

**THE CALLING FROM THE MARGINS: MISSION TO AND BY HEARING-  
IMPAIRED PEOPLE IN FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES IN PRETORIA AND  
JOHANNESBURG**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree *Doctor of philosophy* at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or other tertiary institution.

Date: 15/08/2019

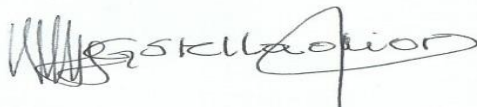
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I, Stella Kayenga Mbangi with student number 14257948, am the author of calling from the margins: Mission to and by hearing-impaired people in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and have obtained, for the research described in this thesis, the applicable research ethics approval. I declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

Signature

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my LORD, and to all the missionaries working towards the Kingdom of God all over the world with compassion to the lost and with the mission of making disciple of Jesus Christ for the kingdom to come. It is also dedicated to my future husband and children.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16)

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I could not have accomplished this research without the field information supplied to me by the pastors and leaders of the five Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg who were willing to contribute their assistance and relevant information.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is very much concerned about the marginalised, specifically people who are hearing-impaired (deaf and mute) regarding their full participation in the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and how the church can extend support toward them. Though the communication barrier is standing in between I believe through mission and theology of justice and advocacy as strong instruments to break the wall that has marginalised hearing-impaired to the church and societies. In Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg hearing-impaired people are marginalised and don't attend church services or participate as ministers in the church, this study sought to examine the access of people who are hearing-impaired in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The objective was to discover and accurately evaluate the missiological, theological, social, and justice dimension of the exclusion of people who are physically-impaired especially hearing-impaired people in the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The social, justice, missiological, and theological factors that influence equal access for physically-impaired people especially hearing-impaired people in the church and ministry was exploring to some extent. The study is based on empirical theological praxis as a methodology, a qualitative approach was used in this study, and the data are collected with different approaches as followed: literature study, interview, observation, and life histories will be guided in the nature of qualitative interviewing and requires that questions are composed during the research project. It has been found that the Francophone in Pretoria and Johannesburg views disability as a curse and it is built in their culture as well as their biblical perspective of disabled. As a result, there is constant pressure on people with disabilities to heal. It has been established, therefore, that Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should learn from South Africa justice and advocacy for disabled and there is a necessity of professional coaching with regard to hearing-impaired people in order to promote their integration and involvement in the church. This study is the action plan to break the walls of marginalisation, liberating the language barrier. I furthermore strongly believe, it is also going to bring genuine hope in the African communities. In chapter five, six and the last one, I list a series of recommendations as ways to attempt solving this problem. In addition, I propose that the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, as instruments of God's mission, should have the task of ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access in the church and as ministers. To conclude, from a *missio Dei* dimension, Francophone in Pretoria and Johannesburg as instruments of God's mission must be inclusive

in all their ministries and activities without any form of discrimination, and exclusion. Therefore, is only when equal access to churches and ministry is guaranteed to people with disabilities that they can truly reflect their true commitment to the *missio Dei*.

## **KEY TERMS**

The calling, the mission of the church, full participation, marginalised, people who are hearing-impaired, statistic and praxis in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, strategies, justice, advocacy, missiological approach and support.



## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AACC: All Africa Conference of Churches

ACSA: Airport Companies of South Africa

A-PODD: African Policy on Disability and Development

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CSDA: Centre for Social Development in Africa

EDAN: Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network

DBE: The Department of Basic Education

DJCD: Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

DoT: Department of Transport

DPSA: the Disabled People South Africa

DSD: Department of Social Development

DWCPD: Department of Women, Children and Persons with disabilities

GDoH: Gauteng Department of Health

INDS: Integrated National Disability Strategy

NCCK: The National Council of Churches of Kenya SAHRC: South African Human Rights Commission

NHA: National Health Act

PAUs: Passenger Assistance Units

PEPUDA: Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination

PRASA: Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa

SADA: South African Disability Alliance

SAHRC: South African Human Rights Commission

SAPS: South African Police Service

WCC: World Council of Churches

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE CALLING FROM THE MARGINS: MISSION TO AND BY HEARING-IMPAIRED PEOPLE IN FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES IN PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a product of nine years of observation in many churches, but in particular, Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, as well as social contact between the researcher and the pastors as well as the Francophone communities.

In December 2015, I visited Lubumbashi, one of the capital cities of DR Congo, for one week. I was hosted in a monastery where my uncle who is a monk serves. I had the opportunity to discuss my concern with regard to people with disabilities, very specifically hearing-impaired people concerning their full participation in the church, and how the community is supposed to extend support toward them. It was obvious that the communication barrier between them was limiting and/or preventing the local church, and church members to cross over and reach out to the hearing-impaired people. The next day, I was introduced to sixty hearing-impaired children from the age of six to twelve years, with whom I wanted desperately to share the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I could not! This was not because I did not have anything to share but because I was unable to communicate with them in a coherent manner. Therefore, from that day onwards my concern increased, and birthed the desire to learn sign language with the purpose of presenting Jesus Christ to them, as well as to assist them; because the Bible instructs us to maintain, and do justice for the rights of all who are destitute (Psalm 82:3).

The World Council of Churches (WCC) (2013:45) states that: “Mission from the margins calls for an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures, and local contextual realities”. The issue of mission to and from the marginalised is of global concern and that the WCC attended to the very same issue in the 2013 policy document *Together towards life*. As I conclude, this study will bring together the connection between the call and mission of the church praxis as the WCC stated that, mission from the margins is an invitation for the church to look at mission as a vocation coming from God’s

Spirit working for a world in which there is the fullness of life for all, which will eventually present what participating in God's mission can look like when the missionary joins in with what God is already doing among the marginalised.

I recognise that there is a possible divergence of concern. As well as being the objective investigator, I am at the same time applying for sign language courses in order for me to communicate with hearing-impaired people among Francophone churches and communities in Pretoria and Johannesburg since I am serving in one of those churches which I am researching. However, I have the added benefit of binding theory to practical knowledge, which I used to inform and expand principles rising from the research.

## **1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The research problem can be defined as:

We are establishing what the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg are doing in the ministry with regard to the disabled, especially hearing-impaired in terms of their accessibility as visible members. The book of Proverbs 31:8-9 says: "Speak up for the people who have no voice, for the rights of all who are left desolate and defenceless. Speak out for justice! Stand up for the poor and destitute!" Therefore the church must consider seriously the fact that the issues here are also related to the full participation of people with disabilities in the churches. As it has been called 'Mission to the Margins' by the World Council of Churches (2013b:52-53).

The World Council of Churches (WCC), (2013:52) reports:

God did not send the Son for the salvation of humanity alone or give us a partial salvation. Rather the gospel is the good news for every part of the creation and every aspect of our life and society. It is, therefore, vital to recognize God's mission in a cosmic sense, and to affirm all life, as being interconnected in God's web of life (WCC 2013:52).

The church's journey is based on the mission of God for all humankind to be saved, and the church needs to develop a missional understanding of the unity of the body of Christ which does not discriminate against anyone. Therefore an inclusive attitude is needed in the church in order to welcome people with disabilities into the Christian fellowship (Otieno 2009:14).

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS**

The research questions that will be explored are: How will Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg remain faithful to its mission regarding hearing-impaired people? What are the strategies that the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg applied to reach the spiritual and physical needs of hearing-impaired people that will facilitate their integration as active members of the church?

The research problem will be explored in three guiding sub-questions: (1) what is the missiological reason for Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to attend to physically-impaired people, especially hearing-impaired people? (2) What kind of praxis can support the missiological position of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg regarding the mission to and by the hearing-impaired people? (3) What is the understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of people with physically-impaired in the church?

### **1.4. METHODOLOGY**

The focus of this study will be based on empirical theological praxis as a methodology for research in missiology that is both interdisciplinary and meets scientific demands. The empirical theological praxis cycle offered a process of perception, experiment, test and evaluation. Therefore, the phases of the cycle proposed for this methodology are heading methodology; methodology and procedure; data collection; specification of the empirical data design; preparation of participants; data analysis; analysis of the empirical theological data; the interview guide. (Faix 2007:113)

The centre of the cycle is based constantly on the process of missiological reflection, which is presented in three phases Faix (2007:120-122) stated the following:

1. Induction: involving analysis that moves from an empirical case to the comparison of theories of theology.
2. Deduction: proceeding from a general rule to a particular conclusion.
3. Abduction: starts with a genuine situation but for which no specific rule exists previously.

### **1.4.1. Introducing methodology**

The researcher's outlining preparation and motivation will be discussed as well as the theological and missiological expansion of the research problem and aim (Faix 2007:118).

#### 1.4.1.1. Methodology and procedure

A qualitative approach will be used in this study because it contributes knowledge individually, organisationally, socially, politically, and as well as in linked phenomena soundly (Yin 2009:4). This will explain the researchers' understanding in taking action and practices of selecting hearing-impaired people. The output will attend to providing data for analysis and information that will conclude by answering the research problem.

Creswell defines qualitative research as:

A means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell 2009:4)

There are different types of approaches but in this research, the researcher will use four methodologies of data collection and enquiry, according to Osmer's (2008:47-63) suggestions:

1. Literature reviews from accessible sources, including recent research in relevant studies.
2. Analysis of Francophone churches' strategies on how to share the gospel and support to hearing-impaired people.
3. Investigation on how many hearing-impaired people Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg have, the fellowship between the two different languages when it comes to communication in the church, and the church's commitment of assistance to hearing-impaired people in order to understand each other.

4. The case study of five Francophone churches in both cities, and one church of hearing-impaired people in the city is a suitable approach because it contributes to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organisational, social, political, and related phenomena (Yin 2009:4). The use of such cases, as Hiebert (2009:170) states that using such cases are 'real-life' events with a start, a centre process and a conclusion. Glatthorn & Joyner (2005:103) mentioned that "Case study research is undertaken to provide a detailed description of a particular situation, organization, individual, or event".

The four chosen methods will allow the improvement of grounded theory; enable the steps back and forth between the data and evidence in its contents and contexts (Verschuren & Doorewaard 1999:143-178).

The ± 300 participants are the general research population. However, the centre of attention will be pointed to:

1. A case study of three Francophone churches in Pretoria, two churches in Johannesburg, three more or less hearing-impaired people in both cities, and one hearing-impaired church in one of the cities.
2. Research based upon hearing-impaired people involvement in Francophone churches as members or leaders.
3. An analysis of the churches' ministries perspective regarding hearing-impaired people full participation.

#### 1.4.1.2. Data collection

Therefore, the data will be collected with different approaches as followed: literature study, interview, observation, and life histories.

#### 1.4.1.3. Specification of the empirical data design

The literature used in the literature study includes books, journal articles, dissertations and other theological publications online and in print.

The research interviews will consist of a list of composed questions that serve the aims of the research. Rossman and Rallis (2012:177) state that: “an interview is a conversation with a purpose” the collection of data will be a procedure of interviewing the pastor and leaders in the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg regarding the demography, attitude, theology, mission and the praxis of the church toward people with disabilities. Particularly hearing-impaired people in their communities. The approach of this research will focus on the full participation of hearing-impaired people in the church, and also a church with both hearing-impaired people and minister. The leaders of cell groups, pastors, and hearing-impaired people will be the target of the interviews being conducted.

Data recording: Creswell suggests recording the data collected during the interviews in activity 5 (paragraph 1.5.3). Greeff in De Vos et al (2005: 298) states that if participants give their permission, a recorder is very useful. It allows the interviewer to focus solely on the content and process of the interview and guarantees the capture of all data. A disadvantage is that it can confuse the participants; therefore, it is advisable to place the recorder in a discreet place and not manipulate it during the interview. In this study, interviews will be recorded on a digital recorder with the consent of the participants. The sound file of each interview will be transferred to at least two computers and the interviews will be written, verbatim, in a word processor. The original transcripts will be kept in the safe, while copies will be made for data analysis. This procedure is consistent with activity seven of the Creswell model (paragraph 1.5.3).

There are four types of observation which are: 1) Observer as a participant. 2) Complete observer: the researcher is a stranger and observes from a distance; 3) Participant as observer: the researcher becomes an integral part of the observed situation and intervenes to solve problems. 4) Full participant: the researcher is completely immersed in the situation that s/ he is not recognised as a researcher. (Nieuwenhuis 2011: 84-85, see Creswell 2013: 166-167).

In this research, the participant observation as a phenomenological way of approach will be used in order to emphasise the importance of personal perceptive and interpretation and raise a concept of personal knowledge and subjective. The chance to study the place of marginalised persons in the life of the church will be given. Hendriks calls this method ‘direct observation’ and defines it as “an intentional and systematic investigation and description of what takes place in a social setting. As such, it is the most readily available and potent method. It perceives records, reflects and reports” (Hendriks 2004:231).



It is important to represent the life histories of people with a hearing-impaired regarding their views of the church. History is one of the big supports in theology when it comes to research, however, the historical framework is always given to elaborate theology.

#### 1.4.1.4. Preparation of participants

Pretoria and Johannesburg are the cities in which the researcher chooses to conduct this research since both cities have a large number of Francophone churches. Some churches have existed for more than 10 years, and the others are new. Creswell introduced a model (par. 1.5.3) of data collection, in which a rapport is to be established with participants. First of all the researcher made preliminary contact on the telephone with the eventual participants, in order to introduce herself and to inform participants about the research process, aim and objectives. Then she sent an email with data and an explanation about the selection criteria for the purposive sample in an attached letter of introduction and informed consent for participation in academic research to the participants who will be interested in participating in the research.

However, a guarantee of confidentiality was given, with the addition that the data will be seen only by the supervisor of the research plan. For all other purposes, anonymity and confidentiality were observed. The interview guide allowed participants to get ready for the interview. Participants signed a consent form for voluntary participation in this research during the interview.

#### **1.4.2. Data analysis**

At this point the analysis of the data with an empirical theological framework of finding, validation and application will be presented (Faix 2007:118) According to the data and its analysis, a 'theory of practice' is complex in every chapter (Faix 2007:118).

#### **1.4.3. Interview guide**

This interview will be guided in the nature of qualitative interviewing and requires that questions are composed during the research. Any suitable questions in relation to the areas of interest will be considered in the assurance that the subject is covered carefully. In order to cover the subject in their general order, an interview guide will be established. Therefore, the questions will be numbered, brief, effective, generating knowledge and promoting excellent

communication throughout the interview. In harmony with the research objectives, the answers will be categorised during the analysis stage of the research process, and the answers will be clarified frequently (Kvale, 1996:12, 129 -131; Greeff in De Vos et al., 2005:297; Babbie & Mouton, 2005:289).

The questions for the proposed interview will be divided and addressed to three groups of participants as a follower:

1. Pastors and leaders of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg
2. Pastors and leaders of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg
3. Hearing-impaired people who fully participate also as leaders

The question for the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg will focus on the following aspects:

1. Demography
2. Attitude
3. Theology and mission
4. Praxis

## **1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

This study is a missiological perspective on the research problem; therefore, it will be accompanied by available preliminary investigations, in order to present the reason for the process and the discovery of the problem (Faix, 2007:118). Although the theories, concepts, methods, methodologies that were employed in the study were successfully utilised to achieve its purpose, this was not a straightforward and simple process as one can see through the work done.

The focus was on the framework and results. It was mainly used to develop the cause and effect relationship between the theology, justice and social belief system, and the exclusion, inaccessibility, and the lack of participation of persons with a disability in Francophone churches. Hence, the how, and the way are considered as realistic evaluation questions used to the fullest. Perhaps the study would have involved middle range theory testing and a focus

on “how, and for whom, and which way”. However, these other aspects of realist evaluation are possible opportunities for further research.

There is a need for further research to be carried out regarding the following: missiological paradigm and to be able to provide strategies that will help churches to accommodate hearing-impaired people in ministry and to provide methods to adopt in order to welcome physically-impaired people and give access to the hearing-impaired as well. Despite these limitations, the study was successful in achieving the purpose of answering the research questions, as posed in chapter one.

### **1.5.1. Missiological formulation of the question**

From the year 1971, the WCC developed an important concern about the mission of the church to the marginalised, ‘The unity of the church and the unity of mankind’ was the theme discussed at the meeting by the Faith and Order Commission in Belgium. Perhaps, we have to consider it. The WCC’s 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Harare introduced another a programme for people with disabilities in order to revive the agenda and to set up a network. ([www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/hist.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/hist.html). Accessed in 2016).

It was reported at the AACC in 1991 that, the reason why many African church members are not completely ready to join together with the disabled in the church and community are: (1) they are at the foundation level of the improvement concerning the project for disabled, and (2) others have no such projects. It was said in the WCC World Council of Churches in 2006 that, a disabled, and a person facing racial discrimination are not different in the sense that both require advocacy and bring up questions of justice. Therefore, the WCC concludes that these situations have theological dimensions that must force reflection with unity, mission and spirituality.

### **1.6. HYPOTHESIS**

According to the WCC, “mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission” ([www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/hist.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/hist.html). Access on 2016).

Therefore, the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg journey in terms of its unity, mission and witnessing to all humankind, in particular meeting the spiritual needs of people with disabilities, and God’s mission, and the mission of the church influences in the

communities of marginalised especially hearing-impaired people in the churches, will be the outcome of this research.

## 1.7. CHAPTER DESIGN

The organisation of chapters will be presented as follows:

Chapter two: a theological reflection of the relation between the mission of the church and people who are physically-impaired.

Chapter three: understanding *missio Dei* in the context for all humankind: The biblical theology's meaning of *missio Dei* in reflection of all humankind in the OT and NT is explored in order to develop the characteristics of God's mission to all humankind and guide the direction of the church's mission to God's views of *missio Dei*. A historical redemptive approach will be used in order to illustrate more missiological reasons for churches to attend to marginalised, especially hearing-impaired and a brief literature review will be made regarding *missio Dei*.

Chapter four: the Francophone church's Christian understanding of culture and contextualisation

Chapter five: a closer look at physical disability within the South African perspective of justice and advocacy and its influence on the church.

Chapter six: the necessity of a professional coaching process to accompany Francophone churches to include the hearing-impaired people in *missio Dei*.

Chapter seven: the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of hearing-impaired people in the Francophone church, the missiological implication, and the impact of the Francophone church in Johannesburg and Pretoria It will attempt to answer following sub-questions:

1. What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of those marginalised in the church, especially people who are hearing-impaired?
2. How will Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria remain faithful to its mission regarding people with disabilities especially with people who are hearing-impaired?

3. What are the strategies that the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria can apply to reach spiritual and physical needs of the person with disabilities especially with hearing-impaired people in order to facilitate their integration as an active member of the church?

4. What kind of praxis can support the missiological position of the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria in regarding the hearing-impaired?

Chapter eight: conclusion and recommendations: present the findings of the research, weaving all the above together, provide a conclusion to the outcomes of the study and put forward recommendations for further research. It will attempt to answer the following question as well: What advice and comments would you offer the church's leaders who consider ministering to those marginalised particularly the deaf and mute?

### **1.8. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

Key concepts, applicable to the study, need to be defined to guarantee precision and improve validity, in order to help avoid uncertainty in the use and meaning of the terms in other contexts.

**The call:** To be summoned to a place of work, duty, or experience a divine appointment to a vocation or service.

**The mission of the church:** A series of church special services for increasing the devotion of people and converting all humankind in imitating God's mission.

**Full participation:** Total involvement in the church as members, leaders, and ministers.

**Marginalised:** People with a disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society that has little or no consideration for people who have impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream activity (British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, 2002:2).

**Hearing-impaired people:** People who are unable or incapable of hearing and speaking in order to communicate but can still communicate through sign language.

**Statistic and praxis in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg:** numerical fact and practice use in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

**Strategies:** the method used to obtain the goal of sharing the gospel to all humankind

**Missiological approach:** steps to take in a missiological way to assist the marginalised

**Churches initiated:** to introduce and introduce the churches to the knowledge of mission to the margin especially deaf and mute.

## 1.9. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the title of the research was given and the research plan was provided. The aim of the study was outlined: mission from the margins: mission to and by deaf and mute in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, figures relating the call and mission of the church regarding the full participation of people with disabilities in the church. This was followed by the introduction, the research problems, the research questions and sub-questions, the methodology, delimitation of the research, hypothesis, chapter design, research plan, and the clarification of the key concepts.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND MARGINALISED PEOPLE

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This theological reflection of the relationship between the mission of the church and physically-impaired people, specifically hearing-impaired people as those marginalised, is discussed according to the WCC policy statement and other relevant sources. This research also attends to the importance of being and having marginalised people in the church. As a determined dedication to all human rights and justice, the WCC emphasises the church's mission with regard to margins. The WCC discussions will be our guideline in ways in which the church and society as a whole should be able to act justly moving towards the margins and to advocate in their favour.

The WCC states:

Mission from the margins is a theological activity with people who are exposed to racism, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, Dalits and people with disabilities. They are not outsiders. All belong to the body of Christ, are part of the church. The WCC facilitates theological reflection based on their experience and visions of the world, with the hope that their contributions may help the churches to transform themselves into sanctuaries of love, justice and peace (World Council of Churches 2017: 47).

Kabue, executive secretary of EDAN, clearly defined the background for the new policy document, "The Gift of Being", as discussed by the WCC Central Committee during a meeting in Norway. He draws the connection between the fact that we are created in God's image and the title 'The Gift of Being.' All lives matter and carry the same value and it does not necessarily depend on our physical attributes because we are all created the same in God's eyes and we all have His image. We definitely exist because of the love of God towards humanity which is given to us equally and this also highlights the importance margins have in His eyes as well. (World Council of Churches 2017: 52)

This chapter is divided into four main sections:

- “Called to be the church of all and for all” by EDAN
- Theological reflection of the mission of the church
- Theological reflection of people with physical-impairment
- Theological reflection of the relationship between the mission of the church and people who are physically-impaired.

The “called to be church of all and for all” section starts with a history of both WCC and EDAN on how they influence churches and physically-impaired people to be in the mission field together in the unity of serving God.

## **2.2. “CALLED TO BE CHURCH OF ALL AND FOR ALL” EDAN PERSPECTIVE**

In the early 1960s, the WCC started considering the disability issue as a significant call for the church to recognise margins. In all its general assemblies, the WCC constantly discusses the position of people who are physically-impaired in church and society.

The WCC introduced the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) in 1998 during the 8<sup>th</sup> WCC assembly in Harare, whereby ten people who are physically-impaired who were participants, also as advisers, were given the opportunity to plan their own forum that can encourage the church to include persons with hearing-impairment in their mission, and it was adopted as the justice, peace and creation team by WCC. At the Mennonite conference centre, Dutch staff members of the EDAN, the WCC Commission on Word mission and evangelism, and the WCC Faith and Order Commission together with other participants developed a new statement which was titled “Gift of being: called to be a church of all and for all”, and it was issued in 2003.

This section will examine a statement by EDAN and provide reasons as a paradigm in a way in which people should define the church and view physically-impaired people and how to have an impact on this mission. It is important to discuss this theological paradigm in order to overcome the current challenges in the integration of physical-impaired people in the church.



### **2.2.1. The Church of all**

The EDAN meeting observed that churches are motivated on issues concerning physically-impaired people within the last ten years, but there are still some stubborn challenges that need to be taken care of.

Kabue states:

The communion of the churches in unity and diversity is impaired without the gifts and presence of all people, including persons with disability. The mission of the church is to proclaim God's reign of justice and peace and is less than credible if the churches do not actively and visibly receive the diverse gifts of all its members, including persons with disability (Kabue 2014:5).

The church's mission is incomplete without the exercise of particular gifts by people in mission that God has put in place for us because we are all created with particular gifts which, when used properly, have an impact as an adoration before God. All creations were made for God's glory and for his service despite our different physical attributes (Kabue, 2014:7).

God is a God of unity and the church as His body should live for all and in communion with all, and this should be an important mission of the church. The persons who are physically-impaired have been marginalised in many places; but churches and church organisations should welcome them and create an environment in which they feel loved, admired, and needed.

The "church of all" has for primary revelation the brotherhood and the equality of spiritual privilege. Therefore, both brotherhood and equality of spiritual privilege are characterised by a faith that associate maturity and engaged brotherhood communion. All churches deliberately believe in the Great Commission, in which the mandate was given to go and share the gospel with love despite our physical appearance.

The church should not be characterised only by good appearance, great knowledge, superiority or a place whereby judgement of evil takes place; but also as a place which considers all mankind precious and the rarest gifts. Therefore, this is not a work for a few designated and inspired pastors, but the work of every Christian since all are the church.

Swinton (2008) relates the story of a young man called Stephen, who has Down's syndrome. The author talks of his experiences with Stephen, which clearly shows how the sense of being human is misunderstood and disrespected. He challenges the church to be an important authentic example in the way that all human beings should be understood and respected because we are all made in the image of God; therefore, the church should be a place that embraces unconditional love to accommodate all human beings especially people who are physically-impaired.

Swinton states that:

One might assume that a church that proclaims a radical gospel of love and acceptance, based on the profoundly humanising ministry of Christ, would offer a vital corrective to the negative attitudes, values and understanding that are so prevalent within society (Swinton 2008:167).

The church of all is like an introduction of God's mind in regard to the mission of the church.

### **2.2.2. The church for all**

In Luke 4:18-19 the Bible says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Exell (1973:435) declares:

Yes, you neglected, suffering people, the saviour of the world places you on a level with the favoured of the earth. The permanent and the spiritual belongs to you as much as to them; the same Father; the same love revealed; the same heaven beyond are for you.

This portion of Scripture is understood as if Jesus was giving an illustration that was associated with the aspect of the fulfilment of his commission. Jesus presents how he can accommodate people with different types of bondage and oppression (The gospel of Luke 1995:105). It is argued that Jesus saw that there were people who are not spiritually

prosperous, and he taught them about the internal life and the just judgement of sinners (Arthur 2003:81).

The "poor" are all those who are deprived of the comfort of this life and, therefore, may be more willing to seek treasures in heaven, all who are sensitive of their sins, poor in the Spirit and all miserable and the afflicted. Our Saviour presented as proof that He was the Messiah and that he came from God who preached to the "poor." The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor; ancient philosophers have ignored them, but the Gospel seeks to bless them, to give comfort where it is needed and where it will be received with gratitude. Wealth fills our spirit with pride, complacency and the feeling that the gospel is not necessary.

The poor "feel" the need for comfort that the world cannot give, and as a result, our Saviour has had his greatest success in sharing the gospel with the poor; and the gospel has poured out its richest blessings and its most joys. It is also proof that the gospel is true. If it had been "of human origin," it would have sought the rich and powerful; but it despises all human greatness and seeks as God does, to do good to those whom the world forgets or despises (Barne 2013:98).

Jesus' statement laid the fundamental policy as a declaration that it was time for all those who were rejected to be welcomed by and in the church, and it expressed the attitude that Jesus always displayed throughout his entire ministry.

In the New Testament, the word 'church' is actually the translation of the Greek word '*Ekklesia*'. '*Ekklesia*', from '*ek*' meaning 'out of' and '*klesis*' meaning 'a calling' or 'assembling'. Before and during the time of Christ and the First Century church, the primary usage of the word '*ekklesia*' referred to the assembling of the lawful body of citizens who made up the governing bodies in the different cities (Acts 19:39).

Kärkkäinen (2002:19) points out that Eastern ecclesiology sees the church as the image of the Trinity in the same way we are made to the image of the Trinity; therefore, the church on earth should represent 'the mystery of unity in diversity'. Each person of the Trinity is equal to others, likewise, Christians are called individually but when they are gathered, they become one in the union as the body of Christ.

Hastings (2012:129) concludes that based on the church as one with the missional Christ, it has the obligation of being attractive and incarnational, meaning that the church needs people

who will be attractive and incarnational as Christ was on earth. Being attractive is a basic conclusion of a full Christological determined ecclesiology/ missiology, and it applies when we decide not to present only one side of incarnational Christology.

The Bible says they will know us by our love (John13:34-35). People are sick, rejected, deprived, poor, discouraged, and lost. They need and desire a refuge of protection, a place they can run to and be freed, protected, fed, and accepted. The local church should be: A gathering of God's people who understand, forgive, love, and accept all without any discrimination because Jesus died on the cross of Calvary for all.

Therefore, the local church is obliged to work hard in loving each other and accepting those who join in unconditionally. We must know that love never fails and that perfect love casts out all fear. We must love all people in God's kingdom. This means we must ask God to send us sinners, prostitutes, drug addicts, alcoholics, rich men, poor men, people with impaired conditions, and all others who need love attention and a living Christ. We want them to come into this oasis and be refreshed and rescued in that love.

2.2.2.1. The Great Commission identifies the church to be a place for all

The Bible says: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19)

This has been interpreted as indicating the following:

The invitation to become a disciple is open to all peoples of all nations. In other words, people are not called to become individual believers, but must be recruited as disciples within the Christian community, whose reception of the Christian message in faith must materialize in their lives (*The New Interpreter's Bible: The gospel of Matthew* 1995:503).

Allison (1997: 688) argues that:

The climax and crown of Matthew's gospel are profoundly apt in that it invites the reader to enter the story, and it not only does but it underlines that the particular man Jesus, has universal significance.

When Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and teach the gospel to the nations, He didn't send them specifically to one tribe of Israel, neither did he send them specifically to people of

certain social ranks nor to those without physical-impaired conditions but to all nations. Nations are made out of all sorts of people and the church likewise. In other words, Jesus sent them to go teach the good news to:

- black people
- white people
- Indian people
- coloured people
- albino people, etc...

And in terms of social ranks, He said, go teach my good news to:

- rich people
- poor people

And in terms of physical condition, He said, go teach my good news to:

- those who are physically sound
- those who are physically challenged by various sicknesses
- the blind
- the crippled
- the deaf and dumb
- the lepers
- the lunatic, etc...

And in terms of Spiritual Condition, he said, go teach my good news to:

- those who are demon-possessed
- the witches

- magicians
- backsliders, etc...

So from this Commission of the Lord Jesus, it comes to a point of realisation that since the good news of Jesus Christ is to be preached to all nations without any exception, this means that the church must be a place that accommodates everyone without any distinction of race, social rank or physical condition. Everybody has a place therein and must be loved in the same way.

#### 2.2.2.2. Jesus Christ the example

As recorded in the four gospels Jesus was portrayed as having love for everybody. He was even called a friend of tax collectors. In those days, tax collectors were regarded as thieves but this never caused Jesus to turn his back on them; but on the contrary, he spent time with them and shared meals with them. He also approached those who had leprosy. According to the Law of Moses, if someone is a leper, he is unclean and such a person must be kept out of the camp lest he spreads his uncleanness everywhere and to every people. But he (Jesus) approached and touched them with love and healed them without any discrimination. He loved his enemies; this is even seen in his teaching about enemies (See Luke 19:1-9, John 5:1-13).

Jesus fed the hungry and felt compassion for the needy. He accepted everyone. This must be the attitude of the church. Accept all and be a place for all. Jesus himself, as God the Son, entered by his incarnation into a specific human context and communicated the nature of God and the gospel in ways that were culturally relevant without ever compromising his holiness and without capitulating to sinful cultural trends (Hastings 2012:61).

The church carries the obligation to act like Jesus; otherwise, it is not a church at all. It must be a place where people can come to see and hear about Jesus, and that people can feel the love of Jesus in action. It must be a place where everybody can run to for safety, protection, encouragement, and not a place for certain groups of people only.

#### 2.2.2.3. Invitation for all

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

It has been pointed out that, Jesus' invitation extends to all who are burdened. In his polemical situation, Matthew had in mind and particularly the burden of the religious obligation imposed by the scribes and Pharisees, which he understood as a barrier to communion with God (Keck 1995:275). The verse starts with an invitation, "Come unto me": This phrase in the new covenant simply encourages people to believe in Christ and become his disciple or follower.

The second part of the verse shows that this invitation is for all. When he said, "come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". He did not invite any specific groups of people. This invitation was not only for white or black people. It was and still is for all the rich and poor likewise. Those who are physically sound and physically challenged or people who are impaired as well. So based on these few Scriptures, the above-mentioned, it clearly shows that the church has no reason to be biased or partial. The church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head. The church as the body must welcome whoever the head invites or calls. The body has no right to send away whoever the head invites. A clear indication of a disobedient is seen when a church starts showing favouritism to certain people over others.

#### 2.2.2.4. The church is a place of rest for all

The Scripture says in the book of Matthew 11:28-29 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The church must not be a place where people become so much overloaded with problems, frustrations and burden of politics and so on... but a place of rest. A place where everybody would like to be and experience a real rest.

According to this Scripture, we see that Jesus promises to give rest to whoever comes to him. So the rest that Jesus promises to give whoever comes to him is available in the church. This rest is for all. Davies (1997:288) states that Matthews 11:28-29 may simply assume that the yoke of Christ alone brings true rest and that therefore all who have not come to Jesus must be deprived of rest.

#### 2.2.2.5. The Church is for all because Jesus died for all

"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Barret (1978:169) argues that:

“Whereas Christ died, he died to sin once for all. His once for all death to sin the death of all men, so far as they are willing to die with him.”

This Scripture clearly shows that Jesus’ death was the price he paid for all. So the church must bear in mind that the death of Jesus Christ created a place for all.

Tasker (1973:86) states that:

“Christ died for all, for the innumerable company of those who would enjoy the benefits of his redemption. In a very real sense, His death was their death”.

It was a very fundamental platform during his time, including those who were rejected in one way or another by those in power. "Proclaim the year of the favour of the Lord" represented more than a simple political or religious speech; it is a revolutionary proclamation for people who lived in darkness. The expression mentioned in (Luke 4:18), "recovery for the blind" is not just rhetoric expression; but rather the explicit mention of the attitude that Jesus assumed in his entire public court ministry, dealing with persons with disabilities in utter distrust of traditions, customs, and above all sanitary laws that hindered solidarity actions to a numerically significant group in the Jewish Community of the New Testament. The action of Jesus stresses the fact that the unfair and oppressive world would end with the establishment of the kingdom he inaugurated.

The book of (Acts 3: 1-10) writes about a forgotten, ignored, rejected man, condemned to the marginality at the door of the temple in Jerusalem. No one wanted to approach him, have a relationship with him, look at him, touch him or even talk to him as it is was not only despised by society but also punishable. Peter and John’s approach to the handicapped man at the door of the temple is a clear example for the church to follow. The placement of the narration of this historical fact exactly after the description of the church growing up in this city is not a simple coincidence; but rather an eloquent example of the interest of the sacred writer to highlight the diaconal action, based on love, of the church that realised his work in the middle of such a complex situation.

Let's look at this passage in more detail:



The apostles, Peter and John are, without a doubt, the disciples who, according to John 9: 2, in the presence of a man who was blind from birth, asked Jesus, "... who sinned, this man or his parents, whom he was born blind? "(v.2)

It considers that disability, as the product of the sin of an individual or his ancestors, was and unfortunately in many places is still one of the three religious barriers that people with disabilities have faced in Jewish society. Therefore, disability as a divine punishment and invalidity following the curse is more than a popular belief; they are well-defined theological concepts. Of course, the same text from John's gospel mentioned before, but in verse 3, gives us a resounding answer of Jesus with regard to the question of his disciples:

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "But this happened so that the work of God could be displayed in his life." John and Paul, now at Belle Gate and face to face with a person with a disability, would have to apply correctly what they had learned from the Lord.

It argues that:

Jesus' word in verse 3-5 turns the conversation away from the disciples' conventional theodicy concern. In the fourth Gospel, 'sin' is not a moral category about behaviour, but is a theological category about one's response to the revelation of God in Jesus. The man's blindness, therefore, is not an occasion for reflection on sin and causality, but is an occasion with revelatory significance (*The New Interpreter's Bible; The Gospel of John 1995:653*).

### **2. 3. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

Mission is not going to far of places to convert the gospel but to discern where the triune God is working and joining in God's mission

God is called to be a missionary God, and the servants of God are called to be the witnesses of God.

Hastings (2012:149) pointed out that:

A Christian theology of mission therefore is inherently creational, world-affirming and holistic and it moves us to engage the world to seek the whole

personhood and full humanisation of each person. It is concerned with evangelism and compassion and justice, and both local and global contexts.

“You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 43:10).

“These words suggest the high honour, as well as the great responsibility of a Christian profession” (1973:365).

Through the prophets, God reminded the people of Israel of their mission: "I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open their eyes that are blind, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon" (Isaiah 42: 6-7).

God is a sending God. The God who said to Jonah, "Rise up, go to Nineveh, this great city, and cry against it" (Jonah 1: 2) is the God who told Peter to get up and go down to Caesarea to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Cornelius and his family (Acts 10:20). The God who said to Jeremiah, "Say no, I am a young man"(Jeremiah 1: 7) is the God who, when the time came, sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who will believe in Him. Who were under the law, that we might receive adoption "(Galatians 4: 4-5). The God to whom Isaiah cried, "Here I am! Send me" (Isaiah 6: 8) is the God to whom Jesus prayed: "As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

Therefore, God because of His mission for this world, is described as a God who sends, and His Son as a Lord who sends. Jesus chose twelve disciples and sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and heal (Luke 9: 2). He appointed seventy others and sent them twice ahead into each of the cities and places where he himself would come (Luke 10: 1). The theme of the sending is illustrated in Jesus' parable of the great banquet, in which the master of the house orders its servants to go on the roads and hedges and call people to come so that house is filled (Luke 14:23).

God's heart for all the peoples and all the nations is still the same as it was in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament, God is a missionary God and he wants all people, all cultures and all races to be saved. As believers approach God, they must acquire that heart for the nations that affect their daily lives (Wilhemson 1972:83).

### 2.3.1. The Biblical Mandate for the Church mission

Bosch (1991:228-229) states that:

The word Missionary comes from the Latin word “*mitto*”, which means “to send.” It is the equivalent of the Greek word “*apostello*”, which also means “to send.” The root meaning of the two words is identical. Jesus Christ was the first Apostle; he derived his apostleship from the Father who said on many occasions “sent” him into the world on a Mission of redemption. From among his disciples, Jesus chose twelve men whom he called “apostles.” These men were taught and trained by him, gifted with apostolic authority, and after the resurrection was sent out to make disciples of all nations. In the book of Acts the apostles including the second group were such well-known as Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, and others are sent out by the Holy Spirit, and the church.

Blauw (1862:82) argues that the Greek word for church, ‘*ekklesia*’ refers simply to a group or an assembly of “called out people.” Under the leadership of Moses, the Israelites conceived of themselves as people “called out” from Egypt to be separated and unique in their relationship to Yahweh.

The history of the church has not always existed, but, theologically and empirically, it was created in the interest of the mission. It is impossible to separate the church and the mission in terms of source. The achievement of God's missionary purpose is the church. The church has an intimate relationship with God's mission. Therefore the Spirit of Christ that invests in the mission of the church likewise lives in the church. The moment he sent the church into the world, Jesus Christ infused the Holy Spirit into the church (John 20: 19-23). Therefore, the church has to participate in the mission just as fire exists by burning (WCC 2013: 21).

Our participation in the mission of God is to share His mission. The church of all nations stands in continuity through the Messiah Jesus with the people of God in the Old Testament. With them, we were called by Abraham and commanded to be a blessing and a light for the nations in compassion and justice in a world of sin and suffering. We have been redeemed by the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and authorised by the Holy Spirit to testify to what God has done in Christ. The church exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity and to participate in the transformative mission of God in history. Our mission is entirely derived from the mission of God; it addresses the whole of God's creation and is anchored at

its centre in the redemptive victory of the cross. These are the people to whom we belong, whose faith we confess and whose mission we share (Cape Town Commitment 2010: 19).

### **2.3.2. The Church is Missionary**

The church is the missionary agency of Christ. It is sent to the world by the Lord Sender, as clearly stated in the document produced by the WCC Mission. The church is sent into the world to Call People and the nations to repent, to proclaim the forgiveness of sin and a new beginning in the relationship with God and with the neighbours through Jesus Christ. The church has a constitutive brand to be apostolic and to be sent into the world: that is to share the gospel, to be compassionate, uphold justice and to accomplish God's mission.

The principles of mission seek to grasp God's great goals for the beloved creation and mission of the church for those purposes. As the vision is reflected in the New Testament that speaks of a loving, merciful God who desires a loving relationship with all of God's good creation. The church, invested with the Holy Spirit, is called to serve as an ambassador of the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ (World Council of Churches 2013).

The mission is not optional for the church, but it is at the heart of His appeal in the power of the Spirit to follow Christ. Mission is defined in connection with the nature of God revealed in His love, creation, reconciliation and redemption of the world. Although this language may be common, the implications are quite fundamental. If the mission follows who God is, then the mission is endless. Mission is not a temporary activity undertaken before the end, but it describes the very nature of God and the human relationship with God.

In this perspective, mission describes the very nature of the Christian life in all its public, liturgical, institutional, spiritual and service dimensions. It also means that the body of Christ, for those of us who identify with the broken body of Jesus Christ, is a missionary. The community called by this God exists only in his own way, following his path to the Holy Spirit. In other words, the church finds its individuality by transcending itself, and so sharing the gospel means telling it to those who have not heard it yet. And as the encounter between Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10), it occurs in the expectation of what we will learn ourselves about what it means to be the disciples of Christ and the requirements of the obedience of the Spirit (World Council of Churches 2013).

God in His mission through Jesus Christ identifies those whom the world has marginalised, the handicapped, the poor and the oppressed, and calls His body to respond compassionately to human needs. This response is not something to give back to the institutions, it occurs in identification with those who are in need, in feeling the pain with those who suffer and responding in the hope, joy and the promise of the kingdom. The church must be a place of healing and not of injury. The power of God promised to His people does not lie in political or economic power. Although it is a temptation to which the church has too easily succumbed.

The nature of Christian maturity is creating a great environment for those who are marginalised and oppressed. It means hopefully creating a room for every human being to participate in the mission of Christ. The testimony of the church is not to hold back those who are broken and disturbed but to be in communion with them. In this, the body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24) discovers the nature of His holiness and unity. God's justice is based on righteousness, and God calls His people to live righteously and seek justice for all, to seek the liberation of all oppression and to be people of peace.

The church is called to care for the creation of God, to preserve its integrity and to protect the life that comes from God as a gift and blessing. The gospel is for all people and all cultures through time and history. Therefore, the church must always seek to reach each generation and culture in order to live the gospel in love in order to remove all obstacles.

The reconciliation of God with the human being is manifested in the life of the church which is the body of His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, the church in unity must represent the desire to be part of God's healing of denominational divisions. Ecclesial traditions must be seen in relation to the whole body of Christ, working for this purpose and pursuing the mission of God in partnership with the universal church in the name of the God of reconciliation. In addition, God's mission is greater than the church, and there are many who work for justice, compassion, and the care of creation that do not have the name of Christ. It is good that the church of God works in partnership with all people of goodwill to fulfil God's purposes.

Guder (1999:21) states: "The witness to Jesus Christ is incarnated in the formation of the church as Missional community; Jesus Christ forms his church for its incarnation witness by making disciples who become apostles"

Wilhemson (1972:83) makes the point that:

The heart of God for all people and nations in the New Testament is the same heart He had in the Old Testament, and is the same heart He has right now. God is a missionary God, and desires all people, cultures and races to be saved. As believers draw closer to God, they should be gaining such a heart for the nations affecting their daily life.

The local church should meet the demands of the cultural changes in the postmodern world and a need to be relevant for all impaired people, therefore it is a challenge to make sure that the passion of the church in mission is kindled and turns the approach of the believers in the local church to start taking the gospel across ones cultural boundaries and being motivated to go into the world and share the good news regardless of their culture.

#### **2.4. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON PEOPLE WHO ARE PHYSICALLY-IMPAIRED**

One of the key problems that arises when the theologians of disability begin their arguments about disability and theology is the image of God (*imago Dei*). Although different researchers consider the *imago Dei* of different dimensions, this study is not another discussion on whether people with disabilities are created in the image of God or not, as many theologians of the world have already established. The point of interest here is to emphasise that people with disabilities are also created in the image of God.

The point of view of McNair & Sánchez (2008:36) and Reynolds (2008: 34-35) is that biblical interpretations of disability are not always negative but sometimes positive. It is encouraging to see that participants agree that people with disabilities are created in *imago Dei*, which is a good premise for the theological discourse on disability. However, it is also clear that this is how Christians, especially pastors, interpret the *imago Dei* as the biggest problem. The emerging themes of the image of God and disability simply affirms, that there are different interpretations of disability in the *imago Dei*. Some excerpts from Galgalo's article (2011: 32-40), *Perfect God and imperfect creation: in the image of God and the disabled*, reviews various interpretations of the image of God.

Four points of view of the *imago Dei* are presented: traditional, substantive, rational and functional, to which a fifth is added, the spiritual interpretation of the *imago Dei*. Disability theologians such as Swinton (2001: 25, 38) and Kabue (2011: 21) show that people with disabilities are human beings created in the same way, and so they are also created in the

image of God, despite their disability. According to Swinton (2011: 276), traditional theologians often interpret *imago Dei* from a "hermeneutically adequate" position. This is also evident in the Christian context because disability is attributed to the fall. If disability is a curse and is inflicted by gods and ancestors as a punishment, then disability is also related to sin and is also punished by God. The Bible defined disability as a disease. Blindness, deafness, dumbness, leprosy and paralysis are well-known diseases in both the New and Old Testament.

Apart from people who become disabled due to their advancing age mostly blind people. The natural reason for disability is not indicated in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the general view of disability is a result of God's anger for disobedience of His words, and as the result of unbelief and ignorance as well. In Leviticus 26: 14-16 says: "I am going to bring you sudden terror, waste diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain your life."

"If they will not learn obedience by the things they suffer, God Himself would be against them; and this is the root and cause of all their misery." (Henry 2013:78).

Claassens (2013:55-56) points out that the Bible and religion have an impact with regard to disability which represents discrimination and exclusion. Based on a number of selected biblical texts, she finds it problematic that disability is typically related to sin or curse or punishment. Claassens proposes a paradigm shift in religious settings and conversations about disability. The band between sin and disability present the theology of disability as a punishment on an individual or family because of disobedience. Therefore, disability is not only an individual cause of sin but sometimes the whole family is included. The Bible promotes strongly the revelation that links disability to disobedience to God.

Isaiah 42:18-20 says:

Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? Seeing many things, but thou observes not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

Here the children of Israel are compared to deaf and blind people, while they have eyes and are deaf but just because of carelessness. Hearing-impairment symbolises spiritual

stubbornness or the wilful refusal to hear and obey the Word of God. They are deaf as the idols they serve (Deut 4:28, Ps 115: 4-8, Rev 9:20; Ryken 1998:146).

The book of Leviticus in its teaching requires that in a ministry physical imperfection is perceived as an obstacle to the priestly ministry for Aaron's descendant. And the LORD speaks unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 21:17 says: "Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God."

The word "blemish" originally meant "black spot". It does not matter what is impaired or different from a given standard, but "imperfection" has been used to describe the various anomalies that disqualify someone from the priesthood (*The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1920). The interpretation of this Levitical text can be attributed to the confusion between physical disability, corporal perfection and moral impurity (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*: 1972). According to Eiesland (1994:123), the theological sense of perfection has historically included physical impeccability, and many religious orientations establish a direct link between physical perfection and spiritual beauty. "The idea is clear that holiness finds physical expression in integrity and normality."

Physical disability is evidence of a person's sin and a sign of God's punishment. In other words, the perfection of the body is a symbol of the perfection of the soul (Melcher 1998:356).

People with disabilities are also considered unworthy in society and are also considered useless, that why this vision of future prejudice, in which physical imperfection is seen as an obstacle to the exercise of the priestly office for the descendant of Aaron.

It is also important to emphasise that other perspectives and approaches to disability are also found in the Bible and Christian theology.

Jeremiah 31:8-9 says:

Behold, I will bring them from the North Country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them, the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travailed with child together: a great company shall return thither.



They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Miller (2016:26) clarifies that Jeremiah emphasises restoring people's relationship with the Creator Father. These memories of a disabled nation of early Israel subjugated to the physical scars of the bondage of their Egyptian captors, who also fled in the original exodus. In Jeremiah's description of the returning ghost, he lists categories of people who cannot usually make long journeys due to physical conditions: the blind, the lame, pregnant women and men and women at work. The inclusion of the disabled is seen in God's plan for the restoration of the Israelites. We find God assuring the rest of His people, Israel to Babylon, that the land of their captivity would be returned to them and that they would return to Jerusalem.

The eternal kingdom, which God will establish, will favour the weak, the lame and the marginalised above all others. They are the chosen ones of God. It is clear that by restoring the rest of the people of Israel, God has made sure that all disabled people are also returned. God did not want the blind and the lame to be left behind. God wanted everyone to be restored, showing interest in them. Therefore, disability should not be an excuse for not integrating into the church. God did not leave anyone behind when He restored the rest of Israel to Jerusalem, nor Christians.

Christianity teaches us that all people are equal (James 2: 1-9). In Genesis 1: 26-27, we read that all human beings were created in the image and likeness of God. The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ came into the world so that people might have life in abundance (John 10:10). This implies the enjoyment of all human rights, such as education, employment and worship. Christ's mission was to heal the afflicted, to feed those who are hungry and to heal the disabled (Matthew 15:32, Mark 2: 1-2). Jesus Christ gave them a special place in his ministry because they were oppressed and marginalized in their community. He showed them love and compassion and cared for their physical and spiritual well-being (Matthew 15: 30-31, Mark 2: 1-12).

#### **2.4.1. The Biblical perspectives on the physical-impaired people**

In most of the stories in the Old Testament, the physical-impaired people are discriminated against. Melcher (1998:55) notes that in the book of Leviticus the impurities of human beings

which are also seen physically can disturb the presence of holiness in the sanctuary even from far. An example of discrimination is found in the Bible, whereby sin is connected with disabilities. (Mark 2:10-12). Eiesland (1994:73-74) mentions three theological problem statements that can be seen as barriers in a community of disabled:

- Disabilities as a result of sin
- Disability as virtuous suffering
- Disabilities as cases of charity.

The result of all these themes is what Eiesland (1994:120) called "disabling theology". The Bible, which is the main source of Christian theology, illuminates this further.

John 9:1-3 says:

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

But Jesus Christ in his human reaction showed love as a vital person, he approached the man with a heart full of compassion which perhaps did not come from above but from mutual *agape*. When Jesus healed, not only did he remove the disability in someone's body, but he was also breaking down the social wall that stands between people with disabilities and their full participation in the life of the community. Jesus healing was not meant to cure a disability only, but it was more about restoring a community. And Jesus Christ on the cross, with wounded hands, feet and side, living and dying in this disabled way represented him as the God of those who are both spiritually and physically weak.

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls appears to have been an article in the creed of the Pharisees, and it was pretty general both among the Greeks and the Asiatic. The Pythagoreans believed the souls of men were sent into other bodies for the punishment of some sin which they had committed in a pre-existent state. This seems to have been the foundation of the disciple's questions to our Lord. Did this man sin in a pre-existent state, that he is

punished in this body with blindness? Or, did his parents commit some sin, for which they are thus plagued in their offspring? (Clark 2013:27)

The ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, instructs about worship, not as a statement that diminishes physically-impaired people, but rather as a symbol of both the perfection that God deserves in our worship and the perfect and impeccable sacrifice that Christ would offer in his death on the cross. Jesus in his ministry identified also all those who are weak not by choice but by the imposition of life which is only controlled by God and His sovereignty.

#### **2.4.2. The theology of the cross**

Kolb (2002: 443) stated that this theology comes from Luther, reviling the nature of God and the nature of the human creature trapped in sin. His affirmations on these issues were a paradigm shift with a Western Christian perspective in the understanding of God's revelation of Himself, the way God handled evil and what it meant to be His human. This introduced a new concept on how to think about God and the human creature in a way that the cross of Christ as the important point of understanding and presents them in the biblical message.

The cross gives a definition of God in a biblical context, it answers the question of all ages about who God is and what He did, and it includes the respect to the characteristics of human nature and culture. Therefore, Luther's paradigm presents the sense of being human and the focus that should be given to God as a Christian.

Suffering and tribulations are not the main focus in the theology of the cross-view, but God is the one that humans should fix all attention on. Because of our sin, the merciful God took the form of the cross to also break the barrier between the marginalised and societies including the church as the body of Christ. The "theology of the cross" brings new hope as a response to the realities of life, the reality of the cross of Jesus Christ includes the reality of being disabled. The theology of the cross is a deviation from the vagueness of human attempts focused on God, indicating where He should be found and who He really is.

Luther focused first on the void wall created by the impossibility of human and sinful conceptualisation of God, with the eyes down, no one can see God. With fallen human ears, no one can listen to his Word. Then Luther focused very strongly on God in his revelation of

Himself nobody has seen God, but Jesus of Nazareth, God in the flesh, who come close to us, in the midst of our twisted and ruined existence.

This God on the cross makes known the fullness of His love as well as the insufficiency of all human efforts to please him. God is revealed through His little voice, which is the impotent word of the cross, the Word made flesh, come and abide among His people. The Word transmits to the world life and the power of its promise. Therefore, only total dependence and trust in God and what He promises in His incarnation and in the Scriptures, is the centre of life, the living source of authentic human life. God designed life to focus on trust in Him. Even in a "guilt-free" society, the theology of the cross provides the underlying signature for the discussion of topics that seem far away, the subjects of redemption.

Even sinners who are aware of guilt cannot understand how overwhelming the extent to which sin has determined human existence after its fall. No one can understand the enormity of overcoming God's love for the problem of sin and guilt. Luther rejected any cheap atonement in which Christ bought his people, like a little gold or silver. He suffered the death of the cross and thus answered the request of the law that sinners must die. But Luther not only portrayed the saving act of Christ as exchange "of the sin and death of the sinner by his own innocence" and Luther also confessed that Christ had won the battle against Satan in a "magnificent duel". God in his most magnificent form, measured by His mercy and love for his human creatures (Wengert, 2009:43).

Jesus died for only one reason that the world can have human life in its full potential. It is only at the foot of the cross that one can discover the true human identity. Luther concluded that the Christian life is not automatically noticeable by worldly definitions of blessings or sorrow, but is formed by Christ and his cross. The cross of Christ shows Christians must live a fearless life. Theologians recognise the need for change and recognise the theology of Luther's cross as a tool for change. Change that allows us to live in a culture that confronts evil and suffering and keeps us optimistic. Change means living in a culture that liberates those who are marginalised and disabled and release them from discriminatory behaviour.

### **2.4.3. The theology of liberation**

The origin of liberation theology comes from the Brazilian Catholic communities and Christians who participated in the confrontation of political and economic poverty in the countries of Latin America at the end of the 1960s and until 1970. In the late 1960s, the

Episcopal Council of Latin America organised two major conferences in Bogotá in 1966 and in Medellín in 1968, with a purpose of replying to the censure of liberation theology by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Regardless of the debut, the systematic development of the first theology of liberation is accredited to Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian Catholic priest and his book *“Teología de la Liberación: Perspectivas/Liberation Theology: perspectives”* published in 1971 (Miguéz 2004: 120).

Bosch (2008:432) argues that:

The theology of liberation is a multi-faceted phenomenon, manifesting itself as black, Hispanic and Amerindian theologies in the United States, as Latin American theology, and as feminist theology, South African Black Theology, and various analogous theological movements in other parts of Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific.

The goal of liberation theology is both a reflection and an action to free the poor and marginalised from political and socio-economic poverty. The call and mission of the Catholic Church have the responsibility to remain united and speak on behalf of the oppressed on socio-economic issues by focusing on change. It suggests that theologians contribute to the foundation of liberation theology and directly address the important problems of injustice and poverty. From the countries of Latin America, the theology of liberation has shown a parallel emergence and development in some parts of the world. Its diverse nature responds perfectly to the realities of socio-economic oppression exposed in different parts of the world, groups of people and their experiences in poverty, oppression and marginalisation. (Ven 2004: 2 & Copper 2013: 1)

A hermeneutic of liberation has the vital tendency to approach and apply a biblical text chosen to respond to the experiences and anxieties of the masses. It is significantly aware in the absence of the oppressed, the marginalised and the poor in society. Moreover, its theological reflection is clearly able to highlight and maintain the dialogue between Christian traditions, the societal theory actively deals with the situation of the poor and the marginalised. It has attracted many followers rooted in Christianity, the life of prayer, love and commitment to fraternity.

Theological reflection introduces the salvation of Jesus in the current context and in the state of the poor (Rowland 1999: 7). De Villiers (1987: 6) presents that "liberation theology" is

derived from two terms "liberation". Which speaks loudly the condition of the oppression and shouts loud for a change, and "theology" which points out to God's word that challenges the oppressive condition.

In Greek and Hebrew, the term liberation is translated as redemption and salvation. (Gutiérrez 2012: 7). Sobrino (1994: 17) specifies that two important attributes of Jesus Christ; Saviour and liberator to shape a new Christological model relevant, to provide a new meaning to salvation beyond biblical interpretation as redemption. Essentially, the new Christological attributes of liberation describe in particular the challenges and oppression that society faces and demonstrates the purpose against the experiences of social injustice. Gutiérrez states: "Behind the theology of liberation, there are Christian communities, religious groups and peoples that are increasingly aware that the oppression and abandonment they suffer are not equivalent with their faith in Jesus Christ".

"The principal objective is not to interpret the Bible rather to interpret life with the help of the Bible. It conveys the revelation as a present reality, and the Bible helps the theologians to decipher it in the world and to transform the world into a great visibility" (Tamez 2006: 21). Fawcett (1994: 570) similarly asserts that liberation hermeneutics identifies the contemporary difficult situations of the poor and marginalised along with the search for relevant biblical texts to verify the facts about the poor. Characteristically, the important fact in the hermeneutical process is to use the biblical text as a mirror to dynamite the socio-economic transformation of the poor. Because "the poor" is a common name not only to describe the economically disadvantaged mass, but it is an inclusive name for oppressed, discriminated and marginalised nations, gender and ethnic groups for all known and unknown reasons.

According to Bennett (2007: 41), the concept of the hermeneutics of liberation is to identify theological reflection through the discovery and transmission of the understanding of the dialogue between the social context and the Scriptures. He states: "Praxis in the theology of liberation is in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed with the intention of bringing liberation and humanisation through radical and transformative social and political change." (Bennett, 2007:42) He also identifies that the hermeneutics of liberation is more the prophetic response at the moment of the "praxis-theology of the vanguard". (Bennet 2007: 42) By "praxis-precursor of theology" meant that the hermeneutics of liberation seeks to remain largely biblical, appealing to experience to avoid discord, but to maintain the authenticity of Scripture, beyond what it is ordered. It is prophetic enough to perceive and respond to the

needs of the poor to a large extent without discrimination or inequality. It is a practice of fundamental justification that involves theologians getting involved in the community of the oppressed and the marginalised, by covering both the experience of the advantaged and disadvantaged in the society.

The starting point of Black Liberation Theology is a serious thinking on the black regarding marginalisation and persecution when it comes to biblical faith, the system includes the study of the compartments of marginalisation and oppression, serious investigation that takes Old Testament and New Testament paradigm of the liberation of Christ who lives amongst the oppressed and actively involves himself in the freedom procedure. (Chimhanda 2010:434-445)

Tshaka (2010: 532-546) argues:

As such, it is confined to black people and their concerns. When used symbolically the word refers to every human situation of enslavement, domination and oppression and therefore to the situation of deprivation, powerlessness and of being the underdog who suffers injustice at the hands of the powerful and the ruling elite.

Buffel (2010:470-480) states: “When theology is not about liberation then it is worthless and not worth pursuing.” Botha and Andiñach (2009: 1) emphasised that the Bible, Hermeneutics and Liberation are not related concepts but are fundamental for religious, linguistic and social realities. Its main concern is that the objective of the conceptual framework of hermeneutics interprets the existing facts of current reality. Liberation, however, forms an intense concept through the use of pluralistic connotation capable of identifying the theologies of liberation. It mainly addresses the paradigms of biblical, religious and a socio-economic path with the poor and the marginalised. They agree with Solivan (1998:34) on the fact that the concept of the Bible, hermeneutics and liberation combine separately to redefine the acquisition of a different theological praxis that integrates orthodoxy and liberation orthopraxis. They affirm that thought hermeneutic describes the liberating action as biblical. In conclusion, this approach describes the Bible in conjunction with the hermeneutics of liberation as paving the integration of interpretation and the whole culture and society.

The theology of liberation assisted the church to experience again its old faith in Yahweh, whose exceptional requirement, which made him completely different to others was based on

his participation in history as a God of justice, and who defended the cause of the weak and the oppressed. (Bosh 2008:442)

## **2.5. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND PHYSICALLY-IMPAIRED PEOPLE**

The importance of the image of God in human beings and the presence of Christ with the marginalised and the oppressed is a fundamental theology proposal that should be at the heart of all pastoral efforts. Therefore, mission should not be considered as a historical phenomenon, but as a Commission from God, which required to be recognised in missionary circles for a larger and deeper theological orientation. Not only in the area of the church and mission, but also theology and missionary thought and approach.

As Yong (2007: 177) argues, “the theology of the cross provides a biblical framework for thinking about the connection between Christology, theology, and disability”. The theology of the cross is seen as equally with living with physically-impaired people since the church is the body of Christ and life in the body of Christ; likewise, the church should freely accept physically-impaired people in the community of faith with a new hope of responding to the realities of life. Schaefer (2011:415) states: “the cross of Jesus removes the disability and leaves the ability to live out a vocation.” The church must acknowledge their experiences with these experiences in order to reinterpret these passages for the well-being of all souls, including those who are disabled.

It does not take much to recognise that there are serious problems with the religious on the subject of language about God and the love of God when applied to disability. The physically-impaired people challenge the assumptions by which non-disabled people find order and meaning in the world. To maintain these assumptions, people of faith depend almost automatically on the notions that this implies that it is God who causes disability, for example, as a curse or a punishment, a cross to endure, an opportunity for God to heal people without disabilities to demonstrate charity, a kind of moral lesson for people without disabilities.

But the Bible says in Romans 12:3-5 that:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think



soberly, according to as God hath dealt with every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office.

Blair (2008:76) stated:

The grandfather of practical ministry literature related to people with disabilities is Reverend Harold Wilke. In his book, *Creating the Caring Congregation* (1980), Wilke invites faith congregations to consider the “special needs” of people with disabilities. He calls their attention, first and foremost, to the attitudinal barriers that contribute to physical and architectural barriers, which, in turn, discourage and even prohibit persons with disabilities from full access to the community of faith. Wilke himself was born with no arms, and thus writes from personal experience.

Therefore, in order to welcome physically-impaired people, the church should understand that the same death and resurrection of Jesus Christ redeemed all humans without discrimination. In 2 Samuel 9:13 the act of King David is seen as a reflection of the compassion of Jesus Christ and serves as an example of the complete restoration of a person with a disability to lead a normal life. In addition to examining the image of God, the healing stories in the gospels also provide a revelation of the vision of theology as more liberating than discriminating. The mission of Christ on earth supports a liberating theology.

The ministry of Jesus is related to the fact that it is a company of people who, for one reason or another are marginalised. In fact, the gospel shows that Jesus spends a lot of time with the marginalised, and showed great compassion for people with disabilities. The concern for the disabled was one of the main notes of Jesus' earthly ministry, He was touched every time he met people with disabilities, and healing was one of the important manifestations of his ministry. Creamer (2009:32) states that "limits are normal". There is nobody on earth without limits or weaknesses.

According to Rayan (1991: 29), the parable of the Great Banquet shows that Jesus Christ, in word and deed, places the disabled in the circle of the unity of the Christian church. The Kingdom of God is not complete without them. This is described in Matthew 21: 12-14. After the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem: "The blind man and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them" (Matthew 21:14). In Mark 16:15, we read, "Go into the world

and preach the gospel to every creature." This includes people with disabilities. It involves restoring the disabled to their legitimate legacy in Jesus Christ and their rightful place in the church as part of the "body of Christ."

### **2.5.1. The barrier-breaking ministry in the mission**

In addition to the inclusive biblical perspectives on disability, theological circles discuss a theology of the liberation of disability that collaborates with human rights ideologies, especially because this collaboration fosters the recognition of the inherent dignity of each person. Without distinction of race, religion or disability. This theology criticises discrimination against people with disabilities and emphasises forms of social inclusion.

Eiesland (1994) argues against the concept of the person and normality that requires physical perfection, emphasising the fact that at the centre of the Christian faith there is a God who finds Himself disabled. The disabled God arises in a particular situation in which people with disabilities find themselves when they try to live a dignified life. Through the idea of the disabled God, Eiesland developed a liberation theology of disability that challenges unjust structures and beliefs and approves new images and applies such as the image of God as "disabled"; therefore, challenging the perfect corporeal image of the divine.

Her proposal is a model of God that gives importance to disability and cares and contributes to the liberation of people with disabilities. The liberation theology of disability is about justice and the inclusion of people with disabilities. It bases its liberating praxis on the struggle of people with disabilities to transform the oppressive structures, beliefs, values and attitudes that lead to social and theological exclusion of people with disabilities. As a result, it rejects definitions of disability by perceiving that it is within individual deficiencies and provides a strong argument to suggest that much of the disability is socially constructed.

The mission of Christ on earth, which is clearly established in Matthew 11: 2-5 and Luke 4: 18-19 (also called the Manifesto of Nazareth) supports a liberating theology. When the disciples of John asked him: "Are you the one who comes or should we look for another?" Jesus responded with words that recalled the prophecies of Isaiah: "Return to John what you hear and see, the blind find their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor the gospel preached to them "(Mt 11: 3-5).

The concern for the disabled was one of the main notes of Jesus' earthly ministry. Whether a person is born blind in John 9 or the person with the dry hand in Luke 14, Jesus was touched every time he met people with disabilities, His ministry is linked to the margins, he was forced to live among them (Mark 7:37). In fact, the four gospels show that Jesus spends a lot of time with the "least" in society, and showed great compassion for people with disabilities.

In the past, healing stories in the gospels were seen as controversial by some scholars, such as Hull (2001:178) and Grant (1997:156), who see the healing stories of Jesus as denoting a moral imperfection of people with disabilities. When Jesus healed the disabled man on the edge of the Bethesda, he said, "Look, you have been restored, stop sinning, or something worse will happen to you" (John 5:14). This clearly indicates that Jesus thought there was a connection between the man's disability and sin. In the case of disability, it is often assumed that healing is the eradication of the problem to promote virtuous suffering as if it were a contagious virus or a means to induce greater faith in God. Such theological approaches to healing emphasise the "healing" or "acceptance" of a disease (Ecumenical Network for People with Disabilities (EDAN) 2006).

In this type of theology, disability is a social construction and healing is the removal of social barriers. From these perspectives, the healing stories in the gospels relate mainly to the restoration of people in their communities, not to the healing of their physiological conditions. The healing acts of Jesus, for example, the healing of the blind in John 9 or leprosy in Mark 1: 40-45, which asks Jesus to purify it, suggests how Jesus restores the people in his community. Similarly, in Mark 2: 1-12, Jesus met the paralytic and forgave his sins. Forgiving sins here means eliminating the stigma imposed on them by a culture in which the disadvantages are associated with sin or where someone is ostracised as a sinner and unworthy of acceptance of their society (EDAN 2006).

### **2.5.2. The healing message in mission**

Wilkes (1980: 21) points out that the doctrine of the imputation of integrity and justice has caused problems for people with disabilities, stemming from the belief that the strength of faith, or lack of faith, is related to their disadvantage and many people with disabilities receive this type of response every day. A Christian with a visual impairment is often asked the question: "If your faith were genuine, would not Jesus have restored your sight?" Such views prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in social life.

According to Owen (1991: 15-16), the result of people establishing a direct connection between physical perfection and spiritual righteousness is that many people with disabilities do not dare to seek a religious house and feel neglected by the church. She gives an example of a healing service in the church where the priest says: "Only the devil prevents us from acquiring a perfect body immediately." This image of a minor and a sinner is reinforced by the way preachers bombard people with disabilities with healing messages.

The present church continues to pose questions about a disabled person seeking to enter the ministry. Suggesting that some physical disabilities are a disqualification for ministry, Leviticus 21:16-23 has been used to justify the exclusion of persons with disabilities from ecclesiastical visibility and authority (*The Interpreters Bible*, 1953, Wilkes, 1980, Govig, 1982 and Eiesland, 1994). According to Govig (1982: 95), "this text is a barrier to the ordination of people with physical disabilities, it is literally applied to prevent people with disabilities from preaching". A study on the ordination of people with disabilities in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya shows that the church has some reservations about the ordination of people with disabilities. It is believed that disability can hinder the performance of a minister (Mwangi 2007:87).

Wilkes (1980) stated that one of the reasons to exclude people with disabilities from the ministry is that the priesthood is a very public role. It is done "before the congregation"; therefore, it is believed that the disability may cause a negative response from the congregation: "Certain forms of disability or disfigurement may cause discomfort or distraction within the congregation" (Wilkes, 1980: 33). Njoroge (2001:7) does not consider people with disabilities as a problem; rather, it is the attitude of the church that is the problem. The problem is not that we have deaf, dumb and blind people (and with other disabilities) among us; but that churches and institutions related to the church are usually deaf, dumb and blind to our concerns and our needs.

The ministry and the state of mind of Jesus towards people with disabilities offers something like a systematic treatment of disability, practical or theoretical. Hunsberger (2011: 96) points out that the mission approached is far from the margins. Marginalised in society are considered to be underestimated; these consist of: "the oppressed, rejected, neglected, discarded, considered incapable or not normal, because of their social, financial or physical status." Therefore, people with disability are found among people in the margins. The churches, therefore, should be the source of God's expression of mission for everyone.

Bosch's theory of mission as a facilitator of the introduction to salvation and the hunt for justice, where he insists on social justice as a vital portion of the mission. Salvation does not only see the relationship of the individual with Christ, but it also recognises hatred, injustice, oppression, marginalisation, violence and other forms of suffering in the world as important matters. In addition, the mission as the agent for justice has the responsibility to deal with the tension of expressing unconditional love. The mission must fight any form of social injustice, discrimination, oppression, stigmatisation and exclusion, among others (Bosh 1991: 393-401).

## **2.6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter can be summarised in four conclusions. First, the social attitudes and the cultural belief systems must not interact with the mission of the church with regard to hearing-impaired people, the church is for all and of all as the Bible defines it. Second, the theology that liberates and empowers people with physical-impairment discussions was based on biblical texts, opposing traditional theological interpretations of disability. Third, the images of God as a missionary that promotes no discrimination approaches when it comes to mission filled with a profound example of inclusion, love and acceptance. Finally, theological reflection on the relation between the mission of the church and physically-impaired people is to support and protect the right of salvation of people who are physically-impaired in braking all barriers that oppose the mission to be complete.

## CHAPTER THREE

### UNDERSTANDING *MISSIO DEI* IN THE CONTEXT FOR ALL HUMANKIND

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to frame the theology of *missio Dei* in the context for all humankind using a historical redemptive approach. It consists of three main sections. The first section will define *missio Dei*. The second section will discuss mission with regard to some biblical narratives of the *missio Dei*. Last, this section will discuss mission from and to the margins.

For practical-missional praxis, some redeeming historical passages and case of the *missio Dei* in the Old and New Testaments will be explored in order to accomplish the objective of this chapter. The accents will be on the understanding of the *missio Dei* as a context of all humankind. Gaffin (2012:109) argues that, “salvation resides ultimately, not in who God is or even in what he has said, but in what he has done in history, once and for all, in Christ.”

The mission is not simply an exchange of different people, nor mere obedience to the word of the Lord, nor a simple obligation to reunite the church. It is to participate in the sending of the Son, the *missio Dei*, with the integral objective of establishing the reign of Christ over all redeemed creation (Hartenstein: 1952). Suess (2003: 552) affirms that the mission that is not related to the *missio Dei* is reduced to nothing. The term *missio Dei* can be attributed historically to Augustine in light of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Withworth (2012:6) argues, “for the *missio Dei* to be defined as the grace of the triune God moving in, through and with the world, that all might be drawn into the life-transforming embrace of divine love”. *Missio Dei* develops the characteristics of God’s mission to all humankind and guides the direction of the church’s mission.

Wilhemson (1972:83) stated:

The heart of God for all people and nations in the New Testament is the same heart He had in the Old Testament, and is the same heart He has right now. God is a missionary God, and desires all people, cultures and races to be saved. As believers draw closer to God, they should be gaining such a heart for the nations affecting their daily life.

### 3.2. DEFINING *MISSIO DEI*

Bosch (1991: 390) defines mission as *missio Dei* pointing that, "the mission is an attribute of God": God is a missionary God. It is the mission of God that includes the church and the church's mission to impact the world as an instrument that God uses to reach and express his unconditional love.

Mpinga (2014:92) argued that the notion of *missio Dei* is indispensable for the understanding of the missional church. *Missio Dei* as the mission of God is the reason for the being of the church. It gives all the meaning to the existence of the church in the world. The only justification of the presence of the church in the world is *missio Dei*. The church is called and sent to participate in God's mission; it is called for the service of *missio Dei*. Without *missio Dei* the church would not exist because the first defines the second. Furthermore, *missio Dei* concerns the sending of God into the world for the redemption of the whole of creation.

*Missio Dei* is a Latin theological term that can be translated as "mission of God" God is, therefore, the initiator of mission in sending His Son, and then through the Son in sending the Holy Spirit so that the Church is sent into the world as a continuing movement of God's Trinitarian life. This definition provides a simple introduction to the concept of *missio Dei* which essentially is the work of mission of the Church, which is a subset of the work of God in the world, rather than something with an independent existence.

In the event of His self-revealing, God chose to reveal Himself and wanted to develop a Christ-centred approach to reveal and to see that His self-revelation in the incarnate Lord Jesus. Mission is God's work and that the authentic church mission must be in response to God's mission.

*Missio Dei* is therefore seen as a movement from God to the world, and the church is viewed as an instrument of it, and to participate in the movement of God's love toward people. It is understood throughout the Scriptures that the end result of such *missio Dei* will be the glorification of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Because of His unconditional love plan God sent His Son to save the world from perdition and Jesus obeyed and willingly sacrificed his precious life to do so. (Peters 1997:9)

The incarnation of Christ is the biblical model for the contextualization of the mission of the church. It is for the fulfilment of this mission that Christ, the Word of God, became flesh and

dwelt among us. (See John 1:14) Therefore, the incarnation itself is part of the process of fulfilling the mission. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ has been made meaningful through the incarnation. The fact that the Word of God has become flesh in the person of Jesus Christ in the world is an important asset to understand God and His mission to creation.

The incarnation of Christ can be used as a character in the mission of Christ and as a way of laying down not only the foundation of the church, but also its character. Luzbetak (1995:133) argues that “mission consists in incarnating Christ in the given time and place, allowing him to be born in the lifeway.”

Bosch (1991:391) stated that the *missio Dei* is God’s activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate.

Stott (1992:335) declares that “mission arises from the heart of himself and is communicated from his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of a global God.”

### **3.3. THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE OF THE *MISSIO DEI***

Mission traces its roots from the person, life, mission, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the community he established, as stated in the New Testament. The life of Jesus of Nazareth is the norm for a true Christian mission, the task of the church, in each generation and in all socio-political and historical contexts, therefore constantly verify whether her understanding of Christ corresponds to that of the first witnesses. (Girma Bekele 2011: 154)

Girma Bekele (2011:153) argued:

Bosch presents a missiological reading of Jesus and his followers as an absolutely necessary hermeneutical key to comprehensively unlocking the biblical foundation of mission. A variety of missions can be found in the New Testament, but the authors spoke about the same Jesus to people within the specific contexts of their own communities.

Hunsberger (2011: 310) states that: “The framework for biblical interpretation is the story it tells of the mission of God and the formation of a community sent to participate in it.”

Wright (2006:124) argues that, “biblical mission and biblical hermeneutics seemed to morph into each other in unexpected but fascinating ways”



Luke does not present Jesus by quoting a specific verse of the Old Testament, but affirms that the mission of preaching repentance and forgiveness to the nations in its name is, "what is written." It seems to say that the whole of the Old Testament finds its centre and realisation in the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah of Israel, and in the mission to all nations, which is derived from that event. (Wright 2006:134)

The full meaning of recognition: Jesus as Messiah is then in recognition of his role regarding God's mission to Israel for the blessing of the nations, therefore, a messianic reading of the Old Testament must flow into a missionary reading, which is precisely the bond that Jesus establishes in Luke 24.

The World Council of Churches (2012:159-160) affirms that God is the Trinity that invited the Son and the Holy Spirit to the process of creation, redemption and support of all creation. However, the image of this divine God is better understood in the Greek philosophical notions of divinity as a teacher of perfection, far from reality. The omniscience, the omnipotence divine and the impassibility. On the contrary, the God known and loved on the margins reflects the divinity with the greatest power in the freedom of vulnerability. They find the image of God to be described in the texts of the prophet Isaiah, the most appropriate. This God is a servant that is identified with those who suffer unfairly. This God was revealed in the crucified Christ who lifted the marks of the systemic oppression in his own flesh.

*Missio Dei* in the Old Testament entailed God's revelation through his acts of creation and His chosen nation Israel, the election of biblical Israel in the Old Testament through Abraham and the mandate to represent God to other nations provides insight into the goal of mission in the Old Testament.

The following examples give a summary of the biblical narrative of the *missio Dei*:

- Abraham was called upon to go to a place unknown to him.
- Noah to a generation that was destroyed by the flood.
- Isaiah crying out ' here am I send me'.
- Moses sent to Egypt to confront Pharaoh for the release of God's people the Israelites from bondage and captivity.

- Jeremiah sent to God's people (Jer. 1).
- Jonah sent to the city of Nineveh to declare the plan of God to destroy the city.

The prophets:

Isaiah- Isaiah 55:11, Ezekiel 3:5-6 and Jeremiah- Jeremiah 14:14, 7:25 and Jonah to Nineveh.

God is the initiator of mission to the people and sustained mission throughout human history.

Jesus is the founder of the New Testament Church (Matt 16:18). He instituted the Great Commission according to: (Matthew 28:18-20), (Mark 16:17-18). Mission goals in the old and New Testament have a unique focus: according to (Isaiah 61:1-3) the same Scripture was quoted by Jesus which was referred to as his manifesto in (Luke 4:18-19).

Mission Goal of the church is focused on (Isaiah 61:1-3):

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to [a]heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

The New Testament narrative on mission is extensive, few examples could be considered:

- Matthew 24:29-31 .....To Prepare The Saints for the Coming/ Return of the Lord.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and

great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His[de]lect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- Luke 10:1-3 After these things the Lord appointed [a]seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few”; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.

Luke 10:21 .....to reveal God’s Hidden Strategy to those who believe in the gospel ....In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes.

Luke 10:19.....Empowerment of the Saints.....19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

- John 3:16.....To Unveil Authentic love of God to the World.

According to John 8:44.....Create Awareness of the Deception and Wickedness of the Devil to Humanity

John 14:16, 26.....To connect humanity with the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Helper.

According to Kaiser (2000:11), Old Testament mission points to a central action, the act of being sent with a Commission to carry out the will of a superior in this instance God (YAHWEH). He engages various persons and offices for example patriarchs and prophets to undertake different mission errands in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament narrative on mission is extensive, few examples could be considered:

1. In the creation of Adam and Eve
2. The call of Abraham

3. The Covenant and Election of Israel
4. Universal blessings in Psalms
5. The exilic testimonials from (Naaman, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Jonah- The reluctant prophet)

### 3.3.1. "In the beginning *missio Dei*"

As a starting point, the first book of the Bible will be discussed at the beginning of *missio Dei*, for an understanding of the universal scope of the Old Testament, and therefore, the book of Genesis will be considered of particular importance to *missio Dei*.

This point will be discussing not only as a narrative of *missio Dei* but as well as the key to *missio Dei* which has the beginning of the Israelites history and journey with the creator.

In summary, the content of the ten first chapters can be summarised as follows:

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth. All creation has been established in humanity and for humanity (Genesis 1)
- As a result, the centre of Creation is humanity (Genesis 2)
- But humanity did not obey God's word and were chased out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3)
- From there the door of sins was open and increased every day (Genesis 4-6)
- Judgement (Genesis 7-8)
- A new generation of humanity is growing. (Gen. 10)

The above summary of the ten chapters gives us a conception of both origin and the history of the earth and the world.

God's relationship with the nations begins with the history of Israel, which started with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.

The manifestation of the restoration of the lost relationship with God started with Abraham "In you will be all the families of the earth blessed ", Gen. 12: 3.

The call of Abraham is the light of God's revelation to the nations, and as Genesis is the key of the story of Israel the great importance of this affirmation is Abraham and his descendants draw the attention to nations and their perspective of blessing to the nations.

The election of Israel was an honour that was not extended to them so that they can dominate only, but for them to recognise it as a commission. These elections distinguish Israel from the nations, in order for them to serve God and reveal his glory and lordship on earth, the election has no goal in itself, but only God's kingdom. Therefore, the election is not primarily for the title "God's nation", but for the function which points to the recognition of God by all nations in the entire world. That means that Israel will fulfil a priestly role as a people in the middle of the towns, they will represent God in the nations.

4. The history of Israel as a context is universal mission because the Old Testament often clarifies it and it shows accurately God's covenant with them.
5. Therefore there is real justification for speaking of a missionary calling of Israel as a *missio Dei* because Israel is called under the figure of the Servant to bring justice to the nations and to be a light to the nations.

Wright (2010:23) argues, "The Bible tells us that God did send many people. But the range of things for which people were sent is staggeringly broad."

The main purpose of this mission movement is focusing on the development of God's mission, which eventually started with Adam as the first human missionary to work and to represent God as the creator of the universe but he failed to fulfil his task in mission.

According to the book of Genesis, Noah came as one of the persons who had to stand in order to fulfil the mission given to him by God for 120 years, but the generation responded negatively and they neglected both the mission and the sender, Abraham was dedicated and went out from his people as a missionary for the blessings of his descendants as well as for foreign nations. Joseph likewise in a foreign country, served as a slave, in prison, and the whole Egyptian nation as well as the Hebrew nation faithfully. In his leadership he pleased God in all directions. The book of Exodus emphasised that Moses was called by God to release Israel from 400 years of slavery, and according to the book of Deuteronomy, after the death of Moses, the young Joshua became a leader in order to take the new generation into the Promised Land. The book of Joshua tells us that God gave incredible victory over the

enemies under Joshua's leadership. The book of Samuel said that, Samuel was dedicated to serve God since childhood and God used him to anointed kings David is one of them whom God used to for his leadership to nations. Nehemiah was called to fulfil God's mission in a different way, to achieve the goal of reconciling people with God. (King James version 1999)

God used Queen Esther in a miraculous way, and she became a missionary instrument of God to save many lives from destruction. The four major prophets and the twelve minor prophets were also involved in mission, God used them and gave them a different mission to accomplish but the main goal was to reconcile the nation with the eternal plan of God.

### **3.3.2. The Old Testament mission goal**

#### **Wright (2010:41) argues:**

In the call of Abraham, God set in motion a historical dynamic that would ultimately not only deal with the problem; the sinfulness of every human heart, and the fracturing and confusion of the nations of humanity. The Israelites mission in the Old Testament does not go beyond the Commission in which they have to witness the existence of God in nations and the restoration of God's relationship with men.

In the book of Jonah, the missionary ideal is proclaimed clearly, and in this book Israel addresses its own call in the world. Therefore it is a defender of mission among the nations, and the book is concerned about the Commission which is to proclaim to all nations the message of salvation.

The misinterpretation of Israel's election essentially illustrates the character of the God of Israel which was namely "His care for the nations". Therefore, we in fact must conclude that there is a declaration in the Old Testament valid to express in a few words the message on the notion of mission quoted in the book of Jonah as "going out to the nations". It is simply the confirmation of the interpretation concerning the nations that are in need of salvation. This same notion is again stated in the Psalms where the concept articulates that the nations would again come to Israel, Jerusalem was believed to be the centre of the world, the place where all the nations of the world would come to God. On the other hand, it is also important to observe that the coming of the nations to Jerusalem, and/or to Zion, to God is the confirmation of the biblical prophecy which initially stated the universal election of Israel.

However, the “universal prophecy” is the answer to the promise made by God in regard to the calling of the nations of the world to salvation. Therefore, the Psalms and the prophetic writings achieved their dual purposes by being the testimonials confirming the election of Israel by God, and witnessing the calling of the nations to the Kingdom of God. Or in other words it is the selective and inclusive work of God or in other words, when God elected Israel to be the channel of his mission He also included the nations of the world in His mission.

This same Israel fulfils the role of a messenger, calling the earth to Israel, the city of Jerusalem, or the temple. We must remember that the Psalms, for example, invite nations to know and to praise Jehovah, but these Psalms were sung in the temple of Israel, and therefore could only be heard by those present, that is, by Israel itself. But the execution of the call and the promise of nations are the business of the future. In other words, the revealing universal meaning of Israel’s mission and function is centred in them being the servant of the Lord.

Throughout the period the Old Testament the missionary interpretation of Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Jonah are identified with a concern for commissions and promises that will only be made in the future.

Flemming (2015:xiv) states,

The God who created all thing is on a mission to redeem and reclaim a rebellious and sinful world, to set right a world that has gone wrong and ultimately to restore all of creation. To that end, God calls the people of Abraham to be an instrument of blessing for all the people of the earth.

The Israelite God became human, and was given a mission which is to make His name known by all nations.

Wright (2010:25) says, “Our mission flows from God’s mission, and God’s mission is for the sake of his whole world indeed his whole creation”.

The mission of Israel consists of the fact that from them, God will make His power known visibly and tangibly in the eyes of all nations and in view of all nations. The prospect of a positive reaction from nations to the existence of Israel is presented for the first time in prophetic literature and this one is quite general, and it is even the very assumption of the

election of Israel (Gen. 10, n and 12); the latter is so rare that one can point to a single biblical passage with certainty (Isa. 42: 4). But the thought of mission in the centripetal sense occurs with great frequency in both the prophets and the Psalms. We understand by this the promise of the coming of nations in response to the deeds of God in Israel. This same Israel meets the role of messenger calling the earth to the knowledge of God.

The Psalms, for example, invite nations to know and to praise Jehovah, but in that time these Psalms were sung in the temple of Israel, and therefore could only be heard by those present and that is Israelites themselves. But the execution of the call and the promise of nations are the business of the future. In other words, they reveal the universal meaning of Israel's mission, and function. The central picture of the mission given to Israelite as missionaries will be fulfilled through Jesus especially at the end of the days. We only pay attention to some other book of the Old Testament, but we look at the book of Jonah as a universal mission portion which articulates very well the de-marginalisation of all that is not worthy to be saved

The passage in the Old Testament is a revelation playing an important role as in the book of Dan. 7: 1-14. When, after this brief survey, the results are an affirmation of a mission fulfilled which makes the name of the Lord known by nations

### **3.3.3. New Testament narrative of God's mission**

In the New Testament perspective, the four gospels provide rich resources for the first college of mission that Jesus Christ established. The coming of Jesus Christ to the world to die for the remission of people's sins is a true biblical standard of mission, upon which all the understanding of mission will be built. Jesus as a missionary left the glory in heaven and lowered himself to take the nature of humanity, join humans in his own context, speak his language, live with them, associate with them and eventually die for them in order to save them from eternal damnation, all this is a summation of mission at work. Jesus Son of the living God, left his heavenly context, and introduced himself to the context of humanity, and then shared his message of salvation with all people during his time, and across social boundaries, taking the message to the Gentiles.

Wright (2010:42) argues:



The New Testament presented to us the answer that the prophets point toward; the one who would embody Israel as their Messiah, who would be faithful where they had been rebellious, who would be obedient unto death, and through his death and resurrection would bring about not only the restoration of Israel but also the promised salvation to the end of the earth.

Jesus Christ organised a group of twelve students known as ‘disciples’ teaching and introducing to them mission strategies. The three-year ministry of Jesus Christ was an introductory part of the basic principles of mission and the nature of the leadership that the disciples had to grasp. Some of the elements that Jesus introduced to the disciples included total sacrifice; they had to realise that the ultimate sacrifice that one can ever give is one’s own life in order to ransom others, Jesus Christ himself died on the cross and gave up his life for the salvation of many.

The calling the twelve disciples was done by Jesus Christ in order for them to follow his steps, to learn from him, to do as he did, to speak as he spoke, to be a model as he had been in his daily life, and to teach. In the New Testament the Gospel of Jesus was spread, focused on the salvation of nations, for the reason that the driving force behind the missionary work of the apostles was the power of the Holy Spirit. During Christ’s lifetime, the spreading of the gospel was focused on the house of Israel, and consequently most of the events occurred in Judea and Galilee. As the apostles sought to fulfil their Commission to carry the gospel message to the nations.

Acts 1:8 provides a rough outline of the entire book: Jerusalem (1-7), Judea and Samaria (8-12) and the end of the world (13-28). Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told his followers to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the promised gift of God (Acts 1:4, Luke 24:49). It was significant indeed for the disciples to wait for this promised gift of the Holy Spirit so that they may be empowered for the work of mission (Acts 1:8). It is impossible to imagine the possibility of mission without the help of the Holy Spirit being present in the early church. The power of the Holy Spirit forms the pillar of the mission work since it is the Holy Spirit that convicts and changes the lives of people through repentance.

WCC (2013:46) states that:

The universality of the Spirit's economy in creation and the particularity of the Spirit's work in redemption has to be understood together as the mission of the Spirit for the new heaven and earth when God finally will be all in all.

However, Acts 1:8 supports scripture where the disciples are promised with the impartation of the Holy Spirit, for the successful witnessing of the gospel in different nations, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". (Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit is the pillar of the mission of witnessing the gospel to all the people.

The promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples was the foundation and the empowerment to be witnesses to the world, carrying the messianic mission to the fields. The importation of power through the Holy Spirit in the church is a tool to be used in the process of carrying the message to different people. The disciples were called to follow Jesus, to do what he says, to go wherever he goes. The Apostle Paul is one of the examples following the guidance of the Holy Spirit during his mission trips.

The most fundamental principle that Jesus Christ taught his disciple is the principle of love. It was because of the love of God that He sent his only begotten Son to come and die for the sins of the people and it is the same love that forms the heart of modern mission. Jesus Christ instructed his disciples that people would be able to know them by the mark of 'love' "The world will know that you belong to me if you love one another."

The other principle that Jesus Christ taught his disciples is about suffering. He made it crystal clear that if the world hated him, they will experience the same thing. Many of them will suffer for the sake of his name and the message they are taking across to the different nations. Jesus suffered in the hands of his own people, leaders, and he was finally killed on the cross. The early church bears the same mark of suffering persecution, terror and horrific experiences of believers before enemies of the gospel. The book of Acts brings to the surface difficult situations that the church passed through, and the dispensation that the church experienced was spearheaded by suffering and torture. The other principle that Jesus prepared his disciple with is a committed heart, "whoever put his hands on the plough and looks back is not worthy for the kingdom".

### **3.3.4. The New Testament goal of mission**

Wright (2010: 189) argues:

The gospel is good news of the God who came, who came back as he first promised, and who will come again, bringing both judgement for those who reject him and salvation for those who heed his call to repent and believe the good news.

We can see the fulfilment of the New Testament, not only the expectation of salvation in the Old Testament being fulfilled, but the revelation of salvation becomes clearer. Here the assumption and the reasons for preaching the gospel to the nations are revealed. It is this messianic way of sowing, suffering and dying, of the subsequent resurrection, and the preaching of the gospel among the nations, that is the new element through which compliance far exceeds the expectation of the Kingdom of God pushes through the last phrase “the end of the days has arrived”.

Flemming (2015: xxi) argues,

From the beginning the New Testament writings addressed Christian communities that were engaged in God’s mission. The Gospel, letters, and other New Testament writings unpacked the apostolic gospel and its significance for missional communities

The ultimate intention of God is manifested through Israel and the world and He will bring judgement Himself and opens the way of salvation for all.

Wright (2010:190) further says,

“The gospels festoon the story of Jesus ‘birth and ministry with scriptural quotations to show the full significance of that”.

The "Great Commission" lies in the fact that mission relied on Jesus’ statement (Matt. 28:18-20) which was isolated from biblical witness yet cannot be rejected. Here for the first time the Commission is given to go out among the nations. Therefore, the limits of the preaching of the gospel from the apostles before the resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 10: 5), however, can only be achieved by going ahead, visiting the nations. This output is related to the task of making

the disciples a guide. The fact that this focuses on travelling, will make it necessary to go beyond the borders of Israel consciously and intentionally to fulfil the order which is to "Go out" into the world.

Flemming (2015:12) says,

“Matthew 28:16-20 itself is steeped in the language and themes that appear throughout the first Gospel”

The authority of Christ over all things in heaven and on earth promotes a positive attitude toward barriers as “all nations.” This positive relationship has been given the meaning of the order "make disciples". Jesus gave total domination over the total world of men, however, the gospel must also be shared in totality with all human beings.

Flemming (2015:13) argues,

“Matthew has shined a floodlight on Jesus’s authority throughout the narrative.”

There is nothing new in Jesus’s teaching, it's just a matter of remembering what Jesus already said which is not a "secret teaching" or a new law. In this sense, what Jesus ordered is a memory of what was valid even "in the beginning". (See 1 John 2: 7). But the difference is that they received new authority because now the commandment comes from the one who has all authority. This "commandment" is a reference to the real and the divine power to claim all life and every man.

After the proclamation and command, the promise continues with the presence of Christ as the great gift which means salvation for all nations, in other words, the God of Israel has now made His presence in Israel among all nations at all times, because the indication of the character of His presence is directed to proclaim, command, preach and make disciples. Therefore, the attributes of the disciple are not only obedience to his order of proclamation, and instruction to all nations, but also to the world as the last and the deepest purpose of the work of Christ. The convincing power to proclaim the gospel in the world arises with firm certainty of the presence of Christ. The direct presence of Christ always gives rest. There are several short stories in every moment and every day. All the circumstances, to do the work he did requires this short summary of the contents of the "Great Commission", its importance and its durability.

The news is apparent because it appears in the other gospels, but the emphasis in the resurrection and the number of missions are different. In (Mark 16: 14-20), Mark emphasises more about the intense and complete authority of Jesus as a superior power over unbelief, powers, and sickness. In (Luke 24: 44-53), the emphasis is in the outgoing elements in the activity of God, that makes victory from defeat, transforms sadness into joy, our freedom from sin and guilt, and our let's sing praises.

Wright (2010:192) states: "it is important to see how this 'peace-making' work of the cross reconciling Jews and Gentiles and creating one new humanity, it is not just a by-product of the gospel, but is at the heart of the gospel itself (Eph3:6)."

As there is a difference of emphasis between real authorities, liberating authority, forgiving authority from all accounts, it is clear that the resurrection, and the work of Christ, is the first authority and the greater one for the proclamation of the gospel between nations. The second authority is the gift of the Holy Spirit, with whom we should deal with now. The lasting presence which Christ promised in (Matt 28:20) is the presence of the Holy Spirit whom John, in particular, is referred to as a return of Christ (John 14: 1-6, 15-19, 25-28, 15:26, 16:22); and Paul, in a very compact statement: "now the Lord is the Spirit 5', 2 Cor. 3:17". This lasting presence of Christ spans the Holy Spirit to allow the disciples to complete the mission to share the gospel with all nations.

Wright (2010:456) states that,

There is, therefore, a marvellous interlocking network of sending in the New Testament presentation of God's involvement in the mission of Jesus and the church. God the Son is sent by God the Father and God the Spirit. God the Spirit is sent by God the Son and God the Father. The apostles are sent by God the Son and God the spirit

The focus is the fact that Christ himself is doing his work of proclamation of the gospel from the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Spirit that the disciples will be witnesses of Christ's Acts I: 6-8 (Luke 24: 47 and John 20:21).

The mission of the church is linked to the Holy Spirit week of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit first makes humans an instrument of mission; the close connection between the call to mission and the saint cannot be exaggerated. If the disciples, in Acts 1: 6-8, ask questions about "the

restoration of the kingdom in Israel", they receive the answer: "you will receive the power to preach the gospel in Samaria which is already the borders of Israel, and it's showing nature of the gospel, which crosses all frontiers" (see Acts 1: 8). But it is always within reach of the old land of Israel which limits (Acts 8: 4-25) the baptism of the Ethiopian, who came from the ends of the earth to worship the God of Israel, it is still in the spiritual horizon of Israel (Acts 8: 26-40). Peter is sent to the Gentile Cornelius, who admits he lives within the confines of Israel, but apparently does not live on the horizon of the greatest of the apostles, announces the inflexion point. We are informed insistently and repeatedly that God Himself intervenes. He tells Peter that a new era has begun, in which the distinction between Jew and pagan disappears to the extent that the preaching of the gospel is concerned. In my opinion, it is not a coincidence that Luke places this event, bound in (Acts 10-11: 17), after the conversion of Saul. He has been called directly from heaven, through a private revelation of Christ (Acts 9:15). When Saul was called to be the tool of God, Peter is warned to accept this change of watching over the world of the Gentiles for God, because they are convinced by divine intervention and by the authority of Peter that God also gave the Gentiles repentance to life (Acts 18). When the Jewish Christians of Cyprus and Cyrene also preached the gospel to the Greeks the hand of the Lord was with them.

The Scriptures tell us that the proclamation of the gospel among the nations is possible through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which allows the apostles and the community to testify. It could be said that, by this means, a new period of world history has opened and a new creation is born around Christ. Christ is the end of the Old Testament and the firstborn of the new creation, the end of a world, the beginning of a new age and the "hinge of history." The mission, seen from this aspect of the New World, is not just a consequence of the dominion of the world through Christ, but it is also its actualisation. The proclamation of the gospel is the form of the Kingdom of God. Acts 1: 6-8 must be seen in this light: the expected establishment of the kingdom for Israel will be carried out at a particular time by God, but the manifestation of the kingdom is a matter of the testimony of men by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in the Holy Spirit, it is Christ himself who testifies, but at the same time, it is the disciples who testify. We are told strange things about this unity in the tension of human and divine testimony, again and again in the New Testament.

Flemming (2015:46) argues,

“In fulfilment of God’s purpose, then, the spirit gives birth to a community of mission, a restored Israel, which can embody Israel’s servant role as light to the nations of the earth.”

The proclamation does not depend on the history of the world, but the history of the world depends on the proclamation. From this point of view, mission, like all "signs", does not allow a single calculation or limitation of this generation or any other generation. According to this primitive Christian idea, the church must proclaim the gospel to "the whole world in each generation"

Mission (1 Pet. 2) during the last three centuries has been a theological necessity because the proclamation of the gospel in the world continues to be so because the Christian proclamation bears witness not only to the coming kingdom but also to the kingdom that is being forged. Foreign mission has always been a task of proclaiming in the space and scope of our own church. The Kingdom of God concerns the whole and the vision of the end embraces the whole world. The congregation that waits for the Lord cannot maintain its nature if it allows itself to be enclosed in the space of a single people and does not participate in work and prayer in the proclamation of all nations.

### **3.4. MISSION FROM AND TO THE MARGINS**

WCC (2013:52) defines:

Mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission. It seeks and seems to be an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalised.

The following story, given by a person with visual impairment, is presented to illustrate the exclusivity of the church with respect to the marginalised:

Kamau, clutching his uneven clothes around him, slowly followed his steps down the hall to the main entrance of the church. It was Christmas day and the banks were full of people. When the congregation stood up to sing, Kamau made his way among the celebrants. Suddenly, a rough hand grabbed him and dragged him out. "I didn't come to beg," he said. "I want to worship the Lord." Shortly after, he was pushed out of the door. Remorse and shame filled his heart and stifled his voice. He sat down slowly, taking his head in his hands. "Why,

oh Lord, why am I blind?" Isn't just because I'm blind, that I haven't been allowed to stay in?  
"Don't I Also have a soul? (Adapted from Rayan, 1991).

In their self-assessment, the World Council of Churches (WCC, 1982), the Conference of Pan-African Churches (AACC, 1991) and the NCCCK (1993) state that the majority of their member churches have not yet fully integrated disability. The life of the church and the community. Many churches have socioeconomic development programs, such as schools and medical facilities, although very few churches have specific programs for people with disabilities. AACC (1991) notes that most African churches only have incipient development projects for people with disabilities, while others do not. Scholars (Bartley, 1977, Wilkes, 1980, Bach, 1991, Muller-Fahrenheit, 1991 and Kabue, 1993) reported that churches for people with disabilities tended to distance themselves and have not completely integrated them into the mainstream of the church and society in general.

Njoroge (2001:7) does not see being physically disabled as a problem; rather, it is the attitude of the church that is the issue. She argues as follows:

...the problem is not that we have people who are deaf, mute and blind (and with other disabilities) among us, rather the churches and church related institutions are usually deaf, mute and blind towards our concerns and needs.

The following story will attend the church in Kenya and the policies and relationships with people with disabilities as an illustration of the research problem:

Masakhwe (1999: 7) makes a scathing attack against the church in Kenya. It recognizes that the church has been a key model to support people with disabilities, but also notes that the church has also overlooked the serious problems that affect people with disabilities and, therefore, has become part of the problem that affects people with disabilities. The church has talked a lot about human rights, but it has not embraced the disability and concerns of disabled people in its crusade and its human rights program with the same vigour, despite the problems disabilities are also human rights issues. He attributes this attitude to the negative representation of people with disabilities in the Bible as missing persons in some aspects or sinners who must be cleansed and healed.

While it has been suggested that churches discriminate against people with disabilities, it is also important to recognize that the church was the first institution in Kenya and the world to



begin providing social services to people with disabilities. The schools created special schools for disabled children. For example, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) opened the Kambui School of the Deaf in 1963. The first school for visually impaired people was created in 1946 by the Salvation Army, while the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) School Luke for the Deaf in Embu. The Roman Catholic Church has also opened a series of special schools in the country, such as the St. Lucia's School of the Blind in Egoji. The Methodist Church has a school for the deaf in Meru. In addition, the Catholic Church in Kenya addressed the issue of the rights of persons with disabilities. They asked Christians to review their attitudes towards people with disabilities and promote their well-being. The church is committed to working with the Kenyan Mentally Disabled Association to combat the violation of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in Kenya.

The apostles also followed this tradition (Acts 3: 1-12). As a result, the church regains its true identity when fully integrated with everyone, including people with disabilities.

The contemporary church of Kenya, as the bearer of the ministry and message of Christ has the mandate to follow his example. Therefore, the church must deal with people with disabilities, who generally suffer from neglect and discrimination in society. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK, 1993:1) summarises this expectation as follows:

The churches must increasingly become aware of the needs and problems of the handicapped in our society and endeavour to provide programmes, physical facilities, learning materials, opportunities and resources, and where possible involve the handicapped in participating fully in the church and community life on the understanding that the handicapped need appreciation not pity.

According to Wilkes (1980: 40), the church is driven by the emerging presence of people with disabilities in the community and the challenge of individuals and groups in the community with disabilities. Because of this a deeper theological awareness, the church is now moving towards a new sense of acceptance of people with disabilities in the life of the church and the community. They are an integral part of the church and society and are essential for the integrity and unity of the church.

Therefore, it is imperative that church leaders develop an inclusive worldview for people with disabilities to be sought with the gospel and be welcomed into a Christian community, and

for the Church of Christ to become an effective catalyst for achieving change of cultural attitude towards people with disabilities. The Church as a whole "must recognize the spiritual and material needs of people with disabilities and their families and respond to the way of Christ" (Govig 1982: 98). To ignore the existence of disabilities is to deny reality. Ignoring people with disabilities is a sin.

Unfortunately, discriminatory practices against people with disabilities in the church and society contradict these teachings. In general, churches are expected to defend the fundamental rights of marginalized and oppressed members of society by their very nature, churches are expected to work for equal opportunities for all in order to create a fair and participatory community.

Churches must identify with the problems faced by people with disabilities and strive to create a supportive environment in which people with disabilities can participate equally in valid individuals in social, economic, cultural, religious and social life. The politics of society. Swain and Cameron (2003) find that people with disabilities want the same opportunities and opportunities in life as people without disabilities. They also want education and work, and affordable housing, relationships and the ability to make their own decisions about the problems that affect their lives.

This example of Rayan (1991: 28) indicates that David did three things to restore Mephibosheth and show the world what it belongs to:

1. The restoration of self-esteem: all this time Mephibosheth was feeling rejected, but now David presents compassion to him.
2. Restoration of identity: all this time Mephibosheth was seen as no one, but now he has been restored to his position of a prince.
3. Restoration of society: Mephibosheth was rejected by everybody, but now has the chance to be part of the king's family.

Luke 4: 18-19 says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament written 285-247 B.C.) shows that *ekklesia* was used to designate the gathering of the people of Israel (Acts 7:38). Acts 19:21-32 clearly shows that there was a riotous mob assembled (*ekklesia*) for the purpose of trying Paul. So, we would note from the above meaning and usages of the word that *ekklesia* is the assembling, gathering together of some individuals to carry out specific purposes. Therefore, the New Testament Church is a body made up of the citizens of the Kingdom of God (those in Christ Jesus) who are assembled, gathered together to carry out the specific purposes of the body, under the direction of Jesus, who is the head. Thus, based on this definition, we come to a point of realisation that the church should be an oasis of love for all (Where love is displayed to everybody without any discrimination). So, since the church is called to be an oasis of love for all, it would be better to define and explain the word oasis first and then fit it in a biblical context to bring more sense to this subject. An oasis is a fertile or green area in a desert (where the water table approaches the surface). It is also a refuge serving as a place of safety or a sanctuary (Kariger and Fierro 1995:45)

The consultation carried out in the Institute of Churches and Society suggest that the theologies on disability included the following categories:

- God is the sovereign and loving Creator of all people, including the disabled.
- The challenges of people with disabilities do not reduce the image of God in them.
- At the same time, the restoration of their abilities does not improve the image of God. They are in the true image of God as He is.
- God is the God of all life and of all situations in life and, therefore, cannot be excluded from any aspect of life.
- God uses every obstacle to fulfil God's purpose and the glory of God.
- God identifies Himself and overcomes disabilities.
- God calls His people, the church and all creation to identify with people with disabilities.

- The World Breaking reality is that human beings live in the world of the survival of the fittest and that, as Christians, we must imitate the example of Paul's disinterest.
- God calls everyone, including the disabled, to the fullness of life in Christ.
- God calls all believers and all Christians to anticipate eschaton when there is no more death, illness, sadness or suffering (Revelation 21:4).

### **3.4.1. Mission to the margins**

Following the path of Jesus Christ, as an expression of a theology of the cross and not as self-proclaimed glory, we realise that, in turn, we become the messianic community. The messianic community follows the way of Jesus Christ: his preaching, his teaching, his healing and his prophetic ways and power. The peculiarity of primitive Christianity was its dissolving the cultural barriers that favoured the exclusion and the division of God's people (Gal 3:28). This overcoming of the ideology of the exclusion was based on the work of Christ on the cross (Ephesians 2: 13-16). It is the understanding of nature and the activity of God in the world that we can talk about the mission of God. (World Council of Churches 2012:161)

Mission is proceeding from the margins; those on the margins are the vital and essential agents of mission. Further, the margins are the vibrant centre of God's presence and work in the world.

Jesus says:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; nor does it give light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)

Salt has three basic characteristics which are: a preservative, a purifier, and seasoning. Like salt, the disciple has a preserving influence on the world, as a purifier it has antiseptic (cleansing purifying) qualities. Disciples must have a cleansing and purifying effect upon the world. As a seasoning salt, the disciples live their lives as they should, then the disciple's

message becomes more appetising to others and causes them to want what they have. Seeing the saltiness in their lives will give them zest and purpose for living.

Jesus also says that since believers are the light of the world. There are several important things that are pointed out about light in those passages:

a. The position of the light

It is to be in a place where it can be seen, a place where it can do some good. Believers are not to be hidden or kept under cover. Christians are to be visible, not secluded or hidden away. There is no “secret agent” disciple.

b. The nature of the light

The disciple’s light is to be seen so that God will be glorified. It is to banish or expose darkness. Believers are to testify and expose spiritual darkness in the world. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God. Without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. (Philippians. 2: 15)

Bosch states that “The final part of the ‘Great Commission’ mentions ‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’. On the face of it, this ‘teaching them’, together with the preceding ‘baptising them’, appears to be the real content of disciple-making, and therefore of mission, in Matthew’s understanding.”(Bosch, 1991:65)

Bosch continues by stating that,

The phrase ‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ refers back primarily to the first of these discourses, the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, this sermon expresses, like no other New Testament passage, the essence of the ethics of Jesus, through the ages; however, Christians have usually found ways around the clear meaning of Sermon on the Mount. (Bosch, 1991:69)

Patte (1996:272-273) indicates that,

The conclusion about what the sermon says presuppose that the teaching of this text is primarily understood as setting up goals for the disciples’ life;

among these goals is a vocation to manifest God's goodness so that other people might give glory to God and might become disciple themselves.

Wright (2006: 36) argues:

There are many ordinary and worthy Christians whose personal piety relishes those Scriptures that speak to them of their own salvation and security, that encourage them in times of distress that guide them in their efforts to walk before the Lord in ways that please him. But it comes as a surprise for them to be confronted with such an array of texts that challenge them in relation to God's universal purpose for the world and the nations, the multicultural essence of the gospel and the missional essence of the church.

The mission was understood as a movement from the centre to the periphery and from the privileged to the marginalised of society. Today, foreigners claim their essential role as agents of the mission and affirm that it is a transformation. This change in the vision of the mission has its roots in solid biblical foundations, because God has chosen the poor, and the foolish (1 Corinthians 1: 18-31) to promote God's justice and peace mission so that life can flourish. If the concept of mission changes from "mission to margins" to "mission of margins," then what is the distinctive contribution of the people of the margins?

The mission on the margins requires an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures and local contextual realities. The Christian mission has sometimes been understood and put into practice so as not to recognize God's alignment with those who are still marginalized. Therefore, the mission of the margins invites the church to reinvent the mission as a vocation of the Spirit of God who works for a world where the fullness of life is available to all. (COE 2013: 16)

Wherever there has been much discussion in missionary circles about "church and mission." This discussion should not stop here because it has been described elsewhere. But we will have to discuss the extent to which biblical research gives us the opportunity and the right to oppose the church and the mission. So far in the discussion, we have been guided more by the historical growth of the situation than by the light of the gospel. However, biblical theology has undergone a remarkable development in recent decades, which has led to the rediscovery of the church as a community of the kingdom, as a community of witness and service in and

for the world. In addition to the existing missionary movement, the vast majority accept the belief that the church is a missionary church or that it is a church.

In a somewhat more detailed passage from the well-known passage (1 Peter 2: 9-10), we will illustrate the purpose of the argument in the previous paragraph that a "mission theology" cannot be other than "theology." of the church "as the people of God called the world, placed it in the world and sent it to the world. This passage is as follows:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

The church has a missionary call to meet the spiritual needs of the people, including people with disabilities. The question of satisfying spiritual needs. People with disabilities challenge the mission of the church. (General Council of the Assemblies of God 2000:1)

### **3.4.2. Mission from the margins**

The goal of mission of the margins is first and foremost, the mission God is to affirm, safeguard, and celebrate life in all its fullness ... we recognise if we wish to participate in God's mission, we must discern where God is affirming, safeguarding, and celebrating life in the midst of death (World Council of Churches 2013:)

Manchala (2010:154) states:

Have also been victims of churches' missionary expansion and theologies that took shape amidst and legitimised historical processes of discrimination and oppression of the weak and the vulnerable, these groups of people have been generally referred to or seen as recipients or objects of churches' mission. Therefore, it is unique that these marginalised sections, the former victims, former objects of mission, now attempt a missiological reflection, not as a reaction to what mission has been to them in the past but of what they imagine God intends for the whole world and creation today.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah who incarnated the suffering servant, opted for a life of solidarity with the weak, the vulnerable and the destitute, an expression of his determination to resist the powers that defied the will of God. Through its message and his sacrifice, laid the foundations for the Kingdom of God. This foundation is characterised by the emancipation of the marginalised (Luke 6, Matthew 20). It is through the identification of Christ with the marginalised (Matthew 25: 31-46) that the workers became privileged with God. (World Council of Churches 2012:154)

The WCC (2010) declares:

Through our struggles for life in abundance, we become vehicles through which the true nature of the *missio Dei* (mission of God) is manifested. Although we suffer unjustly from the forces that corrupt the justice of God, we receive by divine grace a deposit of hope, endurance and perseverance, which are indispensable to remain faithful to the promised Kingdom of God.

Today, God identifies Himself with those thrown into the burning furnace of discrimination and social exclusion. Although the marginalised are deprived of their ability to carry out their duties in a very humorous way, which had been manifested by *Sophia* (wisdom), as well as their struggle against the enemies of life until they end up winning. This implies that the marginalised when participating in the mission of God move from their lives of suffering and hope, endurance and find victory over evil. Therefore, the mission of God flows from the very nature of God. (World Council of Churches 2012:160)

Marginalised people have God given gifts that are under-utilised because of disempowerment, and denial of access to opportunities and/or justice. Through struggles in and for life, marginalised people are reservoirs of the active hope and collective resistance (WCC2013:15).

### **3.5. CONCLUSION**

As indicated in previous sections, the research explored theological, missiological justice and social factors that influence equal access for persons who are physically-impaired in the ministry and the church.



This chapter discussed the theology of *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind using a historical redemptive approach. It is very important, however, not only for a "theology of missions", but also for a "theology" of the church ", to constantly remind that this is God's mission for the world.

The call that the church has been commissioned is timeless and universal, it is as valid today as it was then, and therefore the church is expected to be active in sharing God's News to all the people of different languages and cultural backgrounds. As much as *missio Dei* has been renowned and understood for salvation of all humankind, one of the key principles that should not be overlooked in the process of effectively sharing the gospel with all humankind is culture, one of the key elements because to take the message of the gospel to different cultural groups of people one needs to accommodate their cultures.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CULTURE AND CONTEXTUALISATION: FRANCOPHONE CHURCH AND CONTEXTUALISATION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the socio-cultural situation of disability in Francophone societies, in particular Johannesburg and Pretoria in South Africa. This is relevant for background information on why the exclusion and lack of participation of people with disabilities in society, even before analysing the field data. We present here some aspects of Francophone culture, and a literature study will be utilised to describe the theory of culture.

The Francophone church worldview and Christian understanding will be specified more to answer the section on attitude, the section for leaders and pastors of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and the section for the hearing-impaired who fully participate as leaders in the interview questions. It helps to promote the exchange of ideas between Christianity and culture and to promote the gospel a way that Christianity does not enforce itself, in consequence creating a common movement: "Enculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture" (Bosch, 1991: 454).

Ukpong (1999: 100-108) agreed, the sociological anthropological method of inculturation is a collaboration between anthropological and social characteristics of culture that considers a worldview. Symbols and meanings work together within the social context, identities and structures that surround a culture which explains the phenomenon and how it relates to Christianity.

Niebuhr (1956:34) argues that, "We judge science and philosophy, technology and education, either in the past or in the present, always in reference to the values that were intended for them and the values that attract us"

#### **4.2. DEFINITION OF CULTURE**

Newbigin (1984:5) defines culture as, "the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from generation to generation" and on the other hand, Hirsch (1998:9) contributed by saying that, "culture is a complex jungle of ideas, history, language, religious views, economic systems, political issues, and many more." There are many other

scholars who have defined culture. Kathy Black (2000:8) in her understanding commented that, “culture is the sum attitudes, customs, and believes that distinguishes one group of people from another” and according to Black the transmission of culture is done through materials, rituals, institutions, objects, languages from one generation to the other, in other words, all that people do in a given context such as singing, the way of dressing, problem-solving skills are the contents of culture and they are submitted from one generation to the other using different mediums such as objects such as artefacts, carvings, or through arts such as drawings, songs, performances such as plays. South Africa has a cultural (heritage) day in which the whole country celebrates. In this day everyone dresses in his/her own cultural attire just to be proud of who they are, appreciating their cultural backgrounds and diversities. By the virtue of celebrating this heritage day, it enables those children who are living in towns, far away from their traditions to trace and appreciate their cultural background; this is one way that culture is transmitted. According to Edward B. Taylor (1991:8): “culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, believes, and art, morals, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member modern society.” However, despite the angle on which each field of study tries to define what culture is, all the definitions meet on the same ground which is “people and their behaviour in their setting”. Culture has a powerful influence on the way people view things, judges situations, presumptions, behaviour, no wonder Westby and Ford believed that culture is just like a flame upon which members define their roles and experiences (Westby and Ford 1993:320) The fact that each people group have got their own cultural settings, believes, values, morals and worship, therefore culture is an important subject to be considered as far as mission to and from the margins is concerned.

Niebuhr (1956:34) states that “The human achievements are all designed for an end or ends; the world of culture is a world of values.” Luzbetak (1988:72-79) defines culture as: “A dynamic system of socially acquired and socially shared ideas according to which an integrating group of human beings is to adapt itself to its physical, social and ideational environment”.

If the local church disregards the influence of culture in ministry then sharing the gospel will be like doing the right thing wrong, because it is not only about sharing and offloading what someone has, it is all about receiving factors that determines the seed of the gospel has fallen on the fertile ground where it will grow and bear fruit, or if the seed has fallen on rocky dry

ground where the seed will dry and die out before bearing the fruit. The concept of culture in its simple form can mean the specific way of which a particular group of people live. However, Merriam-Webster defines culture as beliefs, customs and the arts, of a particular group, place or time, a particular society that has its own beliefs, way of perceiving things, behaving or working. (Webster 1978:175)

Africa is a continent that is rich in people groups who have different cultural belief-systems. This can be observed in the rich cultural diversity that Africa has is seen in different cultural dressings, different songs and food. At Back to the Bible Missions every year students from over twenty-four countries in Africa are enrolled, and all the students come together, with different languages, dress codes, behaviour, are all gathered in one class to learn the Word of God, that is when the beauty of diversity in cultural settings is exposed. The above illustration regarding the Bible school demonstrates how people can be exposed to other cultures unknown to them but they can learn.

The term 'culture' has a Latin etymological background, which points to the language of agriculture. A Germany philosopher by the name, Gottfried (1869: 8) argued that civilisation is the core producer of culture, and according to him, culture is a by-product of enlightenment.

Niebuhr (1956:32) defines as: "Culture is the "artificial, secondary environment" which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation, inherited artefacts, technical processes, and values"

Researchers and scholars in order to understand the concept of culture and the distinction of cultures, borrowed the theory of evolution introduced by Darwin. However, scholars may marry the evolution from the perspective of Darwin in light with the formation and differences of people's cultures. A well-known person who followed this root of cultural evolution is the anthropologist, Taylor, in his cultural evolution theory believed that there is a series of steps and stages that cultures formulate from the primitive state to enlightenment stage. Taylor's theory tried to explain the differences between all the human cultural groups, unity of all the cultures with a critical analysis, it was him who contributed to the definition of culture as "the system that comes such as knowledge, art, morals, law, customs, and all traits of habitual traits that people manifests as the members of a particular given cultural society". (Taylor 1871:1)

Following this definition, all the human traits, behaviour, morality and many other things are judged from the angle of culture.

Schusky (:10) commented that:

Scholars recast the history of marriage, religion, politics, the family, and mythology and other social forms, speculating on their origin and stage of evolution. Because such a wide variety of forms were examined, some intellectually concluded that all aspects of human behaviour were valid fields for study. Organisation of studies should fall to anthropology, and its concept of culture should be such as to allow investigation of all these facets of human activities.

However not all scholars viewed culture in the same way, some viewed culture from the lens of historical perspective arguing that culture has all to do with historical understanding where all cultures fit in a specific situation in the history of man, therefore, to understand culture one should revisit the history of that cultural pattern, and in this context of understanding culture, they believed that when it comes to an ethical review, there is no absolutism. All things should be judged in their own cultural setting since all cultures do not have the same historical context. In other words, what might be viewed right in one cultural context might be taken to be a seriously bad thing in a different cultural context.

The Force and Freedom (1 943:107) argue that,

Culture is the sum of all that has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of material life and as an expression of spiritual and moral life-all social intercourse, technologies, arts, literature and sciences. It is the realm of the variable, free, not necessarily universal, of all that cannot lay claim to compulsive authority.

Cultural ethical relativism entails that there is not one universal standard measure which can represent all the cultures upon which bad and good things can be judged. Cultural relativism denotes that everyone views the truth in his/her own context.

Kraft (1978: 358) believed that this approach of understanding culture in their own historical context can be well handled by the study of linguistics which can lead us to the best

understanding of differences and similarities in cultures. These theories discussed above try to dig out the roots of different cultures from different angles, however, this is where the church, especially in the field of mission has been captivated. Should the church discard all cultures as evil, should there be a different culture that the church should be introducing? These questions bring the church to a very serious point as far as mission work in line with the Great Commission is concerned.

Cultural values define and bind people together, and is the ethos that governs how people think, comprehend and formulate their worldview. The cultural element can act as a barrier if the church overlooks its significance in the process of preaching the gospel.

Wuthnow (1992:37) also sees culture as a practice among social relationships in social situations. In other words, Francophone culture focuses on social models of perceptions, constructions, belief systems and attitudes, among others. This section takes into account some aspects of Francophone culture. Culture is the “shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialisation. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.” (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition)

#### **4.3. THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH ON CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

Niebuhr (1956:32) argues, “What we have in view when we deal with Christ and culture is that total process of human activity and that total result of such activity to which now the name culture, now the name civilisation, is applied in common speech”

The church and scholars have not been quite on the topic of culture especially when it comes to the area of mission and cross-cultural; however there have been different understandings as well on how to view different mechanisms of the cultural system. Others believe in the neutrality of all cultures in the sense that all cultures have got a unique development, different from each other. To question the existence of the evil elements that are visible in other cultures in light of the Word of God, Ed Stetzer (2006: 267) believes that, somehow cultures should be viewed as neutral in nature in the sense that as much as evil traits can be visible in culture, which of course needs to be dealt with, but the skeleton of the culture, which is cultural style is a neutral base. According to him, it is the content, not the expression that should be judged based on the ethical scale of right and wrong. From the same angle, Driscoll in his work *Radical Reformation-80* brings the same argument that God is the author of

everything, including culture itself, therefore, culture is not a bad thing. On the other hand, Snoeberger agrees that “There is a general assumption that the culture is neutral and either independent of or essentially in harmony with God”. Just as man retains the image of God in microcosm, so culture retains the image of God in microcosm. As such, culture possesses aspects and attributes that escape, to a large extent, the effects of depravity. The Christian response to culture is merely to bridle various aspects of culture and employ them for their divinely intended end- Glory of God. (Snoeberger 2004:357)

Niebuhr (1956:201) gives the following distinctions to explain the relationship between Christianity and culture. Here are the three major choices:

- Opposition to culture (Christ against culture),
- Agreement between Christ and culture (Christ of culture),
- And a combination that incorporates insights from both of these two views (Christ above culture).

Within the third framework are three variations:

- A synthetic type that sees Christ as the fulfilment of culture,
- A dualistic type that sees an on-going tension between Christ and culture,
- And a conversion type that portrays Jesus as the converter of culture and society.

Niebuhr (1956:39) argues, “Yet the Son of God is himself a child of a religious culture, and sends his disciples to tend his lambs and sheep, who cannot be guarded without cultural work.”

- The relationship between language and culture

The knowledge of culture and intercultural communication is the key to effective mission work because every people group has their own way of communicating their values and beliefs. Therefore, their moral affect either enhances communication among themselves or acts as a barrier with other people groups outside their cultural frame. Every culture has got its own peculiar aspects of linguistics and for a cross-cultural worker to effectively communicate with any people group in their respective cultural setting then, he or she should be able to

master the elements of linguistic interpretation of that people group, otherwise there will be a total communication breakdown. The risk of being mis-interpreted might be high if this skill might be overlooked. Therefore for the best effective understanding of the values of the workers, norms and beliefs, then the farm managers take to study the language. Language is one of the major barriers of communication as far as cross-cultural and mission are concerned, and one of the breakthroughs in mission is when a missionary is able to communicate the gospel in the people's own language, the reception is warmer than communicating using an interpreter. Some cultural groups value their own dialect more than other people's languages and if it happens that a minister of the gospel is communicating using the hated language, then there is a complete communication breakdown between the two parties. According to Brenda Bosh in one of her lectures which concluded that, "at the top of a list of stressors for missionaries in a cross-cultural ministry, are language problems." (Brenda Bosh 2013 page number)

Many missionaries are leaving the mission field with the stress of failing to communicate properly in the native language since in many countries English is not used as a main language of communion. She said that distributing the literature in people's language alone does not help, because there are many things that need to be clarified, and it is painful to see that a person would want to ask more yet cannot because of the language barrier. On the other hand, there are some dimensions of the ministry that are more private such as counselling that requires personal communication with a person yet due to a communication barrier, everything is not fully achieved. Language in missiological and cross-cultural understanding, is the key factor that enhances effective communication of the gospel. This is the reason why the best approach to cross-cultural mission is to work hand in hand with the locals who know how to translate the language well. I believe the first priority of the mission organisations working in different cultural groups should be to teach their workers native languages before sending them off into a cultural group. It is better to learn the basics than not to speak the foreign language at all.

- Cultural ethical codes in cross-cultural and missions

Different cultures have different moral codes, what is acceptable in one culture as a moral value that can be interpreted as immoral in the context of another culture. This is a concept of cultural relativism where there is no absolute standard of moral judgement that represents cultures. Every culture has a moral codes that governs the daily living of people traditionally.



There are different values that tie and give a sense of identity to a particular cultural group such as a code of conduct for dress, respect, discipline, relationships these are the contours that bring people together as one culture. In certain cultures, commonly in African cultures, there are codes of conduct that should be respected especially in dress. A woman is expected to dress in a certain way, such as covering herself completely so no body part should be exposed to the public. In some Arab cultures, a woman covers her face down to her feet every time she goes out in public. Married women are not allowed greet a man with a direct handshake if she does, it is viewed as an abomination in society. When it comes to a dress code, women who dress in long pants in public are considered to be lacking home schooling and are viewed as prostitutes. These cultural values are very crucial when a local church is carrying out a cross-cultural and mission because if they are not observed, the communication will be distorted for the recipients. In the Malawian context in a cultural group known as the 'Ngonis' if a woman goes into a community of the Ngoni to share the gospel yet wearing long pants, no one will listen to her since in this culture prostitutes are the ones wearing long pants as a way of attracting men. In the Western world, there is no problem when a lady dresses in long pants or short pants and in fact there is no problem of a woman putting on short pants to church. In the African context this it is viewed as an abomination and people hate it and if they see it taking place, they just close themselves up. If the Western missionaries come into this culture wearing either long pants (women) or shorts, immediately the people are closed up and they cannot listen to what the missionary is talking about or teaching. These are small things that affect the entire process of communication in a cultural setup. In other cultures gestures when speaking to the elder's matters most such as a young man cannot speak to the elders while standing, he has to squat or kneel down to show respect. To others when speaking to the elders or in the church, putting their hands in their pockets would be interpreted as an act of arrogance and pride, thereby people shut themselves and will not listen to you because the gestures have already spoken to them more than words.

Therefore, in this context, one must know these cultural moral codes, which will aid him or her on how to carry the message in respect of the moral codes of a particular society as a key of reception and effective communication. Cross-cultural and mission especially in the context of hearing-impaired people, it is fundamental to respect their moral values as the key to win them for Christ and share the good news to them.

Whoever, communicates either verbally or with body language should be very sensitive in cross-cultural mission, failing to observe these small things, distorts the communication system between the gospel sharing team and the people at the receiving end. The language barrier within the church should be removed for the church to have influence among people who are hearing-impaired.

The churches have actually become cultural preservation facilities instead of being a medium of passing the gospel to all the cultural groups and being flexible to adapt and accommodate people of all cultural backgrounds in the church. Many churches these days only preach and conduct the entire service programme in the native dialect, which is not a bad thing. However, in the context where the church is among people of different backgrounds, then many people are excluded. Language barriers within the church have been a burden in the attempt to accommodate everyone. If a person from a Swazi background has gone into a Dutch Reformed Church where everything is carried out in Afrikaans, then there is already a barrier to accommodate people who are not familiar with the language used during the service. This attitude prevents the church having an impact on surrounding people groups, who should have been easily converted to Christianity. Ethiopian Churches in South Africa are having the same challenge, because all of them use their own language Amharic, and everyone who does not speak or understand Amharic is a stranger in the Ethiopian church. Ethiopians are very good business people, and in business, they try to learn the language of the locals for the sake of communication but when it comes to church business, there is zero outreach programmes and zero language flexibility whereby the locals do not attend their church services because of the language used in the church service.

#### **4.3.1. The issue of Culture among Francophone people**

There are many Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg composed of people from different countries with different cultures. These countries and tribes have different languages except from the French language that they share together, dress codes, food and culture, and more. However, some cultural practices are general for all.

There is a lack of participation for people who are hearing-impaired in the Francophone church in Johannesburg and Pretoria. How can people who are hearing-impaired participate fully and equitably in the church as a member or minister if they are excluded from society? My argument is that socio-cultural constructions and perceptions of disability in the

Francophone context explain their lack of participation; in the sense that disability is perceived as a curse, people with disabilities are seen as a curse. Culturally, in the traditional belief system, cursed people are an abomination with which one cannot socialise, they are evil or witches, or their curse is contagious.

It is easy to conclude that attitudes towards people with disabilities are changing tremendously, but unfortunately this is not the case, people cannot easily separate from their culture, and this became evident when pastors who were interviewed, despite their high level of education and Christian origin, still attribute the perception of disability to being a curse. This is the reason why intercultural, interreligious, missiologists and theologians emphasise the importance of contextualisation and dialogue to make sense of a phenomenon. In essence, the use of Francophone culture as a lens shows that the stigma, exclusion and lack of participation of people with disabilities is mainly a cultural problem and a historical model. Perhaps the best way to understand their exclusion is to understand the traditional culture and belief system, a dialogue proposed by missionaries and intercultural theologians. This investigation serves as a kind of dialogue.

It is obvious that the perception of disability as a curse, which is rooted in the traditional system of culture and beliefs of Francophone, triggers the discrimination that leads to exclusion and lack of participation in the life of society. Therefore, I argue that the socio-cultural construction of disability as a curse and discrimination becomes the mechanism that generate exclusion and lack of participation in society in the context of Francophone society and culture.

#### **4.3.2. Disability culture and perceptions of ministry**

From observable behaviour and literature, it is clear that culture influences the interpretation, perception and construction of disability (McNair and Sánchez, 2008: 37). Perhaps the system of cultural beliefs, social status and religion are some of the main factors that influence the attitudes of Francophone churches towards people with disabilities. In many cases, the disability is considered a curse or punishment inflicted on the family by the gods or ancestors because of the sins of the parents or ancestors or of the disabled themselves. This reinforces Shiriko (2011: 170) who points out that many Africans believe that there is a spiritual cause for everything that happens. This belief system shows how people with disabilities are not accepted and welcomed in Francophone society. The belief in

reincarnation also has a role to play; People with disabilities are considered reincarnated ancestors who may not have lived their lives well.

The way Francophone churches in general, and people with disabilities, in particular, respond to the disability culture and their perception of disability in ministry is common. Some people with disabilities also have negative attitudes toward other people who are disabled. Slikker (2009: x-xi) testifies that if people with disabilities do not feel good about themselves, they tend to withdraw from society.

#### **4.4. CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE LIGHT OF FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES IN PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG REGARDING HEARING-IMPAIRED PEOPLE**

Contextualisation has been defined by many people and scholars in many different ways, for example, Hesselgrave (1989:1) definition of contextualisation states, “presenting a supra-cultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms”. In other words, bringing the Word of God, the gospel into the cultural elements of the people, in an integrated manner through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Luzbetak (1988:79-134) went on to define the term contextualisation in the following basic way, “The process by which a local Christian community integrates the gospel with real-life context, blending the text and context into that single, God-intended reality called “Christian living”

In this section, the importance of the concept of contextualisation, and its application to the ministry of hearing-impaired people, will be investigated

In response to the Great Commission (Matthew 28) the church has been confronted with the challenge of extending the good news to all humankind; in other words, the church has been mandated to preach the Word of God, the message of salvation to all people groups in this world. Different mission organisations are launching global outreach programmes that focus on an outreach to different people in their own cultural context. Examples of some of these organisations are Mission Mobilisations, Frontline Fellowships, Operations Mobilisations and many other individuals who are in the mission of training and empowering local churches with church planting and discipleship making. However, the effectiveness of all these organisations and all the local churches that are on the campaign in church planting will depend on how relevant the gospel has been applied to the particular context of a certain people group.

Beyerhaus (Pretorius et al 1987:112) that entails,

The communicator of the gospel would proclaim in such a way as to set the proclamation free from traditional Western forms in which it seems repulsive to the hearers, and present it, clothed afresh in Asian or African form, so as to appear intelligible and relevant to both Christian and non-Christian hearer.

In this case, contextualisation means that the gospel is being presented in such a way that hearing-impaired people would understand it in their own context and be able to apply it effectively in all other areas of their lives. However it must be respected that there are different annexes of cultures, thereby, Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should put in mind the factors of cultural pluralism, however, the gospel should settle down with those cultural principles. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg must understand and appreciate all hearing-impaired cultural differences and dynamics well, and this can only be achieved if there is a good communication system between the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg and hearing-impaired people. The communication between the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg and the hearing-impaired people would form their base upon biblical principles related and applied to the people. (Bevans 1992:30)

Morris (1993:135) argues that: "Paul could assert his Jewishness but here he speaks of becoming like a Jew. His prime relationship was to Christ and he saw himself accordingly as not under the law."

#### **4.5. THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

The mission is to "eat and drink what they have" (Luke 10: 7).

Lingenfelter (1992:182) states,

The New Testament yield some fascinating insights into the social structure of Galilee and Judea at the time of Christ. In Luke 4:38-39, we find Jesus in the home of Simon, the gospel imply that Jesus was a frequent guest at Simon Peter's house and that the relationship that Jesus had with Peter, James, and John was a rather intimate one. Eating at someone's house in first century Judea identified the guests socially with their host. Jesus, a guest by the mere

fact of his presence, acknowledged that he was accepting the social class of his hosts and participating in their activities.

Flemming (2015:58) states, “John narrates a whole series of transforming personal encounters

David Bosch describes the possible famous elements of an emergent paradigm of the ecumenical and missionary as “mission as contextualization” (Bosch, 1991: 420-432) and "mission inculturation" inculturation is a second important model of contextualisation (Bosch, 1991: 447-456)

Contextualising the church is the attempt to be church in ways that are both faithful to Jesus and appropriate to the people the church serves. It assumes that the shape of church can change according to the situation.

Churches will look different because they are engaging with different people (Moynagh 2012: loc 4278). If the church is to serve its context, it must connect to it. This happens through contextualisation. Andrew Walls referred to this as the indigenising principle. “The impossibility of separating an individual from his social relationships and thus from his society leads to one unvarying feature in Christian history: the desire to ‘indigenise,’ to live as a Christian and yet as a member of one’s own society” (Walls 1996:7). Genesis 3:8 exposes the greatness of God, His majesty and powers that at the mention of the word, the world was created, and He is the same God who created humanity and placed them in the garden. God had to communicate with humans in the context therefore created a being “Adam” who would understand. God who is all knowing communicated His will to a human who is limited in understanding and perceiving realities, and who is physically and spiritually weak to grasp the mysteries of this world. God surely has to come to the level of humanity and communicate His wisdom in a way that a human would understand (Engel -1983:82). The message of God throughout biblical history has been in such a way that God used tools and skills to fit in the context of humans. Abraham the man of faith understood God in his own cultural context. The physical manifestation of the angels as God’s messengers to a physical man is another example of how heavenly creatures such as angels contextualise themselves with man.

Davies (1988:260) argues, “the Angel who appears to Joseph is reasonable; his imperative is followed by an explanatory clause which makes the command sensible.” The entire message

of God through the chosen nation of Israel is a visible example of how God has contextualised his universal plan of salvation in traditions and practical living of humanity.

The coming of Jesus Christ, in the form of a human, is a pure example of how God lowered Himself to a human context in order to fit in with the salvation plan. The nature of the birth of Jesus Christ, through Mary points to the incarnation strategy so that Jesus Christ should be identified with the people right in their own cultural set up, as a child to be raised by his earthly parents and observe all the religious festivals and grow up as a mature Jewish man. This is all symbols of how God has ever since respected culture and has used the context of man to deal away with man's problems. (Luke 2:1-20)

The messages and the teaching Jesus Christ recorded in all the gospels fits well in the context of Jewish culture. The parables that he used, were well-known stories that the people at that time understood such as the parable of the sower in the book (Matthew 13:1-9), the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:32 (which has pagan imprints to show how serious the sin was when the prodigal son ate with pigs).

Davies and Allison (1991: 388) argue, "Jesus' mysterious presence is the kingdom in him. And the background for the term as it is found in the gospel would therefore seem to be supplied not by Hellenistic religion but the Dead Sea scrolls and Jewish apocalyptic literature." Theology mediates the meaning and role of religion to a culture (Bevans 2002:11). The point made by Bosch in his description of contextualisation is, "still as relevant as ever – mission as contextualisation is an affirmation that God has turned toward the world. Mission as contextualisation involves the construction of a variety of "local theologies" (Bosch 1991:427).

Paul when he argued with the Philippians to live a Godly life, exposed the contextualised nature of Jesus Christ in his relation with man as he comments,

In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, being in a very nature of God, did not consider equality with God, something to be used to his advantage; rather he made himself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross" in other words, the humility of Jesus Christ

was for the sake of fitting in the context of man, by making himself vulnerable to man's context where sin rules. (Philippians 2:8-11)

Paul who contributed to a large quantity of the New Testament, his approach to missions and cross-cultural evangelism was a pure breed of contextualising the gospel, he once said,

When I was with the Jews, I lived like the Jews, I lived like the Jew to bring the Jew to Christ. When I was with those who followed the law, I became like one under the law, even though I am not a subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to the Christ those who are under the law, to the weak I become weak that I might win the weak, I have become all things to all people, that by all means, I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:20).

Paul's strategic approach to win people for Christ was a well-articulated procedure where he could press himself in the midst of the culture, lowering himself to the level of a slave in order to cross the gospel to the people. (Parris 2008:28)

Paul as a missionary, on different missionary journeys visited many cities with people of different social standing. He could address each people group differently; to the Jewish communities Paul could argue and preach in the Synagogues, however, when he was in the Gentile territory, Paul could use a different strategy to fit in that cultural context. Paul in Athens, confronting the philosopher in quite a different manner; these were the Epicureans and Stoics who had a different understanding of spiritual things. Stoics (2008:28) argued that God is manifested in many other gods and that each and every person has divine elements, while on the other hand, Epicureans disbelieved in the spiritual world, they built their belief system in the material world. (Polhill 1992:36-37) In his approach, Paul had to build a philosophical argument as well as appealing to the intellectual levels of this audience, and this is an approach which is different from how he delivered his gospels to other Jewish and Gentles.

One of the outstanding approaches that Paul introduced quite different from any other is when he addressed the thinkers of Athens in the book of (Acts 17:23) and as it is recorded "So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are religious. For I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I



found also an altar with the inscriptions ‘To the unknown god’ what therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Barrett (1998:839) argues that “Paul goes on to say much that religious Athenians would find familiar, and never unknown.”

This is an intellectual approach that Paul used in order to fit in with the context of the Athenian philosophers who spent a great deal of time in reasoning and discussions of wisdom. Paul knows them well, a point that made it easy to establish his counter-argument on the knowledge they had already in their minds as philosophers. Paul in his argument, showed them the limitation of their knowledge, and the limitation of their culture in the light of the truth. Paul did not exhort their culture nor assimilate it, but he used their culture as a stepping stone to settle the good news where their knowledge falls short. (Stott 1994:278) Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should understand contextualisation as a strategy of culture replacement, encouraging hearing-impaired people to drink the gospel in the *missio Dei* cup, changing the way people think and act in a certain way is no easy task. Cultures should be appreciated and let the Holy Spirit lead in convicting people.

#### **4.6. CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES IN PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG AS THE MISSION BASE**

The missional approach to an anthropological understanding of cultures creates a platform where mission and cross-cultural works should be operating effectively in bringing the message of the gospel to any given specific people group with distinct cultures. This is a concept that should be the aim of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg; to devise methods, and update strategies of global outreach with the deep understanding of cultures of the targeted people group. Contextualisation is not only limited to the transmission of the gospel into given cultural contours, but applies to the personal conduct of the carrier of the gospel matters as well. The Apostle Paul was not only good in the anthropological art of preaching the gospel, but he also lived the concept. His conduct and self-respect and attitude were the key to unlocking pagan cultures. He could live with the people in their own houses, which meant he could eat with them and sleep wherever he could be given. (Mark 7:19) Even Jesus Christ, lived his own message, where culture could limit healing, Jesus Christ used that platform to demonstrated God’s love. Living with the people gives a sense of acceptance

even eating their food is an act of honour to other cultures. (James 20:14) Sometimes believers refuse to go out of their comfort zone which in this case is sharing the good news to hearing-impaired people.

#### **4.6.1. Cultural values and acceptance in culture**

Livingstone Church Mission of Malawi, under the wing of Presbyterian church missions of Malawi operating in Southern regions of Malawi currently issued an apology to the chief of that region when one of the mission pastors called the chief a sinner: because he allows his subjects to drink beer in his territory. In return, the chief vowed to close the church in his area of jurisdiction because according to their traditions, all the cultural gatherings and functions, even at the funerals, locally brewed beer is used as a token of welcoming the visitors. Therefore by the condemnation of beer on biblical grounds, the church was interpreted to be a threat to the already existing cultural codes of traditions as well as their belief system. (*Malawi News* 2016: 1)

Due to the fact that people in this region are loyal to the king, the church suffered and eventually issued an apology for condemning beer and avoided the threat of excommunication. The first error of the church is that she failed anthropologically to understand the culture of this group of people and rushed to judge them as sinners. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should be very careful when touching the cultural issues of the hearing-impaired group since, it is culture that binds people together, and traditions and beliefs and the cultural values give people a sense of identity. Therefore if the church directly rejects the cultural system, people will feel rejected and in return they will reject the church, which is a missing mark to a missiological approach of the cultural anthropological approach of the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The Word of God should be preached as a foundation where people would be able to measure some of the traditions' and values against the Word of God as a standard measure. The Francophone church in Pretoria and Johannesburg should not view hearing-impaired people as sinners or cursed in the first place, however, the church would have settled and humility teaches the gospel till the Holy Spirit starts to convince people to see the need of changing some of the things they do. Second, the church played a holy attitude among the people, separating herself within the bounds of the culture whereby the local people withdrew

themselves to their own cultural traditions and beliefs. The local people closed up, and the church suffered.

#### **4.6.2. Reaching out to all people**

Different cultural groups have different methods of welcoming visitors, in some cultures; the best food is served to the visitors to show them that they have been welcomed. Due to cultural relativism and pluralism of traditions and beliefs, in what is believed to be the highest level of hospitality in one cultural group, it is not the same standard in other cultures. In my Congolese culture when we receive a visitor, the highest level of hospitality is shown in the food. Chicken meat is highly regarded in our culture, and to cook and give chicken to our visitors, we believe that that is the best we can offer and when the visitor finishes all the meat in the served plate, we are all happy. When the visitor rejects the chicken, it is viewed that s/he is selfish. If the visitor does not eat all the chicken, then s/he is asked to carry with her/him when leaving the place as a token of appreciation. In other cultures, the best hospitable food can be hatched, for example eggs; others can be a wild animal such as wild pig or crocodile. The key to being accepted as a missionary in all these cultures first is when their food has been accepted and appreciated, second if there are no signs of discomfort in the eyes of a visitor, then all the locals take a visitor as their own family and they are open to listening to the news s/he has brought to share with the family or the whole village.

#### **4.7. CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY DEMANDS TOTAL SACRIFICE, A REFLECTION ON THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MISSIOLOGICAL MODEL OF CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY**

The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg cannot have a full comprehension of the cross-cultural ministry and evangelism if the biblical model of Paul's missions is overlooked. The book of Acts is the masterpiece of missiological approach and cross-cultural ministry which the local churches can use to harvest principles of missions, teach and motivate the young people who would like to venture into mission with a full package of expectations of what awaits them on the mission field. The modern-day mission approach has missed the mark whereby the full cost of being in mission and the dangers, sacrifices that are part of the mission culture is not fully taught, a concept that has to develop mission work as some sort of adventurous trip and vocation journey. The Apostle Paul as a model of biblical

mission gives a full reflection of the sacrifices and challenges that should be considered for mission and cross-cultural ministry.

#### **4.7.1. Missions call for total sacrifice**

Paul states,

Five times I have received from Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with the rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in an open sea. In my frequent journeys, I have been in danger from the rivers and bandits, in danger from my countrymen and from the Gentiles, in danger in the city and in the country, in danger in the sea and among the false believers. I have laboured and toiled and I have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have gone without food. I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak and I do not feel weak? Who are led into sin and I do not inwardly burn (2 Corinthians 11-24).

In other words, there is total denial and a challenge to face extreme conditions for the sake of the unsaved believers? Paul faced extremely dangerous situations that if considered today few would consider leaving their comfort zone and venture into mission for the sake of the lost. He faced challenges among the believers who wished him dead, the plots of both the Jew and the Gentiles who did not like his approach to receive the good news. In addition, the pressure of the responsibility of the all the churches where he had poured his heart out, taught them the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ, and yet they were still sinning and embracing the other false doctrines, as was the case of the Galatian church. In other occasions, Paul faced stoning, such as what happened in Lystra. Paul and Barnabas as missionaries in Lystra city healed one of the sick men (Acts 14:8-20) and when the people saw what had happened, they took them as gods (Krodel 1981:54).The stoning of Paul was instigated by the Jews who influenced the crowds. They dragged Paul out of the city thinking that he was dead; in many cases Paul faced imprisonment and torture because of his service for the Lord, sharing the gospel for Christ. (Acts 14:19)

The thing to do, calls for seriousness and faithfulness in God, and to hear His voice in all decisions to be taken.

#### **4.8. CONCLUSION**

The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should come to terms by realising that culture is a subject that cannot be ignored as far as mission is concerned. Culture defines how people think, relate with each other, values and ethos that governs their worldview, as well as their belief system. Culture affects the communication of the people, therefore, before taking the gospel to hearing-impaired people, there is a need for proper preparation, studying the targeted group, analysing and understanding the values in that culture such as respect, and then when the time of taking the gospel to them the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg will already be informed of what is expected to do or not to do. The acceptance and the level of reception depends on how much knowledge the church has regarding the people she is ministering. Last, Jesus Christ should be the model of the missiological approach the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg use, since Jesus Christ is the Master who came to break the chains of the bondage of people and he is the one who promised that he will be with us till the end of the world.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SOUTH AFRICA'S PERSPECTIVES ON JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

I discovered early that the hardest thing to overcome is not a physical disability but the mental condition which is induced. The world, I found, has a way of taking a man pretty much at his own rating. If he permits his loss to make him embarrassed and apologetic, he would draw embarrassment from others. But if he gains his own respect, the respect of those around him comes easily. Alexander de Seversky, an aviator and aeronautical engineer who lost his leg in World War I (*People Dynamics*, April 2005:16).

This chapter discusses how justice and advocacy apply to people with disabilities in the church, and then explains the role of the church in promoting the above-mentioned justice and advocacy. The first part of the chapter starts with the importance that justice plays in recognising, promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities. It takes into account the justice dimension in South Africa and how it impacts the church. The points of departure are the constitutional recognition and protection of the rights of people with disabilities, legislation dealing with the matters relating to disability, various case law studies, the South African Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Public Protector and the Employment Equity Act.

The second part focuses on the advocacy issue surrounding physical disability. It also elaborates on illustrations from the Bible, as well as presenting a literature study. Also to be discussed is the government policies and programmes that deal with the issue of physical disability, the 'Know Your Constitution' movement together with Section 27 and certain organisations advocating for the rights of disabled people.

The Bible asks us to maintain and to do justice for the rights of all who are destitute (Psalm 82:3).

## **5.2. THE JUSTICE DIMENSION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The story illustrated here relates to the dimension of justice and serves as an example of what is discussed in this section.

There was a young woman with a hearing-impairment, who only knows how to read and communicate in sign language, and did her utmost to fellowship with the whole congregation. When the need arose because she understands that it is also the right of church members like her (with hearing-impairment) to have access to the gospel of Jesus, she took immense courage and stood to preach to others in sign language. Had she not taken such an initiative, other church members like her would have been prevented from enjoying such a right of access because of certain barriers that are completely beyond their control.

### **5.2.1. Constitutional right and protection**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996) is the most important piece of legislation in the whole country as well as the highest law. Any other law or conduct that contravenes the Constitution is invalid. This Constitution has immense respect for human rights. Thus, both the public and private sector stakeholders have the duty to uphold and respect all that is required to be done by the Constitution (Constitution, 1996).

Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution contains what is known as the ‘Bill of Rights’ which is the prime protector of the rights of every individual. It confers on all human beings within the boundaries of South Africa the rights to life and provides for the equality, freedom and human dignity. The government is the first role player in exercising the fulfilment and protection of these rights.

Section 9 of the Constitution clearly states that everyone is equal before the law and protects the citizenry against unfair discrimination. This is known as the ‘equality right’ and is the first right contained in the Bill of Rights. It protects against unfair discrimination in both the public and private sectors, and it provides for affirmative action to be followed in order to redress the inequalities of the past apartheid era.

Section 9(3) of the Constitution provides that the State may not unfairly discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly on the grounds of discrimination and that national legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination in terms of sub-section 4. In 2000, the government enacted the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000). This law serves to promote equality between everyone and to prevent unfair discrimination. It also provides for remedial actions for those who have been unfairly discriminated against. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJCD) has set up equality courts that deal with issues and complaints related to unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment. South Africa is a Member-State of the African Union and has to abide by the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in terms of Article 18. In terms of this article, people living with disabilities have the right to special measures that protect them in keeping with their bodily needs (African Union n.d.).

### **5.2.2. Legislation dealing with disability**

South Africa does not have comprehensive national legislation dealing specifically, exclusively and directly with issues relating to people with disabilities or disability itself. However, there are numerous extant laws that touch on the subject matter or that deal with people with disability. The following list comprises some of the most notable of this legislation:

#### **5.2.2.1. Children's Act 53 of 2003**

The Act caters for the special needs of children in the form of care and assistance as it best suits them. Section 11 of the Act deals specifically with issues relating to children with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Section 6(2) (d) and (f) of the Act provides that all proceedings, actions or decisions relating to issues concerning children must first shield the child from unfair discrimination, including on grounds of disability, and recognise the disability of the child in order to create a positive surrounding for the child that caters for her/his special needs.

#### **5.2.2.2. Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007**

Although this Act deals with all sexual offences, it also makes provisions for the recognition and greater punishment for the sexual violation of people who are mentally disabled.



#### 5.2.2.3. Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977

In taking into account an accused person's mental ability to stand trial, section 194 of this Act prevents a person who appears or proves to be mentally ill and cannot make proper use of his/her mind to be compelled to give evidence while in that state.

#### 5.2.2.4. Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998

Any form of violence in domestic relationships is prohibited in terms of this Act. This Act also protects people with disabilities from being abused psychologically and/or physically in whatsoever form.

#### 5.2.2.5. Electoral Act 73 of 1998

In terms of sections 33 and 39 of this Act, disabled voters need to be assisted by people of their choice at their request. These voters can also be registered as special voters, with permission to vote on a predetermined day before the said election either at their place of residence or at the voting station if they can get there.

#### 5.2.2.6. Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005 & Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 25 of 2002

In terms of section 2(s) (iii) of this Act, one of the primary objectives of this piece of legislation is to provide the regulation of electronic communications in the Republic in the public interest and for that purpose, according to section 2(s), ensure that broadcasting services, viewed collectively (sub-paragraph iii) cater for a broad range of services and specifically for the programming needs of children, women, the youth and the disabled. Section 1(l) of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act makes provision for a similar objective.

#### 5.2.2.7. Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

The main aim of this Act is for the promotion and achievement of equity in the workplace. Unfair discrimination against employees on the ground of their disability or health status is strictly prohibited by this legislation. Disabled people form part of the designated groups in terms of Chapter 3 of the Act, to which employers' have a duty to follow in matters relating to affirmative action.

#### 5.2.2.8. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995

When looking at the labour practices, this Act prohibits unfair discrimination against a person with a disability on the arbitrary ground of disability.

#### 5.2.2.9. Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002

In terms of section 3, this piece of legislation regulates the mental health care, treatment and rehabilitation services provided to everyone, and especially the way in which the property of persons with mental illness and persons with severe or profound intellectual disability may be dealt with by a court of law.

#### 5.2.2.10. National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977

Proposed amendments of this Act are still under review, in order to tackle the subject matter of how buildings facilitate the access by people with disabilities. Further requirements to be met include, amongst others: (1) people with a disability should be able to enter a building in confidence and safety and be able to use its facilities safely, such as its toilets; (2) buildings must be able to provide for the needs of people with a disability in that there should be no barrier that prevents people with a disability from accessing them, such as their lifts. This legislation caters for people who are visually impaired, on wheelchairs or who cannot walk without some sort of assistance. Halls and venues used by the public have to adhere to the rule that enough space is left available for people with a disability.

#### 5.2.2.11. National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996

In terms of this Act, no person can be prevented from receiving an education on the ground of their disability.

#### 5.2.2.12. National Health Act 61 of 2003 and the Sterilisation Act 44 of 1998

This legislation prohibits the forced sterilisation of disabled people. In terms of the NHA, everyone has a right to reproductive health services they seek, such as family planning, and this includes people with disabilities.

#### 5.2.2.13. National Land and Transport Act 5 of 2009

In terms of section 8 of this Act, the Minister of Transport may make regulations that stipulate the requirements in terms of which vehicles and other transport-related facilities be made accessible to people with a disability, especially in the public transport system.

#### 5.2.2.14. National Road Traffic Act 93 of 1996

The Act prohibits people with certain disabilities and/or from obtaining a learner's or driver's licence.

#### 5.2.2.15. Postal Services Act 124 of 1998

Section 2(h) of this Act ensures that the special needs of people with a disability be considered when rendering postal services to them.

#### 5.2.2.16. Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000

In favour of those who were previously economically disadvantaged during the apartheid era, this piece of legislation aims to balance the inequality by providing a framework for the preferential treatment of people with a disability and those previously disadvantaged.

#### 5.2.2.17. Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act

This Act aims to prevent unfair discrimination as envisaged in sections 9 and 10 of the Constitution, especially based on a disability, and to protect their human dignity.

#### 5.2.2.18. Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999

These Acts provides for skills development targets that also include persons with disabilities together with the Employment Equity Act in detailed frameworks.

#### 5.2.2.19. Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004

The Act permits persons who meet requirements to apply for and become recipients of disability grants in terms of sections 5 and 9 of the Act.

#### 5.2.2.20. South African Library for the Blind Act 91 of 1998

The Act made it a law to have South African public libraries for blind people and have information and facilities arranged in such a manner that is favourable and suitable for them.

#### 5.2.2.21. South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

The Act makes provision for an education system that is all-inclusive for everyone, including and without exception, people with a disability, and that as far as is reasonably possible to provide special education needs to students who require them. The legislation also requires public schools to provide facilities that are accessible to people who are disabled.

In the clear absence of legislation protecting people who are disabled and promoting their rights, these people are mostly left to depend on a “*welfarist*” approach. This simply entails the goodness and kindness of the government and non-government institutions towards them. Thus, creating and advancing a positive policy environment in the country provides the path for people with disabilities to address issues such as poverty alleviation, high levels of unemployment, education of children and youth with disabilities, improved access to social security and assistive devices, access to housing, public health services and transport.

Current legislation such as the Employment Equity Act, Social Assistance Act, Skills Development Act, have enabled and pushed for the awareness of the needs of people who are disabled. However, with the exception of a few policies such as the Social Assistance Act, the implementation of these policies has had a marginal impact on the lives of a majority of people who are disabled in South Africa. Problems, as are always expected to be encountered when dealing with these issues, including the lack of budgetary allocations, ignorance of civil servants charged with the responsibility of implementing these policies, and procedural bottlenecks have been identified as some of the main causes of ‘policy evaporation’ within the South African context.

#### 5.2.3. Case law

In 1997 in the case of *Prinsloo vs Van der Linde* (1997) 3 SA 1012, the Constitutional Court held that one of the most important criteria for the determination of unfair discrimination is human dignity and had the following to add:

[A]t the heart of the prohibition of unfair discrimination lies a recognition that the purpose of our new constitutional and democratic order is the establishment of a society in which all human beings will be accorded equal dignity and respect regardless of their membership of particular groups (*Prinsloo vs Van der Linde* (1997)).

Equality courts in all magisterial districts within South Africa have been established by the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA, Act 4 of 2000). This Act aims to provide a quick and formidable alternative for those who feel they have been unfairly discriminated against on the basis of disability. These courts are more suited to consider all applications and complaints in determining the best outcome that is not humiliating for the plaintiff.

The court in *WH Bosch vs The Minister of Safety and Security & Minister of Public Works* (2005) highlighted the importance of human dignity in considering a complaint based on disability, and held that:

[T]here is no price that can be attached to dignity or a threat to that dignity. There is no justification for the violation or potential violation of the disabled person's right to equality and maintenance of his dignity that was tendered or averred by the respondent. The court, therefore, found the discrimination to have been unfair.

As a result of this decision, all South African Police Service (SAPS) stations had to re-organise themselves, and make their facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

In terms of 2004, in the Equality Court case of *Esthé Muller vs Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Work* (2003), it was decided in an out-of-court settlement that all court buildings and venues be upgraded to facilitate the accessibility by people who are disabled. In consequence of this, the Department of Public Works kick-started their long-term project to renovate existing public services buildings one by one to comply with the order.

The Equality Court in *Lettie Hazel Oortman vs Saint Thomas Aquinas Private School & Bernard Langton* 2010) ordered the school to re-admit Chelsea Oortman and that the school had to upgrade itself by ridding itself of all obstacles so that Chelsea could have direct access to all her classrooms and all the other venues she needed to attend using her wheelchair. The plaintiff in this case was assisted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in tackling this issue and defending the learner so that her constitutional right to an education is not hindered because of physical facilities that a few men are reluctant to upgrade for the benefit of all their learners and is, thus, unfair and utterly discriminatory.

Another infamous case at the Equality Court is that of Standard Bank of South Africa vs Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and Others (2008), where the bank appealed a verdict by the Commission in favour of the plaintiff who brought the complaint against the bank on the basis of a decision that was 'automatically unfair'. The court upheld the decision by the Equality Court and held that the bank had not adhered to the Code of Good Practice on Dismissal of the employee, as he was dismissed after a severe car accident that seriously injured him. The court emphasised the constitutional rights are the right to equality, the right to human dignity, the right to choose an occupation, and the right to fair labour practice. Judge Pillay, in reading the verdict, was of the view that "constitutional rights are the right to equality, the right to human dignity, the right to choose an occupation, and the right to fair labour practice".

As stated in Section 9(a) of PEPUDA, the legislation prohibits unfair discrimination on the ground of disability in the form of ‘denying or removing from any person who has a disability, any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their functioning in the society’. This is a clear case of gross negligence and a consequent tragedy that occurred in the Life Esidimeni matter that severely violated the provision in respect of persons with mental health-related disabilities. In 2016, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) terminated its contract with the Life Esidimeni facility in an attempt to deinstitutionalise the care of patients. Over a thousand mental health patients were moved from the facility to numerous NGOs. As a result, between 118 and 143 people lost their lives between March and December 2016. It was alleged that the termination of the contract with Life Esidimeni was influenced by a number of factors, including policy and legislative considerations that favour community-based care over institutional care. The Commission received a complaint pointing to the potential violation of human rights and loss of life from the Ubuntu Centre on 15 March 2016. The Commission’s subsequent investigation related to violations of the right to life, access to health care, the right to dignity, the right to freedom and security of the person, the right to food and adequate nutrition, access to information and proper consultation, cruel and inhumane treatment, and the responsibilities of private business in respecting human rights. The Commission, through its monitoring process, formally requested responses from the Gauteng Department of Health in order to ascertain, among other things, what steps were put in place by the department to ensure the safety and well-being of patients who were transferred from Life Esidimeni to NGOs across the province. In response, the GDoH gave assurances to the Commission that the termination of the contract with Life Esidimeni followed a review of a number of longstanding contracts with service providers, in line with prescripts of the Auditor General, as well as constitutional imperatives regarding public procurement. In addition, the GDoH indicated that placement of patients was carried out through a specialist project team and the suitability of NGOs to cater for the specific needs of patients was assessed prior to placement. However, after conducting an inspection at one of the NGOs to which mental health care users had been transferred, the Commission determined that it would be appropriate to bring the matter to the attention of the Office of the Health Ombud. The findings of the Health Ombud’s report demonstrated egregious violations of various constitutional rights, including the right to life; the right of everyone to have access to health care services; the right to have human dignity respected and protected; the right to an environment that is conducive to health and well-being; the right to sufficient food; and the right of access to information. It further found that the GDoH had covered up

the number of people that had died; that the licencing process was deeply flawed with invalid licences issued to all the NGOs where patients had been transferred; and that the GDoH had no idea of the whereabouts of several patients, whether dead or alive.

Regarding the GDoH's decision to relocate the patients, the report found that:

The decision was unwise and flawed, with inadequate planning and a 'chaotic' and 'rushed or hurried' implementation process... The decision to terminate the contract precipitously contradicted the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategy; the cost rationale could not be justified above the rights of the mentally ill patients to dignity and the state's constitutional obligation to accessible health care... This precipitous approach was not supported by available research experience or legislative prescripts... The project has brought 'pain and anguish' to many families, it has also brought national and international disrepute and embarrassment to South Africa, particularly its Health System.

Among other things, the Health Ombud recommended that the Minister of Health should request the Commission to undertake a systematic and systemic review of human rights compliance and possible violations related to mental health on a national level. The Minister of Health subsequently requested the Commission to do the same. In view of the findings of the Health Ombud, the Commission reiterated its 2009 recommendations regarding the protection of the rights of vulnerable people, including people with physical and mental disabilities. The Commission's investigation and monitoring of the Life Esidimeni matter continued, and a National Investigative hearing was held on 14 and 15 November 2017 with a view to highlighting the human rights dimensions of the tragedy.

Currently, arbitration proceedings are taking place between the State and affected families, and are presided over by retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke.

Globally speaking, it is a well-known and undisputed fact that people with disabilities are marginalised and excluded from full participation in society. South Africa is not an exception whereby people with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination in various social spheres, including access to health care services, employment and education. The recent tragedy that occurred when thousands of mental health care patients were transferred from the Life Esidimeni care centre to unprepared NGOs, illustrates both the vulnerability of people with disabilities as well as apathetic social attitudes towards their well-being.



People with disabilities continue to experience exclusion from the economic and education systems. A major obstacle to the social inclusion of people with disabilities is the stigma that still attaches to disability. Urgent attention should, therefore, be paid to promoting equality and inclusion in the context of disability. In order to facilitate awareness-raising and education regarding disability, government should act swiftly in bringing the promotional aspects of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000 (PEPUDA) into operation. That is where courts have jumped in to protect and enforce the rights of people with disabilities and to prevent any form of unfair discrimination against them, as shown in the various cases cited above.

#### **5.2.4. The South African Human Rights Commission**

Disability is one of the seven focus areas identified by the South African Human Rights Commission within its mandate to promote, protect, and monitor the realisation of human rights in South Africa. People with disabilities currently account for 5.1% of the population aged 5 years and older in South Africa. People with disabilities continue to lack access to adequate health and basic education and are at risk of economic isolation with no prospect of securing employment. The sector is also particularly vulnerable to the compounded effects of discrimination and abuse. This is what one finds when accessing the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC/HRC)'s website immediately on the homepage.

After the National Census in 2011 (StatsSA 2011), it was revealed that:

[T]he national disability prevalence rate is 75%. More than half (53, 2%) of persons aged 85+ reported having a disability. Persons with severe disabilities experience difficulty in accessing education and employment opportunities. Households headed by persons with disabilities were found to have less access to basic services compared to households headed by persons without disabilities. There are also disparities in terms of access to assistive devices across population groups and geography.

The HRC concentrates on curbing the abuse and unfairness aimed at people with disabilities. The margins highlight complaints to the Commission with regard to matters relating to equality. Aspects of equality refer to equality in terms of access to, acquisition, disposal, acceptance and accommodation. The HRC states that the third highest number of equality-related complaints they received in 2015/2016 were related to disability alone. The Commission is mandated by section 28 (2) of PEPUDA, which examines the extent to which discrimination related issues of disability occur in South Africa, to produce an Annual Equality Report.

The Commission also compiled the 'Disability Toolkit' (SAHRC 2017) on 'Promoting the Right to Work of Persons with Disabilities' for the private sector in 2015. This Toolkit document was produced with the intention of promoting awareness and assistance of employers in the private sector of the economy to consider and recognise the right of employment for persons with disabilities. It submits that it is unfair to deny person employment based mainly or solely on a particular disability. This point will be further elaborated below. The Commission also has Section 11 Committees which act as advisory boards consisting of experts in their particular fields of knowledge. These Committees advise and provide recommendations to the HRC with regard to matters relating to people with disabilities.

The HRC organised a meeting of the Section 11 Committee on Disability in the Western Cape in July 2016, which was attended by various representatives of the numerous Disabled People Organisations within South Africa, in order to discuss and evaluate the progress achieved in tackling complex issues relating to margins. They also touched on the subjects of the lack of provisions of wheelchairs by the DSDs in rural areas of the country; the development and enactment of a Disability Act; and the Independent Monitoring Mechanisms in place to deal with the raised issues and concerns.

## 1. Investigations

One has to file a complaint to the Commission for it to initiate an investigation into an alleged human right abuse towards a person with a disability or that is aimed at an issue dealing with a disability. That is to say, a complainant who is not happy with a disability-related abuse of unfairness or discrimination, has to go to the HRC to file his/her complaint by explaining his/her side of the story; the complaint is accepted and received by the HRC with a case number allocated to it for an investigation to be conducted. There are different ways in which the HRC goes about resolving these issues depending on the nature of the complaint that is filed and the complexity of the matter. Two examples of recent complaints received and solved by the HRC are that of: (1) Ndebele Nkosi vs BMW South Africa (2017), where the HRC mediated and solved a complaint on the reasonable accommodation of a visually impaired employee at BMW who sought the betterment of the workplace facilities in order for him to work accordingly; (2) the HRC also initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint against Standard Bank, that resulted in adverse findings against Standard Bank. These findings were concluded and resulted in Standard Bank putting in place measures to ensure that persons with disabilities could access Automatic Teller Machines with ease and comfort when banking.

## 2. Monitoring through Site Inspections and Provincial Visits

The HRC conducts and engages in monitoring through site visits and physical inspection of how accommodating various facilities and locations are to people with disabilities. This is done for instance in schools for learners with special educational needs and public institutions. As reported, recent site visits include the Swana School and Assessment Centre for people with disabilities in Empangeni, the Stanger Training College and Sunfield Home School in the Ilembe/Uthungulu District Municipality, and the Verulam Day and Frail Care Centre.

## 3. Investigative hearings

The HRC conducts hearings on a variety of issues relating to the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities. As was done in 2016, the HRC organised the National Hearing on Unfair Discrimination in the workplace. The objective of a Hearing like this one is to look thoroughly into the issues of discrimination happening around us and arrive at a common understanding and awareness of the trends of discrimination in the workplace; the form and inter-relatedness of types of discrimination; as well as the challenges and barriers to equality faced by all stakeholders, including employees, public and private sector employers, trade union bodies and government departments. The hearing panel consisted of Commissioner Malatji, Commissioner Ameerma, and Ms Trevonica Naidu, an independent expert. The panel received submissions from several government departments including the department of labour, civil society, and trade unions in order to go back to the drawing board and devise ways in which this unfair discrimination towards the margins can be minimised, if not eradicated.

#### 4. Reports

Besides the Equality Reports discussed above, the HRC also publishes Reports on Findings of Hearings, for instance, the 'Report on the Public Inquiry: Access to Healthcare Services'. This report concluded and found that

[C]ertain vulnerabilities, such as having a disability or being an undocumented migrant, place additional barriers to accessing health care services." The same report also found: "The combination of a poorly informed population, access barriers to health care services, a lack of professionals with knowledge and skills and inadequate policy development and implementation contribute to the inadequacy in management and prevention of non-communicable disease and disability.

#### 5. International and regional conferences

When the Commission is not organising its own events, it attends regional and international conferences and other domestic platforms and engages with a range of stakeholders to ensure that its work is relevant and in line with its mandate. These meetings are the best at helping the Commission to co-operate, learn, and share the best practices with other stakeholders in the sector.

The HRC organised a National Disability Rights Summit (in March 2016), in collaboration with the South African Disability Alliance (SADA) and the Department of Social Development (DSD) to sustain conversations around reforms and protections of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Other events in which the HRC is also involved in include participation in the Employment Equity Road Shows by the Department of Labour and Cell C's "Take a girl child to work campaign" focusing on children with disabilities.

The Commission also attended the 7th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and made numerous presentations on "National Human Rights Institutions and the CRPD: Transforming Words into Action," which discussed how National Human Rights Institutions can make CRPD a reality in the whole of South Africa. The HRC also pre-tested the guidelines introduced and developed by NANHRI titled 'Protecting, Promoting and Monitoring the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Guide for African National Human Rights Institutions on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. An interesting project that has been presented and is currently in progress involves collating the responses by government institutions to the CRPD implementation assessment tool. The HRC will then rely on this information to develop its report on implementation.

#### 6. Advocacy and public education

The HRC frequently engages in advocacy initiatives and public education awareness programmes based on issues relating to disability as a whole. These programmes include education programmes aimed at and dealing with disability, training stakeholders, public information campaigns, seminars and conferences, dialogues, roundtables, web publishing and use of social media platforms in order to spread the need to accommodate people with disabilities in our communities.

#### 7. Domestic legislation, international and regional frameworks on disability and older persons

As one of its primary objectives, the HRC monitors and evaluates compliance with regard to the respect and acceptance of rights and privileges of the margins with: Section 9 of the South African Constitution; the United Nations Convention on People with disabilities (CRPD); the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 40 of 2000 (PEPUDA); the White Paper on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2016).

### **5.2.5. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Its preamble kept utilising the words such as “recognising”, “reaffirming”, “recalling”, “emphasising”, “concerned” and “convinced” with regard to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is safe to state that people with disabilities are human beings with as much internationally recognised human rights that must be protected, respected and enforced as able-bodied people (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Preamble).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is, foremost, an international human rights treaty of the United Nations designed with the intention to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities by all States Parties to it. These States Parties to the Convention are then obliged to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law. The Convention has served as the major catalyst in the global movement that once perceived people with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection to full and equal members of society, with human rights just like able-bodied people. It is also the only UN human rights instrument with an explicit sustainable development dimension. The Convention was the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century.

This text was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006 and opened for signature on 30 March 2007. Following its ratification by the 20th party, it came into force on the 3rd of May 2008. As of October 2018, it has 162 signatories and 177 parties, which include 172 States and the European Union (which ratified it on 23 December 2010 to the extent responsibilities of the Member States were transferred to the European Union). In December 2012, a vote in the United States Senate fell six votes short of the two-thirds majority required for ratification. The Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The main purpose of this document is for the promotion and protection of all the fundamental human rights and freedom for people with disabilities in equal benefits with able-bodied persons, and disabled people are understood to include people with long-term physical impairments and mental and intellectual related impairments whatsoever (Article 1).

The Convention's preamble also recognises that:

... that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others...

Article 4 imposes general obligations on States Parties to this document to fully adhere to it and to promote the respect and realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for disabled people without being discriminated against unfairly.

The following include obligations imposed on State Parties:

1. To adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present Convention;
2. To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities;
3. To take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes;
4. To refrain from engaging in any act or practice that is inconsistent with the present Convention and to ensure that public authorities and institutions act in conformity with the present Convention;
5. To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organisation or private enterprise;

6. To undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in Article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines;
7. To undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies at an affordable cost;
8. To provide accessible information to persons with disabilities about mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, including new technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, support services and facilities;
9. To promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities in the rights recognised in the present Convention so as to better provide the assistance and services guaranteed by those rights.

It is imperative for the implementation of this Convention for State Parties to recognise that both disabled and able-bodied people are equal before the law and in society and must both equally reap the benefits of these internationally recognised human rights and fundamental principles. State Parties must by all means, by law and/or customs, prohibit and ensure that no unfair discrimination is levied against disabled people because of their conditions and that mechanisms are in place to effectively deal with and protect people who are disabled (Article 5).

Article 6 emphasises the specific recognition of the rights of women and girls with disabilities, as they are the ones usually the most discriminated against in society and perceived as being weak. It is therefore important for State Parties to focus on the protection of the female group in all instances. This should be aimed at the development and empowerment of women to equally benefit and enjoy their human rights (Article 6). This Convention recognises the best interest of children as the primary consideration for the full protection and guarantee of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for children. It advises State Parties to allow children a certain degree of expression of their views on all matters affecting them, taking into account their age and level of maturity (Article 7).



The Convention also requires State Parties to permit and create a positive atmosphere that enables people with disabilities to live independently and take part in all spheres of life. This entails the assurance that disabled people have access to the physical environment, the transportation system and information and communications together with services that are readily required to be served to them both in rural and urban areas (Article 9).

In terms of Article 31, States Parties have the obligation to collect appropriate and relevant information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to this Convention.

We can all agree that the State Party cannot fully comply with this Convention on its own and needs to recognise the importance of international cooperation. In support of national efforts for the realisation of the purpose and objectives of this Convention, States Parties should undertake appropriate and effective measures in this regard, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organisations and civil society, in particular organisations of persons with disabilities. States Parties need to facilitate and support capacity-building, including through the exchange and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices, as well as facilitating a comprehensive system of cooperation in research and access to scientific and technical knowledge in the provision of technical and economic assistance, including by facilitating access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, and through the transfer of technologies (Article 32).

All State Parties are tasked to submit to the designated Committee, within two years after this Convention has come into force for the diverse States Parties, overseeing the implementation of this Convention their respective comprehensive reports on how they are giving effect to the obligations under this Convention and the progress achieved so far. These countries are then tasked to submit subsequent reports at the very least every four years on their progress and as well as whenever the Committee makes a request. This Committee also sets forth the guidelines to follow in drafting and submitting the said report (Article 35).

The Government of South Africa, as represented by the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, jointly with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) held and conducted a consultation between 10 and 12 June 2013 on ways to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD) in this country.

The main objective for this consultation was to assess the South African national experience on implementing this Convention and to come up with measures that promote social acceptance and human rights recognition of people with disabilities at the national, provincial and local levels.

The consultation was attended by representatives of the relevant departments of the South African government and agencies, the Police Services, public associations, representative organisations of persons with disabilities as well as international organisations accredited in the country (UNIC Pretoria, 2013).

The University of the Western Cape Centre for Disability Law and Policy briefed the Parliamentary Committee on South Africa's compliance of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It turned out that, since South Africa had ratified the Convention in 2007, it had not adequately incorporated the Convention into its own legal framework, which then also weakened the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention in South Africa. It further emerged that South Africa usually fails to submit its respective report on time to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund was also given an opportunity to brief the Committee on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children. It emerged that South Africa's first Country Report had been submitted in order; however, the second Report was late and was still being put together. It also came to light that there was a problem between the different pieces of South African legislation that dealt with children, particularly the definition of the "child".

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund highlighted a point of grave concern about the role of parents in their children's upbringing in South Africa. As it is always stated that children's rights always seem to trump or supersede the rights of their parents, and resulting in the disempowerment of parents in their children's lives. This leads to a series of unfortunate events such as burgeoning teenage pregnancy in schools as well as children being prematurely exposed to adult roles. A consideration was proposed to suggest the role of the parent as well as the responsibilities of the child must be examined and emphasised correcting the flaws (PMG, 2011)

### **5.2.6. The Public Protector**

Section 182 of the Constitution states as follows:

...that the Public Protector has the power, as regulated by national legislation to investigate any conduct in state affairs, or in the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice; to report on that conduct; and to take appropriate remedial action. The Public Protector may not investigate court decisions, must be accessible to all persons and communities and any report issued by the Public Protector must be open to the public, unless in exceptional circumstances, to be determined in terms of national legislation, require that a report is kept confidential. According to section 182, the Public Protector has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation. This Office is, thus, also responsible for the protection and enforcement of the rights of all people with disabilities (Public Protector Act of 1994).

In November of 2010, the Office of the Public Protector dealt with a case of an investigation against the Department of Health in the Western Cape in failing to properly and medically care for a disabled patient. Mr Lobi filed the complaint on behalf of his son, Mr Lobi Jr., who was involved in an accident and had suffered serious physical damaging injuries that included a disabling brain injury. The son had been bedridden for more than 2 years and was not in the financial position to afford the hospital expenses nor a wheelchair at least for his movements. He was not informed by the public hospital at the time that he could be reclassified as a state patient and be given a wheelchair in accordance. The Office concluded that, although it is an incontestable constitutional right in terms of section 27 of the Constitution that the patient is provided with the supply of what he needs in accordance with

his treatment, there is still a serious backlog in making this service automatically viable. However, there are also other remedial actions that can be considered in order to mitigate the circumstances and that urgent steps should be followed in order to provide the son with the wheelchair at least. The Office also urged the Department of Health to revise its priorities in terms of budgeting and planning and to bring about adequate ways that can unnecessarily avoid such issues from occurring frequently (PPProtect.org).

## 5.2.6 Employment Equity Act

1. What is the legislative definition of 'disability'?

In terms of the South African Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), a person with a disability is one who has a long-term or recurring physical, including sensory, or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospect of entry into or advancement in employment (Section 1).

2. Is there protection for people who are disabled in the workplace?

The answer is yes. This Act protects people who are disabled against all forms of unfair discrimination and provides them with affirmative action measures to institute in case of maltreatment. Unfortunately, there are still recorded high volumes of unfair discrimination cases against the margins due to stereotypes, fear and ignorance against them. This leads to very high levels of unemployment among them. The University of Johannesburg's Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) published a study in 2014 which shows that at least 68% of disabled South Africans of working ages never attempt to seek to enter the corporate world due to the stigma around their disability (Centre for Social Development in Africa, 2014). The study also highlights the fact that only about 10% of disabled people in South Africa actually have access and receive the grant allocated to them. The CSDA in a study of 2010 published that there are many people who are disabled living in South Africa who do not even know that they are constitutionally entitled to basic human rights for people with a disability or that there exist government grants in their favour due to them (Centre for Social Development in Africa, 2010).

The following are ways in which unfair discrimination against people who are disabled occur at the workplace (Ministry of Labour, 2008):

3. Criterion set on employment opportunities that out rightly exclude people who are disabled from even thinking of applying or thinking they can progress at the workplace. An example would be when an employer requires the applicant to have his own car and also to drive, but the person who is disabled can do the job if alternative transportation is provided for him.

4. In terms of remuneration and job status, if you look at most workplaces you will discover that people who are disabled occupy inferior job positions and barely make it to top management of companies and earn less than the average able-bodied doing the same as them.
5. Workplace facilities are not conducive enough to allow people with a disability to effectively perform duties. That would be the lack of toilets for the disabled and parking reserved for the disabled only.
6. Lack of adequate educational training on how to accommodate and fairly treat people who are disabled.
8. Oversight on the part of supervisors and management on issues affecting people who are disabled.
9. Stereotypes and ignorance.
10. Do people who are disabled also qualify and obtain government grants and funding?

Again the answer is yes. More than a million South Africans with disability receive the disability grant and children who are disabled obtain a care dependency grant that assists their caregivers with the minimum finance to care for the children. There is also a temporary disability grant received by at least 250 000 people with temporary disabilities.

### **5.2.7 Census**

In terms of the 2001 Census by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA 2001), 2 255 982 (comprising of 5 per cent of the national population) were recorded to have a serious disability: (1) women made up 52 per cent of the total number of people with disabilities (1 173 939 were women), and obviously the rest comprise men; (2) children between 0 to 9 years of age made up 8,5 per cent of the total number of people with disabilities, and the youth between the ages of 10 to 19 years made up 13,6 per cent of persons with disabilities.

The 2011 Census by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA 2011) which made use of a new classification system, recorded that 2 339 000 people in South Africa (5,2 per cent of the population of at least 5 years old) live with a disability. In terms of this, women with disabilities made up 5.4% of the total population of women in South Africa (1 260 000 women).

The most common forms of disability in South Africa (the following is taken according to the sample of the 2011 General Household Survey and considers a total population of 45 345 000 of South Africans aged at least 5 years living with some form of disability):

1. 3 001 000 had sight impairments;
2. 840 000 had hearing impairments;
3. 1 028 000 experienced difficulty walking;
4. 1 107 000 reported challenges remembering and concentrating;
5. 1 564 000 reported challenges with self-care;
6. 364 000 experienced difficulties with communication;
7. 4 271 000 made use of spectacles or contact lenses;
8. 110 000 used hearing aids;
9. 347 000 made use of walking sticks or walking frames;
10. 83 000 used wheelchairs; and
11. 24 000 used other assistive devices.

### **5.2.8. Demographics**

In terms of a Statistics South Africa 2014 (StatsSA Report 2014) which is based on the 2011 census, at least 7, 5% of the entire national population is, by definition, living with a disability. The following represents the percentages of people living with disabilities in the nine provinces:

1. Free State with 11,1%;

2. Northern Cape with 11%;
3. North West with 10%;
4. Eastern Cape with 9,6%;
5. KwaZulu Natal with 8,4%;
6. Mpumalanga with 7%;
7. Limpopo with 6%;
8. Western Cape with 5,4%; and
9. Gauteng, with 5, 3%.

### **5.3. THE ADVOCACY DIMENSION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **5.3.1 Government policies and programmes on disabilities:**

The government engages in the quarterly outreach programmes, branded 'Taking Parliament to the People' and the 'Imbizo', whereby selected members of Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures together with various cabinet ministers and mayors met with community members in remote areas, especially in rural areas and townships, to discuss matters relating to human rights and service delivery. The guidelines for these meetings specifically demand that the programmes are accessible to persons with disabilities, in terms of physical facilities and approach, and that they are targeted together with their organisations for their specific requests and/or concerns. Various governmental institutions profit from these rare occasions to provide public service delivery, such as by the Departments of Home Affairs and Health, directly to the people who would normally be reluctant or unable to go to them. Once upon a time within the South African government existed the Office on the Status of Disabled persons. They were responsible for the development and distribution of policy guidelines that showcased disability in the eyes of the media to various media outlets. Their objective was to bring about a good and positive image of people who are disabled in the mass media.



The Department of Basic Education (DBE) works together with various Government Communication and Information Services in order to produce and spread positive awareness projects in the mass media on the right of people who are disabled in our communities, especially children with a disability. This can also be found on the DBE's website side of the 'Thutong Education Portal'.

The National Accessibility Programme is a large, multi-year research and innovation public programme serving as a government portal that discusses the marginalisation of disabled people from society as a whole and the economy, enabling their participation and collaboration in society through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It is an initiative between the public sector, the African Advanced Institute for Information and Communication Technology and disability rights organisations. It serves as an integrated service provider to the disability community and industry offering accessible technology services, communication services, data synthesis services and other commercial services (National Accessibility Programme 2013).

As a project which commenced in 2005, the standard design guidelines (Universal accessibility standards) aim to push for accessibility in the passenger rail service. The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) and the Department of Transport (DoT) opted to start using this initiative since March 2008 on its public rails and trains. This was achieved with the collaboration of organisations dealing with matters relating to disability. The Airport Companies of South Africa (ACSA) work in collaboration with the various disability organisations in order to better their services on passenger assistance units (PAUs) and in increasing the number of units available at ACSA airports and training PAU personnel. These organisations for the people who are disabled regularly report all instances of unfair discrimination of disabled people in terms of boarding flights. Cases like these are resolved in a collaboration of the Civil Aviation Authority, the Department of Transport, the Department of Women, Children and Persons with disabilities (DWCPD).

The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12 is a government project responsible for the recording and reporting of processes from grade R to 12 that are in line with the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12. The Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education provides a list of prescriptions for which this national policy on assessment must adhere to with respect to persons with disabilities (Department of Basic Education 2013).

Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in classrooms through the National Curriculum Statement of 2011. These documents provide ways in which learner diversity at schools and other learning facilities through the curriculum can be achieved by teachers, principals, subject advisers, administrators, school governors and others in various positions at these schools and learning facilities. The subject's content, the language of teaching, classroom organisation and disposition, teaching methodologies on their own, the speed at which the subject is being taught and the length of time available to complete the curriculum, teaching and learning support materials and assessment can all become obstacles to learning, especially for learners with disabilities. That is why it is very important to emphasise the differentiation in the curriculum delivery and to diversify so that it is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the needs that may arise. This in turn boosts the confidence of these disabled learners in that they can see the effort being made to accommodate them in the learning process and they can surely and positively reciprocate (Department of Basic Education 2001).

On 30 March 2007, South Africa signed and became a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This signature was ratified on 30 November 2007. Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, contained in chapter 2 of the 'Bill of Rights', expressly prohibits the unfair treatment and discrimination of people with disabilities or another health-related status. The first democratic government drafted the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) in 1997, which was a White Paper which laid out numerous government policies to tackle the issue of disability in South Africa. In 2015, the drafted White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which updated and added the previous White Paper of 1997, the provisions of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol.

ormer President Jacob Zuma's ministerial cabinet included the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities from 2009 to 2014. The department dealing with issues related to disability was widely regarded as inefficient and underperforming in most of its affairs. This led to the former President's second term in office disbanding the department and transferring the entire organisation to the Department of Social Development. This department was then led by Minister Bathabile Dhlamini. A march with more than 150 people was organised by the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) to the Union Buildings to protest this change. The organisation stated that the move would even make matters worse than they already were, as the Department of Social Development had problems of its own which it was seriously failing to address.

The Department of Social Development's 2015 White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities updated and supplemented the 1997 INDS by integrating the provisions of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol.

During the apartheid regime, there were policies that separated schools based on racial segregation as well as disability. There were schools for the disabled which included schools for the blind, deaf or intellectually impaired children. Schools that provided for physically disabled children had the same academic curriculum as schools for the able-bodied. Besides, they were equipped with medical and paramedical services in case the children needed them. Obviously, the schools for white children were better equipped and organised than the ones that catered for black children. The democratic government of former President Nelson Mandela in 1994 introduced new policies to move away from the practices and followed an approach to accommodate all the children unless a child required special attention based on their disability. Children who were disabled had the choice of studying together with able-bodied children if they could. However, the process of developing the facilities and improving the education system to accommodate these children with disabilities continues to prove too slow, in that most schools still do not have resources in braille for children who are blind. The 2014 CSDA study also shows that there has been an increase in the percentage number from 0.3% in 2002 to 2% in 2014 of people with disabilities in South African who achieve university degrees.

Maria Rantho, deceased in 2002, was the very first person with a disability in a wheelchair to become a member of parliament of the National Assembly of South Africa. The South African Community Action Network put in place a hotline in which people can report illegally parked cars on parking spots reserved for the disabled only.

### **5.3.2. Public awareness campaign**

The “Know Your Constitution” campaign is a one-of-its-kind movement/campaign which advocates for the right to constitutional literacy for everyone, even including the right to have access to physical copies of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This campaign peaked nationally on the 10th of December 2013 – the 17th ‘birthday’ of the official adoption of the South African Constitution. One of their main areas of focus is on the rights of people with disabilities. According to this campaign, people with disabilities are not just blind street beggars at traffic lights or a group of very important celebrities with disabilities; but also, that the relative invisibility of people who are disabled in our society fails to give a true impression of the fact that up to 15% of our national population may have an impairment or disability of some kind in or outside of them. The immense effort and work being done by SECTION 27 and Afrika Tikkun showcase the fact that constitutional literacy is a necessary tool that serves as the mouthpiece that enables the marginalised to speak for themselves. This in turn provides an example of what those voices can achieve, given access to and the understanding of our Constitution (Suleman & Elphick 2013). We feel that our children with disabilities should not be treated as if they do not exist! They also have rights to education like all other children,” states a letter that was presented to a Ward Councillor in Orange Farm in one of the campaign cases. A small group of carers of marginalised children from the township drafted and arranged the delivery of this letter to the government officials as a response to the ill-treatment they have been receiving. The carers are members of the *Sidinga Uthando* Self-help Group. This group consists of amazing mothers who undertook a period of twelve sessions that trained them on disability and human constitutional and legislative rights and their enforcement. One of the constitutional rights enforced by the group of women was that of Section 29 of the Constitution, which states that all children must have immediate access to basic education, at least provided by the State. This was not the case in the township and the women decided to take it upon themselves to fight the problem and ensure that every disabled child received the adequate and basic education that was due to them. They compiled lists with the details of all the children who had some form of bodily disability and

needed some form of basic education and presented it to the provincial department of education. An educational facility for the children was built as a result which could accommodate the children. This particular constitutional section has been there for a very long time and it had to take a group of courageous women to realise the power and impact it had when enforced on the government institution responsible for fulfilling the specific obligation owed to the children. More and more civil organisations followed suit when they had learned of this national news. This is a clear sign that structural discrimination and systematic exclusion of the margin is not just limited to disabled people in urban areas, but in the whole of South Africa and the world together. The organisation for disabled, *Siphila Isizwa* in the Kwa-Zulu Natal, also led the enforcement of Section of 29 of the Constitution so that their children who are disabled had access to the basic education that they were deprived of. Another great example of the advocacy of rights of disabled people is an event organised by Section 27 together by former Justice Zakeria Yacoob of the Constitutional Court, who became blind at 16 months due to meningitis and has lived with it his whole life. Students for Law and Social Justice in the form of a workshop based on constitutional literacy, especially with the focus on constitutional rights for the disabled in South Africa, formed the subjects of discussion for the four days period they were in session. The former Justice had the following to say, hoping that the people themselves get stronger and they are able to organise themselves, able to understand more clearly what they need and they are able to demand it. Because I believe that with the absence of a strong civil society, the government will never deliver properly, whoever that government will be.

### **5.3.3. Organisations advocating for people with disabilities**

This list (Disability Allsorts 2013) includes some of the organisations advocating for people with disabilities such as:

1. Disabled People South Africa (DPSA): This organisation is responsible for developing, educating and integrating persons with disabilities into the society within South Africa.
2. African Disabled Refugees Organisation: This organisation is responsible for providing support for African Refugees.
3. Alexandra Disability Movement: It is involved in different projects including advocacy, disability, job creation, and welfare in relation to people with disabilities.

4. Association for and of Persons with disabilities: It offers a wide range of services in assistance to people with disabilities including residential facilities, learning centres, a school support programme, a youth empowerment programme, leadership camps, sports clubs, an entrepreneurship programme, a rehabilitation programme, skills development, and a job creation programme.
5. Association for Persons with Physical disabilities: This association does quite a lot for people with physical disabilities that include: community development, protective workshops, training in work skills, access, awareness, placement, sport and the continual fight for equality for physically challenged people.
6. Association for the Rehabilitation of People with Disability: It provides its services in collaboration with communities and/or directly with individuals that are beneficial to people with disabilities in so many ways.
7. Centre for Rehabilitation Studies - African Policy on Disability and Development (A-PODD) Project: A project developed with the objective to collect and analyse research based information as to whether people with disabilities take part in national and international policy initiatives that target poverty reduction.
8. Children's Assessment and Therapy Centre: The Centre is focused on evaluating and determining early learning and behavioural difficulties in children and how to best help them.
9. Children's Disability Centre: It is interested in the early childhood development of children by focusing on their medical and developmental assessments of disabled children; therapy; support to children and caregivers; training and skills development in the management of disabled children; gathering and publishing of statistics; resource and consultancy centre networking with other organisations and government authorities.
10. CREATE - CBR Education and Training for Empowerment: It provides training and education to community-based rehabilitation workers, including workshops and courses in disability and rehabilitation.

11. Curamus Association: This caters for members of the South African Security Services or their dependents who have a disability and those people with disabilities caused by war.
12. Disability Action Research Team: They have the objective to conduct research and provide information about disability, all information that clearly demystifies disability and encourages people with disabilities to belong to and take part in activities in their communities.
13. Disability Alliance (Formerly South African Federal Council on Disability): It is responsible for the discussion, joint planning, collaboration and consensus-seeking among key role players within the disability sector.
14. Disability Connexion: This is a multi-national and inter-denominational Christian organisation which aims to bring together people with disabilities and connect them together and the church.
15. Disability Empowerment Concerns Trust: This is a broad-based BEE investment project that was established by the seven largest South African disability NGO's for their own benefit.
16. Disability Info and Care: They are focused on the training of care-workers, placement of care-workers, personal development programmes for people with disabilities, employment placement, personal consultation, and enquiries on all disability issues.
17. The Disability Help-Line - Networking on Disability Issues: They support persons with disability through a series of networking on disability issues, a telephone help-line, assessments of the accessibility of existing buildings and facilities where access is required by people with disabilities.
18. Disability Options: This is an independent movement collaborating with people with movement disabilities as well as other physical, vision, hearing, speech and mental disabilities.
19. Disabled Children's Action Group: They work together with the DPSA and protect the rights of disabled children to ensure the positive development of these children in

their respective communities. They also serve to promote the issue of disability and do-away with barriers and perceptions of disabled people in South Africa.

20. Disabled Care Group: This Group aims to fully support persons with disabilities or chronically ill people, or persons who are looking after people with disabilities or chronically ill spouse(s).
21. Disabled Youth South Africa: Their objective is the organisation of projects with the aim to promote the equal rights for youth with disabilities and to direct and guide these youths in their awareness programmes about socio-economic issues, such as health care, especially AIDS.
22. Gauteng North Services to People with disabilities: It protects and advances the rights and well-being of disabled people in Gauteng North in a series of beneficial projects in favour of the disabled.
23. Health Professions Council of South Africa: This Council was created with the aim of protecting recipients of health care services, guide practitioners on educational, professional and ethical issues, and coordinate the 12 professional boards in setting health care standards for training and discipline in the professions registered with the Council, ensuring on-going professional competence and fostering compliance with those standards.

## **5.5. CONCLUSION**

One of the missions of the church is to facilitate the integration of disability problems throughout the spectrum of the life of the church and society, while paying due attention to the particular and unique areas that needed equalisation of possibilities. One of these areas is to defend the rights of people with disabilities. It means working with churches to promote the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the spiritual, social and developmental life of the church and society and advocate for the general improvement of services for people with disabilities

The church must become an advocate for and with them. One has to come to realise that in order to understand what the Constitution and what various legislative provisions say and provide for the disabled, one does not need to depend on their bodily disabilities as a



stumbling block because they are either blind, dumb, deaf and so on, but that these laws have been drafted and enacted to benefit everyone equally. This is also a clear example that the availability and accessibility of the Constitution and the other legislative provisions are for the benefit of all especially the disabled and makes it possible for the disabled to have a weapon to rely on when demanding equal and fair treatment for themselves with regard to how things are done in the environment they find themselves in. They can always rely on and use them to be treated as equal as or even better than able-bodied people. South Africa has one of the most progressive, liberal and democratic constitutions, but there still remains a huge gap between reading the law as it is and having it applied in the lives of the disabled who already expect to have equality and fairness in every situation of life. Most of the time, the implementation has to be enforced and really sought for by the ones affected the most, either by themselves or through their representatives.

## CHAPTER SIX

### COACHING AS AN INTEGRAL PROCESS IN FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES FOR THE INCLUSION OF HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

During the process of data collection, the need for coaching regarding hearing-impaired people was raised by almost 75% of Francophone pastors who participated in the survey. Hence the importance of this chapter is to bring to the research practical contributions on how to handle the challenges of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

“We are called to joyfully engage in the ways of the Holy Spirit, who empowers people from the margins with the agency, in the search for justice and dignity (Acts 1:8; 4:31).” (Arusha 2018:1)

The churches must have an effective coaching programme for a successful mission for and by hearing-impaired people.

Hull (2006:25) stated, “Discipleship ranks as God’s top priority because Jesus practiced it and commanded us to do it, and his followers continued.” The reason why an effective coaching programme is very important is that it enables churches to achieve the Great Commission in (Matthew 28:19-20) *which is the missio Dei*. An acceptable coaching programme which will be called “discipleship” enables believers to live missional lives for their unbelieving neighbours and go to the ends of the earth to preach the gospel.

A valuable discipleship programme helps believers in the church be equipped to use their gifts that God has given them. An excellent discipleship programme sends out equipped believers to do ministry in the church and world as preachers, leaders, servants, teachers, and so on.

A wonderful discipleship programme facilitates a coaching process that helps people who were sent to be great leaders, just as Jesus did for his disciples. A worthy discipleship programme empowers believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. A great discipleship programme makes believers expand the Kingdom of God. A discipleship programme is a very powerful tool for churches to reach out to the lost people and to equip believers. It also encourages Christians to be sent out into the world to expand the Kingdom of God.

If there is no effective coaching programme in churches, churches will get lost in a maze, not realising where to go, what to do, and the how and why of doing it. Leaders of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg have a serious problem trying to put in place an effective and biblical discipleship programme because they think that discipleship is a programme for training believers in Bible study, prayer, and other courses. Many leaders think that a discipleship programme is designed to revolutionise a church in regard to numerical and spiritual growth.

Earley (2013:3) stated, “Making disciples is not a suggestion to be merely considered or an option to entertain. Making disciples must dominate the life of a Christ follower.” Discipleship is not just for new believers or believers who are prepared, but it is for all believers so they may become more and more mature until Jesus Christ returns for his bride. It is not enough for some believers to learn what the Bible says, how to pray, or how to preach, and so on.

Hull (2006:24) demonstrated Jesus taught that faith means to follow. That was his first test of a person’s faith. Following, however, is not short term. Discipleship is not a programme or an event; it is a way of life. It is not for a limited time, but for our whole life. Discipleship is not for beginners alone; it is for all believers for every day of their life. Discipleship is not just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does. It is not just part of the advances of God’s kingdom; the existence of disciples is evidence of God’s work on earth. Without enough of these works, the task languishes and the work remains incomplete.

An effective biblical element in a discipleship programme is to recognise that it is a life-long process. This chapter will present a practical and biblical professional programme model call discipleship for Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to accompany them to include hearing-impaired people in the *missio Dei*

In order to make this programme effective, it is advisable to be focus on relationships. Jim Putnam demonstrated, “When it comes to discipleship, relationships are the pipe. They are the conduits that deliver the precious ingredients of discipleship.” (Dongshin 2018 page number)

There are seven-points that will be discussed in this chapter: the concept of coaching in general, the contextualisation of the gospel in the light of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg regarding hearing-impaired people, the biblical basis of contextualisation

of the Word of God, a cultural anthropological understanding of the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg as a mission base, cross-cultural ministry demands total sacrifice, a reflection on the apostle Paul's missiological model of cross-cultural ministry, how Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg can implement practical effective coaching, and the Francophone churches praxis to follow in regard with hearing-impaired people.

## **6.2. CONCEPT OF DISCIPLESHIP COACHING IN GENERAL**

According to the *Cambridge Online Dictionary*, the word coaching is the act of giving special classes in sports, a school subject, or a work-related activity, especially to one person or a small group.

The Arusha statement (2018:1) declares,

Discipleship is both a gift and a calling to be active collaborators with God for the transforming of the world (1Thessalonians 3:2). In what the church's early theologians called "*theosis*" or deification, we share God's grace by sharing God's mission. This journey of discipleship leads us to share and live out God's love in Jesus Christ by seeking justice and peace in ways that are different from the world (John 14:27). Thus, we are responding to Jesus' call to follow him from the margins of our world (Luke 4:16-19).

On the website of "Library of Professional Coaching" the historical understanding of the professional coaching was summarised as follow:

Coaching emerged during the postmodern period of the late twentieth century, born of a rapidly changing socio-economic environment and nourished by the root disciplines of psychology, business, sports, and adult education. Now, approximately twenty years later, as we look forward to the professional challenges the field is facing today, we can benefit from the perspective we have gained on its short but explosive history. That history, characterised by the interaction between and the cross-disciplinary development of its root disciplines, is further complicated by the generational differences and varying professional backgrounds of its originators, as well as the changing socio-economic conditions of the period (history of coaching professional 2018.)

Considering this summary, ‘coaching’ is a relatively new concept which arose in the working environment about 20 years ago. The practice behind the concept of coaching seemed to be a great need in many fields besides the traditional field of sports. And even today, due to the continuously growing number of job seekers, professional coaching is essential in various disciplines. Therefore it is important to understand the coaching process applied to hear impaired people.

### **6.2.1. Reaching**

The Arusha Statement (2018:1) states:

We are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ—the fullness of life, the repentance and forgiveness of sin, and the promise of eternal life—in word and deed, in a violent world where many are sacrificed to the idols of death (Jeremiah 32:35) and where many have not yet heard the gospel.

The first step for an effective coaching programme for a disciple-making model is reaching, which means reaching out to all humankind with the gospel through a variety of ways to Christ. In order to reach out to all kinds of people for salvation, the first thing that all believers have to do is to go to their neighbours who are not believers. The Great Commission in Matthew 29:19-20 relates to go to all nations in order to make disciples. Going is a prerequisite of making disciples and is essential in reaching out to all humankind. Jesus Christ reached out to many lost people to make multiplying disciples.

Malphurs (1992:42) said,

The Saviour clarifies what He means by this word in such passages as Luke 5:27-32, 15:1-10, and 19:1-10, where He develops the concept of seeking lost people such as Levi the tax-gatherer and his friends, tax-gathers and sinners in general, and Zacchaeus. Far too many churches are waiting for people to come to them... the church will have to take the initiative and pursue these all humankind.

The churches must reach out to all humankind to Christ with the gospel so that they can be made disciples and not wait for them to come in the church. Jesus Christ came to the earth to

seek out people and give them salvation. He commanded all believers to go to the ends of the world to preach the gospel, just as He did.

Many Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg have been using the “Come and See” method to save people especially for disabled. This means that churches invite unbelievers to the church through wonderful events, programmes, and sometimes popular celebrities. Many churches find this method attractive for getting unbelievers to come to church. Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg host big festival events or programmes when they invite unbelievers several times a year. The reason why Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg have been using “Come and See” is because they consider evangelism as an event or temporary programme. But, this method has serious repercussions because unbelievers go to special events and are not seen again. Churches spend lots of money on the events and on honoraria given to popular celebrities. Big churches can accomplish this type of ministry within their budget, but for a small church, it is all but impossible. These days, big churches are getting bigger and small churches are getting smaller because of “attractional model.” At the very heart of winning people to Christ are believers going out to the lost and developing relationships with them while at the same time showing them the love of Christ and his transforming power in their lives. Going to them and having relationships is so much more important than saying “Come and See.” Going to reach out to lost people in the command of Jesus Christ that all believers must obey for the entirety of their time on earth. In order to make reaching work for Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, church leaders must plant DNA of the Great Commission in the heart of believers.

### **6.2.2. Service- evangelism**

There are many ways to serve and evangelise people for the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

First of all, an outreach ministry is very effective in seeking out people. Believers can serve unbelievers with their gifts or professional skills such as cutting hair, giving beauty treatments, providing medical care, helping with their needs, and so on. This ministry has to be carried out as often as churches can manage. Serving can make an unbeliever open their heart toward Jesus Christ. After their heart is opened, believers can share with them the gospel and, God-willing, they will start attending church soon after.

### **6.2.3. Open Small Group**

Another effective way to share the gospel with people is with an open small group. This is an easy and laidback environment to invite unbelievers into.

This discipleship model is used by churches with a concept of helping an unbeliever experience the love of believers and Jesus Christ. This is not making unbelievers go to church, but asking them to come to a friend or neighbour's house and share their lives together. The purpose of the open small group is to open the heart of unbelievers in order to show them Jesus Christ. Before believers preach the gospel, the group basically shows unbelievers the difference between secular people and Christians through group sharing. These days, many people have heavy burdens weighing on their hearts and this group provides a safe place for unbelievers to open up about their situations and receive comfort. One of the most important aspects of open small groups is that believers show unbelievers how their lives were transformed and are still being changed today. As time passes, believers share the gospel with the people in their group and ask them to come to church.

This is an effective way of meeting people, showing them their need for Christ, and sharing the gospel with them.

### **6.2.4. Relationship-Evangelism**

“God is a missional God. The self-diffusive, gathering, and sending nature of God means that missionality starts with a relationship, a going beyond oneself, being in relation and calling others to relation (Bevans & Schroeder 2011:10). ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4:8) is the core and essence of God. It is because of this *ἀγάπη* [love] that is shared within the Trinity and with his creation that God sent His Son as a redeemer to a lost world to restore the broken relationship between the world and him.” (Wright2013:1)

This evangelism is achieved through deeply rooted relationships. This is very unpopular in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg because many Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg do not value relationships. Biblically speaking, believers have to be good trees before they bear abundant fruit. This means that believers have to have close relationships with unbelievers before they preach the gospel to them. Believers can have relationships with family members, neighbours, people in the villages, co-workers, friends, and so on. After they have a good relationship, believers can then preach the gospel and

invite them to the church. “The journey of discovering community and relationship in the Trinity sets the example and standard of who and what the church should be.” (Wright2013:1-2)

### **6.2.5. Community Serving Ministry**

Community Serving Ministry is a great method for gently helping unbelievers open their heart toward Christ and his church. There are many ways to serve in the local community. The college for old men and women in the church is effective to serve unbelievers with many kinds of programmes. Helping take care of the disabled is also another way that the church can reach out to the community and share the gospel with the least of these. When the local community has an urgent need, churches can step up to help fulfil that need through a Community Serving Ministry. The Arusha call (2018:1) says: “We are called to be formed as servant leaders who demonstrate the way of Christ in a world that privileges power, wealth, and the culture of money (Luke 22:25-27).”

Reaching is the first step for discipleship in Francophone churches in Pretoria. Hull said (2006:34), “The first step in making disciples is evangelism. One reason contemporary disciple-making doesn’t produce new disciples is because churches limit disciple-making to training people who are already Christians. Instead, all disciples should be actively involved in finding others who need Christ.”

All churches must go to lost people to have a relationship and to preach the gospel. Many believers tend only to associate with people from the church and do not regularly interact with unbelievers. All believers have the potential to fill the church and then they leave the church to go home where they are to be as lights shining in the darkness of a sinful world. Believers should not hide from the world, but permeate it with the gospel, reaching out to the lost people to Christ. All believers have to saturate the world with the gospel. Jesus was incarnated to reach out to all humankind and he gave up living at his rightful and perfect place beside the Father in heaven. He gave that up to reach out all humankind. Paul stated, “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).



### **6.2.6. Developing and training disciples**

The sixth step for an effective coaching programme of disciple-making model for Francophone churches to develop, which means that all believers must be developed to love God and people and to expand the Kingdom of God through the growing, training, and equipping stages. Paul wrote,

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

These verses demonstrate three different areas of ministry: growing, training, and equipping. Paul indicated that the reason why Jesus Christ called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is to equip believers for serving. And all believers have to reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of Son of God, and they have to be mature in the fullness of Christ. This means growing through training— equipping. These verses emphasise that all believers have to be trained because God wants them to be like Jesus Christ and equipped to serve Him and their neighbours. In this regard, growing, training, and equipping are paramount in the sixth step of the effective coaching program of the disciple-making model.

- **Specific Suggestions for developing**

There are specific activities that can be used to help develop believers through growing, training and equipping such as worship, small group studies, education classes, training classes, and so on. On the first activity, Gustafson (2006:23) stated, “Worship is the act and attitude of wholeheartedly giving yourself to God-Spirit, soul, mind and body.”

When believers give God their Spirit, soul, mind and body wholeheartedly, they can encounter God’s existence. Through encountering God in worship, believers can be forgiven from their sins and transformed into mature people. Although they still have serious problems of sin in their lives, every time they come to God in worship with a humble heart, they will experience God’s grace, and this makes them developed in front of God.

The first activity is an education class where those who were called are educated using many different curricula. The various classes help believers to learn and experience the Word of God through Bible school, prayer school, evangelism school, service school, and so on. These classes emphasise the most basic areas in Christian life. All believers can learn how to read the Bible, how to study it, how to pray to God, meditate, preach the gospel to unbelievers, and how to overcome the power of evil.

The second activity is the small group. All believers should be involved in a small group as part of the body of Christ. It is almost impossible for a large group in the church to have and maintain intimate relationships, but small groups make it possible for each person to be involved in the church and experience transformation through the deep relationships that small groups have to offer.

Gladden (2011:38) argues that,

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). That means they devoted themselves to growing in Christ and maturity. Evidently not only did they listen to what the apostles were teaching in the temple courts on the Sabbath and other days, but these people also gathered in their homes and studied and practiced what was being taught in the temple courts.

Both large group services and small groups are important. Through large group services, believers can learn good lessons how to live in the world as Christians. Through small groups, the believer can study the Bible deeply and put what they have learned from their studies into practice.

### **6.2.7. Growing**

After a person accepts the call to salvation, the process where a believer starts growing in Christ-likeness begins. Paul said,

Therefore do not let sin reign in our mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness (Romans 6:12-13).

Although a person becomes a believer and the Spirit abides in his or her heart, the temptation to still sin lurks at the door. A believer has to intentionally strive with the power of sin and through that striving growth occurs.

#### **6.2.8. Training**

After a believer begins growing, they should be given training for it enables Christians to be strong soldiers for the Kingdom of God who grow to be like Jesus Christ and serve God and people with their gifts. And, because it is almost impossible for believers to grow without intentional training, training is essential in the church for discipleship.

All believers have to be intentionally strong in the Lord and in the power of His might that comes through training. If believers do not train themselves, they will be defeated. In order to be fully trained, believers need the truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word. With these, believers can be trained as strong soldiers. According to the Word of God, all believers have to read the Bible, pray to God, worship God, preach the gospel, have fellowship with believers, and live in the life of self-control and self-discipline. (See Grudem, 1999:332)

All believers who have received some education have to be trained with intensive programmes so that they can be equipped to minister. It is a little different than education and training because it is a more intensive process for equipping believers to use their gifts to serve God and people in the church and in the world. The best representation of these types of training classes is a small group, Ministry Training, Bible Doctrine Training, and the school of prayer. Through these training classes, believers will be equipped to serve God and people. Reading the Bible, Prayer life, Worship, Witnessing, Fellowship, and self-discipline are essential to training believers to grow like Christ.

#### **6.2.9. Equipping**

Equipping is used to make all believers equipped to serve God and people with their gifts. The reason why all believers have to be equipped to grow is that they have to serve God and people and they cannot do that well if they are not equipped. God has given all believers gifts that they are to use to serve Him and others. Christians must discover, develop, and use their gifts and talents to glorify God. Although believers want to become like Christ, many do not

want to be involved in ministry or use their gifts for the church. This is not as good as the children of God. Christians have to be prepared to become disciple-makers.

### **6.2.10. Sending**

All believers have to be sent out so that they can obey the Great Commission. It is not biblical for believers only to function within the church, learning wonderful things but never putting them into practice with their neighbours. This is not true and complete discipleship. The ultimate purpose of discipleship is not simply to train believers but to send them out into the world to expand the Kingdom of God as disciple-makers. Jesus Christ said, “These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instruction: Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans” (Matthew 10:5). Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to the villages to preach the gospel. And Jesus said, “After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Luke 10:1). Jesus sent out seventy-two others to every town and place to preach about the gospel. And Jesus Christ said, “Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). After Jesus was raised from death, again, He spoke about sending out his disciples. Although Jesus had trained his disciples for about three years through his deep relationship with them, he sent his disciples into the world to save the lost people when he ascended to heaven. When Jesus had to leave earth to go to heaven, he said,

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

If the Great Commission is going to be achieved, believers must go to all the nations carrying and proclaiming that message. Without going, nothing happens. Jesus Christ sent His disciples to all nations to make disciples. Sending ministry was very important in the ministry of Christ. If churches are to truly imitate the discipleship ministry of Jesus Christ then all churches have to send out believers into the world to make disciples.

Today, this is one of the most serious problems Francophone churches encounter: disciple-making is not for pastors, but for all believers. Many pastors have been trying to raise up mature disciples in the church, but those who were trained by pastors do not go to the world and make other disciples. Pastors are making disciples, not disciple-makers. Jesus made not

just faithful and mature disciples but disciple-makers who turned the world upside down. Making disciples is not the end-goal. Leaders have to make disciples who can make other disciples - disciple-makers. Those who were trained and sent out have to make other disciples.

Earley (2013:74) represented a disciple as “a person who has been summoned to be sent. Any discipleship scheme that leaves out ministry is ineffective. Jesus trained them to do something: fish for men and be sent out to preach.” Believers should not be satisfied with just training. They should seek to possess a passionate heart that drives them to share the gospel with a lost and dying world.

Up till now, Francophone churches have misunderstood that discipleship is a short term programme taught by pastors. Jones (2004:10) explains that,

This mindset prohibits those who have been trained from taking their knowledge of God to those do not have it. All believers have to go to all nations as missionaries of God to save the lost and to make disciples. Tom Jones demonstrated, God’s nature is at the root of mission. The living God portrayed in the Bible is a sending God. He sends because of His love for the world (See John 3:16). He sent Abraham from his home into the unknown, promising to bless the world through him if he obeyed (See Gen 12:1-3). God sent Joseph into Egypt to help preserve God’s people during a time of famine (See Gen 45:4-8). When the time had fully come, God sent His son. Later, the Father and the Son sent the Spirit on Pentecost (cf Gal 4:4-6; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; See Acts 2:33). Finally, Christ sends His church (Matt 28:19-20).

Earley (2013:79) said, “Jesus was sent as a missionary to the world to make disciples. He has sent His disciples into the world to make disciples. To follow Jesus fully means that you and I must follow His example and be missionaries.”

The important thing that all church leaders must do is to plant the DNA of a missionary in all believers to make them preach the gospel to all nations and disciple-makers. A sending ministry is the most powerful ministry for the expansion of God’s kingdom, and is almost impossible to accomplish without the work of believers who are sent out to the nations. Jesus chose just twelve disciples and sent them out as disciple-makers. They made other disciple-makers through the sending ministry and caused the gospel to spread throughout the world.

- **Specific suggestions for Sending**

The most critical aspect of the tenth step of discipleship is, Sending, is making sure that the believers who are sent out adequately understand the gospel message and can explain it. They can take this message out into their homes, local communities, working places, campuses, and overseas. Using the small group environment is especially helpful because they enable believers to meet unbelievers in a low-key atmosphere and to make disciples effectively. Those who were trained have to be leaders of small groups in order to make disciples. There are many positions for trained believers to become leaders. When the newly trained believers become the new generation of leaders, they are really becoming the new disciple-makers. This relational cycle is the natural means by which the church of God grows.

### **6.2.11. Instruction**

The eleventh step for an effective coaching programme for a disciple-making model is instruction. Christians who are sent out into the world have to be given instructions by more experienced church leaders for them to grow and become more effective as disciple-makers. All church leaders have to be coached. It is almost impossible to do ministry effectively alone because there are too many frustrating difficulties. The body of Christ was designed in such a way that the older teach the younger and that is exactly what instruction is. Through instruction, trained Christians can be taught effective wisdom, ministry skills, how to deal with difficult people, good methods for ministry, comforts, and so on. Satan tries to make believers downcast when their efforts aren't as successful and they think they ought to be. Instruction is the best antidote to those disappointments. If discipleship was easy instruction wouldn't be necessary. However, building up or making disciples is hard and believers will be frustrated if they go it alone. All those who are sent need a mentor, just as Paul mentored Timothy. They need instruction to be effective disciple-makers Jesus used the instruction step in his discipleship to build up his disciples. Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Sending his disciples out was like sending a sheep among wolves.

Because it was so hard, he often coached his disciples giving them much needed encouragement. When seventy-two people whom he sent out returned with joy, he instructed them with encouragement. And, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit"

(John 20:21-22). Jesus sent his disciples into the world and he said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” He did not send them out alone, but he gave them the promised Holy Spirit. This is his coaching ministry. And although Jesus was not with his disciples on earth in the book of Acts, he was coaching his disciples while in heaven. The four gospels are about the ministry of Jesus on the earth and the book of Acts is regarding his ministry in heaven by his Spirit called the Holy Spirit.

Disciple-making without an instruction, makes it almost impossible for believers to multiply. Earley (2013:172) said, “Without continual coaching and accountability, your disciple group leaders will not continue to multiply. Disciple group leaders must receive continual coaching and accountability or they will not continue to multiply.” Instruction encourages trained people not to give up making disciples in spite of their many frustrations. In order to actually help trained believers, instruction is essential. In order for coaching to be effective in discipleship, all pastors must realise that they are to be coaches as well. Although pastors often make disciples with programmes, the more important role for them to fulfil is to coach leaders so they can be effective in disciple-making. There are many things that pastors can do in relation to instruction. Prayer is vital in the instruction ministry.

Pastors have to pray for leaders to be great disciple-makers. Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17. Prayer enables the Holy Spirit to work in the leaders. Pastors must also continually preach the word to their leaders. These leaders go out to preach from the Bible and pastors are crucial in helping leaders to learn and understand the Bible message. Finally, caring is a very important thing in coaching ministry. These are very important actions that all pastors have to take. All leaders have to have a deep relationship with their coach mentor. There is not a single person who can accomplish this alone. A coach will help his or her leader be effective and overcome difficult obstacles with actual comments, prayer, caring, and so on.

All churches have to build up their coaches to help their leaders be disciple-makers so they don't give up on the ministry. All leaders cannot be coaches, because this is a spiritual gift. Churches must carefully choose their instruction according to their spiritual gifts.

#### **6.2.12. Filling with the Holy Spirit**

White (2015:3) argues that:

From the Pentecostals' perspective, the role of the Holy Spirit has been paramount in the *missio Dei* process. He has been active in the Old Testament, in creation, in redemption, and in various other spiritual undertakings. In the New Testament, however, his work becomes totally and evidently apparent and prominent with regard to world mission. This implies that the starting place for considering the spiritual dynamics of mission must be in recognising the role of the Holy Spirit.

Filling with the Holy Spirit is the most essential thing in converting, equipping, sending out, and coaching believers. It is directly related to expanding the Kingdom of God. If there is no filling with the Holy Spirit in discipleship, then nothing has really happened. Reaching without the filling of the Holy Spirit does not save lost people. If someone is saved, they will be filled. Equipping without the filling of the Holy Spirit is not effective. In order for reaching and equipping to be effective, all people have to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. Sending and coaching without filling with the Holy Spirit does not work. When Jesus Christ said that "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21), He emphasised receiving the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no power behind the sending and coaching ministry. Filling with the Holy Spirit is indispensable for effective discipleship. Without the Holy Spirit, everything becomes the work of humans and not of God.

Earley (2013:33) demonstrated, the work of the Holy Spirit does not end when a person is saved. The Holy Spirit becomes our primary Comforter (John 14:16-17) and Teacher (cf John 14:26; 1Cor 2:12; 2 See Pet 1:21). His life flows unhindered through us, He becomes our Life-changer (Gal 5:22-23). He is our spiritual gift-giver (1 Cor 12:4-11). The Holy Spirit is the most important person in your spiritual life. Beyond that He is described as our guide (Rom 8:14; 1 Thess 5:19) and Power-giver (Eph 3:16; Luke 24:49. Acts 1:8). In order to lead other people to Christ, we need the spiritual guidance and spiritual power given by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the most important person in your ministry life.

White (2015:3) states that:

The missional role of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the unbelievers, but it is also extended to believers in order to fulfil their ministry in the church and their mission in the world. The Holy Spirit, for example, came upon the



disciples on the day of Pentecost for the purpose of equipping them to begin the mission entrusted to them (Acts 2:1–41). This role of the Holy Spirit in believers therefore includes empowering believers for mission and character development, which could also be called the ‘life in the Holy Spirit’.

Reference required

In the Bible, there are many roles given to the Holy Spirit. He is the Comforter, Teacher, Life-changer, Gift-giver, our Guide, and Power-giver. These roles are all related to discipleship. In order to make believers into disciple-makers, the role the Holy Spirit plays is essential, because He can do everything for effective discipleship. The Holy Spirit is better than any other for making discipleship effective. Even, Jesus Christ needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit when he started his ministry. He was baptised and the Holy Spirit came to him.

In the above figure for the discipleship model, filling with the Holy Spirit is the roof that covers the house. Filling with the Holy Spirit must covers everything in discipleship, that is to say, all people who are disciples must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

One of the most effective discipleship strategies in history was that of Jesus’ twelve disciples in the early church recorded in Acts. Whenever Luke explains effective discipleship, he intentionally emphasises that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They prayed, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and then preached the gospel without fear. The reason why they could make non-believers believe in Jesus Christ, grow in maturity, and then make disciple-makers were that they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **6.2.13. Expanding the Kingdom of God**

The foundation of this effective coaching programme of a disciple-making model is expanding the Kingdom of God. The ultimate purpose of this discipleship model is to expand the Kingdom of God, not expand the church building or increase the number of church members. A problem that Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg encounter is that they are focusing on expanding their own church building or membership rather than expanding the Kingdom of God. Although many churches experiencing numerical growth preach the gospel to the people, many people who register in the church come from another church, which is horizontal migration. This is not expanding the Kingdom of God, but expanding the number of church members. McNeal (2003:24-25) indicated that,

Wrong Question: How Do We Grow This church? Or How Do We Get Them to Come to Us? This is the wrong questions. This is not the reason why churches exist in the world. Like these questions, if churches want to grow their churches numerically, they need effective methodology, human psychology, management issues, strategic planning, raising unprecedented amounts of money, and communication skills. All of this has been done with what result? Diminishing returns!

Cole (2010:169) said, “Success is not measured by how many people come but by how many go! We want to measure the church’s sending capacity more than its seating capacity.”

In the Great Commission, Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations. Churches have to send believers out to make disciples, not to gather believers to their specific church building. At that time, the Kingdom of God will be expanded. Luke wrote, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). In order to expand the Kingdom of God, believers have to go to the ends of the earth and possess a missional spirituality.

Cole (2010: 170) demonstrated, “missional spirituality requires that God’s people be captured by His heart for people, that our hearts be broken for what breaks His, that we rejoice in what brings Him joy.” The first priority all church leaders have to have is that they need to send believers to where the unbelievers are and not bring them to the church through the guise of additional programmes.

Matthew wrote, “Jesus went through all the town and villages, teaching in their Synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (Matthew9:35). Jesus taught many people in the Synagogues, preached the gospel of the kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness. Jesus went to places to meet unbelievers and preach the gospel. This made God’s kingdom expand. His ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing was for expanding the Kingdom of God. Regardless of what discipleship model is in a church, all discipleship models have to be focused on expanding the Kingdom of God.

The thing to expand the Kingdom of God is to plant DNA of the Kingdom of God to believers. So, all church leaders have to recognise and explain that the Kingdom of God is the first priority in church ministry. They have to have that vision in mind in order to expand the

Kingdom of God. Christians must know the purpose of the church and the reason why it exists in the world if they are ever going to fulfil their God given role. All parts in this discipleship model are for expanding the Kingdom of God. If church leaders do not have this vision, their discipleship is meaningless.

### **6.3. HOW FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES IN PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG CAN IMPLEMENT PRACTICAL EFFECTIVE COACHING**

The primary mission of the church is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the people of all nations and cultures. The Great Commission therefore, is not an option but a command that has to be obeyed without question. The local church therefore, should make the business of every believer to share the gospel in one way or the other, reaching out to those who have never heard about the good news of Jesus Christ. There are spiritual principles that the local church should implement if the concept of coaching and cross-cultural mission should be achieved.

#### **6.3.1. Prayer life**

Prayer changes things and people. It is the foundation of the relationship between God and a believer. It is through prayer that God confirms individual calling. It is the communication channel between believers and God. Prayer is not all about talking but listening to what God is saying which is a very crucial principle in missions and cross-cultural. It must be understood that mission, especially in the context of cultural pluralism, is a head-on spiritual battle where the believers are rescuing people who are in the territory of the evil one. Therefore before one goes into mission sent by the church, the prayer life has to be very strong in other words, his or her relationship with God has to be on very good terms. Jesus Christ is the role model of a leader, who depended on prayer, he withdrew from people just to pray, at certain occasions he instructed his disciples that some of the problems need much prayer and fasting.( Matthew 17:21)

The first thing that the locals should implement is good communication with God through prayer, listening more to what God is saying and obedience following God's commands, because the battle is not for the flesh, for the weapons of this warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down the strongholds.( 2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

### **6.3.2. Mission prayer support groups**

Back to Bible mission every day during the morning devotions there is a special programme allocated to praying for missionaries. The college, through its mission department, connects missionaries with students and every student is given a missionary whom he or she prays for every day, this is called “Missionary Adoption Programme” All the missionaries who visit the college are adopted by students and being prayed for every day. There is no greater support than to pray for a missionary who is in the frontline of the battlefields in closed countries. Missionaries face many difficulties such as visa issues, language barriers, adaptation to the harsh conditions and weather. All these challenges need people to intercede for them if missionaries are to survive in the mission field. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, on the other hand, should develop a heart for mission by creating the mission prayer groups that should always stand in prayer for those who are on the mission field serving the Lord. The backbone of missionaries is the group of people from the local church who pray for them. Without mission prayer groups, it is like sending soldiers into the battlefields without an open line of provision.

### **6.3.3. Creation of the outreach programmes**

The local should graduate from only Sunday services to practical outreaches, such as reaching out to different communities such as the hearing-impaired community in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The church supports financially and spiritually the mission group that shares the gospel to people who are hearing-impaired in order for them to learn sign language and to support hearing-impaired people when they are in need. The local church should not feel comfortable only by sitting on the pews every Sunday; there is a need to take the gospel beyond the church walls, and go into the field where people need to hear the good news even with sign language.

### **6.3.4. Education**

Education is one of the most powerful tools that helps spread the good news, especially when sending a person who is not deaf to a sign language class. This will be a great way to help the church to gain knowledge and understanding of how to communicate with people who are hearing-impaired. I believe that the church as well should use this strategy by capitalising on education where the church can effectively minister to many people who are hearing-impaired in a way that they will understand. I believe that learning sign language is one of the

best tools to assist hearing-impaired people to grow with a heart for mission and ministry in the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. It is through education that one sees the need for spreading the gospel to the entire world, and an appreciation of the diversity of cultures, respect and understanding

#### **6.4. THE FRANCOPHONE CHURCHES PRAXIS TO FOLLOW WITH REGARD TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HEARING-IMPAIRED**

All church leaders interviewed said that the church, must have a praxis to follow in order to welcome people who are physically-impaired and especially people who are hearing-impaired into the church.

Jesus in Matthew 14: 13-21 says that: “feed the needy” the church must represent God and act in the same way caring for those who cannot by themselves, particularly people who are hearing-impaired and have been marginalised even in society, or can’t provide for themselves because of discrimination. As we all know Christians should not just represent God in words but in the act as well, therefore, they should have the same compassion as God when they see those who are in desperate situations, then practically intervene in their situation to change their situation. This indicates that church leaders understand the notion of the church as God’s sender to also assist those who are in need, such as people with hearing-impairment.

From this point of view, this is a reasonable theological justification, because God, through Christ, has inaugurated and established his new community composed with disabled and non-disabled that represents him in the world. Here, representing God implies that Christians embody the loving and compassionate character of God in the world. As Christians are people who embody the compassionate, kind, loving and merciful character of God in the world, this means that Christians must ensure that people in need, such as disabled, and others are supported.

However, despite the importance of this theological logic to challenge the fact that Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg have to organise hearing-impaired ministries that will respond to challenges in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The churches should think about such crucial issues as the challenge of representing God to all humankind and providing for their need as well as sharing the gospel with them. This is the only way churches can effectively explain God’s being and its relationship with humanity.

#### **6.4.1. The example of Jesus**

All the church leaders interviewed cited the example of Christ as one of the theological reasons for a ministry to the disabled. The ethical lives of Christians should be illuminated by Christ in all areas, including how we treat the hearing-impaired among us. Christians should be like a compassionate Christ, who healed the sick (Matthew 8 and Luke 5: 12-13) and fed those who were hungry (Matthew 14: 13-21). In addition, the church can resemble Christ when it imitates the exact steps of Christ, following Christ's footsteps when the disabled are of concern. Therefore, the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should display that the church is caring and supporting the community just as Christ has been with marginalised people during his earthly ministry.

The Church cites the example of Christ as a theological justification that pushes the church to respond to its challenges regarding the hearing-impaired. The motivation to establish a ministry with the disabled is biblical. As Christians, we must follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sacrificed his life to save all people. His love was for all humankind when he died on the cross, and many churches do everything possible to become like Christ. Therefore, following the example of Christ, as the theological basis of the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, is validated because the church must follow the example of Christ who introduced a new benevolent community. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg as a community of God, must follow the example of Christ in his ethical life, since Christ has demonstrated, in the course of his earthly ministry, how his disciples should behave towards all humankind, including the hearing-impaired. However, churches should beware of any superficial understanding of this theological category, which may suggest that Christ healed the sick and fed the hungry (Matthew 8 and Luke 5: 12-13) (Matthew 14:13).

Hence, the Francophone churches should do the same for people with hearing-impairment, this means that churches should know that following Jesus' example in caring for all humankind is rooted in the biblical-theological notion and the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should be encouraged to remember the sacrifices they must offer to face the challenges with regard to sharing the gospel with people who are hearing-impaired. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg must learn to recognise that Christians cannot automatically follow the example of Christ by virtue of their own being

Christians; instead, they must develop a deep sense of love and care that derives from their concept of the mission that God has inaugurated and realised for them through Christ.

The notion of looking after the needs of people who are hearing-impaired as a form of evangelism has a powerful theological justification that must push the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to be more concerned about ministering to people with hearing-impairment. Therefore looking after the hearing-impaired is a form of evangelism that the church is called to do.

The book of James 2:14-18 is a good text to state that good works are a form of evangelism. James 2:14-18 explains that if Christians say they have faith then they should show it in their actions because words without actions are dead. You cannot simply say you care for people who are hearing-impaired if you do not show that love to them in a practical way. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should see the notion of considering the need for the hearing-impaired as a form of evangelism that gives a foundation to a hearing-impaired ministry.

The *New Interpreter's Bible* (1998:201) states that, "James demands that we pay attention to the ragged homeless person who wanders into our assembly, to the desperately needy man or woman we meet on our city streets, to the orphans and widows who make up so much of the world's perennially impoverished population." It is clear from the extensive context of Scripture that Christian faith should be accompanied and it is through these works that people will come to know Christ and be saved. Thus, the dimension of works and evangelism emerges from Scripture but not from the texts of James 2:14-18.

#### **6.4.2. Universal nature of salvation**

The Bible concern to reach people of all nations in word and deed is one of the theological *rationales* for *missio Dei*, this theological convictions arises from the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 in which Jesus charges Christians to reach people of all nations, the Great Commission is interconnected with the notion of the universal love of God, who loves all people regardless of their nationalities and physical appearance. Therefore, the church should love all humankind by not discriminating against them. This understanding will challenge Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to reach people who are hearing-impaired by sharing the good news with them.

The notion of God's concern to reach all people as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 has a connection with people who are hearing-impaired because the gospel that Jesus commanded his disciples to preach to all nations is expecting multi-dimensional results which one is to share also the gospel to hearing-impaired.

God expects the church to preach redemptive acts of Christ that redeems people from sin and all its consequences and not to judge and condemn people for their impairment. This interconnection can then lead the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to advance the Great Commission as a theological justification for a hearing-impaired ministry.

#### **6.4.3. The notion of good deeds**

The theological rationale of good deeds shows that whenever you do good to others, you are doing it to God. In Matthew 25:35 Jesus equated a Christian relationship to the need of a relationship with himself. When Christians look after needy people among them, they are doing it to God. Therefore, this understanding can push Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to honour Christ.

Hence, Christians honour God by looking after people who are hearing-impaired as a theological rationale for churches as expected and justified from Scripture since it is explicit in Matthew 25:35 that Jesus Christ is challenging Christians to look after all humankind in the image of God.

#### **6.4.4. The notion to join God's plans to bring His peace to all people**

The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should join hands with God in His plan to unite all people as a theological motivation that will encourage the church to provide a ministry for people with hearing-impairment. Therefore, joining hands with God in His plan to unite His people as a theological basis for church and considering the plan of God from a doctrinal aspect of God's common grace that emerges from Acts 14:14-17, Matthew 4:44-45 and Psalm 36:25. God the creator of heaven and earth provides rain for all people so that they can have crops that produce food (Acts 14:14-17). In other words, God has plans to provide for all people by causing His sun to rise on both evil and good people. He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous so that they can thrive by having food (Matthew 4:44-45, cf. Psalm 36:25). In our view, the aforementioned approach regarding the doctrine of the common grace or love of God who looks after both the righteous and unrighteous can stand



as a foundational theological statute for churches to join hands with God in His plan to prosper people by starting with the hearing-impaired.

#### **6.4.5. The notion of sharing the Gospel with the hearing-impaired**

The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should focus on sharing the good news while attending to people who are not deaf because the role of the church is to preach the gospel that grants people eternal life. The church should emphasise the return of Christ by preaching the gospel that gives eternal life to the hearing-impaired with the focus of the church not lying in this life but in the world to come. This is to say people should not be worried much about their present situation but they should be concerned about what will happen when they die. In the book of Matthew 6:19-34 is a good text to direct the focus of people to the world to come because it challenges the church not to focus on material things; instead, it should focus on seeking the Kingdom of God or investing their treasure in heaven.

Therefore, the doctrine of life after death and the second coming of Christ to consummate his kingdom should be understood by Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. By doing this, they have adopted a spiritual theology of justice for the hearing-impaired, and it is irrelevant to the multi-faceted and complex needs people who are hearing-impaired are facing at this interim period of Christianity. It is a spiritual theology of justice because it views people who are hearing-impaired worshippers as having eternal life.

#### **6.5. CONCLUSION**

Discipleship coaching and cultural anthropology have been discussed to be key in the field of coaching Francophone churches to include people with hearing-impairment in the church and ministry because culture and values identify people, and binds people groups together. Therefore the study of the hearing-impaired cultural group will help the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg strategies on how to effectively outreach to them while sharing the gospel without looking down upon the cultural values that bind them together. Despite cultural diversities, Jesus Christ commissioned the church to go to all humankind to proclaim the good news. The challenge of the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg is based on the question of how to communicate with the hearing-impaired if sign language is not learned in order to communicate? The answer is found in the adaptation and contextualisation of the gospel in order to meet the mission demands of people with hearing-impairment. The Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg can also

be relevant through the way of communicating with the hearing-impaired by using advanced technology as a way of taking the gospel to the level of understanding for the hearing-impaired. Perhaps using media such as the creation of a Christian Facebook page as a tool for spreading the gospel.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSIOLOGICAL REFLECTION REGARDING THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE HEARING-IMPAIRED IN THE CHURCH, THE MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATION AND THE IMPACT OF THE FRANCOPHONE CHURCH IN JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA.**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the impact the church has in communities where the hearing-impaired can found, how mission is understood, the church's involvement with those people and the missiological understanding that supports this involvement and ministry, although there is a serious lack in the way francophone churches accommodate the hearing impaired. .

Unfortunately in this thesis the hearing-impaired voice cannot literally be heard, because the focus is on the congregation where they are aware that this people are around. This thesis is a first step to restore mission from the margins, especially hearing-impaired. Therefore, it must be kept in mind that the researcher was unable to find data from francophone churches who have members with hearing-impaired and who are visible in church life.

Chapter seven will answer the research questions, how will Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg remain faithful to its mission regarding people who are hearing-impaired? What are the strategies that the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg applied to reach the spiritual and physical needs of the hearing-impaired that will facilitate their integration as active members of the church? The research problem will deal with the following sub-questions:

1. What is your understanding of the importance of the missiological reflection regarding the full participation of the marginalised in the church, especially for the hearing-impaired?
2. What strategies can Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria apply in serving the spiritual and physical needs of disabled people, especially people who are hearing-impaired, in order to facilitate their full integration as members of the church?
3. What praxis can support the missiological positions of Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria with regard to people with a hearing-impairment?

Qualitative research to investigate the situation in Francophone churches will reflect on people in the margins, specifically people with hearing-impairment, and the missiological factors in connection with their full participation in the church and it will be analysed in order to influence both the church and the marginalised in order to consider its missiological structures. A summary of a number of interviews with different churches on this is relevant

## **7.2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED**

This study uses a qualitative approach in determining the importance of the missiological reflection on the full participation of people with hearing disabilities in the church, the missiological involvement and the impact of Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

This qualitative approach examines in detail "the experiences of people who use a specific set of research methods, such as in-depth interviews, group discussions and observations" (Zikmund et al 2013: 132). The main reason for using the qualitative approach to determine how Francophone churches of Johannesburg and Pretoria understand the missiological thinking regarding full participation of people with hearing-impairment in the church lies in their ability to understand, examine and clarify complex situations towards people in their natural environment (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010: 135)

The outcome of this chapter is based on the personal observation of the French-speaking churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg and interviews with pastors and leaders of some Francophone churches. It should be noted that on this point the presentation is entirely according to their understanding and their response. The participants were asked to answer the questionnaires. The participants were contacted by phone and email. They were given a questionnaire on which to respond.

### **7.2.1. Study population**

The population that was interviewed to determine the manner in which the current Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria are responding to the hearing-impaired and their participation in their churches comprises three groups of people: (1) church leaders; (2) leaders of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg; (3) and people who are hearing-impaired who exercise leadership roles in the church. The reason for choosing

these churches was the assumption that the churches would respond to the research questions in order to analyse the research problem. A purposive and convenient approach will be used in this study. The purpose approach indicates that not everyone can participate in the study (Zikmund et al., 2013: 393-394), whereas a convenience approach depends on the collection of data by community members available to participate in the study (Zikmund et al., 2013: 392-393). Therefore, using the purposive approach, church leaders were purposely approached according to their ministry and were purposely identified in advance due to the relationship they have with the researcher.

The pastors, leaders and people with a hearing-impairment mentioned in this research attend or led the respective churches for a prolonged period of at least ten years. These participants have agreed to share the different challenges they face on a daily basis in dealing with the issues discussed in this study. In addition, they have been attending these respective churches for a considerable time to be able to provide informed experiences and information concerning their churches' responses to hearing-impaired challenges. At least ten years of church attendance is also considered a sign of commitment to the church, or at least a sign that one has found acceptance in the church. Using a convenient approach, I conducted research in the churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg because of their proximity to my area of residence. There is a great possibility that the other eight South African provinces also have Francophone churches dealing with the same issue, and this study will respond to these challenges in a similar way that Pretoria and Johannesburg churches do. Other churches can learn from what is happening in these specific ones. Many of the churches that participated in this study are Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. It is important to note that there was no discrimination of other denominations, but the above-mentioned ones were the churches that were available and willing to participate in the study. As such, diversity in terms of theological traditions was not taken into account when deciding which churches could participate in the study. Although this is not the criteria that has been put into the conceptualisation of the study, it is evident that the churches that participated in this research had existed for at least ten years.

The church leaders who participated in this study were leaders who had led these respective churches for a period of at least ten years. At this point, church leaders were contacted in advance and research questions were forwarded to their respective church councils and the entire congregation in order to consider whether the church would participate in the study. As

such, it is interpreted that church councils and members of their church have knowledge that interviews are conducted on their church premises with regard to the proposed theme in question. The date of the interview was agreed between the participants and the researcher. There are about five churches that will be studied, in order to maintain the anonymity of these churches, I will identify them with letters: "from A to E". For more information, the questionnaires and the answers will be at the end.

### **7.2.2. The sample and sample size**

Cotty (1998) and Noor (2008: 5) argue that the sample size should be guided by the research problem under the objective of the study. In other words, a research methodology is a comprehensive approach that has for purposes outlining our choice and use of specific methods. Gentles (2015: 1775).

From the above-mentioned arguments on the sample size for the study, the number of churches sampled to determine how the Francophone churches in PTA and JHB respond to the full participation of hearing-impaired people. The interviews comprised five churches who were represented by two church leaders per church, people who are hearing-impaired who participated fully as leaders and are represented in this sample with twelve church leaders, and sixty people who participated in six focus groups. A group of at least eight people were led by the church and this lasted more than 2 hours. However, some participants were interviewed by email.

Edwards (2012: 2) argues that a number of factors can influence the amount of data collected by the researcher. This is not only measured by the number of interviews but also by the availability of time and resources. The data was gathered from these three groups of participants, namely: (1) church leaders in Pretoria and Johannesburg; (2) leaders and pastors of people with hearing-impairment in Pretoria and Johannesburg churches; (3) and the people who are hearing-impaired who fully participate as ministers in the church. They were interviewed to give their understanding of the importance of the missiological reflection regarding the full participation of people with a hearing-impairment in the church.

### **7.2.3. Interview process of churches, church leaders in Pretoria and Johannesburg and people with hearing-impairment who fully participate as ministers in the church**

The researcher planned to visit some of these respective churches to introduce the study to church leaders. When I arrived at the church on a Sunday, I attended the church and then after the service there was time to talk to the church leaders and present the ethics letter of approval from the university as validity that the study was approved by the University of Pretoria. After the researchers spoke the church leaders expressed their interest in considering to participate in the study, we exchanged contact details. The letter of introduction and informed consent for participation in academic research also shows the nature and purpose of the study that was originally shared with church leaders by word of mouth in our prior conversation. This was aimed to help the church leaders to table the issue to their church councils and the rest of the members of the church to be aware of the study and then arrive at an informed decision on whether they want to participate in this research or not. Basically, the recruitment letter and all that it entails helped the respective churches to make a decision on whether or not to participate in the study.

However, once a church made the decision to participate in the study or not, the researcher will be informed by telephone regarding their decision. For the churches that were available and willing to participate in this research. I sent the consent letters and open questionnaires to the church leaders so they could give it to all the participants. This was done so that our participants became familiar with the study and the open questions the researcher was going to ask on the day of the interview. The anonymity of the participants in the report of the data was mentioned and all churches and participants requested that their names were not to be mentioned in the study and the analysis of the collected data.

### **7.2.4. The data collection methods**

Among many qualitative methods that have been developed, to have a profound understanding of the problems through their textual interpretation and the most common type are interview and observation (Creswell, 2007:34).

Jamshed (2014:67) argued that the interviews are the most common data collection format in qualitative research. In other words, qualitative research can be done through individual

interviews or group discussions. Therefore, the discussions with church leaders were conducted through in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that consists of "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of interviewees to explore their views on a particular idea, programme or situation" (Boyce and Neale, 2006: 3, Zikmund et al. al., 2013: 149). However, the number of participants recommended for in-depth qualitative interviews depends on the goals and objectives of the researcher (Baker, 2012: 1-42), which meant that, from my sample of five churches, I had in-depth interviews with two leaders of each the five churches to create a more relaxed environment, and to be able to ask questions and explore questions in detail with the participant (Boyce & Neale, 2006: 3).

The interview with the other participants was carried out through a focus group. Group discussions refer to an interview of a small group of people, usually six to ten, about their ideas, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes about a particular topic under study (Zikmund et al., 2013). : 142-146). In view of the above, six focus groups of six to ten participants were organised. However, regardless of the weaknesses of the group discussions, it was used because it is "relatively quick, easy to execute, they allow the interviewees to overlap" (Zikmund et al., 2013: 142).

The questionnaires for participants were designed by the researcher and the problems that the researcher focused on were determined by the objective of the empirical study indicated in the proposal of this study. The questionnaire refers to a questionnaire composed of unstructured questions that do not suggest a possible answer to the question (Zikmund et al, 2013: 336-337). Participants were free to answer the questions proposed in their own words. The advantage of using a questionnaire is that it allowed respondents to think about the topic under discussion and to give detailed answers to the questions (Zikmund et al, 2013: 336-341). This has created an opportunity for the interviewer to follow any new problems during the interview that requires investigation and enlightenment. The questionnaires for all participants have been prepared and sent to them before in order to prepare and to guide them on the issues of the questions. Composition questionnaires for participants were different, the wording of the specific questions differed from participants. The questionnaire was consistent with the purpose of this empirical chapter. These questionnaires are attached at the end of the thesis.



Cornwall and Jewkes (1995: 1667-1676), Kaluwich (2005), Bergold and Thomas (2012: 1-21) and Jamshed (2014) emphasise participant observation as a classic form of qualitative research. Based on their different disciplines, they argue that an observer who participates in the qualitative method means that the researcher collects observation data in a situation or organisation when s/he has access to the research site. The qualitative approach mentioned above is relevant for the researcher because the researcher is a Francophone member and one of the leaders of the Francophone church in Pretoria, which corresponds to the inclusion criteria of this research study.

This means that the researcher used part of the knowledge acquired from her personal experience as a Francophone member and leader of one of the churches in Pretoria. The observation also helped the researcher to acquire knowledge and in-depth information on the subject under investigation.

According to Singleton et al. (1993: 474, see Babbie, 1995: 456), the researcher understood that research ethics prohibited, among others, a researcher from asking questions that made it difficult for participants to report information that may be offensive. The researcher in the consent letter that the participants had to sign their names would not be included in the process of reporting, analysis and publication of the research. In addition, the consent letter establishes that the information collected from the participants will only be used for research purposes and is justified in this regard. It also indicates that the results of these interviews should be published in the academic field so that anyone could have access to it when it is needed. This was to ensure that the information is available to the churches that need to read the published work in order to improve and expand their missiological understanding in regard to hearing-impaired people in various ways. The objective and responsibility of the researcher was to treat the participants with respect and to protect them, although, historically, adherence to these principles sometimes clashed with scientific practice, causing considerable controversy (Singleton Jr. et al, 1993: 479). ). The interesting part of this research is that, although the researcher was a participant observer on the subject under study, she made sure that the results of this research came from different participants.

Elmusharaf (2012) declares that fieldwork data can be recorded in a notebook or recorded in audio, after which the researcher would transcribe them into writing. Therefore, there is no inconvenience if the data was recorded by writing in bound booklets or recorded audios that will be transcribed after the interview. However, the important thing is that all data records

must be clear, complete, and safe. With this in mind, the interviews were recorded in secure notebooks. The researcher recorded all data in safe notebooks and they were always transcribed on the computer as soon as possible. This was done to support the collected data or to facilitate double storage of the collected data.

### **7.2.5. Data analysis**

The data collected in this research were analysed using a qualitative data analysis approach with an empirical theological framework of discovery, validation and application will be present (Faix 2007: 118)

The topics of analysis were developed using a framework approach. The framework was developed according to the objective of evaluation that will be achieved with the qualitative approach (O'Connor and Gibson, 2003: 68-71). The information, analysis and evaluation of the participants in the questionnaires were carried out between June 1 and August 15, 2018, the reason for doing so was that qualitative research usually collects a large amount of data that requires several explanations and tests (Alhojailan, 2012: 39). And this helped the researcher to accurately identify 'excerpts' that relate to the research's objective (Alhojailan, 2012:43-44).

The question for the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg will focus on the following aspects:

1. Demography
2. Attitude
3. Theology and mission
4. Praxis

The questions for the proposed interview will be divided and addressed to three groups of participants as follows:

4. Pastors and leaders of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg
5. Pastors and leaders of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg
6. Hearing-impaired who fully participate also as a leader

## **7.2.6. Demographic details for participated churches and participants**

### **Identity and Nature of church A**

Church A is a charismatic church in Pretoria that was created and planted in many other global locations. The vision is to go around the world and make all nations follow Jesus Christ in the way that the whole world will be changed to Christ. The role of the church in the community is as a life changing instrument, the mission of the church is to go around the world and make the nations the disciples of Jesus Christ according to the Gospel of Matthew 28:19 and Matthew 9:13.

When the francophone church was formed, the motivation was to take care spiritually of Christians who had just arrived in South Africa and who could neither speak nor understand English. Most of the migrants already knew God, but they needed a place to fellowship. The context of apartheid was also favourable to the evangelisation of these oppressed peoples. Over time, the church has become more involved in global mission and is open to all French-speaking citizens from different countries and even South Africans and other Anglophones.

The leadership of the Church is part of the general organisation, which refers to what happens when there is a situation. Below, there is a pastor deputy, who is also assisted by four other pastors, an administrator and representatives of teams or departments. The "life of the church" is the nomenclature of the structure that is applied to the direction of the department heads.

### **The ministries in the church**

There are a number of ministries exercised in this church: ushers department, music department, Sunday school department, intercession department, preachers department, moderators department, youth department, women department, partnership department, social department, follow up department, financial department, and interpretation department

### **Identity and Nature of church B**

Church B is in Pretoria, serving God and the people. The vision is to go around the world to influence the lives of people by making the followers of Christ effective and effusive. The role of the church in the community is to disciple them and to understand and respond to their

needs of the community. The mission of the church to plant an effusion of churches and effective disciples around the world.

The senior pastor is assisted by other pastors, elders and deacons. They are responsible for different departments. The senior pastor uses them according to his vocation and the gifts of each one. This structure seems to be built on the model of a teacher and his disciples. All the disciples are equal and stand on the same ground. Nobody is superior to another. Everyone must learn at the feet of the teacher who is the senior pastor.

The senior pastor has the responsibility of appointing all the other leaders. He does so after a long period of prayer and observation of the members in regard to their commitment, their gifts or their talents, the product of their performance and their vocation. He also uses the advice of other leaders. The role of leadership in the mission of education is a vision of the world of vision and the communication strategies that will be carried out. Directed with the responsibility to promote the vision and the fundamental values of the parliamentary Church.

### **The ministries in the church**

These include:, preachers, moderators, youth, Deliverance and counselling, single adult, marriage, ushers department, praise and worship, Sunday school, and outreach

### **Identity and Nature of church C**

Church C is a charismatic church in Pretoria, whose vision is to prepare souls for the coming of the Lord and win tired souls. The role of the church in the community is to bring people closer to God through the teaching, and the mission of the church is to care for souls who are tired in helping them to follow Christ as Lord and Saviour.

It was necessary to take into account the spiritual needs of the francophone countries who lived in Pretoria at that time. It is for this reason a pastor was sent to Pretoria to establish a church, ordained for the ministry as a prophet of God in the sense that he teaches the basic truth of the Word of God.

The church has a vision of forming leaders, transforming the whole church into a missionary church. According to the pastor, the members of this church see themselves as bridges between those who do not know God and God. The clear mission of the Church is to remove people from the world and bring them to Christ. The members of the church are missionaries

in their respective regions where they represent the Lord Jesus Christ. The church also has the opportunity to serve and help a family that has lost a father. The church has influence even in a white community. The pastor is invited from time to time to minister in other churches. That means there is some positive influence in the community.

The structure of the Church is as followed Father God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, followed by the pastoral team and the ministries. The deacons come after the pastoral team. The senior pastor leads the vision and leads the pastoral team. Leaders know that their mission is to work for the growth of God's kingdom. It means being aware of your personal vocation and successfully representing Christ in society.

The ministries in the church

These include: teaching, intercession, prophecy, social, praise and worship, Sunday school, women, men, pastoral, and evangelist.

### **Identity and Nature of church D**

Church D is a Pentecostal denomination and is located in Johannesburg, the vision of the church is to empower life through prayer and the Word of God that brings faith. The role of the church in the community is to release the potential and the gift that God has given people and affect them with the Word of God. The mission of the church is to make of all nations a follower of Christ, to prepare the people of God to enter their destiny in God through prayer and teaching of the word to enable people.

The pastor believes that God is opening new pages in the history of the church, and God is preparing the church to shine. The congregation identifies itself as a church that keeps the word of God and faith. The general vision of the church concerns the Great Commission.

In addition, the vision is to bring people from darkness to light. In the founder's understanding, the church belongs to God. God is recognised as the owner and teacher of the church. As the light of the world, the salt of the earth the church is called to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world that is why the church was sent to the world.

The church is willing to be part to the unity of the church general. Leaders and members attend spiritual meetings and other events organised by other churches. They also invite other members of the church to attend their meetings. Pastors are invited to preach the gospel in

other congregations. The church is also ready to collaborate with other churches as part of a missionary program and to work for the unity of the body of Christ. Therefore, there is an open mind when it comes to working together for the kingdom of God.

Each leader has a specific description of his work according to his personal call, but the senior pastor is the supervisor of all the ministries of the church.

**The ministries in the church**

These include: pastoral, evangelist, prophetic, men, ladies, youth, music, intercession

**Identity and Nature of church E**

Church E is a revival church planted for the first time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and then planted in many countries where the missionary pastors ran the congregation. The role of the church in the community is helping them to seek first the Kingdom of God and all good things will be given according to the book of Matthew 6:33. Its mission is to reach people from all over the world who live on earth.

The church is structured in this way: the senior pastor is the founder and supervisor of the ministry. He is assisted by two pastors: one is responsible for the administration of the church and the other for the spiritual life of the church. In addition to the pastoral team, there are elders. Leaders meet annually, monthly and occasionally when necessary. Leaders are appointed through the process of prayer, member observation, and discernment of vocation. Candidate leaders are trained in the church by the senior pastor and his associates.

**The ministries in the church**

These include pastoral, evangelisation, choir, social, treasury, youth, interpretation, usher, women, and intercession

*Table one provides the number of members the churches have, the number of hearing-impaired people [HIP] the churches have, and the number of other physically-impaired people the church have.*

CODE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	NUMBER OF HIP IN	NUMBER OF OTHER PIP IN THE
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	ATTENDING THE CHURCH	THE CHURCH	CHURCH
A	70-90 Members attending church services	None	1
B	150-200 members attending services	None	None
C	80-85 members attending services	None	None
D	100-200 members attending services	None	None
E	50 members attending church services	None	None

The above table is to give the number of members each participant churches has. This table shows that church A has 70-90 members attending the Sunday service, and the church is a multicultural gathering of people from different tribes who speak different languages but the church has no hearing-impaired members, the church B has between 150 and 200 members on Sunday service, there are people from different countries, but they don't have hearing-impaired as members in the church, the church has 80 to 85 members who attend Sunday service but no hearing-impaired in the church, and they find in terms of integration with people with whom they can at least speak the same language. They have between 100 and 200 members or more attending Sunday service, but no hearing-impaired in the church, and the church has at least 50 members attending Sunday service, but no people with hearing-impairment in the church.

According to the research carried out, it has been found that the Francophone churches participating in this research data collection do not have people that are hearing-impaired in

their church even in the mission field, but in the case of other physically-impaired only church A has one member with an impairment.

### **7.2.7. The church attitudes towards hearing-impaired people**

The attitudes of the Francophone church to the hearing-impaired and how their experiences in the Christian context is discussed in this point.

Therefore, regardless of the attitude of the church toward the hearing-impaired, this may have an impact on their access to the church. It is a descriptive and critically analytical of the attitudes of the church obtained from interviews with pastors, listening to members and pastors of the church and observing services of the church. This includes deaf people among Francophone Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, and in addition, the pastoral care of people with disabilities was also studied.

The Francophone churches do not have a specific plan to minister specifically to the hearing-impaired, and they do not have any policy. This determines why people who are hearing-impaired do not appear in any of the plans of many churches, and the situation is relevant in this case illustrating how people with hearing-impairment are generally marginalised and excluded from society likewise in the church.

People who are hearing-impaired are also considered to be cursed, and this attitude perpetuates their lack of involvement in the church as a member or leader. The church's attitude is also one of the factors that influences the inaccessibility the hearing-impaired in the Francophone church, as established in the traditional belief system that disability is the cause of the sin.

The traditional belief system and Christian attitude toward people with physical-impairment which is rooted in the Francophone church, explains the lack of people who are hearing-impaired accessibility to churches. The biblical perceptions of healing of the disabled include the fact that someone with faith can't still be disabled in the community of Christ's believers, as well as the language barrier being an obstacle. Many people have no interest to learn sign language especially not for the purpose of ministry. All the causes and effects mentioned above have led to a lack of equity and access for the hearing-impaired as a members or leaders.



It is rare to find a sign language facility in any Francophone church in Johannesburg and Pretoria since facility access for people with disabilities is usually a late occurrence. Some churches try to provide facilities but it still not enough. However, extreme inaccessibility for people with disabilities is evident.

#### 7.2.7.1. The Church facility for people who are hearing-impaired

The facility needed for the hearing-impaired in churches is not the same as for those who are blind and physically-impaired. Communication is seen as a very big obstacle for the hearing-impaired as well as for non-deaf people in the church. The absence of interpretation in sign language excludes deaf people from the rights and privileges of attending church in many communities. In fact, deaf people have few churches created especially for them. However, deaf people explained that they are excluded from society and churches due to the lack of communication in sign language. Here is a brief excerpt of what some deaf people have to say about access. One of the disability experts identified the starting point of the accessibility problem for deaf people, such as the lack of institutions that offer training in sign language interpretation.

It is rare to find formal training for sign language interpreters in society, and even some courses on disability are available in the church, but sign language courses are still not available in many churches in general.

In addition to the interviews, I attended an Afrikaans service in a church of hearing-impaired people where the pastor was a normal hearing person with her husband and kids. She learned sign language from both grandparents but becoming a pastor was not part of it. An interview with the pastor indicated she found a job on the internet where a congregation of people with hearing-impairment were looking for a pastor to lead them since she was qualified she applied and was accepted.

I experience joy in the eyes of people during the service and after the service, however, everything including prayers, songs, announcements and the sermon were in sign language. What I liked most was how the hearing-impaired can rejoice in the presence of the Lord by expressing themselves in their signing, and their way of clapping hands.

I could see how members were happy to be in this church, I wonder why churches remain inaccessible to the hearing-impaired. They enjoy celebration, like to attend weddings,

Christmas, and other joyous events. There is still a certain degree of marginalisation since there are not any other non-deaf people who expect the pastor and her family and some members who are there because of their family member.

The observation of the previous church shows that if people with disabilities have access, they can worship and serve God more happily. Swinton (2002: 29) emphasised that the spiritual dimension of the lives of people with disabilities is neglected. In any instance, it is a fundamental human right, which also improves well-being. The pastor and his leaders should be commended for taking this brave step which is in the right direction. Theologians of disability such as Reynolds (2008: 222, 243), Swinton (2002: 29), Webb-Mitchell (2010: 78) and Möller (2013: 34), among others, highlight the need for churches to be more friendly towards people with disabilities, so that they do not consider themselves as strangers. The best way to ensure disabled participation in the church is to have access to appropriate facilities and programmes.

The Francophone church perspective on the hearing-impaired healing is relevant to the quantity of faith that people with a hearing-impairment have for their healing. This is useful to demonstrate pastors' expectations about people with disabilities and how this affects the equity and access of people with disabilities.

Currently, in most of the churches, it is common to see disabled people who test miracles of healing. People with disabilities are frequently invited to participate to attend healing crusades. Shiriko (2011: 171) points out that for Africans, there is always a spiritual cause for disability. According to Swinton (2001: 40), the pressure exerted by preachers of faith and the healing of the disabled who experience miracles suggests a theological extension of the medical model of disability. It is determined from the data that disability is a social construction as a curse in most church culture and traditional belief system, especially among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches where it is definitely seen as a curse or demonic activity or sorcery, so it should not stay. Pastors often refer to biblical healing passages and, therefore, require that people with disabilities, especially Christians, cannot remain with their disability, but must be cured. When people with disabilities go to church, they often experience pity and exclusion. Pastors often deviate from the main theme of their sermon to preach about faith, healing, miracles, sin, curse and hospitality for the poor. This often makes people with disabilities feel uncomfortable, so they prefer not to go to church.

From these results, I argue that most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have no place for disability because they see salvation as a holistic liberation, so the disability should be tolerated in the church. The experience of people with disabilities in churches asking for healing is quite sad. As a result, the identity of persons with disabilities in Francophone churches is no different from society in general. Perhaps, the church thinks that the disabled should only go to church for healing, and not to worship God.

This healing pressure on people with disabilities as a spiritual dimension of the medical model of disability, because, this model considers disability as a condition that requires a cure or intervention. The disabled do not need healing but acceptance for what they are because they have also been created in the image of God. (Swinton 2001: 25, 47, 48)

As a result, people with disabilities are under a visible force from churches to be healed at the same time they wish to worship God and fellowship. In this situation of healing, the perspective is important because there are divergent views on healing.

The participants are pastors and leaders. It is clear that there is a contrast of perception of healing and disability from the Francophone perspective, while disabled people see the persistent demand with the influence of the pastors to heal as a useless mission because worship is the main reason of them going to church and not being healed. Pastors also refer to biblical healing stories that justify their faith for healing and disability views. This points out the position of theologians with a disability such as Claassens (2013: 55) and Reynolds (2008: 34-35), among others, that the Bible has had a negative impact on the attitudes of the church towards people with disabilities, which is obviously the situation in the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The pastors also believe that although God works miracles, the sovereignty of God has an important role to play; that is why many people with disabilities are not healed. They also stated that disability is for the glory of God. They often refer to the story of Jesus in John 9 and his encounter with a blind man.

#### **7.2.8. Francophone Church in Pretoria and Johannesburg Missiological model of approach to hearing-impairment**

Looking at the Christian context, writing about mission is much easier than living mission, therefore, there is a need for understanding mission structure and mission models which will help churches in their mission, and the best approach to hearing-impaired people in the community.

There can be no message unless there is some source of communication, and there is no communication unless someone receives the message.

One of the participants in the research stated that, according to the Bible, Jesus died for all of us, so all people may receive the good news of salvation according to Matthew 28:18-20. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to go and preach the gospel to all people, by all means. This may be either by the means of sign language, bioscopes or any other way the message can be transmitted. It is the calling of the church to take the gospel to hearing-impaired people in the community.

Another respondent stated that practical support is also important where the church provides special needs education. The main purpose here is to share the good news to all, therefore transformation, mixing with those from a different culture and different people, and show love in action not only word

The church is still struggling to welcome people with disabilities but certainly needs strategies in order to focus on this group of people. Some of the possible strategies mentioned by respondents include:

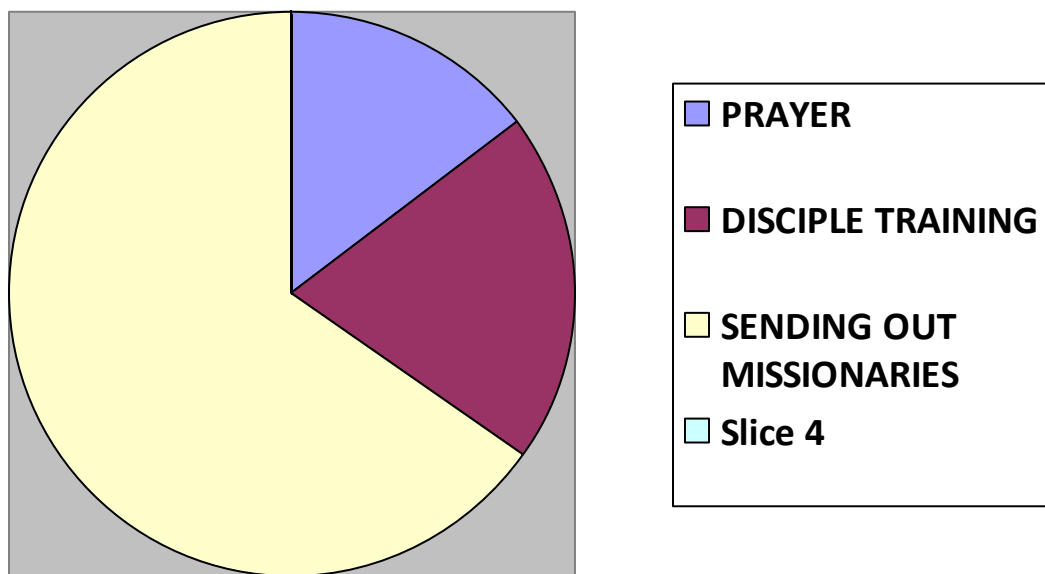
- The church needs to accept HIP in the community: this means the church will not try to change them but will make them feel comfortable, not showing judgement for their condition but approaching them in a friendly manner.
- The church should give them responsibilities: the church needs to provide them with responsibilities as other church members are expected to. In these responsibilities, the church needs to ensure that there is no discrimination because it brings embarrassment and shame to them. As HIP use sign language, there is a need for church members to volunteer to learn sign language and to assist in interpreting worship services.
- The church needs to have physical facilities that can accommodate HIP.
- The church needs to bring the gospel to HIP as these people also need to hear the good news.

### 7.2.9. Missiological praxis of participants

According to the participants, the praxis of ministering to hearing-impaired people can be categorised in terms of spiritual and physical needs. Spiritual praxis was defined as attending to prayer, discipleship training, sending out as missionaries and physical praxis as social support, financial support, and moral support.

#### 7.2.9.1. Spiritual praxis

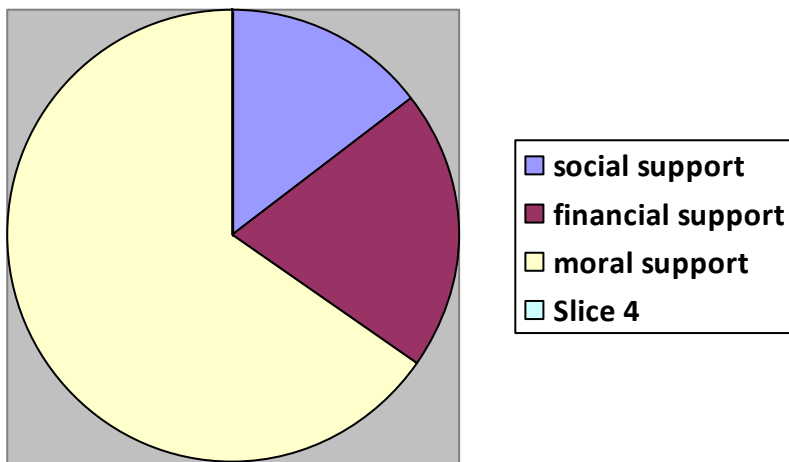
Most participants indicated that the most effective praxis to support the missiological position in regard to hearing-impaired people is sending missionaries out. Few participants reported disciple training and meetings to equip all people for mission. Prayer was mentioned but only a few acknowledged it as an effective spiritual praxis. (Figure 1)



The participants gave reasons why sending missionaries out is the most important spiritual praxis because missiology is an area of practical theology that focuses on missionary work, and it has much to do with sending the church out to the mission field.

#### 2.9.2. Physical praxis

This figure shows the effectiveness of moral support when it comes to physical praxis in a French-speaking church (Figure 2).



A positive response about moral support is due to the message of the kingdom that affects their lives and they are passionate about knowing more about Christ who accepts all people.

### 7.3. SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS AND THE FINDINGS

**What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of marginalised in the church, especially hearing-impaired people?**

- Church A in Pretoria

A pastor and leader stated that when we think of people with disabilities we automatically think of doing something for them, we do not reflect that they can do something for us and with us. They have the same duty as all members of the body of Christ to do the Lord's work in the world according to their God given talents and gifts. We as a church are not there to show pity but to empower these people. If we have men and women who can teach and preach the word using sign language they are a tool to reach out to others who are in the same situation, but they cannot go if they are not equipped in sign language but to preach using sign language, because they need to know the gospel for them to be saved.

- Church B in Pretoria

B pastor and leader stated that the church can play an important role in protecting people with disabilities through pastoral care to individuals. The church visiting someone with a disability can reassure the person that life still has purpose and value even with a disability. The church also can help families to cope with the change and challenges they face for this person with a disability. Pastors and ministries within the church can provide on-going support to individuals living with disabilities and help them feel a sense of belonging in the body of Christ.

- Church C in Pretoria

C pastor and leader stated that disabled people are people with physical challenges. These people face many challenges from people around them such as rejection, oppression, being under looked and isolation. However, the church has a big role to play regarding their participation in the church as for as missiology is concerned.

- Church D in Johannesburg

D pastor and leader stated that it is very important to note that when the church is participating in the issues of the disabled people, they have an opportunity to reach to the other people with the same problems even beyond that and this is important. Others will be reached in the course of the training that other missions give to the physically challenged people just to equip them to do mission at any time in a lifetime. This brings encouragement in their lives; they feel encouraged in such a way that they miss many church programmes. This makes them happy and committed. The mission is preaching to hearing-impaired people to show them the love of Jesus then they are seeing this love in the mission and churches which is the most important thing and am sure they are also preaching to others.

- Church E in Johannesburg

E pastor and leader stated that, missiological comes from the word mission which means reaching out, now coming back to missiological it can be defined as the science of cross-cultural communication of Christian faith in the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus told us to go into the world and preach the good news to all creation (Mark16:15) this act is very important because it helps us to spread the word worldwide.

**How will Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria remain faithful to its mission regarding people with disabilities especially people who are hearing-impaired?**

- Church A in Pretoria

A pastor and leader stated that the church can be faithful on this issue when they accept that disability ministry is a huge ministry, it is important to train church leaders to embrace the disabled.

- Church B in Pretoria

B pastor and leader stated that the church should genuinely help the disabled with the money that they are receiving from donors. The church has to bear in mind that we are all crippled in one way or the other, either spiritually or physically and we need Christ no one is perfect. In that way there will be no segregation in the church and the church will fulfil its mission faithfully.

- Church C Pretoria

C pastor and leader stated that it is necessary for a church to remain faithful to its mission when its members become more and more informed about ministering to the disabled because each member is called to witness for Christ in the world, light and leaven in society and a reconciler a culture of conflict.

- Church D in Johannesburg

D pastor and leader stated that, the church needs to remain faithful in this mission by enhancing the lives of people with physical and developmental disabilities and to promote the welfare of people with mental and physical disabilities through direct care, education and training and enabling others through training resources and encouragement to effectively minister to the disabled.

- Church E in Johannesburg

E pastor and leader stated that, by having love toward people with disabilities, the church will be able to trust and to be trusted as well. Love is the most important thing which can help the church to remain faithful.



**What are the strategies that the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria can apply to reach the spiritual and physical needs of the person with disabilities especially people who are hearing-impaired in order to facilitate their integration as an active member of the church?**

- Church A in Pretoria

A pastor and leader stated that the church has to find means of reaching people with disabilities and share the gospel with them by using some of those strategies:

First, training is needed: the church has a task to reach the disabled but the problem as people are not trained on how they can reach out, but if the church is trained then it can be able to reach such people.

Second, love: in everything that reaching out takes place there is a need for love because if the church can't have love, which means it cannot reach out, most disabled are suffering and getting lost just because no one has love for them, so the church has to show love to them.

Last, acceptance: most people want to reach to disabled but the problem is they don't want to accept them with their situation, so this means it is hard to minister to them. The church must be able to accept such kind of people and remove all rejection in the heart of people in order to reach all men kind.

- Church B in Pretoria

B pastor and leader stated that the church must be far ahead of government and individuals. The church must have organisations that works with disabled e.g. school of deaf and mute in order to preach the gospel of love and salvation.

Organising activities like a soccer game, running, going on excursions and parties...etc. because of the lack of love, they mostly isolate themselves from able people or it makes them very sensitive to other people.

- Church C in Pretoria

C pastor and leader stated that the first strategy is a spiritual one, pray with them and teaching the Word of God in order for them to do likewise to others. When they are involved in such activities they grow well spiritually.

The second strategy is physical, which will try by all means to reach their needs based on what is available; we need to take advantage of what we have to share. Equipping them is another vital thing that will help the church to meet disabled. The church can develop a system of working with them in a lot of activities, trying to fuse them in spiritual and physical duties of the church.

- Church D in Johannesburg

D pastor and leader stated that the strategy that the church needs to use is proper training, it is hard to reach to all kinds of people when you are not well trained, and one is accepted and love them.

- Church E in Johannesburg

E pastor and leader stated that including disabled in church programmes is the most important strategy amount others, having them in the services, and building a school for them.

### **What kind of praxis can support the missiological position of the Francophone churches in Johannesburg and Pretoria in regarding people with a hearing-impairment?**

It was declared that the church has the task to follow what Jesus did while he was ministering. Love and care are the main elements that activate all praxis that Jesus used.

#### **7.4. CONCLUSION**

As we saw in this chapter, many Christians connect disability with sin and demonic activities that need healing through prayer. The missiological approach toward hearing-impaired people in the Francophone church in Pretoria and Johannesburg church is that they are speaking more about it than putting it into practice. Perhaps, some hearing-impaired people had visited the church but there are no facilities for them to feel welcome in the church. Most of the churches presented healing as the gospel for them and in some cases where the healing didn't take place, they are considered to lack sufficient faith.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation has grappled with questions of theological, missional, justice and social factors that hinder equal access for the disabled in society and as well as in the church where they even more marginalised. The focus has been related to the full participation of people with disabilities especially people with a hearing-impairment in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The first chapter provided a general introduction to the thesis, which included the context of the study to clarify its purpose, the research problem, the research questions, the theoretical framework and the methodological framework. As an interdisciplinary study and due to the methodological and conceptual frameworks used, the first chapter placed the research in the context of missiology. Research is also sociocultural because it uses some aspects of realistic evaluation. The second chapter presented a theological reflection of the relation between the mission of the church and the physically-impaired, the third chapter defined the understanding of *missio Dei* in the context for all humankind. The biblical theology meaning of *missio Dei* in the reflection of all humankind in the Old Testament and the New Testament is explored in order to develop the characteristics of God's mission to all humankind. This is reflected in order to guide the direction of the church's mission toward God's view of *missio Dei*. A historical redemptive approach has been used to illustrate more missiological reasons for churches to attend to the marginalised, especially the hearing-impaired; and a literature review has been made regarding *missio Dei*. The chapter fourth the Francophone church Christian understanding on culture and contextualisation, the Chapter fifth discussed South African perspectives on justice and advocacy for people with disabilities and how these have influenced the church's mission with the disabled. The chapter sixth presents the importance of a coaching process for a mission to and by the hearing-impaired in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The chapter seventh, investigated the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of hearing-impaired in the Francophone church, the missiological implication, and the impact of the Francophone church in Johannesburg and Pretoria, The research confirmed through the data collection via interviews and observation that people who are hearing-impaired in Francophone churches in

Pretoria and Johannesburg are considered as marginalised due to communication barriers between the normal hearing people and them. Chapter eight, which is the final chapter of this thesis, draws conclusions and reflections on the purpose of this study, taking into account the research questions, the methodological framework and the conclusions and recommendations that could improve the quality of the research. Equal access to marginalised people in French-speaking churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. It also makes recommendations for the universal church as the body of Christ. This section below includes a critical analysis from which conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made in light of the church's missiological expectations regarding equal access to a ministry for people with hearing impairment. The conclusions drawn from the results will be extremely critical in light of the missiological expectations proposed by missiology theorists. As a result, a series of recommendations to transform church praxis are formulated to facilitate equal access for people with hearing impairment.

### **Limitations**

The research problem set out to investigate if the church considers itself as a prophetic voice for marginalised people and if such a perspective is also considered as mission. Research questions of the study grappled with how Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg could remain faithful to their mission regarding the hearing-impaired? And what strategies these churches are applying to attain the spiritual and physical needs of people who are hearing-impaired that will facilitate their integration as active members of the worshipping community?

The research problem was explored through three guiding sub-questions: (1) what are the missiological reasons for Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg to reach out to people with a physical-impairment, especially those with hearing-impairment? (2) What kind of praxis can support the missiological position of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg regarding the mission to and by the hearing-impaired? (3) What is the understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of people who are physically-impaired in the church? The aim was to facilitate and promote the exploration of the problem by investigating the impact that theological, justice and social aspect have on Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

Regarding the purpose of the research, it is evident that there are social and theological factors that influence equal accessibility for the hearing-impaired with regard to their full participation in the church. But in the case of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, disability is seen as a curse. This is one of the factors that has been identified in their belief system which influences marginalisation, attitudes of discrimination, and inaccessibility. This automatically positions people who are physically-impaired as marginalised and under constant pressure to expect healing miracles through faith in God.

Another discovery of the study is the fact that people with this form of disability are excluded from participating in ministry because of the perception that they are unfit. Such a notion is often linked to the exemption of persons with disability from the Levitical priesthood as subscribed in the Old Testament. These are negative socio-theological concepts that need to find tuning for the better functioning of the church. Empirical data in chapter four provided evidence that persons with hearing-impairment or other physical conditions are marginalised in some Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg and therefore excluded from the churches' ministries.

Perhaps the answer to "how will Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg remain faithful to its mission regarding hearing-impaired people?" posed by this research, will be through faith and healing where preachers will normally change their sermons for persons with disability and dramatise their need for healing. And the answer to "what are the strategies that Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg applied to reach the spiritual and physical needs of hearing-impaired people that will facilitate their integration as active members of the church?" could be a call to healing through prayer and faith of the person who may be free from the curse and can serve freely.

## **8.2. CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS**

This study is based on empirical theological praxis as a research methodology in missiology. According to Swinton and Mowat (2006: 50), although some researchers insist on the use of a single method, the ideal way to carry out practical theological qualitative research is to develop an appropriate style using different methods without being bound to any of them for this reason, the tools used here are considered appropriate for different aspects of the research.

The focus of this study is based on empirical theological praxis as a methodology for research in missiology. According to Swinton and Mowat (2006:50), although some researchers emphasise using a single method, the ideal way to do a practical theological qualitative research study is to develop an appropriate style using different methods without being bound by any of them. For this reason, the tools employed here are deemed appropriate for different aspects of the study to investigate and evaluate the accessibility of people with a hearing-impairment in the Francophone churches around Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The study has a central tenet of missiological reflection in its approach. It is also a qualitative study as indicated in chapter one (heading 4.1.1). The successful engagement of the research design and methodologies also justify the theological, justice, and social focus of the study.

It was explained previously that this research adopted a qualitative approach because it contributes knowledge at an individual, organisational, social, and political levels of church and society as it links to the phenomena which are to some extent a realistic evaluation. As an interdisciplinary study, it utilised methodological and conceptual/theoretical frameworks from various disciplines in order to explore equal accessibility for the hearing-impaired in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The research design and methodologies applied were useful in achieving the aims and objectives of the study. We briefly explain them below.

According to McIntyre (2001), a qualitative method is useful for exploring social meanings or reasons related to behaviour. Qualitative research not only takes into account the objective nature of the behaviour, but also its meaning (quality). In general, qualitative research deepens on the descriptive narratives of their own experiences, rather than quantifying and using numbers to interpret these experiences. Therefore, a qualitative approach was appropriate to explore the meanings associated with the call to margins: the mission to and for people with hearing difficulties in the Francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

Individual and focus group interviews and observation were the methods used to investigate the equity and access of the hearing-impaired as fully active members in the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Data collected enabled conclusions to be made concerning the research problem and question. A qualitative approach was helpful to arrive at

answers to different interview questions in the churches with regard to attitudes towards people with disability, and how these impact on their marginalisation.

Conner (2015: 15), a theorist in missiology, believes that there have been several theological discussions about disability, but that missiology has contributed very little to the general discussion on the subject. In his recent article, *Enabling Witnesses: "Disability from a missiological perspective,"* he believes that people with disabilities who have the opportunity to be included in the church could be marginalised. As a missiologist, this confirms the need for this investigation. Although this study was established in the discipline of missiology, it has an interdisciplinary approach and uses methodologies, frameworks, theories and concepts of other disciplines. The first chapter places this research in the contexts mentioned above. The question now is whether the interdisciplinary of the study has paid off. The answer is unequivocal: "Yes!" You could say, however, that it was not an easy process.

This current study was successful in its approach as proposed by missiologists and theologians like Bosch, the World Council of Churches, in exploring the marginalisation of people who are hearing-impaired with regard to the Christian context and its implications on justice, right and access of persons with disability as active and full members of the church. The study was a theological reflection of the relationship between the mission of the church and people with physical-impairment, and an understanding of *missio Dei* in the context as for all humankind. The theological response derived from the study as posed by the main research question could be summarised as the church is "for all and the church to all". The theological and missiological approach, focusing more on the marginalisation of hearing-impaired people, was helpful in drawing conclusions highlighting the relevance of the context when making sense of the current situation. This means that the questions of who, what, how, where and other relevant related questions, engaged the conclusion that disability is not only constructed as a social barrier but also as a missiological barrier. In addition, it is evident that theology has an influence on the perception of disability, both in society and Christian context. It was helpful to identify that even in the Bible disability is seen often as a curse, similar to the culture and traditional belief system. Therefore, the theological vision of people with disabilities has an influence on the church. The mission of transforming will be to emphasise the need to change the practice of churches and theological institutions to do justice to people with disabilities in the church and give them access to the Gospel.

Some people live with discrimination based on their gender, race and class. Race, class and sex really mean nothing. They only make sense in terms of how important society is to them. Social construction is the way in which society will group people and privileges certain groups over others. For example, you act like a woman or a man because society tells you that and not because you choose to be. In the same way, it indicates the race and social class to which you belong. These are social processes that differentiate us between what is "normal" and what is "abnormal."

The social constructionist paradigm used in conjunction with cultural research has been useful in exploring the nature of marginalisation that exists in the francophone community and in the church with regard to people with disabilities. Social identity was successfully discovered to explore the accessibility of people with disabilities in these churches. This model has been useful in the use of francophone culture and social configuration, including churches, to conclude that disability is a social concept in francophone society. Disability is socially constructed as a curse in francophone culture and in the traditional belief system of both churches.

Justice and the correct research approach uses everyday life occurrences to discover how the government is involved in helping the disabled. This means that justice and right according to South African law with regard with this particular group of people is used as a connection to inform data collection and analysis (Marshall & Gretchen, 2010:24). The thesis used a justice approach in accordance with South African law on disability as a tool to investigate equal accessibility for persons with disability within the church as fully active members. However, there is a need for further research focusing on justice and the right of the disabled in the belief system and Christian dialogue. This point was mainly focused on the influence of South African perspective on justice and advocacy of persons with disability in order to influence the church to act justly toward the disabled.

Pawson and Tilley (2005: 365) suggest that the best way to conduct an evaluation survey is to make a realistic evaluation based on a theory. In a realistic assessment, "the basic question posed and hopefully resolved is multiple." Realistic evaluations do not ask "What works?" Or "Does this program work? If not, ask:" What works for whom, in what circumstances, in what aspects and how? "In an effort to improve decision making, the evaluators try to determine "how" the results were caused by the influence of the context. In other words, the evaluators seek to study the causes and effects according to the context of each situation.



An effective coaching programme model for francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg is needed today in order to accommodate disabled and especially people that are hearing-impaired in the church and ministry.

Their discipleship model is the main coaching type that Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg need.

First, they need to reach out to people that are hearing-impaired to believe in Jesus Christ as a Saviour. Second, they must develop believers who were called by the gospel with three stages: growing, training, and equipping with the aim of facilitating the hearing-impaired with integration into the church. The third step is that the hearing-impaired who were developed have to be sent to save the lost in the world according to the commandment of Jesus Christ. The fourth step is that the hearing-impaired believers who were sent out into the world need to be instructed so they can become more effective in their ministry. The fifth and most important step in discipleship as a professional programme is the filling of the Holy Spirit. Each of the steps can only occur through the power of the Holy Spirit. The last step is the foundation of discipleship called expanding the Kingdom of God. This demonstrates what the ultimate purpose of discipleship is. These six steps produce an effective coaching programme and discipleship model for Francophone churches to break through the serious difficulties that they encounter these days with regard with people who are hearing-impaired involved in the church as members or ministers.

According to Conner (2015:15), “Missiology is an integrative and multidisciplinary field of study that is particularly attentive to how interaction with cultures, social traditions, and religious convictions transform the church through boundary crossing”. Therefore, the missiological duty is to make relevant contributions to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the mission of the church. The concluding observations have been a humble contribution to the sober discussion about disability from a missiological point of view.

Bosch (1991: 9) stated the following: missiology, as a branch of the discipline of Christian theology, not that selfless or neutral enterprise; Well, to look at the world from the perspective of commitment to the Christian faith. Such method does not suggest a critical test; as a matter of fact for the sake of Christian mission, it will be necessary for the realisation of the situation of Christian mission to have a rigorous analysis and evaluation.

The idea is to explain the theological and social justice factories that influence equal access for people with disabilities in the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg. The initial sections of this document suggest that the study is designed with the object in mind. Chapter seven drew conclusions based on the results of this investigation. However, in this point, the conclusions are analysed precisely in times of the deceptive expectations of francophone churches that focus on the deceptive reflections of disability, *missio Dei* and mission as a search for social justice. In the preliminary chapters it is indicated that the research theory is in *missio Dei*.

Swinton (2011: 274) believes that the starting point of disability theology is to accept that people with disabilities are a marginalised group and are excluded from church ministry. He adds that the spiritual abandonment of people with disabilities is the "forgotten dimension" of spirituality. He states that "despite evidence suggesting that special attention to the spiritual aspect of the lives of people with disabilities can improve health and improve lives, this dimension of people's lives is often overlooked. It stresses that the spiritual aspect of the lives of people with disabilities is poorly documented and misunderstood. This aspect of spirituality should be considered relevant by a service to provide comprehensive support to people with disabilities (Swinton, 2002: 29). This confirms Conner's view of the relevance of this study. The study largely took into account the findings and contributions of Swinton and others on *missio Dei's* theological discourses and his theological reflections on disability.

Swinton (2001: 25, 47) strongly states that disability does not need healing. He states that disability is not a situation that requires intervention or a solution, but must be accepted as is. People with disabilities should not be judged but evaluated and respected by what they are because they are "truly" human beings created in the image of God. The common factor is that people with disabilities are also created to the true image of God. These people who are Christians have Christ in them, so there are "no Jews or Gentiles, no men or women, no healthy people or disabled people", all are equal. It has been argued that people with disabilities are not accepted as members of the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg, which has led them to seek healing because of their exclusion from church ministry.

Finally, it is evident that people with hearing-impairment are marginalised in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. This is seen in the fact that these persons attend

church services and meetings with no forum for interpretation within the service for them to understand. Their lack of participation is a clear indication of exclusion and discrimination.

No social group is always the same, the same goes for people with disabilities. We come from a variety of cultures and, therefore, we are culturally conditioned in the same way as each person. We are exposed to various types and levels of medical care and social attitudes. We have managed to accept our disabilities in different ways. Some of us have been disabled since birth, either due to congenital diseases or birth traumas, while others have been victims of accidents or have had a disability later in life. Each of us has difficulty accepting our disability and has discovered that the quality of medical care or education we have received, or the attitude of people who have influenced our lives and our spiritual lives, have been accepted or hindered. We have been supported by the links of different cultures of people with disabilities, such as the uniqueness of sign language or a particular political understanding of our minority status. We want to say that our differences are part of the wealth of people with disabilities as a group and we welcome them. People with disabilities who share the Christian faith are united by their awareness of God's love for God and compassion for the sick and disabled and find their strength in the care of Christ. However, many found that the church's teachings on this truth were too limited and sought their own understanding. Everyone's awareness of how long he hopes to live and his own experience of faith has affected the way they accept their disability. They relied on certain theological tools to meet their existential needs to explain the mystery and paradox of love and suffering, which coexist and make sense of their lives.

These extracts are paraphrased, modified and cited directly in the document of the World Council of Churches (so far of the WCC) entitled "A Church of all and for all - A provisional declaration" (2003). These are some theological reflections that Francophone pastors can take into account in the document entitled "A Church of all and for all: a provisional statement" of the WCC (2003).

Christ destroyed all the walls of separation (Ephesians 2:14). But there are human separation walls that keep people with disabilities behind. This contradicts the ministry of reconciliation of Jesus Christ.

Historically, disability has been interpreted as a loss, as an illustration of human tragedy. Stories in the gospels about how Jesus healed people with different diseases and disabilities

are traditionally interpreted as acts of liberation, stories about how humans have had the opportunity to live a more enriched life. Since then, churches have often struggled to find the best way to properly minister to people with disabilities.

The ecumenical movement has also faced the need to solve the problem. After the fourth assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1968, the theme "The unity of the church and the renewal of humanity has emerged as a means to link the problems of the church and society." In the assembly and later, the attempt to explore the church as a more inclusive body intensified. In the Faith and Order Commission, the Faith and Order Commission aroused great interest in the meeting of the Leuven commission in 1971. This first attempt to address the situation of persons with disabilities consisted of a theological examination of the service provided to disabled people in light of the compassion of Christ.

In the period that followed, the interest of people with disabilities went from theological reflection to practical issues of inclusion within churches and ecclesial communities. But often, this reflection and action in the churches treated people "with disabilities, the disabled and people with disabilities" (all these terms were intended to reflect the global and replace each other) as objects rather than themes for reflection. The emergence of the Ecumenical Network for the Defence of the Disabled (EDAN), founded at the WCC assembly in 1998 and assimilated to the WCC structures within the Justice and Peace creation team, is now a sign of hope. In the process of raising awareness about churches and Christian institutions, because now people with disabilities are themselves subjects of reflection. EDAN works in the eight regions of the world and serves as a support network for people with disabilities who seek to solve the specific problems and challenges they face in their own contexts.

However, some churches are increasingly aware that people with disabilities are inviting them to explore a new understanding of the Gospel and the nature of the Church. This knowledge was evident in the first interim statement of the WCC Central Committee of 1997, which aimed to reflect theology and make churches more inclusive. This new interim statement in collaboration with the Faith and Order Commission is the beginning of a continuous process. It is not exhaustive, but offers indications and ideas on the main theological issues. It is hoped that this statement will also allow churches to interact with the discourse on disability and address the issue of inclusion / exclusion, active participation and full participation in the spiritual and social life of the Church. In particular and society in general.

People with disabilities have struggled to be recognised. They are economically deprived of their rights and suffer certain deprivations in their standard of living and / or their employment opportunities. Another consequence is the poverty of relationships and opportunities. They are also often vulnerable to discriminatory social trends.

## **8.5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This final section of the thesis proposes a number of recommendations to improve accessibility for physically-impaired people in the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. This part of the research is an integral part of the practical theological reflection framework used for the analysis (Swinton & Mowat, 2006: 95). Recommendations are based on the input of the participants and their own personal reflections based on the research findings. The following recommendations are suggested:

### **8.6.1. Theological reflection and duty**

It is recommended that the Francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg look beyond the requirements of *missio Dei* and consider the importance of providing accessibility to persons with disabilities as an integral part of their activities. This will enable hearing-impaired people to be well-received in the duties of the kingdom. Churches should try to talk to the right interested party, such as social assistance, disability organizations and people with disabilities, for advice on accessible facilities. The following points will help us begin to do something to recognise their presence among us as the entire church of Jesus Christ who is equal before Christ.

The church needs to train helpers who will assist people who are hearing-impaired by teaching those who are willing to learn sign language in order to interpret whenever there is a meeting. During praise and worship, songs should also be interpreted by using sign language, as their language of communication.

The church needs to pray with the hearing-impaired and encourage them every time they come to church by using sign language. Leaders of the church must teach some members of the church how to be with them during church service. Perhaps spending time with them and creating programmes such as Bible studies during the week to teach them the Bible using sign language could improve the sense of belonging. Sports and games should be organised for them using sign language.

Love and the care should also be shown by facilitating their comfortability and make them feel welcome in the church. Give follow up interaction and planning to visit them. Have others fellowship and rejoice with them for the decision they take, use sign language, disciple them to disciple others who also have a hearing-impairment. And pray with them every time when they meet together through encouraging passages from the Word of God on a daily basis. This work could be done by the leaders of these churches.

Many church leaders or ministers of the gospel turn a blind eye when it comes to the ministry of disabled people as if they do not exist. The ministry of for the hearing-impaired is a challenge that can be met only when we all join forces to reach out to them. We could develop various programmes that advice and complements leaders on the needs to consider when ministering to the hearing-impaired

Church leaders should become aware and concerned about the ministry to the hearing-impaired. They could also develop or reinforce the standard of technology in the church in order to accommodate people who are hearing-impaired. Church leaders should be encouraged to read and understand the needs of the hearing-impaired in local libraries so that they may know more about them.

Ministers could play a great role in the ministry of the hearing-impaired by becoming part of their lives through constantly being present for them when they need them while taking their responsibility as the church's spiritual leaders. They should show interest in people who are hearing-impaired through conducting Bible studies for them, in order to teach the word. Church leaders should explore ways of communicating with the hearing-impaired.

Church leaders need to change the present denominational structure so that the hearing-impaired work to succeed and go to outreach others. Leaders could have two or three sign language people who interpret messages for the hearing-impaired while preaching.

Leaders could also ensure to include them in their activities to avoid marginalisation. The best way to make this possible is through their participation in church programmes, home cells, and prayer meeting groups. They could also engage a search on what tools for hearing-impaired ministry are available.

Another aspect one could emphasise here is that there is no need for us to call them by their physical condition, which largely causes them feelings of humiliation. This reduces their self-

esteem and gives them the impression that they are of a low level or function. Leaders should explore ways of educating congregants on how to treat this delicate group of people. Today we have to see the need of training and involving people with a hearing-impairment in the church service, home cells, and prayer groups and much more depending on the services which they are best gifted to participate. This is of crucial importance to their spiritual nurture and care.

We affirm that God loves all people and gives them the opportunity to respond to that love. We believe that every person with a disability has the opportunity to find peace with God. As people with disabilities struggling with God, we all ask ourselves the same basic questions, but the theological research involved can be complex. Why me or my loved one? Is there any purpose for my disability? The answers to these questions may be influenced by the expected period of time of a disability, and by the time and circumstances that caused it. Accepting a disabling disability is influenced by the time one is expected to live and the quality of life one can have.

They have fought with God intellectually and physically to achieve this peace, and while some of them have had the privilege of writing intelligently about it, others have demonstrated it in their innate gift of grace demonstrated in the love and affection shown to those who care for them. So deeply if so many people with disabilities have this ability to reach an agreement with God, the church must surely find ways to accept the gifts they have to offer. It is not about meeting halfway but of full acceptance.

#### 8.6.1.2. Biblical reflection and duty

According to Claassens (2013: 55), Reynolds (2008: 34, 35) and McNair & Sánchez (2008: 36) ,theologian attending to disability, biblical interpretation has negatively influenced church attitudes toward people with disabilities. From the field research, it is clear that the interpretation of the biblical texts on disability has worsened the marginalisation, exclusion and inaccessibility of persons with disabilities in the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg. This means that the Bible as a religious resource influences the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities. References to healing miracles are often made in the Bible to reinforce the socio-cultural constructions of disability as a curse to oppress and exclude persons with disabilities from church ministries.

According to McNair & Sánchez (2008:36), biblical interpretation regarding disability have impacted on the constructions of disability both positively and negatively. For Reynolds (2008:34-35), although there are negative biblical texts on disability, there are also some texts that are positive. He therefore, proposes that a hermeneutic of disability be approached in such a way that does not increase the sufferance of persons with disability. He calls this the theological hermeneutic of disability, where there is a careful and negotiable biblical interpretation which takes into account the holistic historical, cultural, social, political frameworks of the biblical era, as well as current era. Hence, pastors in Francophone churches in Pretoria can adopt the theological hermeneutic of disability, as this can assist in preaching sermons that are liberating and welcoming.

Based on the above discussion, I propose the Bible as example for the marginalisation, exclusion and lack of participation of persons with disability from Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. This can assist Christian leaders to review their theologies of disability, which in turn will have an impact on their policies and praxis and possibly enable accessibility for persons with disability in francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. For instance, the biblical texts presented in chapter two, although some of them have been interpreted negatively and thereby triggered the marginalisation and exclusion of persons with disability from Christian communities, they still can conversely serve as an intervention. Leviticus 21:17-13 and John 9 are examples of disability texts in the Bible that have reinforced the marginalisation of persons with disability. However, as indicated by Reynolds, if the theological hermeneutic of disability is employed in interpretation, this could serve as an intervention.

Leviticus 21:17-13 has functioned as a yardstick regarding the exclusion of persons with disability from pastoral ministry. But Yong (2011:18, 19) and Olyan (2008:31) explain that the exclusion of Levitical priests in this text was only partial. Priests with a disability were exempted from some of the duties of the high priesthood; however, they could observe other activities outside the holy place. This highlights the point that there were Levitical priests with a disability. They also emphasise that the prohibitions in the holiness code were not only targeted at persons with disability but there were other exclusionary factors. If this text, for instance, is reinterpreted from this perspective, it could do more good than harm.

Similarly, as indicated in chapter two regarding one of the central biblical texts in the conversation on theology and disability, Yong (2011:57) is of the opinion that a normative



reading of John 9 indicates that the expectation is for blind persons to be healed. Furthermore, God is glorified in the restoring of sight of a blind person. But in her interpretation of John 9 Black (1996:60-64) highlights that the questioning of Jesus by the disciples about whose sin caused the man's blindness connotes how people in Jesus' time saw blindness as an imperfection, "meaning created imperfectly". In Jesus' time, persons with a disability were regarded as imperfect or not whole; this is how disability is also viewed today. This relegates persons with disability to the status of second-class citizens. But Jesus' answer dispels that negative perception, but it raises another point regarding disability; "for the glory of God to be revealed".

Yong (2011:57) likewise, indicates that if John 9 is read from a redemptive perspective instead of a normative hermeneutic, then the blind man in John 9 would be identified as independent, as he could go to the pool of Siloam by himself. It is clear that if a theological hermeneutic of disability is implemented when interpreting biblical texts on disability, it can possibly minimise the marginalisation and exclusion of persons with a disability who suffer in Francophone communities. This is why I propose the Bible as an intervention for equal access for persons with disability in churches

### **8.6.2. Missiological reflection and duty**

As indicated in the initial chapters of this thesis, the theological dimension of this research is the global *missio Dei*. Being a missiological study, it is worth considering the mission of the church in the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg in providing equitable access to the disabled in the church. The question is: "What is the purpose of the mission in the Francophone churches of the two cities?"

According to Swinton (2011: 274), *imago Dei* has been interpreted from a valid hermeneutical point of view, so people with disabilities are not respected and accepted by who they are. They must be accepted, respected and valued as human beings created in *imago Dei*. Ecclesiastical leaders and Christians in the Francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg should reconsider their theology and think about who God is, but above all, accept and value the disabled for who they are, because they are created in the image of God. God. This could eventually reduce the pressure of faith / healing on people with disabilities when they go to church. By coming to worship God and communion, they could be more accepted and valued.

The questions previously posed by Bevans and Schroeder are useful for churches to reflect and reformulate their priorities, policies, theologies and practices with people with disabilities in the foreground. The Jesus we serve is all inclusive. Considering the mission as *missio Dei*, God's mission is to reconcile the world and the church is the tool (Bosch, 1991: 390). An important question for the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg, which could be food for thought, would be: how did they use the use of God in their mission?

According to Bosch (1991: 393-401), the mission as mediation of salvation implies that the mission is holistic, so that salvation is not limited to the individual's relationship with Christ, but must also take into account hate, injustice, oppression, marginalisation, violence and others. Equally relevant forms of suffering in the world. The mission as a search for justice must face the tension of the expression of unconditional love in a context full of injustice. Salvation must bring joy and hope to all, especially to the marginalised of society, including the disabled. The mission must resist any form of social injustice, discrimination, oppression, stigmatization and exclusion. In addition, Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 348-395) affirm: "The missionary presence of the divine God in creation is never to impose, but to persuade and respect the love of freedom, the mission can no longer continue. In a way that neglects freedom and dignity of the person. Human beings. "They conclude that the mission as a participation in the mission of the Divine Trinity can only be continued in dialogue and can only be carried out with humility - "bold humility" - as proposed by Bosch (1991): 489).

As a result, the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg need to review their ministries from a missionary perspective to reflect these missionary expectations. In fact, the inaccessibility and exclusion of people with disabilities indicates that these churches did not consider *missio Dei* as an integral part of their ministries. If the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg imagine such reflections, it is possible that their policies, theologies, ministries and practices are positively influenced and guarantee the equity and access of persons with disabilities to their ministries. I firmly maintain that only if the francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg are accessible to people with disabilities and are taken into account and fully associated with *missio Dei*, will the mission of the church be fully fulfilled.

### **8.6.3. The justice and right reflection and duty**

This thesis has been audible about South African perspectives on justice and advocacy for people with disabilities and its influence on the church. The evaluation of the judicial framework must be observed because the study has shown that the judicial setup attends to a lot of people with disabilities, even more than the church does. Therefore, the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg should partner with the justice and right fora to closely look at the country's perspective of justice and advocacy for people with disability in order to affect the belief system and the needs that accommodate people with disabilities.

### **8.6.4. The Church reflection and duty**

This section discusses the Francophone churches of Pretoria and Johannesburg as a whole. There is an old saying that "we are united, divided we fall". This is a recommendation of the participants. Regarding the way forward, they proposed that Francophone churches could unite, regardless of their denominational membership, for the sole purpose of providing access to the hearing-impaired in the church. Through the Francophone Christian Council, each church must be willing to pool its resources to provide all modern accessibility facilities in accordance with universal design standards. If these churches pursue this goal, the aforementioned wisdom will be truly reflected in French Christianity and reflect the unity of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **8.7. AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The findings of this study illustrate the lack of equity and access for persons with disability in francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. In order to fully provide people who are hearing-impaired with equal accessibility, further research would be needed in this regard. Hence, possible topics for further research include normal hearing people and sign language acquisition. Further research on sign language education for church ministers can assist in investigating modern accessibility facilities, which can help integrate and include the hearing-impaired in francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg in their ministry as especially in God's mission.

Sign language learning will focus on accessible teaching and learning designs and methods to research the hearing-impaired perception of ministry and gospel. This direction may improve direct understanding of the gospel to persons with hearing-impaired disability.

This research focused more on the missiological and theological factors that influence equity and access for persons with disability in the church. Additional research could be to investigate interventions that pay particular attention to hearing-impaired people. This can positively influence equity and access for persons with disability in churches in a more practical manner.

This research focused on francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Additional research could be extended to involve the marginalised in other Christian communities; this is worthy of note for further consideration.

## 8.8. CONCLUSION

This dissertation titled, ‘The calling from the margins: mission to and by hearing-impaired people in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg,’ is a missiological study that aimed at exploring the francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg in their mission in regard to the hearing-impaired as margins, and missiological and theological factors that influence equal accessibility for such persons in the church.

The theological focus of the study was on the inclusivity of the *missio Dei*. Marginalisation and hearing-impaired were employed as conceptual frameworks to further investigate and realistically evaluate how the missiological construction of disability in the francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg is understood; and how their belief system influences the equal accessibility for hearing-impaired people in these churches. A qualitative approach was employed using interviews, cultural research and realistic evaluation to explore the disability phenomenon regarding access for persons with disability in the francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The questions posed were primarily: ‘How will francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg remain faithful to their mission regarding the hearing-impaired?’ What are the strategies that the francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg applied to reach the spiritual and physical needs of the hearing-impaired that will facilitate their integration as an active member of the church?’ The methodologies employed together with missiological concepts and use of different missionary theological reflections of disability as a point of departure were successful in answering these questions.

It was established from the field research that disability is constructed as a barrier in society that hinders accessibility for such persons. Previous studies had gone to the extent of constructing disability as a curse and disease that needs a cure. It was also discovered that

persons with disability in francophone churches experience extreme exclusion and lack of participation in societal life, which can be attributed to the socio-cultural construction of disability as a curse in the francophone culture belief system. It is significant to note that the way disability is constructed in the francophone culture and belief system is not so very different from the way it is constructed in the francophone Christian context. Disability is therefore constructed in the francophone Christian context as a curse. This is an indication of enculturation where the culture and traditional belief system has influenced Christian attitudes towards persons with disability in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Societal and Christian attitudes towards persons with disability in francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg which are embedded in the culture and traditional belief system also have a negative influence on equal accessibility to the ministry for persons with disability in these churches.

Furthermore, biblical interpretations of disability have reinforced socio-cultural constructions of disability as a curse to exclude persons with disability from church and ministry. This is seen in the fact that there is constant pressure on persons with disability to obtain healing by faith due to biblical healing accounts. Pastoral ministry for persons with disability is exclusive in praxis. Although participants say it is a possibility, it is obviously clear that hearing-impaired have been excluded from churches and ministry because of the interpretation exempting persons with disability from some Levitical priesthood duties in the holiness code.

In essence, the reality of the hearing-impaired in francophone churches is that of marginalisation, exclusion and lack of participation. For hearing-impaired persons have equal access to francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg, there is a need for transformation in the praxis of the churches. I, therefore, propose that the francophone churches should value and welcome biblical interpretation from Jesus' way of doing God's mission. If biblical texts on disability are interpreted from the perspective of a theological hermeneutic of disability (Reynolds, 2008:34-35), this could be redemptive, leading to the de-marginalisation of persons with disability in francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

I, therefore, propose that it is only if francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg are all-inclusive in their praxis in providing equity and access to persons with disability that they can be recognised as agents of mission fully involved in the *missio Dei*. In conclusion, one

could say that the time for the Christian francophone church in Pretoria and Johannesburg to imitate the theology of disability with a commitment to redemptive meaning.

## 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### **Interview**

Interview with the Pastor of Church A took place at the Pretoria on Sunday 3 June 2018 in his office.

Interview with the Leaders of Church A took place at the church after service on Friday 9 June 2018.

Interview with the Pastor of Church B was at his work's place on Monday 11 June 2018.

Interview with the Leaders of B took place at Pretoria on Monday 11 June 2018.

Interview with the Pastor of Church C took place on Sunday 10 June 2018.

Interview with the Leaders of church C was at Pretoria after Church on Sunday 10 June 2018.

Interview with Pastor of Church D took place on the phone on Saturday 16 June 2018.

Interview with the Leader of church D was via email exchange on Friday 15 September 2018.

Interview with the Pastor of church E was via email exchange on Thursday 21 June 2018.

Interview with the Leaders of church e was via email exchange on Saturday 23 June 2018

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Informed consent for participation in academic research

(Note: This letter is on file for each of the five churches pastors and leaders whose data was used in the research)

Title of the Study: the calling from the margins: mission to and by hearing-impaired people in Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg

**Researcher:** Stella Kayenga Mbangi (Doctorate PhD, science of religion and missiology)

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You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely mission. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

• **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is:

1. to study the Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg journey in terms of its unity, mission and witnessing to all humankind, in particular meeting the spiritual need of marginalised especially hearing-impaired people,
2. to promote and present how joining in God's mission can look like when the church joins in, with what God is already doing among the marginalised especially hearing-impaired people,
3. to encourage and influence the church to engage in ministering and equipping spiritually leaders from the margins especially hearing-impaired people in the community worship.

The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participants' names will be used in the final publication.

- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted over a period of more or less two years and its projected date of completion is on October 2018.
- **Research procedures:** The study is based on empirical theological praxis as a methodology, a qualitative approach will be used in this study, and the data will be collected with different approaches as followed: literature study, interview, observation, and life histories will be guide in the nature of qualitative interviewing and requires that questions are composed during the research project.
- **What is expected of you:** In each church the senior pastor and the leaders of departments will be selected for the interviews and the church members will be the objects of observations during Sundays and weekly meetings.
- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be treated as the data, participants, and the organisations will be kept confidential. The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.


## WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

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I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.

I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_



Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 17/04/2017

Contact number of the Researcher: 0710801387

## **Appendix 2: The questions for proposed interview guide**

### **To the leaders and Pastors of Francophone churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg**

#### **1. Demography**

- 1) How many members does the church have?
- 2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?
- 3) How many people with other physical do you have?

#### **2. Attitudes**

- 1) How does the church understand its role in the community?
- 2) What is the missional goal of your church?
- 3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people that are hearing-impaired?

#### **3. Theology and mission**

- 1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?
- 2) How does the church minister to physically-impaired people?
- 3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?
- 4) What is your understanding of the “theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired”?

#### **4. “Praxis”**

- 1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to people who are physically-impaired?
- 2) Does the church have ways of attending to hearing-impaired people in the services?
- 3) If the church has hearing-impaired people in their community, describe their participation in the church activities?
- 4) How does the calling and mission of the church assist a disabled in praxis?

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

**To the leaders and pastors of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg**

- 1) What was your motivation when you start ministering to the hearing-impaired people?
- 2) Which approach do you use to minister to hearing-impaired people?
- 3) How was the response of hearing-impaired people?
- 4) What are the challenges that you face as a church and as an individual regarding hearing-impaired's ministry?
- 5) What advice or comments would you offer to other church leaders who consider ministering to marginalised, in particular, hearing-impaired people?

**To hearing-impaired who fully participate as a leader**

- 1) What is your experience in the church particularly as a leader or an active member who is part of a ministry or cell group?
- 2) What are the challenges you have as a leader?

### **Appendix 3: The response of pastors and leaders of the church to the questionnaire (interviewed 20017 and 2018)**

#### **Church “A” in Pretoria**

##### **Demography**

1) How many members does the church have?

- 70 -90 members attending the church services

2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?

- None

3) How many people with other physical impairments do you have?

- One

##### **Attitudes**

1) How does the church understand its role in the community?

- The role of the church in the community is as a life changing instrument

2) What is the missional goal of your church?

- The mission of the church is to go around the world and make the nations the disciples of Jesus Christ according to the Gospel of Matthew 28:19 and Matthew 9:13.

3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people who are hearing-impaired?

- We have no specific approach but we are working according to our vision which is to go around the world and make all nations follow Jesus Christ in the way that the whole world will be changed to Christ

##### **Theology and mission**

1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?



- We only have one physically-impaired member in the church and so far so good, there is no challenge and our experience is so positive.

2) How does the church minister to physically-impaired people?

- By providing the gospel with love

3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?

- We should share the gospel to all

4) What is your understanding of the “theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired”?

- Having compassion for physically-impaired people by letting the church and community to accept and accommodate them and welcome and assisting them because our duty as Christians is to love everyone without partiality and we should be able to fulfil the Great Commission.

### “Praxis”

1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to the people with a physically-impaired?

- We have to assist them in their daily live.

2) Does the church have ways of attending to hearing-impaired people in the services?

- Not yet

3) If the church has hearing-impaired people in their community, describe their participation to the church activities?

- No, we do not have.

4) How does the calling and mission of the church assist disabled in praxis?

- By inviting them to the service

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

- We pray for them that healing takes place

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

- When we think of people with disabilities we automatically think of doing something for them, we do not reflect that they can do something for us and with us. They have the same duty as all members of the body of Christ to do the Lord's work in the world according to their God-given talents and gifts. We as a church are not there to show pity but to empower these people. If we have men and women who can teach and preach the word using sign language they are a tool to reach out to others who are in the same situation, but they cannot go if they are not equipped in sign language but to preach using sign language, because they need to know the gospel for them to be saved.

## **Church "B" in Pretoria**

### **Demography**

1) How many members does the church have?

- 150 to 200 members

2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?

- None

3) How many people with other physical do you have?

- None

### **Attitudes**

1) How does the church understand its role in the community?

- The role of the church in the community is to disciple them, and to understand and respond to their needs of the community

2) What is the missional goal of your church?

- The mission of the church to plant effusion churches and effective disciples around the world.

3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people with a hearing-impairment?

- From now we have no particular approach, but we are working on it.

### **Theology and mission**

1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?

- Since we have not a physically-impaired person in the church we have not yet gain any experience in regard with physically-impaired people.

2) How does the church minister to physically-impaired people?

- It depends on how the Holy Spirit will guide us

3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?

- Gospel for all

4) What is your understanding of the “theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired”?

- It means to have respect toward human diversity as God’s creation and a common harmony in the world.

### **“Praxis”**

1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to the people with a physical-impairment?

- We value them as God does

2) Does the church have ways of attending to hearing-impaired people in the services?

- Not yet

3) If the church has hearing-impaired people in their community, describe their participation in the church activities?

- We don't have at the church and in the community we may have but they don't show up.

4) How does the calling and mission of the church assist disabled in praxis?

- By praying for them

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

- We do pray for them

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

- The church can play an important role in protecting people with disabilities through pastoral care to individuals. The church visiting someone with disability can reassure the person that life still has purpose and value even with a disability. The church also can help families to cope with the change and challenges they face for this person with a disability. Pastors and ministries within the church can provide on-going support to individuals living with disabilities and help them feel a sense of belonging to the body of Christ.

## **Church "C" in Pretoria**

### **Demography**

1) How many members does the church have?

- 80 to 85 members

2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?

- None

3) How many people with other physical do you have?

- None

### **Attitudes**

1) How does the church understand its role in the community?

- The role of the church in the community is to bring people closer to God through the teachings

2) What is the missional goal of your church?

- The mission of the church is to care for souls who are tired in helping them to follow Christ as Lord and Saviour.

3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people with a hearing-impairment?

- Our approach is still a work in process soon we will put it in place.

### **Theology and mission**

1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?

- We have not yet gain any experience

2) How does the church minister to physically-impaired people?

- Through outreach

3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?

- All human being should hear and share the gospel

4) What is your understanding of the “theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired”?

- It the calling of the church to be an inclusive community that engage on the issue of justice and advocacy by bringing equality.

### **“Praxis”**

1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to people who are physically-impaired?

- We need to create a safe space in the church for them

2) Does the church have ways of attending to hearing-impaired people in the services?

➤ Not yet

3) If the church has hearing-impaired people in their community, describe their participation to the church activities?

➤ We don't have or we have not yet seen anyone

4) How does the calling and mission of the church assist disabled in praxis?

➤ Through prayer

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

➤ We organise conference for all to attend

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

➤ Disabled people are the people with physical challenges. These people face many challenges from people around them such as rejection, oppression, being under looked and isolation. However, the church has a big role to play regarding their participation in the church as far as missiology is concerned.

## **Church "D" Johannesburg**

### **Demography**

1) How many members does the church have?

➤ 100 to 200 members

2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?

➤ None

3) How many people with other physical do you have?

➤ None

## **Attitudes**

1) How does the church understand its role in the community?

- . The role of the church in the community is to release the potential and the gift that God has given people and affect them with the Word of God.

2) What is the missional goal of your church?

- The mission of the church is to make of all nations a follower of Christ, to prepare the people of God to enter their destiny in God through prayer and teaching of the word to enable people.

3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people who are hearing-impaired?

- We have not yet thought about it but it will be part of our future plan for mission and how to reach these specific people.

## **Theology and mission**

1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?

- No experience yet

2) How does the church minister to people who are physically-impaired?

- It depends if we meet one during an evangelist event.

3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?

- Doing God's mission as it is written in the book of Matt 28:18-19

4) What is your understanding of the "theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired"?

- We see it as an institution or fraternity that is focused on building an inclusive community advocating for the spiritual development of physically-impaired people.

## **"Praxis"**

1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to the people with the physically-impaired?

- We would like to implement them in the ministry and Bible study in order for them to become co-workers in the church.

2) Does the church have ways of attending to people who are hearing-impaired in the services?

- Not yet but in process

3) If the church has people who are hearing-impaired in their community, describe their participation in the church activities?

- We don't have

4) How the calling and mission of the church assist disabled in praxis?

- Through outreach

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

- We support them spiritually and socially

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

- It is very important to note that when the church is participating in the issues of disabled people, they have an opportunity to reach to the other people with the same problems even beyond that and this is important. Others will be reached in the course of training that other missions give to those physically challenged people just to equip them to do mission at any time in their life time. This brings encouragement in their life; they feel encouraged in such a way that they will not miss many of the church programmes. This makes them happy and committed. The missions are preaching to hearing-impaired people to show them the love of Jesus then they are seeing this love in the missions and churches which is the most important thing and I am sure they are also preaching to others.

**Church "E" in Johannesburg**



## **Demography**

1) How many members does the church have?

- 50 members

2) How many hearing-impaired people does the church have?

- None

3) How many people with other physical do you have?

- **None**

## **Attitudes**

1) How does the church understand its role in the community?

- The role of the church in the community is helping them to seek first the Kingdom of God and all good things will be given according to the book of Matthew 6:33.

2) What is the missional goal of your church?

- Its mission is to reach people from all over the world who live on earth.

3) How do you approach persons with disabilities in particular people who are hearing-impaired?

- We have none but we will like to learn and attend to those people

## **Theology and mission**

1) What is your experience regarding ministering to physically-impaired people?

- We will like to but since we do not have people who are physically-impaired in the church we still do not having experience.

2) How does the church minister to the physically-impaired?

- Through conferences if they came

3) How do you understand the *missio Dei* in the context of all humankind?

- Share the gospel without limit

4) What is your understanding of the “theological dimension of justice and advocacy in regard to people who are physically-impaired”?

- It's the church as an inclusive community and the church as a holistic mission building an inclusive community.

### **“Praxis”**

1) Describe your role, as a church, in relation to people who are physically-impaired?

- The church must break the historical barriers that associate disability with sin and begin to embrace physically-impaired people by simply engaging in God's view of mission.

2) Does the church have ways of attending to people who are hearing-impaired in the services?

- We are looking forward to plan about it

3) If the church has people who are hearing-impaired in their community, describe their participation in the church activities?

- No we don't have them

4) How does the calling and mission of the church assist disabled in praxis?

- By praying for them

5) Missiological implication and impact of the church in the communities of people with disabilities?

- We serve all the community and take care of those who are in need

6) What is your understanding of the importance of missiological reflection regarding the full participation of disabled in the church?

- missiological comes from the word mission which means reaching out, now coming back to the missiological it can be defined as the science of cross-cultural communication of Christian faith in the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus told us go

into the world and preach the good news to all creation (Mark16:15) this act is very important because it helps us to spread the word worldwide.

### **To the leaders and pastors of hearing-impaired churches in Pretoria and Johannesburg**

1) What was your motivation when you start ministering to the hearing-impaired?

- I was motivated by both my grandparents who were hearing-impaired

2) Which approach do you use to minister to people who are hearing-impaired?

- I don't have any specific approach except the biblical one by using the sign language as way of sharing the good news with them

3) What was the response of people who are hearing-impaired?

- They welcome the Word of God with all they heart

4) What are the challenges that you face as a church and as an individual regarding a ministry for the hearing-impaired

- The challenge that we have is that expected from the hearing-impaired and their family we have no other normal hearing people in the church and we can only do the evangelism to hearing-impaired people because most of the normal hearing people don't understand sign language.

5) What advice or comments would you offer to other church leaders who consider ministering to marginalised, in particular, people with a hearing-impairment?

- To have two services one for the hearing-impaired and one for normal hearing people because of the language barrier.

### **To hearing-impaired who fully participate as a leader**

1) What is your experience in the church particularly as a leader or an active member who is part of a ministry or cell group?

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2) What are the challenges you have as a leader?

