

**MISSION AS THE CREATION OF A GOD-WARD CULTURE:  
GOD'S MANDATE TO ADAM, ABRAHAM AND JESUS**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

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## DECLARATION

I, Derek Gary Kamukwamba, declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, is my own work, unless where acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted previously by me for a degree at another university.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Place: .....

## ABSTRACT

The traditional definition of the term mission has always carried with it the connotation of redemption or salvation and because of this salvation and redemption are seen as the central tasks of mission. It is with this understanding that Piper declares that “when this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more” (2010:17). If this is so why were Adam and Eve created, and what mandate did God give them? And why will the redeemed be gathered in the New Creation (Revelation 21-22)? Are they without a task to carry out? If they all have tasks given to them by God who created and redeemed them, is it possible to come up with a definition of mission that embraces their tasks as well, thereby freeing the term mission from the redemption or the salvation connotation?

This study investigates the possibility of coming up with a definition that does not carry with it the salvation or redemption connotation, and one that sets the term free, thereby locating mission in all the divisions of the biblical storyline or the biblical grand narrative: namely, the creation, the fall, the redemption and the consummation or the new creation. To do this the study takes the following as its working definition for mission: “the reason or purpose of one’s existence”. Thus, mission lies in the question of why we were created. God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep upon the earth”(Genesis 1:26). Using this definition and the theme of the kingdom of God, the study demonstrates that God’s mission to human beings and to the whole created order comes to us through the call of Adam, the call of Abraham and the call of Jesus. The study acknowledges that these three personalities mark the three phases in God’s plan and purpose for mission. If these three Adams are taken out of the picture, mission cannot be fully understood.

Looking at the call of Adam, the call of Abraham and the call of Jesus, the study notes that in the call of Adam God sets the pattern for his kingdom. Adam’s call

to mission is the foundation of all that is to come. In the call of Adam, humanity is called to “represent God’s kingship through the whole range of human life on earth” (Peskest & Ramachandra 2003:37) to share in God’s reign. Thus, humanity is to be the people of the kingdom: “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule enjoying God’s blessing” (Roberts 2002:32). All the calls to mission that follow after Adam’s call are about reclaiming that which was lost. In other words, these calls are more of a journey back to that which was lost; it is more a question of establishing a community that will live up to God’s mandate to Adam. It is from this point of view that the study takes its title “Mission as the Creation of a God-ward Culture: God’s Mandate to Adam, Abraham and Jesus”. This has been humanity’s mandate from creation and will continue to be its mandate until the consummation. Even though God’s call comes on different levels and under different circumstances or stages in human history, the primary goal for mission still remains the same: that of bringing about and affirming the reign of God. This is the reason for humanity’s existence in every generation.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Many Christians have taken a negative attitude towards culture. To them Christianity is above culture, they see culture as being in constant conflict with the church, thus they feel that Christians should do everything they can to oppose and overcome culture by faith. Culture is generally understood as the total way of life of any particular group of people (Burnett 1996:14). This being the case, it means that for the Christian faith to be meaningful and at home, it needs to be live and experience in a cultural setting of every group of people, telling the Jesus story in the people's own environment and from the people's own world view.

I feel strongly that if Jesus is to entrust the Zambian Church (and not only Anglicans in Zambia, but all Christians throughout the world) with his mission, there is need for that particular Church to be a Church that is able to tell its own story from its own point of view. I am encouraged to take up this conviction by the encounter of Jesus with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, in Matthew 16:13-15.

In Mathew 16:13-15, Jesus was nearing the end of his ministry on earth and realised that if he was to entrust God's mission to his disciples, they must be people who can tell their own story of who he is. The test to this comes in the two questions "who do people say that the son of man is?" (v13) and "but who do you say that I am?" (v15). Jesus attaches great importance to personal discovery and the importance to tell one's own story from one's own perspective. These questions are posed to the Church, the people of God. The first question has been answered but not all Christians have answered the second question. Some have told their story, while others have not and, to borrow from Waruta's words, "have been more or less content" (Schreiter 1992:52) with the story told by others. Thus, to some extent many have been reluctant to answer Jesus' second question. In this way, missiological and many other debates have to some extent remained other people's and not been made personal.

It is only by addressing the second question that a society or community starts identifying mission within its own context and situation. One needs to tell one's own story from one's own perspective. All people have a story to tell, and the fact that these stories have not been written down should not be confused with the reality of possessing it. Knowing one's story is knowing oneself, because stories are the continuing conversation between oneself and the world. Knowing one's story means that one is able to fully understand oneself, why one does certain things which other people do not do, but do not do certain things which others do. It helps one understand one's identity, where one has come from and then determine where one would like to go. Such stories help people to realize their identity.

Scholars from other parts of the world have helped in telling the story of the Christian faith, but it is a story from their perspective, influenced by their culture and their worldview. Since a story is individual people's understanding of events in the world around them, selected fragments of all the available material on the basis of what is significant to them, a story is influenced by their own insights, pre-occupation and worldview of their generation. In other words, their identity should not be based on someone else's definition of identity.

It is important for people to tell their own story from their own perspective so as to define themselves. This is the challenge that Christians face. It is a task for every individual and every community to define itself and not to be content with other people's definitions.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The definition and understanding of a term or concept influence the way it is used and gives a position from which one comments and makes a contribution on prevailing debates. In missiology, for instance, the definition of the term mission gives a position from which it can be commented on and makes it possible to contribute on whether mission is to be found in the Old Testament or not, or whether it is confined to the New Testament only. Comments and contributions as

to whether the traditionally known texts of the “Great Commission” are the only texts for the commission or whether other texts should be considered as being part of the commission for mission should also be discussed.

It is because of their definition and understanding of the term mission that Kösternberger and O’Brien do not acknowledge the whole Bible as showing the presence of mission. According to Kosternberger and O’Brien (2001:251), “there was no mission in the Garden of Eden and there will be no mission in the new heaven and new earth”. This is the same position taken by Piper (2010:15,25) who argues that mission is a temporary necessity and so when this age is over and the redeemed of the Lord finally come before the throne of God, then mission will be no more. Peters (1972:15) agrees with them and sees all the pages of the Bible as having sins written on them, except for Genesis 1 and 2, and Revelation 21 and 22. He argues that if sin was not a serious reality, there would be no need for Christian missions, neither would the doctrine of soteriology make sense. It is sin that makes salvation necessary and sin makes Christian mission necessary.

The traditional concept of mission has always carried with it the idea of the geographical expansion of the Christian faith and the redemption or the salvation connotation; thus, salvation and redemption are seen to be the central tasks in mission. For instance, Ott and Strauss (2010: xvii) define mission as “the sending activity of God with the purpose of reconciling to himself and bringing into his kingdom fallen men and women from every people, nation and tongue”. Even when they declare that “the Bible is from start to finish a missionary book”, they still have in mind salvation and redemption (Ott & Strauss 2010:3). Thus, in their explanation they state that “for it is the story of God himself reaching into human history to reconcile a fallen and rebellious humanity to himself and to re-establish his reign over all creation” (Ott & Strauss 2010:3). The reaching out that is being referred to in this statement is that which occurs after the fall and before the consummation. Does the Bible start on Genesis 3 and finish on Revelation 20?

This study has taken the concept of mission which is tied to salvation or redemption as its research problem statement. Thus, the main research questions are as follows: Should the definition of mission always carry the salvation,

redemption and restoration connotation? Is it possible to come up with a definition of mission that is free from the redemption and salvation connotation? One that can somehow make the creation narrative (Genesis 1-2) and the new creation narrative (Revelation 21-22) stand on their own, be interpreted and understood missiologically in their own right as somehow independent narratives, with a message of their own, in the same way as the fall (Genesis 3-11) and the redemption (Genesis 12-Revelation 20) are sometimes taken to be? This would involve a concept of mission that allows the creation and new creation to be seen as narratives where there is mission. As long as mission continues to be defined exclusively in the light of redemption or salvation, there will always be claims that there was no mission in the Garden of Eden and there will be no mission in the new creation, and the claim will always be justified because there was nothing to redeem or save in Genesis 1-2 and there will be nothing to redeem or save in Revelation 21-22.

To help in solving the research problem the study takes the working definition of Wright's (2010:17) understanding of the term of mission as answering the following questions: "What are the people of God here on earth for? What does the Bible tell us about what God expects from his people? For what purpose or mission do they exist?" The study pays particular attention to the second question: "What does the Bible as a whole tell us about what God expects from his people?". In other words, what is God's mandate to humankind? What was God's mandate to Adam as the representative of the first generation of the people of God? Adam failed to live up to God's mandate to his people, and the result of this failure, the human disobedience and rebellion against God, was that creation lost its initial status. This brought disastrous effects on the whole creation. Evil and sin found its way into every aspect of human life and creation, and human life and the whole creation was subject to destructive forces. As Wright explains:

Evil and sin weaved their way into every aspect of God's creation and every dimension of human personhood and life on earth. Physically, we are subject to decay and death, living within a physical environment that is itself under the curse of God. Intellectually, we use our incredible powers of rationality to explain, exercise and "normalise" our evil. Socially, every human relationship is fractured and disrupted – sexually, parental, familial, societal, ethnic, international – and the effect is

consolidated horizontally through permeation of all human cultures, and vertically by accumulation through the generation of history. And spiritually, we are alienated from good, rejecting his goodness and authority. Romans 1:18-32 outlines all these dimensions in its analysis of the fruit of Genesis 3. (Wright 2010:40)

But then what was it that God expected Adam to do when he put him in the garden? What was it that Adam failed to do? What was God's reason for Adam's existence? After the fall, in spite of human disobedience and rebellion, God decided not to abandon his creation; he did not destroy it, but put in place a plan for redeeming his "beloved world", as the Gospel of John puts it: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son" (John 3:16). God chooses to identify himself with his creation, as Wright (2010:41) observes "he [God] chose to do so within history through persons and events that run from Abraham to the return of Christ". But what was God's mandate to Abraham as the representative of the second generation of the people of God?

In the New Testament, the time has come: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Jesus makes a declaration at the beginning of his ministry and tells his audience what his mission is all about and what the mandate is that God gives to him. What was God's mandate to Jesus as the initiator of the third generation of the people of God, the Church?

The purpose of this study is to provide a theological framework for the understanding of mission as the creation of a God-ward culture, the kingdom of God. In this study the Bible is the primary source, with the theme of "the kingdom of God" as the controlling theme of the study. The study addresses both the Old and New Testament, considering the kingdom of God in relation to the call of Adam, Abraham and Jesus. Borrowing from Wright's words, the study will investigate the question "what does the Bible as a whole, in both testaments, have to tell about why the people of God exist, and what is it that they are supposed to be and do in the world?" (2010:17).

As has been indicated earlier, Wright's definition of mission is used as the study's working concept. He defines mission by addressing the question "who are we and

what are we here for?” Thus, in this study mission is being defined as “the reason for one’s being or one’s existence”. This definition helps in locating mission in all the biblical narratives. The aim of this working definition is that through the theme of the kingdom of God and the divisions of the biblical narrative, some answers to the research questions can be found. This will be done by locating the kingdom of God concept into the divisions of the biblical narrative.

### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

Bearing in mind that the term mission is not an easy term to define, “it is notoriously difficult to define” (Bevan & Schroeder 2004:25), and that sometimes it has been used with ambiguity, the study seeks to secure the working definition given and fit it into the context of the study as a whole. In this section, explanations and descriptions are provided of the concept of the kingdom of God and how this concept has been introduced, developed and consolidated, and finally how it is seen as being fulfilled at the second coming of Jesus at the close of the age. It also explores the fundamental reasons for the centrality of this concept, looking at God’s call to mission, God’s plan for mission and God’s purpose for mission, considering the call and ministry of Adam, Abraham, Jesus and the disciples of the Jesus community who represent the early Church. To do this the study will take into account the different biblical divisions that different scholars have identified and see how these divisions lay the foundation for the biblical understanding of the kingdom of God as it is articulated in the New Testament.

The study is intended to contribute to a clear understanding of the theological basis for mission. At the centre of consideration will be the concept of the kingdom of God, that is mission as the establishment of a God-ward culture and the creation of the kingdom of God as applied throughout all the biblical generations, from Genesis to Revelation. For the sake of a clear and proper perspective, the study will consider Adam’s, Abraham’s and Jesus’ call according to God’s mandate and their role in the establishment of a God-ward culture.

## 1.4 Motivation

In Matthew 16:13-16, Jesus, nearing the end of his ministry on earth, realised that if he was to entrust God's mission to his disciples, to send them as the Father had sent him, they had to be people who have a story to tell about who Jesus really was and is. Jesus had a story to tell about the Father who sent him, and in the same way the disciples need to have a story to tell of who their sender is. The test for this came in two questions: "Who do others say I am?" and "But who do you say I am?" The questions reveal that everyone has a story to tell and that each one is entitled to their own story. What Jesus seems to be indicating to his disciples is that what others say makes very little difference, but what they say makes a lot of difference. Jesus does dispute or commend what others say but he commends Peter for the answer. The second question comes as a challenge that one needs to stop looking around, focusing on other people, and rather focus on oneself. It is out of this conviction that missiology as a study discipline was born as a way of the Church assessing itself. It is a self-critic in order to see how faithful the Church has been in carrying out God's missionary mandate, bearing in mind that it is the only sent one and that authority belongs to the sender.

The question attaches great importance to personal discovery. Although others have told their story, it is important for each individual to discover his or her own story. It is of great importance to tell one's own story from one's own perspective— it makes a big difference.

It is important to note that the second question of Jesus to the disciples still applies; others have told their part of the story of what mission is, while others have been content with the stories told by their counterparts. Jesus' questions suggest that all people have a story to tell, and that no one should be living a borrowed life. Life itself is a story to tell.

This realisation motivated and encouraged the topic of this debate. This research will become part of the debate and will address the question "what is mission?" Peter gave the following answer: "You are the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). There was nothing new that Peter said. He only expressed that

which was at the heart of the Jewish community of his day, and their hopes and aspirations with regard to the promised Messiah, that to which all the law and prophets pointed. As seen in the discussion of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:15-21:

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognising him. And he said to them, “what is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?”. And they stood still, looking sad. One of them named Cleopas answered him. “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things” And they said to him, “concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Peter did not invent his own ideas of who Jesus was. All he did was to take the hopes and aspirations of the community of his time and make them his own as part of his story. This is what it means to tell one’s own story. It is not making up new ideas but getting those ideas that the people around have and making them one’s own.

When people are content with the story that others have told, they have not answered Jesus’ second question: “But who do you say that I am?” Without answering this question, any subject remains foreign; it is not defined in accordance with one’s context and one’s generation.

## **1.5 Scope**

The study is a missiological study that explores mission as the creation of a Godward culture: God’s mandate to Adam, Abraham and Jesus. Mission has its origin in the triune God. It is fundamentally God’s involvement with the whole of his creation, with humankind as his stewards. Even before the time of the New Testament, God was already actively involved with his creation as the Book of Hebrews (1:1-2) explains: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our

fathers by the prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by a son". This involvement differs from one generation to another; thus, God's involvement during the time of Adam differs from that of Abraham, which in turn differs from that of the time of Jesus.

In order to have a clearer understanding of the subject at hand, borrowing from Pretorius and Robinson's words, "in order to gain a bird's eye view" (Pretorius & Robinson 1987:1), the study will consider all the divisions of the grand narrative, that is creation, fall, redemption and consummation. The study will consider the whole Bible, both the Old and the New Testament. Bartholomew and Goheen argue that:

The Bible narrates the story of God's journey on the long road of redemption. It is a unified and progressively unfolding drama of God's action in history for the salvation of the whole world. The Bible is not a mere jumble of history, poetry, lessons in morality and theology, comforting promises, guiding principles and commands. Instead, it is fundamentally coherent. Every part of the Bible – each event, book, character, command, prophecy and poem – must be understood in the context of the one storyline. (2014: 14)

Wright agrees with Bartholomew and Goheen's reminder when he makes this observation: "The Bible is the presentation of God walking the path of human history, through the pages of the Bible, God pins a mission statement to every signpost on the way" (2006:23). It is therefore important in a study like this, and other studies that undertake to understand major biblical themes, for one to take the Bible as a unified whole. Bartholomew and Goheen continue to explain: "Hence the unity of the Scripture is not a minor matter: a fragmented Bible may actually produce theological orthodox, morally upright, warmly pious idol worshippers" (2014:14).

Glasser and McGavran similarly argue that:

We believe that if only the Church understands the total revelation of God concerning the mission of his people, they will offer him the heart, strength, time and resources essential to carry out his will among the nations. This means the Old Testament witness as well as the New. We acknowledge the authority of the Old Testament

because Jesus was very closely bound to it. He knew no other word of God and he knew no other God than the God of the Old Testament....All scripture makes its contributions in one way or another, to our understanding of mission. (1983:31)

In order to comprehend mission in its broader understanding, the Bible as a whole should be studied. Thus, both the Old and the New Testaments have a major role to play. Like any other biblical theme, for mission to be fully understood one needs to begin from the Old Testament and work through to the New Testament. As Glasser explains:

The Old Testament affirms again and again that God desires to destroy all evil and bring to an end every grief that has plagued humankind. Without its contribution to our understanding of the eternal purpose of God with respect to individuals and nations, the New Testament portrayal of the “already”, the “not yet” and the “consummation” of the kingdom will appear incomplete. The revelation of the love of God in Christ cannot be fully grasped apart from the Old Testament. Even the Lordship of Christ can be best understood when it is informed by the Old Testament concept of kingship. (2003:21)

This means that when one turns to the New Testament, one must recognise that the “New” part about the New Testament had already commenced in the Old Testament. Jesus explained this in Matthew 5:17 when he said: “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them”. This means that the New Testament does not replace the Old Testament, but the New Testament adds value and new insights to the Old Testament. As Burnett (1996:117) explains, “in turning to the New Testament, one must recognise that the ‘new thing’ about to come to fruition had already commenced in the Old Testament. The New Testament does not do away with the Old but adds to it, both in quantity and quality”. It is with this understanding in mind that this study is to be undertaken. It takes the whole Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, as the scope for the research.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

Wright (2010:25) defines mission as “all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole creation and all that he calls us to do in co-operation with that purpose”. He sees mission in a broader sense, as he explains when making distinctions between mission (*missio Dei*) and missions (*missioecclesiae*):

So, when I speak of mission, I am speaking of all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole creation and all that he calls us to do in co-operation with that purpose....But when I speak of missions, I am thinking of the multitude of activities that God’s people can engage in, by means of which they participate in God’s mission. And it seems to me there many kinds of missions. (Wright 2010:25)

Wright sees the mission of God’s people in the light of God’s mission, that is, he sees missions in the light of mission. Wright (2010:31) states that “at the end of the day, mission is a matter of loyalty. The ambassador must have complete loyalty to the government he/she represents....So, mission of God’s people has to start and finish with complete commitment to God whose mission we are called to share in”.

For Wright the term mission denotes a sense of purpose and conveys the reasons for one’s existence. Ashford (2011:22) agrees with Wright and defines mission as “the privileged participation in God’s mission to make himself known”. For Ashford, there should be a refocusing of what mission is, from activity to purpose, from “being primarily the salvation of souls to the worship of God. In this way mission is about making God known, worshipped and enjoyed” (Ashford 2011:22).

Burnett (1996:12) defines mission as the activities of the people of God in the world when he says that “mission describes what the Church is sent into the world to do”. Thus, for Burnett mission is about answering the following questions: “What is the Church to do?” and “Why is the Church here in the world?”. Or on a personal level the question is: “What is God wanting of me?” Burnett (1996:11-12) explains that “one cannot answer these questions without reference to the word ‘mission’. Throughout its history the Church has been conscious that it has been commissioned by God for a particular task– a task that is intimately involved

with the purposes of God for his creation”. This is the same view that Wright takes, as he defines mission by addressing the question “who are we and what are we here for?” (2010:23-24).

What Burnett is saying here is true for all humanity. Humankind has been conscious that it has been commissioned by some divine power for a particular task throughout its history, from community to community, from generation to generation. That task has to do with God’s purpose for his creation. With this understanding, Burnett agrees with the “twofold mandate concept”, namely the “cultural mandate” and the “redemptive mandate” (Burnett 1996:19). The emphasis is on being called into being, and being chosen or set apart for a task or function. Therefore, mission is one’s place and function in God’s universe and one’s relationship with God, others and the whole creation.

Verkuyl (1978:5) defines missiology as “the study of the salvation activities of the triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, throughout the world geared towards bringing the kingdom of God into existence”. He further explains that it is “the study of the worldwide Church’s divine mandate to be ready to serve this God who is aiming his saving acts towards this world. In dependence on the Holy Spirit, and by word and deed, the Church is to communicate the total gospel and the total divine law to all men” (Verkuyl 1978:5). Oborji (2006:42) defines it as “an academic study of the missionary dimension of the Christian faith...a theological discipline that engages in a systematic and scientific study or elaboration of the fact [that] the Church is missionary by nature”. He sees it as a study that “examines scientifically and critically the activities through which the Church does [its] mission – the work of evangelisation and of planting the Church itself among various cultures and peoples” (Oborji 2006:42). Moreover, Skreslet (2012) defines missiology as “the systematic study of all aspect of mission” and sees it as “an intersection point among the many disciplines that takes an interest in mission related phenomena”. He further explains that “some of these disciplines are more often than not reckoned among theological sciences, but others would normally find their way into standard seminary curriculum. Put in another way, missiology has two distinctive ‘publics’ to which it now relates directly...those who do mission and university academics” (Skreslet 2012:12).

This research takes the view of mission as articulated above and as explained by Bosch who understands mission as God's "yes" and "no" to the world. "Yes" to the world in that "people live in a series of integrated relationships" where the spiritual or personal sphere cannot be divorced from the material and the social (Bosch 1991:10). In this case the task of the missionary is "as coherent, broad and deep as the need and exigencies of human life" (Bosch 1991:10). The missionary's task is to bring the whole gospel to the world to seek integral salvation. The world in this case is seen, as Bosch puts it, "as the theatre of God's activities" (1991:10). Dyrness calls it "the dramatic action of the kingdom of God" (1998:12). Jesus in John 17 verse 10 and 16 talks of the disciples as being in the world but not of the world. Bosch (1991) further explains that "God's love and attention are directed primarily at the world, and mission is participation in God's existence in the world". This means that God's "yes" to the world is seen when the Church takes a stand of solidarity with those faced with injustice, oppression, marginalisation, poverty, discrimination and violence (John 17:10).

On "no" to the world, Bosch (1991:11) explains that Christianity should not be blended with social, secular and political movements to the point of becoming completely identified with them, such that the Church becomes a religion of society. In today's world, the Church should not become a non-governmental organisation. Jesus calls this being of the world (John 17:16).

Taking the understanding of mission which defines mission from the point of view of one's purpose of existence, the reason for one's being and the reason for one's call allows the term to be all-embracing. This also allows mission to fit into all the divisions of the biblical narrative. Again, with the definition and understanding of mission from the point of view of the reason or purpose for existence or calling into being, it is possible to identify or find mission in both the Old and New Testament. It is with this understanding in mind that Okoye (2006:10) makes this observation: "Mission being part of the identity of any faith community, it cannot be defined without reference to the life and tradition of that particular community".

## 1.7 Literature Review

What is mission? The term mission is not an easy term to define as Bevan and Schroeder acknowledge in these words: “What is mission exactly, of course, is notoriously difficult to define. Perhaps the best way to begin a definition is to say [that] mission takes the Church beyond itself into history, into culture, into people’s lives beckoning it constantly to ‘cross frontiers’” (2004:8). Buono agrees and in the introduction to *Missiology, Theology and Praxis* he argues that “mission has always helped the Church to go beyond the frontiers of the accomplished in order to face the one of novelty, of the unheard-of, of the risky, as long as Christ is preached” (2002:25). Buono also quotes Muller who defines missiology as:

The systematic study of the evangelising activity of the Church and of means with which to implement it. It is a scientific study of the missionary reality of the Church where the scientific discipline and missionary charisma mutually enrich themselves.... Missiology should be the dynamic foundation of all theological studies and the heart of ecclesiology. (in Buono 2002:31-32)

Buono also quotes Coffele’s definition of missiology as “a breach of theology that methodologically and with different approaches deepens, but always departing as theology – from the revelation of God, the origin of the missionary mandate and its intimate relationship with being Church” (in Buono 2002:32). Likewise, Oborji (2006:15) defines missiology as “an academic study of the missionary dimension of the Christian faith, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). It is a theological discipline that engages in a systematic and scientific study or elaboration of the fact that the Church is missionary by nature”.

Glasser (1983:7) also agrees with Bevan and Schroeder when he observes that all Christians agree that the Church has a mission to the world. This mission reflects God’s love for people of all nations. But as to the nature of this mission, there are great differences of opinion among those who profess to be followers.

McGavran (1983:15), Glasser’s co-author, expresses the same sentiments and sees the spreading confusion concerning the word “mission” on the part of the mainline denomination and older sending missionary society as a major cause for

the tremendous decline in missionary sending. Thus, for McGavran before there can be any theology of mission, there must be a clear definition of mission so that it will not mean everything and nothing. Glasser and McGavran define mission as :

Carrying the gospel across cultural boundaries to those who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to accept him as Lord and Saviour, and to become responsible members of his Church, working as the Holy Spirit leads, at both evangelism and justice, at making God's will done on earth as it is in heaven. (1983:26)

They further explain that the definition of mission should not narrowly confine mission to a verbal announcement of the gospel. It should accept the practice of the last 150 years which used a great variety of activities to communicate the gospel across linguistic and cultural barriers to those who had not yet believed (Glasser & McGavran 1983:27).

Glasser and McGavran list the activities of education, medicine, agriculture, literacy programmes, dialogue, presence, proclamation and social action, and continue to explain that:

All these are mission when their purpose is to witness to Christ that men and women may know him, love him, believe him, be found in him, become members of his Church, and create in the segments of society they control a social order more agreeable to God. Our definition of mission rejects any activity, even that of verbal proclamation of the name of Jesus, which does not unshakably intend that the unredeemed should choose to become disciples of Christ, bound together in congregations, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and resolve to live the life as Christ would have them live it. (Glasser & McGavran 1983:27)

According to Bosch (1991), the term mission has been defined in many different ways. He argues that "until the 1950s, 'mission', even if not used in a univocal sense, had a fairly circumscribed set of meanings" (Bosch 1991:1), and some of these meanings are:

- the sending of missionaries to designate territories;

- activities undertaken by such missionaries;
- geographical areas where the missionaries were active;
- agencies that dispatch the missionaries;
- the non-Christian world where these missionaries are to work also referred to as a mission field; and
- centres from which missionaries operated on the mission field (Bosch 1991.1).

The early and modern Church's concept of mission was, and is, in some way as stipulated by Bosch. The early Church's method of doing mission may not have been as elaborate as the modern missionary enterprises, but the principle is the same. There is the sending Church or organisation, there is the identification of the non-Christian world where to send the missionary personnel, there is the identification of the geographical area, there is the setting up of the centre from which the sent missionary personnel would operate from and there are the activities laid down which the dispatched missionaries would follow and report back to the sending agency.

DeYoung and Gilbert tie mission to the traditionally known Great Commission as they explain that:

Mission is not everything we do in Jesus' name, nor everything we do in obedience to Christ. Mission is the task we are given to fulfill. It is what Jesus sends us into the world to do. And if we want to figure out what Jesus sends his disciples into the world to do, we think the best place to look is the Great Commission. (2011:29)

DeYoung and Gilbert see mission as being summarised in the Great Commission passages (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 13:10; Mark 14:9; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). They call this "the climatic marching orders of Jesus" (DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:26), and in so doing they confine mission to the New Testament, and even confine mission to certain passages of the New Testament and not the entire New Testament.

Piper opens the introduction and the first chapter of his book *Let the Nations be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Mission* with these words:

Mission is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship does not. Worship is ultimate, not mission, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship will abide forever.... Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of mission. (2010:15,35)

These passages and the layout of Piper's book show that his understanding of the term mission is from the redemptive point of view, that is, mission as activities which enable an individual, individuals or community to be set free from all the entanglements that prevent them from serving God as they ought to. As he explains, "mission is not a recruitment project for God's labour force. It is a liberating project from the heavy burdens and hard yokes of other gods" (Piper 2010:55). This then enables them to come to the realisation of who they are meant to be. He further explains that the human race's greatest sin is not failing to work for God so as to increase his glory but rather failing to delight so as to reflect his glory. God's glory is most reflected in humans when humans are delighted in him (Piper 2010:57).

Piper places more emphasis on preaching, teaching and prayer. On preaching and teaching, he emphasises a shift from the Old Testament model of a come-see religion to the new era of a go-tell religion in the New Testament thus taking the Great Commission seriously. The gospel should be preached as it should be – a liberating gospel. He brings out the dangers of the prosperity gospel and attachment to the material things of this world. On prayer, he acknowledges the critical role of prayer in the purposes of God for the world, but he is cautious not to overstate the role of prayer in relation to the proclamation of the word of God (Piper 2010:84-85).

Kosternberger and O'Brien argue from the same point of view as Piper. They define mission from the redemption or salvation point of view. They see mission as God sending his son to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion

against him and that stands under his judgment. Thus, for them mission is ultimately bound up with God's salvation plan that moves from creation to new creation (Kösternberger & O'Brien 2001:268).

Burnett defines mission as the activities of the Church in the world when he writes that "mission describes what the Church is sent into the world to do" (1996:12). Thus, for Burnett mission is about answering the questions surrounding what the Church must do, why the Church was created and what God wants of each individual. One cannot answer these questions without reference to the word mission. Throughout history the Church has been conscious that it has been commissioned by God for a particular task that is intimately involved with the purposes of God for his creation (Burnett 1996:11-12).

What Burnett is saying here is not only true for the Church, but also for the whole human race. Humankind has been conscious that it has been commissioned by some divine power for some particular task throughout history. That task has to do with God's purpose for his creation.

The central theme for this thesis is the mission of the people of God. As stated in the problem statement, this subject matter has had major research done on it before. In fact, it is the subject matter that missiology is all about. In this study, however, the aim is to investigate the what, the why and the how of mission using the theme of the kingdom of God. This becomes the central theme for the thesis in order to discover the mandate given to Adam as the representative of the first generation of creation, to Abraham as "the second Adam" representing the second generation of creation and to Jesus as "the third Adam" representing the third generation of creation. The purpose of this is to consider how the mandates differ or match. The concept of the three Adams is discussed in chapter five.

This study relies mostly on books, articles and journals that have been written on the subject. To avoid losing direction on the central theme, the research is focused on eight books as guides: Ashford's *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church and the Nations*, Burnett's *The Healing of the Nations: The Biblical Basis of the Mission of God*, Bartholomew & Goheen's *Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story*, Dyrness's *Let the Earth Rejoice! A Biblical*

*Theology of Holistic Mission*, Glasser's *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*, Piper's *Let the Nations be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, Roberts's *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* and Wright's, *The Mission of the People of God: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. These eight books have been chosen because they present a clearer outline of the basic structure of the biblical narrative and the concept of the kingdom of God. This is not a case of limiting the study to these books but rather a matter of setting the perimeters on the central theme. All the books in the bibliography have been extensively consulted.

## **1.8 Methodology**

It is generally agreed that research methodology falls into two categories: qualitative research and quantitative research (Kombo & Tromp 2006:9). In this study, the researcher uses the qualitative research method the qualitative research method suits the study as there is no hypothesis to prove. As Orodho and Kombo argue, the researcher has no “educated guesses about possible differences, relationships or causes of the research problems” (in Kombo & Tromp 2006:43). The qualitative research method involves description. It seeks to describe and analyse the subject matter so as to bring about a deeper understanding of it (Kombo & Tromp 2006:9). Kombo and Tromp refer to the qualitative research method as “naturalistic because it uses natural settings and not artificial ones, it relies on a research strategy that is ‘flexible and interactive’, which may include interviews, focused group discussions and questionnaires” (Kombo & Tromp 2006:9).

Since this study is about subject matter that has been researched and commented on by many scholars, a flexible approach is needed to allow for the discovery of the unexpected and new information and an in-depth investigation of the subject matter. Thus, the qualitative research method best fits the research aims and objectives of this study (Kombo & Tromp 2006:9).

Creswell defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding where a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports, detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting” (in Maree 2007:265). Furthermore, he explains the goal of qualitative research as that of exploring and understanding a central phenomenon (Creswell in Maree 2007:265) and that a qualitative research approach “seeks to provide understanding from the participants’ perspective. It tries to answer the questions such as ‘what is unique about this individual, group, situation or issue? Why?’ The goal is always to seek insight into participants’ perspectives, experiences, attitudes and behavior” (Creswell in Maree 2007:115).

Maree also cites Guba and Lincoln as classifying qualitative research in four categories: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Orlikowski and Baroudi are cited as classifying qualitative research in three categories: positivism, interpretive and critical. But Maree (2007:57), however, acknowledges that these categories are only distinctive in theory, and that in practice they overlap. On research design, Maree (2007:70) observes that “there are currently a very wide range of qualitative designs”.

Nieuwenhuis makes this observation about qualitative research:

Qualitative research as a research methodology is concerned with the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research. Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with, and observing the participants in their natural environment (in situ) and focusing on their meanings and interpretations (Holloway & Wheeler 1996). The emphasis is on quality and depth of the information and not on the scope and breadth of the information provided [...] Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding phenomena within their natural occurring context (called naturalistic context) with the intention of developing an understanding of meaning(s) imported by the respondents, a “seeing through the eye of the participant” so that the phenomena can be described in the meaning they have for the actors or participants. (in Maree 2007:51)

Maree (2007:55) further explains that in qualitative research the researcher recognises that the world is made up of people who have their own assumptions, intentions, beliefs and values. Thus, if one wants to know reality, one has to explore the experiences of others with regard to specific phenomena, attempting to see how others have constructed reality. This is achieved by asking about it. In qualitative research the researcher looks at human events in a more holistic way that attempts to locate individual actions in their cultural contexts. This suggests that human activities must be investigated in terms of meanings, considering the “why” people say this, do this or act in this way. This must be interpreted by linking them to other events in order to gain greater understanding. Thus, qualitative research acknowledges that there should be an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants’ reality based on these experiences. Even though personal experiences, beliefs and value-laden narratives are biased and subjective, in qualitative research they are accepted as being true for those who have lived and experienced them. This means that stories, experiences and voices of the respondents are the mediums through which reality is explored, understood and known (Booth, Colombo & Williams 2008:55).

This research also falls in the category of “pure” research as opposed to “applied” research. Booth, Colombo and Williams explain what is meant by “pure” research and make a distinction between pure and applied research:

We call research pure when the solution to a problem does not bear on any practical situation in the world, but only improves the understanding of a community of researchers. When the solution to a research problem does have practical consequences, we call the research applied. You can tell whether research is pure or applied by looking at the last of the three steps defining your project. (Booth et al 2008:59)

Booth et al list the three steps as the topic, the question and the significance, and further explain that in “pure research the third step refers only to understanding” while in “applied research the second step refers to knowing, but the third step refers to doing” (Booth et al 2008:59).

This research has been done in a library, in an office and on the internet; thus, it is a secondary research project also known as desk research. The management study guide website defines desk research as “the research technique which is mainly acquired by sitting at the desk”. It further explains that “desk research is basically involved in the collection of data from existing resources such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines and online” (management study guide). Therefore, this research is purely theoretical and one that is done from a desk, reading relevant literature from the library and on the internet, and because it is theoretical research, the conceptual analysis method has been used which involves looking at how some scholars have defined the term mission, and how their definition has influenced their use of the term in their contribution to missiological debates.

### **1.9 Key Concepts**

In this section several key concepts are discussed and explained. These concepts are important to the investigation of the research problem statement.

**Christendom:** Tennent defines Christendom as a political and ecclesiastical arrangement that reinforces a special relationship between the Church and the State. The State strengthens the Church by promoting the Christian hegemony over the religious and cultural life. The Church in turn gives legitimacy to the State by supporting the political establishment and tacitly granting divine sanction to the actions of the State (Tennent 2010:18).

Christendom can exist in official, legally binding ways, in an unofficial but explicit way with the constitution granting Christianity special status, and in an unofficial implicit form, more in expressions than in the constitution. When it exists in an official form, the Church receives protection and many privileges from the civil authorities, in that it is the established religion of the State. There is usually a very thin line dividing the Church leadership and civil leadership.

Christendom is about how Christianity dominated the world thereby dividing the world into two spheres: the Christian world and the pagan or heathen world.

Geographical boundaries have been drawn and Christendom represents the Christian world and all those outside Christendom's boundaries are regarded as the lost and belonging to the realm of darkness – the pagan world. It is with this understanding (and one that still lingers in some parts of the world) that the Western world has been seen as the Christian world—everyone from the West is seen a Christian. And the non-Western world has been seen as representing the pagan world— everyone from the non-Western world is seen as a non-believer.

**Church:** According to *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, the term “Church” comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* derived from the term *ek-kaleo*, a word used for the summons to the army to assemble (*kaleo* means to call). The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* gives the basic definition of the term *ecclesia*, from which the English term “Church” has its roots, as “a meeting or gathering. People gathered together or are summoned for any and every purpose”. It goes further to explain that it is the people and the purpose that give significance to the term. Thus, in the New Testament context, the Church is:

- An assembly of persons that has been summoned for a particular purpose (the purpose can be secular or religious).
- A community of believers which has been gathered from inhabitants of a specific area. The community meets in assembly, to be sure, but it is constituted as *ecclesia* prior to and apart from such assemblies.
- A community gathered by God through Christ. The Church is understood as the body in Christ. The body binds men and women together in fellowship or communion.
- The eschatological people. The Church is here understood to be the eschatological gathering of God's people into his household, to become his “house” and his “family”. The Church is the sons and daughters of God waiting for the second coming of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when they will be gathered as the redeemed into the new city of God.

**Covenant:** The *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary* defines the term covenant as “a solemn promise made binding by an oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action. Such an action or formula is recognised by both parties as

the formal act which binds the actor to fulfil his promise”. It further explains that “covenants may be between parties of different socio-political groups, in which case the covenant creates a relationship between them regulated by the terms of the covenant; or a covenant may take place within a legal community, in which case obligations are assumed which the law does not provide for, i.e., it makes new obligations binding” (Buttrick 1962:714).

According to the *Theological Word Book of the Bible* the term covenant means “bond” or “fetter”. It defines the term covenant as an “artificial brotherhood, and has no place where the natural brotherhood of which it is an imitation already subsists” (Richardson 1980:55). It goes on to explain that a covenant may be between individuals, monarchs, tribes, king and his people, and husband and wife. A covenant creates rights and duties, but does not necessarily place the parties concerned on an equal footing. It may come about by mutual understanding or may be forced on a conquered party.

The biblical understanding of a covenant is that of a bond entered into by two parties on a voluntary basis, where each party pledges to play their part. It is based on personal choice rather than compulsion (Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Joshua 24:14-24; 1Kings18:20-21; John 1:9-13; Revelation 3:20). As the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* observes, the covenant metaphor is central to the biblical understanding of the relation between God and his people (Freedman1992:1179).

**Creation:** The term creation refers to an act through which something that did not exist previously in that particular form is brought into existence. The *New International Dictionary of the New Testament* explains that the term creation has “a number of meanings in current usage. But it always refers to an act by which something which has not previously existed in this form is brought into being” (Brown 1986:376).

**Culture:** Burnett defines culture as the “total way of life” of a particular people:

Culture has most simply been defined as the total way of life of people. It includes the outward practical aspect of how people

obtain their food, how they dress, how they organise their society and marriage, as well as how they practice their religion or what music they play. Culture also includes the language and religious belief of the society, both which have great influence in forming the ideas of the people. At the core of any culture are those fundamental ideas assumed by the people to be true and, in general, above contradiction. Ideas concerning space and time, gods and creation, what is good and what is evil. These fundamental ideas are usually called the “world view” of a society and enable the people to make sense and order of their environment. (Burnett 1984:14)

**Fall:** The fall refers to the first act of disobedience of Adam and Eve, whereby humankind lost their primal innocence and happiness and entered the actual condition of sin and toil (Romans 5:12). Bartholomew and Goheen define the fall as “the assertion of one’s autonomy: to become a law unto oneself as the source for determining what is right and wrong, rather than relying on God’s word for direction” (2014:41).

**Great Commission:** The term “commission” is used to refer to the mandate and instruction given to someone at the beginning of one’s task or assignment, in most cases after that person or persons have undergone some kind of training and are now ready to take on the task. This is not only for religious groups, but is also used in secular settings. In the Christian tradition, the texts of Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 13:10; Mark 14:9, Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:8 and John 20:21-22 that contain the instructions of Jesus Christ to the disciples are referred to as the Great Commission.

**Kingdom of God:** Adam Richardson defines the kingdom of God as “the sovereign Lordship of God of his people or over the world which he has made”. From the New Testament and Jesus’ perspective it means “the renewal of the world on the line of God’s original purpose” (Richardson 1980:119). The *New International Bible Dictionary* defines the term as the “sovereignty of God manifested in Christ to defeat his enemies, creating a people over whom he reigns and issuing in a realm in which the power of his reign is experienced” (New International Bible Dictionary 1987:568). Dyrness defines the kingdom of God as “the sovereign rule of God in history that leads to redemption of the lost and

restoration of the created order” (1998:127) and Ashford defines the kingdom of God as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule and blessing” (2010:60-61). In contrast, Glasser defines the kingdom of God as “a new world, a new state of affairs, a new community, the good realm where the realities of redemption are granted and received, where the conditions of fulfillment are realised and evil is no longer at work” (2003:189).

**Mission/Missions:** It is worth noting that the terms mission (singular) and missions (plural) are at times used interchangeably, while at times the distinction is strictly observed. The distinction made by different scholars helps to understand how varied the use of the terms is and helps in understanding the debates in missiology.

Nissen defines mission as “God’s self-revelation as the one who loves the world”, while missions is defined as “particular forms, related to specific times, places or needs of participation in the *missio Dei*”. He argues that:

Here it might be useful to distinguish between mission and missions. The first refers primarily to the *missio Dei* (God’s mission), that is God’s self-revelation as the one who loves the world. Mission (the *missio ecclesia*, the missionary venture of the Church) refers to particular forms related to specific times, places or needs, of participation in *missio Dei* (Nissen 2007:17).

Tennent defines mission as “God’s redemptive, historical initiative on behalf of his creation”, while he defines missions as “all the specific and varied ways in which the Church crosses cultural boundaries to reflect the life of the triune God in the world and through that identity, participate in his mission, celebrating through the word and deed the inbreeding of the new creation” (Tennent 2010:29).

Van Rheezen defines mission as “the work of God in reconciling sinful humankind to himself”, and missions as “the plans of committed believers to accomplish the mission of God” (1996:20).

Ott and Straus define mission as “the sending activity of God with the purpose of reconciling to himself and bringing into his kingdom fallen men and women from every people, nation and tongue”, while they define missions as “the various specific efforts of the Church to carry out the task of mission in the world, usually related to spread of the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom of God” (2010:XV,XVII).

Van Engen makes no distinction when he defines mission as when:

The people of God intentionally cross barriers from Church to non-Church, faith to non-faith to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ; this task is achieved by means of the Church’s participation in God’s mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other and to the world, gathering them into the Church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the works of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ. (1996:26-27)

It is in line with the above understanding of mission that the term is being used in this research, that is, mission as all the Church’s activities: the making of disciples of all nations, the performing of deliverance and emancipatory actions, and the doing of works of charity or social action. Mission is meeting the prevailing needs of people whether spiritual, physical or social.

**Missionary:** Bosch in his book *Transforming Mission* explains that “the term mission presupposes a sender, a person sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent, an assignment and the effect of what is done” (1991:1). A missionary, therefore, is this someone being sent with a commission to perform a given task, someone acting in the name of a superior, carrying out an important mandate, serving as an ambassador on behalf of a leader. In Christian mission God is said to be the source of mission. He is the one who sends “as the Father sent me, so I send” (John 20:21). Even though God is the one who sends, he is also the one who reaches out or searches out: “But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, ‘where are you?’” (Genesis 3:9). God is the first to reach out; he is himself the missionary.

**Missionary Enterprise:** Missionary enterprise refers to the activities, task or programme for missionaries and missionary agencies. The propagation of the Christian faith among non-Christian people was understood as the Church's main task in the creation of missionary societies or agencies. This understanding later changed to that of the "common witness of the whole Church, bringing the whole gospel to the world" (Van Engen 1996:18).

**Missio Dei:** Mission belongs first of all to God. Buono states that mission "has its origin in the Father's fountain of love, its development in the Father who reveals to the Son his salvific design so that in the strength of the Holy Spirit he can fulfill it through the Church" (2002:102). Bosch (1991:392) agrees with Buono as he also states that "mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love". He further explains that "the *missio Dei* notion has helped to articulate the conviction that neither the Church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Mission is primarily and ultimately, the work of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the Church is privileged to participate" (Bosch 1991:392).

**Redemption:** According to the *New Dictionary of Theology*, the term redemption is the concept found in the Old Testament to express the action of a relative in setting free a member of his family or buying back his property (Leviticus. 25:25ff) or, in general, that of purchasing something for a price. A ransom-price is paid to secure the release of what would otherwise be under forfeit (Ferguson 2003:560). The *New Bible Dictionary* defines redemption as "deliverance from something evil by payment of a price". The term in this case is more than simple deliverance. The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* defines redemption as "a process by which something alienated or at least subject to alienation may in some circumstances be recovered for its original owner by payment of a sum of money. The alienated thing may be either real property or an animal or legal freedom of a person" (Vol. R-Z: P21).

In the Old Testament the verb "redeem" is used to mean "buying back" something or someone. The noun "redeemer" is used to mean someone who performs that

act of buying. According to Wright (2010:98-99), the term was used in three ways:

Bringing a murderer for justice: If someone was murdered it was the duty of the victim's wider family member to seek out the guilty person and bring him or her to justice before the elders (Numbers 35:6-34).

Helping a family member out of debt or slavery: If someone was struggling against adverse economic circumstances and had no option but to sell some land, or even to sell some dependants into bonded labour, in order to obtain or pay off the debt, it became the duty of a family member to buy that land in order to keep it in the wider family, or pay off the debt so that family members enslaved for it could be free (Leviticus 25).

Keeping a brother's family name alive: If someone died without having a son who would inherit his name and property, there was a strong moral obligation on a brother or some other male relative to take his widow into his own family, and seek to have a son by her. Then that son would inherit the name and property of the deceased brother (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

**Restoration:** The verb "to restore" generally means to bring back to the original state. Restoration therefore means the process of bringing back to the original state and in the case of the biblical understanding restoration means bringing back the fallen creation to a harmonious set of relationships as God had intended it to be at creation. The doctrine of restoration is central to the understanding of God's redemptive work, that God's redemptive work is aimed at the removal of all the disorder in creation which is the result of sin, and that God will at the close of the age re-establish all things to perfect harmony.

**Sin:** The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines sin as "the purposeful disobedience of a creature to the known will of God". Sin is therefore going against God's established order. Other terminologies used are missing the mark, missing the way or goal and deviation from the right way. It is with this in mind that Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans about going astray and falling short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

According to Roberts, sin is not just law-breaking but law-making, usurping God's authority and establishing one's independence, and doing away with God's

created order and God's established standards. It is like saying, "from now on, God, we want to be the law-makers in the world, setting the standards by which we will live". It is a bid to be like God (Roberts 2002:39). Dyrness defines sin as "[refusing] to live under God's instructions, being disobedient towards God's instructions, [and refusing] to acknowledge one's assigned place in creation. This results in proper systems of relationships being lost and balance being upset" (1998:42).

### **1.10 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and includes the background to the study as the introduction to the thesis, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the motivation for the study, the scope of the study, the theoretical framework and literature review, the methodology used and key concepts. The second chapter explores the theological basis for mission, using the Bible as a source for the theology of mission, and in identifying the presence of mission in both the Old and New Testaments, while using the kingdom of God concept as the guiding theme. An attempt will be made to see how the concept is introduced in the Old Testament starting with the call of Adam, how it is developed with the call of Abraham with the formation of the Abrahamic community, and then with the call of Jesus, the formation of the Christian community, the Church as the new people of God, the new Israel, and how it is seen as finally being fulfilled at the close of the age with the second coming of Jesus.

The third chapter explores mission as portrayed by the Old Testament using the grand narrative of the creation, fall, redemption and consummation, and by considering God's plan and purpose in the call of Adam, Abraham and Israel as a nation. The chapter also considers the model of mission in the Old Testament. The fourth chapter investigates the presence of mission in the New Testament and considers the call of God to mission, and the call for a Messiah which is seen as being fulfilled in the call of Jesus, leading to the call of the disciples who are the representatives of the Church.

The fifth chapter explores the title of the thesis “mission as the creation of a God-ward culture”, looking at the difference between a God-ward cultured community and Christendom. Furthermore, the relationship between the cultural or creation mandate and the gospel or salvation mandate and the relationship between evangelism and social action is explored. The final chapter draws a general conclusion for the entire thesis by looking at the findings and making some recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MISSION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theological framework for the understanding of mission as the creation of a God-ward culture – a mandate that God has given to his people. Using the Bible as the primary source, this chapter looks at the Old and the New Testament and considers the presence of mission in both books. The chapter also investigates the questions “what does the Bible as a whole tell us about why the people of God exist?” and “what is it that they are supposed to be and do in the world?” The chapter then introduces a definition of mission that is not influenced by the concepts of redemption or salvation.

The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part deals with the question “what is mission?” It looks at the definition of the term mission, the distinction between mission (singular) and missions (plural), the division of the biblical narrative into four main sections, and how the definition of the term has influenced scholars in the way they use the term and apply the concept in their understanding of the different mission models. It then looks at the central theme for the thesis – the kingdom of God – and defines the concept. The second part investigates the presence of mission both in the Old and New Testaments using the concept of the kingdom of God and locates the concept in each of the four divisions of the biblical narrative. The third part examines God’s purpose for mission and looks at God’s purpose in the call of Adam, Abraham and Jesus. It introduces the concept of the “three Adams” (meaning Adam, Abraham and Jesus). The fourth part of the chapter looks at some of the models of mission in the Bible and the last part draws some conclusions in the form of a reflection.

### **2.2 What is Mission?**

When the term mission is used, it is still understood in many circles primarily as the geographical expansion of the Christian faith through Church planting and the conversion of non-Christians to the Christian faith. In some circles it still has the

traditional understanding of the geographical movement of the faith and the crossing of seas from the Western world to the non-Western world. Thus, it involves the concept of the “mother Church” and “daughter Churches”. This misunderstanding is to be found in the two camps: the “mothers” as well as the “daughters”. Many Christians see the Church in the West as the mother Church and members of the Church in the West are happy and proud to be the “mother Church” that exercises its dominance and paternalistic tendencies on the Church in the non-Western world. Some members of the Church in the non-Western world want to remain babies, always looking to the “mother” to meet all their needs, whether these be financial, spiritual or pastoral. For instance, in the Anglican Church, many Anglicans see the Church of England as the “mother Church” of the Anglican communion, and the Archbishop of Canterbury as the pastoral and spiritual leader of the communion, much like the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury is seen as the final authority in resolving conflicts in dioceses. If conflicts arise in a particular diocese, letters from self-appointed “concerned parishioners” (as the discounted parishioners usually call themselves) are written to the Archbishop of Canterbury (some even go to the extent of sending copies of their letters of complaints to the Queen of England) and the archbishop is asked to come and help resolve the conflict. Such Church members do not see the need to contribute to the well-being of their local Church because to them all is provided by the Church in the West. All they need to do, according to them, is to appeal and the mother Church will respond and meet all their needs.

Those who have moved on and stopped seeing the Church in the West as the “mother Church” still have the “mother Church” concept lingering in their thoughts and experiences. The concept has been shifted from the Church in the West to the local bigger Church, especial those from which people who initiate the planting of Churches come from. Even in this case, some of these local missionary sending Churches are proud to be considered as the “mother Church”. These, like their Western Church sisters, exercise their motherhood and paternalistic tendencies on their “daughter Church” and the daughters are content with their position in this false image of who they are.

### 2.2.1 Definition

Bevan and Schroeder argue that “mission is notoriously difficult to define” (2004:25). The term mission has not been an easy one to define and has been used with ambiguity. It is perhaps with this in mind that Ferdinando in his article “Mission a Problem of Definition” observes that the ambiguity in meaning of the term may not matter so much. What is important is not the precise definition but rather the informed and biblical reflections of the activities and ministry that are referred to. Therefore, the substance and not the word is important.

Ferdinand makes the above observation and acknowledges the difficulty in coming up with one concrete definition and then explains the need for each scholar or individual calling for mission to be clear about what type of mission one is talking about. He argues that

It does still matter in that confusion over meaning of the word is likely to produce uncertainty about such questions of substance as well. In this case there is agreement about the central importance of mission. Whatever it is and the obligation under which it places Churches and individual Christians to quote Brunner’s well-known observation “The Church exists for mission as a fire exists for burning.” Where there is no mission there is no Church. However, it is problematic to call people to engage in mission when the meaning of engagement remains elusive. (Ferdinando 2008:46)

Kosternberger (1998:1) comments on the definition of the term “mission” in the opening words of the introduction of his book, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel*. Kösternberger says that the term “mission” like the term “discipleship” has a commonplace in the contemporary Church. It is spoken of young people as going on short-term mission or prospective missionaries as joining a mission agency. Moreover, in theological writings the word mission is ubiquitously used. Numerous studies on mission have been made on various portions of the Bible. In these writings reference is made to the “mission of Jesus”, the “mission of Paul” or the “mission of the people of God”. But in all these the term does not carry the same meaning; the

meaning ranges from proclaiming the gospel on a cross-cultural dimension to ministry that is a person's sense of call or purpose. Thus, in the midst of such terminological diversity and differences, it is difficult to know how the word is tied to the biblical concepts. It is therefore important to be specific rather than trying to bring various strands of biblical teaching on mission together.

Kösternberger states that his working definition for the word mission is “the specific task or purpose which a person or group seeks to accomplish, involving various models of movement, be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering by calling others to follow, or following” (1998:41).

The term mission is not specifically a biblical or religious term such as salvation, justification, sacrifice, atonement, covenant, gospel or even evangelism. Otto and Strauss (2010: XIV) have observed that the term mission does not occur in most English Bible translations and so it is a fruitless exercise to search for the term in the concordance when trying to find its biblical usage.

The term mission is used in many circles of secular life. It is used by governments, especially in relation to people working in diplomacy. These are in most cases referred to as “people in foreign mission”. It is also used by people in defense services or military services and those sent to carry out specific tasks are sent on a mission. In military circles understanding one's mission is very much emphasized and it comes in a form of command. Often the phrase “mission accomplished” is reported rather than “job done” or “task carried out”.

In recent times it has become a common word for people in business enterprises. In fact, it has become a norm for every institution including learning institutions, health institutions and even the Churches to adopt a “mission statement”. Any institution or establishment that does not have a “mission statement” is seen as not being serious about its business. The understanding is that a mission statement defines or spells out why that particular institution or establishment exists– it is the beginning and the foundation of the business. Board Source defines a mission statement as “an organisation's reason for being” (2012:9).

In Christian circles “the word mission was first used in 1544 by the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola and Jacob Loyner to describe the spread of the Christian faith” (Otto & Straus 2010: XIV). Ignatius of Loyola was a professional soldier who came into the Church with a military background (Lion Handbook1977:411). He and Loyner used the term mission not on a biblical or theological basis but more on secular and military grounds. Ignatius’ career as a soldier ended when he was seriously wounded, and during his recovery he had time to examine his past life and his future as he read books on the lives of the saints and the life of Christ. He was challenged and resolved to become a soldier of Christ deciding to dedicate his sword and armour to God and took up the cross of Christ. Ignatius of Loyola is the founder of the society of Jesus commonly known as the Jesuits. He was the society’s first general, with the Pope as the commander-in-chief (Lion Handbook1977:413).

What then is mission? As has been discussed in the first chapter, Bosch states that the traditional usage of the term “mission presupposes a sender, a person or persons sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent and an assignment” (1991:1). Bosch further explains that until the 16th century the term was “used exclusively with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, of the sending of the Son by the Father, and of the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son” (1991:1). Moreover, the usage of the term in reference to the spreading of the Christian faith was first used by the Jesuits. Furthermore, Muller cites Ignatius of Loyola as saying, “by mission I mean journeys and undertakings carried on from town to town for the sake of the word of God” (in Otto & Strauss2010: XIV). Goheen is also in agreement with Bosch, and Otto and Strauss when he writes that:

The word “mission” derives from the Latin word *mittere*, “to be sent,” and thus assumes a sender, someone sent, a place or persons to whom the messenger is sent, and the task to fulfil. The Jesuits were first to use this word when in their fourth vow they promised obedience to the Pope in regard to mission outside the Church’s fellowship – including Protestants – to gather them in the mother Church. (2014:16)

Hunt observes that “the term mission, both in its Latin roots and in its mundane secular meaning, refers to the sending of a person or persons as agents of another charged with a specific task” (2010:3). But even with this knowledge of the roots of the word it has remained a word with broader meaning and implication. The word has broad definitions and broad definitions mean that it has broad implications, which then means that it includes many different missions within the mission of God.

### **2.2.2 Distinction between mission and missions**

In this study’s definition of the term mission there is need to take note that some scholars have found it useful and helpful to make a distinction between the term itself: mission (singular) and missions(plural). As Nissen observes:

Here it might be useful to distinguish between *mission* and *missions*. The first refers primarily to the *missio Dei* (God’s mission), that is, God’s self-revelation as the one who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world. *Missions* (the *missioecclesiae*, the missionary venture of the Church) refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in *missio Dei*. (2007:17)

The distinction shows that the two terms are at times used interchangeably while at other times the distinction is strictly observed. The distinction that different scholars make also helps to understand how they define and use the term.

Even though Nissen makes the distinction of the term, he uses the terms mission and missions interchangeably. He seems to see the term missions (plural) as the missionary venture of the Church and in the light of mission, he sees God’s mission, and God’s involvement in and with the world. In contrast, Peters and Piper observe the distinction with strictness. They speak of Christian missions or Church missions. Nissen speaks of Christian mission or Church mission.

Wright seems to agree with Nissen’s distinction. He defines mission as “all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole creation and all that he calls us to do in co-operation with that purpose”, while he defines missions as “the multitude

of activities that God's people can engage in by means of which they participate in God's mission" (Wright 2010:25). Wright sees mission as being broader, and this allows him to talk of the different missions in the category of mission. Thus, when he speaks of mission, he has in mind all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole creation and all that God calls people to do to co-operate with him in fulfilling that purpose. But when he speaks of missions, he has in mind the multitude of activities that God's people can engage in so as to participate in God's mission, and there are many different kinds of missions.

Similarly to Nissen, Wright sees missions in the light of mission. He does not observe the distinction in a strict way. He uses the term mission (singular). This can be seen from the titles of his two books *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Biblical Grand Narrative* and *The Mission of God's People, A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. In both cases he uses the word 'mission' (singular) and not "missions" (plural) because even if it is the mission of God's people, ultimately it is God's mission. Mission therefore overshadows missions.

Tennent, however, makes the distinction. For him mission refers to God's redemptive, historical initiative on behalf of his creation while missions refers to all the different and specific ways in which the Church crosses cultural boundaries to participate in God's mission (Tennent 2010:59). He explains that "mission is made possible only at God's invitation" and that "mission is first and foremost about God, his redemptive purposes and initiatives in the world, quite apart from any action or task or strategies or initiatives the Church may undertake" (Tennent 2010:55).

Tennent similarly observes the distinction in his usage of the term. He also sees missions in the light of mission. According to Tennent, missions flow out of God's heart and God's initiative; thus, "missions should never be conceptualised apart from the *missio Dei*" (2010:59).

Van Rheezen defines mission as "the work of God in reconciling sinful humankind to himself" while missions is defined as "the plans of a committed believer to accomplish the mission of God". He explains that the role of God in

mission is the starting point of understanding the terms “mission” and “missions”. This includes mission as the work of God. Thus, any understanding of mission that excludes God and sees mission as a human endeavour is erroneous. Mission has its roots in God’s desire to reconcile the whole creation to himself with humans as his agents of reconciliation. He goes further to explain that there should be no confusion between the two terms: “mission is the theological anchor of missions. Missions is the practical implementation of the mission of God. Missions without mission is empty – like a body without the spirit” (Van Rheenen 1996:20). Therefore, Van Rheenen observes the distinction in the usage of the two terms.

Ott and Straus (2010: xv, xvii) define mission as “the sending activity of God with the purpose of reconciling to himself and bringing into his kingdom fallen men and women from every people, nation and tongue”. In contrast, they define missions as “the various specific efforts of the Church to carry out the task of mission in the world, usually related to the spread of the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom of God” (Ott & Straus 2010: XV, XVII). Although Ott and Straus acknowledge the distinction in their usage of the terms, they do not observe the distinction with strictness.

Blackaby and Wills have this to say on the distinction of mission and missions:

Make no mistake, there is a difference between mission and missions. By mission I mean the total redemptive purpose of God to establish his kingdom. Missions, on the other hand, is the activity of God’s people – the Church– to proclaim and to demonstrate the kingdom of God cross-culturally to the world. (2002:3)

They see missions in the light of mission, and there can be no missions without mission. Mission is God at work, while missions is God calling humankind to cooperate with him in his mission, to be his missionary people. As Blackaby and Wills observe: “God reveals himself to you so you can adjust your life to him and join him on his mission” (2002:3). Thus, according to Blackaby and Wills (2002:3-4), being on God’s mission is not a profession, a vocation, or a location

but a life-long call. It is a call to God's way of life, that of living according to his purpose for his glory.

Oborji (2006:42-43) sees mission as referring to “the *missio Dei*” (God's mission). Mission is God's divine intervention and involvement in favour of all humanity and with the whole world at all times (Oborji 2006). Mission is God's as the one who loves the world, with the Church as the sacrament and the instrument of bringing about the realisation of God's plan of salvation in the world. While missions, *missio ecclesiae* (the missionary ventures of the Church), is seen as particular undertakings by which the bearers of the gospel are sent by the Church to go forth into the world to preach and plant the Church among those who have not yet believed in Christ.

### **2.2.3 The basic structure of the biblical narrative**

The distinction between mission and missions has been made clear in earlier sections of this chapter and it has been noted how the terms are used. However, in the usage of the terms within the biblical narrative scholars have found it helpful to divide the biblical narratives into four main sections or parts: creation, fall, redemption and consummation or new creation. Different scholars call these divisions by different names.

Ashford calls them “the major plot movements” when he argues that “in order to build a biblical framework for understanding God's mission, the Church, and the Church's mission to the nations, one must first understand the unified biblical narrative, including its four major plot movements: creation, fall, redemption and restoration” (Ashford 2011:6).

Wright (2010:39) calls the division “the biblical storyline” and he explains that he finds it helpful to visualise the story as an actual line on which one is able to pinpoint key points. He identifies creation, fall, redemption and new creation as the four sections of the biblical story.

DeYoung and Gilbert (2011:70) call the division “the four broad acts”. They see the basic structure of the biblical narrative unfolding into four acts: creation, fall, redemption and consummation. It all begins with the creation of humankind in perfect relationship with God. It then continues with humanity’s fall into sin, proceeds with God’s plan for redeeming the whole creation and ends up with the glorious consummation as the completion, the culmination and the perfection of God’s reign over his creation.

Dyrness (1998) similarly calls the division “acts” but does not follow the format that Wright, Ashford, DeYoung and Gilbert have identified. He has five acts as the layout for his book *Let the Earth Rejoice! A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission*. He presents the biblical narrative as the dramatic actions of the kingdom of God, Act 1, the Creation which has 4 scenes, creation of the world, creation of man and woman, the fall and expulsion from the garden and the call of Abraham. Act 2, the Exodus, with 3 scenes, the rescue of God’s people, entrance into Canaan and the monarchy. Act 3, the exile, with 3 scenes, the prophets, eviction from the land and between the Testaments: a distant hope. Act 4, Jesus Christ, also with three subsections, Jesus Christ: the coming of the kingdom, the death and the resurrection of Christ and early Church in mission. Act 5, the Consummation with 2 scenes, the end and the goal creation: new heaven and new earth, and the epilogue.

Roberts goes further in his division of the biblical narrative and presents eight sections as the layout for his book *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*. He also takes the theme of the kingdom of God as the controlling theme for his book. He calls the narrative “the story line of the Bible”. He has five sections in the Old Testament, namely the pattern of the kingdom (creation), the perished kingdom (fall), the promised kingdom (Abraham-Joseph), the partial kingdom (Moses-Solomon), the prophesied kingdom (Exilic period), and three sections in the New Testament, namely the present kingdom (Jesus’ time), the proclaimed kingdom (disciples-Church) and the perfected kingdom. With the eight divisions, Roberts fits into the biblical narrative the theme of “the kingdom of God”. He traces the development of the concept of the kingdom of God, how it is to be understood and how it is applied in the whole Bible. In this way Roberts explains God’s big picture according to the storyline of the Bible.

Taylor (2015:26-40) takes the suggestion put forth by the former Bishop of Durham in the Church of England, Tom Wright, and divides the Bible into six sections. He calls these sections “a six-act play”: Act 1 is the creation; Act 2 is the fall (with Act 2a as Noah); Act 3 he calls Israel and as the longest act it is further divided into six scenes: scene 1 covers Abraham and his family (Genesis 12-50), scene 2 is the Exodus (Exodus to Deuteronomy), scene 3 is the conquest of the promised land (Joshua, Judges and Ruth), scene 4 is about the kings of Israel (1 Samuel to 2 Chronicles, Psalms, wisdom literature), scene 5 is about the exile (Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Isaiah 40-55) and the last scene is the restoration covering Ezra, Nehemiah and the later prophets Act 4 is Jesus covering the life and ministry of Jesus; Act 5 is the Church and Act 6 is the new creation.

Bartholomew and Goheen (2014:17) call the biblical narrative “the grand Story”. They divide the grand story into six sections and since they see the Bible as a drama, they call the divisions the “six acts”. Similarly to Roberts, they also take the theme of the kingdom of God as central to their divisions. The division is as follows: Act 1, God establishes his kingdom (creation); Act 2, rebellion in the kingdom (fall); Act 3, the king chooses Israel (redemption initiated); Act 4, the coming of the king (redemption accomplished); Act 5, spreading the news of the king (the mission of the Church); and Act 6, the return of the king (redemption complete). With these six acts, Bartholomew and Goheen trace the development of the kingdom of God concept, seeing how it fits in God’s mission entrusted into the hands of humankind as his image bearers beginning with Adam at creation, through Abraham, Jesus and the Church, and with human kind as part of the Church.

The division of the biblical story into sections, mainly the four major sections, helps researchers to understand God’s mission in the world. It helps them find answers to the following questions: who are we?, where have we come from?, and where are we going? These sections are discussed in more detail below.

The first section (Genesis 1-2) provides the foundation to understanding God's mission – the mission in which God calls his people to participate. Roberts calls this section “the pattern of the kingdom”. He explains that the Garden of Eden is God's designed world as he wants it to be. God's people, Adam and Eve, lived in God's place, the garden, under God's rule, always enjoying his blessing. He further explains that to be under rule, submitting to God's word, is the best way to live. This is God's original plan for his creation. God's original creation presents a model of his kingdom and how he meant it to be (Roberts 2002:23).

Thus, in the first section, the creation, one sees a perfect portrait of a world as God intended it to be; a beautiful environment of peace and of harmony between God and all his creatures, with human beings as king ruling on behalf of God. Therefore, it introduces the kingdom of God. This is the goal of mission: the building up of a God-centred environment. Adam was expected to promote and maintain this environment of a God-centred culture.

In the second section, the fall (Genesis 3-11), information of how the creation through human disobedience and rebellion against God lost its initial status is provided and the disastrous effects brought on the whole creation as a result are shown. Evil and sin found their way into every aspect of human life and creation. The second section also provides the explanation of humanity's situation and condition as caused by the fall:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So, the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them”. (Genesis 6:5-7 RSV)

By the time the story has reached Genesis 11 the human race faces huge problems: the beautiful setting of peace and harmony, the Garden of Eden, was no more; humanity has lost the sense of God-centeredness; man murders his brother; there is sinfulness in every human heart; and the fracturing and confusion of the nations make humans alienated from themselves, from the rest of God's creation

and from God himself. In this section the pattern of the kingdom that was introduced at creation is destroyed and instead there is rebellion in God's kingdom. Humanity introduces a contrary kingdom – the kingdom ruled by the forces of evil and where death has started to rule.

In the third section, the redemption (Genesis 12-Revelation 20), it shows how God deals with his creation after the fall. In spite of humankind's disobedience and rebellion, God chose not to abandon his creation. He did not destroy it; instead, he redeemed it and chose to identify himself with creation. As Wright puts it, "He chose to do it so within history through persons and events that run from Abraham to the return of Christ" (2010:41). This section is divided into two major parts: The Old Testament and the New Testament.

God's mission in this section was to deal with the problem of humanity, "the sinfulness of every human heart, and the fracturing and confusion of the nations of humanity" (2010:41), through his people Israel, the sons of Abraham, and with God himself as the Redeemer. The story of God's redemption begins with the call of Abraham and it moves on to the creation or establishment of Israel as a nation which enters into a covenant relationship with God. God calls Israel to be his representative, to be his priestly people, and to be distinctive and holy. The story then moves on through the era of the settlement in the Promised Land under the leadership of judges and then the monarch. However, Israel failed to live up to the standard of God's call and thus the prophets kept on reminding Israel of its calling.

In the New Testament section of the Redemption, unlike in the Old Testament where God chooses persons and events to redeem his creation, God chooses to use himself, by being born as man through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and by creating a new people of God who are to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament part of the redemption has two parts. Roberts call them "the present kingdom" and "the proclaimed kingdom". The present kingdom part is the time of Jesus. During this time the message as proclaimed by Jesus was that "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). In other words,

with the coming of Jesus the time for waiting for God's kingdom as hope for the future had come to an end. As Roberts (2002:24) explains:

The waiting was over, God's king had come to establish God's kingdom. His life, teaching and miracles all proved that he was who he said he was: God himself in human form. He had the power to put everything right again, and he chose a very surprising way of doing it: by dying in weakness on a cross. It was by his death that Jesus dealt with the problem of sin and made it possible for human beings to come back into relationship with his Father. The resurrection proved the success of Jesus' rescue mission on the cross and announced that there is hope for our world. Those who trust in Christ can look forward to eternal life with him.

The last part of the redemption, that which Roberts refers to as "the proclaimed kingdom", is the time of the Church. Jesus by his death and resurrection did all that was needed to be done to secure redemption for creation – everything was put right, and the kingdom of God was completely restored. However, the job was not yet finished. It was a replay of the creation narrative in which after completing his creation, "God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good". The good in the case of creation was a potential goodness; something needed to be done in order to develop it to its full potential. This is the same in the case of Jesus. He needed to ascend (John 20:17) and the Holy Spirit had to come on the Church (John 16:7-11), the "new Israel", so that it could be the light and the salt of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). There is a crucial role that the Church has to play. The ministry of Jesus was confined to a very small area, but the gospel needs to reach the ends of the world to all nations. This is the task of the new people of God, the Church.

The fourth section, the new creation (Revelation 21-22), Bartholomew and Goheen call the "return of the king: redemption accomplished". This section provides the information of the climax of the biblical story. This climax is the return of Christ, not as the Messiah but as the King of kings to rule over his creation as it was in the original plan of the Garden of Eden: "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any

more, for former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4). All is done and all things are put in their rightful order and place.

#### **2.2.4 How the definition influences the usage of the term**

In a previous section of this chapter, the distinction between the terms mission and missions is explained and the basic structure of the biblical narrative is explored. Now the study considers how some scholars have defined and used the term mission and analyses how their definition has influenced their understanding and articulation of the whole discipline.

##### 2.2.4.1 George W. Peters

Peters defines missions as “the total biblical assignment of the Church of Jesus Christ [which] includes the upward, inward and outward ministries of the Church”. Peters sees mission as the sending forth of the Church as the sent (a pilgrim, stranger, witness, prophet, and servant as salt or light etc) in the world. It includes the sending forth of authorised persons beyond the borders of the New Testament Church and its immediate gospel influence to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in gospel destitute areas, to win converts from other faiths or non-faith to Jesus Christ and to establish functioning, multiplying local congregations who will bear the fruit of Christianity in that community and that country (Peters 1972:11).

Peters defines mission from a Christo-centric, salvation point of view. His understanding of mission is clear from the introduction of his book where he states that “Christian missions make sense only in the light of an existing abnormality or emergency and in the conviction that an answer to and the remedy for such a malady is available” (Peters 1972:15). For Peters sin threatens humans’ existence, thus an answer and a remedy is urgently needed. It is here that mission comes in to bring about salvation. Once salvation has been achieved, mission becomes unnecessary.

Peters argues, as do many other scholars, that at the creation man was created sinless. He was created as a unique being and was set apart from all other creatures. Furthermore, man was the only creature created in the image of God as “an intelligent, volitional, emotional personality, perfectly related to God and endowed with capacities and authorities which defy our present comprehension, definition and realisation” (Peters 1972:16). But at the fall in Genesis 3, man is radically changed as Peters (1972:16) explains:

Genesis 3 radically changes man in his being, divine relationship, history, mission and destiny. Sin in all its reality, satanic impact and consequences encounters man, and man consciously and deliberately sides with sin against God and the command of God. At the same time sin penetrates, permeates and overpowers man. Thus, man becomes a willful sinner, entering into a state of rebellion against God and into a life of disobedience to the command of God. He also becomes an enslaved sinner who is guilty before God, defiled in his being, deprived in his personality constitution, separated from God, and destitute of divine purpose, mission and destiny. Man is lost, and life is rendered meaningless and empty. Man is at enmity with God. At the same time, man is fallen prey to the horribleness of death as a process and destiny.

Thus, according to Peters, all the pages of the Bible have sin written on them in bold letters except for Genesis 1 and 2 and Revelation 21 and 22 (Peters 1972:15). In-between these four chapters is where the history of human salvation is to be found. He calls the first two chapters of Genesis pre-history and the final two chapters of Revelation post-history.

Although the consequences of sin are clearly stated and sin has become an “inherent evil and therefore disruptive, corruptive, defiling, degrading and bearing destruction and death in its very nature” (Peters 1972:18), man is still man and he is not finished as “he is left with the capacity and awareness for salvation” (1972:18). In light of this, Peters (1972:27) explains his understanding of the mission as:

The progressive objectification of the eternal and benevolent purpose of God which is rooted in his very being and character and which embraces all ages, races and generations.

The historical affection of God's salvation procured on behalf of all mankind in Christ Jesus because of his incarnation, death and resurrection. It offers forgiveness of sins, and new life and dynamic to all who believe in him as the eternal son of God and saviour of mankind.

The practical realisation of the Holy Spirit operating in his world on behalf of the eternal purpose of God and actualisation of salvation procured through Christ Jesus in the lives of countless individuals, families, tribes and people.

According to the above understanding of mission, Christian mission makes sense only in the light of an existing abnormality or emergency in the conviction that the answer to and the remedy for such a malady is available. The idea that's in made salvation necessary and that sin makes Christian mission necessary implies that mission is not to be found in Genesis 1 and 2 and in Revelation 21 and 22. In accordance with Peters's division of human history, mission is only found between the two (Genesis 3-Revelation 20). He explains that it is in this portion of the Bible that one finds:

- 1) A record of the facts and horribleness of sin operating in mankind and man's sinfulness and depravity in conscious and volitionally yielding to sin.
- 2) The grace, the faithfulness, long suffering and loving kindness of God towards mankind in providing salvation, through the seriousness of the holiness and justice of God in judgment. (Peters 1972:18)

Defining mission from the salvation point of view, Peters sees that God's people have a duty to proclaim God's salvation to humankind which is a message that should bring about conversion and restoration. But this is to be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. Peters explains that the missionary task is essentially and ultimately committed into the hands of the Holy Spirit; he is in control. The Holy Spirit is the present administrator of salvation and mission because salvation was procured historically in the person and work of Christ, the eternal son of God. Thus, it is prudent that administration and actualisation be committed into the Holy Spirit. Only he can make real experientially the salvation procured on Calvary (Peters 1972:159).

Peters sees the people of God as the “sent one” and sent by the Holy Spirit through the Church (Acts 13:4) to bear witness to Christ and proclaim the revealed message of God’s redeeming act in Christ Jesus (Peters 1972:160). Therefore, according to Peters, God has chosen the Church to be a people of faith. Faith in this case is seen as the spiritual eye that beholds God and perceives Christ as the Saviour and Lord. Faith is the spiritual mind that understands the Bible as the word of God, that accepts missionary task as the purpose and will of God and discovers mission as the natural result of the work of Christ. Moreover, mission is the inherent element of the call unto salvation and obedient compliance to the prompting of the Holy Spirit (Peters 1972:161).

#### 2.2.4.2 Jean-Paul Heldt

Heldt in his article “Revisiting the Whole Gospel: Towards a Biblical Model of Holistic Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” proposes the following definition of mission:

The personal purpose and corporate endeavour of proclaiming the good news of the coming kingdom of Christ Jesus through (1) the healing of and rehabilitation from biological diseases (epitomised by “sight to the blind”) and the preservation of our physical environment (ecology and biosphere); (2) economic household and community development through self-reliance and community participation (exemplified by Jesus “good news to the poor”); (3) the restoration of political peace and social justice (illustrated by the “release to the captive”) and (4) the reconciliation of human beings with their creator God through faith in Jesus Christ, announced in Luke 4 by the “liberty for the oppressed”. (2004:164)

He proposes to define mission from the restoration point of view. For Heldt the purpose of mission is to undo and progressively overcome the negative effect of the fall and in doing so the current fallen world would be prepared for God’s ultimate restoration of the new heaven and new earth. In this way God’s original plan of the first creation, the original worldview of the biblical Sabbath, will be in effect for eternity (Heldt 2004 P164).

Heldt agrees with Peters that without the fall there would be no need for mission. Like Peters, he also sees mission as an enterprise for solving the problem of sin: “I see mission and the whole missionary endeavour primarily as a legitimate and biblical ‘problem-solving’ enterprise” whose goal is to achieve a better alternative and hope for the future” (Heldt 2004 P162).

After completing the creation of the heaven earth, God declared everything that he had made “very good”. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God resulting in the fall; thus, if it had not been for the fall, there would have been no need for mission. Once the fall occurred, mission becomes necessary, and it then becomes God’s mission to bring the fallen creation back to himself.

Heldt’s proposed definition considers mission from the holistic point of view. It also looks at mission from the individual, family, community and national point of view.

#### 2.2.4.3 Christopher J.H. Wright

Wright defines mission as “committed participation as God’s people at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for [the] redemption of God’s creation” (2006:23). He defines the term from a general point of view, embracing the secular concept as well; as he explains:

Generally speaking, I will use the term mission in its more general sense of long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned action. Within such a broad mission (as applied to any group enterprise), there is room for subordinate missions in the sense of specific tasks assigned to a person or group that are to be accomplished as steps towards wider mission. (Wright 2006:23)

According to Wright’s definition, the term mission denotes a sense of purpose. It is goal oriented and it is about answering the question “who are we and what are we here on earth for?” (Wright 2010:23-24). It urges acting on the answers to these questions too. Once people understand who they are and where they have come from, they should realise that their mission comes from God. Mission is

God's and human kind does not have a mission of its own. God himself has a mission and it is God who has a purpose and goal for the whole of his creation. Scott explains that "mission arises from the heart of God himself and is communicated from his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of the global God [...] All our mission flows from the prior mission of God, thus we are people called into 'existence' to participate with God in the accomplishment of God's mission" (in Wright 2010:24).

This definition of mission makes Wright see the Bible as presenting a "portrait of God that is unquestionably purposeful. The God who walks the path of history, through the pages of the Bible pins a mission statement to every signpost on the way" (2010:23). It is from this understanding that Wright gets the courage and confidence to make a bold claim in the opening words of one his books that "mission is what the Bible is all about. We could as meaningfully talk about the missional basis of the Bible as of the biblical basis of mission" (2006:29). Wright sees God's mission, in which God invites humankind to participate, coming at different levels in the history of God's own world, as he explains in the four major sections of the biblical storyline (Wright 2010:39).

Wright defines mission in a broader sense, guided by the questions "what are God's people here on earth for?", "what does the Bible tell us about what he expects from his people?," "for what purpose or mission do they exist?," and so gives an understanding of the whole Bible as a book about mission. Defining mission as the purpose of one's existence means that mission is to be found in all the four major sections of the biblical storyline, even in sections such as the creation and the new creation where other scholars such as Piper, Peters, Kösternberger and O'Brien claim there is no mission. For Wright there is mission because people who will be found there will surely have a purpose for being there – a purpose for their existence. Thus, for Wright, both the Old and New Testaments seek to explain God's purpose for humankind in accordance to their own generation and context.

#### 2.2.4.4 Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert

DeYoung and Gilbert define mission as “the specific task or purpose which a person or group seeks to accomplish” (DeYoung and Gilbert 2011:19). They take Kösternberger & O’Brien’s (2001:41) proposed working definition of “the specific task or purpose which a person or group seeks to accomplish, involving various models of movement, be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering by calling others to follow, or following”. This definition is a general one and not strictly a religious definition, and DeYoung and Gilbert push it further and place their emphasis on the concept of “being sent and being given a task” (2011:20). This they tie to the Great Commission when they write that:

Mission [...] is not everything we do in Jesus’ name, nor everything we do in obedience to Christ. Mission is the task we are given to fulfill. It’s what Jesus sends us into the world to do. And if we want to figure out what Jesus sends his disciples into the world to do, we think the best place to look is the Great Commission. (DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:29)

They see the mission of God as summarised in the words of the Great Commission. For them, the Great Commission is the climatic marching orders of Jesus which need to be obeyed. They believe that the Church has a unique and central calling as witnesses of Christ whom are sent into the world to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations (DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:26).

In explaining and proving their point, DeYoung and Gilbert examine some texts which are at times referred to as commission for mission texts. These texts are Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:5-6 and Luke 4:16-21.

They acknowledge that Genesis 12:1-3 is a key passage in the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation, as is expressed in the following words:

Everyone agrees that this is a pivotal text not just in Genesis but also in God’s found plan of redemption history. After a host of curses (Genesis 3:1, 17; 14:11; 5:29; 9:25) and lots of sin run amok, Genesis 12 bursts onto the scene with the promise of

universal blessing. At last, here's a spot of good news and beautiful revelation both of God's mission and of marching orders for Abraham. (DeYoung & Gilbert2011:30)

However, they do not agree that Genesis 12:1-3 is a commission or call to mission. DeYoung and Gilbert examine the grammar of the passage to show that the passage lacks the "marching orders for mission" to Abraham. They do not see Abraham as receiving an assignment to carry out YHWH's blessing to the nations. Rather, they see nations being promised divine blessings if and when they see Abraham's faith in YHWH. These blessing are received if and when the nations establish contact with the descendants of Abraham (DeYoung & Gilbert2011:32).

Thus, for DeYoung and Gilbert, Genesis 12:1-3 is neither a commission nor a call to mission. Although there is plenty of the blessing to go around, there is no evidence to show that Abraham took his call as a commission to find ways for blessing the nations. Abraham's call is not about a community blessing programme but about God's unilateral promise to bless Abraham and through him and his descendants the nations will be blessed. The emphasis here is on the chosen family as recipients of God's purveyors of it (2011:33). Since Genesis 12:1-3 has no missional charge, it cannot stand as a commission text.

On Exodus 19:5-6, they argue that this passage speaks of Israel as the kingdom of priests and a holy nation has misunderstood. The reference of "kingdom of priests" has been interpreted by some scholars as "intermediaries for the presence of God in the world" (DeYoung & Gilbert2011:34). McNeal argues that "God created a people to serve as his ongoing incarnational presence on earth" (in DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:34)and Wright says that "it is thus richly significant that God confers on Israel as a whole people the role of being his priesthood in the midst of the nations [...] Just as it was the role of the priest to bless the Israelites, so it would be the role of Israel as a whole ultimately to be a blessing to the nations" (in DeYoung & Gilbert2011:3).

DeYoung and Gilbert see this passage as being misunderstood. They observe that while it may be attractive to think that Israel is meant to mediate God's blessings

to the nations as a kind of the incarnational presence, this is not the best way to understand Exodus 19 or the phrase “kingdom of priests”. They outline their reasons for this in the following way:

- 1) The primary role of Levitical priests was not to serve as mediators in terms of incarnating God’s presence but to serve as mediators between God and humankind’s sacrifices, that is, in terms of placating God’s anger.
- 2) [The] kingdom of priests is a designation of Israel’s being set apart for God, it suggests holiness and privilege.
- 3) Israel is commanded to the care of sojourners and foreigners in its midst but there is no explicit instructions for Israel to go into the world and serve the needs of the nations. (DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:35)

Thus, DeYoung and Gilbert do not agree that Exodus 19:5-6 is a missional text as it does not qualify as text for commission for mission.

When it comes to Luke 4:16-21, DeYoung and Gilbert acknowledge that this text “is one of the clearest statements of Jesus’ mission and goal of his ministry” (2011:37). According to DeYoung and Gilbert, “Jesus’ mission laid out in Luke 4 is not a mission of structural change and social transformation, but a mission to announce the good news of his saving power and merciful reign to all those broken hearted – that is the poor-enough to believe” (2011:40). However, they do not classify it as a missional text: one that commissions or instructs the people of God to get on with the task. They come to this conclusion by examining the grammar in text of the scroll the Isaiah. For DeYoung and Gilbert only the text of Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:8 and John 20:21 are to be classified as mission texts or as they put it “precisely, the Great Commission” (2011:40). These are the texts with the grammar that suits the marching orders to “go”.

#### 2.2.4.5 John Piper

Piper in his book *Let the Nations be Glad*, states in his introduction that:

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church, worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is the ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship therefore is the fuel and the goal of missions. It is the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of mission is the gladness of the people's in the greatness of God. (Piper 2010:15, 35)

The above quotation and the layout of Piper's book show that he defines missions in terms of redemption. Mission is seen as the activity or activities which enable an individual, individuals or community to be set free from all that prevents them from worshipping and serving God as they ought to, thereby coming to a realisation of who they are meant to be. Piper explains that "missions is not a recruitment project for God's labour force. It is a liberating project from the heavy burdens and hard yokes of other gods" (2010:55).

In this respect, Piper places more emphasis on the preaching and teaching, because it is through preaching and teaching that people will come to the full knowledge of God and their need for repentance. Thus, in his introduction he deals with the importance of preaching the gospel as it should be preached, and he brings out the dangers of the prosperity gospel and puts forth his advice to the prosperity gospel preachers. According to Piper (2010:56), God's first requirement of all men everywhere is that they repent from seeking their joy in other things and begin to seek it only in him. God is not only to be served but he is to be enjoyed as well. The world's greatest sin is not that humans have failed to work for God in order to increase his glory but rather that humans have failed to delight in God so as to reflect his glory, because it is only when they delight in him that they are able to reflect his glory (Piper 2010:56-57).

In his definition of the term mission, Piper confines himself to the third division of the biblical narrative: the redemption. According to Piper (2010:35), once the realisation of who humankind is meant to be has been attained, and once this era of no geographical area as the centre for the faithful is over, the redeemed are

gathered in the new holy city (Revelation 21:1-8), and then mission ceases. In this case, mission is more like a vehicle that enables one to reach one's destination. When the destination has been reached, the vehicle is of very little use, if of any use at all. It was a temporary necessity to get to the destination, but once the destination has been reached, one has to leave the vehicle. Thus, Piper with this understanding of mission in mind can argue that "when this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity" (2010:15).

When mission is defined from the redemption point of view, as Piper defines it, mission as "a liberating project", liberation from the "heavy burden hard yokes of other gods", then it is true that there is no mission in the first and last parts of the biblical narrative divisions that have been noted, that is, creation and consummation or new creation. Mission will then fall in the period between creation and consummation or new creation, that is, in the fall and in the redemption. As Ott and Straus (2010:5) commenting on redemption explain: "In this time between creation and consummation, God is at work in the story of redemption, drawing peoples from all nations to himself and re-establishing his reign". In the first and last division, there is nothing to liberate. Those who are found there are already liberated and are already in fellowship with God, enjoying his blessings.

#### 2.2.4.6 David G. Burnett

Burnett defines mission as the activities of the Church in the world. For him mission describes what the Church is sent into the world to do. It is about answering the questions "what does God want the Church to do?" and "why is the Church here in the world?". He observes that no one can answer these questions without referring to the word mission. Throughout history the people of God are conscious that they have been set apart and commissioned by God for a particular task; a task that is intimately involved with the reasons of God for his creation.

With this understanding, Burnett agrees with Peters and all other scholars who talk about the “twofold mandate” (Peters 1972:166). Burnett calls the two mandates the “cultural mandate” and “redemptive mandate”. Peters does not acknowledge the first mandate and the whole creation story, Genesis 1 and 2, which he calls pre-history, as having mission or being missionary in nature, because for him “Christian mission makes sense only in the light of an existing abnormality or emergency and in the conviction that an answer to and remedy for such a malady is available” (Peters 1972:15). However, Burnett acknowledges that mission is to be found in Genesis 1 and 2, in the first division of the biblical narrative: the creation. For Burnett the creation account of Genesis provides the fundamental concepts within which the missionary task is to be understood and taken. He calls these concepts “the three major systems of human relationships”: the relationship with God, relationship with other people and relationship with the environment (Burnett 1996:22). He sees these systems as providing fundamental concepts within which the missionary task is to be undertaken (Burnett 1996:22).

Looking at these definitions, one can deduce that the definition of the term mission shapes the understanding of mission. It also shapes the understanding of who the people of God are and influences the way people carry out God’s mission.

In the mission theology debate, the definition of the term mission has played a major role. One’s understanding of the term influences one’s usage and one’s position in the debate. For example, according to Peters (1972:15), “there would be no need for Christian missions if sin were not a serious reality [...] Sin made salvation necessary and sin makes Christian missions necessary”. In contrast, Kösternberger and O’Brien argue that there was no mission in the Garden of Eden and there will be no mission in the new heaven and new earth. They acknowledge, however, that in the new heaven and new earth the results of mission will be evident.

It is perhaps with this in mind that Ferdinando in his article “Mission a Problem of Definition” made these comments:

However, perhaps the ambiguity in the meaning of mission may not matter so much. What is important is not precise definition of the term, but informed and Biblical reflection on various dimensions of Christian activity and ministry to which it might refer. Substance is far more important than words used to represent it. (2008:46)

Ferdinando having acknowledged the difficulty in coming up with a concrete definition, urges and explains the need for each scholar or individual calling for mission to be clear what mission one is talking about, as he observes,

Nevertheless, it does still matter in that confusion over meaning of the word is likely to produce uncertainty about such questions of substance as well. In this case there is agreement about the central importance of mission. Whatever it is and the obligation under which it places churches and individual Christians to quote Brunner's well known observation, "The church exist for mission as a fire exist for burning." Where there is no mission there is no church. However, it is problematic to call people to engage in mission when the meaning of engagement remains elusive. (2008:46).

The next section of this study will attempt to show that the presence of mission in both the Old and New Testaments is not only about liberation or redemption. Mission is what the whole Bible as the revelation of God through his creative acts is all about. Thus, one can call the Bible "the missionary acts of God". The Bible therefore is about a missionary journey with creation in Genesis 1 as the starting point (departure) and the new creation in Revelation 22 as the destination (arrival).

### **2.3 The Presence of Mission in Both the Old and New Testaments**

As previously quoted, Wright states that "mission is what the Bible is all about, we could as meaningfully talk about the mission basis of the Bible as of the biblical basis of mission" (2006:29). Wright (2006:30) explains that he holds this conviction because of the conversation between Jesus and the two disciples on the

road to Emmaus on the first evening of Jesus' resurrection as recorded in Luke 24. Wright observes that in the conversation, Jesus is not presented as quoting a specific verse from the Old Testament, but he claims that what is written about him is the mission of preaching repentance and forgiveness to the nations in his name. The whole scripture (in this case the Old Testament as the New Testament had not yet come into being at this time) finds its focus and fulfillment in the life, death and resurrection of Israel's prophesised Messiah. Kirk (1999:20) agrees with Wright that the Bible should be examined as a book about missions from the beginning to the end.

This chapter has noted that the definition of a term influences how it is understood and used. Wright takes a broader definition of the term mission: that of mission as the purpose of existence and what is hoped to be achieved. Kirk defines mission as what the people of God are sent to do. Defining mission as Wright and Kirk do makes it possible to see mission as present in the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Thus, even in Genesis 1 and 2, in which some scholars claim there is no mission, Adam and Eve are created for a purpose; they have a reason for existing (Genesis 1:26). Therefore, they are given a task to accomplish (Genesis 1:28). The same can be said concerning the last two chapters of the Bible. Those found in the new earth will definitely have a reason to be there and the reason for their existence for God as revealed in the Bible is unquestionably purposeful.

Thus, the whole Bible is the revelation of God's mission to the whole creation, from the first chapter and the first verse (Genesis 1:1) to the last chapter and the last verse (Revelation 22:21).

Concerning the link between the Old and the New Testaments, Glasser in the preface of his book *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*, argues that:

Only if the Church understands the full biblical revelation of God concerning the mission of God's people, stimulated by confronting scripture with today's questions, will they be responsibly challenged to offer to God the devotion of heart, strength, time, and resources essential to its completion. This means listening to

the Old Testament witness as well as to the New Testament [...] All Scripture makes its contribution in one way or another to our understanding of mission. (2003:11)

With the above conviction in mind, Glasser (2003:17) begins chapter one with firm statement that the whole Bible is a missionary book; both the Old and New Testaments are the revelation of God's purpose and action in mission in human history. Although the Old Testament is the word of God primarily to Israel, Jesus accepted it as the word of God and his disciples had no other choice but to follow his example. Thus, the Old Testament is the Bible of the Apostolic Church. Its value is not in that it anticipates the New Testament's announcement of the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world, but rather in the fact that it is also God's revelation in the same way that the New Testament is God's revelation. In both books God reveals his mighty acts and gracious purpose on behalf of his people and the world he created for them. Both books are organically related in a dynamic and interactive relationship, and in both books God acts through his son.

Okoye (20016: xvi) also has something to say on this as he makes the following observation:

I have been particularly sensitive to the integrity of the Old Testament, which remains fully "word of God" because Christians regard both the Old Testament and the New Testament as "word of God". It is important to respect the organic link of the two without reducing one to the other.

Okoye explains that "the Bible begins with the theme of mission in the book of Genesis and maintains that drive throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament" (2006:7). Moreover, Glasser (2006:19) observes that the New Testament cannot be understood without the Old Testament rootage, at all levels, ranging from idioms, assumptions, thought forms, hopes and worldviews. The Old Testament is the foundation and apart from it the New Testament is incomprehensible. Thus, as one studies the Old Testament, one senses that there is something that the Old Testament in itself cannot provide, and this something finds its fulfillment when one turns to the New Testament. One then begins to see light at the end of the tunnel, the dawning of the kingdom, the assurance and hope

that the creation will be vindicated, and that all will be well in the end (Revelation 21:1-5).

The link between the Old Testament and the New Testament is neither one of upward development nor of contrast. It is one of beginning and completion and of hopeful expectation and fulfillment. The Old Testament faith is a faith of great expectation, but this expectation does not find fulfillment in the Old Testament itself. It points ahead to the rule of God. The Old Testament is an incomplete book. It is like a signpost on a roadside pointing to the destination out of sight. Bright (1953:192-193) compares the Old Testament to a noble building without a roof and the New Testament as the roof which stands as the completion of the building. The roof cannot stand on its own without the building. If the Old Testament is a building without a roof, then the New Testament alone is like a roof without a building; it cannot stand without the building. This means that the New Testament rests on and is rooted in the Old Testament and cannot be understood by itself alone and apart from the Old Testament.

It has been mentioned earlier that the Old Testament points beyond itself to the kingdom of God. The concept of the kingdom of God is the dynamic bond that binds the Old and the New Testaments together. If the theme of the kingdom of God is removed, the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament is lost and the whole set-up collapses. It is the theme of the kingdom that binds the two books together. Thus, we have in the Old Testament eschatological statements such as “behold, the days are coming” and “it shall come to pass in those days”. In these statements the Old Testament is illuminated with the hope of the coming kingdom. The same kingdom lies at the heart of the New Testament, but it is no longer in the future, but in the present: “the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand”.

### **2.3.1 Liberating mission from the salvation connotation**

As already mentioned, the definition of the term mission influences the way the term is used and the position from which to comment and contribute to the

ongoing debates in missiology. Comments and contribution, for example, to discussions about whether mission is to be found in the Old Testament or whether it is confined to the New Testament. It also adds the debate around whether it is possible to add to the list of the traditionally known texts of the Great Commission, namely Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, John 17:18 and 20:21-23, and Acts 1:8.

With the above in mind, Kaiser (2000:7) has this to say in the opening paragraphs of the preface to his book *Mission in the Old Testament*:

Probably the last thing a person is likely to think about in connection with the Old Testament is a missionary message to the Gentiles and the nations of the world. That begins, we are assured by the less careful readers of the Old Testament, in the New Testament after our Lord gave the Great Commission (Mathew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15) and the promised Holy Spirit had come on the disciples (Acts 1:8).

Thus, for Kaiser (2000:7) the Bible begins with the theme of mission in the book of Genesis and maintains the driving passion throughout the entire Old Testament. He observes that if an Old Testament text for the “great mission” must be identified then it will be Genesis 12:3 which reads that “all the people of the earth will be blessed through you”. This is the earliest statement of God’s purpose and plan to see that the message of his grace and blessing comes to every person on the Earth. The same concern is emphasised in the last book of scripture: “Every nation and tribe and tongue and people” (Revelation 5:9; 7:9;14:6). And so, the theme of mission to the whole world is the central theme connecting and unifying the whole Bible.

Kaiser’s assertion is reminiscent of the fact that creation (Genesis 1 and 2) is central to understanding God’s mission and it should be given some space to stand on its own. In most cases the study of Genesis 1 and 2 is closely connected to Genesis 3-11. Even in the structuring of the Bible creation is put together with Genesis 3-11, making Genesis 1-11 one component. In line with this study’s working definition which seeks to liberate mission from the salvation or redemption connotation, Genesis 1and 2 will be treated as a separate and

independent section that should not always be understood in the light of other passages, but rather one that controls other passages, if not the rest of the scriptures. This study looks at the story of the Bible as one long journey where the creation in Genesis is the point of departure and the consummation or new creation in Revelation is the destination.

Wright observes that as one listens to some presentations of the Bible message and mission one may think that the Bible begins at Genesis 3 and ends at Revelation 20. The Bible is not only about finding a solution for sin and how to survive the creation, ending up with the new creation. The Bible is more than only securing salvation; it is about finding one's identity in God the creator (Wright 2010:40).

Based on the above understanding, the division of the biblical narrative identified earlier –creation (Genesis 1 and 2), fall (Genesis 3-11), redemption (Genesis 12-Revelation 20) and new creation (Revelation 21-22) – helps to prove whether mission embraces all generations, and whether it fits into whatever division, thereby identifying or finding mission in each of the four sections. As Ashford observes, “mission [is] part of the identity of any faith community [and] it cannot be defined without reference to the life and tradition of that particular community” (2011:10).

Therefore, the understanding of mission is in accordance with how the definition fits into the basic structure of the Bible. It all depends on identity, context and where the emphasis is put in the definition. Where the emphasis is in the definition of the term will provide a position from which to articulate the subject and will influence the use of the term. No one comes onboard with a blank and plain white piece of paper. All people come onboard influenced by forms of some sort. Cook makes this observation:

Let me give you the view of the man in the picture, the missionary. What does he think about, what does mission mean to him? [...] To the Christian missionary and those who sent him out, mission is the Christian Church trying to win others to the Christian faith,

especially through a group of selected workers called missionaries.  
(1954:10)

The purpose of mission when defined from the redemption or salvation point of view will be to “re-establish the kingdom of God” – a kingdom where creation will be as God intended it to be. In the words of Anderson, “creation must be reclaimed, returned to its proper relation to God, its proper function as a sign of God’s presence and love given to humanity” (1982:83) and this begins after the fall, with the call of Abraham.

When mission is defined from the salvation, redemption or restoration point of view, mission becomes restricted to certain parts of the Bible. Gnanakan comments on the relationship between social action and evangelism in reference to the restriction experienced because of certain definitions:

Recent years have staged major debates on the scope of the Christian mission particularly on the relationship between evangelism and social action. Some stress the priority of evangelism and others social action that are restricted without any reference to a whole. The problem has been compounded by an absence of a theology of creation alongside our theology of redemption. Starting our theology of redemption from the fall as recorded in Genesis 3 we have limited ourselves to God’s work only within humankind.

When we start our theology from creation God’s mission becomes[an] all-embracing mission with a concern for all of humanity within the framework of creation. We speak of holistic mission but do not seem to have a whole. Creation is where we must begin so that we can capture the scope of this completeness.  
(1999:40-41)

This is not only true for evangelism and social action, but also for mission. We need to begin with creation as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2 and not with the fall as recorded in Genesis 3.

When redemption is pushed to the period of the rebellion of the devil, before creation, the purpose of mission becomes to undo and progressively overcome the negative effect sin brought about by the rebellion of Satan before Adam and Eve were put in the garden. In this case the purpose of creation becomes to rectify all

that Satan's pride had distorted, thus making Adam and Evil agents of redemption. This, then, reduces God to a reactionist and one who creates because he is pushed into doing so. Thus, creation becomes something that God chooses to do not because he is God, but rather because it is something that he is forced to do because of the presence of sin. Creation becomes something in order to prove his point. It is important to note that while God builds into his creatures the potentialities for development, renewal and adaptation, there are no rivals and no helpers in his work of creation. He is God who chooses to create on his own accord. He is the absolute and there is therefore no struggle with Satan or any lesser god.

However, the purpose of mission when defined from the reason for being is to create and maintain a people who will reflect God's nature, character and glory in the whole created order: a people with a God-ward culture, a people who are to delight in God, a people who are to worship him as they represent him by exercising God's kingship within God's whole creation, and a people who will promote God's kingdom. With this definition mission is freed from the redemption or salvation connotation and in this way mission is not in any way restricted to any part of the Bible. Mission, then, has its presence in the whole Bible, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.

### **2.3.2 The kingdom of God**

What is the kingdom of God? The *New International Bible Dictionary* defines the kingdom of God as "the sovereignty of God manifested in Christ to defeat his enemies, creating a people over whom he reigns and issuing in a realm in which the power of his reign is experienced" (1987:568). This dictionary explains that the biblical usage of the term "kingdom of God" has three different meanings:

1. The kingdom of God is sometimes the people of the kingdom. In Revelation 5:10, the redeemed are a kingdom, not, however, because they are the people over whom God reigns, but because they will share his reign.

2. The kingdom of God is the realm in which God's reign is experienced. This realm is sometimes present and sometimes future.
3. The kingdom of God is also God's reign or rule, the dynamic rule of God manifested in Christ to destroy his (spiritual) enemies and to bring men and women the blessings of God's reign (1987:568).

Grudem quotes Ladd as defining the kingdom of God as "the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God, and derivatively, the sphere in which the rule is experienced" (2000:863). He explains that in the biblical idiom, the identity of the kingdom is not in its subject but in its rule. The kingdom is the rule of God and subjects are the people of God's rule. They enter into the kingdom, live under it and are governed by it. Thus, the Church is not itself the kingdom of God but the community of the kingdom. The Church is a society of men and women. In the same way, the disciples of Jesus were not the kingdom, but they belonged to the kingdom and the kingdom belonged to them.

Richardson defines the kingdom of God as "the sovereign lordship of God over his people or over the world which he has made" (1980:119), and from the New Testament and Jesus' perspective, it means "the renewal of the world on the lines of God's original purpose" (Richardson 1980:119). Dyrness defines the kingdom of God as "the sovereign rule of God in history that leads to [the] redemption of the lost and the restoration of the created order" (1998:127). From a different point of view, Ashford defines the kingdom of God "simply as God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing" (2010:60-61).

Roberts (2003:21) has the same definition as Ashford but he observes that defining the kingdom of God simply as God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing may sound like an overly simplistic definition for such a significant theme in scripture. However, he sees these simple words as having great depth. God's longing is that human beings should enjoy an intimate relationship with him in his presence, as it was in the Garden of Eden. Because he is a perfect and holy God, this is only possible if humans submit to his loving rule and renounce sin. This is life as it was designed to be lived – life at its best. This is what is seen at creation. In the Garden of Eden, living under God's rule means enjoying God's blessing as

the two go together. Thus, when Adam and Eve disobeyed, humanity forwent God's blessings.

Moreover, Van Engen defines the kingdom of God as "the dynamic, active rule of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy spirit" (1991:109). In contrast, Glasser defines the kingdom of God as "a new world, a new state of affairs, a new community, the good realm where the realities of redemption are granted and received, where the conditions of fulfillment are realized and evil is no more at work" (2003:189). Similarly, DeYoung and Gilbert define the kingdom of God as "God's redemptive reign in the person of his son Jesus [the] Messiah which has broken into the present evil age and is now visible in the Church" (2011:127).

Peters (1972:40) is another scholar who discusses the kingdom of God, but he approaches the concept in qualitative and quantitative terms. He sees the qualitative aspect of the kingdom of God in a "threefold" manner. On the first level, the kingdom of God is seen as "the rule of God in the heart of man". It is with this concept in mind that the writer of the book of Revelation says: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). At this level the kingdom of God is "moral, not nationalistic, it is spiritual, not materialistic, it is actual, not idealistic" (1972:40-41). On the second level, the kingdom of God is viewed as the rule of God in the Church: "To Christ belong all right, authority and rulership in the Church. He bestows gifts and dispatches his ambassadors. He is sovereign lord of the Church (Ephesians 4:7, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:20)" (1972:45). On the third level, the kingdom of God is seen as "God's rule in the world, that is the presence of individual Christians in the world who are under the rule of God bringing the presence of the gospel into the world. As such, the presence of the gospel in this world constitutes judgment modification and enrichment of the order of society. It is strongly social in its general impact, regulating all relationships according to the will and purpose of God" (1972:41).

Wright agrees with Peters as he observes that "God's mission involves God's people living in God's way in the sight of the nation" (2006:22-23). This is what is entailed by the motif of the light of the world. It means that individual Christians

and the Church are to be “a display people embodying in its communal life God’s original creation intention and eschatological goal for humanity [...] God’s people were to be an attractive sign before all the nations of what God had intended in the beginning, of the goal towards which he was moving; the restoration of all creation and human life from the corruption of sin” (Goheen 2011:25).

Looking at the above cited definitions, it is clear that the kingdom of God is about the rule or reign of God, those under that rule, the place or jurisdiction in which that rule is to be experienced and the quality of life that those living under that rule are to enjoy. This thesis has taken Ashford’s definition of the kingdom of God as its working definition, that of the kingdom of God as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule enjoying God’s blessings” (2010:60-61).

### **2.3.3 Fitting the definition into the biblical story**

In most cases, scholars define the concept the kingdom of God from the restoration or redemptive point of view. They have in mind God’s redemptive activities and the renewal of God’s original intention. The argument as to whether mission is found in the Old Testament or not is dependent on its definition. Thus, the traditional understanding of mission, that of sending preachers to the land of non-believers, suggests that there is no mission in the Old Testament for there is no indication of adherents of the old covenant being sent out in order to win others to their faith (Bosch 1991:17). Those who define mission from the redemption or salvation point of view emphasise the “sentness” of the people of God with the view of going to convert. For them there is no mission in the Old Testament, because even Abraham who was called out of his homeland in Genesis 12 was not given the mandate to “go” and make disciples or win others to the faith (DeYoung & Gilbert 2011:33,34). This school of thought has influenced not only missiologists but also many biblical interpreters in that they nearly always see Genesis 1 and 2 in the light of chapters 3 to 11. But in this study the emphasis is on being chosen or set apart for a task or function thus defining mission as “the purpose or reason for one’s existence”. It emphasises mission as one’s place and function in God’s universe and one’s relation with God, with

other people and with the rest of God's creation. Defining mission in this way means there is mission in both the Old and New Testaments. It also means that mission is to be found in all four sections of the grand narrative.

The Old Testament (especially Genesis 1-2) is fundamental to this understanding of mission and all other themes of the New Testament. All these themes have their roots in the Old Testament. Blauw affirms this understanding when he writes that "the first chapters of Genesis are (as the whole Book of Genesis, for that matter) a key to the understanding of the rest of the Old Testament and even for those who recognise the unity of the Bible, of the whole Bible" (1962:18).

The Old Testament and the New Testament are not independent of each other. As one reads them one senses that the New Testament is incomplete without the Old Testament. In fact, even the name itself "New" suggests there is an "Old" somewhere which has to be clarified or fulfilled. That Old Testament points to something in the future that awaits fulfillment, something that takes away the suspense, the longing and restlessness, and it is the New Testament that provides this answer.

Therefore, Roberts sees the Bible as a unified book, and he holds this strong conviction because of Paul's comments on the inspiration of the scripture as he wrote to Timothy: "All scripture is inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). As mentioned earlier, Roberts calls the division of the biblical narrative "the storyline of the Bible" and he sees the Bible as unified under the theme of the "kingdom of God".

The adopted working definition of this paper is that of mission being "the purpose of or reason for one's being or one's existence", and mission as the activities of the people of God in the world. This definition describes what the people of God are sent into the world to be and to do. This study has also adopted the definition that Kosternberger proposes as his working definition, that of "mission as a specific task or purpose which a person or group seek to accomplish, involving various models of movement, be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering by calling others to follow, or following"

(1998:41). This definition ensures that mission is not only seen from the salvation or redemption point of view, but also from a broader view. It puts more emphasis on being chosen or set apart for a task or function, and thus mission is seen as one place and function within God's creation and God's universe. Thus, one's relationship to other people and to the whole created order is emphasised. This being the case, mission is to be found even in Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22 because those who are there have a reason or purpose for being there. They have a reason for their existence and that is their mission assigned to them by the one who made them: their creator. Mission therefore is found both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Therefore, since mission is found both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, there is another danger to the definition that must be addressed. Van Engen comments on this danger and says that "determining the scriptural understanding of mission is not as simple as we might think" (1996:35). He agrees with Bosch whom says that "we usually assume far too easily that we can employ the Bible as a kind of objective arbitrator in the case of theological differences, not realising that [all] of us approach the Bible with our own set of preconceived ideas about what it says" (in Van Engen 1996:35). It is indeed not a simple matter trying to determine the biblical understanding of mission. Therefore, this research acknowledges the danger of using texts as proof of one's position and the danger of taking texts out of their contexts and makes every attempt to avoid this habit by seeing every text that is used in broader context and in relation to other texts which address the same subject matter.

This study's point of view is in accordance with the working definition that has been set earlier in this chapter. Mission as the purpose of one's being, the purpose for one's existence; mission as the creation of a God-ward culture and community (or communities). This is what the people of God are called into being and sent into the world to be and to do, beginning right where they are in their family and the places in which they are located.

## **2.4. God's Purpose for Mission**

God's purpose for mission in the Old Testament and in the New Testament will be guided and directed by the working definition of mission, the theme of the kingdom of God, and the biblical narrative divisions that have been discussed earlier in this chapter. This section explores some of these thoughts and concepts.

### **2.4.1 God's purpose for mission in the Old Testament**

In Genesis 1-2, God calls creation into being. This is the first section of the biblical storyline. In these chapters, God's original intention for creation is clearly stated, that is, to create a world under the leadership of humankind that will reflect who God is, communicate God's message, display his glory, and reflect all the attributes of God. As Burnett observes:

The creation was a demonstration of the very nature and character of God, as Paul points out in Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world, God's qualities – his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen; being understood from what has been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse". This verse lays down principles significant to the whole notion of mission. (1996:25)

The creation story provides the information that is fundamental to the understanding of mission. Fubara-Manuel (2004:21-22) observes that when the story of the Bible is closely examined from a missiological point of view, one of the first truths that impress themselves on the reader's mind is the fact that God is a missionary God, or rather the God of the Bible is a God with a mission. When the creation story is examined, the missional heart of God at work is found. God is the one with a programme and plan.

When God finished his creation, he said that all was "very good" and all was under control. God's sovereignty was all set and unchallenged. In Genesis 1:28 and 2:19-20, God entrusts Adam and Eve with the leadership of the whole creation and gives them the mandate to create a community that has a "God-ward culture". God specifically prepared a special place, the Garden of Eden, from

which Adam and Eve would operate to fulfill God's plan: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8). Roberts says the following about the creation: "Genesis 1-2, the first two chapters of the Bible, shows us God's original, perfect creation. They present us with a vision of how the world was meant to be" (2002:27). He sees creation as God setting up the pattern of his kingdom and the first hint of the establishment of the kingdom of God, a God-given land, is present. God's special prepared land has its roots from the Genesis account of the Garden in Eden.

Ashford (2011:61) points out that the scriptures area divinely told story of God's own mission for his world and the establishment of his kingdom is at the heart of his mission. Ashford quotes Baulkham as stating that the Bible is a kind of project aimed at the establishment of the kingdom of God, and that achieving it is God's purpose for the good of the whole creation (2011:61). This is what mission is about. He sees the kingdom of God as the goal of God's mission and he sees mission as a universal one. Mission is the ultimate end for all of God's creation in which every particular person has to participate.

Thus, the first hint of the kingdom concept can be found in creation. God calls humankind into being as the ones who are to share God's reign: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over...'" (Genesis 1:26-28). From this passage it is clear that God did not create humankind so that he could reign over them, but rather so that humanity could share God's reign with God himself. The images or statues in ancient kingdoms represented the authority of the king, and here it means that God installs human beings as his image in creation with the authority to proclaim God's sovereignty over creation, and God authorises them to do the same. Thus, this is the first of three definitions of the kingdom of God in the creation story, that is, the kingdom of God as the people of the kingdom. This section also shows Ashford's and Roberts' definition of the kingdom of God as God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing.

In the creation story God prepares a special, beautiful and rich land, the Garden of Eden: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put

man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow, every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food....” (Genesis 1:8-9). It is in this beautiful and rich land that humankind was to share in the reign of God. It is in this beautiful, rich and perfect land that human beings were to live under God’s rule and enjoy his blessing. As Roberts explains, “When a job has been done perfectly, there is nothing more to be done. And he wants human beings to live with him in the seventh day, sharing in his ‘rest’ and enjoying his perfect creation” (2003:31).

Thus, the second of the three definitions of the kingdom of God is the realm in which God’s reign is to be experienced and can be found in the creation story (Genesis 1 and 2). In this first division of the biblical narrative God set an environment under which he expected his creation to live with humankind as leaders. Adam as the representative of the first generation of the human race was expected to maintain that pattern set up by God and create a community under the leadership of humanity that would develop a God-ward culture. The word “culture” in this case is being used cautiously as Tennent observes that the word can and has been used in “surprisingly contradictory ways” (2010:159). This study follows Burnett’s definition of the word, that of culture as “the total way of life of a particular people” (1984:14), and Niebuhr’s definition of the word as “the artificial, secondary environment which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation, inherited artifacts, technical processes and values” (in Tennent 2010:160). When God said to humankind: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over...” (Genesis 1:28), which is repeated when Noah and his family come out of the ark (Genesis 9:1-2), God was commissioning humankind. This is the Great Commission in the first phase of *mission Dei*. Just like Jesus in the well-known Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, God was passing on or delegating kingly authority over the whole of his creation to human hands. Okoye commenting on the same writes: “God crowned human beings with glory and majesty, attributes of God and derivatively of the king. By doing so, God aligned them with the divine realm, making them only ‘little lower than the heavenly beings’” (2006:33).

#### 2.4.1.1 Adam in God's purpose for mission

As noted earlier, in ancient empires and kingdoms, emperors and kings set up for themselves statues as their images in cities and towns in their territories. These images were meant to proclaim their sovereignty over the land of their domain. This practice can be said to have been initiated by God who set humans in creation as his image bearers. However, this is not in the same way as the statues of emperors and kings as these statues were to function in a symbolic way while humans as God's image are to function both in a symbolic way and in a real and practical way. The same principle is at work though in this setting up of images. When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God's specially-prepared, rich land, they were meant to function as kings in God's kingdom on the behalf of and for the benefit of God, by serving and keeping God's creation. They were intended to be the link between creation and God. Okoye states that as the "image of God they are viceroys of the creator on earth. Their stewardship is meant to reflect the intentions of the creator and bring to God's creation the purposes intended by God" (2006:33).

Genesis 3-11 provides information of how the creation, through human disobedience and rebellion against God, lost its initial status, and narrates the disastrous effect brought on the whole creation. It also provides the explanation of humanity's situation and condition caused by the fall. Roberts calls this section "the perished kingdom" (2002:37). It is a broken kingdom with broken relationships. Bartholomew and Goheen refer to this epoch as "rebellion in the kingdom" (2014:39) and cite Peterson's description of this section of the biblical narrative: "A catastrophe has occurred. We are no longer in continuity with our good beginning. We have been separated from it by a disaster. We are also, of course, separated from our good end. We are, in other words, in the middle of a mess" (in Bartholomew & Goheen 2014:39).

It is humans who are to represent God on earth. Adam and Eve were to bring about and affirm the rule of God in the world, thereby promoting the kingdom of God. But contrary to their mandate, Adam and Eve developed a community that was the opposite of God's plan. They developed a community that was set against

God and so the battle was set. Adam and Eve, listening to the serpent (Genesis 3:4-6), willed the deliberate refusal to live under the command of God (Genesis 2:16-17). They chose to rebel against their creator and in so doing they rejected their mandate to be the bearers of God's image. They desired to be independent of God, in fact, they desired to be equal to God as the chapter says "you will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4). This amounts to direct disobedience and deliberate rebellion, and thus is a direct and deliberate attack on the divine order set up at creation. As Anderson observes:

Sin is an act of rejection and rebellion, of separation, and human beings were intended to be the link between God and his creation. Adam's sin affects the whole world. Life is from God and to reject him means to turn away from life. It means death. Sin is therefore foolish and suicidal. When Saint Paul writes that the wages of sin is death, he means that death comes quite logically from sin, not because someone broke the rules and God imposed the "death penalty" but because by deliberately cutting oneself from life, from God, death is the natural consequence. (1982:80)

Simon Peter understood this very well and so when Jesus asked the disciples, "Do you also wish to go away?" Peter's answer was "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John6:66-69).

It is with this understanding in mind that every time the people of God choose to go their own way, rebelling against God by being disobedient, God is left with no other alternative but to drive them away from his land. If they think they can be independent, no longer ready to live under God's direction, no need for God, they no longer want to be God's image bearers: "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, eat and live forever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden [...] He drove out man" (Genesis 3:22-24). Consequently, man was no longer fit to live in God's given land or in the kingdom of God. He became a citizen of another kingdom and needed to join that kingdom he had chosen. This pattern is repeated in the history of the people of God. Every time God's people turned away from God, following their own heart, they were driven

out of God's given land. Since land defines who people are, it gives them their identity and their relationship with God and with one another.

The call of Adam and Eve to mission did not produce God's desired fruits. Instead of the world being populated with vice-regents of God, the world was populated with rebels determined to create a universal kingdom of their own (Genesis 11:1-9). Thus, after the fall the Bible is full of people determined to be independent from God who no longer want to live as God's people in God's place under God's rule and enjoying God's blessing. The fall means that humankind is no longer fit to live in God's given land or to live in the kingdom of God as God's kingdom people. Humankind has become citizens of another kingdom, and thus they need to leave God's kingdom and join that kingdom they have chosen. As Okoye observes:

The creator of heavens, who shaped the earth and made it, did not create it to be chaos, but formed it to be lived in (Isaiah 45:18). The earth was created in a frontier state, and human beings under God are to "green" the earth, subdue and beautify it. As "image of God", they are viceroys of the creator on earth. Their stewardship is meant to reflect the intentions of the creator and to bring God's creation to the purposes intended by God. (2006:33)

Even with the development of a community that was opposed to God's plan, the development of the kingdom of darkness, God did not give up his original plan. He still willed human beings to be his image bearers and develop a community that reflected who God really was, and is – a community that would show what it means to live as God's image bearers as the kingdom of God. Thus, God decided to create another kingdom people that would realise the intentions which Adam and Eve failed to realise. God does this by calling Abraham. The call of Abraham is the first phase in God's salvation history, but it is the second phase in God's plan for mission. It marks the beginning of God's plan for reclaiming his creation and re-establishing the kingdom as he had intended it to be.

#### 2.4.1.2 Abraham in God's purpose for mission

The invitation of Abraham to participate in God's plan falls in the third section of the biblical narrative division: the redemption. It runs from Genesis 12 to Revelation 20. This section contains information of God's dealing with his creation after the fall, his plans for reconciling creation back to his original intention, and his re-establishing or reclaiming of the kingdom. As has been noted, this is the longest section of the biblical narrative and it is divided into two major parts: the Old and New Testaments. Each of the two major parts can be divided into sub-divisions. It is in the redemption section that some scholars mistakenly trace the roots of mission in the Bible. Some scholars confine mission to the New Testament at the commissioning of the disciples and see Jesus' words of "go [...] and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20) as the only commission to mission because it even specifies what is to be done: "Make disciples of all nations". Such commentators see Abraham as being called, but without the task of making disciples: "Leave [...] to the land that I will show you [...] and I will make your name [...] and you shall be [a] blessing..." (Genesis 12:1-2).

Other scholars include Abraham since he was called out of his home land but exclude Adam who was not in any way called out for a task, and thus was not on God's mission having only been given a land to live in: "And the Lord God planted a garden...[where] He put man" (Genesis 2:8). But the call to mission should not always be seen in the act of being called out, rather it should also be seen in the act of bringing into being or being set apart for a task. Thus, Adam was called into being with a purpose in mind by the one who called him into being or set him apart for a task. When God said, "Let us make man [...] and let them have dominion over..." (Genesis 1:26-28), he set Adam apart from the rest of the creatures for a special task. God had a reason for creating him differently from other creatures and this was God's mission for Adam. He had a reason to be there.

As noted earlier, mission starts in Genesis 1 and, as Dyrness argues, the call of Abraham is not the beginning of mission. However, Dyrness adds that “though this initiative is not strictly speaking the beginning of mission, it does inaugurate the redemptive movement of which missions is the final extension. And its character influences the content of our evangel irrevocably” (1991:47-48). The call of Abraham is fundamental to the understanding of mission, and it comes against the background of a human/creation under divine judgment. It is against this background that God called Abram, as he was named at first, and promised him a new identity of becoming a great nation. Abram and Sarai would give birth to a new community through whom God would accomplish his purpose. This purpose was to bring back the fallen human/creation into fellowship with God, and with one another. Ashford puts it this way: “God called Abraham and began the long process of establishing a people who will play a major role in his mission” (2011:41). This process is what is referred to as salvation or redemption history, and it began with the call of Abraham. Moreau, Corwin and McGee make this observation:

With the fall comes the banishment from the garden and from intimacy with the creator. Individuals have fallen, but so have whole societies. The curtain closes on this act with a world of people scattered and unable to communicate with each other. With people broken and separated from the creator, and successfully lured by a clever enemy, the stage is set for the story of redemption played out through the rest of the drama. (2004:21)

Moreau, Corwin and McGee see the call of Abraham as the first phase of the story of God reaching out to the fallen and broken creation. In this story God’s nature, love and concern is clearly seen, and his goal is clearly spelt out. In the same way that Adam and Eve were called into being and given the land in which they were to carry out God’s mandate, Abraham is called into being so to say, and promised land in which he is to fulfill God’s mandate: “Leave your own country behind and your own people, and go to the land I will guide you to” (Genesis 12:1). In the Old Testament the call to mission is strongly linked to occupying the land given or prepared by God himself. It is in this God-given land that mission has to be fulfilled. It is in this land that a God-ward culture has to be developed.

Thus, mission in the Old Testament has a strong sense of land possession or land ownership. To fulfill their mandate Adam and Eve had to be in a God-given land: “And the Lord planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Genesis 2:8). It was in this God-given land that Adam and Eve were expected to carry out God’s mandate: that of developing a God-ward culture. It is also in the same God-given land that the nation of Israel was expected to carry out God’s mandate so that the nations would say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his path” (Isaiah 2:3).

Therefore, God’s call to mission has a very close connection with possessing the land, and it is in that land that God’s mission has to be fulfilled. It is in that land that God promised to make Abraham’s name great and make him into a great nation. The name that humans were seeking to make for themselves in Genesis 11:3-4 is to be given by the creator for his own name’s sake. The Promised Land is the land that tells the story of who God is, and thus becomes a source of blessing for all nations. Burnett makes this observation: “God promised Abraham a new country. The people would need a land in which to live and provide for their physical needs, a land in which a society could develop so as to fulfill the cultural mandate. It would demonstrate the way in which God would have man live” (Burnett 1996:50).

Pierson sees Genesis 12 as the clearest missionary text in the Old Testament; it is here that God’s strategy for reconciliation and redemption begin. Abraham’s call is linked to the well-being of God’s creation, and from Abraham another major turning point is started in the salvation history. It is the beginning of a loving process of establishing a people who are to play a major role in God’s mission. As Ott and Strauss observe, “from Abraham will come the nation Israel, and from the nation Israel will come the Messiah, whose redeeming death and resurrection will be the source of blessing for the nation. Through Christ people of every nation partake in the Abrahamic blessings” (Ott & Strauss 2011:8). Moreover, Pierson makes this observation while discussing the word “blessing”:

The word “blessed” in Hebrew has much more profound meaning than that we give it in English. It meant being incorporated into the family. Jacob was blessed that Esau was not. The word conveyed authority, responsibility, reconciliation and meant opposition to satanic darkness. Blessing in the Bible is something that unites men and women with God and each other and brings them into a permanent fellowship. (Pierson 2009:20)

The Abrahamic journey of faith and obedience leads on through his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, whose name is later changed to Israel. These three (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) are commonly and collectively referred to as the patriarchs, meaning the “heads of fathers”. Thus, through them the formation of the tribe of Israel is seen and it is at this stage in the history of the people of God that God shifts his attention from relating on an individual level to relating on a community level. Through their line is traced the establishment of the nation of Israel with the call of Moses as the starting point of the founding of the nation of Israel in the Exodus experience. The journey is concluded, though not in the sense of coming to a definitive end, by the settlement in the land of the promise with King David as the ideal king, “a man after God’s heart”, who is promised a son as the eternal king who will lead God’s people into God’s Sabbath. Roberts outlines this journey in relation to the kingdom of God. He describes the Exodus journey as the “promised kingdom” with the covenant with Abraham as the focal point, the settlement in Canaan as the “partial kingdom”, with the Davidic kingdom as the focal point, and the “prophesied kingdom” with the promise of a son to David as the focal point.

#### **2.4.2 God’s purpose for mission in the New Testament**

In considering God’s purpose for mission in the New Testament, this study looks first at the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament in the light of mission, and then at the mission of Jesus and the mission of the disciples as representing the Church. Tennent (2010:77) points out that if mission is rooted in *missio Dei*, that is, in God the Father as the source and the initiator of mission, then mission will be seen within the framework of the grand narrative and not only from the perspective of the sent Church. In other words, mission should not be seen as beginning after the resurrection or with the witnessing Church

streaming out into the world in obedience to the Great Commission. In fact, even the Great Commission text should be seen within the larger context of the mission of God, and as part of the unfolding drama of God's redemptive plan which was put in place even before creation in the design of God. This will only find its culmination in the consummation of the new creation. It is from this larger perspective that the redemptive intentions of God for the world are revealed to humanity in the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12.

Glasser (2003:20-21) agrees with Tennent when he points out that God's right to reign and rule over all of creation and over all the people of the world must be unequivocally understood. The kingdom of God is one of the central themes of the Bible bringing together the message of the Old and New Testament narratives. The message of the kingdom of God contributes to the understanding of the eternal purpose of God with respect to individuals and nations. And the New Testament portrayal of the "already", the "not yet" and the "consummation" of the kingdom will appear incomplete. Moreover, the revelation of God's love in Christ cannot be fully grasped without the Old Testament. Even the Lordship of Christ is best understood when it is informed by the Old Testament concept of kingship.

In the above observation, what Tennent and Glasser are saying is that one cannot understand God's purpose for mission in the New Testament without listening to the Old Testament. Mission does not begin in the New Testament nor should it be seen exclusively in the confines of the New Testament. Mission starts with God and is expressed or manifested at creation.

#### 2.4.2.1 The relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament

This chapter has noted that scholars divide the biblical narrative into four parts: the creation, the fall, the redemption and the new creation or consummation. In Genesis 1 and 2 God calls creation into being and through Adam and Eve humanity is given a mandate: the missionary task of developing a God-ward culture. This is the first part of the biblical narrative division (Genesis 1 and 2), with the definition of missions that has no concept of redemption or salvation,

because at this stage all was good: “Then the Lord looked over all that he had made, and it was excellent in every way” (Genesis 1:31). This means that at this stage in the mission that God committed to humanity there was nothing to redeem or save as all was perfect, harmonious and peaceful. Humanity’s mission was to develop a God-ward culture. Dyrness quotes Westernmam as saying that humanity’s mission was “to civilise the earth” (in Dyrness 1991:34). This stage describes humanity as God’s image bearers, installed as God’s vice-regent over the whole creation with a mandate to control and rule on behalf of God.

The second part of the section, Genesis 3-11, is referred to as the fall. It presents a series of human failures. As Bowen observes, “God intended the nations to receive his blessing, but they obstinately refused to co-operate with his purpose” (1996:16). This section describes humanity’s failure to live up to God’s given mandate and the consequences of that failure. As Ashford observes, “in the fall, however, man and woman rebelled against God and in doing so alienated themselves from God and from the rest of the created order. As a result, God’s good creation is marred by the ugliness of sin, and that has a far broader impact than we might typically imagine” (2011:7).

Then comes the third division, the redemption (Genesis 12–Revelation 20), where the information of God’s dealing with his creation after the fall is provided. In spite of humanity’s disobedience and rebellion God chose not to abandon his creation. He did not destroy it, but instead redeemed it and chose to identify himself with it. As Wright puts it, “he chooses to do so within history through persons and events that run from the call of Abraham to the return of Christ” (2010:42). As discussed earlier in this section, the redemption is divided into two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament section of redemption God’s mission was to deal with the problem of humanity, the sinfulness of every human heart and the brokenness of the whole created order. This he chose to do through his people Israel, the sons of Abraham. The story of God’s salvation or redemption through his people, Israel, began with the call of Abraham. It then moved on to the creation of Israel as a nation, and then moved on through the era of the settlement in the Promised Land, under the patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, the judges, and the monarchy. Israel failed to live up to

the standard of God's call which the prophets kept on reminding them about (Deuteronomy 10:12-13). Israel failed to walk the way of the lord.

The call of Abraham falls in the third division: the redemption. This section begins with Genesis 12 and goes on through the New Testament and ends at Revelation 20. The call of Abraham marks the beginning of God's plan for the redemption of the world. Buono makes this observation: "The figure of Abraham is fundamental because he succeeds humanity marked by sin and Babel. God's blessing descends upon him and his family. This cannot be Abraham's and his immediate descendants' exclusive inheritance because in Abraham this blessing is for all people" (2006:85).

Thus, the Old Testament presents a picture of a history moving forward and looking forward to the promises of God beginning with the promise of "the woman's seed" in Genesis 3:15. As Kaiser explains:

But the story did not end there, for in Genesis 3:15 God declared that he would put "enmity" between the serpent and the woman, between the serpent's "seed" and the woman's "seed". But then a sudden turn of events announced that the serpent would bruise the heel of one of the woman's "seed", a male from among her offspring. Most surprising of all, however, the male child of the woman's "seed" would strike back by crushing the head of the serpent. This would be a lethal blow. It guaranteed that the coming man of promise, from the male line of Eve, would once and for all settle the issues that sin of Adam and Eve had raised (Kaiser 2000:16).

Then comes the call of Abraham with the great promise of God to Abraham, often called the "Abrahamic covenant" witnessed to in Genesis 12:1-3. Central to this promise is the provision of land and enjoyment of God's blessings in that land. In this promise, Abraham is to begin a community that would walk in God's way. This community is not restricted to the immediate offspring or the biological children only. Thus, God's promise to Abraham has universal implications, as Wright explains when commenting on Genesis 18:19:

The community of Abraham includes Old Testament Israel along with all those who are in Christ – Jew and Gentile believers

(Romans 4; Galatians 3) so the ethical stretch of Genesis 18:19 is long indeed and extends right to where you and I sit right now. For if we are in Christ, we are in Abraham, heirs of the promise God made to him and the responsibility God laid on him. And if we inherit Abraham's blessing, we will inherit his mission also.

What then is the mission of God's people? According to this text, it is to be the community who live by the ethical standards of the ways of God, so that God can fulfill his promise to Abraham and bring about the blessing of the nations (2010:83).

However, there are three central figures in the biblical storyline. There is Adam who changes the course of human history and puts the whole created order under a curse by his disobedience, Abraham who through his obedience and faith brings about restoration, and Jesus Christ who through his obedient death and resurrection brings about total restoration and consummation. Thus, one is not wrong to speak of "three Adams", with Abraham as the second Adam and Jesus as the third Adam. After all, the kingdom concept that Jesus talks about has its foundation in the call of Abraham. This will be expanded on in the section about the Church and mission. Kaiser (2000:20) observes that the Apostle Paul in Romans 4:3 named Abraham as the heir of the world and in Galatians 3:39 Abraham is referred to as the father of all who believe in Christ. He sees the word given in Genesis 12:3, that in Abraham's seed all nations of the earth would be blessed to be equated with the sum and substance of the gospel in Galatians 3:9. Thus, for Kaiser there is no doubt that this is the centre of what is at the core of the gospel and mission in both the Old and New Testaments. Moreau, Corwin and McGee summarise it in these striking words:

In Abraham, then, God manifests his reign. Through him the kingdom revealed in creation and rejected by Adam and Eve is restored and begins its advance. Abraham is blessed not only for his sake but also for ours. God's missionary heart is evident as he begins the process of rolling back the kingdom of darkness and seeking his lost creation. No wonder Paul asserts that the Abrahamic covenant stands throughout the ups and downs of Israel's history as the proper foundation for God's ultimate salvation blessing his son (2004:32).

As discussed earlier, the New Testament is also contained in the third division, the redemption (the redemption is the longest of the four divisions). This division moves on from the call of Abraham or the Exodus level. As this division is the

longest is has sub-divisions as well which are different in form. The notable differences are discussed below:

- The Old Testament part is very particularistic in nature, though the ultimate goal is universal, while the New Testament part is universalistic, especially from Acts to Revelation.
- The Old Testament part presents a picture of a history moving forward, looking to the promise of God, while in the New Testament time has come: “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15; 4:18-21); “he came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (John 1:11-13).
- In the Old Testament being a community or people of God is bound up with possessing land, while in the New Testament being the people of God is not bound up by possessing land – this comes at the consummation in the fourth and last division. In the last part of the third division, the New Testament, being the people of God means being a pilgrimage, journeying people. Thus, in Acts followers of Christ are first known as people belonging to the way (Acts 9:2) and John says that believers do not belong to the world, but that Christ has chosen them out of the world (John 15:19). According to the New Testament, believers will only inherit or possess land when they prove to be faithful, obedient and loyal, and are made perfect at the last day. Since then they will be pure and in a perfect relationship with God and under the leadership or kingship of Christ, inheriting or living in a God-given land will be a gift that will be given to them for standing until the end (James 1:12; Revelation 2:26-27). Thus, there will be no need for sending them into exile. They will finally be said to have inherited the kingdom of God, they shall be God’s people living in God’s land under God’s rule enjoying God’s blessing.

#### 2.4.2.2 Jesus in God’s purpose for mission

The New Testament section of the third division, which Dyrness calls the “acts of God in history”, address the fourth and fifth acts, which are Christ and

consummation. In Roberts's division it is called the sixth, seventh and eighth acts which are "the present kingdom", "the proclaimed kingdom" and "the perfected kingdom". While in Bartholomew and Goheen's division this part of the Bible is called the fifth and the sixth acts, which are, "the coming of the king", "redemption accomplished", spreading the news of the king, the mission of the Church and the return of the king, and redemption completed. At this level mission is still defined from a salvation point of view that sees mission as "ultimately bound up with God's saving plan that moves from creation to new creation, which has to reach the ends of the earth in Jesus Christ God's son, to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against him and stands under his righteous judgment" (Kösternberger&O'Brien 2001:251).

The ministry of Jesus can be divided into five sections: the election, ministry, the passion (pre-resurrection), the resurrection (post-resurrection) and the ascension.

**The Election:** This section covers the conception as announced by the angel Gabriel commonly known as the annunciation, the visit of Mary to the home of Elizabeth and Zachariah in which both Elizabeth and Zachariah acknowledge the Lord (Luke 1:39-79), leading to the formulation of the song of Mary (v.46-55) and the song of Zachariah (v.68-79), and the birth and the presentation of Jesus in the temple after the law of the first born (Exodus 13:2,3; Leviticus 12). The presentation in the temple leads to the encounter with Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, ending up with the formulation of the song of Simeon also known as the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 3:29-32). In his prayer of blessing, Simeon affirmed the mission of Jesus as the sent one of God, a mission of universal nature, and declared the child as "a light for the revelation to the gentiles and for glory to thy people Israel" (v.32). This section also contains the visit of the wise men from the east and the exile of Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus. There is also the visit of the boy Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem with his parents at the age of 12.

**The Ministry:** The ministry section begins with the baptism by John and the acknowledgement by God of Jesus as his beloved Son. This is immediately followed by the temptation which is the test for obedience and loyalty. The

boundaries are set for Jesus' earthly ministry. After Jesus passed the test, he went for the inauguration of that ministry seen in Luke 4:16-21 (cf Matthew 4:12-22). In the inauguration Jesus spelt out his mission and the reason why he was sent by the Father. It is more like the mission statement that organisations and companies of today come up with, stating the reason for their existence, or like a political party's manifesto. This leads to the calling of the disciples and the training of the disciples which forms the main part of the earthly ministry of Jesus. Also included in this section are the teachings about the kingdom of God, what the kingdom is, how it will come about, who can enter it and how it is attained. In this section Jesus demonstrates:

A ministry so unique and so significant that his disciples would be convinced he truly is "the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). This ministry was dominated by acts of deliverance of the demon-possessed, the healing of all forms of sickness and infirmity, and by proclaiming the forgiveness of sin to the penitent and believing. It was a ministry that included a wide range of demonstrations of his power: feeding the hungry, triumphing over wind and wave, controlling the fish of the sea, multiplying joy at a wedding ("the best wine"), and demonstrating an outgoing love for the marginalised and rejected of the society. (Glasser 2003:198)

**The Passion (Pre-Resurrection):** This section covers the period of the suffering or endurance, and it is referred to as the "passion of our Lord Jesus Christ". Notable activities in this section are the triumphal entry into Jerusalem leading to the cleansing of the temple, the cursing of the fig tree, the institution of the last supper, the washing of the disciples' feet, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane with intense prayers of sweat and blood, the betrayal by Judas leading to the arrest, the desertion by the disciples and denial by Peter, and ends up with the trial, crucifixion and death at the hands of Pontius Pilate and the Jewish leaders. The passion forms the eight-day celebration or commemoration beginning on Friday of Sorrows, Palm Sunday through the Holy Week up to Jesus' death on the cross on Good Friday. The passion is the time of testing for the disciples that would prepare them for what lay ahead of their call and the crucifixion of their master. Glasser explains that it is in the light of this that the parable of the Good Shepherd is given (John 10:1-18) "to remind the disciples that the crucifixion

must take place before mission to the nations could begin. Jesus must first lay down his life for the sheep (v.11, 15, 17). Only then could there be the bringing in of those, ‘other sheep’ that are not of the Jewish fold (v.16)” (2003:199).

**The Resurrection (Post-Resurrection) and Ascension:** In this section is the resurrection and the 40 days interval between the resurrection and the ascension. The resurrection is central to the Christian faith and belief. It is the foundation of the Christian faith as Paul states:

If Christ has not been raised from the dead, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (1Corinthians 15:14-18)

The resurrection is a replay of the Jewish Passover. From this point of view, the Easter celebration for Christians, the new Israel, is a replacement of the Jewish celebration of the Passover. Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday two days after Good Friday, the day of his crucifixion. Easter’s date corresponds roughly with the Passover, the Jewish observance associated with the Exodus (Matthew 27:15-17, 26; Mark 15:6,15; John 18:39-40; 19:13-16,30-31). The resurrection is like the Passover in the climax of God’s liberative action for his people. In the Passover the Israelites celebrate God’s victory in freeing them from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh in which God finally delivered a victorious blow to the Egyptians, defeating them and their gods and by setting the Hebrews free (Exodus 12:25-27, 29-33; 14:30-31). Similarly to the Passover, the resurrection is the climax in the mission of Jesus. It is Jesus’ greatest moment when he defeats the powers of darkness, setting the whole creation free.

After his resurrection Jesus stayed with his disciples for 40 days before ascending to the Father. This 40-day period was a time for evaluating the disciples to make sure they were fit for the task that lay ahead of them. Thus, he reminded them that, “these are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that

everything written about me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). Glasser argues that, “in the 40-day interval between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus sought to confirm the faith of his disciples and bring to a climax his instruction concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3)” (2003:252). Glasser goes on to explain that Jesus did this by bringing together three great streams of truth. He first ““opened to them’ the Old Testament through providing his person and work as a hermeneutical key (Luke 24:25-27)” (Glasser 2003:252-253). And then, Glasser states that Jesus:

Issued the Great Commission, the missionary mandate with three major components, the obligation to proclaim the good news of the kingdom and persuade people everywhere to respond by repentance and faith; the establishment of a baptised and worshipping community whose focus is Jesus Christ, enthroned in the midst; and the essentiality of obedience: “teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you” (Matt.28:18-20). Lastly, Jesus told them that they were incapable of carrying out the Great Commission on their own. They must wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (Glasser 2003:252-253)

The ascension of Jesus marks the beginning of the reign of Jesus Christ; the work that he was sent to do, of being sacrificed as the lamb without blemish, has been completed, and now as the risen and exalted one, time has come to take up his rightful place and receive the worship and magnification of his name (Philippians 2:8-11). As in the words of John, having been lifted up on the cross, he is now exalted in glory with the work of drawing men and women, in fact the whole creation to himself (John12:32). He is now able to deliver God’s people “from bondage to sin and the fear of death into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Eucharist 1976:22), transferring them into God’s kingdom, his kingdom. Although his kingship and his kingdom may be known only to his people, they will come, and every eye will see him (Acts 1:11; Revelation 1: 4-7).

In the ministry of Jesus, the role of the Holy Spirit is clearly outlined, beginning with his baptism, the temptation in the wilderness and the beginning of the actual work (Luke 4:18-19). Moreover, Jesus outlined the mission of the disciples as he bid them farewell (Luke 24:44-49), and he ended his words with “stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). This power

from on high is what Luke describes in Acts 2:1-4, as the Pentecost experience (John 19:19-23).

#### 2.4.2.3 The Church in God's purpose for mission

The first task of Jesus as the enthroned king was the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost resulting in the creation of the Church. Concerning the sending of the Holy Spirit, it is worth noting as Gallagher and Hertig note that:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not primarily concerned with salvation, or even a "second work of grace", but with the essential empowerment of the Church for its witness throughout the world. The disciples were not waiting upon the Lord primarily for their personal renewal, but for corporate empowerment for their mission. (2004:21)

The calling of the first 12 disciples is a replay of the calling of the 12 tribes of Israel from whom came the nation of Israel as the people of God. Israel as the chosen people of God failed to live up to their call and to the will of God, and when God's promised Messiah came, they rejected him. God had no option but to give them what they deserve: rejection as the chosen people of God. The calling of the disciples is the calling or gathering of the new people of God:

For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all rejection of Old Israel, as portrayed by Ezekiel the countries, and bring you into your own land. For I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will clean you. A new heart I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

The 12 disciples are the foundation of this gathering, like the 12 tribes of Israel out of which came the nation of Israel. Out of the 12 disciples comes the Church,

the new Israel, God's people out of which the kingdom of God is to develop. Thus, the call to discipleship can be considered from another point of view: as the call to the kingdom of God. Through the call of the disciples, Jesus' mission was to instruct humanity and reveal to them how they can be better humans. His mission was to give them a clearer understanding of the character of God. As already noted, this call is a call to radical obedience and loyalty. Bright argues that it is:

No call to be answered with a modicum of moral improvement, a burst of zeal, a few New Year's resolutions to live a better life! It is a call to total and radical obedience, to an utterly impossible righteousness, to be perfect as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48): In short, a call to the righteousness of the kingdom of God to which no man can attain, yet to which he may give the answer of faith. For to say yes to the kingdom and to submit to its rule is faith (Mark 1:15; cf. Romans 3:22) And it is of faith's nature to cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24, KJV). (1953:219-220)

Here it is worth noting, as Bright does, that obedience is not the condition for one to be accepted to be a disciple or for entrance, but rather it signifies one's willingness and desire (Bright 1953:220). Obedience is an act of faith, the faith and trust that moves one to be obedient and loyal as a disciple. It is with this understanding that the debate on faith and works needs to be understood. Yes, one's justification does not come by works, but one's justification is seen through one's works. Faith that does not move someone to work is not faith at all. In the same way, if one has faith, one will definitely be obedient.

But what is the Church in relation to the kingdom of God? According to Glasser:

The Church is nothing less than the missionary people of the kingdom of God. The Church does not establish the kingdom. It is rather the custodian of the good news of the kingdom. The Church is the true Israel, God's covenant and servant people, called to be a sign of the many-faced righteousness/justice of the kingdom before the world and seeking through the gospel to draw people into its covenant relationship— kingdom in contrast, represents the dynamic activity of God and the sphere in which his rule is experienced (2003:225-226).

The mission of the Church as the new people of God has its roots in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). In the Great Commission, Jesus sent the disciples as representatives of the Church, and the Church as his ambassador before the world with the task of fulfilling the mandate first given to Adam and then to Abraham: the mandate of creating a community with a God-ward culture. In this commission Jesus spelt out who the new people of God were before him, what their mandate was and how the mandate was to be carried out. Matthew's account of the Great Commission identifies the things that the people of God are sent into the world to do. In other words, Matthew brings out the reasons for the existence of the Church.

Like in all of God's mandates, the Church needs to know its boundaries. The people of God need to know who they are before God: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). In the words of John, "you did not choose me, but I chose and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16). The disciples are to go on the mission of winning people of all nations into their community as the people of God, through baptism and enlisting them into his kingdom, and teaching them to be obedient to all the teachings of Jesus, just as Jesus had done with the first group of disciples (John 20:21).

The Church, the new people of God in the journey of faith, is called to obedience and loyalty (the same obedience and loyalty that was commanded of Adam in the mandate given to humanity through him by God) in the restoration section of the biblical storyline or grand narrative of the kingdom. However, this section moves further towards the consummation. Here the mission of the Church is to proclaim the kingdom of God, thereby preparing for the return of the king. Thus, Roberts calls this section the "proclaimed kingdom" (2002:123). In the mission of Jesus, the king of the kingdom demonstrated the presence of the kingdom: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:27). At the ascension Jesus promised to return, not as the saviour but as king, and it is this promise of the kingdom for which the new people of God, the Church, have to prepare the nations. Therefore, Glasser describes the Church as "the custodian of the kingdom; through its proclamation

of the gospel throughout the world, God will decide who will enter the eschatological kingdom and who will be excluded” (2003:226).

The new creation or consummation is the last section of the grand narrative (Revelation 21-22) and it is the final episode of the journey of faith, obedience and loyalty when all who have walked this road will finally be welcomed by their king. As Wright explains, “the return of Christ will not only bring to its grand finale that section of the Bible storyline that we have called redemption in history, it will also inaugurate the ultimate fulfillment of the whole point of the story – namely, the redemption and renewal of God’s whole creation” (2010:43).

Then comes the close or end of the age that Jesus talked about in the Great Commission, and the mission mandate that was added at the call of Abraham, the mandate to mission in the light of redemption or salvation, will come to an end as well. However, at that point human beings will still have their reason for their being, and that reason will be their mission.

The Bible is God’s revelation to humanity and the whole creation. It reveals God’s plan to his people. Thus, the whole Bible is therefore the story of how God reveals his plan. It begins with Adam, then Abraham and it comes into full disclosure and fulfillment in Jesus. In most Biblical writings Jesus is referred to as the second Adam but this study identifies him as the “third Adam” and the last of the Adams. Anderson observes that “when Christ on the cross said, ‘it is finished’, he meant the whole plan that God put into operation with Abraham was completed.” (1982:81). Roberts agrees with this observation as he explains that:

God calls Abraham and makes some unconditional promises to him. Through Abraham’s descendants he will re-establish his kingdom. They will be his people, living in his land and enjoying his blessing, and through them all peoples on earth will be blessed. That promise is the gospel. It is partially fulfilled in the history of Israel but only finally fulfilled through Christ Jesus (2003:23).

This study wishes to push this assertion further to include Adam, that is, when Christ on the cross said that “it is finished” he meant that the whole of God’s plan that was put in operation at creation in the call of Adam, and reintroduced in the

call of Abraham, was completed. All the three Adams were called for one primary task, that of creating a community (or communities) with a God-ward culture, though they each came on the scene at different times in history. Each “Adam” had his own unique way of how this task was to be accomplished.

## **2.5 Models of Mission in the Bible**

As mentioned previously, Okoye argues that mission is part of the identity of any faith community, and that it has to be defined with reference to the life and tradition of any such community (2011:10). If this is so, then just as there are many different faith communities, there are also many models of mission that can be applied to meet the missionary needs of different communities. Since the Bible deals with different people and their faith at different stages in the grand narrative, it definitely contains different models of mission. As Okoye observes, “the Bible contains different models of mission operative in different faith groups at different times” (2011:10). He calls these “the faces of mission” and cites Legrand as outlining some of these models:

The exodus model of mission as the pilgrimage of liberated people, the Abraham model of mission as a blessing to all, a pilgrimage of faith and dialogue, the creation model of responsibility for God’s world. The Johannine model, consisting in sharing of life and spiritual experiences. The Pauline model of itinerant mission of proclamation, conversion, and founding of believing communities. (in Okoye 2006:10)

Okoye (2006) acknowledges that there are “divergent models of mission”. The list is long and the above mentioned models are only some among many. Despite this variety, it is generally accepted among missiologists that the Bible presents two main models of mission: the centripetal and the centrifugal. As Peters observes, “in regard to methodology, the scriptures prescribe a twofold way– the centrifugal and the centripetal. It must be recognised that the Old Testament is wholly built around the latter method whereas the New Testament enjoins the former method” (1972:21). Peters explains that:

The centripetal method may be thought of as sacred magnetism that draws to itself. Israel, by living a life in the presence and the fear of the Lord, was to experience the fullness of the blessing of God. In this way they were to startle the nations to attention, arouse their inquiry, and draw them like a magnet to Jerusalem and to the Lord. Universality was to be actualised by drawing the people to the Lord rather than by sending out messengers with a message. (Peters 1972:21)

### **2.5.1 The centripetal model of mission**

The Old Testament presents the centripetal model of mission as the main or controlling model for mission. It is a model of drawing people to the centre which is Israel, the community of the people of God. As Moreau, Corwin and McGee observe, “Israel (specifically Jerusalem) was to serve as the centre to which other nations would come, a light to the nations” (2004:36). It is with this notion in mind that Isaiah writes that “it shall come to pass in the later days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised, Jacob, that he may teach us his way and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2-3).

The centripetal model of mission has its roots in the instructions of Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”. Here multiplication is by procreation and makes marriage between a man and a woman the only acceptable relationship among the people of God. It also makes childbearing a God-given obligation for the people of God and part of God’s mission. Moreover, it makes marriage among the same tribe the favourable way of conducting marriage (remember that Abraham was called out of the world to begin his own family and create a God-ward culture community; marrying from other tribes would mean assimilating that tribe’s culture as well). Thus, in the Old Testament centripetal model of mission there should be no mixing of cultures, and this is one of the reasons that led to the downfall of King Solomon who had wives from other nations.

The centripetal model of mission also makes the issue of land possession non-negotiable. As Gutierrez observes:

In the Bible the land is one object of the promise of life. The children of God are promised a land of their own in which they will live as the proper inhabitants and not as outsiders or strangers. A foreign land, on the contrary, is a place of injustice and death (for the Jewish people the prototypes of such a land were first, Egypt and, later on Babylon [...]). A “foreign” land is one that is hostile and has therefore lost its meaning as a gift from God. (2005:10-11)

The people of God have to own land of their own, a God-given land, and thus, for the Israelites, they have to leave Egypt and Babylon in order to secure their own land to which the nations have to come. It is from this land that the people of God are to receive the blessings of the Lord and show the glory of God. Thus, Solomon prayed this prayer to God at the dedication of the newly built Temple:

Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, comes from a far country for thy name’s sake (for they shall hear of thy great name, and thy mighty hand, and of thy outstretched arm), when he comes and prays towards this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to thee, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name. (1Kings 8:41-43; cf 1 Chronicles 16:23, 2Chronicles 32-33)

Furthermore, in 1Kings 10 God endowed Solomon with unusual wisdom as verses 23 and 24 explain: “Thus king Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind”.

With this understanding, the idea of being in exile is unacceptable to the people of God. It is also from this understanding that the exodus model of mission takes its roots.

### **2.5.2 The centrifugal model of mission**

The New Testament presents the centrifugal model as the main or controlling model for mission, but not as the exclusive one. Similarly to the Old Testament, the New Testament has the presence of centripetal models for mission. The centrifugal emphasises the “go” as opposed to the “come and see” of the centripetal. It has its roots firmly in the words of the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”. Here multiplication is mainly by conversion. Pro-creation is somehow underplayed and so is marriage as biological childbearing is replaced with spiritual childbearing. Unlike the centripetal model which requires the people of God to possess land, with the centrifugal model the people of God need not possess land as they are “in the world but not of the world”. They are sojourners and pilgrims on a pilgrimage. Thus, the New Testament people of God before being called Christians were known as “the people of the Way” (Acts 9:2). Of course, this refers to their belief in Jesus, the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6; Acts 19:9), but it can also refer to people on a pilgrimage, and since they are on the move, mixed marriage is not much of a problem (Matthew 8:19-20).

Within the centripetal and the centrifugal models in both the Old and the New Testaments is found the Abrahamic and the Exodus models of mission. God’s call to mission is understood from the point of view of these two models. The two models are both fundamental to the understanding of God’s call to mission, if not to the understanding of what mission is. There are many other models of mission in the Bible, but all other models have their foundation in the Abrahamic and the Exodus models.

### **2.5.3 The Abrahamic model**

The Abrahamic model of mission is the model of the people responding to God’s call to mission, taking God at his word, thereby placing their absolute trust in him as expressed by their willingness to leave the known and move on to the

unknown. It is a journey of faith. This model has its roots in the call of Abraham in which God said: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). God required Abraham to “leave and go”. The Abrahamic model of mission emphasises these two requirements: God’s command of leaving and going and the appropriate response to that command is believing and obeying. If anyone is to succeed in carrying out God’s mission these two requirements are non-negotiable, and they have to be met. Commenting on these requirements Wright argues that:

The story of Babel had brought an end to the hope and attempts of humankind to find their own means of blessing. Blessing will not come from within that world itself. Abraham must relinquish all that ties him to the land of Babylon before he can be a vehicle of blessing to the whole world. Babel, the climax of the problem portrayed in Genesis 3-11, cannot be the source of the solution to the problem. (2010:78)

Thus, the following paragraphs will examine certain concepts of the Abrahamic model.

**Leaving and Going:** God’s call to mission requires one to leave and go, and for Abraham it meant literally leaving all that was familiar to him, all that humanly speaking defined him and gave him identity in order to then venture into the unknown. For Adam and Eve, it meant leaving the self, the renunciation of self-promotion, status and the desire to be like God (Genesis 3:4-6). For Jesus it meant not exploiting his divine status (Philippians 2:5-8). Leaving and going means different things to different people depending on God’s call to different individuals, but there is always some form of leaving and going. Jesus emphasised the need for leaving when he said to his disciples, “if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25, Luke 9:23-24).

**Believing and Obeying:** In all of God’s call to mission, God states clearly that his relationship and fellowship is based on faith and obedience – God sets the boundary. He did this at the call of Adam as Genesis 2:15-17 states that, “the

Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’” God did the same at the call of Abraham as seen when considering leaving and going. Abraham was called to move on from the known to the unknown. He was promised children even though it was a known fact in human terms that it was humanly impossible for Sarah to have children (Genesis 18:11-12). Dyrness makes this observation: “His new name must have been an embarrassment to him: Father of many nations (Abraham when will your first nation be born?)” (1998:52). But Abraham took God at his word and promise, and he was even willing to sacrifice his only son, a son of old age, a son of the promise. For this reason, as the scripture says, “and he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:1-5). Thus, through Abraham’s faith and obedience, God set out on the mission of reclaiming back his creation, based on his condition. Likewise, Moses put forth a reminder to the Israelites before taking possession of the Promised Land the need for believing and obedience when he said, “and now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you except to listen carefully to all he says to you, and to obey for your own good the commandments I am giving you, and to love him, and worship him with all your hearts and souls” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

In the call of the disciples, which is also the call of the Church, Jesus did the same, as expressed in the opening words of the Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18-19). Jesus in these words is reminding the disciples (and the Church) that as they carry out the mandate given to them, they should always remember that they are not in charge. It is not their mission, but they are only messengers of him to whom belongs the authority. Even Jesus was aware of the boundaries set when he was sent on his earthly ministry. This can be seen clearly in his encounter with the devil during his temptation just before he began his ministry. The answers he gave the devil clearly show that he understood who he was and what his limits were (Matthew 4:4,7,10). Similarly, the answer he gave to John and James’ request: “‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you’. And he said to them, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ and

they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left hand in your glory...’, ‘but to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’” (Mark 10:35-40). Matthew’s account adds, “for whom it has been prepared by my Father” (Matthew 20:20-23).

#### **2.5.4 The Exodus model of mission**

The Exodus model is based on the Israelite’s experience of deliverance from slavery in the land of Egypt. In the Exodus narrative God’s dealings with the Israelites are described in detail – what he did for them and why. The Exodus narrative is found in chapters one to eighteen in the book of the Exodus, and in the story there are four areas of bondage that the Israelites suffered at the hands of Pharaoh. There is the political dimension, the economic dimension, the social dimension and the spiritual dimension. These dimensions are discussed next.

**Political Bondage:** The Israelites had come to Egypt as migrants and refugees at the time of famine, at the invitation of Pharaoh:

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “say to your brothers, ‘do this, Load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come to me and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat of the fat of the land’ command them also, ‘do this; take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come give no thought to your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours”. (Genesis 45:17-20)

Based on this invitation by Pharaoh who knew Joseph, the Israelites migrated to the land of Egypt and found favour in the eyes of the Egyptians of that generation. Glasser observes that though the Israelites were welcomed in the land of Egypt, they were made to live apart in Goshen, separate from the Egyptians due to the Egyptian abhorrence of shepherds (the Israelites were nomads and shepherds). Although this separation enabled them to maintain their ethnic identity and their own communal lifestyle, in the long run this worked against them (Glasser 2003:71). As Glasser explains:

The fact that they were placed in a restricted area for “separate development” (e.g. apartheid) was potentially harmful. Any deliberate segregation of the people even if undertaken for reasons that initially seem to be in their best interests inevitably proves harmful, since it restricts personal freedom and exposure to other people. So, it was with the Israelites in Goshen. (2003:71)

However, as Exodus 1:8 puts it, a new Pharaoh and a new generation of Egyptians arose who did not know Joseph, and the Israelites lost their political freedom as they had outlived their welcome. As Wright explains:

With a change of dynasty had come a change of policy towards them, and Exodus 1:8-10 portrays how vulnerable they were to being made the target of irrational fear, political cunning and unjust discrimination. They had no political freedom or voice within the Egyptian state, even though they had grown in numbers. In fact, their numerical growth is cited as one of the major reasons for the Egyptian hostility. (2006:268)

**Economic Bondage:** The Israelites lost their political freedom and had all other privileges withdrawn, and then Pharaoh used them as slave labour (Exodus 1:11-14). Thus, the Israelites were being exploited as slave labour and as years pass they grew in numbers and the Egyptians started regarding them as a security risk.

**Social Bondage:** The Egyptians started putting in place policies that touched the political sphere of the life of the Israelites (Exodus 1:8-10) and took away the political freedom and all other privileges they had by forcing economic oppression onto them (1:11-14). Then Pharaoh moved on to the social sphere and family life in particular with attempts at the extermination of all male Hebrew infants. As Wright observes:

The Pharaoh embarked on state-sponsored genocide-inciting “all his people” to a murderous campaign against Israelite’s male babies. So, the people suffer intolerable violation of fundamental human rights and aggressive interference in their family lives. Israelite families are made to live in constant fear. Nine months fear as every pregnant mother waited for the news that should

normally have brought great joy (“it’s a boy”) but would now bring terror and grief (Exodus 2:1-2). (2006:269)

**Spiritual Bondage:** In a situation where there is no political freedom, where there is economic oppression and interference with social life, especially with family life, there is also no religious freedom. This was the case with the Israelites in the land of Egypt. In Mathew 6:24 Jesus stated that “no one can serve two masters”. This is a plain fact, and the fact that Pharaoh claimed ownership of the Israelites, as slaves were considered the property of the master, it meant that the Israelites could not give to God his due service and worship. It is for this reason that God’s instructions to Moses were to bring the Israelites out of the land so that they could serve God: “But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain” (Exodus 3:12). The whole conflict was a spiritual conflict. Wright puts it this way: “A power encounter between the true divine power of YHWH and the usurped divine claims of Pharaoh and ‘all the gods of Egypt’” (2006:270). It was a conflict to ascertain who the true God is and who has claim over the nations, including Egypt.

In the Exodus story, God responds to all the dimensions of the Israelites’ needs. In all these responses God is not distant from the affairs of his people. Instead, God has a special concern for the well-being of his people, especially those who are being oppressed. This story shows that nothing is hidden from God; nothing happens without God noticing or knowing, both good and evil. It is with this in mind that the story of Job is told:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, “where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “from going to and fro, on the earth, and from walking up and down on it”. And the Lord said to Satan, “have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” (Job 1:6-8; 2:1-4)

In the Exodus model of mission, God challenges the reader to get to know who he really is. He is revealed as a compassionate God, the redeemer. He is God who is

not divorced from the affairs of his people nor indifferent to what is going on in his world. He is a living God who wants to be actively involved in the lives of his people. He is the God walking in his garden, searching out and asking: “Where are you? Where is your brother/sister?” and declaring, “I have seen [...] I have heard their cry [...] I know their suffering [...] I have come down to deliver”.

Thus, God’s call to mission both in the Old Testament and New Testament is understood from the point of view of the Abrahamic and the Exodus model of mission. These two models of mission are the foundation for the biblical understanding of mission. The Abrahamic model is the model of response to God’s call to mission from the people of God who take God at his word and leave the known and move to the unknown in faith. The Exodus model emphasises the Exodus not merely as an event in history, but as a pattern of life for the people of God. As the chosen people of God, the redeemed of the Lord, they are to live out the same qualities that moved or motivated God to act in the way that he did. They are to reflect the character of God in the way they behave towards others and in the way they treat others.

## **2.6 Reflection**

As has been explored in this chapter, the definition of the term mission influences the usage of the word and gives a position from which to articulate the understanding of the subject. It also influences one’s engagement in the ongoing debates on the subject. For instance, on the debate of whether mission is to be found in the Old Testament or not, or whether it is only confined to the New Testament, or on whether mission is only found between Genesis chapter 3 to Revelation chapter 20, with Genesis 1 to 2 and Revelation 21 to 22 having no references to mission.

When Kösternberger and O’Brien say that “there was no mission in the Garden of Eden and there will be no mission in the new heaven and new earth” (2001:251), which is also the position taken by Peters (1972:15), they are influenced by their definition of the term mission. In contrast, Kaiser argues that mission does not

have its root in the New Testament's gospel of the Great Commission. For Kaiser, "the Bible begins with the theme of missions in the book of Genesis and maintains that driving passion throughout the entire Old Testament and New Testament" (2000:7). He also sees Genesis 12:3 as the first Great Commission (Kaiser 2000:13). Wright takes the same position as Kaiser when he sees the call of Abraham as the Great Commission (2010:41).

Such differences in definition and understanding lead to Bosch talking about "a remarkable escalation in the usage of the word 'mission' among Christians" (1991:1), and Bevan and Schroeder acknowledge that "mission is notoriously difficult to define" (2004:25).

This thesis has taken Wright's definition of mission as its working definition. It sees mission as "one's purpose or reason for existence" (Wright 2010:23). This is also the definition that Kosternberger uses as his working definition: "mission as a specific task or purpose which a person or group seek to accomplish, involving various models of movement, be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering by calling others to follow or following" (1998:41). These definitions see mission not only from the salvation or redemption point of view, but from a broader point of view. It puts an emphasis on being chosen or set apart for a task or function within God's creation. This being the case, mission is to be found in both the Old and New Testaments, even in those sections of the Bible that do not have redemption activities in them such as Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22. Those found in these parts of the biblical narrative have a purpose to be there. They have a reason for their existence, be it worshipping or singing. Whatever the case, they have a reason for existence and an assigned mission from God. This definition, therefore, concludes that mission is to be found both in the Old and New Testaments, and leads to an agreement with Kirk that the Bible is a book about mission from beginning to end, and with Glasser who states that "the whole Bible, both Old and New Testament, is a missionary book, the revelation of God's purpose and action in mission in human history" (2003:17).

In the call of Adam, God set up the pattern for his kingdom. Adam was given the mandate to rule, populate and care for creation. There was harmony between humans and God, between man and woman, and between the whole created order. Although God pronounced the newly created world as very good (Genesis 1:31), the goodness is that of potential goodness, that is, it needs to be cared for and developed in order to realise its full goodness. Adam and Eve represented humanity and were set apart for this task: to populate and civilise the earth and to develop a God-ward culture in the new and cultureless world. It is here that the cultural mandate is given (Genesis 1:28). However, Adam and Eve failed to fulfill this mandate and instead they created a Godless culture.

In the call of Abraham God began afresh his mission for the creation of his kingdom. Abraham was called as the “second Adam” to participate in God’s mission of creating a community with a God-ward culture that would bring about God’s blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:1-2). But at this point mission takes on the redemptive notion. Thus, God’s mandate for mission to humanity becomes a “twofold mandate” – the salvation or redemption mandate and the cultural mandate. The two mandates stand side by side, as the status of humanity stood at that time (and as the current status still stands) (Genesis 6:5). The cultural mandate cannot be fulfilled without fulfilling the redemption mandate. The purpose of the salvation or redemption mandate is to set humanity free from the effects of sin caused by the fall, so that they are free to carry forth the cultural mandate.

Similarly to the call of the first Adam, God set the boundary for Abraham. First, he was asked to “leave [...] and go” (Genesis 12:1), then later he was asked to sacrifice his beloved and only long-awaited son (Genesis 22:2). In all these, Abraham proved his faith, obedience and loyalty to God, and thus he passed the test. As Paul put it: “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:3). It is worth noting that the redemption mandate does not begin with the disciples in the New Testament, issuing from the command in the Great Commission. It has its roots in the call of Abraham in Genesis 12. Indeed, the call of Abraham is God’s first step in the history of salvation. Thus, it is here that the redemption or salvation mandate begins, and because of this the

call of Abraham is fundamental to the understanding of mission. When creation was under God's judgment God called Abraham to begin a new community through whom God's purpose to bring back the fallen creation into fellowship with God and with one another was to be accomplished.

The choice of Abraham to be an instrument through whose descendants all the nations of the world would be blessed is portrayed in Revelation 7. It is not because of Abraham's merit, but rather because of the grace of God. All that Abraham had to do was to trust God and set out on a journey to his new home, making himself available to be the father of a family that would be the nucleus of a nation through which the re-creation of the kingdom of God could be accomplished. The Abrahamic journey of faith, obedience and loyalty lead on through Abraham's son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel, and from whom come the 12 tribes of Israel. It carried on to Moses and the founding of the nation of Israel in the Exodus experience. The journey was concluded, though not in the sense of coming to a closed end, by settling in the "Promised Land" under the kingship of David as the ideal king, the "man after God's own heart".

With David, God's covenant with Abraham is re-affirmed and God makes another covenant with David in his promise of a son as the eternal king who is to lead God's people into his rest, God's Sabbath. During this time of peace, Jerusalem became world centre of pilgrimage for all nations. The temple that was built in Jerusalem provided a permanent symbolic presence and dwelling place for God (Acts 2:5; 8:27-28). However, the time of peace did not last forever. The kings who followed David did not live up to God's call but followed their own hearts and worshipped other foreign gods, thus having no trust in God as their king and protector. As has been acknowledged earlier in this chapter, living in God's land demands unquestioning faith, absolute trust and undivided loyalty. The Israelites violated God's covenant, and thus they became unfit to live in the kingdom God. They became unfit to live in their God-given land just like Adam and Eve with the consequence of eviction from the kingdom, from God's Promised Land (an echo of the scattering of humanity at Babel) (Genesis 3:22-24; 11:6-9).

The sending of the Israelites away from the promised land into exile entails a sense of the ending of God's mission that started with the call of Abraham. It might imply an end to Abraham's mission for the creation of a God-ward culture and community and the end of the project to re-establish the kingdom after the manner of the Garden of Eden. But unlike Adam's call to mission which was a complete failure, Abraham's call was not a total failure, but was rather only a setback because there still remained some pockets of people who were faithful to God. These people were called the 'remnant'. Through the remnant God was to continue fulfilling his promise of the kingdom for his people and the blessing of the whole of his creation. The sending of the nation of Israel into exile was more of a disciplinary measure so that there was some kind of purging –the purification of the remnant. It was out of the remnant that the promised son of David, the seed of the woman, the Messiah, was to come. It is within this background that the call of Jesus is to be understood (Luke 1:26-38; 2: 8-14; Matthew 1:18-25).

The call of Jesus to mission is the last and final initiative in God's purpose for the creation of a community with a God-ward culture – the kingdom of God. In Jesus, God chose to use himself by being born as a man through the incarnation. In being born as man, God decided to identify himself with his creation. Therefore, the call of Jesus to mission is special and unique. In Jesus, God is both the sender and the one who is sent, the messenger and the message, the Holy one and the one who judges, the one who punishes and the one who redeems. Moreover, in Jesus the important divine offices of king, priest and prophet are embodied.

Similar to earlier callings to mission, that of the first Adam and the second Adam, in the call of Jesus as the third Adam God set the boundaries as a form of test as seen in the temptation narrative. Jesus was tempted to see if he counted equality with God as a thing to be grasped (Philippians 2:6), to see if he would abuse his divine power and his relationship with the Father for his personal satisfaction. This he refused to do, and thus he passed the test, proving that good can overcome evil through faith, obedience and loyalty. Jesus, having passed the test, was now ready for the task of creating a community with a God-ward culture through the disciples, through whom the Church came into being, and their task of spreading the good news. This good news was the fact that, finally, the call of the first

Adam and the second Adam had been fulfilled in the call of the third Adam. Nations could now come and enjoy God's blessings because God, in Christ, had conquered death and banished sorrow and despair through his death and resurrection. The seed of the woman had finally crushed the serpent's head, so the whole creation was therefore welcome to come to him in repentance and share his victory. The Church in this case has a task of preparing the whole creation for the second coming of Jesus in order to usher in the kingdom of God. This restoration of the kingdom, after the pattern of the Garden of Eden, represents the opportunity for the whole creation to enter into God's Sabbath.

## **CHAPTER THREE: MISSION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Mission is best encountered by exploring the divine drama of God's acts in calling and setting apart a people for himself. To do this, the chapter will look at God's plan for mission by using the divisions of the grand narrative or the biblical story and the kingdom concept as a guide and by considering God's call for mission in these divisions. In the first and second divisions (creation and the fall), the call of Adam will be discussed. In the third division, the redemption, the call of Abraham will be considered, which leads into the call of the nation Israel as the chosen people of God.

It is worth noting that the term "call" or "calling" is being used in this study to mean two things. First, the term is used to mean bringing into being. For instance, Adam's call looks at coming into being or being created. Second, Abraham's call looks at being called from a former engagement to a new engagement or office, meaning that one was not doing the work that one is now doing. This is what is meant by the call of the prophets. Amos 7:12-15 explains what it means to be called by God to the office of a prophet, and to any other office in the mission of God.

### **3.2 Creation**

In considering mission in the Old Testament, that is, looking at God's plan for mission, this chapter will look at three of the four plot movements of the biblical storyline that fall in the Old Testament (that is the creation, the fall and the redemption) and see how God's plan for mission fits into the biblical storyline.

Genesis 1 and 2 set the tone for God's initial plan for mission. In Genesis 1:1-2, it says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters". These verses seem to indicate

that the heavens and the earth were in existence but in disorder. They present a picture of a situation with total chaos, darkness and disorder – a situation of things or a system out of control. God’s plan is to bring order out of this chaos and to bring light and control. As Kösternberger and O’Brien observe, “from the opening verse of the chapter, God’s control over all creation was asserted” (2001:26).

In the verses that follow, detailed explanations are given of how creation was carried out, marked by days and evaluation from God, “and there was evening and there was morning [...] and God saw that it was good”. At the completion of creation “God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning a sixth day” (Genesis 1:31). All the acts of creation were completed in six days, and on the sixth day God created human beings in God’s own likeness: “Then God said, ‘let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness’” (Genesis 1:26). As DeYoung and Gilbert put it, human beings “were created as the crowning act of God’s creation and designed as his image bearers” (2011:70).

The creation account in chapter one ends with God’s overall evaluation of his creation, and God was very pleased with what he saw of the work that he had done, “and behold it was very good” (v. 31). As usual, every good work brings about satisfaction and relaxation and so on the seventh day God rested. The creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 gives the initial plan. Okoye commenting on Genesis chapter one writes that “Genesis 1 is considered to unfold the blueprint for mission, in that it depicts both the purpose of creation and the responsibility of humanity in it and for it” (2006:24). At the conclusion of the two chapters God set the pattern of how he intended his creation to be, thereby setting up the pattern for his kingdom. Thus, God’s plan for mission is the creation of a good, harmonious and perfect world that reflects who God is and tells the story of the nature and character of God.

The first indication of God’s plan for the world appears in the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2. Here lies the root of God’s plan for mission in the world and it is presented at two levels. First, God’s plan for the mission in relation to the whole

of his creation, including humankind and second, God's plan for mission in relation to humankind alone – this is *missio Dei*.

In considering God's plan for mission in the first and second chapters of Genesis, it is important to note the challenge surrounding the definition of mission. Mission is in most cases overshadowed by, or seen in the light of, salvation history. It is as Pretorius, Odendaal, Robinson and Van der Merwe observe:

The creation theme may never be considered apart from the salvation theme (cf Psalm 136, Isaiah 40-55). Although creation comes before salvation, it is as saviour that we get to know God as creator (cf Duran 1982:80-84). How even in its own peculiar way the creation theme points to God's power, wisdom, righteousness and love in creating and ruling the universe [...] It is not only in the light of God's salvation power, but also in the light his creation power [...] The God who created is the one to be worshipped. (1987:12-130)

In most cases, the study of Genesis 1 and 2 is closely connected to Genesis 3-11. Even in structuring the Bible, creation is put together with Genesis 3-11 with Genesis 1-11 as just one component in the narrative. In line with this study's working definition which seeks to liberate mission from the salvation or redemption motif, Genesis 1 and 2 will be treated as a separate section or component from Genesis 3-11.

Creation is central to the understanding of God's plan for mission and it should be given space to stand on its own. The story of the Bible is a journey from creation in Genesis to new creation in Revelation. Thus, Wright argues that "a Bible stripped of its beginning and its ending produces a concept of mission that is distorted" (2010:48).

God's plan for the whole creation is to put all things in order, thereby creating a world where all things, the whole created order, would fit in accordingly. This is a world of harmony between God and his creation, and among all of God's creatures. It is a world in which all of God's creatures would live in perfect peace and perfect rest. In short, God's plan is to set up his kingdom. God's creatures, living in God's land, under God's rule and control, enjoying God's blessing and

fellowship. Isaiah 65:17-25 presents a picture of God's initial plan for his creation for his world.

Although this passage is a prophecy for the future that talks about restoration, it also presents a picture of God's initial plan and intention for his creation – a world where all of God's creatures are to co-exist, living as true neighbours in perfect harmony: “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isaiah 65:25; Isaiah 11:9). In this new created world, even the diet has to change back to the original diet as God gave to the first humans in the first chapter of Genesis 1:29-30. The current diet was due to the wickedness of humans. God then decided to destroy the whole creation by flood, but Noah found favour in the sight of God. Noah was instructed to build an Ark in which God saved him and his family, and two of every living thing from the flood. When Noah and his family, and the all the living things that were in the ark, came out after 150 days, their diet was disturbed as all the fruits and seeds which made up the original diet was destroyed by the flood. God had no other choice but to allow them to eat flesh (Genesis 9:3-4). But in the original order of living, God's creatures were not to fight for food or kill for food; they were to pick at will. Life was not meant to be a survival of the fittest and competition for gain or dominion for jurisdiction.

At creation all of God's creatures were to live in fellowship and peace, fully aware of who they are and why they have been created. The whole creation was to be full of the knowledge of God and the fear of the Lord. There was to be no sin and no consequences of sin as that is the curse brought about by Adam and Eve's disobedience: “Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring fourth to you [...] In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Genesis 3:17-19). There was to be harmony, fellowship and friendship between God and his creation, and harmony, fellowship and friendship among the creation.

Genesis 1:26-31 defines humankind's purpose and place in God's plan. God's plan for humankind is that humans will reflect God's character and nature in creation, and his plan is for them to live in perfect fellowship and harmony with

God, maintaining the image mentioned in Genesis 1:1-2, that is, the orderly force or spirit bringing about order in a chaotic situation.

Unlike any other creatures, humans were created in the image of God and after God's own likeness, which means that humans were to enjoy a special and unique relationship with God. It is as DeYoung and Gilbert (2011:71-72) have commented that in the "very good" world that God created, human beings were to occupy a unique and privileged position. They were not only to rule the world under God's ultimate authority serving as God's vice-regents, but they were also to live in relationship with him as other creatures in all creation. They were to live and walk with him in perfect fellowship as his sons and daughters.

Okoye also makes this observation: "In Genesis 1, rather than human beings being created for the relief of the gods, God created everything for the sake of human beings. God created the world as a place for human beings and as where God can dwell with them as in a sanctuary" (2006:32).

An image represents the original thing in its nature and being, otherwise it is not an image, but rather an imitation or a fake representation. Man and woman are not an imitation of God or a fake image of God; they are the actual image of God. From the beginning, humanity has the duty to reflect God's image and it is the nature of human beings to do so. For this is the reason humanity was created; it is their reason for existence and it is humanity's mandate. As Okoye states:

The creator of the heavens, who shaped the earth and made it, did not create it to be chaos, but formed it to be lived in (cf Isaiah 45:18). The earth was created in a "frontier" state, and human beings under God are to "green" the earth, subdue and beautify it. As "image of God" they are viceroys of the creator and to bring God's creation to the purposes intended by God. God has already created everything according to its kind, each according to its species, with inherent laws proper for each. These laws will serve human beings as a blueprint for their stewardship over creation. (2006:33-34)

In God's plan, human beings were meant to live forever and not to die: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the

garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Genesis 2:16-17). This passage implies that dying is the result of disobedience; it comes from the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is a choice that Adam and Eve had to make, eat of it and die, or do not eat of it and live forever. Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and death came about: “Therefore sin came into the world through one man and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all men sinned” (Romans 5:12). But it was not God’s original intention that humans should die, rather, death came as the result of disobedience.

In God’s plan, human beings as God’s image bearers were meant to live in perfect harmony and fellowship with God and with the whole creation. Besides living in harmony and fellowship with others, human beings were also meant to live in perfect harmony and peace with each other. They were to live a balanced life and thereby bring about the balance of nature. For this God embodied in the human person the three divine offices, that of king, prophet and priest. These three divine offices were developed later when Israel became a nation, especially under the monarchs, where the office of king, priest and prophet became a role to bring about balance in the life of the community. However, at creation these roles were embodied in one person, and with these divine offices in them, man and woman lived in peace and gratitude accepting their unique dignified role as the image of the only God, knowing that they were called into being to represent God’s kingship in all areas of life throughout the whole created order on earth. Thus, there was no need for a king as God himself was their king. They lived in fellowship with God, at peace with God, with one another and with the rest of the creation. They lived in God’s rest with no fear, no feeling of guilt and no shame. Thus, there was no need for a priest. They lived in fellowship with God and God spoke to them directly, freely and openly, and thus there was no need for a prophet (someone else to be the mouthpiece of God).

The first humans were mandated to rule over and care for God’s creation, and they were to be kings on behalf of God. It is as DeYoung and Gilbert (2011:71) observe that Adam and Eve, besides living in fellowship with God, were also mandated to rule over and care for creation, having dominion over it as God’s

vice-regents. The whole creation was given to them to rule, of course not by abusing, tyrannising and exploiting it, but instead by working and keeping it. This authority that was given to them over creation was not absolute; it was authority deriving from and subject to God's own rule over the creation.

In God's original plan, humans were not meant to be kings over fellow humans. The correct understanding or meaning of a king is to be a shepherd or someone who leads others on God's behalf. Jesus explained this to the disciples:

A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:24-27)

Thus, this conversation of Jesus with his disciples showed the misunderstanding of the role of a ruler or king. When Israel request a king at the time that Samuel was leading them, Samuel raised the same concerns that Jesus was pointing out to his disciples, and he warned the Israelites about the ways of kings in 1Samuel 8:10-18.

The creation story of Genesis 1 and 2 shows that the world is a created one, by God as a good world. God's intention for the world is that it should be populated with his creatures under the rule of God through humans who are made in his image. God intends for humans to be a kingdom of priests. God's world is a world that is to reflect his glory and points continually to the beauty and goodness of the creator. God's plan for humans in his creation is that humans are to be the centre of creation. The whole creation is instated on humans and for humans (Blauw 1962:18).

This is God's plan for his creation where "all is very good" and where all of God's creation exists in perfect harmony and fellowship with God and with one another. As mentioned earlier, it is a world where all things, the whole created

order, would fit in accordingly, a world in which God through man would be in total control which tells the story of who God is and reflects the glory and attributes of God. The Psalmist explained that the heavens tell the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his hard work. And that each day pours forth speech and each night declares knowledge. Even though no speech, no words, no voices are heard, their voice goes out through all the earth and their words reach out to the ends of the world (Psalm 19:1-4). Ashford puts it this way:

In creation, God established a kingdom to display his glory. He formed the world out of nothing, and he ordered it to manifest his glory and goodness. He formed and ordered a world in which the final act was to create human beings. He created a place for his people and called them to live life under his providential blessing and rule. God placed Adam and Eve in the garden and provided for them perfectly, and they related to him intimately. He was their God and they were his people. God had established his plan and promised his continual provision. By relying on God and trusting him, displaying their knowledge of God and their love for him, Adam and Eve enjoyed his blessing. At the end of creation, Adam and Eve were in the garden enjoying fully all of God's blessings (2011:30).

Burnett similarly argues that “the creation was a demonstration of the very nature and character of God, as Paul points out in Romans 1:20, ‘For since the creation of the world God’s qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made’” (1996:25).

### **3.2.1 Adam’s mission**

Adam’s call to mission comes at a time when all was in perfect harmony and at the time when God had just finished and evaluated his work of creation. It is worth noting that the goodness of creation that Genesis 1:31 talks about is not the goodness of a perfect finished product that does not require working on, but it is the potential goodness. Dyrness (1998:32) observes that creation was pronounced good and it had already realised what God had in mind. But there still remained, in another sense, a higher purpose that God had envisioned. Thus, the good of creation, in this sense, was only a potential good. Its real glory would not be seen until someone brought out all that lay buried in its depth. There was the need for

someone to till and keep it and to tame its abundance. Adam's task was to "cultivate" and bring out the good that was in creation and to create a God-ward culture in a world where culture of any kind had not yet been created. By so doing Adam would protect, prevent and preserve creation from any harm. It was under this potentially perfect order that God set before Adam his task. In other words, Adam began on a "blank sheet of paper".

It is also worth noting that Genesis 3 is not the introduction of sin into the universe. Sin had entered the universe long before Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden, as Dumitrescu observes:

The battle between the forces of good and evil left an indelible mark on the history of the planet. Paul even speaks of a plan made ages before the earth came into existence, a plan which detailed God's mission and decision to send Jesus to rescue humanity. This cosmic conflict was already in full swing by the time Adam and Eve walked in the garden. The same conflict required humans to protect the garden as a sign of God's dominion over creation. The free choice given to humans was only a natural ingredient of the battle. (2008:55)

Genesis 2:16-17 indicates that there were two forces existing at the time Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden: good and evil. It means that there was the potential for the development and maintenance of the kingdom of God which had its roots in the force of good through obedience. Through faith, obedience and loyalty humanity would maintain the image of God. However, there was also the potential of developing the kingdom of darkness by living a sinful life which had its roots in the force of evil through disobedience. Through disobedience humanity would develop the opposite of the kingdom of God – the kingdom of darkness. It was a matter of choice, and humanity chose the kingdom of darkness through disobedience, thereby distorting the image of God in them and derailing God's plan for creating his kingdom set after the pattern of Eden.

Genesis 2 describes how God set apart humans from the rest of his creatures and made a beautiful garden for them, specifically planted for them to live in. The garden set the environment under which God expected his creatures under the leadership of humans to live. They were in God's peace and rest, God's pattern

for his Sabbath. Glasser calls it “the primeval paradise” (2003:39). Here humanity was expected to live as “God’s people in God’s land under God’s rule, enjoying God’s blessing” (Roberts 2004:23). All life in the Garden of Eden was peaceful according to God’s plan, as Bartholomew and Goheen argue:

At the beginning the creation is redolent with shalom, the Old Testament word for peace, meaning the rich, integrated, relational wholeness God intends for his creation. The life of Adam and Eve is the life of shalom. They walk with God, they have each other, the garden provides all they need as they till its fertile soil and prune its burgeoning plants. There is no storm cloud on this horizon, no hint of trouble to come. (2014:40)

But humans were not content with living under God’s rule: “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4). With Adam and Eve, things did not go as God had planned and purposed. Burnett (1998:33) explains that by listening to the serpent Adam rejected his role as vice-regent with the responsibility to guard God’s creation. He thus showed himself willing to be directed by creation and not by the creator. He further refused to carry out the mission of the cultural mandate under God’s direction and for God’s glory.

Ott and Straus (2010:6) argue that Adam and Eve’s sin was a matter of distrusting God’s goodness and rebelling against his loving authority over their lives. At creation there was perfect harmony between God and humanity. The purpose of man and woman was to love and glorify God, but the heart of sin is the rejection of such a relation with God. The kingdom of God consists in essence of living under God’s righteousness and loving reign, but sin rebels against that reign.

### **3.3 The Fall**

As noted in the earlier chapters, the fall is the second division in the grand narrative, running from Genesis 3 to Genesis 11. It tells a sad and heart-breaking story of how God’s perfect and harmonious creation is spoilt and of how God’s set pattern of the kingdom is altered and transformed to what God did not intend it to be. Roberts describes it as being altered from the pattern of the kingdom to the

perished kingdom, while Bartholomew and Goheen call it rebellion in the kingdom. In Genesis 1-2, God set up the pattern of how he intended the creation to be a perfect and harmonious one: “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). Thus, God established his kingdom, setting up the pattern of how his kingdom was to be, with humanity as the pinnacle of his creation. God is king over the whole of his creation, but he set humans apart from the rest of his creatures. He created man and woman in his own image after his likeness and they were to enjoy a unique relationship with God. Humans were set as rulers over the non-human part of creation (Genesis 1:26, 28). They were given a great responsibility, but this responsibility had to be exercised with attention to who they are before God. This accountability and responsibility to God is captured by Bartholomew and Goheen who explain that “in the kingdom, which he has set up by creating it, the special role he has assigned to humanity is that we should serve as his ‘under kings’ vice-regents or stewards. We are to rule over creation so that God’s reputation is enhanced within his cosmic kingdom” (2014:34). This is what was required of Adam and Eve and is what is still required of humankind. Like any of God’s calls to mission, God had set up the boundary for its true operation: “And the Lord commanded the man, saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die’” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Being God’s people, living in God’s given land, under God’s rule and enjoying God’s blessing is a call to a life of faith, obedience and loyalty. It is a call to the journey of faith. It is accepting that humans have been created as faith beings. This life journey demands unquestioning faith, absolute trust and undivided loyalty, and this is what was required of Adam and Eve. They were called to a life journey of faith, obedience and loyalty. Thus, the journey of faith, obedience and loyalty did not begin with the call of Abraham, but rather began at creation. Earlier in the chapter it is explained that sin entered the universe long before Adam and Eve were put in the garden (Genesis 2:15-17). This means that Adam and Eve were created to develop and maintain the “potentially good creation” through their faith, obedience and loyalty to prove that evil could be overcome through faith, obedience and loyalty. They were entrusted with the cultural

mandate so that the kingdom that God had put in place would be populated with a God-ward cultured community.

It is worth noting that the argument that Satan used to persuade Eve to eat of the forbidden tree was not disputed by God (Genesis 3:4). In fact, God affirmed it in Genesis 3:22. This means that in all of God's calls to mission, in the journey of faith, obedience and loyalty, what is required of those called is not right or wrong, or truth or falsehood, but rather unquestioning faith and obedience which shows absolute trust and undivided loyalty. In this Adam and Eve failed God, and through their disobedience they developed a rebellious community in God's kingdom. God was left with no other option but to evict them from his kingdom, for the kingdom of God is not for rebels but for his obedient children. God had no other option but to let humans go the way they had chosen to go, away from his kingdom.

God stood as king and judge before Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They made their choice and so they got what goes with the choice they had made: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you shall eat of it you shall die". Subsequently, God pronounced his verdict on the serpent, the man and the woman (Genesis 3:16-19). In the verdict to the serpent is contained a promise that at some point in time the woman's seed will crush the head of the serpent thereby delivering a defeating blow to the serpent. This brings about the good news that at some point in time God will restore back his kingdom as he had set it up before the rebellion.

The Garden of Eden, as has been noted earlier, was perfect home for God's creatures. However, instead of developing a God-ward culture, Adam and Eve developed a culture that was contrary to the initial mandate. This culture brought on humanity and the whole creation terrible consequences with a series of curses as seen from Genesis 3:14-19. Commenting on this, Tennent (2010:106) argues that the entrance of sin and the brokenness of the human race apart from God is what is referred to as the fall. He further explains that the chapters that follow (Genesis 6-11) develop cycles of human rebellion and wickedness that culminate

in the narrative about Noah (Genesis 6-9) and the Tower of Babel experience where many languages were introduced which led to the creation of many different communities, and these communities created different cultures. The cultures in turn determined the identities of the communities that created them.

The effect of sin on humans is both personal and systematic. The separation is not only of individuals from God, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid”, but also a fracturing of all relationships, “Am I my brother’s Keeper?” and society (the world of Noah). The effect does not only affect humans; even the soil is cursed, which is a clear demonstration that the whole creation is affected by the willful pursuit of human autonomy.

Humanity in Adam and Eve chose to be independent of God, and their eating of the forbidden tree was a quest for autonomy. They desired to separate themselves from God. God had no other alternative at this stage but to grant them their desire. But this meant sending them out of his land, his kingdom, because it was his land and only those who desire to be under his rule and delight in him could live in it and enjoy his blessing. Thus, this brought forth the breaking down of all relationships. Ashford lists the broken relationships as the broken relationship with God, with others, with self and with the created order (2011:10-11). Fear and shame came in, mistrust and the pointing of fingers became their lifestyle, and then came God’s verdict: curses on the serpent, the woman and the man, ending in being driven out of the garden. Since humans had chosen not to live according to God’s established order but instead wanted to live according to their own order, they were no longer fit for God’s kingdom; they were now citizens of another kingdom.

Genesis chapters 4 to 11 describe the transformation of humans from faith beings to faithless and careless beings. It provides the information of the effects of disobedience and how humanity had lost its initial status. In the biblical storyline or grand narrative divisions this section is referred to as “the perished kingdom” (Roberts 2002:37) or “rebellion in the kingdom” (Bartholomew & Goheen 2014:39). As the human family grew on earth, sin and disobedience also multiplied, and the family experienced the first loss of a member as Cain killed

his brother and refused to take responsibility for his actions. Chapters 6-9 give a picture of the damning condition of the status of creation which results in God deciding to destroy the world by the flood, leaving only the family of Noah with a pair of every kind of unclean bird and unclean animal and seven pairs of clean birds and clean animals (Genesis 7). After the flood God reaffirmed the command given to Adam in Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea” (Genesis 9:1-2). God also added a component for their diet since all the seeds and fruits of the earth were destroyed by the flood, and he gave them the commandment not to kill their neighbour:

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; every beast I will require it and of man; of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply it. (Genesis 9:3-7)

God then made a covenant with Noah for the well-being of his creation (Genesis 9:8-13). The narrative division of the “perished kingdom” ends with the scattering of humanity abroad over the whole face of the earth after they try to comply with the Lord’s command of being fruitful and multiplying the earth. Like their forefather Adam, they were still concerned with leading a life of their own without God. They sought independence from God and attempted to create their own kingdom (Genesis 11:1-9). Thus, the Babel experience is the opposite of the Pentecost experience (Acts 2), for the Babel experience sees God’s introduction of many languages as a tool for preventing humanity from creating their own universal kingdom (Genesis 11:5-9). In the Pentecost experience the speaking in tongues was a demonstration that the Holy Spirit is able to overcome the confusion brought about by the introduction of many languages at Babel. God’s plan for mission cannot in any way be distracted by any language barrier. The speaking in tongues at the Pentecost experience is the tool that God uses for the

creation of the kingdom of God and it helps with the ingathering of God's chosen people (Acts2:41-42).

### **3.4 The Redemption**

Goheen (2014:42) observes that redemption refers to the recovery of a son who is part of the family but has been alienated. Redemption is the return of this son to his proper relationship. Humans as God's image bearers and vice-regents are enslaved, but God intervenes to restore them to their proper place in God's creation.

Genesis 12 marks the beginning of God's plan for redemption and the reclaiming of his kingdom. It also marks the beginning of the two mandates, the cultural and the salvation mandates, existing as two stages in the creation of a God-ward culture. As noted previously, God's purpose for mission was to create a world that reflected his character and nature and a world in which his creation through humans would enjoy God's peace and rest where God was in total control. After the fall the world, through humanity's disobedience, developed a Godless culture that sought independence from God and doubted the trustworthiness of God. This culture had a serious moral lapse. In short, humanity developed a culture that was the opposite of God's initial plan or intention. Humanity's mandate after the fall, therefore, was not to deal with a cultureless world, but rather to develop a God-ward culture in a Godless world. At creation the task was more like developing a culture in a newborn baby, while after the fall, the task is more like developing a culture in an adult who has already been immersed in some other culture, or like bringing up or teaching a child some culture in the midst of other teachers of different cultures.

With Abraham God wanted to start afresh his plan for the establishment of his kingdom, and to do this he needed to separate Abraham from the community he was living in, as it was a community with a Godless culture. Kosternberger and O'Brien call it "a fractured and disastrously broken society that had lost any sense

of God-centeredness” (2001:28). For Abraham to begin a new community of the people of God, like Adam, he needed to be in a God-appointed or prepared land:

Now the Lord said to Abram; “Go from your country and from your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves”.

So, Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (Genesis 12:1-4)

In the Old Testament being a community or people was bound up with possessing land. Dyrness (1991:50) explains that one could not live without land as in land possession the original created purposes for man and woman were recalled and reflected God in their task in the context of creation. Throughout generations land has continued to be fundamental to the consciousness of humanity and if humanity is to bear God’s special blessing it has to be in some created context a special place in which they can express themselves and worship the Lord.

Land gives a community identity and defines the relationship that a community has, among itself, neighbours, the environment and the giver of land. In the case of the people of God, land defined who they were before God, and the relationship they had with God and the whole created order. It is for this reason that the Israelites while in Egypt asked to be allowed to go somewhere to worship God: “The God of the Hebrews has met with us, let us go, we pray, a three days journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to our God” (Exodus 5:3).

In Egypt they had no identity, no name and no relationship with the gods of that land. This is the same in any other place or land of exile. It is with this understanding that Psalm 137 was composed:

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? (Psalm 137:1-4)

It is also with this understanding that it became easier to understand why the Israelites kept turning away from the way of Yahweh. Yahweh had no choice but to send them into exile away from their God-given land. They had no right to be in that land because they had chosen not to live up to their identity and thereby had broken their relationship with God. It is the land that gives them their identity as the people of God.

In the call of Abraham, God began his plan of restoration by bringing back his creation into fellowship with himself and with one another. The formation of a nation with a God-ward culture meant that Abraham had to leave all that the people of that time regard as giving someone personal identity and security – one’s native land, one’s past and one’s family ties. God’s call to mission is a displacement from the known to the unknown, from the seemingly secure to the seemingly insecure, and from the seen to the unseen. Thus, the call of Abraham was a journey of faith.

In Genesis 12, Abraham set on an actual journey to the land of the promise, which was at the same time the second phase of the journey of faith, obedience and loyalty in God’s plan for mission. Once again, God set the limits of his promise to Abraham. In the call of Adam God set the boundaries of his call. For Adam it came as a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For Abraham it came as the following condition: “Leave your own country behind you, and your own people and go to the land I will guide you to. If you do, I will cause you to become the father of a great nation; I will bless you and make your name famous, and you will be a blessing to many others” (The Living Bible, Genesis 12:1-2). The fulfillment of God’s promise depended on Abraham leaving and going away, believing and obeying. To see if Abraham had “left his own” and gone to “the life of faith”, God requested him to sacrifice his only long-awaited son, and Abraham obediently gave his son. God was happy with Abraham’s faith and he made a covenant with him (Genesis 22:1-19).

Wenham (in Bartholomew & Goheen 2014:54) observes that God’s promise to Abraham renews his vision for humanity as set out in Genesis 1 and 2. Abraham

like Noah before him was the second Adam figure. Adam was given the Garden of Eden, God's special prepared place: Abraham was promised the land flowing with milk and honey, the land of Canaan. Adam was instructed to be fruitful and multiply: Abraham was promised descendants as numerous as the stars in heaven which cannot be counted. God walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden: Abraham walked before God. Thus, the call of Abraham can be seen as the answer to the problem set out in Genesis 1-11.

It is worth noting that what God requires for those he chooses is to co-operate with him in the whole process of building his kingdom. In all of God's calls to mission, in the journey of faith, what is required of those called is not a question of right or wrong. In this case, God would not have asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, which is a practice that God warned the Israelites not to be found guilty of (Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10). Here what God requires is not truth or falsehood, or God would have disputed the devil's argument in Genesis 3:4-5, instead God requires trust and unquestioning faith (absolute trust) and obedience, and undivided loyalty which is an expression of love. In the same way, in the call of Abraham there were boundaries set as he was required to leave and this was a call of displacement without which all that was promised could not be fulfilled. Then came the test of his life. The first promise given to Abraham was to make him a great nation and to give him the children he had been longing for (Genesis 15:2; 17:18-19). When finally the child of the promise came, God asked Abraham to present him as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-3), and Abraham gladly offered Isaac to God in complete trust (Genesis 22:7-14).

In calling Abraham and making a covenant with him, God was entrusting Abraham with a mission of creating communities of faith, obedience and loyalty. Wright argues that Abraham must create "communities committed to walking the ways of the Lord in the world of nations that were walking the ways of Sodom – transformed communities that would present a stark contrast to the Sodom around them" (2010:86). On the importance of the figure of Abraham, Wright makes this observation: "It would not be an exaggeration to say that Abraham is the most important figure in Paul's understanding of the gospel – second only to Jesus. For what God had accomplished in Christ was nothing less than what he had promised

in Abraham, to bring about the blessing of all nations on earth” (2010:75). From Abraham’s response the growth of a family is seen: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel and from whom came the 12 tribes of the nation Israel. Israel (Jacob) and his sons ended up in Egypt as famine turned them into economic refugees. They were later enslaved by Pharaoh. While in Egypt the Israelites multiplied in number, and under the leadership of Moses with God’s mighty hand they came out of Egypt in the Exodus. The Exodus marks the beginning or movement from a tribe to a nation – the nation of Israel.

### **3.4.1 The divine offices**

When God’s plan for mission was explored earlier, the study looked at the popular concepts of the Messiah which had emerged in Jewish expectations. In answering the question “who is Jesus?” in this section, what has been previously discussed about God’s plan for mission in the New Testament will not be repeated. Instead, this section attempts to add to these reflections by considering the characteristics which are embodied in humanity at creation, characteristics which later develop and are referred to as the “anointed offices” of prophet, priest and king.

In the Old Testament these three offices are developed as Israel becomes a nation, especially under the monarchy. The role of these offices of king, priest and prophet was to bring about balance in the life of the individual and the community, as well as to bring balance to nature since nature’s response is dependent on the way humans treat it. This is the reason why care for the environment is a missionary assignment.

At creation the three offices of prophet, priest and king were embodied in Adam and Eve, and thus they were balanced in nature. Man and woman lived in peace and gratitude accepting their unique, dignified role as the image of the only God. They knew that they were called into being to represent God’s kingship in all areas of life of the whole created order on earth. Thus, there was no need for a king as God himself was their king. They lived in fellowship with God their king

and were at peace with God, with one another and with the rest of the creation. They lived in God's rest with no fear, guilt or shame. Thus, there was no need for a priest. They also lived in fellowship with God who spoke to them freely and openly. As the passage below shows, God and humans could have an ordinary conversation one to one, face to face. Therefore, there was no need for a prophet:

And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden. But the Lord called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave fruit of the tree and I ate." Then the Lord said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."(Genesis 3:8-13)

In the first section of the biblical narrative, the creation, all is well and the three characteristics (prophet, priest and king) are embodied in the human person in which they work well and there is no need for a middle person. The needs of each person are provided for in these three divine offices, as individuals related directly to God.

In the second section of the biblical narrative, the fall, Adam and Eve sinned against God and hell broke loose. At this point the divine characteristics embodied in the human person began to crack. Champion describes sin as the terrible crime of treason that tries to wrest the throne from perfect goodness and illimitable love, one long incessant attempt to dethrone the deity (in Peters 1972).

As Peters says:

Sin is pre-eminently a wrong to God. [...] The Apostle John well describes it as lawlessness, anarchy. It turns the heart into a dark chamber of treacherous plotting against the government of God. It is the ceaseless attempt to undermine the dominion of the divine. One sin is incipient war with God and all good, a league with the devil and all evil, a potential hell replacing heaven. It is not merely assault upon the throne of God; it is the blow struck full at the face of the Father. Sin is the unsheathed sword and the straight thrust at the heart of God. It is the crucifixion of the good, the slaying of the

Son-of-God-nature, the murder of life divine. Sin never rests till it has crowned innocence with thorns and made its spear-thrust into the heart of unsullied righteousness. (1972:17)

Sin is an attack on the divine, and the three divine offices were the first to be attacked. Consequently, the balance of nature that was set in the human person was disrupted. Glasser (2003:7, 4) explains that nothing separated Adam and Eve in their primeval innocence as is seen from Genesis 2:25: “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame”. There were no barriers, no secrets, no regrets, no facades, no intimidations, no status and gender distinctions, and no suspicion and jealousy. They lived in perfect harmony. But after they had sinned, they became conscious of their separation from God and hid themselves from God. They also began to sense their separation from each other.

Slowly, these characteristics, these offices, ceased to work in them as individuals. The first to be affected was that of being a priest, which once it became ineffective meant that Adam who had not known fear became fearful: “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid” (Genesis 3:10). He who felt no shame (“And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed”, Genesis 2:25) was now ashamed: “because I was naked”. Second, the office of prophet was rendered ineffective. Adam and Eve who had enjoyed sweet fellowship with God were now not able to bear facing and hearing the voice of God: “and I hid myself”. How they must have wished for someone to come and stand in for them, like the Israelites in Exodus 20:18-19:

Now when all the people perceived the thundering and the lightings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood far off, and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us lest we die”.

The office of king was also not spared. This was a special responsibility that was entrusted to humans that was only fit for the creator to exercise, that of naming other creatures. In this office God had passed on to humans a gift of being “co-king”, vice-regents, as is demonstrated in the second chapter of Genesis:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to till it and to keep it ....

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him". So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature that was its name.

Thus humanity was given power and responsibility over God's creatures, however power and responsibility came with care and special concern for one another and for the whole of God's creation. But with the fall the care and concern was thrown out of the window. No longer did man see the woman as bone of his bones or flesh of his flesh, but he now described her thus: "the woman you gave me". This spiral of alienation eventually ended with Cain murdering his young brother with no feelings of remorse: "am I my brother's keeper?"

In fact, in the person of Cain the three offices fall apart. The story of Cain shows how the three divine offices became ineffective in an individual. Genesis 4:1-14 presents an ordinary family doing well in accordance with human standards. They lived a happy, religious life and acknowledged the hand of God in their life, as is expressed in verse one: "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord'. And again, she bore his brother Abel" (Genesis 4:1-2a). Each of the members of the family carried on with a chosen occupation and way of life, "Now Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain a tiller of the ground" (v. 2b). Each member also exercised their priestly office: "In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and their fat portions" (v. 3 and 4). For some reason, God accepted Abel's offering, but he rejected Cain's offering. Cain was not happy, as is the case when sin is in control. Like his parents, he did not want to take responsibility and he shifted the blame on to Abel and he vented his anger on his innocent young brother. Cain did not even want to listen to the voice of conscience that came to him through the office of the prophet: "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (v. 6-7). The prophetic voice, the voice of counsel, reminded Cain that it was in his power to overcome sin. It is

from this understanding or point of view that Jesus answered the devil with regard to the devil's temptation of turning stones into bread:

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to be tempted there by Satan. For 40 days and 40 nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. Then Satan tempted him to get food by changing stones into loaves of bread. "It will prove you are the son of God." He said. But Jesus told him, "No! For the scripture tells us that bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need". (Matthew 4:1-4; The Living Bible)

Here Jesus was in agreement with the voice of counsel from God to Cain, that temptations will always come but people have the capacity to overcome or master them if only they pay attention and follow the prophetic voice. Paul put it in clear and simple terms: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man, God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, with the temptation will also provide a way of escape that you may be able to endure it" (1Corinthians 10:13).

Thus, overcoming is not beyond people's power. Cain, however, refused to listen and did not let the divine office of the prophet take control. He was filled with anger, pretence and jealousy and rose against his brother and murdered him. Cain rejected the God-given role of being his brother's and sister's keeper. He failed to exercise the office of king and he failed to be king. In Cain the three divine offices did not work as they were meant to and this led to Cain being unbalanced.

With the divine offices rendered ineffective at the time of Cain, humanity failed to exercise their God-given mandate to populate the earth with God's image bearers who were to subdue and have dominion over the creation. Thus, disorder and chaos were reintroduced on the face of the earth as is explained in Genesis 6. It was like going back to Genesis 1:2 because humans had developed a community or communities which were contrary to God's purpose for creation. God saw humans as beyond redemption and had no other option but to blot them out from the face of the earth. But since God is a God of chances and opportunities he gave humanity a way of escape through Noah. In Noah the divine offices were active and at work. He is said to be a righteous man in his generation and for this reason

he found favour in the eyes of the Lord and he walked with God (Genesis 6:8-10). As a prophet Noah proclaimed God's word by warning people of the pending destruction of creation by the flood, as king he prepared and organised the creation for safety, and as priest he offered a sacrifice when he left the Ark. This pleased God and he made a covenant with Noah for the whole of creation.

There are a number of covenants described in the scripture and the Noahic covenant is one of the principal covenants along with the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the Joshua covenant, the Davidic covenant and the New covenant. The majority of these covenants belong to Israel's history, but the Noahic covenant is with humanity as representatives of the whole creation. God also renews his original mandate given to Adam as the representative of the human race at creation with Noah (Genesis 9:1-2). This is the mandate that is rejected by Cain in the act of killing his brother. Many generations after Noah, Abraham comes on the scene as Ashford explains:

Generations later, after humanity defied his creator at Babel, we reach another major turning point in salvation history, God called Abraham and began the long process of establishing a people who will play a major role in his mission. In spite of his advanced age, God promised Abraham offspring that would eventually constitute a great nation. This people of God would be the means by which blessing would come to all the families of the earth (2011:41).

In the call of Abraham God changed his method of dealing with humanity in order to bring about redemption. This is a movement from dealing with the whole human race to dealing with an individual. Thus, in Abraham all the divine offices were actively working. As king Abraham looked after the well-being of the family, protecting all the members of his family (Genesis 14:13-16). Abraham was called out from the entire human race: "go from" or "leave" (Genesis 12:1). As a priest he offered sacrifice for the family and offered hospitality (Genesis 12:7-8; 18:1-8) and interceded for others (Genesis 18:20-33). And as prophet he received God's word and instructions on behalf of the family, and the Lord himself affirmed him as prophet (Genesis 20:7). In Abraham all the three divine offices were balanced, and although he exercised his priestly office he still acknowledged Melchizedek as Priest of God Most High and gave him a tenth of

everything. It was with Abraham that the payment of a tithe as practice for the people of God began.

Abraham walked with God on a journey of faith, obedience and loyalty and for this he had become the father of all the people of God. After Abraham followed his son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, who was later named Israel by God, from whom the nation of Israel got its name, and after Israel came Joseph. In all these the divine offices were in operation. In Joseph, the office of prophet was prominent, especially in the early part of his life where it also took on another characteristic, that of telling the future and interpreting dreams (Genesis 37:5-10; 40:5-22; 41:1-36). After Joseph came Moses, whose coming Joseph prophesied. Similarly in Moses all the three offices were actively and visibly at work. Hosea affirmed him as prophet when he said, “And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by the prophet was he preserved” (Hosea 12:13). Moses is acknowledged as the greatest prophet, king and priest, and God himself testified to his greatness (Numbers 12:1-8).

It is at the time of Moses that the separation of the three offices started taking shape. Moses occupied all the three offices and beside him was Aaron as the high priest and Miriam as the prophetess. But even though Aaron was high priest and Miriam was the prophetess they still had to work under the directions of Moses. Moses was the law-giver and the founder leader of the nation of Israel due to his acknowledged greatness. Even though there are doubts as to who wrote the first five books of the Bible, commonly known as the Pentateuch, all are accredited to him.

Moses was succeeded by Joshua and at the time of Joshua the office of priest became an independent office with the tribe of Levi occupying it exclusively as a priestly tribe and, unlike during the time of Moses, during the time of Joshua they were fully settled in their office. Thus, in Joshua the two offices at work were that of king, which was more prominent, and that of prophet. As king, Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land (Joshua 3-4) and into battle with the neighbouring cities and nations (Joshua 6-12). As prophet he led the people with God’s instructions (Joshua 3:7; 4:1,15; 5:2; 7:10; 8:1).

After Joshua the people of Israel were led by judges, and the last of the judges was Samuel. Samuel came on the scene when the divine offices had been compromised as is explained in 1Samuel 2:12-35. This compromise led to the word of God being rare and there were no frequent visions (1 Samuel 3:1). In Samuel all the three divine offices were at work. He managed to bring back the office of priest as he was training to be a priest when God's called him to be a judge and being a judge at that time meant being a prophet as well. Samuel lived at a time of transition from a fully-fledged theocratic type of governance that the people of Israel had voluntarily placed themselves under at Mount Sinai to a monarchical form of governance which again they voluntarily chose. It is at the time of Samuel that the office of king became like that of priest, that is, an independent institutional office (1Samuel 8:4-9), which left the office of prophet alone as it was at creation.

As noted earlier, the three divine offices at work and well-balanced in Samuel. He was a perfect king who realized that human beings occupy the office of king on behalf of God (1Samuel 8:4-8). He was a perfect priest who understood that obedience is the primary obligation of humanity and cannot be substituted by sacrifices or offerings (1Samuel 15:22-23). He was a perfect prophet who took the word of God seriously as a guide for his life, and he did not allow himself to be corrupted by all the desires and challenges of the earthly life. Thus, at the installation of Saul as the first king of the people of Israel, Samuel relinquished the office of king. Samuel was in a position to challenge the people:

And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you. And now behold, the king walks before you; and I am old and grey, and behold my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my youth until this day. Here I am; testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hands have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you." They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." And he said to them, "The Lord is witness against you and his anointed this day, that you

have not found anything in my hand.” And they said, “He is witness.” (1Samuel 12:1-5)

Samuel is acknowledged as the second great leader in the history of Israel after Moses, and as Jemison observes, he is one of those in whom the divine offices are combined. He first received the message from the Lord during his training for priesthood as a boy under Eli. In the years that followed “Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did not let one of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord” (1Samuel 3:19,20). Throughout his ministry, people had great respect and high regard for him. It is also acknowledged that in many ways Samuel occupies a place in the history of Israel second only to that of Moses. It is for this very reason that the Lord linked the two when denouncing the sin of Israel to Jeremiah: “Then said the Lord unto me, though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people: cast them out of my sight and let them go forth” (Jeremiah 15:1). Moses and Samuel often stood before God to plead for people, and if God was to respond to the intercession of any man or if the intercession of any man could have availed, it would have been theirs. Each was responsible for the deliverance of the nation from the hand of the enemy in their time. Each marked the closing of an order and the beginning of a new. It was Moses’ privilege to anoint the first high priest and Samuel was privileged to set apart the first king of Israel, and later the first from the tribe of Judah, the founder of the line in which the Messiah would be born. (whiteestate.org: 2017).

The separation of these offices widen as God’s call shifts from an individual call as with Abraham to a tribe-wide call, and eventually develops to a calling of the nation through Moses to Samuel as Israel settled in the Promised Land. The first office to be separated was the office of priest when Moses anointed Aaron as high priest and his sons as priests, and the setting apart of the line of Aaron as a priestly family led to the setting apart of the entire tribe of Levi as a priestly tribe, the Levitical priesthood. Then the office of king was separated at the time of Samuel when the people demanded a king. The three divine offices were finally separated when Saul was installed as king and Israel was settled as a nation under

the leadership of a king. Before the choice of Saul as the king of the people of Israel the three divine offices stood side by side. In some circumstances one of the offices was more pronounced, but there was still the recognition of the importance of the other offices. No attempt was made to suppress the other offices in these circumstances. But with the rejection of theocracy and the taking up of the monarchy, the office of king became the dominant office and the other two offices were either suppressed or underplayed, especially after king David.

David was the ideal king. He was an example of what kingship was meant to be, and he knew that men rule as kings on behalf of God. As White argues in the book *The Story of Prophets and Kings*:

With tender earnestness David entreated Solomon to be manly and noble, to show mercy and loving-kindness to his subjects, and in all his dealings with the nations of the earth to honour and glorify the name of God and make manifest the beauty of holiness. The many trying and remarkable experiences through which David had passed during his lifetime had taught him the value of the nobler virtues and led him to declare in his dying charge to Solomon: “He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. (whiteestate .org :2017)

In the prophets God provided a special means by which the other two offices and the whole community at large were to be helped in order that they might not be nominal or violate the covenant. Glasser observes that “the prophets were men and women whom God called and equipped to make known his true nature and character, and to exercise a ministry of spiritual renewal among the people of God. In every sense, they were the evangelists/revivalist of Israel” (2003:119).

The prophetic word played a very important role in the history of the people of God. From Adam to Samuel, God spoke directly to the leadership, but when the office of kings was established, God spoke to the leadership through prophets. As Bartholomew and Goheen (2014:104) observe, throughout the history of Israel the word of God played a key role whether this word came through Moses, Samuel or any other prophet. But as the office of king became firmly established in Israel,

the office of prophet became more delineated from other public roles. This is the reason why nearly all of the prophetic books of the Old Testament come from the time of the monarch or after its demise. The prophetic office was a counter balance to the powerful office of kingship. There was no dynasty of prophets; God called prophets from different walks of life and he called each of them for the purpose of bringing his word to Israel and its leadership at a particular moment in the history of the nation. The role of the prophets was to remind Israel that it was a theocracy, and the word of God, not the word of the king, was the final authority. Thus, there was often bitter confrontation between prophets and kings.

Thus, prophets were God's mouthpiece with the role of proclaiming God's word to others. They had God's message and not their own message (2 Peter 1:21). Roberts speaks of the prophets as covenant enforcers urging the people that they are sent to obey, reminding them of the blessings that obedience brings about, and also the curses that result from disobedience (2002:90).

Thus, in these offices, God provided the essential elements for the redemption of his creation. Ashford (2011:54) explains that in the three anointed offices the essential elements of redemption are addressed. Fallen men and women have suppressed the voice of the conscious thereby becoming ignorant, deceived and unable to understand the things of God. They need truth, but they can never work that out on their own and so they need a prophet. Fallen men and women have broken the fellowship between them and God. They are guilty and need atonement, but they are alienated and separated from God, and so they need intercession. They need a priest. By rejecting the role of vice-regent of their creator, men and women have become defenseless prey to the world, the flesh and the devil. They are unable to rule themselves, much less to rule the world which God places them in as stewards. For this reason they need a king. With these offices God reaches out to his people in his work of restoration, as Ashford explains:

Through Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20) and the office of Aaron and his descendants, God displayed the role of the priest, an

anointed intermediary between a holy God and sinful men, doing the work of sacrifice and intercession. Through Moses and subsequent men like him, God similarly gave a model of what it meant to be a prophet, an anointed vehicle of the Word of God. Through David, God presented His designated picture of the anointed king, to defend His people and to rule them rightly. (2011:54)

The last of the prophets after the order of the Old Testament prophets was John the Baptist, and he came on the scene as the forerunner of the promised Messiah, thereby fulfilling the prophecy as found in Isaiah 40:3-4.

The coming of John the Baptist also fulfilled the predictions found in the last book of the Old Testament: “Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:1). And, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5). John the Baptist was the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament and put an end to the separation of the divine offices brought in at the anointing of Aaron as high priest by Moses and the installation of Saul as king of Israel. Indeed, Jesus commended John as the greatest of those born of women (Matthew 11:7-15).

In the call of Jesus to mission all of the three offices were met in him. He was and is the ultimate prophet, priest and king. On this Ashford comments that “through the anointed prophet, anointed priest and anointed king of the Old Testament, God pointed forward to the perfect anointed one (Messiah in Hebrew) who would be the ultimate prophet, priest and king” (2011:55). Thus, God was able and confident to say the following about Jesus: “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to him” (Matthew 17:15). All the hopes and inspiration of the Old Testament found their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Ashford (2011:56) goes further in explaining that all of God’s redemptive purpose found their culmination and fulfillment in Christ. The word *Christ* is a Greek translation of the

Hebrew word Messiah which means the anointed one. Jesus is indeed the reality to which the religion and the offices of the Old Testament point to.

As the Messiah, Jesus was the ultimate prophet as he did not only speak the word of God but he was and is himself the Word of God, the perfect revelation of God, as he affirmed in John 4:9. As the Messiah, he was also the ultimate priest, since he was sinless and eternal, unlike Old Testament priests who were sinners and had to offer sacrifices for themselves before they could offer sacrifices for anyone else. The sacrifice Jesus offered was not a symbolic bull or goat for animal sacrifice which could never atone for one's sin. Instead he offered a sacrifice infinitely worth more than that when he offered himself. Jesus was both the only real priest and the only effective sacrifice to which the Old Testament priesthood and the temple sacrificial system were shadows. Jesus offered himself as the perfect sacrifice and he now sits at the right hand of the father as intercessor making intercessions for his people. As the Messiah, Jesus was also the ultimate king. Matthew 28:18 affirms that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him". He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). He has overcome death and he will reign forever. He has the legitimacy, the authority, and power to rule things from personal lives to the entire universe, and he has the wisdom, the goodness, and the love to rule them all perfectly. Jesus is the uniquely perfect redeemer who completely meets all the needs of a fallen world.

### **3.4. 2 Abraham's mission**

The world that Isaiah talks about in chapters 11:1-9 and 65:17-25 is the reverse of the curse in Genesis 3:14-19. It is the return to the world as God first created it. In the call of Abraham, God began his plan of restoration by bringing back his creation into fellowship with himself and with one another. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the formation of a nation with a God-ward culture meant that Abraham had to leave all that the people of that time regarded as giving someone personal identity and security: one's native land, one's past and one's family ties. God's call to mission is a displacement from the known to the unknown, from the

seemingly secure to the seemingly insecure, and from the seen to the unseen. Thus, the call of Abraham was a journey of faith.

This was God's plan in the call of Abraham as the second Adam. When Adam and Eve and the generations that followed failed God, God did not want to abandon his plan. He decided to start afresh and he did this by calling Abraham to mission (Genesis 12:1). God required Abraham to be separated from his people and to go and begin his own community in his own land which God would give him.

As mentioned previously, Dumitrescu argues that mission does not begin with the call of Abraham. He points out that sin entered the universe long before the fall when he writes that:

A widespread belief affirms that God's first mission grew out of the fall of the first humans. However, the Bible reveals that sin entered the universe earlier. Isaiah 14:12-14 describes the moment when Lucifer became Satan by coveting God's glory. Because God is just and merciful at the same time, he had to allow his created beings to choose whom they wanted to follow and obey. Although it may seem strange, God had to allow humans to be tempted in the Garden of Eden in order to respect their power of choice and prove to Satan the accuser that the triune God is just and fair at the same time. As a result of human fall, God had to add a new dimension to his mission on top of his creating activities: rescuing and restoring beings affected by sin. God's mission reflected his character from the beginning. And since humans were created in God's image, he had to restore that image. (Dumitrescu 2008:51)

According to Dumitrescu's explanation, mission is not always to be defined from the point of view of redemption, salvation and restoration of the effects of Genesis 3. Rather, mission is there before the fall, and the fall is not the introduction of sin. Genesis 2:16-17 says that "the Lord God commanded the man saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not, for the day that you shall eat of it you shall die'". At this point humanity had not yet fallen, thus his mission does not include redemption, restoration or salvation as this only came later. At this stage humanity's mission is having dominion (Genesis 1:26-28) and protecting the

garden (Genesis 2:15). This humankind has to do through obedience. Adam and Eve's fall, as Dumitrescu puts it, meant that "God had to add a new dimension to his mission on top of creating activities: rescuing and restoring beings affected by sin" (2008:55).

Johnston agrees with Dumitrescu's explanation that Genesis 3 is not the introduction of sin in the universe when he writes that:

Mission is God's mission, or to use the Latin term, *missio Dei*. Mission is a divine activity. God's mission has a purpose for him and for us. His purpose has a wider aspect of rectifying all that Satan's pride distorted and the more focused aspect of ushering in the kingdom of God by bringing back the king with world evangelisation complete. We only find meaning in our faith when gripped by this purpose. We then eagerly await the return of Jesus while giving our all to make way for his return. (Johnstone 1998:15)

God's mission began when he called humanity into being, as Johnstone observes:

God is before time was. He is completely sufficient in himself. The perfect fellowship and love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit lacks nothing for perfection. Yet God inexplicably desired to lavish his love on the creation he planned and included us in that perfect relationship.

He created time and a universe. He then created one special place unique in the universe – the earth. That earth was a small planet of a middling star among the 200 billion stars in an ordinary galaxy among 200 billion galaxies. But these had not the capacity to respond to his love. He went further, he created life in its myriad forms. Out of those species, he created one species, humankind, in his own image that had the capacity for fellowship with himself. That meant choice; a choice that could mean rejecting the love of the creator. His plan was that those who believed in him should become an Eternal Companion to his Son as his Bride and share his throne and authority. (1998:13)

It is under this background that Adam and Eve as the representatives of humankind were called into being, "that those who believe in him should become an eternal companion to his son as his bride and share his throne and authority". They were called to respond to God's love. Johnstone's analysis of creation is similar to that of Blauw (1962:18) who sees the whole creation as having been

instituted on humans and for humans. Humanity is called into being as the link between God and his creation. The option to choose means that God creates human beings as faith beings, and that God's call to mission is based on faith, obedience and loyalty. God's call to mission is therefore a journey of faith, obedience and loyalty, and this being the case, the journey of faith does not begin with Abraham but with Adam.

In Genesis 1, God spoke and brought creation into being, and humankind came into being as the pinnacle of all of God's creation. They were to live as faithful beings under the command of God. Genesis 3 describes the beginning of the transformation of humankind from faith beings to faithless, careless and indifferent beings. God's call to mission is based on faith, obedience and loyalty, thus, for Adam and Eve, eating of the tree they were commanded not to eat of it meant distrusting God. Here Adam and Eve's sin began with doubts regarding the trustworthiness of God's character (Genesis 3:1-5), which then led to the desire for independence, ending up in their declaration of their independence from God expressed in the eating of the tree (v. 6). Humankind who had been created to live as God's image bearers were now rebels for they refused to bear God's image and their action, as Kosternberger and O'Brien observe, led to:

A serious moral lapse, [which] is also the reversal of the original order of relationships – God, the man, the woman and animals (cf 3:1-6 with 2:18-25) – and thus a deliberate attack on the divine order established at creation.

The sinner finds himself under the wrath of God, and this involves a change in relationships: the intimacy between the man and the woman is broken, the woman will feel the pangs of childbirth (v.16), and the man is cursed in relation to the ground. His relation to the environment is marked by frustration and pain (v.17-19; cf. Romans 8:20-23), and he is unable to exercise his dominion over nature. (2001:27)

It is in this environment that God's call to mission went to Abraham. The call of Abraham marks the beginning of what is generally referred to as "the twofold mandate": the cultural mandate and the salvation or redemption mandate (Peters 1972:166). The two mandates stand side by side. As the current status of humanity stands, the first mandate, the cultural mandate, cannot be fulfilled

without fulfilling the second mandate, the salvation mandate. The second mandate does not begin with the disciples in the New Testament issuing from the command in the Great Commission, but rather has its roots in the call of Abraham in Genesis 12. The call of Abraham, as noted earlier, is God's first step in redemption or restoration history. Thus, it is here that the redemption or salvation mandate begins. The purpose of the redemption mandate is to set humanity free from the effect of sin caused by the fall so that humanity can be free to carry forth the first mandate – the cultural mandate. Thus, the first mandate can be said to be the goal of mission.

### **3.4.3 Israel's mission**

In the call of Abraham, God changed the strategy for his plan of creating a community. Abraham's community was to restore the wonderful pattern that God set up in the Garden of Eden, a place of harmony and peace between humans and God, harmony and peace among humans, between husband and wife, man and woman, brothers and sisters, and a place of harmony and peace between humans and the rest of God's created order. In the second narrative, the fall, God tried to work within the community, but there was no effort to separate those who believed in him from those who were disobedient to him. However, in the call of Abraham the call was clear and definite: "Go from your country and from your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). God reverts back to the Garden of Eden model, except that Adam was put in the garden straight away after God had prepared the land, but in the case of Abraham, he had to journey to God's land, and thus the concept of the Promised Land and "the journey of faith, obedience and loyalty" are relevant to Abraham in this role. As in the case of Adam, the community of Abraham that was to be created would be created through pro-creation (Genesis 15:1-5). It was the biological children who were to inherit the God-given land, and it was only when these had started identifying themselves as the people of God that they could be a blessing to other nations (Romans 11). This understanding exemplifies that in the Old Testament the centripetal model of mission is the main model of mission. Therefore, with this understanding in mind it is clear why marriage with people of other nations

other than the Hebrews was discouraged. Multiplication or growth for the people of God was to be through pro-creation within their own nation.

In the mandate to Abraham God built up a community of those who were to learn the way of the Lord as they journeyed to the Promised Land. Abraham's descendants ended up as economic refugees in the land of Egypt at the invitation of the Pharaoh, and this led to them being enslaved. While in the land of Egypt the Hebrews grew from one family to 12 tribes, and they eventually made up the nation of Israel. Through the Exodus, under the leadership of Moses, God brought them out of Egypt to freedom. Under the leadership of Moses, the Israelites became "the covenant people of God", the chosen race. God reaffirmed his covenant with Abraham and confirmed them as the chosen people of God.

In the Exodus the Israelites embarked once again on the journey of faith and obedience that Abraham started as they moved towards the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses and finally entered the land under the leadership of Joshua. Once in the Promised Land, the Israelites were led by elders. As Bartholomew and Goheen (2014:87) explain, unlike Moses, Joshua did not come in as a leader. The arrangement appeared to be that the Israelites were to live directly under God's reign with the help from elders whom Moses and Joshua had appointed. It was some kind of decentralised government. But this type of governance did not work and Israel did not flourish under the tribal system of governance. The Israelites moved away from following in the way of the Lord as they did under Moses and Joshua. The Lord then appointed judges to lead them, like Moses and Joshua, and these judges received instructions directly from the Lord. The Israelites seemed unhappy with this arrangement and at the time of Samuel, the last judge, they demanded a king for themselves. The Lord was not happy with their demand for a king, and he warned them of the dangers of having a king as their leader. However, the Lord gave them Saul as their first king.

### 3.4.4 The kingdom of Israel

Under the leadership of King David, and later his son Solomon, the Israelites settled down and became a mighty nation living in peace. Thus, the nation of the people of God was established. They lived in their God-given land under God's rule and enjoyed God's blessing. David made Jerusalem the City of David, the capital city of the new kingdom of Israel, and as Wills and Blackaby explain:

Once David became king of all Israel he worked to unite the kingdom in order to honour God. One of the first things he did was attack Jebus, a city on mount Moriah, where Abraham had gone to sacrifice Isaac. David and his army captured the city and made it the capital of his kingdom naming it Jerusalem also known as Zion. (2002:117)

David was succeeded by his son Solomon who later built the Lord's temple according to the plans of his father. The building of the temple in Jerusalem symbolised the bringing of public worship to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, or Zion, was therefore established as the place where Yahweh was to be worshipped, and this was in the mind of the Samaritan woman as she talked to Jesus: "our fathers worshipped God on this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). This is what was expressed in Solomon's prayer of dedication (1King 8:23-53).

During this period God's purpose of creating a distinct people who could be identified as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6) was slowly taking shape. The Lord confirmed David as king and made a covenant with him (2 Samuel 7:8-16). In the covenant the Lord reaffirmed the covenant made with Abraham. Wright (2010:133) observes that by the time of Solomon's reign three elements of God's promise to Israel had been spectacularly fulfilled. As God promised, Israel had become a great nation, God had abundantly blessed them, as their friends and enemies recognised, and they lived secure in the land that God had given them as promised.

Jerusalem became a world centre of pilgrimage, not only for all the Israelites but also for all the nations. The temple provided a permanent symbolic dwelling place of God as Wright observes:

Apart from the fact that Jerusalem was a cosmopolitan city from the days of Solomon, with many foreigners there for commercial or political reasons who were doubtless curious to witness what went on in Solomon's new temple (the Queen of Sheba being only the most celebrated of Solomon's tourists), we have the Old Testament stories of individuals attracted to Israel's God (such as Ruth or Naaman). And then later there was a widespread phenomenon of groups of the so called "God-fearers" scattered around the first century world, attached to the Jewish Synagogue. These were Gentiles who were attracted to the God of the Jews and came to worship Him – people like the Roman Centurion in Luke 7:1-5, Cornelius in Acts 10 or those who heard Paul gladly in Acts 13:16, 46-48. (2010:134)

Thus, the Davidic reign brought security and prosperity as Roberts comments:

The nation has never had it so good. We have reached the pinnacle of the Old Testament. It looks now as if all the promises of God have been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come. At the dedication of the temple Solomon prays, "Praise be to the Lord who has given rest to His people Israel just as He promised. Not one word has failed of his promises He gave through his servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56). God's people are in God's place, under God's rule and enjoying God's blessing. (2002:82)

He further goes on to explain how he sees this fulfillment:

They are God's people: "The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as sand on the seashore" (4:20), just as God had promised. (Genesis 32:12).

They were in God's place: "Solomon ruled over all the kingdom from the River (Euphrates) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the boarder of Egypt" (4:21). The whole land was under his control as God had said at the time of Moses (Exodus 23:31).

They enjoyed God's rule and blessing: "The Ark, the symbol of God's rule, is in the temple" (8:21).

They are blessed: "during Solomon's life time Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, live in safety, each man under his own vine and fig-tree" (4:25). And they are a blessing to the nations; it was God's plan that all nations would be blessed through his people. (Roberts 2002:82-83)

Roberts call this period the partial kingdom. All looks good, but it is not the end of the biblical story. As Roberts observes, “God’s work among the Israelites was never intended to be the final fulfillment of his gospel promises. Within the context of the Bible as a whole, the history of Israel serves as a model” (2002:86-87). Israel is chosen to be a model of what God intends human life to be. They are called as an illustration of God’s purpose for all people. The partial kingdom points beyond itself as it is merely a shadow of the perfect kingdom that God intends to re-establish for the whole of his creation.

### **3.4.5 The division of the kingdom and the exile**

The Davidic reign experience, the period of rest and the peace, did not last forever as Glasser observes:

However, the Davidic monarchy eventually collapsed because of its neglect of God and ethical failure of its rulers, priests and people. Even Solomon’s day was characterised by acute social tension, arising from nepotism and favouritism in royal court, burdensome taxation and religious compromise. In time, most Israelites rejected Solomon’s state as the fulfillment of Israel’s destiny. Revolution broke out in 930BC under the leadership of Jeroboam, labour-gang boss of the hated corv’ee (forced labour) system. Israel broke away from Judah, and neither nation ever fully recovered from this disaster. (2003:108)

It has been noted earlier in the chapter that living in the God-given land, under God’s rule and enjoying God’s blessing demands unquestioning faith, obedience and loyalty. It means having absolute trust in God and having undivided loyalty to him. As Israel settled in the Davidic reign, especially during Solomon’s reign, problems started arising. Solomon loved many foreign women and married many of these foreign women. This meant that he could not be opposed to the worship of foreign gods as Bartholomew and Goheen observe: “This left the kingdom vulnerable to idolatry, and such idolatry started to pollute Israel” (2014:102). Solomon also made an alliance with Pharaoh and Hiram (1 Kings 3:1; 5:12). If Israel was the people of God, in God’s place, under God’s rule and enjoying God’s blessings, this act meant not having trust in God as the ruler and the

protector of his people. Solomon also gave away some portions of the land to Hiram (1 Kings 9:11-14). God's given land was not to be sold or traded in any way. Israel was to be a tenant on God's land and not owners of the land. Glasser (2003:86) explains that because of the wickedness of the Canaanites, God drove them out of the land. Then, as he had promised to the patriarchs, he gave the land to the Israelites as a gift. It was therefore not the Israelites' armies that gave them the land but God alone. The land was subsequently divided equally and given to tribes of Israel except for the tribe of Levi. The division was done by the casting of lots. The casting of lots was a process through which God alone decided on the land's division. God alone was the owner of the land and he alone reserved the right to divide it. God was jealous of his land and he decreed that it should be respected. The produce of the land was his also. For their tenancy, the Israelites were to pay Yahweh a tithe (10%) as rent. This rent was not to be paid to some rich landlord. The tithe was paid to the Levites who at the time of the division of the land were forbidden to own, and so the tithe was their inheritance.

Therefore, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants belonged to Yahweh and not to Israel, individual Israelites or even kings of Israel. Thus, in giving away portions of the land, Solomon disregarded God as the ruler and owner of the land. Solomon was hereby claiming independence and was acting as if he was not answerable to God. He also used forced labour to fulfill his building ambitions. In doing all this, Solomon violated God's covenant and God was angry with him. It was only because of God's faithfulness to the promise that he made to David that Solomon remained as the king of Israel (1 Kings 11:9-13).

In the kingdom there was also nominalism. Thus, Jeremiah's call to the people to amend their thinking:

Thus, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways and your doings, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words; "this the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," for if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods of your own heart, then I will let you dwell in the

place, in the land that I gave of old to your forefathers. (Jeremiah 7:3-7)

After the death of Solomon, as the Lord had told Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah). The kings that followed Solomon followed in his ways and did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, besides for some exceptions. They also did very little to change the people because the people had by that time moved further away from God. The Lord had no other option but to evict them from his land by sending them into exile, just as Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden and just as the people were scattered at Babel (Genesis 3:22-24; 11:6-9).

The eviction of the Israelites into exile brought an end to God's second option of the creation of his kingdom and an end to his mission that was started at the call of Abraham. But unlike the mission through Adam which was a total failure, a mission that only remained in the promise of the woman's "seed" who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15), the mission through Abraham was not a failure, as it was only a setback. First, God himself was committed to the promise he made to David (2Samuel 7:16; 1Kings 2:12; 1Chronicles 29:23; cf 1Kings 11:9-13). Second, among the Israelites, there remained some who were still faithful to the Lord. These people were the 'remnant' from whom would come the Messiah as the third phase or option in God's plan for mission.

### **3.4.6 The concept of the remnant**

As mentioned earlier in the study, the four major divisions or sections of the Bible are the creation, the fall, the redemption and the new creation. In the third division, the redemption, in spite of humanity's disobedience and rebellion, God did not abandon his creation or his plan for mission. He did not destroy his creation but instead he put in place measures for the redemption of his creation. He chose to identify himself with his creation. As in the words of Wright, he chose to be within history through people and events that ran from Abraham's time to the return of Christ (2010:41). In the Abrahamic part of the redemption (Genesis 12 to Malachi), God chose persons and events to redeem his creation. In

the Jesus part of redemption (Matthew to Revelation), God chose to use himself by being born a man through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

In relation to theme of the kingdom of God in the New Testament, Bright (1953:187-188) observes that passing from the Old Testament to the New Testament is “in the fullness of time”, before Jesus of Nazareth who is called the Christ. In so doing, it is clear that the discussion of the biblical concept of the kingdom of God has reached its climatic phase. The New Testament unanimously affirms that this Jesus is no less than the long-awaited Messiah, and that in him all the hope of Israel has found its fulfillment and becomes present fact.

According to Bright, Bartholomew and Goheen (2014:135), it is “the coming of the king: redemption accomplished”. They observe that the meaning of the story of Jesus cannot be grasped until it is seen as the climatic episode of the great story of the Bible: God’s chronicle work in human history. When humanity fouled God’s good creation by their rebellion, he immediately set out on a salvage mission. It was God who created it, thus it belongs to him by right. And he would redeem it and buy it back for himself so that it might be restored to what he had always intended it to be. They see the Old Testament as telling the story of God moving among the people of Israel and making progress towards this goal. These were his first acts of redemption and restoration and his repeated promises that he would one day complete what he had begun within the small nation for the creation. In God’s purpose, the very heavens and earth themselves are to be renewed and restored at last. In its final shape as the kingdom of God, that renewal and restoration is revealed in Jesus Christ.

In the call of Abraham which led to the election of Israel as the people of God, the sending of the people of Israel into exile entailed a sense of ending for the mission of God and an end to Abraham’s mission for the creation of a God-ward cultured community and the re-establishment of the kingdom of God in the Promised Land after the manner of the Garden of Eden. But unlike Adam’s call to mission which was a total failure, as discussed earlier, Abraham’s call was not a total failure but was only a setback, as indicated by God’s dealings with the prophets (1Kings 19:14-18). There still remained some pockets of the people who were faithful to

the Lord, people such as Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrech), Mishael (Mishach), Azariah (Abednego), Nehemiah and the little girl in Naaman's house (to this list can be added Mary and Joseph). Through such people, God continued to fulfill His purpose of establishing the kingdom people and bringing through them his blessings to the whole of his creation. As Bright observes, the sending of Israel into exile was more like discipline, or reformation, "a purge, out of which will come the pure remnant of God's people. The nation goes down into a fiery furnace, but pure metal will come out – a clean people" (1953:88). Similarly, Dyrness considers the exile as the preparation for the next creation, the new exodus (1998:104).

It is from the above background that the term "remnant" was developed. Glasser states that Amos was the first prophet to use the concept of remnant when he writes:

Amos was the first prophet to make extensive use of the motif. He attacked the popular notion that the whole of Israel (ethnically defined) constituted the remnant God would preserve when he would judge the nation in the last day. Amos held before Israel no self-confident salvation based on physical descent, no continued boasting of divine election, no assured certainty of a glorious future. (2003:142)

Glasser goes further to explain that although the concept was first used by Amos, it was Isaiah who developed it to deeper understanding. He states that the concept of the remnant greatly developed during Isaiah's early ministry, at a time when it became increasingly apparent that Israel would not escape going into captivity for its sins and waywardness. Isaiah as a true prophet of the Lord was concerned for the believing remnant in the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis of his time and he built on the witness of Amos. He first introduced the remnant as a "Holy Seed" (Isaiah 6:13). The first impression that one gets in Isaiah's use of the term is that of referring to those who survive the national catastrophe, rather than to the minority within the unbelieving majority (Isaiah 10:20-22; 37:3,32). But then he follows Amos and becomes more specific in connecting the remnant motif eschatology. On the judgment for the house of David, Isaiah sees it more like a tree to be cut down by the Babylonians as sap would remain in the stump and a shoot would emerge at

some point which would become a fruitful tree. He distinguishes the remnant as a spiritual Israel within political Israel. The basis for its existence is the hope that God will one day triumph in human history and make possible its consummation.

Burnett goes further in explaining that “the remnant is the narrowing down of the people of God, who would be the vehicle of God’s redemptive purposes, bringing the blessing promised to the nations” (1996:102). Glasser also talks of the remnant as:

A narrowing down of the people of God. It is not so much an ill-defined collection of believing individuals as a corporate whole whose devotion to God is expressed in the singular “You are my God” (Hosea 2:23). The remnant is the whole of the true people of God, the heir to the promise, the recipient of the divine oracles, and the responsive vehicle of God’s redemptive purpose (Zeph. 3:12-13). (2003:143)

In the hard times of captivity and exile the Israelites looked back to the peaceful former days, the time of rest in the reign of David, just as their forefathers had done in the wilderness looking back to their days in Egypt. Like Moses, the prophets encouraged them to look to the future with hope. God had not completely abandoned them. They pushed the peaceful reign of David to the future and placed their hope in the idea that a son of David will be born who will rule them and bring peace and rest, even more so than that which was experienced in the time of David himself (Isaiah 11). During this time the Israelites thought of history as having two distinct periods – the present age and the age to come.

Bartholomew and Goheen (2014:129) explain that there is the present age which is regarded as beginning with Adam’s rebellion against the rule of God. In this age the whole creation was stained by sin and evil continued to flourish in the world throughout this age. No group of people was spared from this, not even God’s own people of Israel, who had been called out to provide the solution to that evil, were spared. There is also the age to come. In the age to come many among the Israelites believed that God would intervene to cleanse and renew his creation. This would be done through the remnant, beginning with the Israelites, many of whom were still in exile among the pagans or estranged from God by sin. But

before this liberation could come about, God had to deal with Israel's sin first. Many Israelites believed that the night of exile would grow darker until God brought his final judgment on his chosen people. This judgment would be like the darkest hour of the night before sunrise or like the birth pain before a child is born. Thus, the day of God's renewal dawn, a new world would be born and Israel, God's own people, would be forgiven, cleansed and renewed.

It is from this conviction that the concept of the "Day of the Lord" was developed. For example, when Amos talked about the Day of the Lord, he was writing with the above understanding in mind:

Woe to you who desire the Day of the Lord! Why would you have the Day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light; as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him. Is not the Day of the Lord darkness, and light, and gloom with no brightness in it? (Amos 5:18-20).

The message of the prophets was that God was ushering in a new world, a new covenant and a new creation, but first there had to be genuine repentance and conversion, beginning with the house of Israel. It was with this in mind that Ezekiel 36:26-27 was written. This renewal has a strong connection with the Messianic expectation; in fact, it is a future that can only take place through the Messiah. This renewal is a spiritual renewal and is the secret of the new covenant of God.

### **3.5 Reflection**

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish what God's plan for mission is by looking at God's plan for mission in the Old Testament and by considering three of the four plot movements of the biblical storyline: the creation, the fall, and the redemption. This chapter has aimed to see how God's plan fits into these divisions of the Old Testament. God's plan for mission is the creation of a world where all things, the whole created order, would fit together accordingly. A world where there is harmony and peace between God and his creation, harmony and peace among all God's creatures, where God's creatures would live in perfect

peace and perfect rest. It is to be a world that reflects the nature and character of God. It is a world full of the knowledge of God, where all creatures delight in God, and a world where no one will teach another to know the Lord because God's knowledge will be in all creatures (Jeremiah 31:33-34). In short, God's plan for mission is the establishment of his kingdom.

Guided by the working definition that has been adopted, that of "mission as the purpose or reason for one's being", in most cases the first division of the biblical storyline, creation (Genesis 1 and 2), is usually considered or studied in the light of the second and third division: the fall and the redemption narratives. This has led to defining mission always from the redemptive point of view and has led to the conclusion that there is no mission in the creation narrative. Even with those who identify mission in the creation narrative, their definition of mission still carries with it an aspect of liberation or redemption. However, this chapter has shown that the creation narrative is central to the understanding of God's plan for mission and that it sets the tone for God's initial plan for mission. This being the case, it should therefore be given space to stand on its own feet. It is only when the creation story is seen in its own light that the Bible can be seen as a journey from creation to new creation. Creation is the point of departure and the new creation is the final destination. It is within this scheme that it makes sense to talk of the redemption narrative as God's plan for "reclaiming" his creation. Thus, there is an attempt in this chapter to liberate the term mission from the salvation or the redemption connotation, that is, mission as a reason or purpose of being. Thus, this study does not restrict mission to those passages which give a sense of redemption. As mentioned, Genesis 1 and 2 serve as the pattern for God's plan for mission and the two chapters explain the full extent of what God intends creation to be. This is the foundation of God's plan for mission. In the creation narrative God sets up his kingdom.

In the second narrative, God's pattern of the kingdom does not last as he intended it to be. Humans whom he had called into being as his vice-regents derail the plan. In Genesis 2, God set apart humans from the rest of God's creatures and put them in a beautiful garden. This was the environment in which God expected his creatures to live under the leadership of humans. This is the pattern of God's

kingdom and is what it means to talk about the kingdom of God: “God’s creatures in God’s land under God’s rule enjoying God’s blessings”. In all areas of their life in the Garden of Eden, with creation under their leadership, humans were to live in peace, walk with God, have fellowship among themselves and be provided for. But humans were not content with being under God’s control and they wanted to be in total control. They were told by the serpent that “you will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be open and you will be like God knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4).

When God decided to create humans in his own image (Genesis 1:26; 5:1-2), he took a great risk. It meant that humans were the only species of all God’s creatures with the capacity to respond to God’s love and live in fellowship with him, and this is what is meant when the Bible talks about walking with God (Genesis 5:22,24; 6:9). Being created in the image of God meant having the freedom to make a choice, a choice which included rejecting the love of the creator and rejecting to live under God’s rule and control. Thus, in Genesis 3 humans made the wrong choice, cutting themselves away from God’s loving rule and fellowship, and away from fellowship with other creatures including one another:

The result of this choice is what is referred to as the fall and it is fully described in the second division of the grand narrative. Due to their disobedient choice, humanity was no longer fit to live in the kingdom of God. They had chosen not to live according to God’s established order, and so were now citizens of another kingdom. Since God created humans as faith beings it is his plan for humans to live the life of faith, obedience and loyalty (Johnstone 1998:13). In this section of the narrative, however, humans are transformed from faith beings to faithless and careless beings. Thus, this section there is a rebellion resulting in God destroying his creation by means of the flood (Genesis 7).

God decided to start afresh with Noah. He reaffirmed the mandate that was given to Adam (Genesis 1:28; 9:1-7) and made a covenant with him for the well-being of his creation. But like their forefather Adam, the generation that followed Noah did not walk with God like Noah; they were more concerned with leading life on

their own terms. They followed a life without and independent from God and they wanted to create their own kingdom (Genesis 11:6-9). They disregarded God's command to populate the earth (Genesis 9:1-2). God had no other option but to scatter them through the Babel experience through which God introduced different languages on earth (Genesis 11:6-9). Through this same experience God was able to make the disobedient human race fulfill his command of populating the earth.

The Redemption is the third of the four divisions of the biblical narrative and is about God dealing with his creation after the fall. It is God's answer to the problem of sin. In the creation narration, as noted earlier, God set up a pattern for his plan for mission. This plan was not only about how he intended his creation to be, the pattern for his kingdom, but also how he himself carried on his missionary work. Payne observes that "God is a missionary God" who takes the initiative to engage his creation in his plan of mission (2009:8).

Moreover, this third narrative of the biblical storyline begins with the call of Abraham. In the call of Abraham God decided to start afresh and this is the second phase in God's plan for mission. It is the beginning of what is commonly referred to as the salvation history. There are three personalities that mark the phases or eras in creation history. These are Adam who through his disobedience changed the course of God's plan for mission, Abraham who through his faith set the path for God's plan of reclaiming the fallen creation, and Jesus who through his obedience to death on the cross, his resurrection and ascension accomplished the work of reclaiming creation back to God himself (2Corinthians 5:19), the work that was started in the call of Abraham.

The call of Abraham led to the formation of the nation of Israel, a nation called into being with the sole purpose of being the light to the nations, that through them God's plan for his creation could be revealed. Fundamental to the formation of Israel as a nation was the idea "that Israel is God's people, a people whom God had chosen and called, and formed into a nation, that it might be the visible embodiment upon the earth of his own divine glory, and a means by which blessings might be available for the whole. This chosen people descended from

Abraham, was potentially the kingdom of God, that is the sphere in which God's will was to be realised on earth" (Tasker 1944:11).

As is written in Isaiah 49:6, "it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth". Through Israel God intend for the nations to know him, to know what he is like, what pleases him and what displeases him. The choice of Israel as the people of God was not because they were prominent, pious, faithful or powerful, but rather because they were chosen by God's grace. It was a privilege to be fulfilled by taking responsibility. This is the teaching behind the story of Jonah. However, Israel failed God in this and so God embarked on a third option – the call of Jesus.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter two defined mission as “the reason for one’s being or existence” and concluded that if mission is defined as the reason for existence then mission is to be found in both the Old and the New Testaments, even in those parts of the Bible where sin is not found. This definition frees mission from being confined to salvation or redemptive activities. It prevents it from being understood simply as salvation from the effects of sin brought about by Adam’s and Eve’s rebellion as portrayed in Genesis 3-11, or of the effect of distortion brought about by Satan’s pride and rebellion before the creation as portrayed in Isaiah 14:11-14. The chapter stated that in an attempt to find the definition of the term mission, two schools of thought have to be confronted. First is the school of thought that sees mission from the point of view of salvation or redemption. This school of thought is further divided into three groups: one sees mission as redemptive activities from the effect of sin caused by the result of the fall in Genesis 3, the second sees mission as redemptive activities from the distortion brought about by Satan’s pride and rebellion before the fall, and the third group which does not see redemption as the point of departure for mission, but rather emphasises the sentness of God’s people (thus for this group the words of the Great Commission in the New Testament are the point of departure for doing mission; without the command of the Great Commission there is no mission). Second is the school of thought that sees mission as the “purpose of being”. This is the school that sees mission in a much broader sense and sees the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation as all about mission and written by missionaries for missionaries (Kirk1999:20). They see the Bible as a missionary document. This is the school of thought which this study is ascribing to.

Chapter three has established that God’s plan or intention for mission in the Old Testament is the establishment or creation of a world which reflects who God is. God’s mission is the creation of a world that tells the story of God, communicates God’s message and displays God’s glory, promotes the friendliness of God,

reflects all the attributes of God, and has a God-ward culture. In short, God's mission is about the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Burnett defines mission as the activities of the people of God in the world when he says that "mission describes what the Church is sent into the world to do" (1996:12). Thus, for Burnett mission is about answering the questions "what is the Church to do?", "why is the Church here in the world?" or, on a personal level, "what is God wanting of me to do or to be?" As he explains:

One cannot answer these questions without reference to the word "mission". Throughout its history the Church has been conscious that it has been commissioned by God for a particular task – a task that is intimately involved with the purposes of God for his creation (Burnett 1996:11-12).

What Burnett is saying here is not only true for the Church but also for humanity. Humankind has been conscious that it has been commissioned by some divine power for a particular task throughout its history, from community to community, and from generation to generation. And that task has to do with God's plan for his creation as well.

When exploring mission in the Old Testament it is best encountered by exploring the divine drama in God's acts of calling and setting apart people for himself, and to do this chapter three examined God's plan for mission, using the divisions of the grand narrative of the biblical storyline. The chapter explored God's call in general and then specifically looked at the missionary mandate to Adam, Abraham and to Israel as a nation of the chosen people of God. This chapter will turn more attention to God's mission in the New Testament.

## **4.2 God's Plan for Mission**

God's call to mission comes from three different levels in three different environments: Adam's call to mission as the beginning, Abraham's call as the second beginning and Jesus' call as the third and final phase. But, ultimately, they

all have the same goal and that is the creation of a community with a God-ward culture – the kingdom of God.

Vicedom defines *missio Dei* as “the work of God through everything that he has in mind for man’s salvation – the complete fullness of his kingdom of redemption” (1965:43). Thus, Vicedom sees redemption as being offered to humanity and the whole of creation through the agents which God sends so that humanity can be freed from sin, thereby being removed from the kingdom of the world or the kingdom of darkness. Thus, they can again come into full fellowship with God. He goes further in explaining that “through the sending, God builds the bridge and establishes the connection with men whom he desires to save. Consequently, from God’s point of view the sending always has a definite command and a concrete goal which has to be attained” (1965:46). This concrete goal is the establishment of a community with a God-ward culture.

In the definition of the concept of the kingdom of God, it is noted that the term has three different meanings: the kingdom of God as the people of the kingdom (the redeemed are a kingdom who share in God’s reign), the kingdom of God as the realm in which God’s reign is experienced (the realm is sometimes present, sometimes future), and the kingdom of God as the reign or rule of God (the dynamic rule of God manifested in Christ to destroy his (spiritual) enemies and to bring men and women the blessings of God’s reign). Moreover, these three meanings are found in the New Testament. In this discussion of mission in the New Testament, the definition provided by Ashford and Roberts of the kingdom of God as “God’s people in God’s place living under God’s rule and enjoying God’s blessing” will be used. Using the grand narrative divisions as a guide, and the call of Jesus to mission as a key theme, this chapter will try to establish God’s plan for mission in the New Testament.

As noted in the second chapter, the New Testament falls under the redemption section of the biblical storyline (beginning from Genesis 12) and it carries with it a sense of renewal or restoration. Thus, the plan for mission in the New Testament is still to “reclaim creation and return it to its proper relation to God, so that it starts functioning as the sign of God’s presence and love to humanity” (Anderson

1982:83). The plan is to re-establish the kingdom of God. This is a kingdom in which creation will be as God intended it to be and where humankind can give responsible answers to God's questions about spiritual reformation (answering questions like "where are you?" from Genesis 3:9) and social responsibility (answering questions like "where is your brother?" from Genesis 4:9a). In other words, the plan for mission is the promotion of a friendly environment as opposed to a hostile and irresponsible environment of "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9b). God's plan for mission is therefore the promotion of the friendliness of God, thereby establishing the kingdom of God as opposed to the kingdom of the devil or of the world that Adam had created. Vicedom explains that:

The kingdom of the world or of the devil is the most comprehensive expression for the lost condition of men, who by their own power can no longer extricate themselves from it and return into fellowship with God. Therefore, it is the decision of God to help men, to pluck them from the kingdom of darkness, and to transfer them through his mission into his kingdom. Thus, the kingdom of God becomes not only the opposite number to the kingdom of the devil but at the same time a rallying point for those that have been liberated from their power. (1965:20-21)

In the Old Testament God used agents, Adam and Abraham, in his pursuit of creating a community with a God-ward culture. In the New Testament he decided to do it himself by being born as a human being, as "Emmanuel"(God with us), in Jesus Christ, as is explained in the words of the angel to Joseph in a dream: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20). These words are seen as the fulfillment of prophecy as Matthew explains: "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means 'God with us')'" (Matthew 1:22-23).

This God-ward cultured community that is to be formed or created is the community that Paul called the Body of Christ when he wrote:

For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There are neither Jews nor Greeks; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:27-29)

It is with this understanding that Anglicans during their Eucharistic service (Holy Communion Service) make this claim as they greet one another: "We are the body of Christ. In the one spirit we were all baptised into one body. Let us then pursue that entire make for peace and build up our common life. Let us offer one another a sign of peace" (ASB1980:128).

Thus, from the point of view of mission as Goheen (2014:38) observes, the whole Bible tells one – a story of God's long journey to liberate his world from the destructive power of sin. The horizon of God's mission is the ends of the earth. God announces his intentions to restore the creation right after Adam and Eve's treasonous act of rebellion (Genesis 3:15). The story of God's mission is the path that God follows to make known the good news to the ends of the earth. The mission of the people of God is to take up their role in this drama. All people in all places at all times must find their place in this story.

#### **4.2.1 The concept of the Messiah**

The theme of the remnant as discussed in chapter three has a close and strong link with the theme of the Messiah. Burnett and Glasser argue that the remnant is the narrowing down of the people of God, which suggests that the Messiah is the narrowing down of the remnant to one individual: the anointed of God. On the necessity of the remnant to the reality of the messianic expectation, Glasser has this to say:

The great mystery of the Scripture is the reality of the incarnation, when God "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14 see also 1Timothy 3:16). Strange as it may seem, this could not have taken place without believing people "under law" (Galatians 4:4), already dwelling in the land in which this wonderful act of God occurred. There had to be a virgin daughter of Abraham willing to be the chosen vehicle for the incarnation.

And there had to be a devout Joseph to be the guardian of her vulnerability. Many others would be needed, all consciously living under God's control and for His glory. They would be part of the larger context of believing Jews that we encounter when we begin the New Testament. (2003:141)

The general expectation of the Israelites was of a kingdom where there would be no king but God ruling through his anointed Messiah. Bartholomew and Goheen(2014:131) see Israel as looking forward to a day when there would be no king but God, a day when the holy land, trampled and polluted by pagans, would be cleansed so that Israel would again live in communion with God. The day when the Lord would return to his temple that he had abandoned and would dwell among his people. Then Israel would be liberated from its bondage and oppression in the same way as it had been delivered from Egypt and Babylon. The rule of Caesar in Rome and his puppet kings and priests in Israel would be swept away, and the rule of God would be set right, and thus the kingdom of God would be re-established. The coming of the kingdom of God would mean liberation from foreign cultural dictates and Israel's status as the elect people of God would be endorsed. This they believed would be done by God's anointed messenger – the Messiah. How this would be done was the big question with varying answers.

The Messiah was generally conceived of as a divine figure, God's representative, God's visible manifestation bringing "to expression the actual royal lordship of God" (Blauw 1962:47). At the time when Jesus was born there were three popular concepts of the Messiah that had been developed: a political military Messiah, a holy commonwealth Messiah and an apocalyptic Messiah.

**Political Military Messiah:** This concept of a messiah represented a revolutionary option and it was associated with the nationalist party within the Jewish community. It was mainly advanced by the Zealots who had taken their inspiration from the old priest Matthias, the one who initiated the Maccabean revolt, who called on everyone who was "zealous for the law" to join him. It is probably from this call to be "zealous" that the name Zealots came from (1Macc.2:26-27). These people were looking for political independence for the Jews from Roman rule. They were convinced that the Romans had to be driven

out by force through military action. This was to be done by the Messiah who was the one to lead the Jews to political restoration or political independence.

**Holy Commonwealth Messiah:** This concept was advanced by the Pharisees who were equally looking for the independence of the Jews under the rule of a Messiah, but not through military force. For the Pharisees, this independence was to come about by God's action and not man's; thus, for them political revolution and military action was not an option. The Pharisees traced their roots to Ezra, and they developed their concept of the Messiah after the pattern that Ezra had developed. Ezra was instrumental in shaping the holy commonwealth in his time. As Bright observes, he worked very hard "to saddle the Pentateuch Law upon the community as the very charter of its existence" (1953:172). Like Ezra, the Pharisees "saw it as their duty to make actual the ideal of the holy people of God through the strict observance of the law, and if this were done, God would send and exalt his Messiah" (Bright 1953:191). This movement tended to be a separatist and exclusive movement, not from a negative superiority point of view but from fear of assimilation. It is from this point of view that the priest and the Levite acted the way they did in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-36. But as has been observed in the seclusion of the Hebrews in the land of Egypt as they were settled in the land of Goshen, separation, even when done with good intentions, has negative effects.

**Apocalyptic Messiah:** This concept was developed out of the apocalyptic prophecies of the last days, the "Day of the Lord", especially as expressed by the prophet Daniel. As Bright explains, "there was the apocalyptic hope (such as expressed in Daniel and in Enoch) of the catastrophic intervention of God, and of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds and glory to receive an eternal kingdom" (1953:191).

God called Israel to be his special possession; Israel would be bound in a covenant to God and would hold a special place in God's plan for mission. However, this plan had a universal bearing. Goheen (2014:42) notes that Israel as a nation was set apart for God's use in his missionary work. They were to be a model of what God intended for human life and to be an illustration of God's

creational purpose. Just as Abraham their forefather was called to serve as a “model for the continuing education of his descendants from generation to generation” (Wright 2006:358), they were called to serve as models for the continuing education of the nations from generation to generation. They were to live holy lives in the midst of the nations. They were a “royal priesthood” and their role was priestly. In the same way that a priest plays a special role in the midst of his community, Israel was to play a priestly role among the nations. A priest is separated from the rest of the community to be a model of devotion consecrated to the service of the Lord and to be a mediator of God’s blessing to the rest of the community. In the same way Israel was separated from the rest of the nations so that it could be a model of devotion consecrated to God’s service and to be a mediator of God’s blessing to the rest of the nations. Again, just as with Abraham, the life of faith and obedience is stressed as the reason why God will fulfill his promises to bless all the nations. Thus, the people of God must walk in the way of the Lord, the way of righteousness and justice so that God can accomplish his missional purpose of his call.

Therefore, God’s mission through Israel can best be described as rotating or moving on three bearings: universal, centripetal and eschatological. In terms of a universal bearing, God chose Israel as his covenant people of God, but the goal of his mission was that all nations, all cultures and the whole creation would be reclaimed and returned to its proper relation to God, to its proper function as a sign of God’s presence and love. Thus it was the re-establishment of the kingdom of God. In terms of a centripetal bearing, Israel’s role was to be a model and light to the nations. They were to live a life that told the story of who God is so that nations are attracted to Israel’s way of life and Israel’s God. In terms of an eschatological bearing, Israel’s history was eschatologically defined. Even though the recognition of God by the nations was the meaning and content of Israel’s call this does not come to its full realisation during the whole history of Israel. The achievement of this goal looks to the future. The final gathering of the nations awaits the future when “The Day of the Lord” will come and God will intervene and break into human history in an unusually powerful way through the anointed of God, the Messiah and the Spirit, to gather and purify Israel as the

eschatological community and to bring about a comprehensive salvation for all the nations.

It is from this background and understanding that the birth of Jesus was prophesied and announced (Luke 1:26-38; 2:8-14; Matthew 1:18-25). It is also from this background and understanding that the call and nature of Jesus' ministry should be understood. Jesus' incarnation and how the people, the Jews of his time, conceived of the Messiah are also important to this understanding.

### **4.3 The Mission of Jesus**

The calls of Adam and Abraham find their fulfillment in the call and ministry of Jesus. When Jesus uttered the sixth of the seven words on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), he was saying that finally the mission that God had embarked on in the call of Adam and Abraham was now coming to its conclusion. The eschatological era of gathering Israel and the nations begins with the call of Jesus and the kingdom mission of Jesus.

It is not easy to identify passages in which God himself gives instructions with regard to the call of Jesus as he does with Adam and Abraham. In Adam and Abraham's case the book of Genesis can be used to identify how they are called by God. But for Jesus it is difficult to determine which scriptures to study in order to find direct instructions from God.

In overcoming this dilemma, the understanding of the term mission matters a great deal as it plays a very important role in helping to understand clearly what is meant by the "call" and how the call is presented. In understanding and identifying the call of Jesus, Kösternberger's working definition of the term mission will be a useful guide. He defines mission as "the specific task or purpose which a person or group seeks to accomplish, involving various models of movement be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering by calling others to follow or following" (Kösternberger

1998:41). It is from this understanding that Jesus can be seen as called by God to his mission. This definition means that the call to mission is not restricted as only occurring when there is a description of an encounter with God (or God's messengers) as is seen in the case of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-2), Moses (Exodus 3:1-17), Samuel (1Samuel 3:1-9), Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3), the disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), and Paul (Acts 9:1-9).

Even in cases where there is no such dramatic encounter with God, as in the above examples, where there is a clear understanding of what is to be done and who is to carry out the task there is the call to mission. This is true with the call of Jesus to mission. This call begins with an understanding of what is to be done, and it begins with the hope for redemption just after the fall of Adam and Eve when the Lord God said to the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Bartholomew and Goheen make this observation:

Even in the tragic tale of sin's entrance into the world, God does not give up his purpose for his creation and his kingdom. Though Adam and Eve flee from him, God graciously takes the initiative to seek them out. In declaring judgment, God curses the serpent and promises to put enmity between the serpent's offspring and that of the woman (Genesis 3:15). The woman's offspring will crush the serpent's head – in other words, God's promise to extinguish the evil forces Adam and Eve have unleashed. This is the first biblical promise of the gospel: Christ is to be the woman's offspring and will defeat Satan, though at great cost to himself, as the serpent "will strike his heel". (2014:42)

Roberts also sees Genesis 3:15 as a veiled prophecy of the work of the Lord Jesus. In it, God is pointing to a time in future when a human being, a son of Eve, will deliver a final blow to defeat Satan. This is what Jesus achieved through his death on the cross, and this work will come to a completion when Jesus returns as king. Roberts sees these words in Genesis 3:15 being echoed in the words of Paul in Romans 6:20: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (2002:49).

Roberts further explains that it is with Genesis 3:15 in mind that Paul wrote about the eternal plan of God's salvation in Ephesians 1. He concludes his explanation by saying:

As God's plan of salvation is eternal, it is no surprise to see hints of it even during the dark days of the fall and its immediate aftermath; even then the bright light of the gospel can be seen. It gives hope in the midst of despair and begins to promise better things to come. (Roberts 2002:48-49)

Who is Jesus Christ? This is a question of fundamental importance and a question that everyone called to participate in the mission of God cannot afford not to address. If one is to fully understand the invitation of God to co-operate with him in mission one has to address this question. It is a question with which the disciples also struggled: "Who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?" (Mark 4:41). It was this question that became the source of conflict between Jesus, the Scribes and the Pharisees (Mark 2:5-10; John 5:16-18; 7:20). Even Jesus himself had to address this question before he could begin his mission. This was the whole point of the temptation of Jesus and his baptism where he discerned what his true identity was. Here he was faced with the question of what type of a messiah he would be in order to fulfill God's eternal purpose for the redemption of the whole creation. It was a refusal to allow others to give him his identity (Matthew 4:3,6). Moreover, because Jesus attached great importance to self-discovery, he posed the same question to the disciples before he could entrust them with God's mission (Matthew 16:13-19; Luke 9:18-20).

#### **4.3.1 The ministry of Jesus**

When announcing the birth of Jesus the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child will be called holy, the son of God" (Luke 1:35). And to Joseph the angel said in a dream, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from sin" (Matthew 1:20).

In the call of Jesus to mission, which ends in the call of the Church to mission, the Holy Spirit plays a very important and unique role. Right from the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary the scripture clearly shows how the Holy Spirit is involved. The Gospel of Mark introduces Jesus in these words:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased". The Spirit immediately drove him out into the Wilderness. And he was in the wilderness 40 days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him. (Mark1:9-13)

This passage shows that when the time came for Jesus to begin his ministry in accordance with God's plan there were two things that needed to be done: he needed to be baptised and then he needed to be tested. These two were a requirement and not optional.

On the necessity of baptism for God's mission Jesus had this to say: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John3:3). He goes further to explain that "unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is of the flesh and that which is born of the spirit is of the spirit" (John 3:6).

Baptism signifies the putting off of one's old nature, one's former life or status, and putting on a new nature or status. For Jesus it meant the taking off of his divine nature, the divine heavenly authority and status, and putting on human nature, and being identified with humanity and all that goes with it: suffering, limitation to space, temptation and death. This symbolism is clearly demonstrated in the passage of the washing of the disciple's feet in John 13:1-9. In this passage, when Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet, Jesus spoke to Peter plainly that if Peter did not allow Jesus to wash his feet, then Peter would have no part in Jesus: "He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus said to him, 'what I am doing you do not know now but afterward

you will understand'. Peter said to him, 'You shall never wash me!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part in me'" (John 13 6-8). What Jesus was saying to Peter was something like, "it is only when you allow me to serve as your servant that I become your saviour". In other words, it is only through baptism that Jesus becomes the saviour of God's creation.

Creation, through humanity (Adam), had fallen from the mark of God's glory; thus, it is only humanity (Jesus incarnate) that can bring back creation to what God intended it to be (Romans 5:18-19). It is with this in mind that the conversation between John and Jesus when the latter came to the former to be baptised (Matthew 3:13-15) can be understood, and when Peter wanted to refuse having his feet washed by Jesus. Both conversations show how the Jews of the time viewed the Messiah. For them the Messiah was the divine anointed of God who could not be identified with human suffering and misery. One who could not die, was a political overlord, and dominated all the kingdoms of the world.

It is also with this same understanding of who the Messiah is that Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him when Jesus showed his disciple that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes and be killed (Matthew 16:21-23). The same conviction made the two disciples on the road to Emmaus become depressed and hopeless as they talked to each other on their way back to their village, especially as they responded to Jesus' questions (Luke 24:13-35).

There is no better way to explain the meaning and implication of the baptism of Jesus than the words of Paul in his letter to the Philippians:

Have this in mind among yourself, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

This passage shows that Jesus' challenges were the opposite of Adam's challenges. Jesus' challenge was identifying himself with humanity by "emptying himself,

taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”. While Adam’s challenge was identifying himself with the divine: “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”. However, both the challenges of Adam and Jesus had something to do with identity.

In terms of the necessity of being tested for God’s mission, Jesus understood his call and mission very well, right from his childhood, but similarly to the call of Adam and Abraham before him, he had to pass the test of faith, obedience and loyalty before he could begin his mission. For Adam the test was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). For Abraham the test was to leave his identity and move to the unknown (Genesis 12:1-2) and then to sacrifice his long-awaited son (Genesis 15:1-5; 16:2-6; 21:1-6; 22:2). Abraham was asked to give up his hopes of being a father by giving away the only heir who was to perpetuate his name. In the case of Jesus, the test came **in** the form of the three temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13):

- “If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (Matthew 4:3).
- “If you are the son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He shall give his angels charge of you’ and ‘on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone’” (Matthew 4:6).
- “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9).

Kösternberger and O’Brien say this about Luke’s account of the temptation narrative (Luke 4:1-13):

Jesus as God’s Son, that is Israel’s Messiah, replays the story of Israel’s experience in the wilderness, in what amounts to a “new exodus”. Tempted by hunger, Jesus (unlike Israel) depends wholly on God for sustenance (Deuteronomy 8:3). He rejects the temptation to worship the devil in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world (Deuteronomy 6:13; contrast Israel Deuteronomy 9:12) and unlike Israel, God’s son refuses to put the Lord God to the test (Deuteronomy 6:16). As the Messiah, King and Son of God (2

Samuel 7:14, Psalm 27;89:27), Jesus represents the nation and fulfils the task of eschatological Israel in the wilderness. Israel's restoration has begun through the victory of God's hand over the devil. (2001:115)

Nissen (2007:24) talks of Jesus facing two alternative understandings of his mission as the son of God in the temptation narrative. One is the devil's strategy while the other is God's strategy. In the devil's strategy, Satan proposes to Jesus that he manifest his divine authority as the son of God by ruling the whole earth as the earth's new political overlord, dominating all the kingdoms of the world. In this way by means of political power, he can introduce theocracy and avoid the sufferings of the cross. In this strategy God's kingdom would be imposed on people and no freedom would be left for the people. They would have to submit to Jesus in the same way they submit to their current political leaders. The kind of power that the devil is talking about in this strategy is a gift from the devil and it can only be given when the devil is adored. To this strategy Jesus' answer is absolutely clear and leaves no compromise. In God's strategy, the will of God is not that of Jesus as a political and triumphant Messiah, which was the expectation of many people, even the disciples. The mission of Jesus, who is also the expected king of Israel, is to manifest and incarnate God's kingdom by reigning not from above but as Emmanuel. The resurrection does not install Jesus above as the heavenly king or Lord but confirms that he is a king dwelling among his people. The temptation of Jesus is about Jesus being tempted to abuse his strength, his authority, his gift and his relations to the father. It is the temptation of triumphalism, forgetting or by passing the cross.

Similarly to Abraham, once Jesus passed his test he is ready for God's mission. As Luke put it, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Holy Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all" (Luke 4:14-15).

Central to the message of Jesus is "the kingdom of God". As Mark observes, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark1:14-15). He understood the mission that God had

committed to him of creating a community with a God-ward culture and an eschatological community that would signify the coming of the kingdom of God. As Goheen argues, the eschatological era of gathering Israel and the nations began with the kingdom mission of Jesus. Jesus was sent by God to gather and restore creation to the reason for its being – to its mission. With the coming of Jesus “the kingdom of God is at hand”, meaning that the kingdom of God is “already but not yet”.

All Jews brought up under the teachings of the Old Testament prophets expected the kingdom of God to come immediately in its fullness; the old age would be drawn to a close and the new age to come would dawn. But their expectation did not happen immediately. John the Baptist was one of such and this is the reason why he sent his disciple to Jesus to ask him whether he was the expected Messiah, or whether they should wait for another messiah (Luke 7:18-23).

In the mission of Jesus, although the kingdom has already dawned, it has not yet arrived in its fullness. The mission is a sign that God’s power to renew the creation has broken into history. The forces of the age to come are flowing into history but the counterforce of the old age remains a powerful reality. There happens to be an overlapping of the two ages and the reason for this overlapping is mission. This means that the overlap of the ages, the time between the coming of Christ as saviour and his coming again as judge, is the time given for the Apostolic Church to witness to the ends of the earth. The end of things which Christ has revealed is held back until witness to the whole world concerning judgment and salvation is borne. This “already and not yet” time period is the time taken for the end-time ingathering of the nations. It begins with the mission of Jesus to Israel; the renewed Israel is invited to participate in Jesus’ mission to the remaining sheep of the house of Israel and then to the nations.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the remnant is the narrowing down of the people of God, and if this is so then the Messiah is the narrowing down of the remnant to an individual level, to the person of Jesus himself. As the Messiah, he understood that the kingdom community that had to be created was to be more like the remnant; it was not to be confined to a certain geographical area or to be like

the “Adam community” or the “Abrahamic community” which were confined to a particular clan, tribe or nation. Jesus brings a new dimension in defining the kingdom of God. This is a spiritual dimension and is about the “inner person”. It addresses the heart of a person. It is with this understanding that Jesus said to Pilate:

“My kingship is not of this world; if it were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” Pilate said to him, “so you are a king?” Jesus answered him, “you say that I am a king. For this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice”. (John 18:36-37)

The purpose of the Father in sending the Son was that the Son, as a form of Adam, would create a new community of the people of God, the new Israel. The calling of the disciples was the beginning of this gathering of the remnant, and Wright calls it “the gathering of the nations to the new messianic people of God” (2006:506). It was the fulfillment of the mission given to Adam and the promise made to Abraham, as Glasser observes that “Jesus as the chosen one is assigned by the Father the task of bringing those whom he has chosen into the eschatological context of the kingdom of God” (2003:248).

#### **4.3.2 The call to discipleship**

Jesus fulfilled the requirements of God’s call to mission and then went ahead in the task of creating a community with a God-ward culture. He gathered to himself a group around him whom he appointed as his Apostles to work with him (Mark3:13-19). This group was to be the foundation of the new Israel, the eschatological community. As seen in chapter three when looking at the call of Abraham, God’s call to mission is based on faith and obedience:

He who conquers and keeps my words until the end, I will give him power over the nations and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; and I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:26-28)

God created human beings as faith beings; thus, human being's relationship with God depends on faith, obedience and loyalty. Just like the call of Abraham, the disciples were called to a life of faith, obedience and loyalty, and again like Abraham, they were called to a life of uncertainty. Jesus made this clear to those who desired to follow him: "And a scribe came up and said to him, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head'" (Matthew 8:19-20). Paul called this type of life a "walk by faith and not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:17), while the writer of the letter to the Hebrews called it "living by faith" as he encouraged his readers to hold onto their faith in order for them to receive the promise of God's eternal life:

"For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and keep their soul. (Hebrews 10:37-39)

Like Abraham, Jesus was required to develop a kingdom community. This community was to be trained in the kingdom values in the same way that the Abrahamic community had to be trained or taught the Ten Commandments.

Jesus selected the 12 Apostles from his many followers and paid special attention to them. He trained them for ministry in preparation for the day when he would hand over his work to them. His training method was personal because he expected them to be the means of growing a community. They were to be the spearhead in the growth of a God-ward cultured community, and he made sure that they were properly equipped. Jesus created out of the 12 a community that would live and work together. He lived with them, he gave them private lessons and he sent them on assignments as Glasser explains: "Jesus' overall training method had three basic components: prayer, example and instructions. Prayer was primary and fundamental" (2003:209).

On selection, training and ministry, Wright (2010:212) notes that they were called and chosen by Jesus, and not self-appointed or elected by the rest of the disciples. Their authority, function and ministry was derived from Jesus alone. The method of training was that of being with him, simply spending time with him, learning from him, understanding his identity and mission, and witnessing his life and teaching as he unveiled the radical cost of discipleship in his death and resurrection. This method of training made the 12 a unique group so much so that when Judas dropped out, the criteria for his replacement was that he had to be a person who had been with them from the time of Jesus' baptism to the time of his resurrection.

They were identified by being with Jesus; in other words, their identity was Jesus (Acts 4:13). What the Apostles said and did was Jesus saying and doing through them. They were replicating and extending the ministry of Jesus in the same way that Jesus did for the Father's mission.

Coleman outlines eight principles that are behind the methods Jesus used in training his disciples. He summarises them as follows:

1. **Selection:** He chose a few faithful, available, teachable (FAT) disciples. (Luke 6:13-17, Mark 3:13-19). They were not scholars, men with special talents, just ordinary men who he could shape and mould into leaders. He did not spread himself too thin.
2. **Association:** He devoted his time to them, even in the midst of ministry to the masses. They were with him in all sorts of situations – called to simply “be with Him” and “follow Him”.
3. **Consecration:** He called them to obedience – to turn away from sin and sacrifice their own personal interests – to turn to him and his teachings. He called them to commit themselves not to a doctrine or programme, but to his person.
4. **Impartation:** He gave himself to them and for them. The foundation of their relationship to him was his love and self-denial. He lived discipleship before them on a daily basis and there was no limit to his love for them. His commitment to them, and giving of himself for them was the motivation of their giving themselves totally for him.
5. **Demonstration:** He taught them by showing them. All the disciples had to teach them was a teacher who practised with them what he expected them to learn. So, they learned to pray by hearing him pray, learned how to use the word by observing his handling of it, learned how to minister by watching him ministering. They

became evangelists by his demonstrations of evangelism. Discipleship is easier caught than taught.

**6. Delegation:** He put them to work (Mark 6:7, Matthew 10:5, Luke 9:1,2). They assisted him as he ministered, gradually he sent them out two by two. The instructions he gave them are most interesting, revealing how even this was a part of their preparation as his disciples.

**7. Supervision:** He kept check on them and used their experiences to instruct them further (Mark 6:30). This was “on the job training” at its best. They were given adequate room to work and learn, yet never without his concern and guidance as it was needed.

**8. Reproduction:** It is clear that he intended them to become disciples. The Church is like the mustard seed, it starts out small – yet we expect it to grow bigger than the crops around it. John 15:1-17 the branch abiding in the vine must bear fruit. (in McWilliams 2003)

In the call to discipleship and to mission, there were requirements for those would-be disciples. First and foremost, the disciples needed to understand that they did not choose to be disciples, rather they were chosen to be disciples: “You did not choose me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John15:16). Jesus here introduced a new concept of discipleship into his own context. During that time, it was the potential disciples who were the ones who went around looking for a teacher and in this way it was the student who chose the teacher. But for Jesus it was he who went around looking for students, so that in this case discipleship became a gift from him. This meant that the disciples could not behave as if they were doing Jesus a favour by following him, but rather it was Jesus doing the disciples a favour. With this new understanding Jesus then laid down requirements for becoming his disciples.

Disciples were required to give up all that they had for the sake of Jesus: “So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). The disciple had to have a complete change of mindset towards the ownership of possessions. This involved a movement away from the principle of self-ownership, self-interest and self-gratification as the goal of life towards a sense of being accountable to fellow human beings (neighbours) and to God. It showed itself in the hearty and practical recognition of universal stewardship, that everything one is and has (one’s being, life, body, soul, mind,

strength, time, possessions, family and friends) is to be regarded as belonging to God. One is only God's steward and has to give to God full account of one's life. It is with this in mind that David prays:

Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and on earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honour come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name.

But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill offering? For all things come from you and of your own have we given you. For we are aliens and transients before you, as were all our ancestors...O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all yours. (1Chronicles 29:11-16)

It is with the above understanding that some Churches have the following as one of their offertory prayers: "Yours, Lord is the greatness, the power, the glory the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you and of your own do we give you" (An Anglican Prayer Book 1989:116). Thus, being a disciple involved recognising that all possessions are God's, that humans have no absolute right to do what they like with them, nor does it mean paying no regard to God and their neighbours. People are only tenants (Luke 21:33-41) and this is what the rich young ruler failed to comprehend. This sense is also in Matthew 8:21-22: "Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead'" Burying one's father entails inheriting their property and name, thus the disciple was, in fact, saying to Jesus, "Before I follow you, allow me to first claim part of my father's possessions". He was like the lost son in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

Disciples were required to deny themselves and take up their individual crosses and follow Jesus: "And he said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me'" (Luke 9:23;

Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27). Here Jesus came up with a revolutionary concept. The order of priority set by human beings at the fall is self first, others second and God last (the other way of looking at this would be humans, creation and God). God is seen here as the last resort; if all others fail then try God. Self-interest is at the top of the agenda:

So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband and he ate. Then their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. (Genesis 3:6-7)

Jesus revolutionary concept was his rearrangement of the order of priorities in relationships: God first, others second and self last (or God, creation and humans). Disciples must die to self and let God and others live. In the life of discipleship, the disciples needed to have the conviction that their lives were meant to be spent for God and for others.

Disciples were required to hate family and self: “And now a great multitude accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, ‘If any man comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple’” (Luke 14:25-26). No one can serve two masters and discipleship demands personal, exclusive and passionate devotion to a master. Family and other close relationships should not have the first claim on the disciple’s life. If family ties clash with the claims of the master, if any close relationship of a disciple’s life conflicts with the claims of the master, then obedience and loyalty to the master is what is demanded of a disciple. Discipleship entails personal relationship and devotion to a person and not mere devotion to principles. As observed earlier, the rearrangement of one’s priorities was also demanded. What it means here is that the disciple’s love for the master must have precedence over any other. As the *Highlights in Life and Ministry of Jesus* series observes:

We should all understand that Jesus did not mean by this that we cannot love God and family at the same time – that we can only

love God while hating those nearest to us. The scriptures speak too plainly elsewhere of our obligation to our families, husbands, wives and children.

What our Lord means is that our love for him must have precedence over any other. Our attachment to him must be greater than any other. While husbands are to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25), they are to love the saviour more. No human relationship should be more intimate, no human bond more inseparable than that between the disciple and his master. (bible.org/series nd)

The disciple should have a supreme and uncompromising love for the master. It is this love that moves the disciple in a way of obedience: “If you love me, you will obey my commandments” (John14:23). Thus, for one to be a disciple of Jesus, Jesus must be the object of one’s supreme love and devotion.

Moreover, disciples were required to reproduce. Legrand observes that “God’s call culminates in the formation of a people. It is more than a call to service of the true God. Its intent is to integrate human beings into the people of God [...] The goal of the mission of Israel is to create a community – to arouse not only a faith, but a shared faith” (1990:31). At the heart of Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples was the command to “go and make disciples”, and at the heart of the call of Abraham, to whom the promise of blessing for all nations is given, was the command to go and create a community of the people of God. Thus, the Great Commission has its roots in the call of Abraham.

The call to discipleship was and is a call to repentance and faith. It is a call “to conversion – to the deliberate dislodging of oneself from the solitary throne in his or her heart, so that Christ himself might be enthroned thereon by the Holy Spirit” because God’s “sovereign rule demands personal commitment the sort that arises from a transformed, regenerated heart” (Glasser &McGavran 1983:43).

### **4.3.3 The Great Commission**

Once Jesus’ mandate was completed, he commissioned his disciples. He gave them the charge and mandate for their task. This charge and mandate is not only for the first disciples alone, but also for those who are to come after them. This

charge and mandate is traditionally referred to as the “Great Commission”. In it, Jesus spells out what the disciples are to do and how they are to do it. The Great Commission reveals what the mandate is for the people of God – the “Jesus developed community” in the New Testament.

The term “commission” is the term used to refer to the mandate given to a person or a group of persons after some kind of training; it is a mandate to make a new beginning. Thus, the Great Commission of Matthew, Mark, Luke/Acts and John come at the beginning of the Apostles’ ministry. It is worthwhile taking note that the purpose of God’s mission in the New Testament comes on two levels. First, through the ministry of Jesus, as told by the gospels, and second, the ministry of the Apostles as representatives of the “Jesus Communities”, the new Israel, the Church, as told by the rest of the New Testament books. Glasser makes this observation:

Thus, although the Great Commission is the climax of the earthly instruction of Jesus, this in itself does not make the Christian movement a missionary faith. This movement has its source in God, whose gracious redemptive purpose through Christ was to reconcile “to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:20). It is entirely because of the dynamic leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit so that what might be called “true” Israel became a missionary presence reaching out to the nations. But the Great Commission was needed to remove all doubt to end all disputation and to bring into clear focus what the mission of the Church really is. (2003:229)

In Matthew’s account, the commission comes at the very last and once Jesus pronounced the words of the commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Matthew closes his book. Jesus has done his work and it is finished; he now passes on the work to the disciples who are to carry on the mission. He can no longer be at the centre; he can only be with them in the background: “And Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Mark, like Matthew, puts the commission right at the end, and he adds how the parting took place and where Jesus went:

So, then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, and they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message that attended it. Amen. (Mark16:19-20)

John's account emphasises the transition or the passing on of the commission or mandate, which is the same mandate given to Jesus by the Father. Jesus now hands it over to the disciples. In John's account of the Last Supper (John 13:1-15) he writes:

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. When he had washed their feet and taken his garments and resumed his place, he said to them; "Do you know what I have just done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do what I have done to you".(John 13:12-15)

With this lesson or act in the background, Jesus declares to the disciples "as the father sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21).

Luke's account is to be understood alongside the account in Acts where the giving of the last address and charge can be found. Luke, similarly to Mark, adds to the words of the Commission these parting words: "Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51). This is also reflected in the book of Acts:

So, when they had come together they asked him, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the time or seasons which the father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and to the end of the earth". And when he said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. (Acts 1:6)

The Great Commission, understood from all the Gospels and Acts, is a guide to understanding God's purpose for mission, but as has been discussed previously, the Great Commission has its roots in the call of Abraham.

The mission of the Church as the new people of God has its roots in the Great Commission, which in turn has its roots in the creation narrative. In this commission Jesus establishes the disciples as the representatives of the Church, and the Church as his ambassadors in the world with the mandate that was given to the "three Adams" (Adam, Abraham and Jesus). Likewise, in the commission Jesus spells out who the new people of God are before him, what their mandate is and how the mandate is to be carried out. Matthew's account of the Great Commission identifies the things that the Church is sent into the world to be and to do. In other words, Matthew brings out the reason the Church is called into existence. The opening words of the commission of "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18) serve as a warning and the motivation for mission and as the assurance of the disciples' security.

As a warning, the words are to remind the disciples that in God's call to mission there are set boundaries which cannot be crossed. Chapter three has noted that God's plan for creation is that all his creatures are to live in fellowship, harmony and peace, fully aware of who they are and why they have been created. Furthermore, God wants the whole created order to enjoy the full knowledge of God and live in the fear of the Lord. God's plan for humanity is that they must reflect God's character and nature in God's world. They are to live in perfect fellowship and harmony with God, maintaining the image of God as portrayed in the creation narrative (that of an orderly Spirit bringing about order in a chaotic situation). Likewise, Israel, as the people of God, was called into being that it might be the visible embodiment on the earth of God's divine glory and a means of blessing for the nations. As the disciples carried on their mandate they needed to be aware of God's set boundaries (John 13:16; 15:16; Matthew 10:24-25).

As an assurance of security, the words of Jesus point to the fact that he is sent by his Father on mission and that he has accomplished his mission. The disciples had seen this themselves, as John put it:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you (1John 1:1-3).

Jesus is the one sending them, as Harvey observes: “Jesus, the one who was sent on mission and accomplished his mission, now becomes the sender” (in Larkin & Williams 1998:129). It is this assurance of security that gave Peter the courage and confidence to give the first Christian sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-42) with the opening words of “men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words” (Acts 2:14), and ending with these challenging words: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). It is also this same assurance of security that gave Peter and John the courage to challenge the authorities that tried to prevent them from preaching and ministering in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18-20).

The rest of the words of the Great Commission are about what the Church is called to do and how it is to carry out what it is mandated to do: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). It was noted earlier that “the goal of *missio Dei* is to incorporate mankind in the kingdom of God and convey to mankind the gifts thereof” (Vicedom 1965:14). Likewise, Ashford states that “the kingdom is the goal of God’s mission and the end towards which the Church moves” (2011:60). Thus, the mission of the Church is to prepare for the arrival of the king and his kingdom. In the words of the Great Commission cited above (28:19-20), Jesus expresses very clearly how he expects the Church to carry out its mission.

#### **4.4 Mission of the Church**

Jesus gathered, selected and trained the disciples, and then gave them a test question to assess whether they were ready to be entrusted with the mission that God had entrusted to him (Matthew 16:13-16). Jesus was satisfied with Peter's answer (Matthew 16:17-19) and then inducted the disciples as the new people of God. He did this by performing two symbolic acts: the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree. In these acts Jesus expressed that Israel, as the chosen people of God, had failed to live up to their calling. In the cleansing of the temple Israel was judged to have failed to be the blessing to the nations as they had been called to be since God mandated Abraham. In fact, they had become a hindrance to the nations receiving God's blessings (Mark 11:17). In the cursing of the fig tree, Israel, like a fig tree, was judged to have become a seasonal fruit bearing people of God, bearing fruit benefitting themselves only, and no other nations. The implication seems to be that Israel had forgotten that their election as the people of God was for the benefit of all nations, as portrayed in the story of Jonah, but they had become missionaries without a missionary heart.

This prophetic enactment is followed by the Great Commission after the death and resurrection of Jesus at the Ascension (Matt.28:16-20). This is the foundation for the creation of the new people of God, the Church. As has been noted, the new community of the people of God, the "Jesus community", is commissioned to carry on God's mission as it was entrusted to Jesus: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John20:21). According to Luke's version of the commission, even though the new community of the people of God was commissioned to carry on the gospel mandate (Luke 24:44-48), they were told that on their own they were not capable of carrying out the mandate, thus they were to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 49).

The Holy Spirit plays a very important and unique role in the call of Jesus. Right from Jesus' conception in the womb of Mary, the scripture clearly shows how the

Holy Spirit is involved. Jesus reminded the disciples of the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit by instructing them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit had come on them (Luke 24:46-49).

It is only when the Day of Pentecost came that the inauguration of the new community and the first fruits of the eschatological harvest are seen. Thus, after the coming of the Holy Spirit the new Israel, the new kingdom community, the Church, was established with the mandate given to Adam, to Abraham as the second Adam, and to Jesus as the third Adam. This is the mandate of creating a community with a God-ward culture – the kingdom of God.

However, at this stage the calling of the Church into being is still at the level of redemption in the third division of the four sections of the grand narrative. This is a transitional stage from the time of the “present kingdom” to the “proclaimed kingdom”. Roberts explains that at the stage of the proclaimed kingdom, “Christian believers have been given the Spirit to equip [them] to take the gospel to all people. Mission is not an option for the keen few, it is an obligation for us all. Jesus commands us to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19)” (2002:128).

The guiding theme of the kingdom of God has moved from the “present kingdom” (which is the section that covers the ministry of Jesus) to the “proclaimed kingdom”, (which is the section that covers the ministry of the new people of God, the Church). According to the Gospel of Luke, at the Ascension Jesus commissioned the disciples in the words of the Great Commission. The Ascension served as the foundation for the launching of the new people of God, the new Israel, the Jesus community, the Church, with the global view of mission. Jesus was aware that the task before the disciples was one that they could not accomplish on their own. He therefore instructed them to wait for the promise of the Father of “being clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). This promise is for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecost experience has a number of significant implications for the life of the Church, but out of these two particularly stand out. First, the Pentecost is

associated with the ingathering of the first fruits. The first ripe fruits (sheaves of wheat) are presented in the temple before the Lord in celebration and thanksgiving for the anticipated harvest. It is at this occasion that the disciples met for the first time as the community of Jesus, the first fruits (Romans 8:23), for the launching of the Church. Second, Pentecost is associated with the renewal of God's covenant in the giving of the Law through Moses. Here the disciples had to renew their commitment after all that they had gone through –the arrest, trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus whom they had failed.

At Pentecost the new community that Jesus gathered is inaugurated as the new nation of the people of God. Thus, the new people of God, the Church, was the new kingdom community with the same mandate that was given to Adam and Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus passed this mandate on to them in the words, "As the Father sent me, even so I send you", but the mandate had to be carried out under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not primarily concerned with salvation, or even 'a second work of grace', but with the essential guidance and empowerment of the Church for its witness throughout the world. The disciples were not waiting upon the Lord primarily for their person renewal, but rather to receive corporate empowerment for their mission and guidance.

In the Babel experience (Genesis 11), God used the introduction of many languages to scatter people so that they would fulfill his command to populate the earth. Language became a barrier for the people to communicate. Since they could not communicate as before, they had no choice but to group themselves according to their language and settled themselves in communities accordingly. Thus, it is with the Babel experience that the introduction of world cultures is said to have its origin. In the Pentecost experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God again used the many languages, but this time not as a barrier of communication but rather as means to reach out to the many communities so that the good news can go forth from the renewed gathered community. The gather eschatological community received the spirit as a down payment on the future salvation. Goheen (2014:64) observes that the Pentecost community was empowered by the coming

of the Spirit to be the prime exhibit, the illustration and the preview of what the future kingdom would look like.

Speaking on the role and significance of the Holy Spirit in the ministry and theological work of the local Church Schreiter says that:

One cannot speak of a community developing a local theology without it being filled with the Spirit and working under the power of the gospel. Unless the community accepts the free gift of God's grace, unless that community gathers for its own nourishment in the word and sacrament, unless this experience of grace moves the community both into praxis consonant with the gospel and into deeper communion with other Churches [...] it cannot be forgotten that theology is the work of God through a human graced community. (1985:24)

This is not only true of a community developing a local theology, but also for any community that is called to participate in God's mission. Jesus was aware of this and it is because of this that, as the ascended Lord, he continues to work through his Church on earth, and through the Holy Spirit he continues to inspire and guide the Church. Samartha (1981:80) calls the Church "the body of Christ and the community of the Holy Spirit". The work of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the ministry of Christ; thus, the mission of the Church has its beginning in the incarnation, the life, death and the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were also aware of this and it is because of this that they formulated their lifestyle as presented in Acts 2:42-47.

In God's call to mission those chosen are commanded to go and to leave. Thus, the Church has to go. As noted in previous chapters, God's call to mission is a journey undertaken by faith, walked in obedience and lived in loyalty to the one who has set people apart for the journey. In this sense, the call of the Church to mission is a replay of the call of Abraham. Just as Abraham journeyed on to the "Promised Land" (Genesis 12:1), the Church also journeys on to the "Promised Kingdom". The only difference is that Abraham was promised a physical geographical land, which was to be populated through procreation (physical and biological multiplication), and thus it involved the centripetal model as the main model of mission, while the Church is promised a spiritual land beyond this physical

geographical world– the Church is in the world but not of the world (John 17:15-16) –and thus this land is to be populated through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom leading to the creation of descendants through faith in which the centrifugal model is the main model of mission.

The Church has the same task as that which was given to Adam, Abraham and fulfilled by Jesus who accomplished the mission committed to him (John 17:4-5): that of creating a kingdom community with a God-ward culture. Peters observes that “the Great Commission does not create new duties; it merely defines original ones. Christian duties flow from the character of Christianity and their relation to the Lord” (1972:178).

Previously the study has clarified that the definition of mission is not a project for recruiting people into God’s labour force, but rather a liberating project that sets people free from all the entanglements that prevent them from serving God as his vice-regents. Thus, the role of the Church is to be the chosen bearer of the good news of Jesus Christ. As the first fruits of the eschatological community, the new humanity creates through the reconciliation of breaking down the dividing walls. The Church should manifest the victory of the cross in the concrete realities of its being in society, and begin to be liberated from all the entanglements and the powers that prevent humans from being God’s vice-regents. The task of the people of God is to discern what God is doing in the world around them and then to participate in God’s work. It is about engaging God in the community through his word in order “to undo and progressively overcome the negative effects of the fall (Genesis 3), and prepare the present ‘fallen’ world for God’s ultimate restoration of a ‘new heaven and new earth’ (Revelation 21:1-2) where once more as God’s first creation (Genesis 1-2), the original worldview of the biblical Sabbath will be in full effect for all eternity” (Heldt 2004:164).

Therefore, the primary task of the Church is to make disciples and to prepare for the arrival of the king by setting up liberated, transformed communities in the kingdom of God. How is this to be done? The Great Commission lays down the pattern of disciple-making, or the method of discipleship as proclamation, baptising and teaching.

**Proclamation:** The proclamation of the gospel is an important part of the process of making disciples. Paul commented on the importance of proclamation when he made this observation: “For ‘everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:13-14). Proclamation here goes beyond mere communication of the gospel. It is the task of leading people to faith in Jesus. It is conversion or transformation to an attitude of dedication and submission to the kingship of Jesus and it involves a change of allegiance to Christ and accepting Christ so that he becomes the centre of one’s life. It is at this stage of the process that the Church can be called the witness and the “sent one”. McNeal observes that:

The “sent “Church implies a Church on a mission, largely played out away from Church gatherings. “Sent” people maintain the purpose of the Church when scattered and are not just hanging around waiting for the next Church gathering to attend and live out their spiritual development, the sentness of the Church, the commission of the Church as being sent is to engage the world with the gospel. (2011:16)

It is this understanding of the Church as God’s chosen race, his royal priesthood and holy nation sent out to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom that makes the centrifugal model the main model of mission in the New Testament.

Proclamation leads to the first stage in the threefold goal of mission – conversion. Bosch (1992:188) observes that conversion is not the joining of a community so as to procure eternal salvation, but is rather a change in allegiance in which one accepts Christ as Lord and centre of one’s life. A Christian therefore is not simply someone who stands a better chance of being saved in this life, but a Christian is a person who accepts the responsibility to serve God in this life and promote the reign of God in all its forms. Conversion demands personal cleansing, forgiveness, reconciliation and renewal so as to become a participant in the mighty work of God.

**Baptising:** When considering the call of Jesus, this chapter has noted the necessity of baptism in God's call (John 3:3-6). Baptism in the New Testament replaces circumcision in the Old Testament. Entrance into covenant relationship with God in the Old Testament required the chosen people of God to have all the males circumcised (Genesis 17:9-14). In the New Testament all members of the new people of God, the Church, both male and female, are required to be baptised: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). It is with this understanding in mind that Glasser comes up with the "demonstrable affirmation" that "there were no unbaptised Christians in the apostolic Church: all of the five recorded conversions in Acts include baptism: the Ethiopian eunuch (8:36, 38); Saul of Tarsus (9:18; 22:16); Cornelius the centurion (10:47-48); Lydia of Thyatira (16:15); and the Roman jailer (16:33)" (2003:235).

Baptism signifies the putting off of one's old nature, one's former life, and putting on a new status, thus entering into a new relationship with Jesus in the community of the kingdom people of God. Burnett observes that, "there are three aspects to the notion of baptism: submission, confession and incorporation" (1996:137). Baptism serves as one's acceptance of the Lordship of Christ and therefore serves as a point of submission. The baptised person enters into a new family and accepts a new set of social relations and submits to the new head of the community, Jesus Christ. Baptism demands a public confession which is a demonstration of a person's repentance and faith and therefore leads to confession. It shows the change of citizenship, a change of allegiance and the transfer of loyalty to Jesus. Baptism also signifies being incorporated into the community and therefore leads to incorporation. "To make disciples", as Peskett and Ramachandra note, means, "to bring people into pupilage to Jesus Christ, to enroll them in his school, it implies radical, long-term commitment" (2003:176). Baptism therefore is the initiation rite into discipleship and marks the entry into the community of the people of God, the Church. Peskett and Ramachandra go further in explaining that:

Baptism in the triune name is to mark their entry into the community of disciples, and obedience to all Jesus has commanded spells out that ethical character of their discipleship. We note that it is obedience not to "all that I will command them" but to all that I have commanded you; in other words, the apostolic word has

primacy in the development of a disciple's life. Baptism "in the name of" means "passing into the possession of [...] as the mark of ownership by...". It is a sign that the baptised person is under new management. (2003:176)

Baptism is an act of incorporation into the Church and a sign of the change of allegiance and entry into another. The vows that are taken at baptism are more like the soldiers' oath of loyalty on entering the army, or like signing a contract. Thus, when one comes for baptism God asks, "Do you accept the terms and conditions in this contract and bind yourself to observe, living your life in accordance with them? Do you accept the terms of my service, accepting all the privileges with all its responsibilities, with all its promises and all its demands?" Without these questions and answers the contract is not valid. Some Churches in their baptism service have added at the end of the service a part for welcoming the newly baptised with these words:

Minister: God has received you by baptism into his Church.

All: We welcome you into the Lord's family. We are members together of the body of Christ. We are children of the same heavenly Father. We are inheritors together of the kingdom of God. We welcome you.

Burnett observes that "the Church is a community of the people of God who have been 'called out' (*ecclesia*) and have come into a new association as the people of God" (1996:138). Similarly, baptism is a means by which such a community is created. In the concept of the threefold goal of mission, baptism is the second stage. At conversion the group is gathered together, and they make their choice, and now at this stage the group is inaugurated as the community of the people of God, the Church.

**Teaching:** Teaching is part of the process of making disciples. At conversion the group is gathered and at baptism the group is inaugurated as the people of God. Thus, through conversion and baptism the Church is planted, but this is not the end. The gathered group, the Church, needs to learn to live the ways of the kingdom in order for them to fulfill the third stage of the threefold goal of mission, that of the glorification and manifestation of the grace of God. It is through teaching that this is achieved. However, teaching is a process which

means that it is an ongoing project that is not limited to one time. The whole idea of teaching is to transform the learner or disciple into a kingdom individual.

The Jerusalem community which seemed to be all Jewish, continued with the old Testament model of mission – the centripetal model. In Acts 11 the new community is introduced at Antioch. With the new Antioch community under the leadership of Paul and Barnabas, something different took place and an intentional evangelistic programme was put in place. The Antioch community is not inward looking as the Jerusalem community; instead, they look beyond their community to the ends of the earth. They adopt the centrifugal model of mission of the chosen people of God going to the nations.

In the mission of the Church these two models are actively used. Both models remain important. The centrifugal model does not replace the centripetal but rather the centrifugal model serves the centripetal model. The faithful go out to witness to other communities, the mission field (centrifugal), when communities are gathered on the mission field, the Church is formed, and these established communities in turn start witnessing in their lives, in words and deeds in their local communities to the transforming power of God (centripetal). The two models of mission run side by side in the life of the Church and the success of the Church depends on how it uses the two dimensions of mission.

#### **4.5 New Creation (Consummation: Revelation 21-22)**

The consummation is the last of the divisions of the biblical storyline in the grand narrative of scripture. It is the last and final phase in God's plan for mission. At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that Genesis 1:1-2 sets the tone for God's plan for mission, and in the same way Revelation 21:1-6 reaffirms this plan of God for mission in the new creation. The verses that follow into chapter 22 depict God speaking in a vision to John and revealing how all will come about in the consummation of the kingdom. In considering the development of the central theme in this thesis of a "God-ward cultured community" (or the kingdom of God), this section will discuss the "new creation" and move in the storyline from

the “proclaimed kingdom” to the “perfected kingdom” (to use Roberts’ terminology). Bartholomew and Goheen call this final stage “the return of the king” or the “redemption completed”. The work of reclaiming the kingdom started with the call of Abraham and the establishment of a God-ward cultured community in the nation of Israel was accomplished in Jesus Christ through the establishment of the Church as the new people of God, the new Israel.

The word *ecclesia*, from which comes the word church, is defined as a meeting or gathering summoned for any and every purpose. Similarly to the definition of the term mission, it is not restricted to a religious assembly or gathering only, but is also used for secular gatherings. It is only in later development that the term gains its religious connotation and today the word church is automatically associated with religion. Thus, in the biblical context, the Church is a community of believers (or faithful people) which has been gathered in or from a particular area and context. Thus, the Church as a community gathers around Jesus, discerning what God is actively doing in the world around them in order to participate in God’s work in the context in which he has placed them. From the New Testament point of view the community gathers or meets in an assembly in the name of Jesus Christ. In this way the Church is understood as “the body of Christ” (Romans 1:23). They are the eschatological people of God and the sons and daughters of God (Matthew 23:9).

In relation to the kingdom of God the Church is nothing less than the missionary people of the kingdom of God. It does not establish the kingdom, but it is the custodian of the good news of the kingdom. It is with this in mind that Roberts in his division of the storyline calls this stage of the mission of the Church “the proclaimed kingdom”. The Church is not yet the kingdom, but is a community that has been put in place to bear witness to the facts of the kingdom that is ahead, a future set by its king, Jesus Christ. The role of the Church is therefore to prepare the “nations for the return of the king”.

Paul in 2Corinthians 5:17-20 showed that mission is a response to a divine call addressed to a people, and that the missionary enterprise constitutes a necessary link in God’s plan of creating a community with a God-ward culture. The Church

as the redeemed or reconciled people of God is not only the object of redemption, but because of the reconciliation and redemption that it has received from God, it is actively involved as subjects in God's work of reconciliation and redemption. Thus, having received the ministry of reconciliation it is called to be a minister of reconciliation.

In the same way that the nation of Israel was called to be a blessing to the nations, the Church, as the new Israel and God's covenant and servant people, is "called to be a sign of the many-faced righteousness/justice of the kingdom before the world and seeking through the gospel to draw people into its covenant fellowship" (Glasser 2003:225).

Vicedom says this about the Great Commission, which he understands as the proclamation of the coming of the kingdom of God:

The death and resurrection of Jesus are the presupposition for the mission to the heathen. Thereby the eschatological turning point is reached and the kingdom crowds towards completion. This kingdom comes into force through the exaltation of Jesus. He assumes the dominion. Therefore, the great commission [of] Matthew 28:18 is today understood less as a command than as a proclamation of the coming kingdom, the announcement of the ascent of Jesus to the throne, his enthronement. Jesus has become king of the kingdom and in that role has the message of the kingdom proclaimed to men so that they might thereby be prepared for his return and be rescued through this preaching. (1965:41)

Those who are being gathered by the Church, who through baptism become citizens of the kingdom, will be received into the kingdom at Jesus' second coming. Moreover, as noted earlier the kingdom is associated with land possession or inheritance, and so the Church as the kingdom people of God, like Abraham, is on a pilgrimage moving to the Promised Land (John 14:3). It will inherit a special land prepared by God after the pattern of the Garden of Eden in which it will live as God's people in God's Promised Land under God's rule, enjoying God's blessings (the kingdom of God). Humanity will have then gone back to the original mandate that God had for his creation. Moreau, Corwin and McGee make the following comment on this:

The fact that Jesus as the third and final Adam has redeemed us, it puts us in his debt, a debt that we can never fully repay. We all owe our existence to Jesus. He does not ask for repayment, but he does ask for acknowledgement, Jesus is the inventor of the new creation. To put it in today's terms, Jesus owns the patent, like all patent owners, he deserves the royalties for his inventive work. In this case, the royalties given to Jesus are simply our glorifications of him through delighting in him and all that he redeemed. This is the fundamental for mission and is the implicitly in the new creation. (2004:28)

The gathered people of God, the new Israel, will have reached the end of man, to glorify God and enjoy him forever (Piper 2003:21), with Jesus welcoming them with the words of Matthew 25:34: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Then the time will be fully fulfilled, the kingdom of God will once again be created, and the Lord will declare: "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end". God's creatures will be in God's special prepared land (Revelation 21), under God's rule, (v. 3), enjoying God's blessing (v. 4-5). And the questions raised about what God will do about sin and the consequent derailing of his plan for creation will be fully answered.

#### **4.6 Reflection**

The call of Jesus marks the beginning of the third and final era or phase in God's plan for mission. The mission of Jesus was the fulfillment of the mission that God had started in the mission of Adam which ended in a failure, but which was partially fulfilled in the mission of Abraham. It is with this understanding in mind that Jesus is referred to as the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1; Luke 19:9) and it is from this same understanding that those in the community that Jesus creates in the New Testament are said to be children of Abraham, that is, through their faith in Jesus (Galatians 3:7). It is also with this understanding in mind that in this study Jesus is referred to as the "third Adam".

In the Old Testament the growth of the people of God is through pro-creation, while in the New Testament it is through conversion (Mark 1:15). New believers

are incorporated into the family of God through baptism (John 3:1-6). For the New Testament people of God baptism plays a very important role and it marks the beginning of a new way of life, a new birth. It signifies the putting off of one's old nature, one's old ways of life, one's old status, and putting on a new nature or status; thus, the reference to it as being "born again" or being "born anew".

Moreover, in the Old Testament it was a requirement for every male of the Abrahamic community of the chosen people of God to be circumcised. Circumcision was a symbol of entering into a covenant with God (Genesis 17:10-14). In the New Testament baptism is a requirement for everybody, male and female, in order to belong to the Jesus community, the new Israel, the Church (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). Even Jesus himself had to be baptised even though the one baptising at that time saw no need for him to be baptised (Matthew 3:13-15). As noted in this chapter, baptism signifies putting off the old status, and for Jesus this meant putting off the divine nature in order for him to identify himself with the human nature. If this is so then he had no other option but to be baptised: "But Jesus answered him, 'let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented" (Matthew 3:16).

This chapter has also noted that God's plan for mission is the "creation of a Godward cultured community". Jesus understood his mission well and, thus, his message was all about what he was sent to do, proclaiming the kingdom of God. As the faithful remnant of God pruned down to one individual, the Messiah, Jesus understood that the kingdom community that he was to create was to be like the remnant. The only difference is that it is found all over the earth in all nations and is not simply confined to any one geographical area. Therefore, Jesus came with a new way of defining the kingdom of God. This definition takes on a spiritual dimension about the "inner person" which addresses the heart of a person, and it comes on a personal level with an emphasis on discipleship. In the Old Testament the call of God was received on a community level, to Israel as a nation, the chosen people of God. This is the reason why the Old Testament does not address the issue of discipleship. All that was being done was for the good of the community; the community's well-being came first and the needs of the

community were to be protected even at the expense of an individual. This understanding is affirmed in John 11:47-50.

With this understanding of his contemporaries in mind Jesus gave the parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-13; Luke 15:5-7), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), and the Good Samaritan as a challenge to the mindset of the priests and the Levites (Luke 10:29-37). Jesus wanted to turn this understanding around and emphasise the importance and value of the individual. The well-being of an individual should come first because a stable and balanced individual creates a stable and balanced community.

With a clear understanding of his mission, and having fulfilled its requirements, Jesus then began his God-given mission of creating a community with a Godward culture that would signify the kingdom of God. From his many followers he selected 12 disciples who he later called the Apostles. He trained and prepared them, equipping them for the work ahead of them when he would finally leave them. Thus, he created out of them a community that would live and work as a community (Acts 2:44-47).

After Jesus gathered, selected, trained and assessed the disciples to see if they were ready to be entrusted with the mission, he went ahead to institute the disciples as the new people of God, the Church. This institution was followed by the Great Commission, and this came after the death and resurrection of Jesus on the day of Ascension. The Ascension symbolises the enthronement of Jesus as the Lord of the kingdom of God. This is a position that God had set from the foundation of creation. It is within this kingdom that the Church operates as the new people of God.

In the Great Commission Jesus stated the role of the Church and the boundaries it need not cross. Thus, the new people of God are called into being with a mandate to prepare the world for the final consummation of the world. This they are to do by calling people to repentance, thereby re-establishing a living relationship between God and the people of the world. The goal of this is that human beings love the Lord their God with all their hearts and with all their souls and with all

their might (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). This is a love that must also exist between the people of the world and the rest of the created order, and between fellow human beings. As the Church carries the gospel into the world those who respond become citizens of the kingdom of light and leave the kingdom of darkness. In this way, the local God-ward cultured communities are created. As stated above, the work of the Church is to prepare for the arrival of Jesus as king, and this preparation involves the birth, maturation and multiplication of God-ward cultured communities in the nations. It is these who have been reconciled to God whom the Lord Jesus will receive with these wonderful words: “Come O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). When this happens the gathered people of God will have reached the goal of mission, which is to glorify God in a specially prepared land by God, under God’s rule, enjoying God’s blessings.

## CHAPTER FIVE: A GOD-WARD CULTURED COMMUNITY

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the title of this thesis *“Mission as the Creation of a God-Ward Culture”*. It proposes the concept of the creation of a God-ward cultured community or communities as the mandate that God gives to humanity. This mandate comes at three different phases in God’s creation history, marking three different stages or three different generations. The mandate first comes to humanity through the call of Adam, the second through the call of Abraham and lastly through the call or ministry of Jesus. In this study the three are being referred to as the “three Adams” because in the same way that the first Adam, the Adam of the first creation story (Genesis 1-5), represents humankind in his generation, the second Adam (Abraham) represents the chosen people of God—all the people of God in this generation are referred to as “the children” of Abraham—and the third Adam (Jesus) represents the new people of God: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2: 9). It is Jesus who gives to the generation of faith the power to become the true people and children of God: “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:9-13).

This generation, like the Abrahamic generation, is a generation on the journey of faith, loyalty and obedience. They are the pilgrims also referred to as the “Jesus Movement”, and they are all identified as “Christians”; thus, the reference to mission as “Christian mission” and mission as conceptualised by Christians.

This chapter tackles the subject matter by differentiating the notion of a God-ward cultured community from the notion of Christendom. It looks at the relationship between the “cultural mandate” and the “gospel mandate”, the relationship between evangelism and social action, and at how evangelism and social action fit into the God-ward cultured community concept.

## **5.2 The Difference between the God-Ward Cultured Community and Christendom**

The traditional definition of mission has always carried with it the salvation or redemption connotation, leading to the division of the world into two spheres: the world of the saved and the world of the unsaved. Thus, when the term mission is used, it is understood primarily as the geographical extension of the Christian faith. It is understood as the planting of the Church and the conversion of non-Christians to the Christian faith. The term still carries the concept of the geographical movement of the Christian faith and the crossing of seas from the Western world to non-Western worlds, such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and the West Indies. While people have moved on from seeing mission as the crossing of seas or geographical boundaries, there still lingers the concept of the crossing of cultural boundaries or barriers. This chapter proposes the concept of mission as the creation of a God-ward culture and that the creation of a God-ward cultured community or communities is God's mandate to humanity. This concept acknowledges that culture is a gift from God to humanity and that no two cultures can be identical; each culture is unique. This means that no one culture can be said to be a Christian culture, neither can names from one culture or region be said to be Christian names.

### **5.2.1 Christendom**

In the traditional understanding of God's mission, the idea of the geographical expansion of the Christian faith, Church planting and the conversion of non-Christians to the Christian faith predominates (Goheen 2014:15). This understanding of mission in the Western world from the 16th century onwards led to the promotion of Christendom.

What does it mean to speak of a community or communities with a God-ward culture? It is worth noting that to speak of a God-ward cultured community is not

the same as speaking of Christendom; thus, this study does not advocate for another form of Christendom. Tennent defines Christendom as:

A political and ecclesiastical arrangement that reinforces a special relationship between the Church and the State. The State strengthens the Church by promoting the Christian hegemony over the religious and cultural life. The Church in turn gives legitimacy to the State by supporting the political establishment and tacitly granting divine sanction to the actions of the State. (2010:18)

Tennent further explains that Christendom can exist in an official, legally binding way, in an unofficial but explicit way with the constitution granting Christianity special status, and in an unofficial implicit form encapsulated more in expressions than in the constitution. When it exists in an official form, the Church receives protection and many privileges from the civil authorities in that it is the established religion of the State. There is usually a very thin line dividing the Church leadership and civil leadership in these cases. In such a case, Tennent observes that:

To embrace a different faith is to be a “dissenter,” with all of the explicit and implicit sanctions that the term implies. Because of the connection with the State, Christendom often (even unconsciously) conceptualises the Christian Church – the *corpus Christiana* – in territorial ways. To belong to the “realm” means, by definition, that you share the faith of the “realm”. Particular embodiments of the gospel, therefore, are linked to specific geographic region and particular people. (2010:19)

Christendom means a kingdom with a Christian as the king and a community ruled by Christians or governed on Christian principles. It is because of this understanding that missionaries in many instances have focused on the conversion of leaders or rulers of communities (chiefs and kings). Once a ruler of a particular community is converted, the whole community is presumed or declared to be a Christian community. Christendom is about how Christianity has dominated the world thereby dividing it into two spheres: the Christian world and the pagan or heathen world. Geographical boundaries are drawn and Christendom represents the Christian world and all those outside Christendom’s boundaries are regarded as the lost, pagan world which is seen as belonging to the realm of darkness. It is

with this understanding that (this understanding still lingers in some circles in some corners of the world) the Western world is represented as the Christian world. Everyone from the West is a Christian, and the non-Western world represents the pagan unbelieving world.

Christendom sees Christianity at the centre of culture. It is with this understanding that Western culture came to be regarded as Christian culture, while non-Western cultures were all regarded as pagan cultures. For instance, missionaries to Africa regarded all the names from their country of origin as “Christian names”, while all the African names were regarded as pagan names, and because of this everyone desiring to be baptised could not be baptised with his or her local African name. African names could not in any way be baptism names and one needed to change one’s name. In some cases no choice was given; the name was given without any consultation (in some cases a list of the so-called Christian names was given and those to be baptised would choose from that list). The implication was (and still is in some circles) that the Western world, culture and names are shaped by the gospel, and thus everything and everyone from within those boundaries is “Christian”. By contrast, within the boundaries of the non-Western world, cultures and names were not yet under the sway of the Christian hegemony and so no one and nothing from there could be said to be Christian (Tennent 2010:21-22).

Within this context mission is conceived of as coming from the Western world to the pagan, non-Western world. This means that mission can only be done to non-Western persons in a non-Western context. By contrast, outreach in the Western world is not seen as mission but as ministry. On the one hand, the concept of “here” for the West is a culture shaped by the gospel and therefore here everyone is Christian. On the other hand, “out there” are cultures not yet shaped by the gospel and so all who are out there are non-Christians. This is the understanding under which missionary societies have been founded. The main task of these missionary societies is to send missionary personnel to the lost pagans of non-Western cultures. Yoder, commenting on *Theologians and the Missionary Task*, has this to say:

They question missionaries who go to the rest of the world with the Christian message thinking that if they do not reach people with the message those people will be lost. But what does “lost” mean? The missionaries defined salvation in terms of European semantics, European experience and European concepts of what it means to be human, to be saved and therefore to be lost. (2012:38)

This understanding has shaped and defined the way missionaries operate. For them the world is firmly divided into two: the world for Christians and the world for non-Christians. They operate distinctively and independently, and on the mission fields they have “mission stations” as their centre for operations. The concept of the “mission station” has its roots in the understanding that the mission field is in absolute darkness and in a state of lostness – lost in knowledge, lost in culture, lost in development, lost in everything. In the midst of this darkness and lostness, the mission station comes in as the only source of light, more like the light house. It is because of this understanding that a Parish in the urban area or back home in the Western world, doing the same as that of a Parish on the mission field in a non-Western world, is not referred to as a mission station. A mission station is the light house for missionary work among the primitive people of the non-Western world. Yoder, commenting on being independent, says that:

In European Christianity, the agencies that carried out the sending out process were not the Church. The Church was a sociological agency responsible for governing pastors and placing them in pulpits and handling the denomination’s eternal affairs in any given country. The organisations that sent missionaries were missionary societies that were created spontaneously by voluntary membership who then created their own structures. A theologian in a European Protestant university (or an American Ivy League university) did not feel that the missionary enterprise was something for which his/her Church was responsible. Theology had to do with domestic Church management. (2012:37)

For example, Anglicans who started the Anglican Church in Zambia came as two distinctive groups: those who came to the lost and those who came for the Christian Western settlers. Those who came for the lost Africans came as missionaries and were directly under the missionary society, the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). These settled in the rural areas away from the settlers in the urban centres. They came for mission work and Africans have their

homes in the rural part of the country. Those who came for the Christian Western settlers working as farmers, railway workers, miners, colonial administrators and civil servants came as chaplains and were under the diocese— first under the Canterbury Diocese and later under the Diocese of Northern Rhodesia. These did not come for mission but ministry because mission was to the non-Western world and was for non-Western people. Because theirs was the ministry to the saved, they were not involved in any evangelistic activities; they only maintained those who had come as Christians. One may ask if they baptised anyone at all. They did baptise, but not those who came to Church through conversion, but friends, children and relations of their congregation members. The same principle was used for African workers: no evangelism but maintenance of workers who had come as converted Christians from mission centres in Nyasaland, Southern Rhodesia and those from mission centres within Northern Rhodesia. Because of this practice no Anglican congregations were started on the outskirts of any town, and no Anglican schools, hospitals, clinics or health centres were established in any town or near any town.

The task of evangelism was left to the missionaries who settled in the rural areas away from the urban centres where the homes of the natives were. Africans were just visitors in towns or urban centres. They had no permanent homes in the towns, thus, at their retirement it was mandatory to be repatriated back to their home districts. For those under the missionary society one of the conditions was that they were to be single and unmarried (whether male or female). UMCA missionaries took three vows. The promise to remain unmarried in the service of the mission, the promise to live a simple life necessitated by missionary conditions and the promise to be obedient to their Church and to go wherever the bishop sent them.

Reverend Kingsnorth says this about these vows:

These promises are perhaps a pale copy of the three monastic vows, but to me at least they meant a serious and solemn consecration and have always been directive of my life as a missionary. When I later joined the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, the rule of life kept by the members of the society was to me, only

a filling out of the promises taken in the UMCA chapel that November morning (UMCA SF 46B)

Those who came for chaplaincy came under ordinary terms under the diocese, and these came for ministry and not mission. They were to work as chaplains to the European settlers working as farmers, railway workers, miners, colonial administrators and civil servants. Because there was only ministry to the “saved” they were not involved in any evangelism, but maintenance of those who had come as Christians. They translated the Christendom concept to the town. They could baptise, but mostly the relations of those they were already serving, that is, members of the already existing congregation. The same principle was used for the Africans: no evangelism and Church planting in areas that were unevangelised. Congregations existed in townships, but they were planted by the Africans who had come to work who were already Anglicans having been converted while in their homeland. These would have come from mission fields in Malawi, Zimbabwe and within Zambia.

As has been observed, there was a very thin line dividing the Church leadership and the civil leadership. Apart from the priest, if he was full-time, all other leaders of the Church were leaders in the State government or civil service. Thus, with this arrangement where the same people were exercising leadership in the Church and the State, the idea of setting up a Church school or a hospital in town seemed like a duplication of work. This was the same arrangement for the rural areas as the State did not establish schools in areas where the Church had schools.

Evangelism and Church planting was not part of the task of those who came under chaplaincy and the diocese. They left this task to those who came under the mission society. It was the task of the mission societies to evangelise the pagans, while the other groups did “ministry to the Christians”. Thus, if the African Christians came to work on the European farms or in towns they fell under the diocesan priest’s jurisdiction. They were then looked after but not on equal terms as the “European Christians” as they were a “second-class group of Christians”. In contrast, missionaries concentrated in the rural areas where they opened many schools and hospitals and carried out evangelistic activities for the conversion of

the pagans. In 1922 Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) had 457 Anglican schools, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) had 856 and Nyasaland (Malawi) had 2030. Every community that was visited by missionaries had a school set up and some kind of clinic or health post. Schools fell into four categories: mission schools, girls' schools, central schools and village schools. Village schools were in two types: a village school that conformed to the government code and was staffed with teachers possessing prescribed qualifications, and bush schools which did not conform to the government code and were not staffed with teachers possessing prescribed qualifications.

The European colonial administrators did not mind as they were happy to concentrate on the urban areas while missionaries helped them in rural areas. This is the reason why the British ruled nearly all the rural schools and hospitals were in the hands of the Church, and nearly all the schools and hospitals in towns were in the hands of the government. Within this arrangement missionaries represented the colonial administration and in this way the concept of Christendom was consolidated in the British Empire.

### **5.2.2 God-ward culture**

What does it mean to speak of a community or communities with a God-ward culture? To speak of a God-ward cultured community is not the same as speaking of Christendom. The concept of mission as the creation of a God-ward culture does not aim at the promotion of one worldwide culture or the same culture among all Christian peoples as "the Christian culture". In this way reducing the world to a monoculture world will be another form of Christendom. The concept is not about a particular culture but rather is about recognising that any group of people anywhere can in their own particular environment, with their own particular history, their own particular language and their own particular life experiences (their own particular worldview) create a God-ward cultured community. All that is needed in the creation of a God-ward culture is for individuals in such a community to respond to God's call to the life of faith,

obedience and loyalty. This is what Adam and Eve failed to do and what Abraham and Jesus succeeded to do.

This chapter is not advocating for another form of Christendom nor is it advocating for a world of a monoculture, but for the creation of a God-ward cultured community. This concept acknowledges that culture is a gift from God, potentially given for the well-being of and identity of every community. Culture is a way of life that a particular people or group of people develop in accordance with the environment under which that particular group of people live, as noted earlier. A God-ward culture, therefore, means a culture that acknowledges God as the source and final purpose of creation. Genesis 11 (the Tower of Babel story) is generally seen as the introduction of “the world cultures”. This was a community which was concerned with leading a life of its own without God. They sought to be independent from God and attempted to create their own kingdom (Genesis 11:1-4), not wanting to obey God’s command: “And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it” (Genesis 9:7). God introduced many languages as a tool for preventing humanity from creating their own kingdom (Genesis 11:6-9) and some how forced humanity to obey his command of “bringing forth abundantly on the earth and multiplying in it”. Since Babel is acknowledged to be the introduction of “world cultures”, because of the negative connotation attached to the Babel experience it has been incorrectly assumed that all cultural activities are a result of sin. On the contrary, cultural achievements come about when humans develop the potential that God has built into his “very good” creation. Cultural activities are therefore good and the pursuit of them is essentially good and not evil. However, there is need to be mindful that sinful humans can misdirect the good cultural activities. This is the main message behind the Babel story. But in all, culture is God’s gift to humanity, even in the Babel experience, the introduction of many languages is God’s initiative. Thus, the introduction of “the world cultures” is God’s gift to humanity, which means that no culture should be looked at as being inferior to other cultures.

The concept that is presented in this chapter, that of mission as the creation of a God-ward culture does not aim at the promotion of Christendom. The concept of a

God-ward culture, unlike the concept of Christendom, acknowledges that culture is a gift from God, potentially given for the well-being and identity of every community. Thus, there can be no community without culture. For this reason, no one culture should be declared or regarded as “the Christian culture”, thereby exalting that particular culture above others. No name should be declared or regarded as a “Christian name”, thereby exalting that particular name or those particular names above others. According to the Bible, there is only one name that is exalted above any other name and that is the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11). There are biblical names in the sense that they are found in the Bible, but nothing more and nothing less. Names are names and in themselves they are not a source of blessing or curse, belief or unbelief. Each culture has names that identify an individual in that particular culture or tell a story of the happenings in a family or in that particular group of people. Nearly all cultures have names that identify and locate the bearer of the name in a particular family or group of people. In this sense, Elizabeth’s neighbours and family members could not understand her when she refused to name her son after his father Zechariah:

Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown mercy to her and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, “Not so; he shall be called John” and they said to her, “None of your kindred is called by this name” And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John” And they all marveled. (Luke 1:57-63)

The neighbours and family members could not understand why Elizabeth and Zechariah decided to give their son a name which would not locate him within the family. When it comes to naming this is very true of nearly all cultures as names are not given at random. Africans make diligent inquiry in order to find the right name within the family to name their child. Sickness or misfortune may be attributed to giving a child a wrong name and in such a case further inquiry is made and another name is selected. Europeans also name their children after parents, grandparents and friends. In all these cases it is assumed that in some mystical way the identity or the character of the name-bearer is transferred to the

child. Thus, it is traditionally held that names contain the person whose name is spoken. They do more than represent the person: they are the person. Names tell the story of the family. They are there to identify and locate the newly born in the family into which the child is born.

In the Zambian culture, the culture of the *Swaka* tribe of Central Zambia, Kapiri Mposhi/Mkushi Districts, a person is supposed to have at least two names: “*ishina lya lupwa*” (family or surname), in my case the family or surname is *Kamukwamba*, and “*ishina lya pamutoto*” (the name of the umbilical cord), in my case this name is also *Kamukwamba* (I was named after my grandfather). This is the name given at birth usually at the time when the umbilical cord drops off (this maybe a week or so after birth). Before this name is given the baby is not yet considered a mature baby but rather a pre-mature baby, more of a stillborn baby (*akapopo*). When the name is given then the baby has a place in the family. If the baby dies before being given a name the burial rituals are that of a stillborn baby, as one that dies at birth or is born dead, and only women will attend the burial rites and the family undergoes purification rituals.

After *ishina lya pamutoto* comes *ishina lya bulombe* or *ishina lya cipaale/ishina lya mulubansa*. This name can be given at any time, even later in the life of an individual, and this is the name that is usually used by friends and contemporaries as a social name. *Ishina lya lupwa* (surname) and *ishina lya pamutoto* (the name umbilical cord) are very important and crucial names. *Ishina lya lupwa* is a name of responsibility which a person is not usually called by until later when the person proves to be worthy of the family name. In later life a person may inherit the name from their father, “the real *Kamukwamba*”, and all the responsibilities that go with being the head of a family. When every man marries his wife his children will be called by the man’s family name. *Ishina lya lupwa* identifies and locates an individual within the wider community: who he/she is in the community and where she/he comes from, and whose child he/she is. He/she is “*a Kamukwamba*”. *Ishina lya pamutoto* identifies and locates an individual in a particular family ancestry, a particular family line or tree, either from the father’s family tree or the mother’s family tree. In my case, I was named after my grandfather, my father’s father. The name answers the question “which one of the

*Kamukwambasis* she/he?” However, while the family name is always the man’s family name, *ishina lya pamutoto* can either come from the mother’s family line or the father’s family line. In fact, when it comes to naming children in the *Swaka* culture it is encouraged that in order to balance the family there is an alternation in naming the children from the mother’s and father’s line. If the firstborn comes from the father’s family line, then the second born’s name will have to come from the mother’s family line.

Moreover, in the *Swaka* culture the family name does not change but remains for generations. All the male *Kamukwambas*, for instance, will produce *Kamukwambas*. The male children are to perpetrate the family name. This is the reason why there are concerns when one does not intend to marry and have biological children. This concern is not only with the male children but also with the female children. The male child, as earlier indicated, perpetuates the family name, while the female child perpetuates the clan name. This is the reason why in such cultures as the *Swaka* culture and other *Zambian* cultures adoption or surrogate motherhood is not an option; one is biologically born in a clan. An adopted or surrogate child will always carry the clan of the mother who gave birth to the child. While the family name maybe adopted, the clan name can never be adopted. One has to be born into it. Clan identity is very important to the extent that the *Swaka* and *Lala* tribes will always ask for a clan name whenever one is marrying or getting married. The clan is the larger family and one is discouraged from marrying members of his/her clan because members of the same clan are one’s sisters, brothers, mothers or grandmothers. They all belong to maternal relations which in such cultures is an abomination and amounts to incest. Thus, in such cultures the woman is the queen of the clan and the ascension to the throne of the chieftdom of such cultures is through the mother’s clan, which means the chief’s children cannot ascend to the father’s throne and they do not bear the name of the father’s clan. It is the chief’s sister’s children who bear the clan name with the uncle who ascends to the throne.

In other cultures, the family name changes but it is only for a generation. In such cultures, the family name usually means children of. The family name is usually the clan name. For example, a father, who for argument sake can be considered as

the first generation, is the *Kamukwamba*. His child will not be a *Kamukwamba*. His child will have to use his clan name which happens to be the “rain clan”, (“*abena mfula*”), so his family name would be “*Mfula*” which means son of the *Mfula* clan, and this identifies him in his father’s clan. He is their son. It means all who belong to the *Mfula* clan are his fathers, aunties, cousins and grandmothers. In the same vein, his children will not be *Mfulas*. They will have to use his clan name as their family name, and the story goes on. Every generation in the family tree will bear a different family name.

Names are therefore very important in the identification of people in their respective communities and families, and so when missionaries demand that they change their names they dislocate people from their local communities and place them in the communities where the missionaries came from, which is a foreign land where they had never been before and where they would probably never go. This could be the reason why African Christians carry with them two identities – the Church identity which the priest would know and the local community identity which the community would know. They end up living two separate lives and, in most cases, these two lives are contradictory. This fact usually comes out when a person dies and the family, especially the elders, insist that the traditional cultural rituals should be followed. Meanwhile, the Church would also want the Church’s traditional funeral rituals to be followed. For example, there are traditional cultures that believe a person who has died needs to bid farewell to his/her family house, and to do this either the body will have to lie in state or on the burial day, and the body has to pass through the family house, sometimes passing through particular rooms, especially the bedroom and the sitting room.

One may argue that the missionaries are not wrong and that all they want to do is to identify and locate individuals within the Christian family or community since this is what the name does. It is an attempt to say that those who converted could not remain with their former identity. But it is important to learn from God. Though the Israelites were a lost group of people, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24), Jesus came to be with them and identified himself with them, their culture and name. His name was a name that could be located within the Jewish culture, their hopes and aspirations. He did not

in any way change their names to suit the “heavenly culture” where he had come from. Simon’s name was not changed to Gabriel after the angel Gabriel, but Jesus changed it to Peter which had significance and meaning within the Jewish traditional culture. However, what is behind most of the missionaries’ actions is the reinforcement of the Christendom.

What then does it mean to speak of a God-ward cultured community or communities? In Genesis 1:26-28 God’s purpose for creation can be found and his purpose is to usher in his kingdom. As Bowen has observed when drawing his concluding comments on the definition of the term mission, “therefore, how we define mission is less important than how we put it into practice as we relate to God and to our fellow human being” (2007:72). In Genesis 2:8-9, 15-25 God demonstrating his purpose and created a garden and put humans in the garden with the kingdom environment, a kind of Eden-kingdom where they were to “live as God’s people in God’s land, under God’s rule, enjoying God’s blessings”. It is in this garden that God created that he expected human beings to create a community with a God-ward culture that would reflect all the attributes of God. The community should show and tell the story of who God is. Human beings, by being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), are to represent God within the created order. They have a special role that is assigned to them; they are different from the other creatures. Human beings are to enjoy a special intimate relationship with God. As observed earlier, images are used by ancient kings and emperors in their kingdoms and empires. Kings and emperors set up images and statues to represent their authority. Thus, God, by creating human beings in his image, installs the human species as his image in his creation, thereby giving the human species the authority to proclaim God’s sovereignty over creation. Unlike the ancient world images and statues, humans are authorised in a practical way to exercise authority over creation.

### **5.3 Relationship between the Cultural Mandate and the Gospel Mandate**

This section looks at the relationship between the “cultural mandate” and the “gospel mandate”. It addresses what the “cultural mandate” is and what is meant

by the “gospel mandate” and then locates the two mandates in the biblical grand narrative, before finally considering how the mandates are related.

A mandate is generally defined as an authorisation to carry out a specific or particular task given by a superior to a representative. A mandate may come in the form of a command, a directive or a decree. In this case it is God’s directive or command to humanity at creation and Jesus’ directive to the Church, with Adam representing humanity and the disciples representing the Church. Before looking at what the cultural mandate is, it worth looking at the term culture, what it is and how it has been used.

Tennent says the following about the term culture:

Although the word *culture* has been described as one of the most “complex words in English”, it has not stopped the word from becoming one of the most ubiquitous words in popular, Western discourse. If you listen carefully, you will hear the word used to describe a remarkably wide range of phenomena. Those who are not happy with the education system often speak about a “culture of failure”. Pacifists speak about promoting a “culture of peace”. Those who think that the Western society is too materialistic speak about a “consumer culture”. Since 9/11 some have openly worried about the Western world becoming engulfed in a “culture of fear”. Christian pastors exhort their congregation to “engage the culture”.(2010:159)

Tennent explains that the word can be and has been used in surprisingly contradictory ways, and that at times it has been used very broadly, covering a block of civilisation such as “Western culture”, “African culture”, “Asian culture”, and at times it has been used to describe the whole world as a “global culture”. Sometimes it has been used specifically and particularly, and again at other times it has been used very narrowly.

Thus, one needs to understand how the term came into being and be clear in the way one uses the term. What does the term mean and how is it used in this study? The term culture in English is derived from the Latin verb *colere* which means to cultivate or to instruct, and the noun *cultus*, the word for cultivation or training (Tennent 2010:169). This means that culture has to do with cultivation or training,

and because culture has to do with training and learning, it cannot be inherited. It means that when a child is born that child is cultureless. Culture is something that he/she will have to learn as he/she develops, mostly through association. Burnett defines culture as “the total way of life of a particular people” as he explains that:

It includes the outward practical aspects of how people obtain their food, how they dress, how they organise their society and marriage, as well as how they practise their religion or what music they play. Culture also includes the language and religious beliefs of the society, both of which have great influence in forming the ideas of the people. At the core of any culture are those fundamental ideas which are usually called the “worldview” of the society and enable the people to make sense and order of their environment. (1984:14)

Culture is generally defined as a particular people’s total way of life; therefore, culture is the way of life that a particular group of people or community develops in accordance with the environment in which that particular group of people live. It is shaped by experience, history and language. Thus, because of the differences in experiences of language, history and living environment, no two cultures can be identical. There may be some similarity, but they cannot be identical.

### **5.3.1 Cultural mandate**

What is the cultural mandate? The cultural mandate, also referred to as the creation mandate, is the command or the instructions God gave to human beings through Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15, which is reaffirmed in Genesis 9:1. In Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 God called on Adam and Eve as those created in his image to exercise dominion over the whole of God’s creation, to subdue and develop it. Here Adam and Eve stand in as representatives of the human race, and this call is reaffirmed in the mandate to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:1 with the former as the new representative of all human beings.

The cultural mandate or creation mandate comes in the first section or division of the biblical grand narrative: the creation (the other sections are the fall, the

redemption and the new creation or consummation). In order to understand what the cultural mandate is all about the creation story must be studied to see God's purpose for creation. The story begins with a powerful sign: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). These introductory words of the Bible are an affirmation of what God's place in creation is. He is the one who created and the whole of creation owes its existence to God. It is God who initiated creation and he is the one who sustains creation. The words are a reminder of the authority of God as creator. In these words, God sets the boundary which no creature should cross. These words also present God sending a message that he is to be known through his creation. In other words, creation reveals who God is.

Human beings, as part of God's creation, were created specifically for this purpose. Fubara-Manuel (2007:23-24) observes that in bearing God's own image and likeness, humankind is to be the medium of God's self-revelation to creation, the deputy of God on earth, the one to make God manifest on earth, the bearer of the tokens of the divine, and the emblem of God to creation. Humankind is to be the crown of creation. There is no way anyone would be able to know God, even today there is no way anyone is be able to know God, without God's own self-revelation. God has chosen to use humankind as the medium through which he would reveal himself to creation. It is through the knowledge of humankind that God designs the plants and animals, the rivers and the skies, and all other things in creation to reflect who and what he is like.

It is with this understanding in mind that God said, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness[...]So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26-27). After God created them in his image, he then gave them the cultural mandate: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'" (Genesis 1:28). This mandate was reaffirmed with Noah and his sons marking another new beginning: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread

of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and the fish of the sea; into your hands they are delivered.” (Genesis 9:1-2).

What then was the mandate to Adam? God’s plan was to create earth as his kingdom and humankind was made to rule over the earth as God’s viceroy. Thus, in Genesis 2 God planted a garden as a pattern of his desired kingdom and he put human beings in charge: “And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Genesis2:15). It is for this purpose that human beings were made in God’s own image and given kingly authority over the whole of God’s creation: “God created a good earth, a beautiful garden-kingdom, and in his goodness he entrusted it to man to care for,[...] enjoy and rule as king” (McKay1988:19). This mandate was given to Adam in the Garden of Eden after God had finished his work of creation. Adam was to be the representative of the human race and was to populate and civilise the earth, thereby developing a community with a God-ward culture. This mandate involved the whole realm of human culture and human relationships with the whole created order (Genesis 1:28, 2:15). Glasser explains that:

The first obligation that God placed on Adam and Eve made explicit certain activities already built into their essence as human beings. These activities primarily embraced their social existence: marriage (completing humanity and procreating), work (subduing, tilling, guarding), and government (ruling). God’s key words are: “rule over,” “work” and “take care of,” and “name” the creatures (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:15,18-25). These commands mark the beginning of a stream of obligation – a mandate for family and community, law and order, culture and civilisation, and ecological concern that widens and deepens as it courses through Scripture. By it, God calls all who bear his image to the role of vice-regents over this world, to participate responsibly in this task. (2003:38)

Peters (1972:166) goes further in explaining that the mandate in its widest sense includes religion, serving humans in their needs as social, religious and cultural creatures. It includes the nature and social aspect of man such as habitat, agriculture, industrialisation, commerce, politics, social and moral order, academic and scientific advancement, health, education and physical care. It is the qualitative and quantitative improvement of culture on the basis of the revelation

therein manifested in creation. Such culture is to benefit man and glorify God. The Bible expresses it in the following terms: to populate, to subjugate, to dominate, to cultivate and to preserve (Genesis 1:28, 2:15).

According to Peters the Genesis creation story therefore presents “the basic concepts and directives for an ordered and progressive society based on principles of sound morality and ethical monotheism” (1972:166). This means that humanity has a responsibility to build a “wholesome culture in which man can live as a true human being according to the order and creative purpose of God” (Peters 1972:167).

Ashford puts it this way:

Humanity has a unique role to play in God’s kingdom. They are to participate in the fulfillment of God’s creation by being faithful to, multiplying and filling the whole earth. To fill the whole world with his image bearers who know him, trust him, depend on him was and is the mission of God in creation. God seeks to be glorified in the cultural mandate. Humanity is to order God’s creation. We are to take what God created and use it for the purpose God ordained. These are the basics of culture, taking the resources that God gives and using them. God intended that all things would operate under his rule and his purpose. His will was for there to be a God-word culture(s). (Ashford 2011:30)

This is the mandate or commission given to Adam and Eve. This mandate did not go with Adam at the fall and it was not at any time withdrawn. The mandate has stood from Adam through all generations to the present generation. It was derailed at the fall, but it still stands. Even the traditionally known and traditionally accepted “Great Commission” points to the creation of life at the end of the age, which is a recapitulation of creation in the beginning.

While discussing the cultural mandate Burnett (1996:26-27) observes that the picture given in Genesis is that of harmony and balance within which humans have certain responsibilities. There is need to distinguish the responsibilities placed on humans before the fall from the redemption purpose that God began to unfold after the fall.

How is the cultural mandate understood at creation before the fall and after the fall? The definition of the term culture that this chapter has looked, that of culture as “the total way of life of a particular people or a particular community”, helps in understanding the cultural mandate before and after the fall.

According to the above definition or understanding of culture, that is, “culture as the total way of life”, it is possible to say that at creation, before the fall, there was no culture. Adam and Eve had just been called into existence. They had just been born and they had not yet learnt any way of life. Thus, the earth or the world was cultureless. God’s mandate to Adam and Eve was for them to develop a culture in the cultureless world that would define humanity’s place and role in God’s created world and before God himself. They were to create a culture that defined humans’ relationship with God and how humans were to serve as the vice-regents of God. It was to be a culture that defined humans’ relationships with other human beings in terms of the idea of being one’s brother’s and sister’s keeper (Genesis 3:9, 4:9) and a culture that defined humans’ relationship with the environment (Genesis 2:15).

Peskett and Ramachandra (2003:38) observe that men and women possess a unique nature in God’s creation. They are creatures, belonging to the rest of the animal kingdom; they are created on the sixth day, along with other creatures on the earth and they are said to be formed from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). But only humans alone are stamped with the image of the creator thereby calling them into a personal relationship with him. This defines human life as being more than merely biological. Human beings alone are addressed by the creator. To the creator humans exist not only as his objects but as subjects as well. Human uniqueness consists not simply of the fact that they converse with each other, but rather that God talks to them and invites them to respond. In other words, humans are invited to be part of God’s conversation which is the divine life.

Adam and Eve as representatives of the human race were called into being to respond to God’s love, for God made no other creature in his own image. People’s purpose in life depends on their relation to him and their love for their

fellow human beings, because humans were created as social beings. Thus, one's life is in the hands of one's neighbours. It is not only the neighbour who is in the image of God but all human beings, including the self. It is with this understanding in mind that idolatry is seen as the sin of dehumanising oneself, as Peskett and Ramachandra observe: "It follows that when human beings fashion images out of the created world and worship them, they worship something inferior to them and thus dehumanise themselves" (2003:36). God invites people to co-operate with him in the building up of his kingdom towards the final purpose. The whole creation is instituted on humans and for humans, and this calls for humans to have a deep love for God's creation. Being in the image of God also means that humans have the option to choose, and this means that they, unlike other creatures, are created as faith beings. Thus, when God says to Adam, "You may freely eat" (Genesis 2:16-17), he is setting humanity on a journey of faith, indicating that God's call to mission is based on faith, obedience and loyalty: "That those who believe in him should become an eternal companion to share his Son as his Bride and share his throne and authority" (Johnstone 1998:13). This is where the journey of faith begins – with the call of Adam to mission.

God's mandate to humankind through Adam was the creation or development of a community with a God-ward culture ruled by human beings but under the direction of God and for the glory of God. It is for this purpose that Adam and Eve were called into being. This was God's mission to the first human beings, and humanity was expected to carry out this mission with gratitude and in obedience, faith and loyalty. This mandate still remains God's primary mandate to humankind and God still expects it to carry out this mandate with gratitude, in obedience, faith and loyalty. The mandate has not been withdrawn.

### **5.3.2 Gospel mandate**

The gospel mandate, commonly referred to as the Great Commission, is the instruction of Jesus to his disciples before his Ascension. It is his final words to the disciples before sending them into the world with God's mission. Often the

words the “Great Commission” draw attention to Matthew 28, that is,-they often refer to Matthew’s version of the commission. But as Burnett observes, the Great Commission is not only a single statement found in Matthew 28. Yes, Matthew 28 may be the commonly known passage that is in most cases appealed to, but the Great Commission is found in the first five books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Acts of the Apostles. The statements found in each of these particular books add an element of importance to the total commission (Burnett 1996:134).

In John’s gospel (John 20:19-23) the disciples are in the upper room meeting behind closed doors, in sorrow, confusion and in fear. A dark cloud had fallen upon them. Suddenly, Jesus stood in their midst and gave them his peace, “peace be with you”, and assurance of his presence: “When he had said this, he showed them his hands and side” (John 20:20). In response the disciples were full of joy and fear left them: “Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20). In some ways this is a replay of the creation story: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:2-3). The disciples, after receiving his peace, were then given their mandate: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, even so I send you,’ and when he had said this he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” (John 20:21-23).

The primary concern or emphasis in the Johannine version of the Great Commission is the sinful nature of humanity and their disobedient mentality as Glasser observes:

The primary concern of this mission is the sins of people. “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven” (John 20:23). The disciples are herewith empowered in Jesus’ name to be the agents of the remission or retention of sin. They will have the intrinsic authority to declare that forgiveness is available to sinners on the basis of his sin-bearing death. (2003:230)

The commission is to be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit, thus the receiving of the Holy Spirit is very important in the Johannine version of the commission. The Spirit is to indwell all who belong to the Jesus community.

The second important text is the Lucan version of the commission. This account of the appearance of the resurrected Christ to the disciples happens on the road to Emmaus, and later that very evening to the gathered disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:13-49). In the Lucan version the emphasis is on unbelief. Jesus opened the disciples' minds so as to understand that he was the promised salvation as written in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. Like John, he emphasises the need for repentance and the forgiveness of sins, "and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 47). He also points out the important role of the Holy Spirit: "You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I sent you the promise of my father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24: 48-49). The mandate is to be carried on in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The shorter version of Mark (verses 9-20 are a later addition) is considered as the third statement of the commission (Mark 16:14-20). Mark emphasises the fact that the mandate is to be carried out in the name of the Lord:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16:15-18)

Mark is the only one who adds that believers will be given power to perform miracles as the sign for their belief in the Lord.

Matthew's version is the fourth and his commission statement is the most comprehensive of all the statements. It begins with the emphasis on authority and

then addresses the task and its scope and ends with the promise. Like the cultural mandate, it spells out who is in charge, thereby setting the boundaries which cannot be crossed: “In the beginning God created” (Genesis 1:1) and “all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). It is God who is in charge. He has the dominion and humans are to know and accept their place in God’s creation. Authority and dominion is a gift from God and it is to be used as such: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion” (Genesis 1: 26); “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

The task is to make disciples. Jesus had gathered a group of followers to himself, the Jesus community, and the task of these disciples was to create or gather similar communities in all the nations. This was to be done through evangelism, preaching or announcing the good news. One becomes a member of the Jesus community by being baptised and baptism, as noted earlier, is like signing a contract and accepting the terms and conditions of serving the Lord. It is like taking vows of allegiance to the Lord as in the case of a soldier’s oath of loyalty. Burnett (1996:137) notes that there are three aspects to the notion of baptism: submission, confession and incorporation. He sees the practice of Christian baptism to have its roots in the Jewish baptism for heathen slaves. A heathen slave who decided to enter into a Jewish household was compelled to receive baptism. The slave was thus baptised into the family and a new set of social relationships was established, as well as a new submission to the head of the family.

In the case of Christian baptism, baptism calls for confession before the world, renouncing one’s current status and a change of allegiance. The person thus transfers his/her loyalty from one god or hierarch of gods to the God of the Bible. In this way anew relationship is established between the baptised and the triune God. After this comes teaching. As noted earlier, culture is not inherited but taught, and teaching is a very important process of discipling. It is the means of passing on the ways of the kingdom. The commission then ends with the promise of the Lord’s presence, “and lo, I will be with you always to the close of the age”. It ends with the assurance that the disciples will always walk with the Lord.

The version in the Acts of the Apostles, though considered to be the last in the order of the Great Commission statements, is considered by most scholars to belong as one work with Luke. The book of Acts' version emphasises the need to know one's place in God's mission, the need to ask the right questions, the role of the Holy Spirit and the universal nature of the mandate:

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth".(Acts 1:6-8)

Thus, the Great Commission is not the only commission, and neither is it the first commission. It has its roots in the second mandate, the salvation mandate, and it is for this reason that apart from being referred to as the gospel mandate, it is also referred to as the salvation mandate. This also implies that the Great Commission is also a twofold mandate. It is also about the creation of a holy nation, God's own people, purified for God's initial mission, praising and glorifying God.

How are the two mandates related? Previously it has been stated that mission is the creation of a God-ward community; thus, the two mandates are concerned with the process of how the God-ward community is to be created. The mandates have their roots in God's command to Adam as the representative of the human race to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28). This command is reaffirmed with Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:1, and in the promise given in the call of Abraham: "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Genesis. 12:2). These mandates are about populating and civilising the earth.

In the cultural mandate the creation of a God-ward community fulfils the command to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth", and this cannot be done in any other way but through pro-creation. Adam and Eve had just been called into being in a brand new environment. All was new; it was the beginning of all

things and God had established a new and good pattern for way of life in his kingdom. The whole creation was under God's rule and enjoyed God's blessing and all was good (Genesis 1:31). As discussed earlier, the good that is talked of here is not the good of a final product but potential goodness with room for it to be developed further. For example, human beings were created with the potential to live forever, but only if they did not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall die" (Genesis 2:16). Notice that eating from the tree of life, which means that they would live forever, was not on the list of prohibitions. They were free to eat of it, and it was only once human beings had gone against God's command that God protected the tree thereby preventing them from eating of it:

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22-24)

Thus, from this passage, the tree of life was among "every tree of the garden" that they were allowed to eat from.

In the creation mandate Adam and Eve were set apart. God made no other creature in his own image and being made in the image of God carried with it certain responsibilities (Genesis 1:26-27) for which Adam and Eve were called into being. The purpose of life for Adam and Eve was to glorify God by delighting in him as they exercised dominion over creation. They were also to be fruitful and multiply thereby creating a community with a God-ward culture. Therefore, this is an example of the "threefold goal of mission": conversion, glorification and manifestation of God's grace, and Church planting (Kritzinger 1994:1). Moreover, it is shown that the threefold goal of mission has its roots in the creation narrative. The setting apart of humans represents conversion. Humans are to glorify God by delighting in him as they exercise dominion over creation, which in a way is a call

to gratitude, and this represents the glorification and manifestation of God to which they are called. Then human beings are commanded to be fruitful and multiply, thereby creating a community with a God-ward culture and this represents Church planting. This mandate to worship God and exercise dominion over creation, the cultural mandate, was the mission given to Adam by God; it was the purpose of Adam's being.

Burnett sees the cultural mandate given to Adam and Eve as having three components: marriage, work and government. In the marriage component he sees God as giving humanity a task that creation should not remain static and that there should be increase and development. The command "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28) reveals God's purpose for his creation. God did not intend for the first human beings to remain in isolation but to multiply and begin a society (Burnett 1996:67). In the work component Burnett sees God as placing on humankind a special responsibility to care for and preserve God's creation. As he explains:

The word "subdue" [...] conveys the idea of a fight to conquer nature, but the actual meaning is to take authority over the earth which is already possessed. In no sense can this command be interpreted as an exhortation to unfettered exploitation of the natural resource God has provided. God placed human beings in the world to look after it and preserve from harm. (Burnett 1996:28)

In the component of government Burnett sees God as giving humankind authority and freedom to act as his vice-regent. As he explains: "Humanity was given the freedom to act as God's vice-regent to rule over the world in a responsible way, God gave to mankind power delegated for a particular end: the support of [the] human race and [the] development of the resources of creation" (Burnet 1996:28).

Therefore, Adam's mission was the creation or development of a community with a God-word culture ruled by human beings but under the direction of God and for the glory of God. This was God's purpose for Adam and Eve's call to mission. This was the mission to the first human beings and humanity was expected to carry out this mission with gratitude and in obedience, faith and loyalty. However,

Adam failed to live up to God's call of developing the goodness that God had established. Contrary to God's mandate, Adam and Eve developed a community that was the opposite of God's plan. They chose to rebel against their creator and in so doing they rejected the call to be the bearers of God's image. They desired to be independent of God and to be equal to God: "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen.3:4). Their choice involved the introduction of the kingdom of darkness in contrast to God's kingdom which is the kingdom of light.

Before the fall, there was no alternative to God's good provision. Thus, Adam was not told to love his wife because at that time it was not a conceivable option that he would not love her. All existed under or in God's love. Moreover, at that time there was no good news of the kingdom because only the one kingdom of God existed. The term good news came into use because there were others offering their so-called good news. However, the Christian good news is the best option, as will be explained in the next section when the relationship between evangelism and social action is discussed.

After the failure of Adam, the whole human race was drawn into the kingdom of darkness and embraced the death that God had warned them about. As Paul observed, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Romans 5:12). God did not give up his plan for his creation but decided to continue his plans for developing his kingdom. He was committed to a world where all of his creation would exist in perfect harmony and live in fellowship with him and with one another. There would be a world where the whole created order would fit together harmoniously, in which God through human beings as his image bearers would be in total control. This world would reflect all the attributes of God.

God's mandate to Adam of creating a kingdom community, a community with God at the centre of its culture, is still in place and needs to be fulfilled. For the achievement of this task God called Abraham. But unlike Adam who lived when all was good and when there was only one option to every area of human life, humanity at the time of Abraham had chosen to be citizens of another kingdom.

Abraham had to be redeemed from the kingdom of darkness in order for him to be fit for calling others to God's kingdom. Thus, Abraham was instructed to come out or to renounce his citizenship of the kingdom of darkness and to come into God's kingdom (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham obeyed the instructions and was given the mandate, but this time the mandate took on another aspect, that is, it was about the necessity of being saved from the kingdom of the devil into the kingdom of God. It was a change of citizenship from the kingdom of the "gods of this world, false gods" to the kingdom of Jehovah.

With Abraham the mandate now became a twofold mandate as was discussed in chapter three. It is this new side of the mandate that places it in the redemption section of the grand narrative. In this section of the biblical narrative the emphasis of the mandate is on salvation or redemption. It recognises that the goal of God's mandate is the creation of a community with a culture that has God at the centre. But according to the environment in which the mandate was given to Abraham this could not be done before first restoring or reclaiming the kingdom of God. Thus, in the call of Abraham, as noted earlier, God set in place his plan for restoration. It is with the same understanding that the mandate to the disciples should be seen. Here the mandate takes on its name as the gospel mandate. Of course, the cultural and salvation mandates are still there, but the emphasis has shifted to the gospel good news, even though it is still in the redemption section of the biblical narrative. It has become gospel in the sense that from the call of Abraham to the ministry of Jesus the salvation promised in Genesis 3:15, that of the offspring of the woman crushing the head of the serpent ("I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his head") is still on the way. The final ultimate victory over the evil one is yet to come. But when the mandate was finally given to the disciples it was given by Jesus, the third Adam, who had done it all: "It is finished" (John 19:28-30). Jesus, the third Adam, by his life, death, resurrection and ascension had secured the tree of life that was prohibited and protected in the Garden of Eden after the fall. This is the good news to be proclaimed. And those who embrace this good news are to be baptised as a sign of being restored into God's people, the Jesus movement. They are to be taught to live as Jesus lived: the life of faith, obedience and loyalty.

The two mandates have one primary goal: the creation of a community or communities that tell the story of who God is, as established in the Garden of Eden. This community is to reflect God's creation of a perfect home which was the original goal for his kingdom. And this fits very well with the definition of the kingdom of God as "God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's blessing". The mandates therefore are one mandate given at different times in God's creation history, given in different environments but with the purpose of fulfilling one goal.

#### **5.4. Relationship between Evangelism and Social Action**

This section will look at the definition of evangelism, what evangelism is all about, how it fits into mission and then look at how it is related to social action.

##### **5.4.1 Evangelism**

Evangelism is generally understood as the proclamation of the gospel or communicating the Christian message to those outside the Christian faith. The etymology of the term evangelism will show how the term is understood and how it is used. The Christian Apologetic and Research Ministry explains that the English word "evangelism" comes from the Greek word *euaggelion* (noun), meaning "gospel" or "good news". The verb "*euggelizethai*" meaning "announce" or bring good news, is also translated as preach. Thus, to evangelise is to proclaim the good news of the victory of God's salvation. Evangelism is the noun denoting that activity.

At the time that the Church was founded the Romans were in power. The Roman's political propaganda was referred to as the "gospel", that is, the good that is to be found out of the Roman governance. It is from this background that the Church took up the use of the word at its early stage. It was more like offering an option to the Roman gospel; it was more like the Christian political propaganda – the good that comes out of believing in Jesus Christ. Politics is to

do with the question of “who is in charge here?” Thus, while the Romans were saying Caesar is in charge, the Christians were saying that Jesus is in charge. This is the whole argument behind the story found in Matthew 22:15-22:

Then the Pharisees went and took counsel about how to entangle him in his talk. And they sent their disciples to him with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men. Tell us, then, what you think, is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” (Matthew 22:15-17)

In this passage the Pharisees set up a trap for catching Jesus with the answer to their question. The question was not merely about paying tax but rather about the authority of Caesar. If Jesus had said no to paying tax, it would have meant that he was disregarding the authority of Caesar, which to the authority of that time was a case of treason. Jesus, however, saw through their trap and said to them: “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the money for the tax”. He then gave them the answer to their question: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. Jesus was implying that the money shown to him as they rightly said had Caesar’s likeness and inscription, but Caesar had God’s likeness and inscription. Here Jesus was sending the message that ultimately the answer to every equation is God. He is the ultimate. Yes, the coin has Caesar’s image and inscription, but Caesar is God’s image and inscription, and therefore Caesar is not in charge, but God is.

This good news was not restricted to the religious sphere only. It was also secular ordinary news, like the news in Luke 1:19. Here the good news was that at long last Elizabeth, who was regarded as barren and beyond the age of bearing children, was going to be a mother. The following are some of the selected definitions that different scholars usually put forth about evangelism:

- The 1918 Anglican Definition: To evangelise is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that all shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their saviour, and serve him as their king in the fellowship of his Church (The Archbishops’ Committee of Enquiry on the Evangelistic Work of the Church, 1918).

- The 1989 Anglican Definition: To evangelise is to make known by word and deed the love of the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that people will repent, believe and receive Christ as their saviour and obediently serve him as their Lord in the fellowship of his Church (The Anglican Primates, Cyprus 1989).
- The Daniel Niles Definition: Evangelism is one beggar telling another where to find bread (Daniel Niles 1951).
- The Lausanne Covenant: To evangelise is to spread the good news that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sin and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe (The Lausanne Covenant 1974).

Looking at the above definitions, we can see that evangelism entails a personal encounter with the Lord. It is also a holistic conversion and should lead to a movement of the person involved, that is, the movement of the new Christian into the life of fellowship with other believers, into a life of worship of the local congregation, through the confession of faith in Christ and by submission to baptism. Here it is important to keep in view the dimension of the kingdom of God. Thus, it is important to emphasise the significance of the transfer of authority involved in receiving Jesus Christ (John 1:12-13; 20:31). This is at the heart of the gospel. Glasser suggests that in order for evangelism to be successful, the following five steps need to be followed:

**1) Opening one's eyes:** People are blind to the good news of the kingdom and its king and are only vaguely aware of their true spiritual state. They must first be made conscious of their need. Do not emphasise the challenges that may be there (John 4:9) but aim at accepting someone as deserving acceptance. Arouse one's interest and create a desire or hunger for one's solution to one's problem of social and spiritual need (John 4:10-12). In this way one's eyes will be opened to one's need, something that one had not been aware of before (John 4:13-18).

**2) Turn them from darkness to light:** Reveal Jesus as the great, indispensable solution, the true saviour, the all-sufficient God. The "I AM" claims of Jesus in

the Gospel show who Jesus really is, e.g. John 8:34-36, Jesus has power against temptation; John 14:27, peace to the troubled heart; John 14:18; 16:7, presence to the lonely; Mathew 4:19, purpose in life; John 8:12, light to those in darkness; Luke 22:35, provision to the needy; John 11:25-26, eternal life to those fearing sickness and death. He pardons sin and encourages the weak but not without first saying "Follow me." This invitation makes those Christians join the battle as soldiers of Christ.

**3) Turning them from the power of Satan to God:** The good news of the kingdom has at its heart the offer of newness of life. But there is a condition that must be met before Jesus provides himself as the link to everlasting life. In his evangelistic ministry Jesus called for those who would be his disciples to confess themselves to be sinners before God. Thus, his first word of his gospel is "Repent!" (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21). There has to be that judgment of oneself as the sinner expressed by a deliberate dislodging of oneself from the solitary throne in the heart (Luke 23:39-42). The Samaritan woman had to be confronted with what she was and confess her sin before she could become the happy recipient of his forgiving mercy (John 4:16-18). There must be conscious transfer of authority from self to God, or Jesus has no grace to extend. Was this not the problem facing the rich young ruler? He refused to accept Jesus' lordship and was unwilling to share his abundance with the poor. This kept him from entering the kingdom of God (Luke 18:18-25).

**4) Receiving the forgiveness:** After repentance comes faith. Jesus is delighted to pronounce the words of forgiveness to the penitent (cf Mark 2:5,9; Luke 15:7,10). But this great gift has to be appropriated by faith before one can truly enter into the joy of the moral cleansing and personal renewal that Jesus is ready to provide. Without this faith-wrought experience of having been forgiven and subsequent experience of peace with God (or neighbour), there will never be accompanying joy of offering oneself freely in service to God and to one's neighbour.

**5) Receiving a place (inheritance) among those who are sanctified:** A further step of faith is to accept one's relationship to the family of God and enter its privileges and responsibilities. This is accompanied by drawing people to Jesus

and making them members of his community the “little flock” to whom he has given the kingdom (Luke 12:32). He calls for baptism as the essential initiatory rite into his family, the Church. By his grace he also qualifies members to begin to appropriate the fullness of each one’s inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:12)

These five steps are very important in evangelism. They are connected to each other like a chain, where leaving out any of the steps will render evangelism ineffective, thereby producing congregants and not a kingdom community (Glasser 2003:207-208).

#### **5.4.2 Social action**

Mission is not a project for recruiting God’s labour force, rather mission is a liberating project from the sins and vices that prevent people from being available for God and their neighbours. This project is what is called evangelism. Evangelism is calling people to mission and to service. It is a project for the enlisting of people for the reign of God. It is calling people to join the Lord in the work of his kingdom. This call demands that attention be paid to the hopes and aspirations of ordinary men and women as they live in their communities— their hopes for food, security, opportunities for their children, their dreams of justice and human dignity, their dreams of job opportunity and land ownership, their dreams of education and health for them and their families. Meeting people at the point of their needs is what is referred to as social action. As mentioned earlier, Niles defines evangelism as “one beggar telling the other where to find bread”, which suggests that social action can be defined as “one beggar sharing his or her found bread with another beggar”. Social action is about meeting the social or physical needs of one’s neighbour while evangelism is about meeting the spiritual needs of one’s neighbour.

How then are evangelism and social action related? It seems that evangelism and social action have been intimately related from the time that salvation became necessary for humanity. Humans by their disobedience made a decision to be

independent of God. This decision meant that they were not fit to live in the kingdom of God as God had prepared it in the Garden of Eden. Evangelism and social action tends to be limited to the time of the Christian Church. Thus, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization of the World Evangelical Fellowship gave the historical background of the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility in their opening words:

It appears to us that evangelism and social concern have been intimately related to one another throughout the history of the Church, although the relationship has been expressed in a variety of ways. Christian people have often engaged in both activities quite unselfconsciously, without feeling any need to define what they are doing or why. (lausanne.org:2018)

Many debates have been had about the relationship between evangelism and social concerns and attempts are often made to try and show whether the two differ or whether they are the same. Stott in his book *Christian Mission in the Modern World* discusses three ways in which attempts have been made to help explain how evangelism is separate but related to social concern.

First, social concern as a *means to evangelism*. Here evangelism and the winning of converts are the primary ends in view, and social concerns become the effective preliminary tool or means for achieving this desired end. The problem with this concept is as Stott observes:

In its most blatant form this makes social work (whether food, medicine or education) the sugar on the pill, the bait on the hook, while in its best it gives to the gospel a credibility it would otherwise lack. In either case the smell of hypocrisy hangs round philanthropy. (1975:25-26)

It seems in this case that the love for humankind which is one of the motivating factors for social action, is artificially attached to evangelism from the outside. If social action is a means to evangelism it results in the Church producing “rice Christians”, which makes those involved “rice evangelists”. Rice Christians are those who became Christian because of the material and social benefits, once these benefits stop coming they go back their old way, the leaving that is

demanding in true conversion does not take place in a true Christian, it is all artificial.

For Christians social concern is the result of being evangelised. Because the beggar has found bread he is able to share the knowledge of how to find bread and share the bread that he now has. It works in the same way as the debate on faith and works:

Evangelism is the means by which God brings people to a new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others. Paul wrote that “faith works through love” (Galatians 5:6), James that “I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18), and John that God’s love within us will overflow in serving our needy brothers and sisters (1John 3:16-18). As Robert E. Speer wrote about the Gospel 1900: “wherever it goes, it plants in the hearts of men forces that produce new lives; it plants in communities of men forces that create new social combinations”. (lausanne.org:2018)

Second, social concern as a *manifestation of evangelism*. Under this concept social concern is regarded as the manifestation of the gospel which is being preached. Here the love for humanity “is not attached to evangelism rather artificially from the outside, but it grows from it as its natural expression. One might almost say that social action becomes the ‘sacrament’ of evangelism, for it makes the message significantly visible” (1975:26). Charity becomes a necessary and legitimate means of creating an opportunity for the gospel to be preached. The services offered are motivated by love and compassion. This being the case, the services are not simply preparations for evangelism; they are themselves evangelistic services. Here like Jesus, Christians are called to articulate the gospel in words and deeds, this is, what is seen in the ministry of Jesus. His words and deeds belong to each other. His words interpreted his deeds and his deeds embodied his words. Thus, he did not only announce the good news of God’s kingdom, but he lived the kingdom by demonstrating the kingdom values. For this reason, he was able to challenge people that if they would not believe his words they should then believe him for the sake of the works that they were able to see (John 14:11).

The problem with this concept is that there is the danger of making social concern a subdivision of evangelism. In this case it still remains a means to an

end: social concern as an aspect of proclamation of the gospel. If emphasis is put on social action being the proclamation of the gospel, social concern as visible preaching, as is the case for every proclamation, then something is to be expected in return – converts are to be made. Social concern can create an opportunity for evangelism, but this should not be the motive for social activities. Social activities are visible demonstrations of love, and Christians are called to serve people out of genuine love without any ulterior motive.

Third, social concern as *a partner of evangelism*. As partners, social action and evangelism belong to each other, but are also independent of each other: As Stott argues, “Each stand on its own feet in its own right alongside the other. Neither is a means to the other, or even a manifestation of the other. For each is an end in itself. Both are expressions of unfeigned love” (1972:27). Stott recommends this concept as the truly Christian concept. He is persuaded to take this position by the words from the first letter of St. John as he explains:

The apostle John has helped me grasp this by these words from his letter: “If anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children let us not love in word or speech but indeed and truth” (1John3:17). Here love in action springs from a twofold situation, first “seeing” a brother in need and second “having” the wherewithal to meet the need. If I do not relate what I “have” to what I “see,” I cannot claim to be indwelt by the love of God. Further, this principle applies whatever the nature of the seen need. I may see spiritual need (sin, guilt, lostness) and have the gospel knowledge to meet it. Or the need I see may be disease or ignorance or bad housing, and I may have the medical, educational or social expertise to relieve it. To see the need and to possess the remedy compels love to act, and whether the action will be evangelistic, or social or indeed political, depends on what we “see” and what we “have”. (Stott 1972:27-28)

However, in a logical sequence and as a matter of priority evangelism precedes social concern. With regard to Christians, because it is evangelism that puts Christians in a position where they can carry out social activities, it is only by evangelism that people are brought back into the kingdom where they can live out the kingdom values. Going back to Niles’s definition of evangelism, it is evangelism that enables the beggar to find bread. Thus, without evangelism the

beggar has no other means to find bread and therefore has no bread to share. With regard to the world, evangelism relates to the eternal destiny of people, while being mindful that Christians are called to serve humanity in totality, that is, meeting both the physical and spiritual needs. If a choice has to be made:

Then we have to say that the supreme and ultimate need of all humankind is the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and that therefore a person's eternal, spiritual salvation is of greater importance than his or her temporal and material well-being (2Corinthians 4:16-18). As the Thailand statement expressed it "of all the tragic needs of human beings none is greater than their alienation from their creator and the terrible reality of eternal death for those who refuse to repent and believe." Yet this fact must not make us indifferent to the degradations of human poverty and oppression. (lausanne.org:2018)

## **5.5 Reflection**

The ultimate goal of mission is the creation of the kingdom of God. Genesis 1:2 presents a picture of how things were before creation: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep". This is a description of a situation of things out of control, of chaos, disorder and darkness. God's plan was to create out of this chaotic, disordered and out of control situation, order, light and control. In the verses that follow (v.3-27) is a detailed account of how creation was carried out, and in chapter two God demonstrated how he wished his creation to live (2:8-25). Indeed, the Garden of Eden is a perfect portrait of what he intended his world to be. In the Garden of Eden, all things were in order and in harmony with God. There was harmony and peace among all of God's creatures. The conversation between the serpent and the woman shows that there used to be fellowship among God's creatures. They all lived in a friendly environment as "neighbours". This was a world in which all of God's creatures could live in perfect peace and perfect rest. In short, by creating the Garden of Eden God set up his kingdom: God's creatures living in God's place under God's rule and control enjoying God's blessing and fellowship (Roberts 2002:21). In this beautiful setting of peace and harmony he set humans over his kingdom to rule as his vice-regents.

What is the task that humanity is expected to perform? What is their mission in ruling over God's creation? What is the reason for their existence? The biblical grand narrative of the creation (Genesis 1-2) is central to understanding God's initial plans for mission. Genesis 1:26-28 is key to understanding why humans were created. As noted, God's plan for the creation of the world and humanity was to bear God's image and take care of God's kingdom by maintaining the same environment that God set up in his creation acts, that is, keeping and maintaining the Eden pattern. Since all creation was new, it is assumed that there are only two people, Adam and Eve, who also had just been called into being. They were created in God's own image, bearing God's name as God's vice-regents. They were God's own people, living in a specially prepared garden – God's place and God the creator was their king. He set the rules (Genesis 2:16-17), provided for all their needs, and they were under his protection and enjoyed a unique relationship with him as they enjoyed his blessings. This is the way of life that God set up and wanted Adam and Eve to maintain and develop.

This chapter has discussed how culture is defined as the total way of life of a particular group of people. Adam and Eve were put in the garden to maintain and develop an organised system of life with God at the centre. This was their call and mission; it was their reason for being created. It is this organised way of life that has God at the centre that is here referred to as a "God-ward culture". This was the mandate that God gave to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28) as representatives of the human race. Because this organised way of life has to do with beliefs, customs, social systems, artistic taste, language, juridical conception, governance and so on, it is referred to by biblical scholars as the cultural mandate and because it is given at creation, it is also referred to as the creation mandate. This mandate is reaffirmed to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:1 who were to, like Adam, represent the human race. The mandate was not at any time withdrawn and still stands to this day. The mandate to develop a God-ward culture is the reason why humans exist, and it is their God-given mission.

By a God-ward culture is meant the total way of life that tells the story of who God is. It is a way of life that praises and glorifies God and enables each creature to live out its place assigned by God, in which each creature in so doing will

fulfill its role in the created order. In this way the whole creation will be able to praise and glorify God as in the Garden of Eden. As the Psalmist observes, the glory of the Lord will endure forever, and then the Lord will rejoice in his work (Psalm 104:31).

A God-ward cultured community is different from the notion of Christendom. A God-ward cultured community is as described above, while Christendom is a political and ecclesiastical model that reinforces a special relationship between the State and the Church. It is the form in which Christianity has dominated the world for centuries by dividing the world into two: Christendom as the world of the people of God, and those outside the boundaries who are regarded as belonging to the realm of darkness. Christendom sees Christianity at the centre of culture. Thus, the West, where many Christians came from, is regarded as the Christian culture, and culture in the non-Western world is the pagan culture. Even Western names are regarded as Christian names while non-Western names are pagan names and have to be changed at baptism.

How is the cultural mandate related to the gospel mandate? The gospel mandate is the mandate that Jesus gave to his disciples after his resurrection and before his ascension. It is seen as the last instructions of Jesus to the disciples. As noted earlier in the chapter, mission is the creation of a God-ward cultured community, and the two mandates are concerned with the question “how is this community to be established and developed?” The cultural mandate has its roots in the call of Adam with the command: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over” (Genesis 1:28). This command is reaffirmed in chapter 9:1. The salvation mandate has its roots in the call of Abraham and the command “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land I will show you”, and the promise, “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1-2). This command and promise is redefined in the mandate statement of Jesus to the disciples as found in all the first five books of the New Testament.

The cultural mandate is found in Genesis 1 and 9. It is a mandate for all human beings and benefits the whole created order. Human beings have created the

divisions they experience. There is the division of the obedient people of God and the disobedient people of the kingdom of darkness. At creation all could fulfil the cultural mandate as all that was needed was good teaching. It is important to remember that culture is not inherited but it is taught or cultivated. Thus, at the time of Adam and Eve there was only one group of people and the world had no culture. Their task therefore was to develop a culture in a cultureless world and one in likeness to the Garden of Eden. In other words, their task was to multiply and fill the earth with the way of life that God had set up in the garden.

In contrast, at the call of Abraham the two groups were distinct and so only the obedient children were in a position to fulfill the mandate. Obedience is cardinal to fulfilling God's mandate and failure to obey means failure to fulfill the mandate. The task at the call of Abraham became twofold. Since only the obedient children were in position to create a God-ward cultured community, the first task at the call of Abraham, which falls in the redemption section of the biblical narrative, was to redeem people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light – from being disobedient children of God to obedient children of God. Once this had been done the task of creating a God-ward cultured community through teaching could begin. It is with this understanding in mind that the cultural mandate can be said to be the second part of the gospel mandate: “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

The cultural mandate and the gospel mandate are one and the same, except that with the failure of Adam to fulfill the cultural mandate the mandate took on an aspect of salvation or restoration. But the primary goal still remained, that is, the creation of a God-ward cultured community or communities. As has been stated earlier, the mandate was not at any time withdrawn and it still stands to this day. Humankind exists to develop a God-ward culture; it is its God-given mission.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Observations

The traditional definition of the term mission has always carried with it the salvation or redemptive connotation and this salvation or redemption is seen to be the goal of mission and the central task of the mission of the people of God. It is with this in mind that Piper declares that “when this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more” (2010:17).

Is it possible to come up with a definition of the term that frees mission from the redemption connotation? This study has investigated the possibility of coming up with one such definition that does not in any way carry with it the salvation or redemption connotation. This definition frees mission completely and thereby locates it in all the grand narratives of the Bible, namely the creation, the fall, the redemption and the consummation. Mission then becomes the task of all the people of God of every age, generation and time. Thus, the presence of mission will be found in the whole Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. This study proposes mission “as the reason for one’s being or existence” as one such definition.

In the definition of the term mission there are two main schools of thought that have influenced missiological scholars in the way they articulate the whole subject matter. There are those who define mission from the redemption or restoration point of view, and there are those who do not take redemption or salvation as the point of departure in their understanding of mission. For them mission is the purpose of being and the reason for existence.

The school of thought that takes salvation or restoration as the point of reference is further divided into three groups. While all agree within the group that mission involves redemptive or restoration activities, the question that separates them is where such restoration priorities enter the biblical grand narrative. Thus, there are those who see mission as restoration from the effect of sin caused by the rebellion

of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Moreover, there are those who see mission as the restoration from the effect of sin caused by the rebellion of Satan before Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-2). The last group is one which, though it defines mission from the redemption point of view, does not see redemption as the point of departure. For this group the Great Commission in the New Testament is the point of departure. The need for redemption or salvation is there, but this is *missio Dei*. This group emphasises the “sentness” and for them without the directive to “go” there is no mission.

All three agree that the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2 is God’s perfect plan for the world, and that here God sets the pattern of his kingdom. This is the pattern for the kingdom of God where “God’s people live in God’s place under God’s rule, enjoying God’s blessing”. Adam and Eve lived in God’s specially prepared place, the Garden of Eden. They lived under God’s rule, and even though God had set humans over it all to rule, God as creator still remained the overall king. He set the rules and they lived under God’s protection and provision. They had a unique relationship and fellowship with God and this is seen in the direct and cordial conversation that is expressed in Genesis 3:8. Up to this point the three camps agree, but after this the camps separate.

The first group, those who see mission as the restoration from the effect of sin caused by Adam and Eve’s rebellion, argue that when God finished his work of creation and evaluated the work done (“And behold it was very good”, Genesis 1:31) all his work had been finished and thus God’s mission was over. This, they argue, means that there is no mission for humanity in Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22. According to this camp, the Garden of Eden and the holy city, the New Jerusalem, are a picture of a finished product which requires no further work. They see in these passages a perfect home for humans and non-human creatures in which God’s original goal for mission, the establishment of the kingdom of God, has been attained. This group sees Genesis 12, the call of Abraham, as the starting point of mission and Revelation 20 as the finishing point. In the call of Abraham God began his plan for the restoration of his kingdom after the manner of the Garden of Eden. With the fall of Adam, God’s original plan of his kingdom as set in the Garden of Eden was spoiled. Abraham was called to co-operate with

God to restore the kingdom, and through him God intended to build a people who would reflect life as that which was set in Eden. Thus, Abraham's call set in motion God's answer to human rebellion and the effect of that rebellion. In the call of Jesus, which led to the formation of the Church, the new Israel, God concluded his mission of restoration, and the second coming of Jesus closed the chapter. Thus, Revelation 20 marks the end of mission. This school of thought has not only influenced missiologists but also many biblical interpreters who nearly always see Genesis 1 and 2 in the light of Genesis 3-11.

The second camp sees mission as restoration from the effect of sin brought about by the rebellion of Satan before Adam and Eve were put in the garden. Unlike the first group, this group does not see Genesis 3 as the entry or the introduction of sin in the universe. For them sin entered the universe long before Adam and Eve were created. In fact, for this group, the purpose of creation was to rectify all that Satan's pride distorted and thus they push the issue of restoration beyond creation. Adam was created as an agent of redemption, thus for them mission is to be found in Genesis 1 and 2 as well. Only Revelation 21 and 22 can be said to have no mission. Salvation ends with Revelation 20.

The last group in the restoration school of thought acknowledges the need for restoration, but for them restoration is not the point of entry for mission. God gave Adam and Abraham an assignment, but the assignment had nothing to do with mission. Rather, it was about culture. Thus, the mandate to Adam and Abraham is referred to as the cultural mandate and it is about what it means to be human. This group is the one with a "geographical expansionist understanding of mission" (Goheen 2014:35). This group emphasises the sentness of the people of God with the view of going out to convert. For them mission is about being sent to make disciples and this can only be found in the Great Commission mandate. Therefore, this group concludes that mission is only found in the New Testament. They emphasise being sent and the fact that without the marching orders to "go and make disciples", the centrifugal model of mission, there is no mission. Thus, the Old Testament with its centripetal model as the main model of mission does not qualify for them as a book about mission because even Abraham who was called out of his homeland in Genesis 12 was not given the mandate to "go" and

win others to the faith. In this case Abraham does not qualify to be called a missionary. It is only in the words of the Great Commission that the marching orders for mission are found.

The school of thought that defines mission as the purpose of being (which I belong to) acknowledges restoration as part of the missionary assignment but does not see restoration as the entry point for defining mission, neither does it see the Great Commission as the entry point for mission. According to this school of thought, the Great Commission has to be read and understood in the light of God's assignment to Adam and Abraham without which the commission has no roots. Like those in the second camp who define mission from the redemption point of view, that is, redemption from the effects of sin caused by the rebellion of Satan, they acknowledge that Genesis 3 is not the introduction of sin into the universe. Genesis 2:16-17 indicates the existence of two forces, good and evil, and, according to this school of thought, even before the creation God had a plan which is revealed through the Bible. Thus, the whole Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 is the story of how God reveals this plan. It begins with Adam, then Abraham and it is fully disclosed in Jesus. Thus, three figures, Adam, Abraham and Jesus, are very important in understanding God's mission. In the three Adams God's call to mission comes through as a journey of faith, obedience and loyalty, and through them God's plan is to demonstrate that evil can be overcome by faith, obedience and loyalty. The three Adams mark different phases or beginnings of different generations in the mission of God. It is with this in mind that this study's title is "*Mission as the Creation of a God-ward Culture: God's Mandate to Adam, Abraham and Jesus*". It is also with this in mind that Adam, Abraham and Jesus are referred to in this study as the "Three Adams".

This study has defined mission as "the reason or purpose for one's existence". This definition does not confine mission to a particular time, generation or period of the Bible. With this definition in place the study acknowledges that mission is God's and is revealed through God's creative acts. Thus, mission in the Bible has its roots in creation (Genesis 1 and 2), and if creation is removed from the equation the idea of mission will be incomplete. After all, the Bible is the story of one long journey of the people of God (both spiritual and physical), of which the

creation in Genesis is the point of departure and the consummation or the new creation in Revelation is the destination. Bauckham describes the biblical narrative as running “all the way from creation to the eschatological future” (2003:13). The Bible is God’s revelation to humanity and the whole creation, so the whole Bible is therefore the story of how God reveals his plan. It begins with Adam, then Abraham and it comes into full disclosure and fulfillment in Jesus. This study also recognises that God’s mission comes through the call of Adam, Abraham and Jesus – the three important figures in the history of the people of God. This being the case, this study acknowledges that the whole Bible is a missionary book.

Therefore, mission begins with Adam, then Abraham and is fully disclosed in Jesus. Moreover, when Christ on the cross said, “it is finished” he meant that the whole plan that God first put in operation in the call and mission of Adam and Abraham had now been completed in him. In other words, the life and ministry of Jesus was a practical demonstration and answer to the questions “why are the people of God here?” and “what is God wanting the people of God to do and to be?” In Genesis 1 and 2 God calls creation into being, he sets the pattern of how he intends his kingdom to be, and in Genesis 1:26-28 God spells out the nature of human beings and the reason for their existence: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”. This shows God’s desired nature for human beings: to be the image and likeness of God.

The first Adam is called into being at the beginning of creation. He is the firstborn of God’s creation and all things were created for him. He is the crowning of God’s creation. Adam is portrayed as the first human being to be created and this means that he entered a world which was new with no culture of any kind. Thus, his main task was to develop a culture under which God’s creation should live – a culture with God at the centre. This was God’s mandate to him, thus the reference to the mandate to Adam as a cultural mandate. In order for Adam to create a community with a God-ward culture he needed a companion fit for him (Genesis 2:18-24). The understanding is that he was alone as the first human and if he had to create a community he needed the opposite of man: woman. At this point in the history of creation, the creation of a community can only be achieved through

multiplication by pro-creation, and this can only come about through marriage between a man and a woman. Thus, the creation of male and female (Genesis 1:27; 2:18-24) and the command in Genesis 1:28, which is reaffirmed in Genesis 9:1 with Noah after the flood because he and his family are the only people that have survived the flood. Both for Adam's period and Noah's period, marriage has the primary role of pro-creation. This is the only way through which the creation of a community can be achieved.

In Genesis 3:15 God announces his intentions of restoring the whole creation. This God decides to do by calling Abraham. At the call of the second Adam (Abraham), Abraham was not the only human being on earth. The Earth was populated but with rebels and with communities with a godless culture. These were communities with no respect for human life and human dignity and communities where people were divided into class. God's call in this case first requires getting Abraham out of the community of rebels, and then the subsequent creation of God-ward communities which recognise that all human beings are created in the image of God. Here is added another task to the original task given to Adam, that of getting out, setting free or cleaning up. The disobedience and rebellion of Adam and Eve contaminated or defiled humanity and the whole creation was now unfit for God's use in their current state. To be used they needed cleansing. They became members of another kingdom and needed to be set free. It is from this understanding that the whole idea of sacrifice is developed which is offered to act as a means of cleaning or setting free. Dirty vessels need to be cleaned in order to be used, and in the same way defiled humans need to be cleansed or set free from the entanglements of sin in order for them to be used by God or in order to be ready to stand before God. Ritual washing (John 2:6) and the rite of baptism have their roots in this understanding. In this case redemption can simply be defined as "cleaning up or getting out of a messy situation or condition, setting free". It is here that the twofold mandate concept takes root. The mandate of creating a God-centred community still stands, but before this mandate is carried out, cleaning or setting free has to be done, and this becomes the second mandate (redemption mandate) that is added to the first mandate.

In the twofold mandate the second mandate becomes a process or a means of fulfilling God's original plan of establishing the kingdom of God after the pattern of the Garden of Eden. The Great Commission is part of the second mandate and this commission is only a way of fulfilling the second mandate in order to move on to fulfilling the first mandate. Once the second mandate has been fulfilled then those freed or cleansed together with those who were agents of cleansing move to create a community knit together as an actual God-centred cultured community and family. The commission does not stand on its own as a mandate given by God to his people; it only explains how things are to be done. If it is taken on its own the result is that of producing two classes of disciples: the one class being the agents of discipling who are superior to the second class who are those being made disciples. It is because of this that Christians have failed to see the evil of slavery and segregation. The freed slaves for instance are not accepted as being equal to those who were agents of their freedom. They can be free meaning that they are no longer being treated as slaves, but they are often not equal in the sense of having the same opportunities and deserving the same privileges. No, they are women, they are black, they come from that race, tribe or ethnic group. This is not always done by words, but by behaviour and the way others are treated.

The second mandate given to Abraham (and the Israelites) involved leaving or getting out physically from one's homeland and not going back. It represented breaking one's ties completely. Abraham passed this test and God established a covenant with him, and through him the nation of Israel was formed and adopted as the people God. They were God's own possession, but again the nation of Israel did not live up to its call. Israel was chosen so that through it humankind could be gathered into a community with a God-ward culture, but Israel was only an agent of redemption and not the owner of redemption. Instead of achieving this Israel created classes between male and female and between races. Israel failed to be the ingathering agents as God had chosen them to be. However, they did not fail completely and there remained pockets of the faithful "remnants" through whom Israel would be brought back to the realisation of God's mandate to Abraham. Ultimately, this was to be done through the Messiah. The creation of a God-centred community was still mainly through marriage at this time, through pro-creation, but it also took on another dimension, that is, the drawing or

attraction of other nations to the Abrahamic God-ward culture (Matthew 5:14)–the centripetal model of mission.

At the call of the third Adam, Jesus, the Earth was still populated with rebellious communities with no sense of God, but the call of Abraham had created individuals and groups within communities who had the sense of God in their lives. Jesus was sent to restore the mission given to Abraham. First Israel was to be gathered to its mission and then the ingathering mission to the nations would begin. This being demonstrated on the day of Pentecost with the disciples who gathered and received the Holy Spirit as representatives of the nation of Israel and the crowd around them as representatives of all the nations of the world. It was here that the ingathering of the nations began.

In both the call of the first and the second Adam the created community had to have a land to live in. In these two cases land possession was of primary importance. But with the Jesus community or Jesus movement, it is not to be so. The community is not of the world but is a community on the move. It is to be more of a spiritual kingdom that focuses on the state of the heart. Multiplication for the Jesus community is by conversion through repentance and the forgiveness of sin. It is no longer biological children who are to inherit the kingdom but the children of faith. Those born from parents in this community have to enter this community through their own faith and not the faith of their parents. Likewise, marriage in this community is acknowledged as important but it cannot play the central role in multiplication. Parents have an influence on the lives of their children, but in the end the children will need to make their own choice with regard to the ingathering mission. Here is the shift in the model of mission from centripetal to centrifugal. While the centripetal model safe-guards marriage as an institution by putting the emphasis on the pro-creation of biological children from the marriage between a man and a woman, the centrifugal model emphasises conversion, having spiritual children, and this somehow undermines the institution of marriage. This change of circumstances influences a change in people's understanding and motive for entering into marriage. Getting married becomes optional as pro-creation is taken out of the equation and is replaced by fellowship. This in turn has brought about discussions of surrogate mothers, same

sex relationships, single parents, celibacy, abortion and other marriage-related discussions.

All the three Adams (Adam, Abraham and Jesus) were called with a primary task of creating a God-ward cultured community. They all had crucial roles in the salvation history of the created order, and each formed a beginning of a different phase in the history of creation. The Great Commission as given to the disciples did not in any way contradict or outdo the mandate given to Adam and to Abraham, the twofold mandate, and it actually unified the two into one and explained how the mandate is to be carried on.

## **6.2 Recommendation**

In the quest to be part of the ongoing debates and contribute to the articulation of the biblical bases for mission, it has been observed that one's definition of the subject matter plays a very important role in the way one articulates and effectively contributes to the subject matter. Whether in missiological or theological debates no one can claim to have the right definition. Thus, it is important to have a broader understanding of the subject matter and a flexible mind as one looks at the issue at hand. Missiology as a study discipline was introduced to help the Church self-critique in order to keep themselves in check and to evaluate how the Church is carrying out its missionary work. In this sense missiology functions as checks and balances for the Church as it carries out God's mission. To do this effectively there is a need not to have a rigid mind that claims to have an absolute right and claim over the issues at hand. As Dorr observes when commenting on recognising the gifts of others when it comes to dialogue:

My starting point is that each of the great religions of the world has a special gift to offer to the others. No religious believer has the right to say, "Our religion is complete in itself, in the sense that we have nothing significant to learn from the others." [...] As Christians, we are called by the Spirit to open ourselves, with eagerness and with humility, to engage in a dialogue of the head and of the heart with the followers of other religions. In this way we can work towards a far richer, deeper and more rounded understanding of our own Christian faith than we have at present.

Indeed, if we take this invitation seriously, it is not just our understanding of the faith which will deepen. Even our faith itself will grow and blossom in ways that we could never have guessed. (2000:24)

This is not only true of dialogue with other religions, but it is also true of dialogue within one's own faith and the different schools of thought that are found. Each of the schools of thought may put its followers or disciples in touch with its profound concepts, values and principles in a way that makes that particular school unique, but the uniqueness of each school of thought puts it in a position to offer vital and perhaps irreplaceable contributions to the Christian experience and understanding of the issues or concepts at hand (Dorr 2000:24). But this does not mean one must not take a position. It means that in order to contribute effectively each individual needs to make his/her position clear.

There is need to reflect more on the definition and the nature of mission. The people of God only become the people of God as they respond to God's call to mission, and God's call to mission comes at different levels as Bevans and Schroeder observe:

The Church only becomes the Church as it responds to God's call to mission and to be in mission and to be in mission means to change continually as the gospel encounters new and diverse contexts. Such change, however, is not arbitrary; rather, there have always existed certain constants that, while they might differ in content, are always present as a kind of framework by which the Church identifies itself and around which the gospel message takes shape. (2004:72)

Mission is God's mission. Humankind's part is to co-operate with him in his mission. Thus, the role of the people of God is to make known God's intentions, and this can only be done if they go back to find out God's original plan and purpose. This means that people must remain rooted in the word as they address issues of society, always bearing in mind who they are and what they are meant to do: the bearers of God's image with the mandate to create God-ward cultured communities (the kingdom of God), and thereby promoting the love and friendliness of God.

Mission must be contextual in order for the faith to be rooted in the community's real life experiences. Every Church and every member of the Church should assume the primary responsibility for mission in their immediate locality and region. This calls for knowledge of the context in which they are living in, being aware that communities create cultures and cultures determine the identities of the communities which created them. This means that the understanding of mission must be liberated from the Western and the Christendom models of mission. If mission is God's mission and humans are invited to participate in God's mission, then this invitation comes in a particular contextual setting. The Church therefore should be discerning to discover in which way God has been working and continues to work in the local context and environment. This is the mission that God is inviting the Church to participate in.

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