The Rediscovery of the Role of the Laity in the Mission of the Church – with Reference to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA)

Peter Christofides

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University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. P. G. J. Meiring

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To God be the glory.

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis was to study the current status of the laity in South Africa, especially the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) in order to establish whether the Church is advancing or not – both numerically and spiritually.

In missiological studies, we become very aware of different paradigms and models. These standards can often determine the goal of the research and the criterion for testing models which are presented or approached. In this case, the paradigm and standard is found in Scripture. The important problems facing Christianity and missiology today, centre on an understanding of the doctrine, and distinguishing factors, of the Church and its implications. These distinguishing factors of the Church have been discussed and made clear in this thesis as it is a burning issue today – that is certainly true in the BUSA.

Within the commands and paradigms given in Scripture, there is a need to plant churches. These churches are made up of people of the world gathering together into meaningful, worshipping and obeying groups. These groups are distinguished by teaching – (Kerygma) (Κήρυγμα). Each member, according to the priesthood of all believers, has an equal opportunity to make a contribution to the life of the church and together are the driving force, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. Christ's purposes are worked out through local churches and this is tied inextricably with His Word.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by fellowship – (Koinonia) (Κοινονία). This fellowship of love reaches out to include mankind giving rise to loving God and loving one's neighbour. Under the Lordship of Christ there is a constraint of love to live for Him with responsible compassion for others.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by ministry – Diakonia (Διακονία). The Body of Christ is a living organism because each member partakes of the life of Christ. The nature of this life is to be like Christ as it comes to visibility in local churches reflecting a basic organization which conforms to its nature by looking to Christ.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by Worship (Λειτουργία). Christ is worshipped by the local church serving in the world. Those who have faith in Christ serve and minister as representatives of Christ.

The Body of Christ which is the Church functions as a community and has some form of organisation. This does not mean that people strive for positions of power, but rather serve through sacrificial giving. Down through the ages the church has observed the tendency to a hierarchical view of church leadership. The church should be defined and stated by spiritual gifting rather than hierarchical status.

Research has been ventured upon through questionnaires and interviews to determine the status of the laity. This was done across denominations of the Christian faith. From the research undertaken and the data collected, it would be an adequate observation, therefore, to state that most South Africans do not have strong and clear beliefs, largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview – that is, they lack a consistent and holistic understanding of their faith. Millions of South Africans feel personally committed to God, yet they have their own "belief system" or are "spiritual people" in their "own way".

Although one needs to be cautious about reading too much into figures, one needs to be cautious not too become too casual among those who move too far from basic accepted, traditional views. It eventually raises the question, to whom and what are people committed to? Also, people are spiritually active, but to what end in their "own way"?

There is always the possibility that the changes in the behaviours observed will produce some permanent transitions in beliefs. For example, it may be that there may be a dramatic increase in Bible reading that could produce a new understanding of biblical content. It is possible that more church attendance would lead to a deeper relationship with God. It is reasonable to expect more widespread involvement in home-cells and small groups to produce some degree of change in people's lives – if there is correct and appropriate teaching and if there is a conscious effort toward this intention. While such transitions do not occur often, there is always the hope that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, lives will be changed. Since God works through people to accomplish His purposes, it is an exciting challenge for Christian leaders to seek His guidance toward facilitating a genuine period of renewal and revival in this country.

Looking at the current status of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA), field research was done to establish the current situation and maturity (or immaturity) of the churches under the BUSA. This phase of analysis was entered, conscious of limitations, yet confident that the problem was serious enough to demand further analysis that significant data emerged. From this data, we discovered where the problems lay and through analysing this data, recommendations for the BUSA have been made in building mature churches in the denomination. By diagnosis and prognosis, analysis has determined a way forward.

A church without responsible action for the Christian mission is an abnormality. Its own health, growth and maturity which give praise to God are dependent on the Spirit's guidance in the obedience of faith to all nations. Something is wrong when people spectate and expect others to do the task of Christian missions.

Suggestions were articulated and the proposals reached were from the doctrine of the Church and the analysis of the data from the research done. These

submissions are ways the BUSA can become an influence which will be felt among the nations of the world.

In this analysis, the researcher puts forward that there seems to be a position of passive dependence of the laity on the clergy. The researcher believes that each member, both clergy and laity, has their own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the church and the expansion of God's kingdom in the world.

Although the BUSA may be growing numerically, there is a growing concern over the stability of many of the churches and their leaders. Without a greater emphasis on church strengthening, education and equipping, churches under the banner of the BUSA are going to be faced with troubling consequences.

The researcher believes that the role of the laity is on the cutting edge of the Christian mission. If there is no rediscovery of this role, the church will be faced with many more difficulties. The biblical view of the priesthood of all believers or every-member ministry (EMM) illustrates that empowering the laity at grass roots level to be ministers of the Gospel should be standard. This view alerts churches to change their priorities so that more people can engage in ministry that serves the nations of the world – hence the term missional member ministry (MMM).

KEY WORDS

1. Clergy

2. Laity

3. Church

4. Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA)

5. Evangelical

6. Preaching/Teaching – Kerygma (Κήρυγμα)

7. Fellowship/Communion – Koinonia (Κοινονία)

8. Serving – Diakonia (Διακονία)

9. Worship – Leitourgia (Λειτουργία)

10. Missional

11. People Ministry

12. Missional Member Ministry (MMM)

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

"God is a missionary God; the Bible is a missionary book; the Christ of the Bible is a missionary Christ; and His Church is a missionary Church." These were the statements made by John Stott at the Pan African Leadership Assembly in December, 1976, in Nairobi, Kenya. They point out that missions is an enterprise very close to the heart of any true church. Therefore, the task of selecting just those people who should be sent as cross-cultural representatives is a very critical question for the church.

We live in a day and age where much is said about growing the Church. Many plans and strategies have been presented by churches and mission agencies to try and achieve this good end. Some, like J Keith Batemen have suggested "A Ten-Point Plan for Producing Better Indigenous Churches" while others like Donald Sommer has recommended "Integrating Technology in Leadership Training". As good as these suggestions and recommendations may be, the task at hand is not a simple one.

Many churches have been very successful in their missionary enterprise and have presented their "winning formula" for others to ascribe to. Some have allowed their churches to be studied and it would seem that each one has "the secret" of church growth and/or church renewal. Yet, a comparison of the churches leaves one confused as to that "secret", because the differences between them are very great. Their approaches in some cases are almost contradictory to each other. So, where in lies the hard to pin down secret which we would all like to grasp?

1.1. Hypothesis of this Analysis

The hypothesis of this thesis is founded upon the researcher's belief that the role of the laity is on the cutting edge of the Christian mission. If there is no rediscovery of this role, the church will be faced with many more difficulties. The biblical view of the priesthood of all believers or every-member ministry (EMM) illustrates that empowering the laity at grass roots level to be ministers of the Gospel should be standard. This view alerts churches to change their priorities so that more people can engage in ministry that serves the nations of the world.

In this research, the researcher proposes that there seems to be a position of passive dependence of the laity on the clergy and that this is the case in the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA). The researcher suggests that if each member, both clergy and laity, knew their gifts, roles and positions, they would each be able to make their own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the church and to the expansion of God's kingdom in the world.

The researcher believes that the biblical view of the priesthood of all believers or every-member ministry (EMM) has not been made known or allowed people to be empowered at grass roots level in order to "make powerful" the people (Church) to be ministers of the Gospel. The above will alert churches to change their priorities so that more people can engage in ministry that serves the nations of the world. This is what will be researched. It is suggested that from the analysis and data ascertained, diagnosis would help establish a way forward to produce responsible and mature churches in the BUSA.

Over the years, the BUSA has been reluctant to empower its laity and this has resulted in a decline in activity and service by local churches in the denomination. Obviously, many reasons can be offered for this reluctance, such as:

- a threat of the laity to the leadership;

- an inadequate understanding of the priesthood of all believers by the clergy, as well as the laity;
- an insufficiency of understanding peoples gifts which must be used to serve one another and the world;
- ineffective, or non-existent structures to allow the church to function as a living organism;
- lack of proper training, teaching and education; and
- the exclusion of church members performing certain functions in the church.

As it is the BUSA that is in focus in this instance, research has been completed within the denominational churches by virtue of field research to establish the current status of EMM in the churches, evaluate the statistics and present ways forward for EMM to be improved in order for the churches to function more effectively. Through this analysis/research, we have been able to diagnose the maturity of these churches with the significant data ascertained and reflect on the way forward to produce responsible and mature churches.

1.2. Research Methodology

In the methodology of this study on the rediscovery of the role of the laity, the researcher has undertaken a *comparative literary study* with an exegetical theological investigation in order to reach biblical influencing factors. *Quantitative field research* or *empirical research* has been conducted with the churches under the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) in order to discover the qualitative understanding of what situation and state of affairs the churches are at. The results have been thoroughly examined in order to show the shortcomings or competence of those denominational churches in the whole process of rediscovering the role of the laity in the mission of the church. Once the whole evaluatory process was completed and analysed, recommendations have been made in order to redirect the laity into the right process so as to

accomplish the correct mission of the church – which has made this research unique and distinctive. The researcher is an *observer* as well as a serving participant in this exploration – which makes this research more realistic and dependable.

1.2.1. Literature Study

Much preliminary research was done before the main research was embarked on. This has been helpful in getting a feel of the main body of research. After the preliminary study, a more comprehensive study is done before embarking on experimentation and data collection. In this whole process, constant knowledge is being gained through updated information that is available from journal articles, current publications etc.

The bulk of the literature study was acquired through theological research. This was done through in depth study of the Bible and consultation of theological books in order to discover relevant information concerning the research.

1.2.2. Empirical Study

An empirical research was conducted in this research project. The method the data was obtained was through interviews, questionnaires and observer participation. This was added to the literature study completed.

1.2.2.1. Interviews

The personal interviews were conducted by the researcher to establish the status of the laity in South Africa. This research was done through interviews to a broader Christian community in the country as well as students who are not only Baptist who attend the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (BTC) in Randburg, South Africa. Each participant was asked a number of questions and

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it was assured that anonymity would be kept. Qualitative data was called for to establish whether it was a national problem or just a denominational problem.

Collecting data to establish the involvement of the laity in the BUSA was done in a classroom setting at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (BTC) in Randburg, South Africa as well as at the Baptist Union Assembly held in Bloemfontein, South Africa in 2007 – see Appendix B, C and D.

1.2.2.2. Questionnaires

The researcher used questionnaires (Appendix A, C and D) that were handed out to respondents to answer. These questionnaires were helpful in collecting data to establish both the status of the laity in South Africa (Appendix A) as well as the role of the laity in churches of the BUSA (Appendix C and D). It is well imagined that questionnaires are easier to handle that interviews, for a number of reasons. These reasons are that questionnaires demand less time; they can be administered to large groups as opposed to interviews; and, at times, questionnaires can be administered personally.

The researcher developed questionnaires that would be appropriate for the purpose of this study.

1.2.2.3. Participant Observer

It is always helpful to have people at "grass roots" level when researching a topic that will require accuracy and reality. From what they see, they are able to make certain observations, interpret events and make an accurate diagnosis. In this study, the researcher became a participant observer. Being an ordained minister in the BUSA and having participated in churches affiliated to the BUSA since 1989. The observer is also a Senior Lecturer at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (BTC) in Randburg, South Africa. This has allowed direct

observation and has become an effective part of the situation in collecting data for this study. The researcher has therefore been involved at all levels – as a lay person and also as a clergyman. It will be clear to the reader that the researcher writes from the vantage point of an evangelical, Baptist, theologian.

1.3. Definitions

It is crucial that some definitions are articulated in order not to cause any confusion when doing this study as many of the concepts used may have different meanings in the different contexts, or even denominations. To follow are brief definitions of these concepts:

1.3.1. Church

In its most general sense, the religious society founded and established by Jesus Christ, to receive, preserve, and propagate His doctrines and ordinances is what we can call the Church. It is a body or community of Christians, united under one form of government by the profession of one faith, and the observance of the same rituals and ceremonies. It is the Greek New Testament word ἐκκλησία/ekklesia which means "called out assembly". It is basically an assembly or congregation of people who are called out for a purpose. For our purposes, the assembly or congregation of people is located at a place.

1.3.2. Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA)

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) is a Protestant Christian denomination representative by approximately 700 churches and about 50 000 people. The following is the "Statement of Belief" of the BUSA which was passed in September 1924 (www.baptistunion.org.za):

1. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writing as fully inspired of God and accept them as the supreme and final authority for faith and life.

2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

4. We believe that God created man in His own image; that man sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death, physical and spiritual; that all human beings inherit a sinful nature which issues (in the case of those who reach moral responsibility) in actual transgression involving personal guilt.

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, a substitutionary sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.

6. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.

7. We believe in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.

9. We believe in the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation.

10. We believe that the one true Church is the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that the local Church on earth should take its character from this conception of the Church spiritual, and therefore that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of Church membership.

11. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances - Baptism and the Lord's Supper - to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witnesses to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith; that Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification

with Christ in burial and resurrection, and that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and wine as symbolical of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death till He come.

Accompanying the Statement of Faith are the "Baptist Principles" that the church upholds (www.baptistunion.org.za):

PREAMBLE: We as Baptists share many areas of our faith with other members of the professing Christian Church. These include a belief in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; in the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church; and in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

There are however areas of principle and practice where we as Baptists make distinctive emphases arising out of our understanding of the Scriptures. It is to clarify these that the following statement is made. We, as Baptists believe in:

1. The DIRECT LORDSHIP OF CHRIST over every believer and over the local church. By this we understand that Christ exercises His authority over the believer and the local Church directly, without delegating it to another.
2. The CHURCH as the whole company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The local church, being a manifestation of the universal church, is a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and observed. It is fully autonomous and remains so notwithstanding responsibilities it may accept by voluntary association.
3. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM as an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sign of personal repentance, faith and regeneration; it consists of the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
4. The CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLE, namely that each member has the privilege and responsibility to use his/her gifts and abilities to participate fully

in the life of the Church. We recognise that God gifts His Church with Overseers (who are called Pastors or Elders) whose primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, to equip and provide spiritual oversight, and Deacons whose primary function is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Church. This principle further recognises that each member should participate in the appointment of the church's leaders, and that constituted church meeting, subject to the direct Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture, is the highest court of authority for the local Church.

5. The PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS, by which we understand that each Christian has direct access to God through Christ our High Priest, and shares with Him in His work of reconciliation. This involves intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the end of the earth.

6. The principle of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, namely that no individual should be coerced either by the State or by any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the Scriptures responsibly and to act in the light of his conscience.

7. The principle of SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE in that, in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions. The Church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind.

1.3.3. Evangelical

"Evangelical" is derived from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον/evangelion which means "gospel" or "good news." There are probably at least as many different definitions of the Christian term "*evangelical*" and "*evangelicalism*" as there are

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evangelical Christian congregations. Generally speaking, those who proclaim to be "evangelical" are ones who believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God. They believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, that is, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Evangelicals believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, His sinless life, in His atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory. They believe that regeneration by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of lost and sinful people is essential. Evangelicals believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a life pleasing to God. They believe in the spiritual unity of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.3.4. Clergy

By clergy we mean those who are different to laity (laity to also be defined). The Greek word is κλῆρος/kleros which has to do with an inheritance or part that a person plays in the church setting. In this case, we mean Christian religious practitioners or leaders that are members of a religious community. Generally speaking, they are set apart for ministry and have definite roles to perform as designated by the local church or community.

1.3.5. Laity

We understand the laity to be people who are not clergy. The word derives from the Greek work λαικός/laikos which stems from λαός/laos which means the people at large. When speaking of the laity, we mean every member of the local church who is to bear witness according to the gifts given to them, to carry on the work of Christ in reconciling the world. We also mean that they are people who take their place in the life and activities – as well as governance – of the local church. Much, in fact most, of the ministry of the laity is to take place outside

official church structures – such as in homes, workplaces, schools, and so on. Lay people are an important part of the structures of the local church.

1.3.6. Missiology

When approaching the study of missions, we imply the study of the activities that pertain to the salvation activities of God on this earth which are geared toward bringing the kingdom of God into existence on earth. Missiology would be the study of the Church's divine calling to be ready to serve God to all humanity. It is the scientific and critical investigation and examination into the goals in communicating the total gospel to all of God's creation.

1.3.7. Mission / Missions

While doing missiology, we understand missions as the great work of Jesus Christ in drawing peoples to Himself. This great work is undertaken and exercised by and through the Church. This mission is the work of God in reconciling sinful humanity to Himself – this is done by the diverse dimensions as given by Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman (1994:36-39): "*The Kerygmatic Dimension*" – this being the proclamation of the gospel or good news (εὐαγγέλιον/evangelion) in the form of "preaching, witnessing, providing literature, theological education, etc." "*The Diaconal Dimension*" – this has to do with ministries of service such as, "to correct the structural imbalances and injustices which cause sickness, poverty and oppression". *The Fellowship Dimension* – the Church is called to bring about "togetherness" and this is never to be done in isolation. This fellowship takes place in the world among people – people of every tribe, kindred and nation. *The Liturgical Dimension* – this is worship of God, not only in singing of songs but in the inclusion and "holistic approach" of the "Kerygmatic", "Diaconal" and "Fellowship" dimensions. It is summed up so well by Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman, "The liturgical dimension thus serves to place each one of the previous three dimensions in

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perspective. We proclaim not because we know better; we serve not because we are more privileged; we have fellowship not in order to patronize; we do all this – gladly – because the greatness of God's love leave us no other option" (1994:39). This is missions!

1.3.8. Missional

To avoid any confusion, "missional" does not have to do with another renewal movement which is trying to contextualize Christianity for a postmodern generation. It must also not be mistaken with being "evangelistic" or "seeker-sensitive". These terms have to do with the application of a certain type of model for the church. Missional is more than social justice and getting involved with the poor.

To understand the term "missional", we need to have a proper understanding of God. To quote John Stott and a very familiar phrase coined by him, "The Living God is a Missionary God" (1999:3). It is this very God who takes the initiative and sends His Son. This has to do with the doctrine of *mission Dei* – the sending of God. This doctrine is causing many to redefine their understanding of church and its role as an instrument of God in the world. The church, as the people of a missionary God, engagement in the world in reaching out into people's lives is of the essence.

1.4.   Outline

1.4.1.   Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter explaining the relevance and importance of a study of this nature. The methodology as well as the evaluatory and analytical process has been explained so as to reach the recommendations that have been decided upon.

1.4.2. <u>Chapter 2 – The Importance of the Laity in the Local Church</u>

Chapter 2 has focused on the importance of the role of the laity in the local church. It seems that Evangelicals have been weak in articulating a doctrine of the Church and an effective study of the Church – "ecclesiology". These distinguishing factors of the Church have been discussed and made clear in this chapter as it is a burning issue today – that is certainly true in the BUSA.

What is also of importance in this chapter is the emphasis on the reference to the local church. It is of importance to understand the individual and their inward relationship with Christ.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by teaching – (Kerygma) (Κήρυγμα). Each member has an equal opportunity to make a contribution to the life of the church and together are the chief agents for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by fellowship – (Koinonia) (Κοινονία). This fellowship of love reaches out to include mankind giving rise to loving God and loving one's neighbour.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by ministry – Diakonia (Διακονία). The Body of Christ is a living organism because each member partakes of the life of Christ.

This Church that is incarnated is distinguished by Worship (Λειτουργία). Christ is worshipped by the local church serving in the world. Those who have faith in Christ serve and minister as representatives of Christ.

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The Body of Christ which is the Church functions as a community and has some form of organisation. This does not mean that people strive for positions of power, but rather serve through sacrificial giving. Down through the ages the church has observed the tendency to a hierarchical view of church leadership. The church should be defined and stated by spiritual gifting rather than hierarchical status.

In this chapter, the aim was to define and discuss the Church and how it is to be sustained by a community which is dependent on Christ for reconciliation.

1.4.3. Chapter 3 – The Status of the Laity in the Church in South Africa

Chapter 3 has examined the status of the laity in the church in South Africa. There are statistics available on the status of the laity in the church in South Africa. These figures are available from, amongst other oraganisations, BUVTON (Buro vir Voortgesette Teologiese Opleiding en Navorsing) at the University of Stellenbosch as well as Kingfisher Mobilising Centre which is an interdenominational, multi-cultural missions mobilising organization which mobilises faith communities world-wide to be light to the world – to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and to get involved in the needs of the world. These organizations have been called upon and consulted. From these figures and organizations, we have analysed and seen how renewal has taken place in churches where there has been a missionary injection so the church could become more functional. A common term that was used in this regard is the term "Missional Congregations".

Research has been ventured upon through questionnaires and interviews to determine the status of the laity. This was done across denominations of the Christian faith.

1.4.4. <u>Chapter 4 – An Overview of the Current Status of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA)</u>

Chapter 4 has endeavoured to determine the current status of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA). In this chapter, field research has been done to establish the current situation and maturity (or immaturity) of the churches under the BUSA. These interviews were done through handing out questionnaires to students at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (BTC) as well as telephonic interviews. This phase of analysis has been entered, conscious of limitations, yet confident that the problem is serious enough to demand further analysis that significant data will emerge. From this data, we discovered where the problems lay and through analysing this data, recommendations for the BUSA have been made in building mature churches in the denomination. The researcher was in quite a unique situation as both an observer as well as a participant in this research process. By diagnosis and prognosis, analysis has determined a way forward.

1.4.5. <u>Chapter 5 – The Church's Active Role in the Christian Mission for the Purpose of Fulfilling the Great Commission</u>

Chapter 5 has, from the outcomes of the research done, recommended a way forward in the church's active role in the different stages of the Christian mission for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission as instructed by Jesus in Mt 28:18-20.

It is obvious that accomplishing the Christian mission is a progressing endeavour; it is not accomplished all at once. In this chapter we identify some phases for the church to observe where they are in the process of growth and maturity.

1.4.6. Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Proposal for a Way Forward

Chapter 6 is the conclusion and suggestions for a way forward. A church without responsible action for the Christian mission is an abnormality. Its own health, growth and maturity which give praise to God are dependent on the Spirit's guidance in the obedience of faith to all nations. Something is wrong when people "spectate" and expect others to do the task of Christian missions.

In this chapter we have articulated the conclusions reached from the doctrine of the Church and the analysis of the data from the research done and have proposed ways the BUSA can become an influence which will be felt among the nations of the world.

In this analysis, the researcher puts forward that there seems to be a position of passive dependence of the laity on the clergy – this is certainly the case in the BUSA! The researcher believes that each member, both clergy and laity, has their own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the church and the expansion of God's kingdom in the world. Paul's image of the body of Christ in 1 Cor 12 clearly explains the close relationship between Christ and His Church and partly illustrates the unique bond between believers. The church belongs to Christ – He is its origin, its head and its governor. Being Christ's body, believers are linked in a special way. Those who belong to Christ belong to one another.

Although the BUSA may be growing numerically, there is a growing concern over the stability of many of the churches and their leaders. Without a greater emphasis on church strengthening, education and equipping, churches under the banner of the BUSA are going to be faced with troubling consequences.

1.5. Limitations to this Study in Missiology and the Role of the Laity

What is outlined above is a very succinct look at some of the points surrounding strategy, and organisational development that has been investigated in this thesis. This topic is so vast that the scope of this thesis only allows us to examine some aspects within the scope of missiology. What is clear is that there are many techniques and styles available that can be used within mission organisations, churches and other ministry endeavours.

Christ gave us a task, and with that, there is a goal. We are required by God to achieve that goal, yet in a strange way, which is different from a secular approach, God does not expect us to be able to achieve this task on our own. In the church, there is an assumption that people are held accountable, and are expected to produce results, but in accordance with God's will. So, we have to discern whether a ministry is viable or not based not only on results we can see and measure, but by what we feel the Holy Spirit is requiring us to do. This can be a strange concept for non-believers to accept. It may be that the result God wanted in a certain situation is the salvation of only one person – yet the involvement of many lay members.

All of this does not preclude us from planning effectively, setting goals and trying to achieve objectives. It does not stop us from creating dynamic teams of people that are effective in what they do. We can learn vast amounts about organisational development and how to adapt to change. We need to be relevant to new generations of people who have different problems and issues.

For us to be rewarded as faithful servants, we need to be successful. What is success, and how do we measure it? We can measure it by many things, including numbers. It can only be counted as success however if it is in accordance with God's will and we have achieved the desires of His heart.

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CHAPTER 2 – THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAITY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. THE BODY OF CHRIST – THE CHURCH

David Bosch (2005:390) sees mission as the activity of God derived from the nature of God. It is larger than the church and is God turning to the world in respect of creation, care, redemption, and consummation. Mission is participating in the sending God's objectives. The *Missio Dei* is thus, neither the church nor any human agent seen as the sole bearer of mission, primarily and ultimately, the work of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Theology of mission and soteriology are interdependent determining the missionary enterprise. Complete salvation is futuristic as Pauline thinking stresses apocalyptic categories emphasizing the Parousia. The Reaction of church and mission to modernism's view of Jesus as the ideal human being, required an emphasis on the Christological element of soteriology according to Beinert in Bosch (2005:398). The holistic nature of salvation highlights the priority of economic justice against exploitation, human dignity against oppression, solidarity against alienation and hope against despair. Salvation needs interpretation within a comprehensive Christological framework as the *totus christus* (incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection and parousia). This summarized the purpose of mission (2005:399).

1.1. The Position of Lay Members in the Church

1.1.1. The Position of Ordinary Church Members Through the Ages

Over the years we have become accustomed to the distinction between the clergy (κλέρος) as leaders and ordinary church members (laity, congregation /

λάος), and the inferior – or at any rate subordinate – position of the latter. This does not apply to all churches, but it is true of most large denominations. Everyone is familiar with the distinction. It is remarkable that the same distinction is not made in the New Testament. Although there are references to spiritual leaders, elders, presbyters and the like, they do not belong to a superior order or occupy a special position in the church. In 1 Pt 2:5, 9, God's people are called a "holy priesthood" (ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον) and a "royal priesthood" (βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα). All believers are God's priests. Another significant point is that the early church devoted comparatively little attention to church organization, since many Christians were expecting the second coming to happen any day. By the end of the first century, the expectation of an imminent second coming had begun to wane and the church started to organize for its earthly existence. Gradually, an ecclesiastic structure emerged in which the clergy increasingly took charge as leaders and the ordinary members became more and more passive. During the first centuries, the authority of the leaders increased and an ecclesiastic hierarchy emerged. At the head was the bishop, followed by a council of elders to advise him and, below them, the deacons were responsible for various ecclesiastic ministries (Von Campenhausen 1969:97). Hans Kung (1972:54) points out the striking parallel between the ecclesiastic hierarchy and the structure of the Roman civil service of those days.

From the third century onwards the bishops' authority increased. In many of the church historical writings, one often reads of information on the role of bishops – the image of a shepherd in relation to his flock – and the responsibilities to the flock. The shepherd is vested with divine authority and represents the Lord God: "The bishop is God's mouth, and his decision has an authority like that of God" (Von Campenhausen 1969:240). He is described as high priest, Levite, prince, ruler, mighty king and after God, father of the church. The congregation is expected to honour the bishop, who is God's representative, as they honour God (Von Campenhausen 1969:242). Cyprian even goes further, maintaining that there can be no church without a bishop. "Not only is the bishop in the church,

but the church is the bishop. That is to say, without the office of bishop, there is no church" (Von Campenhausen 1969:169).

By this time, the ecclesiastic hierarchy had become so established that it was taken for granted and nobody thought of questioning it. This hierarchy not only made a distinction among the clergy themselves, but also caused a wide rift to develop between clergy and congregation. The shepherd became estranged from his flock. Because the clergy were God's representatives, a clear distinction between them and the congregation was required. The superior status of the clergy was taken for granted. The divide between the official clergy and the congregation widened during the Middle Ages. The church developed its own social hierarchy with special prerogatives, titles and immunities. This was when ordinary church members came to be described as "laity". The word "laity" (or "lay person") is derived from the Greek λακός, meaning "belonging to the λάος" ([God's chosen] people). Eventually it came to mean an inability to join in the scientific and learned discussion and evaluation. Still later it acquired the connotation of ignorance (Kraemer 1958:47). During the first few centuries of the Church's existence, the laity was not all that ignorant, for at that time the propagation of the faith and the expansion of the Church were tasks performed mainly by ordinary members. It was during the Middle Ages that the laity became the subordinate, passive component of the Church.

The Reformation, which happened in the sixteenth century, affected the position of church members. Luther spoke out strongly against the inferior position of church members and referred to the universal priesthood of all believers. In using this term, Luther was emphasizing that not only officially ordained priests belonged to the priesthood; every believer was a member of it. It is understandable that Luther should have concerned himself about this matter, since ordinary church members played a major role in the Reformation. It should be noted, however, that the distinctiveness of the preacher's ministry was maintained. After the Reformation, church members again retired to the

background and the clergy became the corps of office-bearers and representatives of the church.

The image of the shepherd and his flock can be used to describe the relationship between clergy and laity. The clergy are the shepherds, the decision makers, the ones who lead the way. The flock is the church members, the congregation. The shepherds tend their flocks with great love and responsibility and care about their wounds and despair. The flock follows the shepherd with complete trust. This trust is based on past experience. The shepherd has proved himself an able leader, worthy of the flock's confidence. In addition, he is educated and qualified and his leadership is rarely questioned. For many centuries the Pastor was one of the few educated persons in the community and the flock esteemed him, but were also dependent on him. A basic difference between the shepherd and the flock is that the former has a special calling and is set aside for a specific task by his ordination. The accentuation of calling and ordination gives the shepherd certain status. On the strength of it he is accepted and respected as God's ambassador. His main task is to care for his flock. Being the leader, he decides which pastures to frequent and although he may observe the church calendar, he is free to choose the topic of his sermon. In churches where the texts are prescribed, this is not done by the flock but by the chief shepherds. This license gives the shepherd scope to put his own stamp on the flock.

When the shepherd acts, he does so in the name of the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ and addresses the flock with the words, "Thus says the Lord!" This not only widens the gap between shepherd and flock, it also gives the former tremendous authority. The flock rarely questions him and is hesitant to contradict him. However great the divide between them, the shepherd constantly crosses the bridges he has built between himself and his flock and tends them with loving compassion. Like the Good Shepherd, he goes off looking for the lost sheep and cares for the injured. Like David of old, he does not lessen his zeal for protecting the sheep and when danger threatens, he is prepared to expose himself. No

sacrifice is too great and he gives diligently of his time and energy. He identifies with and accepts responsibility for his flock. There is a special bond between shepherd and flock, a trust relationship that is largely attributable to the shepherd's loving devotion and service to the flock and their obedience in following him.

This beautiful relationship did not prevent the flock from becoming so dependent on the shepherd that church members were eventually quite rightly described as the laity. The hierarchical structure left little opportunity for members to have a say in matters and they contributed little or nothing to the church's decision making. Because of institutionalization and the special and respected emphasis on proper training of pastors, church members were hesitant to contribute to pastoral work in the congregation and to offer critical comments on the sermons. Although both clergy and laity are to blame, it must be said that clergy were more responsible for the immaturity of the congregation. Church members were rarely given an opportunity to contribute creatively. In the praxis of the church, everything revolved around the pastor and the congregations remained an undeveloped force. The worst of it was that this immaturity was usually interpreted as pious dependence. It would incumbent on the clergy to train church members to perform their ministries – via their God-given gifts (charismata/χαρίσματα) – and in doing so, build the body of Christ.

Because the clergy were accustomed to take charge of the building task themselves, and because the church structure in those days offered little scope for congregational involvement, church members often found an outlet in free associations, especially in the fields of youth work, mission and charitable work.

1.2. The Need for a Sound Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church)

Evangelicals have not been strong in articulating a foundational doctrine of the church (ecclesiology). Their emphasis on evangelism and cooperative,

interdenominational schools and missions have led to formation of statements of faith where the Doctrine of the Church is conspicuously lacking. Many have come to hold that the New Testament does not speak to Church principles – pragmatism from each cultural area will determine the particular Church governance in the society. More liberal viewpoints reveal the same weaknesses. The history of Protestantism reveals a lack of precise formulation of a Doctrine of the Church. For many, the Church is understood only in terms of the "home" church or denomination. There must be constant recollection that the Church is a "theological entity as well as a sociological entity." The Church is more than a product of sociological considerations – if it was not, it would soon become "irrelevant or redundant" (Bosch 1975:3). The important problems facing Christianity and missiology today centre on an understanding of the Doctrine of the Church and its implications. The concept of the Church must be made clear as it is the burning issue today. Christ said, "I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18). It is the same Christ who will return again to capture His Church (1 Th 4:15-18).

> "Thus our present difficulty over the nature of the responsible church in the mission field is, at bottom, a theological difficulty and can be overcome only by means of a new and more truly Catholic doctrine of the Church" (Beyerhaus 1964:119).

When the truths of scripture are condensed to basic essential expression, we have foundational doctrines. The discipline of theology organises doctrines so their articulation is consistent and relevant and constantly checked for truth matter. A system of theology must have a nuclear core, that is, primary doctrines which direct and inform all other doctrines. The Doctrine of the Church is one of these foundational doctrines. The Doctrine of the Church must be included in the Gospel, which is the "power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rm 1:16). Its omission will diminish the Gospel's power. Its inclusion is quite clear from Paul's doctrinal outline in Romans where the Church is regarded as

part of the Gospel. Rm 9-15 teaches particularly concerning the relevance of the Church to the Christological formulation of basic doctrine. "We are justified in saying that the Church is part of the Gospel, an essential manifestation of the Gospel's power to redeem men in society" (Beyerhaus 1964:107).

The foundational doctrines of the Gospel, from God's self-revelation in Christ from His birth to Christ's second coming, show an incarnational thrust. That is, Christ's life moves out across all barriers to meet people in their contexts of need. An intimate relationship with Christ on the basis of His Lordship will move a person away from ego-centric desires toward other people. This will result in the obedience of faith among all nations of the world (Rm 1:5) and there will be love of one's neighbour (Lk 10:25). "For Barth the special 'form' of love for God is the 'source of the stream' that flows to neighbour" (Berkower 1977:195). Berkower also notes Visser't Hooft,

> "At Uppsala he warned – with no sense of tension
> with what he said before – against all engagement
> with the vertical that entailed a flight from the world
> and against all involvement with the horizontal that
> gave second place to love for God" (1977:194).

A right relationship to humanity results from redemption's work in restoring a right relationship to God. The fact of reconciliation to God is demonstrated where love of one's neighbour triumphs. Love of God touches the social order of the whole of humankind. Christ's authoritative presence will make people sensitive to their responsibility toward others. A new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) is never an isolated, solitary individual. They are aware of their social situation and place themselves in community in relation to others. Davies expresses this thought in this manner: "There is a social aspect to the Pauline concept of being 'in Christ'; union with Christ however personal had meant incorporation into a community that could be described as one body" (1967:90). Therefore, when persons are

intimately related to Christ they "are thereby inextricably related to one another, and are thereby described as 'the body of Christ.'" (Longenecker 1971:99). Those who responsibly acknowledge the Lordship of Christ are members of one another (δέ καθ εἶς ἀλλήλων μέλη) (Rm 12:4, 5). To be a follower of Christ leads one to the local church, which is the Body of Christ (ὄντα ἕν ἐστιν σῶμα) (1 Cor 12:12). The incarnational movement of Christology which brings responsible behaviour toward others is especially characteristic of the relationship of fellow members (Gl 6:2, 10). "The new man means more than just the individual believer after he has been justified and sanctified, it means the Church, the Body of Christ, in fact, it means Christ Himself" (Bethge 1970:218). One's faith in Christ creates meaningful relationships among fellow members of His body. Life which belongs to the Body of Christ is imparted to each individual and hence one cannot enjoy one's life on their own. As a redeemed person, one is aware that one belongs to a holy community where the difference is Christ, where fellowship is with Christ and a royal priesthood (ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον) (1 Pt 2:5). The "new creature" stands in relation to a larger holy community. Holiness works through love which produces a communal consciousness among those with whom God has communicated in and through Christ. There is no place for holiness in isolation. Each member needs the other as they do not have the fullness of Christ on their own; a solitary individual is not a true representative of the Body of Christ. An isolated Christian is deficient in the knowledge of the truth and so there needs to be a comprehension with all saints (Eph 3:18; Col 2:2) and a mutual subjection because of Christ (Eph 4:15, 16; 5:21).

The Church is so to incarnate the Kingdom of God in the world, to envisage and visualise Christ's rule corporately where His presence is confessed and acknowledged. Individuals need the support and reaching of the Church to be effective against social problems where corporate action is needed. The body worships Christ and He is adored as the community gather together to exalt His name in song.

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The Body of Christ began at Pentecost and is the work of the Spirit (Ac 2:32-47). The Church is a new group of people built on an old foundation (Rm 11). Christians are all one in Christ and they keep the unity of the Spirit (ἑνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος) with bonds of peace (συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης) (Eph 4:3). The Holy Spirit works in community. Baptism in the Spirit allows the Spirit to indwell the Christian and He mediates entry into the Body of Christ (εἰ μή ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ) (1 Cor 12:13). This means that in a unique way that the Spirit is the possession of the Body of Christ. The Spirit promotes communion and fellowship in the Body. Therefore, to be "in Christ" places one "in the Church," His Body. The Spirit takes each Christian and moulds them with others into one Body – for His glory. This does not mean that Christians lose their unique identity in the Church. In service of neighbour and love of others, love for God is never abandoned. The individual Christian has no barrier to the worship of God and fellowship with Him. The New Testament is concerned about each person. Christ is personally present in each believer – the whole Christ is in each individual member of the Body. "The individual Christian is a constitutive part of Christian reality" (Mackay 1969:69). Being in Christ emphasizes the responsibility – it requires personal faith and worship. A most important fact is that Christ relates to each Christian individually and each one is a priest. Christ is concerned about the individual and He desires to be the central point of reference in personal lives, that is, people to be free from self-centredness and thereby, selfish ego. This concern is not so privatized that individualism results where the real individual is missed. Brunner put it this way, "God has created man to be a self, an individual, but He did not create him to be alone, to live for and by himself" (1947:290). Individualistic, solitary Christianity, is an incapacity to take part in anything. To be a Christian sets one free from radical individualism, which is venom that destroys the Church, a desire for position which lacks patience and the love of Christ. Bosch states it this way:

"The strength of all individualistic, pietistic Christianity is its emphasis on a vital personal relationship with Christ. The weakness of Pietists lies in the fact that in corporate relationships in which they live other constituent factors are still operative" (*Missionalia* August 1977, 32).

In Christ there is a call for balance between individual and corporate responsibility. Within the Church, individualism is lost while true individuality is discovered. No member of the Body of Christ is constituted to be alone or work in independent isolation. To be a Christian would mean taking in information of the Gospel from the Doctrine of the Church and learning through participation. The Church helps to make one's faith in Christ permanent. It is, therefore, not proper to remove the Church from Christianity for then its power is in danger of fading from view. Isolated or solitary worship underestimates the power of the world to influence thought and action and also fails to equip for responsible service for Christ in the world. To be in Christ asserts that the Church is one of the foundational doctrines of the Gospel, and thereby, part of the power of God to extent His Kingdom on earth.

1.3. Ecclesiology in this Case Refers Primarily to the Local Church

To be a Christian emphasises an individual's inward relationship with Christ which is "mystical." It would be consistent to regard the Church as a purely spiritual entity where believers are united to Christ in a mystical body. We know that through Christ God became manifest in bodily form (καί ὁ λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο) (Jn 1:14). The Church is known as the Body of Christ and therefore, in some sense, must be an extension of the incarnation (Paul 1972:79, 80). This does not extend sinlessness to the Church but it does imply that the invisible is brought to visibility – in a reality in time and place. The New Testament Doctrine of the Church must include visibility because faith is to

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be incarnated. Those related to Christ are related to one another and they show responsible love for each other in corporate experience in the Body of Christ, the Church. The mystical Body of Christ become incarnate, and thereby, visible, in the local church.

The visible local church is a manifestation of the Universal Church in a geographical location. The local church is not just part of the Body of Christ, but because of the presence of Christ mediated by the Word of the Holy Spirit, it is the Church (ἐκκλησία), the Body of Christ. Because of Christ it is in principle united to every other local church so that there is one Body of Christ (Eph 4:4). The presence of Christ constitutes the church and those who recognize His authority are grafted into the Church. As this is process is an extension of His incarnation on earth, the Doctrine of the Church emphasizes members congregating in local places. "Although its missionary origin shows that the Church Universal exists prior to the local Church, nevertheless, it has its first genuine experience of the nature of the Church within the local Church" (Beyerhaus 1964:152). The local incarnation of fellowship with Christ is judged by the unity of love expressed by members in visible interpersonal relationships (Jn 13:34, 35; 1 Cor 1:10, 11). Living in Christ is more than living one's own life for God; this life must be lived in harmony with Christ's will where others also contribute to maturation and Christian service. Today many fail to realize that the Doctrine of the Church confronts believers with necessary interpersonal relationships at the local level.

> It would seem that somewhere, if the church is a corporate body, this reality should become manifest, visible, and present. Many seem quite unwilling to acknowledge that the communal nature of the church can be found only as the church is localized (Middelton 1969:62).

The basic confession that Jesus is both Lord and Christ is an individual acceptance of His divine authority. This confession also asserts that He is truly God. The God of the Bible is a Trinitarian God, thereby making this confession a call to image God's Son (Rm 8:29), and to be measured by the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13), and attain to the fullness of God (Eph 3:19). This cannot be done in isolation from other Christians so it a call to congregate, to be part of the Body of Christ. His will is to be done on earth and He has said, "I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18). God's presence is manifested where two or three are gathered in Christ's name (Mt 18:20). Barth considers these cells to be the basis of the church. "This cultural cell is above all the local congregation, whose limits correspond with those of a group of dwellings that makes possible participation in one and the same Sunday service" (Hamer 1962:175). Christ's will is for repentance to be followed by baptism and entry into the local church (Ac 2:38). Bavinck speaks of the role of the local Church and states, "The church as a whole does not baptize, but only the locally instituted church" (1961:60).

This localized congregation of God's people is called a Church (ἐκκλησία). This word is used 115 times in the New Testament. Its primary usage refers to a local congregation. Eleven times it can refer to the Church Universal. "In some passages the secondary sense [Universal] grows directly out of the primary meaning [local] so that the primary meaning has been said to extend to 96 passages" (Gerber 1971:176). There is no distinction between Church and congregation. Paul does not refer to the Church in Galatia, but to the Churches (Gl 1:2). The plural usage refers to local congregations (Ac 14:23; 1 Th 2:14; Tt 1:5). The context of "church of God" (ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Θεοῦ in 1 Cor 11:22 shows it to refer to a local church or local churches, where the poor are located (1 Cor 11:16, 20). ἐκκλησία is the word used to distinguish the Body of Christ from the synagogue. It is never used to translate the Hebrew word "edah" עדה, which is synonymous with the synagogue of the LXX. It translates the Hebrew word "qahal" קהל, which is God's summons to congregate, rather than a place to worship. ἐκκλησία then, is a congregation called to acknowledge the lordship of

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Christ together (Beyerhaus 1964:109). Believers gather together to share their life of Christ together and teach each other how to behave in the Church (1 Tm 3:15). Local congregations are defined by the imagery applied to the Church: body (Rm 12:4, 5); building (Eph 2:20-22); tree (Rm 11:16-18); flock (1 Pt 5:2); and priesthood (1 Pt 2:5). Constitutive parts are joined together in one place.

It is difficult for ecumenical leadership to grasp that Ecclesiology centres in the concept of the local church. The New Testament is not anti-denominational but gives no organizational pattern for its development. In speaking of administration there is reference only to local Churches, as in Tt 1:5. ἐκκλησία gives understanding for the local Church.

> One of the best articles in the famous Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* is on the church and was written by K. L. Schmidt. There is no doubt left in my mind that the Reformers' congregational view of the church is more than supported by this article. This congregationalism means that the larger structures of the church (associations, synods, assemblies, conventions, meetings, and so on) are built up from and by local congregations, rather than the reverse in which local congregations exist by virtue of the Divine Society (Ramm 1973:37).

> As the Church of the New Testament cannot be understood by playing off idea against reality, so it cannot be understood by playing off the whole Church against the individual congregation. Every true early Christian congregation was just as good a representation of the whole body as the primitive

congregation as Jerusalem. The fact that individual congregations gradually formed larger organizations leaves an impression of development from the individual to the corporate. But we must not be dominated by this impression. What counts is that the congregation took itself to be representative of the whole Church (Schmidt in Kittel Vol. III 1968:535).

Local churches may be non-perfect examples of what the Lord desires of His Body but there is no escape from participation in a local Church. Responsible membership is not with an idea of a church or a denomination. The local church must have some structure, for any community of people must have some form of organization to be effective. The incarnational move to visibility must create a shape that the world can see or it will not image her Lord. Without a bodily form the local church will not survive or will be abandoned. In the New Testament there is a settled pattern of Church administration which is clearly taught. "What is significant is that from the very beginning a clear organizational structure emerges among the Jerusalem community with all the characteristics of a responsible church" (Gerber 1973:21). The Church is an organism. The New Testament outlines the basic structure of local churches and no other form can be permitted for them. One is aware that many believe that local churches must work out their own structures compatible with each unique local situation so that organization is relative and sociologically conditioned to fulfill their function as stated by the Gospel, such as discipline and care for the poor. However, as a building needs a foundation and primary superstructure to stand, so a local church has prescribed for it a basic structure for it to be constituted as the Church of Christ (1 Cor 3:10-17; Eph 2:19-22). The local church has a large area of freedom of design allowing for fleshing out its form in creative meaning making each church uniquely itself. Schaeffer states the fixed norms of a New Testament Church, a local church, and then explains:

First, these are the New Testament forms commanded by God. These norms are not arbitrary – they are God's form for the institutional, organized church and they are to be present in the twentieth century as well as any century. Second, there are vast areas which are left free. There is a form and there is freedom. In other words, the New Testament sets boundary conditions, but within these boundary conditions there is much freedom to meet the changes that arise both in different places and different times (1970:84).

We are all familiar with the evangelical cliché, "the Church is not an organization, it is an organism." Each believer has the potential of the fullness of life by the filling of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament authoritatively demands a minimum structure, a basic organization, in order to make sure that life "in the Spirit" under the Lordship of Christ is not lost. It is quite readily discernible that because of the vast contribution of the local church from the area of freedom that the creative input can easily obliterate the fact that life is in Christ. Brunner, in his *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (1953) and *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation* (1962) speaks of this tension. He has seen that the Church now feels that its organization is more important than the Spirit and calls this the "Kirche." What is desperately needed is a return to "Ekklesia" (ἐκκλησία), which retains the vital ministry of the Spirit where Christ is the only Head of the Church. A Spiritless organization is the death of the Church. Regardless of the danger in organizing, a spiritual community must have a basic structure as the New Testament teaches. "One must throw off the shackles of 'churchianity' without losing the essentials of the Church" (Rubingh 1969: 34). Structures which are not informed by the by the nature of the Gospel of Christ can easily be a complete denial of the character of His Church. The "form should

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bear a recognizable relationship to Jesus Christ and His gospel" (Paul 1972:35). The form of the Church must image and witness to its head, Christ the Lord.

The nature of the Church is a living reality based on the historical sacrifice of Christ and His mystical presence. Christ is in the midst of His Church and constitutes the Church by the power of the Spirit to image or be like Him, to be measured by the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13). Local churches are to be the body of Christ, they are to visualize the nature of Christ. The Church takes its information about itself from its Lord. Its form will become visible in a basic pattern because of its nature. Christians are informed by the rule of Christ inherent in the Church; they become living stones in formed by the nature of Christ. When this nature of the Church is allowed to operate, the local church takes on a distinct form. It is true that the "form" can be counterfeited, but not the "nature". The form must enable the Church to "be the Church" (Mackay 1969:27). When the form emerges from an understanding and response to the nature of the Church revealed in the person and work of Christ and conformation to Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, the true Church of Christ becomes visible.

The "form", organization structure, which is true representation of Christ is unchanging in its basic essence and refers to, and is, confined to the local church. The controversy among denominations and the difficulty of articulating an Ecclesiology rises because of the basic presupposition that the Church refers primarily to the union of many local communities. In the structuring of denominations it is all too easy to forget and/or to change the form of local congregations which is taught in Scripture. If denominationalism then, is a flexible freedom it must not be forced on national areas nor in an ecumenical form; it must arise from local churches whose structures reveal Christ and which have a common, permanent, basic form. Without minimizing the need for demonstrable unity among local churches it must remain clear the "nature" of the Church of Christ is visible in the "form" of local churches. The universal priesthood of believers restricts hierarchical and stratified structures by effectually

visualizing equality of members in local churches.   Denominational super-structures do not reveal the Church's true nature as the Body of Christ.   Only local churches can effectively incarnate the Gospel.

> When one admits that the responsibility of missions rests upon the church, does this mean upon the individual local congregation or the church in its synodical union?   The same senate of Middleburg which laid such emphasis on the responsibility of the church also declared that it is the local church which is called to conduct missions (Bavinck 1961:59, 60).

"We shall begin with local churches. These are the basic units of organic life, the irreducible minimum necessary in order for Christianity to exist" (Brow 1968:14). The Church is a community shaped by the Kingdom motif, that is, its life comes from Christ and its form from His character. As the local church is necessary for the whole Christian enterprise we should understand what the local church should be by looking to its Lord.

> Almost every book on the Church since 1950 has emphasized that the Church must carry the three distinctive marks of New Testament Christianity – the kerygma (the proclaimed gospel), koinonia (the distinctive fellowship), the diakonia (the vocation of service); and let it be admitted that it is impossible to conceive of a true church in which they would not be at the centre. Furthermore, it is true that in dealing with the Apostolic Church, its missionary proclamation, its shared fellowship, and its mutual service, we are not dealing with specific institutions

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but with characteristics of the New Testament community (Paul 1972:281, 282).

The Church is to be like Christ, a community which so lives that Christ's presence becomes visible in the world. As Christ reveals the nature of the Father so the Church is to reveal what Christ is like. Christ speaks – therefore the characteristic nature of the Church is Kerygma (Κήρυγμα). Christ loves – therefore the Church is characterized by Koinonia (Κοινονία). Christ serves – therefore the Church is known by its Diakonia (Διακονία). Kerygma, Koinonia and Diakonia are of the character of Christ and therefore, constitute its nature. As this responsible living becomes visible in local churches the nature takes on a corporate (bodily) form. The form of the local church must be such that it reveals rather than hides its nature. Many have recognized that a church can be like the New Testament church in form but in nature something very different. Where there is use of the Bible (Kerygma), preachers (proclaimers) will emerge. Response to the Gospel produces loving concern for each other (Koinonia), where elders shepherd the members and example/model the Gospel that has been taught. Authentic Christianity regards the needs of the whole person (Diakonia), and is led by deacons. The form of the local church is characterized by recognized teachers, elders and deacons which constitute its leadership who labour *with* all the members in the work of the ministry. Together, "in Christ", they are pointed to local churches where responsible leadership promotes spiritual life and service and in which all minister according to their gifts informed by the Gospel.

1.4. The Church is Distinguished by Kerygma (Κήρυγμα)

To be a Christian has relational association. It basically means that salvation is an individual and personal matter. No biblical theology will try to separate the person from a daily responsible relationship to Christ. There is direct mediation of the presence of Christ by the Spirit and the Word. There are no unique

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intermediaries between Christians and their Lord. The New Testament does not teach the modern differentiation between laity and clergy. The Church is constituted by Christ so that each member is grafted into His Body and is a minister for Christ.

> Christianity is a one-caste religion. All Christians are
> equally called to minister to Christ in the world
> ....Clerical professionalism has gravely inhibited the
> proper development of the diversity of ministries. We
> deplore the prevalent pattern of "one man ministries"
> (Stott 1977:30).

The work of the Spirit ensures that Christians are not isolated individuals but minister in mutual interdependence which does not create a hierarchical church. Each member has an equal opportunity to make a contribution to the life of the Church and together are the agents for the extension of the Kingdom of God. Christ's purposes are worked out through local churches and this is tied inextricably with His Word. The confession and understanding of Jesus as Lord is wrought by the Spirit using Christ's Word. This constrains Christians to congregate and this to hear Christ's Word correctly. Christians know that their relationship to Christ is mediated by the use of the Bible. They were born again by the Word being in their hearts and minds (Rm 10:8). Their discipleship and ministry is dependent on abiding in the Word (Jn 8:31, 32; 14:21). Their private study soon reveals that help is needed in understanding the Bible, the human words of which demand explanation. Serious and honest reflection on the Bible will lead to comprehending *with* all saints what the Bible teaches (Eph 3:18), rather than misunderstanding, disillusionment and rejection. In contradistinction to Roman Catholic elevation of the teachings of the church as a second source of revelation, the Reformation asserted a

> Scripture-principle (which) placed the Church permanently under the authority of the prophetic-apostolic Bible-Word; and it did that in the opinion that in this human distinction between the Church and Holy Scripture as teacher of the Church there is expressed the abiding, lasting difference between the Lord of the Church and the Church as the Church, as the assembly of believers on earth (Barth 1962:180).

Christians hear the Bible with understanding in and by local churches. The Holy Spirit is at work individually and corporately to create a sensitivity to grasp when biblical explanation is representative of common Christian judgement and agreement. Much of the Church's evangelism is so individualistically oriented that it is often simplistic, that is, it is only interested in being "born again" so its message often does not correspond to biblical "Kerygma" and created a mood which is uninterested in understanding the Bible for daily life situations. Gospel content as understood by the Church is disregarded. The Spirit desires every Christian to be a theologian where biblical truth is related to every sphere of life and this discipline takes place in the local church. The corporate hearing of the Scriptures is important because each individual's understanding of the Gospel must be checked by others so there is no addition of personal thought and preference that contradicts the adherence of the Gospel. A church which does not seek to live by Scripture soon changes to something very different from the biblical mode.

The call for all to minister will naturally surface the danger of struggle for position and self-elevation where Christ is dethroned in churches. Only a hierarchy of ministers remains and members become only spectators. The ministerial capacity of every Christian does not mitigate against the need for local church leadership, but leadership must always serve and will not imply superiority. A

basic need of the church is leadership which can teach the Gospel in all its fullness and its implications – the Kerygma. The Kerygma is verbal proclamation and teaching of biblical truth for faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rm 10:17).

> If basic Christianity is to survive, it must be served by a highly trained group of persons who are unabashed and unapologetic in the face of opposition and ridicule. They must be able to outthink as well as outlive all attacks on the central faith which we so sorely need as an alternative to confusion (Trueblood 1969:20).

These highly trained persons do not only need to be ordained ministers, but lay people too. Training does not mean church members become "mini-pastors" but rather persons who are able to perform certain functions in the church – functions that are currently fulfilled mainly by the ordained pastor.

1.4.1. The Spirit's Encouragement for Kerygma (Κήρυγμα)

Under the Spirit's promptings believers congregate in local churches to hear and understand God's Word. As they meet to worship Christ as Lord, they realize the importance of the Word of God being taught and are eager to learn and be equipped to handle God's Word right in life and service. The great and primary need in congregating is for a teaching-training ministry. The Spirit surfaces Spiritual Gifts in the church to instruct in the use of the Kerygma. The Spiritual Gifts are for the edification of the church.

In the context of 1 Cor 12-14 we learn that there are two types of gifts that the Spirit gives to the Church. There is a variety of gifts (charismata/χαρίσματα), 1 Cor 12:4, 11; but among those gifts are greater, better, or higher gifts, τά χαρίσματα τά μείζόα 1 Cor 12:31, and are known as Spiritual Gifts

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(pneumatikos/πνευματικός), 1 Cor 12:1; 14:1, 11. The Spirit grants these gifts according to His sovereignty (1 Cor 12:11); it is the higher gifts or the Spiritual Gifts which should be sought, for they the ones which instruct in the Kerygma to build the Church and to equip the members for the ministry (Eph 4:11, 12). This is also confirmed by the use of the two words together in Rm 1:11, (charisma pneumatikon/χάρισμα πνευματικόν), where Paul desires to establish the Romans, to instruct them by his apostleship in the Gospel.

This command to seek the greater gifts is an embarrassment to many, for it seems to imply a higher spiritual status or position for some. However, it should be understood that spirituality is measured by the fruit of the Spirit, which is love (Gl 5:22-26 and 1 Cor 13) and not by the gifts of the Spirit. The leadership with the Spiritual Gifts are not more spiritual without the fruit of the Spirit and His filling. Furthermore, teaching is not limited to those with the higher gifts. The recognized instructors are to pass on the knowledge of their Spiritual Gifts, correcting and controlling the understanding of the Kerygma, but not stifling the study and proclamation of the Gospel or forbidding judgement to be exercised on their own contributions (1 Cor 14:29-32; 1 Th 5:19-22). The Spiritual Gifts – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – are given to assist the Church to grow to maturity measured by the full stature of Christ and to be equipped for His ministry.

Interest in the gifts has been recovered in recent years due to the influence of the charismatic movement. For them there is no gradation of the gifts. 1 Cor 12:31 is not a command, but a present indicative, zuloute/ζηλοῦτε. Paul's meaning for the Corinthians is that their separating the gifts of the Spirit into greater and lesser (Harper 1968:68, 69). The fact is that this verb form can also be a present, hortatory subjunctive, which is preferred by the New English Bible. It can also be a present imperative, which is preferred by the Today's English Version and the New International Version. With these translations there is a gradation of gifts creating gifted leadership to instruct members in the Kerygma.

It has been traditional to accept that Apostles and Prophets represent temporary offices to found the Church and to inscripturate God's Word. The gifts of healing, tongues, miracles and interpretation of tongues were designed to confirm that the Apostles and Prophets declared the Word of God. As such they have no continuing function and ceased with the founding offices (Hoekema 1972:61). Some feel that today the gift of Church planting by the Apostles is carried by the Evangelists and prophetic gift is assumed by the Pastor-teacher, limiting the higher gifts operating today to two (MacArther 1972:142).

It is well known that Calvin thought that the foundational gifts could be brought back temporarily in times of crisis. Today there is a growing sense that these gifts are still needed in the Church in a secondary sense.

> But, as people came to Christ and formed groups of believers in specific geographical locations, God instituted His second phase or plan for church leadership – a plan that clearly relates to the local church. As will be shown, this new concept called for church leaders who, though they are classified as individuals possessing the greater gifts, were in a secondary sense to have a ministry that included a similar function as those who actually possessed these greater gifts (Getz 1974:101).

It is closer to biblical teaching to state that the foundational work of Apostles and Prophets be viewed as an *office*, Eph 2:20; 3:5, which passed away after the Church was founded. They had *Spiritual Gifts* which continued to function in the churches, which in no was a secondary sense.

Because gifts are also listed in Rm 12 and 1 Pt 4 they are often divided as speaking, serving and sign gifts where synonymous and explanatory words are also used (Stedman 1976:40, 70). The list in Eph 4:11 contains the functions of the speaking gifts, making four in number as the καί and the use of one article τοὺς δὲ combines Pastors and Teachers as one gift. Serving and sign gifts are lower gifts for they do not edify or build the Church. This does not demean these lesser gifts but connects them with the Gospel and to Christ rather than with personal experience. Gifts are not a private matter but are of significance in and for the Church. The believing community controls the exercise of the gifts and prevents individualistic deviations. They are meant to complement each other (Snyder 1973:15-18). When Christians gather together, the highest expression of gifts is the free, helpful discussion of Christians and their contribution in thoughtful speech to each other. Therefore, the gift of tongues must be interpreted in the church and when prompted by the Spirit will be orderly, relevant, helpful and extra-ordinary – it serves as a sign to unbelievers of God's presence (1 Cor 14:22-25). It is interesting to note that the higher gifts are *persons* who have Spiritual Gifts to lead in teaching the Gospel. It is also interesting to note that there are four gifts necessary, justifying against the traditional one-person minister and monological teaching in the church. "Each of you should use whatever gift (χάρισμα) he has received to serve others faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pt 4:10). The higher gifts are to be sought and the lower gifts are to be forbidden; therefore, all have some gift to use in the Church (1 Cor 14:39). All gifts are to be informed by the Gospel so they are equipped to be ministers, but there is control for truth in the ministry led by the Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor 14:31-33; Eph 4:11-16). Very briefly:

Apostles are able to articulate the Gospel in an Old Testament cultural milieu and in a New Testament cultural setting. There is a clear distinction between the Gospel and the relevant cultural application. They serve in local churches but are also sent out into new areas to plant churches across cultures (Wagner 1971:54).

Prophets add urgency to obedience with eschatological perspective. "At every stage the written word of God has needed prophets to apply it to men's hearts in concrete situations" (Brow 1968:54). They can stand apart from the church and proclaim its sins. The recovery of this gift today will transform local churches so they are no longer shaped by secular society and no longer reflect cultural values.

Evangelists are to exposit Scriptures accurately so the Gospel becomes the proper vehicle for the Spirit to use to reveal Jesus as Lord so He can be worshipped with the whole heart. He not only introduces Christ to people for their conversion, but also makes Him known to Christians so they can be like their Lord. "Thus Evangelism is intended to be much more than persuading people to make decisions, and it covers more than persuading people to make decisions, and it covers more than conversion. Jesus had in mind total change in being" (Jauncey 1972:8).

Pastor/Teachers are shepherds who nurture the flock by being with them. They make disciples by the Word, by example and by participating with them in ministry. Care is taken that Christian marriage and families are formed and nurtured. Elders will come out of these families which are properly trained and appointed. "He is both a minister and the encourager, a teacher and a developer of his fellow ministers" (Trueblood 1967:44).

These spiritual gifts can be men or women as for the other variety of gifts (1 Tm 2:12). This presupposes a difference in the *office* of elder and the *gifts* of teaching. The spiritual gifts edify and build members of the church for ministry; the result of their teaching is the formation of servants equipped to minister the Gospel.

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The filling of the Holy Spirit shows the importance of the kind of conversation promoted by the gifting/enabling of the Holy Spirit. Four participles define how to be filled with the Spirit: 1. Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. 2. Singing and making music from the heart to the Lord. 3. Being thankful to God for everything. 4. Submitting to one another in the name of Christ. The evidence of being baptized in the Spirit by Christ is by joining the circle of conversation and using the speech gifts to complete the maturation of the body of Christ in each local church. This will result in less false teaching and deceitful scheming (Eph 4:14).

1.5. The Church is Distinguished by Koinonia (Κοινονία)

Being a Christian means a trinitarian fellowship in the Godhead. This fellowship of love reaches out to include humankind giving rise to the Royal Law: to love God and to love one's neighbour. Under the lordship of Christ there is a constraint of love to live for Him with responsible compassion for others (2 Cor 5:14-21; Mk 12:33). This is a love that comes from God and is different from love emanating from natural man. ἀγάπη (agape) love is not self-centred which seeks to receive but rather to give. It does not refer to a warm, emotional feeling in the presence of the opposite sex. God's love is not based on the loveliness or worth of the object but is initiated from inner character for another's good and righteousness (1 Jn 4:10; Rm 5:8). It is a total way of involvement in another's life and is persistent and not easily discouraged (Rm 8:32-39; 1 Cor 13:4). To be loved by God's ἀγάπη is to have the possibility to be freed from obsession with self. Freed from selfishness one can accept responsibility and in like manner live for others without respect of persons (Ja 2:1; Gl 3:28). As a whole person, a proper social being in the image of God, one can be friendly or neighbourly, respecting and appreciating another's personhood. Constrained by Christ's love and informed concerning ἀγάπη one is released to love in a way that pleases God. People are more important than things. "Love is a commitment of the will

to do that which will benefit the loved one – even at great personal cost, and even when there is no response of love" (Smith 1977:26).

As we look to Christ to be informed about the Church and what it is to be in its local manifestation, we see that Christ not only speaks (Kerygma) but that He also loves (Koinonia). Christians hear the Gospel and by this are related to Christ; there is a fellowship which is constantly nurtured and deepened by the Word. In this involvement with Christ there is a learning and involvement in ἀγάπη love.

This is evident in the early church as seen in Ac 2:42-47. There are a number of characteristics that can be gleaned on:

- The early Church was a *learning Church*. The people were actively involved in listening and learning from the apostles. They were learning new things as they were deeply involved in learning;
- The early Church was a *Church of fellowship*. There was a great quality of "togetherness" as they bonded together in life's activities;
- The early Church was a *praying Church*. These early Christians knew they were not able to meet life in their own strength and therefore spoke to God before going out into the world;
- The early Church was a *reverent Church*. As they moved around, they realized that it was on God's earth that they lived and therefore experienced His presence as He moved with them;
- The early Church was a *sharing Church*. These early Christians had a deep sense of responsibility for each other as they shared their possessions with one another;
- The early Church was a *worshipping Church*. They lived their lives in deep appreciation for what God was doing. They did not neglect gathering together and encouraging one another in God's presence;

- The early Church was a *Church of people whom others could not help liking*. There was an attractiveness about the Church that people wanted to be part of as they felt safe in the company of the Christians.

Those who love Christ, who have become members of His Body, are taught to love one another in God's way (ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς/Love one another. As I have loved you...) (Jn 13:34, 35). As Christians, we are to be full of love (Eph 1:4), and bear this love to all God's people (Eph 1:6). Christ dwells among His people in love (Eph 3:17) and this is to display God's peace in the world (Eph 2). The way Christians love one another is a true demonstration of the way they love Christ.

Christ is a companion who shares with us His love so that we participate in the various phases of His life. This participation or sharing in the life of Christ is called fellowship/κοινωνία (1 Cor 1:9) – this inevitably leads on to fellowship with Christians. A personal relationship to Christ is the constitutive base for fellowship; therefore, it is more than association or social friendship. Fellowship is theological because it is controlled and guided by the indwelling presence of Christ. It is participation in His sufferings so we can reign with Him (Phlp 3:10; Rm 8:17). Clowney believes that "fellowship" is not a strong enough word to denote that common participation of the association of persons who believe in Christ (1975:51). John notes that Christian fellowship is informed by fellowship with Christ and is participation "in the light" (ἐάν δέ ἐν τῷ φωτί περιπατῶμέ) (1 Jn 1:3-7). This fellowship of participants is characterized by responsible love on to another (1 Jn 4:7-12). The work of the indwelling Spirit prompts working through love (1 Jn 4:13-21; Rm 5:5). Walk in love is the opposite of fellowship with the works of darkness. Counsel is given not to be partakers with those of darkness (Eph 5:1-11; 2 Cor 6:14). μετοχή ανδ κοινωνία are synonyms. The verbal form of the former is used to describe the participation of Christians at the Lord's table (1 Cor 10:17).

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The fellowship of the Spirit brings the mind in Christ to bear on the relationships of Christians as they work out their salvation. There must be no room for opposition or self- enhancement, but each is to help care for the other's betterment (Rm 12:16; Phlp 2:1-4). Each must be humble and not be filled with self-pride (1 Pt 5:5, 6). Each should be kind and full of brotherly love and repay evil with good (Rm 12:10, 17, 21; 1 Pt 3:8, 9). Each is to exhibit a readiness to renounce one's own desires and in love give preference to another's will without destroying God's will (Eph 5:21). A community is developed where the fellowship of the Spirit brings people together in the love of Christ; they forgive and love one another as persons. In this community, they are answerable to one another and also initiate responsible actions for others' good and righteousness. The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of love (1 Jn 4).

Koinonia is association with fellow Christians participating together in love. This community is mutually responsible for each other; they are deeply concerned to know one another in a meaningful way. The purpose of the Church is to make mature persons through the aid of intimate personal relationships. Each member is responsible to develop itself by such relationships and also to be concerned to help   others   mature (ἑκάστου μεέρους τήν αὔξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομήν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπη Eph 4:16). Each one is a pastor to someone else. God's life must be incarnated in the local church. According to Richards,

> The church is to be a "transforming community."
> That within the supportive framework of loving
> Christian relationships the believer's new life is to
> grow and develop. In a sense, the church is a womb
> which nourishes the individual – a womb which we
> are never to separate ourselves (1970:93).

Church members are necessarily part of a whole, not just people who happen to attend a particular church. Belief and values are internalized but not privatized so there is a supportive society in which fulfillment and maturity take place, for this is Church. Christian relationships help prevent self-esteem from slipping into selfishness (Wynkoop 1972:28). Agape-love projects into others' lives across the barrier of unwanted invasion of self to each and example a way of living which does not seek to dominate others, which checks personal actions as to their influence on others, which does not dehumanize others by the pursuit after things, and which does not demand one's rights (Phlp 2:6, 7). Koinonia is concerned for people so strongly that organizational structures are not allowed to destroy this nature of the Church in its concern for its form. God hates all the wedges driven to divide His people (Pr 6:16-19). Koinonia promotes love of the people of God (ἀδελφοί); this is the love that has been described (φιλαδελφία 1 Th 4:9, 10).

> Love occurs in its most intense form in maternal love and sexual love, but these can be self-defeating unless they are backed up by that more general love that can be true of any other relationship as well. This general love is the *feeling* of belongingness, that spiritual integration with another person or other people that becomes so important that the self is committed to it regardless of personal cost involved (Jauncey 1972:56).

This love should occur among fellow-Christians in specific relationships on the basis of this general love. It is a love that binds people together as children of one Father (1 Jn 5:1). This kind of love must be kept at full strength (1 Pt 4:8). This fellowship of the people in its biblical usage refers to ἀγάπη love relationships of both male and female (2 Cor 6:18); male to male, female to male, male to female, and female to female. Their mutually responsible relationships

are based on "attractiveness of personalities rather than bodies" (Ramm 1974:95). There can and should be a man to woman love which is not immoral or erotic in the fellowship of the Spirit. There is a completeness of personhood as Christians and in His Church outside of marriage. Christ Himself is an example of this agape relationship. He loved His disciples, He loved Mary and Martha, He loved the world, but He did not marry. God's will can be fulfilled outside of marriage or completing of personhood through sex relationships. The truth of fellowship is that male and female must be friends, they must love one another without the intrusion of erotic sexual motifs. Strong sexual impulse to possess another's body must be controlled. Paul reminds Timothy of this in 1 Tm 5:1, 2. In the fellowship of the Spirit, the urge of sexual temptation is controlled without destroying either personality or sexuality, the result is a community characterized by ἀγάπη love, mutually responsible members caring for each other as taught by Christ.

Cultures and churches have stressed artificial gender roles which tend to keep the sexes apart so it is difficult to develop male-female relationships. It has been common practice to think that there is something wrong with people who are not married. In the Church, there should be a fellowship where all are subject to one another, where all are open to love and are responsible to build bridges of friendship by the gifts they possess for edification. There is no hierarchical order due to ones sexual creation. As Christians, humanity is to be thought of as a unity (Gl 3:28). Different physical sexual elements are natural to the body but are not determinative for persons and are not the basis for hierarchical views of the sexes. This understanding of Gl 3:28 is far too simplistic. Actually Paul affirms here that all alike must come into Christ by faith and thereby belong to the one body of Christ. This is similar to the assertion that there is no difference among those outside of Christ for they are all sinners (Rm 3:23). Distinctive differences of the sexes are not obliterated by these contexts. As mentioned, Koinonia is a theological term; therefore, its implication for male and female must be interpreted from the biblical record.

We begin to read about male and female in connection with the image of God (Gn 1:27; 5:1, 2). Brunner feels that Gn 1:27 alone would testify to the Bible being the Word of God; therefore, it must be understood correctly. Sexuality is not an addition to humanity but a total way of being. The man lives in a masculine way and the woman lives in a feminine way. Their differences are not deficiencies; they are of equal human worth, but are not the same. He realizes that modern woman will not allow her different physical structure to imply that in psycho-spiritual nature she is also different. "But this sexual disposition is not something purely natural – as is, for instance, the digestive system. It helps determine the whole psychical and even spiritual nature of the man and the woman" (Brunner 1947:347). The talk of minimizing the differences between male and female will not make their distinctions disappear for they are rooted in creation. Male and female relationships do not define the image of God in mankind. The Trinitarian fellowship of the Godhead is not described with sexual differentiations. In the creation of mankind, the stated male and female dualism points the likeness of God back to the relation for them with a God who is very different from them. This intimate relationship with God constitutes the image. Adam became a living soul in the image of God before there was a relationship with a female (Gn 2:27). Even with Eve's creation out of man she communicated with God before she related to Adam, for God brought her to Adam (Gn 2:22). This special relationship, the image of God, informs all other earthly relationships, even the relationships of male and female in their differences. This is illustrated and visualized in factual form that there are no differences which cannot be overcome by ἀγάπη-love. Fellowship must include the mutually responsible relationships of male and female. The different characteristics of male and female in the likeness of God are used in the formation of a community in which people can come to maturity, a building up to the full stature of Christ. God's love is pictured as being both with fatherly and motherly characteristics (Is 49:15; Mt 6:8, 9; 23:37; 2 Cor 6:18) (Dolby 1969:103, 104).

According to my understanding of the divine plan, as explicitly stated in the Bible, the two sexes are ordained for specific masculine and feminine roles which cannot be ignored without painful consequences. Men and women are equal but not equivalent! That is, they have equal human worth but are designed for distinctly different responsibilities (Dobson 1971:129).

1.5.1. <u>Submitting to One Another Because of Love</u>

The communion of Christians is to lead its members to maturity. A sign of maturity is to fit into the due activity of each part by being subordinate to one another under the lordship of Christ. The foundational unit of this fellowship to reflect and teach this maturity comes from marriage. The husband and wife relationship, informed by Christ's love, is the basic institution to reflect the love of Christ for the Church, which self-giving love is to characterize mutual subordination. Christ is the head of the Church and the Church, His body, is subordinate to Him. The reflection of this redemptive truth is accomplished by the wife's subordination to her husband as head (Eph 5:22-24). Her subordination is not because of his masculinity as superior to her femininity but because the Lord commands it; it is her assigned role in marriage to help teach by action of life in a permanent situation of ἀγάπη love (1 Pt 3:1). The headship of the man is not founded on his masculinity; in fact, it is unfounded until he has given himself for his wife and cares for her as Christ exampled. Man does not accomplish this perfectly but in his effort to obey the impossible through Christ's position of headship which a woman can trust and respect. Therefore, the husband is finally responsible to initiate and sustain the context of love in the husband-wife relationship. The wife has her role so that ἀγάπη love is seen in daily demonstrations and actual life situations. Their complementary functions

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are defined as oneness. Individual rights are not demanded but orderliness and responsibility are.

The mutuality of the sexes in a spirit of willingness to be subordinate is also taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians. This is to be true especially of the body of Christ which celebrates the Lord's Table (1 Cor 10:24, 33). Men and women can pray and prophesy as they congregate (1 Cor 11:4, 5). The woman is a co-ruler with man (1 Cor 11:10-12). The woman is a co-worshipper with man (1 Cor 11:13-16). This sets the context for asserting that all should seek the higher gifts (1 Cor 12:31). All have gifts to be used in building the Church. The scripture is well aware that this emphasis on mutuality can lead toward unisex or disregard of sexual differentiation. In Paul's day the symbol of differentiation in the Church was a veil. He also regards women's long hair a better symbol. He states there is no hard and fast rule as to the symbol used (1 Cor 11:16). Subordination required of every Christian begins with accepting oneself as God's creation. The opposite extreme, flaunting one's sexuality, is to be avoided also. The discipline of the Lord's Table is to test oneself in regard to love of the brethren, measured by Christ's love (1 Cor 11:27-29; 1 Jn 4:7-12).

The fundamental expression and basic reflection of subordination is in the relationship of husband and wife reflecting Christ's love for the Church. This informs the marriage partners of their roles and gives true meaning to their relationship.

Christians should refer their "new creation" to the subordination to Christ. This informs all other relationships and thus creates a fellowship based on the principle of subordination. The difference of sexes adds emphasis to the principle of subordination in the Koinonia. Each one must learn to control sexual desire and to curb fleshly passion (1 Th 4:2-8). Love must be kept at full strength without wronging one of the fellow pilgrims in this matter of sex. There are two states to be recognized in regard to sexuality, that is, married and unmarried (1

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Cor 7:32-34). ἀγάπη love recognizes both states as legitimate. However, by reference to creation, it is presupposed that the ongoing of society will be through marriage. This is incorporated with the redemptive motif of the Church. In Christ's body subordination is a principle of Koinonia. Marriage is for adults who have first learned how to be friends. This type of maturity is best served by a fellowship based on married partners, reflecting Christ's love. Each knows personally the subordination of love so each can model the respective roles of their sexuality in the permanent relationship of marriage. Without Christian homes Koinonia will never develop according to Christ's pattern of ἀγάπη; subordination will not be taught by forceful, meaningful example. Any other construction of Koinonia will not be Christ-centred and ordered. The mutuality of the sexes in Koinonia cannot be separated from marriage and its principle.

> Family life is not a separate compartment from church life, but an intrinsic part of it ... We must insist strongly that the Christian family is not a bourgeois cultural concept, but a divine institution and the basic unit within the Christian congregation (Griffiths 1975:89, 95).

The home is constituted by marriage. This means that the intensely personal and exclusive relationship of a man and woman to create their home is not a completely private affair. Marriage is a covenantal relationship. Their love is observed, it is pure and it is approved. It has permanent accountability and contractual clarity. This is true of church marriages and reflects Christ's model of fidelity which testifies openly to total commitment (Heb 13:5). There is complete trust in one another so there is acceptance of permanent responsibility for each other which alone fosters intimacy and the right and freedom to serve one another.

> Marriage brings us into a union with another person whose welfare will become so inextricably would up with ours that our every hope and fear becomes of vital importance to her (or him). It is a secure nest where our emotional anxieties can rest and be at peace (Jauncey 1972:57).

It is to be a restful relationship, where each can belong, each can be at home with no sense of being on trial or probation. There is to be unselfish giving and a desire for mutual understanding. Marriage is not constituted on a "50-50" basis but on completeness of persons who are free to be together. Christian marriage is for adult men and women who are strong, who know God's Word, and who have mastered the evil one (1 Jn 2:14).

Children do not constitute the home but are gifts of God to the home. The role of motherhood is never to be downgraded. Whether she ever bears children or not, she is especially equipped to fulfill the role of mother with a unique sensitivity to life (1 Tm 2:15; 5:14). Parents are the main teachers of Christian principles for their children. Each parent's contribution is complementary for healthy growth of the children. All our technological ingenuity has failed to devise any real substitute for a loving home as the best environment for children to grow up to mature adulthood (Mace 1972). Parenthood or larger family concerns should not take preference over the husband-wife relationship or the home will not function properly (Fairchild 1964:55). Families must be the centre of Christian education. In the home is where the facts of faith are learned and applied in life situations. Christianity can best be understood through experiencing it in the intimacy of the home.

> There are no agencies in the church of the New Testament. No shifting of responsibility of the home. And the church of tomorrow, to become again the

church, must firmly return to the home responsibilities our programmes deny them (Richards 1967-1968).

The institution of the family as the basic unit of the Christian community must be respected. "As Christians deeply concerned to develop the new community, let us see that the perfecting of the new community must begin in the home, in our relations with our life partners and with our children" (Griffiths 1975:99). The Christian family is like a church in microcosm and its order and rule must be reflected in ecclesiastical order. The elders who are chosen for oversight in the church must come from leaders who have demonstrated their qualifications in their own homes. It is well known that the word πρεσβύτερος/presbyter, masculine, can have a double meaning referring to older age or church office (Arndt and Gingrich 1957:706). However, the feminine form, πρεσβύτερα, refers only to age (1 Tm5:1, 2, 17, 19). In Tt 2:2, 3 the masculine πρεσβύτης, refers to aged man and πρεσβῦτις, feminine, refers to aged woman. Certainly Paul refers to himself as aged by this word in Phlm 9 (Friederich 1968:683). The verbal form πρεσβεύω, refers to the work of an ambassador and can be male or female (2 Cor 5:20; Eph 6:20) (Scanzoni and Hardesty 1974:63). An elder is a "one-woman-man" – μιᾶς γυναικός ἄνδρα, that is, a husband legally married to his wife and father of their children (1 Tm 3:2; Tt 1:6). This is consistent with the κεφαλή principle of the home and the fact that a woman is not to exercise authority over the man in the church (1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tm 2:9-15). The first apostles were men and the elders of the Jerusalem church were men (Ac 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6; Gl 2:2). It is often overlooked, however, that where there is a man-elder there is to be a wife like unto him. The elder is to be the spokesman for their oneness. If his wife is unconvinced of his leadership in the Lord, it would be a mockery of the Gospel to try and enforce his authority in the church. This means that through her husband in their mutual subordination she has a voice in church matters. He must not pursue his own willfulness and satisfaction, but the Lord's will. This also means that single men are disqualified for this office as well as single women.

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The context of 1 Tm 3 and Tt 1 would allow widower to hold this office because of his experience in marriage. If there are children, all must be under control and at least some of them should be believers. A married man without children would not be disqualified, for it is the husband-wife relationship which reflects the love of Christ; yet it would be unseemly for all the appointed elders to be childless. Certainly their oversight in the church will include demonstrated ability with children.

1.5.2. A Loving Community Raises Elders

Looking to Christ we see that the nature of the Church is to love and create a Koinonia. The form of the local church gathered surfaces the leadership of elders. "In God's economy it seems that local churches with elders are the essence of the visible Church" (Brow 1968:25). Eldership is a clearly defined position in the New Testament concept of the church. This office appears in the Jerusalem church. Paul appointed elders in the churches he founded (Ac 14:23; 20:17; Tt 1:5). Two words are used to describe this office. πρεσβύτερος/Presbyteros is generally translated as elder. It is a Jewish term referring to a ruler or instructor, an official in the governing body of their synagogue (Ac 14:23; 1 Tm 5:1, 17; Tt 1:5; Ja 5:14; 1 Pt 5:1). ἐπίσκοπος/Episkopos is a Greek term used for overseer, inspector, superintendent, and is often translated bishop. It refers to a function of the office of elder to exercise oversight in the church (Ac 20:28; Phlp 1:1; Tt 1:7; 1 Tm 3:2). These words are used synonymously as they appear in the same context (Ac 20:17, 28; Tt 1:5, 7). Lightfoot has confirmed their original identity (1953:95). These words are used in the plural and identify the governing body of the local church. These men make their living in secular occupations while their life in home, church and community models the Gospel. Eldership is the pattern for the organization of leadership in the local church. Where the Kerygma is taught, Christian families develop. From the men of these families elders emerge through appointment by the Holy Spirit (Ac 20:28).

Those persons with spiritual gifts are primarily concerned with teaching, so the Kerygma can be *heard*. The elders are primarily concerned with being models, so the Kerygma can be *seen*. They are men whose lives represent spiritual quality; therefore, it is a good thing for men to aspire to the office of eldership (1 Tm 3:1). Their authority is not from a position of lordship, but from inner motivation to set a good example which is self-authenticating. This responsibility is especially difficult in urban living. They must develop friendships in the commercial world so they know and understand the secular world. Values and behaviour are largely learned through observation, so their oversight in the church must be a personal visibility which examples the life of Christ. Secular techniques of management have crept into the church so that often leadership is not defined theologically by servanthood (Lk 22:25-27).

> Leadership, as it should be in the Church, demands a dynamic definition of the sort that social scientists call a *model*. Leadership is not what one *does* so much as what one *is* within the given contexts of the development of the body of believers. Leadership is not so much bringing people out of a wilderness as it is sharing in a journey. This sharing is a peer (you have but one teacher, you are all brothers ... and do not be called leaders, for one is your leader, Christ (Mt 23:8, 10), and sharing is to be done as a servant .... We must change the *induce, motivate* and *congratulate* model of leadership into *accept, share* and *grow together* or we have no business at all putting the word *Christian* ahead of the word *leadership* (Ward unpub).

There must always be a plurality of elders in the local church; they are to be co-pastors (Ac 20:28; 1 Pt 5:1-4). They maintain their families within the church and also accept being pastured as part of the flock. The rationale of the exemplary life visualised before the community in constant care for their lives is articulated by teaching biblical principles; they feed the flock for they are suitable to teach. Not all the elders may have the spiritual or higher gift of teaching, but they all must have the ability at least to teach what they have been taught and live it out in example of life, for in this way their oversight must also be maintained. Therefore, it is not helpful to regard some elders as "teaching" elders and others as "ruling" elders. Their teaching ministry must adhere to sound doctrine. They are to be able to guard the flock from those who distort the truth (Ac 20:29-31). Men should aspire to be elders since a special function of elders is the training of other men so they can be elders, who will be trustworthy and competent in the Word and people-centred in orientation and responsibility (2 Tm 2:2).

The word elder does not define "age", but certainly refers to mature men of experience. Therefore, elders are not to be young men or inexperienced (1 Tm 3:6; 5:23). In fact, they are commanded to be subordinate to the elders (1 Pt 5:5). Church members are expected to obey and respect their elders (Heb 13:7, 17). They are to be loved and esteemed (1 Th 5:12, 13). Elders must never be treated harshly but as fathers (1 Tm 5:1). They must not be accused unless the charges are supported (1 Tm 5:19). In turn, the elders must labour at teaching, work hard at counseling, exhibit exemplary fruit, and be tireless in their concern for the spiritual welfare of the church. James mentions the duties of elders (Ja 5:14-16), but also the duties of bishops (Ja 1:2-27). They must render account for their work. The elders do not constitute the church nor by their position do they escape common Christian subordination (1 Tm 5:21; 1 Pt 5:5, 6). They are members of the church and at the same time elders of the church. The church needs elders and their work should be a happy task, church members not causing grief and pain (Heb 13:17). Barth applies the fifth commandment to the concept of eldership:

> It is merely that in the church the same kind of obedience as, I hope you pay your father and mother, is demanded of you towards the church's past, towards the "elders" of the church. That is quite simply an *ordinance* (1962:181).

The church is to teach biblical doctrine so there can be grounding in the faith. The church is to be a place of fellowship, where Christians can be devoted to one another and honor one another (Rm 12:10), instruct one another (Rm 15:14), be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph 4:32), encourage one another (1 Th 5:11), and most importantly, love one another (1 Jn 3:11).

The church is to be a place where believers can observe the Lord's supper, remembering Christ's death and shed blood on our behalf (1 Cor 11:23-26). The concept of "breaking bread" (Ac 2:42) also carries the idea of having meals together. This is another example of the church promoting fellowship.

Another commission given to the church is proclaiming the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ (Mt 28:18-20; Ac 1:8). The church is called to be faithful in sharing the Gospel through word and deed. The church is to be a "lighthouse" in the community, pointing people towards our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is to both promote the Gospel and prepare its members to proclaim the Gospel (1 Pt 3:15).

The church is to be about the business of ministering to those who are in need. This includes not only sharing the Gospel, but also providing for physical needs (food, clothing, shelter) as necessary and appropriate. The church is also to equip believers in Christ with the tools they need to overcome sin and remain free from the pollution of the world. This is done by biblical teaching and Christian fellowship.

Paul gave an excellent illustration to the believers in Corinth. The church is God's hands, mouth, and feet in this world – the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27). The Church is to be doing the things that Jesus Christ would do if He were physically on the earth. The church is to be "Christian," "Christ-like" and Christ-following.

1.6.   The Church is Distinguished by Diakonia (Διακονία)

Following Christ demands that the Church be a living organism because each member partakes of the life of Christ. The nature of this life is to be like Christ and as it comes to visibility in local churches it reflects a basic organization which conforms to its nature. The local church is informed concerning its nature and form by looking to Christ. Christ *speaks*, therefore the church is recognized by Kerygma; the form that emerges is special men and women of recognized spiritual (or higher) gifts to teach the Gospel in order to equip Christians for the ministry. Christ *loves*, therefore the church is characterized by Koinonia. The teaching of all things Christ commanded creates Christian families, the basic unit which models the love of Christ. The church which emerges is governed by elders, men and their wives of spiritual quality and maturity appointed from these homes. Christ also *serves*, therefore the church is characterized by Diakonia. Christ is interested in the whole person and seeks to meet the material needs as well as the spiritual needs. The form of the church which emerges as it engages in Diakonia is men and women who lead this ministry as deacons.

To be the Church of Christ it must engage in diaconal ministries, which are activities of service called Diakonia/διακονία. Διακονία is used in two ways in the New Testament. A service of love which provides for material needs and bodily sustenance is known as Diakonia. Diakonia can also refer to the ministry of the Word (Ac 6:4) and for that service which edifies the Church (Rm 12:7; Eph 4:12) (Kittel Vol 2 1968:87, 88). Here, Diakonia/διακονία refers to the first usage mentioned where social service is considered an obligation of the church and is

reckoned a service oriented to the Gospel (2 Cor 8:1-6). It is the basic meaning of "to serve", Diakonein/διακονεῖν, from which deacons (Diakonoi/διάκονοι) is derived (Ac 6:2; 1 Tm 3:12, 13).

It must also be noted that these services were not only done by deacons but by the laity too. If we are to observe the activities of the early church, we see physical needs being met by lay members of the church – needs such as feeding the hungry. Reconciliation due to racial segregation was also done by the laity – segregation between Hellenistic groups and Hebraic groups. It was the laity, as well as the deacons, who comforted the lonely or even the lost. Physical needs were done by all who were able to serve. Spiritual needs were met by the apostles but also the laity as one cannot split people into different parts. We can say, therefore, that holistic ministry took place by the whole Church. In teaching the whole Word of God, the Jerusalem church promoted and supported holistic mission, meeting both spiritual and physical needs. This became a normal and integral part of local church life.

When Christians, individually and corporately, allow Christ to inform their living, there is an interest in the wholeness of persons. In the forward of the book written by Bloesch, Mackay writes, "He [Bloesch] shows that man is truly man, and fulfills his human destiny when his life is God-centred, and when his concern sweeps the full horizon of human need in both church and society" (Bloesch 1967:10). Christian life must include Diakonia with Kerygma and Koinonia, for believers in Christ, social relevance is an integral part of authentic Christianity. "A Christian is asked to include in his life both piety and service. Then he can hold the roots and the fruits of faith in one organic context. Each needs the other" (Trueblood 1970:31). Kerygma and Koinonia which do not surface Diakonia are not of Christ. Human service completes the redemptive emphasis on wholeness, for it includes social responsibility. "Spiritualism is demonstrated whenever people become satisfied with what goes on in a place of worship with no real worry about poverty adjacent to it" (Trueblood 1970:31). A right

relationship to Christ never allows contentment when no effort is put forth to serve neighbours. The "social gospel" movement has tried to divorce devotion and piety from *their* all important deeds of mercy. This reduces the Gospel and deprives social service of direction and motivation for action. At the same time too many Evangelicals have endeavoured to save souls without recognizing a physical environment or context. The Evangelical is correct to cling to Christ alone for salvation but this very faith in Christ seeks to flesh out true piety with genuine deeds of mercy. Christian piety recognizes that diaconal ministries are also related to Evangelical purposes (Shelley 1970:17-19) (Beyerhaus 1971:58).

To serve, Diakonein/διακονεῖν, means basically to wait at tables or to supervise meals. This is taken over in the New Testament for service of Christian love involving food, drink, clothes, shelter, etc. Paul served the destitute in the Jerusalem church by collecting money for them. There is often the idea of sacrificial giving which can entail hardship. From the discharge of these duties comes the official office of deacons, (Diakonoi/διάκονοι) (Ac 6:2; 1 Tm 3:10) (Kittel Vol 2 1968:84-87).

The duties of deacons are deduced from the tasks described by the verb rather than specifically outlined by the noun. This allows an openness to meet the varying needs of different localities. Deacons constitute a distinct office of the local church. The position of deacons in used in context with bishops (Phlp 1:1; 1 Tm 3:1-13). Deacons are servants in the church in the area of material things (Schaeffer 1970:80). Their close association with elders implies that they are their helpers. They work under the general direction of the elders and supplement their ministry. Cabaniss makes a good case for description of elders in Ja 1 and deacons in Ja 2. Deacons are doorkeepers of the church and perform their porter service without partiality. They are also dispensers or administrators of the church's charity. Their actions of supplying bodily needs demonstrate faith so their deeds are oriented to the perfect law of liberty under the general rule of elders (1975:220, 221).

Deacons help in the administration of the church's ordinances. We have it recorded that Philip baptized (Ac 8:38). The basic meaning of Diakonia is to wait at tables. This points toward the service of the Lord's Table and also Christ's example at His table of washing His disciples' feet (Jn 13:5). This has led any churches to regard the Lord's Table as incomplete without a benevolent offering. Powers demonstrate the right of deacons to officiate at the communion service. The Bible does not restrict this ministry to elders; waiting on tables is in accord with their service; his ministry is a service which does not conflict with eldership rule; and his ordinance, as baptism, is a corporate affair (Powers 1974:248).

The diaconate of the church have a spiritual ministry, they have a "right to speak openly on matters of the Christian faith" (1 Tm 3:13). They certainly must be those who have been equipped for the ministry which builds the church (Eph 4:11, 12). All might not possess the gift of Diakonia (Rm 12:7), but their testing shows their qualification for diaconal ministry (1 Tm 3:10), and this is closely allied to prophecy and teaching. Stephen and Philip certainly knew he Scriptures (Ac 7 and Ac 8:35, 36) and were full of the Spirit and wisdom (Ac 6:3). It was a logical step to give Diakonia a second meaning as the ministry of the Word, although all who preach the Word will not be deacons. The breaking of bread can refer to the ministry of the Word, for Christ is the bread of life. The ministry of the deacons includes practical charity, sacramental worship and ministry of the Word. Being a deacon does not disqualify a person from exercising the higher gifts of the Spirit, but even without those gifts the service does tie social service to the ministry of the Word.

It is interesting to note that Phoebe was a deacon (Rm 16:1). A masculine noun is used for diakonos/διάκονος refers to both men and women (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:183). She helped many in their needs, including Paul. Paul mentions he deacons in Philippi (Php 1:1). It was the Philippians who ministered time and again to Paul's material needs. Certainly Lydia was a deacon of this church. He

encouraged Euodia and Syntyche who had shared his struggles in the Gospel to agree together (Phlp 4:2, 3). The deacons at Philippi were both men and women. If the wives of the deacons were referred to in 1 Tm 3:11, there would be an articles before γυναῖκος/gunaikos. This is recognized in the New English Bible in a footnote where it is translated "deaconesses." If it did refer to their wives it would be logical for this verse to follow verse 12. This verse deals especially with the qualifications for women and is placed in the middle of the section on deacons, which is not true for the sections on elders (1 Tm 3:1-7; Tt 1:5-9).

> Women deacons can certainly fulfill all the roles and
> activities which we have seen for men ... The major
> role of a deacon – the carrying out of specific tasks
> and duties in the congregation which have been
> delegated by the elders – is certainly one which a
> woman can fulfill (Powers 1974:258).

The diaconate is an essential office of the church. Deacons who have demonstrated a good record of service are appointed, "they must first undergo a scrutiny, and if there be no mark against them, they may serve" (1 Tm 3:10). They are to supplement the work of the elders as delegated to them. Elders have the oversight of the local church while deacons assist the elders as already indicated. Theologically this is necessary to connect the Gospel ministry with deeds of charity. There is also the very practical necessity of division of labour. Diaconal ministries have an insatiable need for time, money and personnel. Because of so many and urgent and temporal human needs, whenever needed and possible, it is best to use complementary personnel to act as diaconal ministries. In order for elders to function biblically without distraction from their main pastoral responsibilities, deacons must be appointed. This pattern for the church was set from the beginning by the apostles. Although Ac 6 does not mention deacons, as a name their duties are implied by the verb used and their

personal names are mentioned. The apostles said, "It would be a grave mistake for us to neglect the Word of God in order to wait at table" (Ac 6:2). The church membership is compassionate to those in need and deacons ensure that those people are helped. Diaconal ministries are not neglected, but neither is the Word of God.

The position of deacon is not to be regarded as an apprenticeship, as a learning situation for the next higher position of elder. The ecclesiastical method of moving deacons automatically up to eldership after a period of service is not biblical. A person appointed as deacon because of gift or aptitude is in a permanent position. This does not mean that a man-deacon cannot become an elder, but it should not be regarded as a step up in a hierarchical ladder. Church offices do not represent status but duties to perform. Deacons allow elders to perform their duties effectively. Many churches have learned the need for division of labour the hard way when elders have been side-tracked from their essential functions during an extended building programme. In a real sense, under the lordship of Christ, all Christians are responsible for Diakonia. This begins with handling our financial resources, for the root of all evil comes from the love of money (1 Tm 6:10).

> "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Lk16:10-13).

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Heb 13:16). Diakonos/διάκονος can also be used to refer to a minister or preacher of the Gospel. Paul considered himself a minister (Eph 3:7; Col 1:23). He thought of Timothy as a minister (1 Tm 4:6) and also Apollos (1 Cor 3:5). All are to be equipped for the ministry, to minister the Word of God (Eph 4:12). All who minister the Word of God are diakonoi/διάκονοι (2 Cor 3:6). When diakonoi/διάκονοι is used in this manner, it does not point to the position of deacons who are engaged in diaconal ministries. It is, however, a powerful reminder that Diakonia must always be oriented to and directed by the ministry of the Gospel; and that the ministry of the Word is a servant ministry.

1.6.1. Words Versus Action

If one were to examine the New Testament, especially Mt 25, one would see that Jesus and the poor are inseparable. The needy flocked around him everywhere He went – and He was touched by their infirmities. Ten times the New Testament records that Jesus was "moved with compassion" each time in the context of Jesus' personal confrontation with suffering people.

There is a constant tension of trying to fulfill the needs of the world's hungry and the words of Jesus in Mt 25:35, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat".

According to facts about those who are hungry, the following statistics are unsettling and a cause for concern and decisive action (figures from http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-basics/hunger-facts-international.html):

- 923 million people across the world are hungry.
- Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes – one child every five seconds.

- In essence, hunger is the most extreme form of poverty, where individuals or families cannot afford to meet their most basic need for food.

- Hunger manifests itself in many ways other than starvation and famine. Most poor people who battle hunger deal with chronic undernourishment and vitamin or mineral deficiencies, which result in stunted growth, weakness and heightened susceptibility to illness.

- Countries in which a large portion of the population battles hunger daily are usually poor and often lack the social safety nets we enjoy, such as soup kitchens, food stamps, and job training programs. When a family that lives in a poor country cannot grow enough food or earn enough money to buy food, there is nowhere to turn for help.

The truth is that the world produces enough food to feed everybody. It just is not being distributed equally. The imbalance of food distribution is the main reason a hunger problem haunts the world today. Undernourishment negatively affects people's health, productivity, sense of hope and overall well-being. A lack of food can stunt growth, slow thinking, sap energy, hinder fetal development and contribute to mental retardation. Economically, the constant securing of food consumes valuable time and energy of poor people, allowing less time for work and earning income. Socially, the lack of food erodes relationships and feeds shame so that those most in need of support are often least able to call on it.

Mt 25:35 continues the serving challenges placed upon those who believe in Jesus with the words, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink". Water is the most precious of all resources, a vital necessity of life. In most developed countries, if one wants clean water, one just has to open the tap. In less developed countries, people often travel miles on foot to secure a jug of water. It may well

take half a day to make the trip. Besides being essential for drinking, water serves a critical role in food production, food preparation and hygiene.

Mt 25:36 records the words of Jesus saying, "I was sick and you cared for me". It raises great opportunities for the Church to put faith into action. Poor nutrition and calorie deficiencies cause nearly one in three people to die prematurely or have disabilities, according to the World Health Organization. Pregnant women, new mothers who breastfeed infants, and children are among the most at risk of undernourishment.

In 2006, about 9.7 million children died before they reached their fifth birthday. Almost all of these deaths occurred in developing countries, 4/5 of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the two regions that also suffer from the highest rates of hunger and malnutrition. Most of these deaths are attributed, not to outright starvation, but to diseases that move in on vulnerable children whose bodies have been weakened by hunger. Every year, more than 20 million low-birth weight babies are born in developing countries. These babies risk dying in infancy, while those who survive, often suffer life-long physical and cognitive disabilities. The four most common childhood illnesses are diarrhea, acute respiratory illness, malaria and measles. Each of these illnesses is both preventable and treatable. Yet, again, poverty interferes in parents' ability to access immunizations and medicines. Chronic undernourishment on top of insufficient treatment greatly increases a child's risk of death. In the developing world, 26 % of children under 5 are moderately to severely underweight. 10 % are severely underweight. 11 % of children under 5 are moderately to severely wasted, or seriously below weight for one's height, and an overwhelming 32 % are moderately to severely stunted, or seriously below normal height for one's age.

The spreading HIV/AIDS epidemic has quickly become a major obstacle in the fight against hunger and poverty in developing countries. Because the majority

of those falling sick with AIDS are young adults who normally harvest crops, food production has dropped dramatically in countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. In half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, per capita economic growth is estimated to be falling by between 0.5 and 1.2 % each year as a direct result of AIDS. Infected adults also leave behind children and elderly relatives, who have little means to provide for themselves. In 2003, 12 million children were newly orphaned in southern Africa, a number expected to rise to 18 million in 2010.

Since the epidemic began, 25 million people have died from AIDS, which has caused more than 15 million children to lose at least one parent. For its analysis, UNICEF uses a term that illustrates the gravity of the situation; child-headed households, or minors orphaned by HIV/AIDS who are raising their siblings.

1 % (ages 15-49) of the world is HIV prevalent (2005 data). 1.1 % (ages 15-49) of developing countries are HIV prevalent (2005 data). Approximately 39.5 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the world. Of this figure, 63 percent live in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006, 4.3 million people become infected with HIV and 2.9 million people died of AIDS.

With reference to fighting for justice, in Mt 25:36, we also read "… I was in prison and you came to visit me." There are many cases in the world where prisoners of conscience are often charged with political or criminal crimes. It is almost impossible to assess how extensive the imprisonment of Christians may be. According to recent statistics, it would seem that there have been a total of about 70 million Christian martyrs. According to Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian martyrs), it is estimated "that the current average number of Christian martyrs per year are 176 000. International Christian Concern reports that there have been more Christians martyred for their faith in the previous century (20th century) than all previous centuries combined. If one looks at the demographics of the world today, it is quite

possible that two thirds of all Christians alive in the world today suffer persecution in varying degrees, including the loss of freedom, discrimination, imprisonment, slavery and torture. It is a known fact that many house church leaders are still being routinely imprisonment and tortured in China.

The Church does not exist for its own sake. It is sent to serve the world and to recreate it so that it may, once again, be the kingdom of God. The problems of this world are immense. As each person responds in a positive manner, the results should be significant.

1.6.2. The Church's Call to Action

In a world of desperate need, we ask ourselves what we can do about problems so vast and all-encompassing. It is easy to become insulated against action – ironically silenced by the belief that the problems confronting us lie beyond our realm of control. The needs of the poor – and the rich – transcend the physical and the psychological. They are spiritual as well – and there are so many individual people suffering from so many different difficulties.

The solutions to problems in the world today will not be found in the actions of one or two people, but rather, collectively, people – individuals and groups – who can respond to them in a very significant manner. A response as unto God is crucial! We dare not watch a child die for the lack of a cup of powdered milk or a spoonful of rice when we have in excess of both and have enough to save millions of children (and people) from starvation. We dare not stand aside and leave people homeless, their eyes staring into the hopeless future, when we can put a roof over their heads for a meager amount compared to what we have. We dare not take a spectator's seat watching refugees who gather in crowds just out of gunshot range to find a measly place to live – after "running for their lives". They are creations of God and God has given us the opportunity of ministering to them.

In other words, what we really believe in, we do. Everything else is just so much religious rhetoric. God never intended for the righteous to sit idle while the restless poor struggle for survival. It is the responsibility of the Church to survival for the present and eternity are secured.

The words of Jesus "cut through" the dismal state of the world and through our lack of effectiveness: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these of mine, you did for Me" (Mt 25:45).

The problems are worldwide, but individual responses are eternally significant. A loaf of bread, a cup of clean water, a shelter, the Gospel lived out and proclaimed. These actions command immeasurable importance to someone who is hungry, thirsty or homeless.

1.7. The Church is Distinguished by Worship (Leitourgia) (Λειτουργία)

In an age where individualism is stressed, the link between corporateness ("togetherness") and worship, has to be underlined. Although Christian worship is intensely personal, it is nevertheless that of a person who is a member of a group. The corporate aspect, the worship life of the church is therefore far more important than the personal experiences which individual worshippers have (Underhill 1936:93). Christian worship is not just a solitary undertaking, but is firstly an activity engaged in by a group of people. Worship thus, is the church's action before it is the individual's action. The corporate edification of church during worship should then have priority over personal edification (οἰκοδομήν τῆς ἐκκλησίας) (1 Cor 14:12). The worship experience of the "one body" takes precedence over the subjective experience of the individual. Worship is thus not so much an opportunity for individual blessing to be sought, but primarily an opportunity where the church as a corporate body, unified in its Lord, exercises devotion to God.

In worship, the Church is revealed as a *redemptive society*. Worship reveals the Church as different from any other unit of society. It is a particular kind of fellowship; a fellowship of redeemed persons, a fellowship created by the Holy Spirit and united under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This fellowship (so distinctive to the Church) has two dimensions: a vertical dimension which arises from God's revelation through Christ in worship, and a horizontal dimension which arises from the fact that Christ makes every believer a member of His body (ἐνί πνεύματι) (1 Cor 12:13) and hereby joins that believer to the whole of that particular community and to every other Christian (Hahn 1963:33, 34). God's purpose for His Church is redemptive. As a redeemed fellowship, the Church is also a redeeming fellowship in which renewal and redemption should be conveyed to those who stand in need (Segler 1967:71). This renewal and restoration takes place in the healing atmosphere of the Church's worship. It is only as the Church in worship is renewed in its vertical fellowship that it will be able to fulfill its function as a dispenser of horizontal fellowship.

In worship, the fellowship of the Church is revealed as truly catholic. The Church in worship refuses to sanction the sociological patterns of this world and becomes all inclusive, embracing all spheres of society; the rich and the poor, the sinners and the righteous. In worship where Christ, and not man, is exalted, the middle-walls of partition are broken down (Eph 2:14) so that there is no place for class distinctions and social snobbery (Ja 2:1-4). Like the inn where the Good Samaritan lodged the wounded man, the worshipping Church is a place of welcome for all (Lk 10:34) (von Allem 1965:48).

As Church in worship confesses its sins and shortcomings to God, it experiences anew the healing of God's forgiveness and thus becomes a forgiving community. This atmosphere of acceptance and forgives allows for the flow of grace in which all pretences can be shed and the worshipper is released from the bondage of guilt and hypocrisy. The Church in worship allows the believer "to be what he is." Bonhoeffer stated: "In the presence of a Christian brother I can dare to be a

sinner" (Segler 1967:211). As the community of the redeemed and the forgiven, the Church in worship experiences a unity as the Oneness of the Godhead (Jn 17:22) is illuminated to the worshipping community. The awesomeness of God's majesty and man's own sinfulness, binds the gathered Church into a group in which there is no partiality. Splitting differences disappear in the presence of holiness. This is summarized so well in *On Being Witnesses* by Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman:

> Christian mission is an inherent dimension of the worship we owe God simply for who He is. We proclaim not because we know better; we serve not because we are more privileged; we have fellowship not in order to patronize; we do all this – gladly – because the greatness of God's love leaves us no other option (1994:38).

Also, worship reveals the Church as a *living organism*. The Church is gathered around a living Christ and is in a sense a continuation of the life of Christ as He lives in and through the life of His people. The Church in worship is revealed as a living organic fellowship and not as a functioning institution. The worship life of the Church is thus a barometer indicating the reality of a Risen Lord (or not) to others. It is in worship that men perceive (or do not perceive) a true God in their midst. As a worshipping organism, witnessing to life, the worship of the Church must always be open to reform of life-giving renewal. In effectual worship, the Church should be saved from becoming a dead branch as it continually receives life from the true vine, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church (κεφαλήν ὑπέρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ) (Eph 1:22) (Segler 1967:72). A group of believers remains alive in worship, only as it continually comes to the Lord to be judged by Him (Is 6:5). Unless the Church repeatedly comes to confession, it cannot remain a witness to God's grace (1 Pt 4:17) (Segler 1967:73). In worship the Church is continually reminded that it is nothing but a "congregation of

sinners" who depend upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ for life-giving sustenance.

The Church is also revealed as a *holy priesthood* in worship. The New Testament presents the Church as a "holy priesthood" (ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον) (1 Pt 2:5; Rv 1:6). The derived doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" has often been stressed too one-sidedly to emphasis only the priviledge of the individual believer of free access to the Lord. The doctrine also implies that every member of Christ's body is responsible to worship God. Each Christian has the priviledge and the accompanying obligation to worship God "without aid of priest" and to serve as a priest unto God; ministering to God (Heb 13:15) and to fellow humanity (Segler 1967:74). This doctrine thus obligates participation on the side of the entire congregation in worship, not only the "minister". In worship, this doctrine stresses the preeminent importance of every believer's personality. It does not teach (or allow for) extreme individualism in worship; men and women worship in relation to their fellow believers and can only worship "in truth" as they rightly relate to God and to their fellow humans. The doctrine allows for diversity so that "in the worshipping congregation the individual Christian finds his highest values" (Segler 1967:74), as each one ministers according to their particular gifts (Rm 12:6; Eph 4:12, 13).

Worship also reveals the Church as the *Bride of Christ*, waiting expectantly for her Bridegroom. The Church promises herself as Christ's bride, because He promised Himself to her; she gives herself to Him, because He have Himself for her (Eph 5:25-27). The Church is disclosed as the community of hope joyfully anticipating the coming of her Lord and Saviour (1 Cor 11:26).

It has already been pointed out that worship is a twofold event. It is an event consisting of God's revelational activity towards the worshipping community and the community's response to that revelation. It is not easy to clearly delineate where God's service to the community at worship ends and where that

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community's service to God begins. In Heb 13:11, 12 God's activity (through Christ as High Priest) towards His people, is described against the background of Christ's eternally valid sacrifice. Christians respond to the call of Christ as priests through the "offering up of the sacrifices of praise" (Heb 13:15) and then also through "doing good and sharing" (Heb 13:16). In worship the Church responds through its caring ministry for its fellow humanity. The worship is not limited to an inner spiritual response only, but is a pragmatic social concern for humanity in their need. This responses in worship are "sacrifices pleasing to God" (Rm 12:1; Heb 13:16).

1.7.1. The Church in Need of Renewal

The Church always stands in need of renewal, but the modern church in particular, desperately needs to be renewed from a struggle for survival, to become a thrustful dynamic organism, relating people to their Lord. True worship in the Church may well be one of the means of renewal. The community of believers is refreshed and edified in worship (1 Cor 14:3, 12). Barth states "If edification does not take place here, it does not take place anywhere" (Vol 4 1969:638). Church renewal cannot be an end in itself, but will be the outcome of worship "in spirit and in truth". Since worship inspired by the Holy Spirit is the source of the Church's power, the life and ministry of the Church is directly related to its worship. Bailey expresses it in this way: In a marriage where sexual expression is missing, the husband and wife will probably lack genuine sharing in other areas of their marriage as well. Similarly, a congregation in which worship lacks vibrant, life-giving enthusiasm, is likely to have little else happening within it (1972:27). Worship is the fountainhead of all the ministries of the Church and "if worship grows stale or becomes clogged from foreign pollutions, the life of the Church will ebb and its ministries diminish or cease altogether" (Segler 1967:208). Therefore, Church renewal comes via a renewal in worship, since the Church that does not truly worship cannot truly minister.

Church renewal is often confused with liturgical renewal; the latter is but a sub-part of a renewal of the Church. Church renewal is concerned with the revival of the spiritual vitality and health of the Church as a whole and more specifically with that of the individual believers. Liturgical renewal too often is confined to an interest only, in the forms and practices of worship with the aim of developing a more relevant programme of worship. The Church is renewed through worship as it is unified and edified in the exercise of worshipping the Lord. The common worship of one Lord brings about, and assures, fellowship and unity in the gathering (Eph 4:4-6). As the believers are built up in worship, the Church, the corporate body is built up and renewed in its oneness. Furthermore, the Church is renewed, as through worship it becomes socially related to the world. In worship the Lord is glorified in all the aspects of common life; the worshipping Christian is par excellence "in the world, but not of the world". As the Christian worships, he/she is "in serious dialogue with God and will also seek relevant dialogue with the world" (Segler 1967:214). Renewed worship will thus have as its outcome a renewed willingness to subject all of life to the Lord and to become involved with life in all its forms and presentations. This concern for renewal in worship is one of the most encouraging marks of the present day Church which, in worship, has too often revealed "less the joyful song of the new man, than the tiresome and familiar refrain of old captivity in which nothing has been made new" (Hoon 1971:24). Despite the encouraging signs of a sincere concern for renewal in worship, Clark sounds an ominous warning to Baptists when he says: "Yet in this respect of all the major denominations, it is probably the Baptist that has been least affected" (1960:9).

Christian worship is involved with history; the history of God's dealings with His creation. Unfortunately Christian worship, while paying serious attention to past history, very often neglects to pay similar attention to present history (White 1967:49). The nature of worship is (partly at least) the recovering of the actions of God and their significance to man, through our own acts of participation in worship. Seen in this light, past history plays an extremely important role in

worship. The events by which God has acted in the past are delivered to the individual believer and are made "his" events. Worship, however, is also based on present events. It is concerned with what the Lord has done and with what he is, and is going to do. The worshipping Church is thus confronted by the "challenge to try and understand what God is doing in the world and to join Him in His work" (White 1967:75) and then to relate its worship to man's involvement with present-day events and trends. Worship then becomes a response not only to God's past activity, but also to what we have discovered, and are discovering about His present activity in the world.

One's understanding of worship is often hampered by a false and too rigid distinction between that which is "spiritual" and that which is "worldly". Worship is often approached as if it involved the adoption of such an other-worldly attitude which should translate the worshipper from the earth into heaven. Furthermore, worship forms are adopted which often lead to a strengthening of the idea that one has to escape from "life in worship". Theologically, the emphasis in worship has at times been so expressly focused on God's transcendence, that His imminence has been overlooked. God is involved with man and the world in which He has placed man to live. God transcends time and space to meet man in Jesus Christ. Christ's earthly life, even His visits to the "places of worship" (the Temple and the synagogues) evidence of His pragmatic involvement with a needy mankind. Worship instead of trying to "out-spiritualise God" (White 1967:82) should realize that worship concerns also, the reality of the physical world (Rm 12:1). The forms and materials used in worship are material and very worldly. We worship in concrete structures with which one also builds housing apartments etc; in baptism water is used with which one also washes dishes. Worship is performed by humans, where we meet fellow-humans and not "angelic saints".

Christian worship helps the Church to understand afresh that there is no "godless' sector in life; that "all things were created through Him and for Him"

(Col 1:16); that the whole of life is involved when one worships and that worship is involved when we live (Rm 12:1). Worship is often kept on a high pedestal of stained glass windows and rich ceremonial dress, it is "lifted up above the din and smoke of the world" (White 1967:93), but Jesus Christ was born in a stable in a manger; He was found talking to prostitutes and lepers and rode on a donkey; yet His life was an example of a unique oneness with God in worship (Jn 17:22). There is thus, a great need in Christian worship to relate to present-day issues in life as effectively as worship relates to the past acts of God's dealings with mankind: "Our forms of worship ought to shed their celibate garments in order to reflect more nearly life, as it is really lived" (White 1967:95). Worship is as much "sacred" as "secular", as much "other-worldly" as "worldly".

Worship is first and foremost an act that addresses itself to the Lord. Worship is man's response to God's to God's revelation of Himself and is "addressed" to our fellow-man, purely in a secondary sense. Worship must be "in spirit", that is, inward adoration by those who have been "resurrected inwardly" and "in truth", that is, the object of worship, the Lord, must be known in an intimate way, to the worshipper. This aspect of worship, the addressing to God, has often been neglected as a result of an over-emphasis on sermons and an under-emphasis on the other acts of worship such as reading the Scriptures, congregational prayer, the Lord's Supper, etc (von Allmen 1965:77). Worship therefore should not be confused with evangelism. The examples of believers' meetings in the New Testament (Ac 20:7; 1 Cor 14) contain no indications of a mixing of worship and evangelism. The specifically evangelistic address on the other hand (Ac 2:14-36; 13:36-41; 17:16-31) does not seem related to the worship gathering in any way.

The Church must reach mankind with the Good News of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:19, 20) but the question is whether it must do so through a "worship-gospel" service. Worship is something quite different to evangelism, it is "the sphere where finally step by step the Church will bring together in adoration, praise and thanksgiving

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to those whom it has reached by evangelization" (von Allmen 1965:79). Worship is both the priviledge and the duty of the redeemed, of those who have been made "priests unto God". The unregenerate cannot be expected to worship God "in spirit and in truth", they do not yet have the ability to grasp spiritual truths (1 Cor 2:14) and to respond to the Lord in praise and adoration. Sclater goes as far as to distinguish between services of worship and services of mission: "The former are a supreme task of the Church and are ends in themselves, the latter are means to an end" (1970:23). In these services of mission, the evangelized are not expected to worship the Lord as is the case in the services of worship.

Despite the foregoing argument, it cannot be denied that there is a vital link between the worship of the Church and evangelism. But even if in worship there is a phase in which evangelism is a concern, it is not the primary concern (similarly, fellowship on a horizontal plane, although present in worship, is not the primary concern). In worship the primary concern is to enable the Church "to find its orientation towards God and to live it out" (von Allmen 1965:78). The end of the Church (in this context) is not evangelism, but worship. Evangelism has to lead to worship; the "follow-up" of the evangelistic task is training in worship. The sheer sensed presence of God may truly convict the unsaved as the Church worships, and evangelism may thus result from worship (1 Cor 14:24, 25 – note even in these verses the order is first conviction, then worship of the Lord follows). Even so, in this instance, worship and not evangelism is the primary concern. Therefore, the Church does have an absolute obligation to evangelise, but more "alongside" and not so much "in" its worship.

Free Church worship often is guilty of disparaging all forms of liturgy and tradition. Liturgical forms are summarily classified as "the letter which kills". This becomes valid only when a liturgical form seeks its meaning and justification in itself; when liturgy becomes salvation in itself, rather than a means of transmitting salvation. Liturgical forms can be just as Spirit-inspired as the more spontaneous utterances in worship. Furthermore, traditional forms often "possess a timeless

eloquence exceeding our own inventive powers" (Hoon 1971:98). Liturgy must thus witness to, and correspond to what God has revealed of Himself to man. All liturgical forms (including the spontaneous charismatic outbursts) therefore have to be subject to the absolute authority of Scripture. Any liturgy which violates Scriptural teaching, or draws on non-Scriptural sources is illegitimate. God reveals Himself in the Word in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15) and He enables man to create, through the Holy Spirit, liturgy with which to worship Him.

The form of worship is both strict and free. Strict, since it is a question of *Christian* worship; free, since worship is initiated by God who is independent and free of man and since it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The freedom of worship is a disciplined liberty (1 Cor 14:33). Bosch sums it up well:

> The Church has borne witness in different time and places in different ways. This is important. There are occasions when dynamic action in society is called for; there are others when a word must be spoken; others when the behavior of Christians one to another is the telling witness. On still other occasions the simple presence of a worshipping community or [person] is the witness. These different dimensions of witness to the one Lord are always a matter of concrete obedience. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel (1979:228, 229).

1.7.2. Worship and Mission

When considering the relation between worship and mission, one needs to realize that there is no distinction between the two. If one reads the Bible, the work of God and the events that have taken place in history – from Genesis to Revelation – one sees God's saving grace and His continuing work through

Jesus Christ and the Church. Our worship and service to God is in response to what God has done. It is God who initiated this activity in the world and it is Christians who are continuing this service (λειτουργία/leitourgia) through the Church.

Worship is a response to God's grace which is already present and active in words and actions by His people, that is, the Church. God speaks and acts in and through the ritual of Christian worship to save, reconcile, and recreate humanity and all creation. The judgment and mercy of God, proclaimed and enacted in worship, signify God's ultimate judgment and mercy for the world.

Rather than being the means or the motivation by which the church carries out its mission, worship is the location where God carries out God's mission. Worship is the way God gathers people to witness to and participate in God's work of reconciling the world to God's own self. In and through worship, individuals and the community encounter, experience, and celebrate the God who is the source and goal of the rest of their lives. The church proclaims God's reconciliation and shares in God's mission by living in the world in ways congruent with what it experiences God doing and enacting in worship. In this way, God's people worshiping in the midst of the world live out and signify God's own mission for the life of the world.

Worship and mission are God's single activity of reconciliation – reconciliation between God and humanity, humanity among itself, and also humanity and God's creation – not simply distinct yet related activities in which the Church engages. God is the first and primary initiator of this reconciliation. While Christians and congregations can participate in, be indifferent to, resist, and even undermine God's saving activity in worship, they can neither achieve nor stop it. God's work of salvation – accomplished in Christ and continued and enacted in worship – will not be stopped until it reaches its destination, the fullness of the reign of God.

This new understanding will help us recognize worship as the place where we encounter God. Worship is therefore *an experience of God* rather than the Church's *reflection on its experience of God*. When Churches take God's presence and activity in worship seriously and trust that, when God is present and active in worship, something missional will happen, because that is who God is.

1.8. <u>Gifts and Offices Necessary for the Local Church to Fulfill its Mission</u>

As we look at local churches of all denominations and even at those which do not fall within the confinement of denominationalism it becomes obvious that most churches are not reflecting the characteristics, activities and goals of the church envisaged in the Word of God. With reference to the teaching gifts, Bavinck points out that the proper functioning of the people with the spiritual gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers are conducive to the spread of the Gospel (1960:44). Paul clearly states that Christ has gifted His people through the Holy Spirit on this way for the purpose of equipping or preparing God's people to do the work necessary in order that the Body of Christ may be built up (Eph 4:12). There is a desperate need for the church today to come back to the structure which the Lord of the Church has set forth. The church must: "Speak the truth in love, then we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. For him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph 4:15, 16). Bavinck alerts us to the fact that,

"The church alone, which is itself a living spiritual fellowship, an organic whole, has power "to grow". All work, however costly and well-organized, which is not rooted in a church that has found the secret of mutual love, is in the long run powerless" (1960:47).

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Among many Christians today we have the unbiblical understanding of the pastor or the minister of the church doing the work of the ministry and the people in the congregation helping him to do his work or very often watching him try to perform an impossible task. The biblical understanding of the work of the ministry is that those in the body are each responsible to the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ to do the work which He has assigned for each one and for which He has gifted or equipped each one, "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says, 'When he ascended on high... He gave gifts to men'" (Eph 4:7, 8). The Church is, primarily and fundamentally, a body designed to express, through each individual member, the life of an indwelling Lord and is equipped by the Holy Spirit with gifts designed to express that life (Stedman 1972:51).

Each member, therefore, is responsible to so live in fellowship with the living Lord that they will be attuned to His direction in the responsible use of the gift/s, which will lead the user towards other people. The members of the body will thereby be moving away from self-centredness and will be moving towards others in the body and to others who still need to find new life in Christ – as it is well expressed in 1 Pt 4:10 and 1 Cor 12:7.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to the body and are for the world as well. The ministry of the body is the ministry of Jesus Christ through His Church in human society. He loves men and women in the world and wants to reach them through the body. That is the reason He has filled it with His life and equipped it with gifts.

The four gifts listed in Eph 4:11are regarded by many to be the "greater" gifts, which Paul tells the Corinthian Christian to eagerly seek (1 Cor 12:31). Each one of these gifts is given by the Holy Spirit to a person and in the Church we are to look out for such people. Upon closer examination of these gifts we discover that they are people gifted by Christ to teach the Word of God. We shall briefly look

at each one of these teaching gifts – as it is crucial for the gifts to operate in order for the Great Commission to be fulfilled. Without these gifts operating, the laity will not be equipped adequately in order to fulfill this commission.

1.8.1. Apostles

Apostles are gifted to declare the whole body of truth concerning Jesus Christ (Stedman 1972:72). This gift of apostles is essential for the health of the body in order for it to do the work of the ministry. They are people who have received formal theological training in order to get to grips with the doctrines of the Bible. Having shown the ability to teach in their own culture, they move into a different culture in order to establish churches from "grass roots" level in a new culture. Such people today are known as "missionaries". In order for their ministry to be true to the Biblical example (Ac 13) they need to be church people who are sent by local churches.

People sent as missionaries must be mature disciples of Christ and must be part of a team. As these missionary teams will probably go where the Gospel is as yet unknown, they will be the first model in the different culture of what life in Christ is all about. The fruit of the Spirit evident among the team will be the first understanding which the new culture will see of the Gospel. Having learnt in the small group ministry in their home churches, about caring for people by "speaking the truth in the context of love", and in building relationships for the purpose of building up the Body, the new churches planted will follow the same pattern of a discipling/shepherding ministry, up to the point where the new churches themselves are sending out church people as missionaries to plant churches further afield.

Cultures are different, but people have similar emotions and basic needs, and all people have family relationships (Hesselgrave 2000:176). Christ must become Lord in the lives of people at the deepest level of human experience, and so the

missionaries must help men and women in the context of their family living to appropriate the Gospel message for the purpose of building Christian homes where Christ is honoured and worshipped as Lord. From these homes Christian leaders will develop who will care for people as shepherds care for sheep.

Having been involved in planting churches in a foreign culture, the missionary becomes aware of where his own understanding of the Gospel is biased by his own culture. So he wrestles with what is Gospel and what is culture. With a clearer understanding of the Gospel message, he must return to his home church who had sent him out, to share with them his insights gained in a foreign culture.

In the present practice, missionaries normally return to their home country and are involved in a busy deputation programme which involves rushing from one church to another across the country. But as we understand the gift of "apostle" to be a teaching gift, it is for the purpose of equipping people to do the work of the ministry. The missionary really needs time with his own home church in order to challenge the members to look at their own lives and values in terms of how they should be changing their own lifestyles so that they may participate more responsibly in God's concern for people on other parts of the world. Such a challenge invariably leads to a concern also for people nearer home who also need to hear the Good News and who need to see it visualised in the life of the local church.

We see, therefore, that the operation of this gift encourages people "to do the work of the ministry", which means movement away from their own selfish interests and toward other people. The missionary therefore keeps his fellow church members aware of their responsibility for the Christian Mission.

1.8.2. Prophets

The people gifted as prophets are able to unfold the Word of God so that the Body of believers is helped to understand the mind of God and is thereby motivated to act in accordance with the truth of the Word.

Prophets are able to explain the principles of the Word so that it becomes clear, vital and compelling (Stedman 1972:73). The prophets are able to discern the will of God in the local setting, where the Word needs to be applied, in particular circumstances. The prophets will also alert people to God's overall plan which includes the whole world. In all these concerns they will be informed by the written Word of God, as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand what it is that God would have people to know and to do. The prophets, therefore will point people to the work of the ministry locally and keep before them an awareness of what God wants to be done in the wider world. The prophet is never a popular person, because he serves in the Body of believers as the "conscience", making it aware of what the Bible says in areas where it is being disobedient to the revealed will of God.

1.8.3. Evangelists

Evangelists are gifted with the spiritual gift of communicating the Gospel in relevant terms to those who are not yet Christians (Getz 1974:96). This gift, too, must also be developed by a sound knowledge of the whole truth of the Word of God. Evangelists must be allowed to operate as part of the local church so that people in the community are brought under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and into understanding of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about and be made aware of their need to become part of His local body of believers.

awful position of neglecting the ministry which he is responsible before God to do (Stedman 1972:86).

This gift must be training others in the area of teaching and pastoring. Here, we highlight the necessity of training men who have the responsibility to serve the church as elders. The pastors and teachers with their knowledge of the Bible must be responsible to gather these men and teach them, helping them in difficult areas which they may be encountering in their shepherding ministry, and showing them how to apply scriptural principles to particular problems. Some of the pastors and teachers will be more gifted in teaching while others may be more gifted in the areas of counselling and shepherding – but according to their gift they must serve so that elders are trained to meet the needs of the church members in a ministry of feeding and caring.

This gift, like the gift of evangelists, brings to the attention of the church, that God is deeply concerned for people as individuals. As the church becomes a caring church because it is feeding on the Word, through the encouragement of pastors and teachers, there will be a resultant attitude of love within the church which will reach out to neighbour, friend and out into the wider world.

1.9. **People Ministry**

The preceding has been a brief description of what these particular gifted persons are to do. We gather from this Eph passage (4:11-16), that Christ's purpose in giving to the Church these gifts was in order for each church member individually, and the Church corporately, to be busy doing the work of the ministry.

The Church today often thinks in terms of programmes which major on some type of activity. To be structured according to biblical principles, we must realize that people are more important than programmes. It was to people that Christ

came and it is to people that the Church must go. The One who has brought us into a life-giving relationship with Himself sends us to build relationships with people, and for the purpose that they too may come to know Him in a living relationship.

The Church must be in the "people business". It therefore follows that the activities of the Church: the worshipping, the studying of the Word, the fellowshipping and praying and the serving must be in the context of building relationships with each other, in such a way that God is glorified and Christ is seen to be Lord. These activities must be informed by the teaching gifts of Ephesians 4, as they work together at "... correctly handling the Word of Truth" (2 Tm 2:15).

It is in every member ministry that the work of the ministry takes place and the question arises, how does this come about?

1.9.1. The Office of Elders

In the structuring of the Church so that it is seen to be the people of God, we need to promote the building of relationships in Christ. Church people need to get together in small groups of about 10 people where people have more freedom to express experiences, conflicts, joys, needs, encouragement and where responsibility and care for each other is brought about through interaction. Such groups should be the responsibility of mature disciples of Christ (Hesselgrave 1980:286). These men should disciple people, as shepherds. They should be men whom Peter describes thus:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1 Pt 5:2-4).

Paul, too, gives us insight into the qualities and responsibilities of these men (elders) who, "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Tm 4:12). (Also 1 Tm 3:1-13, Tt 1:6-9).

In the Biblical structuring of the church there is a crying need for such elders, men who truly care for people – helping them to maturity, helping people to see their need for Christ to be Lord in their lives. Men who will lead people by their own example, to make decisions of life which will bring glory to God and make known to all who touch their lives something of what citizens of the Kingdom of God are like.

Shepherding in the small group concept requires many elders, who together with their wives, will be involved in caring for people. It is impossible to meet real needs unless you know the person in their context of life. Only then will you know whether that person needs to be encouraged, corrected, etc. It is in the area of building people up to become mature in Christ that elders are to function. Elders/shepherds need to study people to see how their differing needs are to be met, and then to guide people to apply scriptural principles to their areas of need. As Paul instructs the Thessalonians to do, so the shepherds in the local churches should follow this advice, "We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone ... be kind to each other... (1 Th 5:14, 15). This task of shepherding is time consuming if it is to be really effective, but it is a noble task (1 Tm 3:1). Leading people by being living examples of obedience to Christ by both belief and lifestyle, such elders will be discipling men and women who will become responsible church people who in turn will be looking out for other people into whose lives they too can share the truth of the Gospel, in both word and deed.

Elders who model obedience to the Kingdom principles of "loving one another" and "loving neighbour as yourself", must meet, preferably, about once a week

with the small group of church people for the purpose of discipling and shepherding. Because the home is the basic unit of society, it is the husband and wife team – the shepherding couple, who in their relationship of mutual interdependence show what love (man) and submission (woman) really means in the Biblical sense. In his role as an elder, the man is recognised as the spokesman who gives and explanation of their unity in Christ. Together with the other couples and singles, they study the Bible, open their lives to each other and thereby encourage each other toward maturity in Christ. Besides meeting together for mutual fellowship and building up, the shepherds should make sure that each member of the cell group has a further in-depth contact at least once a week, in order to encourage each one in their own efforts to reach out to neighbours in friendship evangelism.

It soon becomes clear that the Biblical office of elders is a time-consuming ministry. To get to really know the "flock" (1 Pt 5:2, 3), to the point where they are able to feed them and lovingly direct them to learn from the Word of God how Bible truths are to be applied and for the "flock" to know the elders well enough to see how they go about obeying Jesus as Lord in their everyday situations, takes much time.

When people are known in this way, through the shepherding ministry, many needs emerge – needs of a material or physical nature. Now the Lord Jesus is not only interested in people on a spiritual level, He is deeply interested in the whole person. It is highly possible when such needs emerge, for the elders to get involved in trying to meet such needs – but these needs tend to use much time, effort and money. This can easily lead to the elders neglecting the spiritual function which the office of elders is responsible for.

1.9.2. The Office of Deacons

In the structuring of the church order, another office is needed. People who, like the elders, are people of God, who are living lives full of the Holy Spirit, should be appointed to meet the temporal needs of people – needs which emerge as a result of the effective work of the elders. This office is that of deacon. These people serve the Lord, alongside the elders ensuring that the spiritual needs of men and women are met by them, because the deacons are taking care of the temporal needs of the church. (1 Tm 3:8-13; Ac 6:1-4).

The deacons are responsible to see that the physical needs of the church people are met and also any needs which come to their notice because of the concern by church members for people in the community. This responsibility does not mean that the deacons personally meet all the needs, but they must be at work among the church people so that, by example and encouragement, they will ensure that the members of the church do not neglect caring for people in their temporal needs. The offices of elders and deacons therefore, model the concern of the Lord Jesus Christ for each person in a holistic way.

1.10. The Order and Arrangement of the Local Church

It is self-evident that any functioning community must have some form of order or organization. "This fact must be faced, however, that in all segments of the Church universal, the institutionalizing process became related through the ages to the aspiration of individuals to achieve positions of power" (Mackay 1969:82). The history of the church certainly verifies this observation. Recognition of this accomplished fact in Roman Catholicism gave rise to Protestantism, but it too has followed the same tendency. Mackay points out ha great changes are taking place in Roman Catholicism so that "Protestantism faces the peril of becoming Romanised at a time when Catholicism is becoming de-Romanised" (1969:85). Church history shoes a constant move in the direction of an Episcopal form of

Church government, or a hierarchical view of Church leadership. The ecumenical movement has accepted the historic episcopate as the "essential ministry" (Kirk 1946) (An attempt to correlate the Anglo-Catholic and Free Church views). The Limuru Principle follows this pattern set by Ignatius (*The Churchman* 1946). A draft basis from four South African denominations' merger presents deacons as Presbyterian elders, presbyters as priests or ministers and bishops. No archbishops would be allowed and the executive head would be known as the "Moderator" (*The South African Baptist* 1972).

The tradition toward the episcopate residing in one person as bishop over a diocese is very strong. Schaff points out that elders and bishops were synonymous in the early Church and served as ministers in local churches. The angels of the churches in Revelation were not bishops but looked toward that office. James was like a bishop in Jerusalem. Ignatius spoke for a monarchical bishop followed by Clement, Polycarp, Eusebius and Jerome. This is outside the biblical material but is not heretical, for it grew out of the needs of the Apostolic Church (Schaff 1854:223-226). Lightfoot reports that by the middle of the second century each organized Christian community had its three orders. "On this point there cannot be two opinions" (1953:186). The evolution of bishop from the elders was developed from the need for unity. John, Philip and Andrew created this form after the fall of Jerusalem. This can be traced from Ignatius and is confirmed by the time of Cyprian as a system of ministry sustained by the Old Testament analogy of sacrifice.

> The solitary bishop represented the solitary high-priest; the principal acts of Christian sacrifice were performed by presbyters, as the principal acts of Jewish sacrifice by the priests; and the attendant ministrations were assigned in the one case to the deacon, as in the other to the Levite (Lightfoot 1953:263).

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Although Streeter believes that there were three types of church order –
Episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational – found in the early Church, he does
argue that James was more than an elder and that after the fall of Jerusalem the
influx of temple oriented Jews changed Antioch's synagogue related form so that
a monarchial bishop emerged by the time of Ignatius (1944:8f). Roman Catholic
and Coptic traditions agree with Eusebius that Peter was the first bishop of
Antioch from 33-40 A.D. (McBirnie 1976:56). The bishop emerged strongly as
the itinerant and prophetic ministries decreased (Ramsay 1907:367ff). The
duties of priests increased as penance came in for post-baptismal sin. A
hierarchical principle is demonstrated forcefully for Church order in the Apostolic
and post-Apostolic times. It is a dominate view today (Robinson 1960:11, 12).

> There *is* value in monepiscopacy, and clearly it is
> the only form of church government that can
> possibly command universal consent in the reunion
> of Christendom .... As regards the threefold
> ministry, we must beware ... of giving up a division
> of ministry which has eminent justification in
> Scripture, history and reason .... It befits us rather
> to take seriously the threefold ministry whose
> excellencies we so loudly proclaim (Green 1964:49,
> 90).

That the "essential ministry" resides in the historic episcopate as the only
possible understanding for the Church has not gone unchallenged. It is obvious
that historical development constitutes the basis for this viewpoint. Kung has
rightly pointed out that "nothing is to be gained from concealing the fact, which
the brief sketch above makes amply clear, that a frightening gulf separates the
church of today from the original constitution of the church" (1967:413). Brunner
is even more vehement in his protest.

Still more terrible, however, than this injurious demonic influence over the community by the State, is the danger to the souls from the side of the church. In the New Testament the Church is never anything other than the community of believers, based upon the divine election, and granted to man in his effective calling .... Clericalism, however, makes the means which Jesus Christ uses to rule His Church into self-sufficient idolatrous authorities: either those of a sacerdotal hierarchy, or of a dogmatic orthodoxy .... When this takes place the correlation of the individual and the community is destroyed, and its place is taken by a subordination of the individual to the collective powers of the Church. This is the most terrible thing that can ever happen; the sanctuary itself has been defiled; it has been infected with the demonic (1947:295).

Niebuhr analyses the concept of ministry in America's churches as "pastoral director" taken from secular business management which can become a "big operator" having nothing to do with the Church's work (1956:31ff). In fact, "the truth of the matter seems to be that the Roman and Anglo-Catholic discussion has failed to demonstrate that 'essential ministry,' as they conceive it, was an integral part of the primitive Church, much less that it was attested to in the New Testament" (Simpson 1966:40). The discussion on the Church is huge and contradictory. Reaction to the dominant Episcopal view has turned many back to the New Testament sources for an understanding of the Church. This is evident in many areas and encouraging, but disappointing when one observes that often the same presuppositions which resulted in the present deadlock still controls the exegesis. The developmental concept defining the church in terms of its

ordained ministers is seen in the stated relationship of the spiritual gifts (higher gifts of 1 Cor 12 and Eph 4) and the eldership office. Schaff (Vol 2) states that the apostles and prophets began the church. The elders/bishops are the pastors/teachers in the local congregations and the evangelists are itinerant missionaries and unite the churches (1854:193-214). Fredrik Franson, the founder of The Evangelical Alliance Mission, believed in Wesley's slogan, "All at it and always at it," all members using their gifts so the devil would not get hold of them. Yet he thought the prophets and teachers as elders of the local church and the evangelists as itinerant missionaries (Torjesen 1977:9, 10). "These men of the gifts and only these are to be the elders of the church" (Eyers 1977:6). Another variation is that as the Church developed the function of the apostles, not his office, was taken over by the evangelist who are the missionaries of today. The prophets' function is taken over by the pastors who supplement the work of the elders (Peters 1970:246, 247, 263).

> Although elders are never classified as men having "greater gifts" in the primary sense, they were, in many respects, *to do the same type of work as an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, and a pastor-teacher*. They were not apostles, but they were to perform an apostolic ministry in the sense of being "delegates," "messengers," to the local church (Getz 1974:110).

Lightfoot states that the bishop did not develop from the apostles, but as the "triadic order" developed the gifts fell away. Schnackenburg probes deeper into the phenomenon of a charismatic with pneumatic order (charismatic gifts) and juridical order (administrative offices). He concludes that they are not mutually exclusive, their differences are inconsequential if endowed by the Spirit. "The only thing that matters is that there is an order which derives from and is willed by God and in which Christ is the head of His earthly community and rules it by His

Spirit (Schnackenburg 1965:26). The Lord appoints human pastors for His flock so there is a hierarchy of order, but not as derived from temple service, an order that preserves the rule of Christ and the origin of authority in God (Schnackenburg 1965:126). The developmental presupposition surfaces the institutional *office* in the Church by absorption of the *gifts*. Ministry is a Church office and by ordination sets the pastors apart from the laity.

It is well known that Harnack thought of two types of charismatic ministry in the primitive Church: a charismatic ministry and the offices of bishop and deacon being localized. This was in response to Sohm who held that the Church had a charismatic order without special ministries. Simpson outlines the issues involved in the disagreement over two types of charismatic ministry and concludes,

> The important issue seems to be whether the ministry is unrelated to charismatic gifts or on the contrary is a special kind of charismatic gift. The instructions in the Pastoral Epistles concerning Church officers seem to indicate that their special endowments (charismata) should be treated as the gauge of their eligibility for office (Simpson 1966:50).

Von Campenhausen agrees to the emphasis on a charismatic community but regards as utopian a continuing Church where the free use of gifts complement each other. He does not deny eldership if subservient to the Spirit, which functions as leading helpers. He feels Luke changed Paul's emphasis helping the rise of a patriarchal society (Von Campenhausen 1969:34-102). Goppelt feels that the evangelists took over the apostolic itineration and the prophets and teachers became the elders. However, a strong emphasis exists that the offices were determined by the gifts (Goppelt 1970:190-197). The Church is a charismatic body which needs leadership, but the leadership offices are part of

the charismata. "The charism cannot be subsumed under the heading of ecclesiastical offices, but all Church offices can be subsumed under charism" (Kung 1967:187). The apostles are no more, but their witness continues in the other spiritual gifts and leadership remains under these as a gift (Kung 1967:355-433). Some discuss ministry as the spiritual gifts without much relation to the offices of the Church. Particular ministers are needed, several different kinds with the spiritual gifts (Paul 1965:30, 60) (Stedman 1976). As the original apostles passed from the scene, ministers appeared as authoritative leaders of the church because of the gifts granted by the Spirit. A development has still been sustained which creates a gap between clergy and laity.

The shift from gifts to elders/pastors or from elders to gifts creates ordained clergy as the essential ministry of the Church. In order not to by-pass the laity entirely, it is not popular to think of bishops who stand in apostolic succession as constituting the Church as representatives of Christ. This is the definitive view of Roman Catholicism since Cyprian and is under-girded by the idea of priesthood from temple worship. Rather the Church stands in succession to the apostles because it is called of Christ. Christ orders the Church and creates its ministers or pastors. Therefore, there is an empathy with Schaff's viewpoint.

> Church government has its foundation in the Christian ministry, which is originally identical with the Apostolate, and contains the germs of all other Church offices .... This office ministerial or clergy is not, indeed, a creature of the congregation. It is itself the creative beginning of the Church, the divinely appointed organ of her establishment and edification .... Every regularly called minister (and not the bishops alone, according to the Catholic and Anglican doctrine), is, as to the essential character of

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his office, in the wide sense a successor of the apostles (Schaff Vol 2 1854:173, 186, 199).

The strong developmental presupposition influencing exegetical concerns soon brings in the problem of the Spirit's unity among local churches established. This has inevitably brought with it denominationalism, the need for organization beyond local churches. It also reads into the scriptural data differences in various localities, such as Jerusalem, Antioch and Philippi. Regarding many of the books of the New Testament as written late in the first century after Christ and also regarding them as edited versions by non-apostolic authors has given rise to strong assertions that there is no clear pattern of Church organization taught in Scripture. An extreme view is that organization in the Church is non-essential, its order is determined by its needs and circumstances but is never legally binding (Sohm 1895:32ff). Streeter saw three distinct denominational patterns and that these arose to meet ever changing needs encountered. Kung implies that the Episcopal form is just one of many possibilities (1967 429). Many would agree that each of these three forms "has genuine insights that make an indispensable contribution to our understanding of the church" (Paul 1972:59). Others of like mind would say that, "It may be nearer the truth to suggest that elements of all three types can be found in each 'typical' early church" (Simpson 1966:44). The different models of the church do not need to be exclusive (Nixon 1977:230). It is well known that Cox in *The Secular City* affirms that the Church is functional and its form is dictated by the needs of secular society. The dilemma of many church and denominational forms claiming New Testament sanction has made for caution in regard to dogmatic statements. There seems to be a growing sentiment that with the intermingling of local church and denominational organizations, "the answer to at least part of our problem seems to be that the New Testament is normative not in *detail* but rather in *principle* .... The only conclusion that seems possible, in these circumstances, is that variety of structure was at least recognized and tolerated" (Simpson 1966:58, 59). Any order is permissible if it abides by the logic of New Testament development and if

it does not destroy the Lordship of Christ and His presence in the church (Davies 1950:20). On the surface all this appears to be a gain in the understanding of the church, but instead actually has reinforced clericalism. Where the Doctrine of the Church has no stated order the vacuum will be filled by those seeking positions of power, intentionally or unintentionally. The laity become spectators in the work of the ministry.

1.10.1. <u>The Importance of a Personal Relationship with Christ</u>

The Bible teaches a personal relationship with Christ whose presence and Lordship is mediated by the Spirit and the Word. This Christ is the historical Jesus, the Messiah promised by the Old Testament Scriptures written by the prophets. While in the flesh He commissioned apostles to write the New Testament to complete the Word of God. After Christ ascended and was no longer visible in the flesh and after the Holy Spirit had come from the Father at Christ's request, the apostles began to witness concerning Christ and began to build His Church according to His will. Their message became an authoritative oral tradition of the Gospel, and as they laboured out toward all nations they began to write this Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That which was inscripturated was an inspired Word, a final authority for faith and practice, a proper vehicle to be used by the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ and His will. The hard authority of the Bible was established.

> Through divine revelation and inspiration these men were authoritative spokesman, for witness to, and interpreters of, God and His Son. Their personal authority as teachers and guides – authority bestowed and guaranteed by the risen Christ - was final, and no appeal away from what they said was allowable. Such authority now belongs only to the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, under

which all our churches and church leaders stand (*The Churchman* 1977:110).

The apostles' witness of Christ was a Word which became part of the foundation of the Church of which Christ was the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20), a divine foundation (1 Cor 3:11). It is with this Word that the Holy Spirit works to reveal Christ and His will. This Word used by the Holy Spirit is characteristic of the "Apostolic Succession." It is not an authoritative spiritual gift which can be passed on from person to person in succeeding generations. Therefore, the life of the Body of Christ is derived from the Scripture and the Church is to live by conformity to Scripture.

The Church is a foundational doctrine of the Bible, it is part of the Gospel given and not a churchly development based on need or cultural motifs. It is a charismatic community, that is, Christ's authoritative presence is revealed through the mediation of the Word by the Spirit. All who responsibly acknowledge Him as Lord by faith are grafted into His Body as members of one another with Christ as head. Each believer has gifts by the sovereign work of the Spirit and thereby are "a company of people bound together in a fellowship of constant ministry to the needs of each other and of all men" (Stibbs & Packer 1967:73). The priesthood of all believers is a reality! The Spirit's work allows the Bible to stand over the Church and to mediate Christ's presence and authority. There is a ministry of the Word of Christ which includes all believers. Water baptism serves as ordination to the ministry of the Word (Mt 28:19, 20). Each believer is concerned to be equipped for this ministry (Eph 4:11, 12).

The Body of Christ is to be like Him in its nature and is to image this in the world. In its visualization, the doctrine of the Church presents a prescribed organization for the *local church*. Any denominational organization developed must be informed by the doctrine of the local church and be for its benefit as has already

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been shown. This is all part of the Gospel interpreted by the Spirit by which every church is involved.

James and Galatians were written about 48/49 A.D., the first books of the New Testament. James refers to a local church because in chapter 2, he talks of a place of worship and conduct there. James 5:14 refers to elders. In 1:27 there is a reference to rulers of the church looking after the widows, which is a cognate verb to "episkopos/ἐπίσκοπος". Their duties in chapter one are similar to 1 Tm 3 and Tt 1. In chapter 2 we have the duties of deacons as dispensers of charity. In chapter three James refers to the charismatic gift of teaching/διδάσκαλος (Cabaniss 1975:219-222). Matthew is very similar to James in its emphasis on the royal law of love, fellowship and also on the matter of the congregation (Mt 18:15-17). It is the Gospel of the Church (Mt 16:18, 19). In Gl 1:11, 12, Paul tells us his Gospel comes by direct revelation of Christ. The church is a charismatic community for all who have received the Spirit who works with this Gospel (Gl 3). He speaks of the teachers of the Gospel (Gl 6:6). There were the apostles and members in the church at Jerusalem (Ac 11:1), and prophets (Ac 11:27), and elders (Ac 11:30; 15:2). There were prophets and teachers in Antioch, as well as a congregation which commissioned Paul and Barnabas (Ac 13:1-3; 15:32-35). There were elders/bishops in Ephesus (Ac 20).   There were bishops and deacons in Philippi (Phlp 1:1). Bishops and deacons are described for Timothy in 1 Tm 3 & 5. Titus is to appoint bishops/elders (Tt 1:5-9). Paul is not divorced from the Pastoral Epistles for the same tension of officers is seen there. Paul recognizes ministers with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:27-29; Eph 4:11, 12). From the very beginning there is a pattern of organization for local churches which are charismatic communities localized. We know these churches by name in Galatia and Asia Minor. We should not undervalue what is taught concerning the local church and its order/organization.

> However, when in the New Testament we find patterns of ministry being tried, being found successful in the church, and being specifically commended and commanded for other churches to adopt, then the onus of proof lies with those who would advocate that the church does not need to use patterns of ministry today (Powers 1973:167).

The church is a charismatic community, that is, the Spirit is the force which unites believers and organizes them in their local congregating under the Lordship of Christ. Through His influence they feel the need for the Word of Christ and His ordinances. Their commonality rests in the fact that they desire the will of Christ. "Rule in the church belongs to Christ, so that it is more correct to speak of 'Christonomy,' the rule of Christ, in the church, than of 'autonomy,' self-rule" (Beyerhaus & Lefever 1977:112). It is certainly true that in the first century the churches were organisms which were living and growing. All believers were gifted to serve one another and were dependent on each other in the name of Christ (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Pt 4:7-11). The freedom of the Spirit brings to the church a responsible knowledge that they are subject to Christ, their glorified Lord. This does not mean that church leadership is unimportant or that it can be constantly changed as long as "Christ is the head of His earthly community and rules by His Spirit" (Schnackenburg 1965:26) (Simpson 1966:162). It does mean that local churches should have the organization specified by the doctrine of the church, but constantly reminded that it is more than another human institution. Its leaders are expected to be filled with the Spirit and to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. Its organization is to be kept to the minimum.

> The church of the Spirit has priority over the church
> as organization. One can have a true church of
> Christ with much Spirit and little organization; one
> cannot have a true church of Christ that is all
> organization and no Spirit (Ramm 1974:60).

The organization prescribed for the church is to preserve the freedom of the Spirit and the Lordship of Christ and is therefore part and parcel of the doctrine of the church. Understanding this properly will help prevent the historical development we have seen toward a juridical hierarchy of ecclesiastical power, Brunner's "Kirche." A purely spiritual community can privatise Christianity completely.
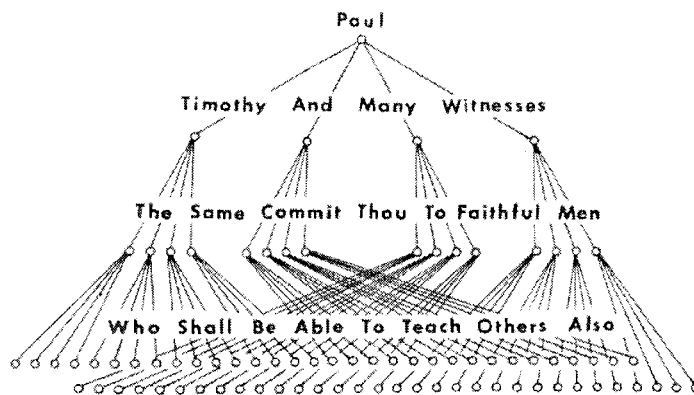
> The Reformation principle of the right of private
> judgement is open to hideous abuse. Any body of
> Christians which lightly regards the authority of the
> church is heading for trouble, and for the fissiparity
> which has been the bane of the churches of the
> Reformation (Wenham 1972:29).

1.10.2.   The Holy Spirit and Order in the Local Church

The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of disorder (1 Cor 14:40). Enough background material has been given to point out that a major controversy has developed concerning the relationship of the spiritual gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) and the offices (elders and deacons), which in turn affects the understanding of the ordained ministry (clergy, priests, pastors or ministers). The main historical answer is that one absorbs the other, while creating a hierarchy of ecclesiastical office distinctly separated from the "laity," and often from authentic spirituality.

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It is clear that the greater gifts and the institutional offices must be kept in creative tension. Without being competitive they must still be kept parallel to each other and defined and recognized separately. The Church is both pneumatic and social, functional and official, prophetic and administrative. The church which is authored by Christ is both spiritual and physical. A docetic Christ is not worshipped and visualised to the world. Christ constitutes the church and Christians are grafted into His body. The Lord of the church is both human and divine, so the church is both spiritual and physical. Church organization is an order informed by the nature of the church and is therefore secondary, for it is through the Spirit and the Word that life is imparted (Johnston 1943:14). This is the reason that Paul is strongly pneumatic in emphasis while not disregarding the local church's organization (1 Cor 2:15, 16). The Church has an historical aspect simultaneously with the pneumatic and church leadership must surface from both. Goppelt wrestles with this problem. Through the pneumatic all members are united in the work of the ministry, the priesthood of the believers; and through the historical the particular offices emerge. Although he finally combines them in the pastoral office, the two forces are jointly at work (Goppelt 1970:196, 197).

The offices can never be filled without the corresponding ministry of the "pneumatikos/πνευματικός", both stand under the Word used by the Spirit. The Spirit surfaces dual-type leadership to aid in the knowledge and application of the truth (Jn 4:24; 8:31, 32). The functions of the spiritual gifts provide edification as the offices provide a sphere in which they can act. The offices develop pastoral oversight as the spiritual gifts continually act as salt and leave, to edify. If prophetic utterance is stifled there is a spiritless church. If pastoral oversight is disregarded, spiritual gifts readily deteriorate into enthusiasm. The Word of God must be ministered, led by *persons* with the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12 and Eph 4) and by men engaged in pastoral work and oversight (2 Tm 2:2; Heb 13:17). The church seeks to live by the Scriptures. 2 Tm 2:2 can be illustrated by a diagram by Macdonald (1956:7/4).

Paul

Timothy And Many Witnesses

The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men

Who Shall Be Able To Teach Others Also

The concept of ministry is defined by the doctrine of the church and is connected with proclaiming the Gospel with understanding. It is important to note that the word for ministry comes from diakonein/διαλονεῖν and has a basic meaning "to serve." Ministering the Gospel is a service rendered; ministers are servants, not rulers in the sense of archi/ἀρχή (Kung 1967:187). In Eph 4:11, 12 it is expressly stated that all are responsible for the work of the ministry. That this ministry, diakonia/διακονία, refers to ministering the Word of God is seen by the context. Each has the Spirit and thereby a gift to understand the Gospel. These ministers have the knowledge of Christ (verse 13) and are to speak the truth (verses 15, 25). They are taught in the truth (verse 21) and are not to be deceived by false teachers (verses 14; 5:6). Each one is to be filled with the Spirit and thereby speak and sing to each other in spiritual songs (Eph 5:18-20). Each ministers to others so all can mature spiritually. In a similar context concerning edification and building the church we are told that all can prophesy (1 Cor 11:4, 5; 14:31).

> Somewhere between 33 A.D. and the present, "minister" moved both grammatically and theologically from a verb (a thing done) to a noun (a person doing it); what was originally a *function* of the church became a *station* in the church. That is, "ministry" was originally the assignment of all believers; indeed, each follower had his own ministry or ministries. There were gifts and callings of the

Spirit. The pastor existed as the one whose gift was
to equip the ministers (laity) for their ministries
(Haney 1973:40).

The Bible teaches that all who recognize His lordship are to be ministers of the Gospel, servants of Christ in word. Eph 4:11, 12 recognises that all are ministers, but also that there are special ministers whose ministry it is to edify and train the ministers. There is, therefore, no warrant for an exclusive doctrine of the ministry in terms of the "laity," as Kraemer's emphasis would imply (Kraemer 1958:114ff). The command to seek the higher gifts (1 Cor 12:31), does not teach that all are to have the spiritual gifts, for the Spirit grants His gifts severally as He wills (1 Cor 12:11). Being responsible to minister, all are urged to find Spirit-qualified ministers to edify and equip them for their ministry. As the spiritual gifts are a plurality of persons, even as they together train the church for the ministry of God's Word, they must submit to edification from the other spiritual gifts and also from the congregation of ministers. All exercise judgement upon prophetic utterance, and have liberty to add to prophetic proclamation (1 Th 5:21). At the same time all can prophesy, it must be under the control of prophets (1 Cor 14:32); and the Spirit is not to be quenched by despising prophecy (1 Th 5:19, 20). "To affirm that the members of the church have their own ministry does not do away with the particular ministers who were called by God to prepare them for their task" (Paul 1965:30). Ministry is the responsibility of the local church, which includes the ministers with special spiritual gifts to equip the ministers. "The ministry of the pastors, which is to teach 'sound doctrine,' as Calvin said, will be the more fruitful for being sustained by an army of laymen instructed by them with a real priestly function in view" (Tournier 1967:215). As previously mentioned, these spiritual gifts can be both men and women without restriction. Ignatius and Irenaeus still claimed their authority because of the charismata/χαρίσματα but after them the gifts were neglected. In the ministry of the church, the gifts of particular ministers must not be absent; otherwise, the rationale and convincement of the Gospel will be largely lacking.

Without the spiritual gifts the power of Christ's presence will be diminished and the direction of His will not be plumbed as they should. The Kerygma will soon deteriorate into meaningless cliché, even though orthodox. The vision of mission beyond the church will find difficulty emerging. The corporate nature of the ministry, each believer equipped by the spiritual gifts to minister, must be maintained so the Kerygma used by the ministers actually does reveal Christ as Lord and does produce understanding of His will. The Kerygma will be internailsed in such a way that in turning from self-centred interests, responsibility to minister the Gospel to others in the body of Christ and in the world is assumed.

The office of elders/bishops in the local church must be kept separate in job description from pastors/teachers and the other spiritual gifts. In the history of the Church, the tendency has always been to combine the gifts and offices so that the Church is defined in terms of its ordained leadership, which in turn has pointed the doctrine of the church primarily to the organization of denominations. The end result is human authority which dethrones Christ and mitigates against authentic spirituality. Gifts and offices are persons who work along with fellow members under Christ's Lordship for the maturation of the body of Christ. They use the same Gospel and teach it. Each member and thereby the local church has Christ as its head and is mediated by the Bible and His Spirit. The leadership of the church is ordered by the Spirit as He illumines the Kerygma, and its form is a dualistic reality where gifts and office are recognized and defined separately, yet held together in creative tension. The purpose of this is clear, it is the ordained order *aiding* Christian congregations' preservation as spiritual communities under the Lordship of Christ and His Word. The spiritual gifts teach the Kerygma with the emphasis of its being *heard* in truth and understood, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rm 10:17). Elders minister the Kerygma with the emphasis of it being *seen*, being visualised among God's people so clearly and strongly that their example leads the church as shepherds lead their flocks. Their goal under Christ and His Spirit is the same, their major tool, the Bible is the same, their work is complementary; but their functions and

emphasis are different. This means that they stand over against each other, not in competition with one another but as a proper check and balance in worshipping Christ and obeying His will *with* fellow-members in the local church, who are ministers of the Word of Christ.

The *function* of spiritual gifts and the *office* of elders cannot be the same. The spiritual gifts are fulfilled by men and women, but the elders are only married men. The woman is not to use this opportunity of leadership in ministry to usurp or destroy the oversight of men in the church, or be unsubmissive to the office of eldership (1 Tm 2:12). Church leadership of function *and* office must model servanthood in word and action. It serves the ministry which knows no dichotomy between clergy and laity. The only position of authority in the church is the Lordship of Christ. All ministers must recognize this authority mediated by the Spirit and the Word. Church leadership serves the ministry of the church which witnesses that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. "Office-glorification, therefore, is a contradiction of terms .... Whoever glorifies an office-bearer merely shows that he does not understand the office" (Berkouwer 1976:65). Church leadership is a service to perform for people-making, acknowledging Christ's office and modeling servanthood. Keeping function *and* office as complementary in creative tension and job description is designed to keep leadership as a needed service rendered from deteriorating into positions of authority which destroy the charismatic nature of the Church and which divorce its form from its nature and its ministry from the body.

Although church organization does not follow the dictates of secular patterns, there is a danger of laws made by a separate body to give itself whatever legislation it needs to promote its own purposes. Traditional barriers to abuse power have been removed. Equality must be reconstructed by restoring division of powers. The gifts make sure that Christ is revealed and His will known by teaching the Kerygma. The elders model worship and obedience in conformity to the Kerygma. Each check and guide each other in helping the church to maturity

and efficiency in the ministry of the Word. Their separation and interdependence provide a barrier to abuse of power so each member can become a minister under the rule of Christ. Being a Christian would mean no one is more important than others and no one is unimportant, but each is to minister to others without self-glory.

It is good to desire the office of elder (1 Tm 3:1). It is necessary to seek the higher gifts (1 Cor 12:31). Basically this means that church members are open to instruction in the Word for maturity of life and service in responsible obedience to Christ. There should be no obsession in discovering what gift is personally possessed or in covertly desiring a recognized position. Rather, in the openness for "body-maturity", the Spirit bestows His gifts sovereignly and they are recognized rather than coveted. Spiritual quality of personal life is demonstrated for others to see so it is not selfish ambition to desire to be an elder. In the emphasis on personal and corporate maturity, the necessary parallel or dual-type leadership emerges without confusion or self-deception. There should be no reason for not obeying biblical injunctions or fulfilling spiritual responsibilities (Getz 1977:7-19). In the corporate desire for maturity by the fruit of the Spirit and measured by the full stature of Christ, believers minister to each other in close relationship and knowledge of each other (Phlp 2). Gifts and eldership will be known in the process of ministry. Spiritual gifts must operate under the administration and supervision of the elders. The elders must recognize their dependence on the Kerygma articulated carefully by the spiritual gifts and allow them freedom to minister as they are gifted. Always under the rule of Christ as mediated by the Spirit and the Word, they never emerge as monarchs over the body of Christ but stand as fellow ministers and servants. The modern division of clergy and laity is not in conformity to living for Christ as outlined by the Kerygma. The congregation needs its special ministers but is not constituted by them. "The ministry comes neither before, nor after, neither above nor beneath the congregation, but within and together with it" (Bethge 1970:365). As believers

exercise their ministry, the Body of Christ is seen in responsible local churches, whose form or order visualises its nature of being.

1.10.3.   Christ is Head of the Church

Christ is the head of the church. All true members of His body are ministers. This means there is life before there can be organization; the body is spiritual before it is institutional; there must be faith before there is order; spiritual values are more important than external offices. No prime minister, president, bishop or pastor can be head of Christ's body. No one in the church can be the head, only Christ is the true head. Only one is the church's rabbi, or teacher, and that one is Christ; all others are brothers and sisters. The special ministers we have noted as leaders of the church are that because they are servants of the church; they serve the church as fellow workers (Mt 23:8-12). Christians are to be members of one another in the body which is to visualise the head, but are not to strive to be the head.

Green asserts that *episcope* originates "in the sole oversight of God Himself." God presides over the world, Christ exercises guardianship over mankind (1 Pt 2:12, 25), and the Holy Spirit sets men apart to be under-shepherds of Christ (Ac 20:28; 1 Pt 5:4). "*Episkope*, therefore, is an attribute of God Himself which in His grace He delegates to some members of His church." Or it can be explained that He delegates, without surrendering His authority, oversight to bishops through the church for *episcope* belongs to *all* Christians. The historical and developed episcopacy is not found in the New Testament or early churches but pastoral oversight of local ministers by the apostles is known. With the passing away of the apostles and the spread of churches, "there is more than ever a need for a focus of unity within the churches of a given area .... Most important of all is the crying need for a ministry to ministers, an oversight of overseers, as none know better than the clergy" (Green 1964:44-50). To conform to the doctrinal thrust of oversight, a single leader (pastor) as now practiced must drastically reduce the

size of bishops. It is heartening to read this effort of theological definition but it still falls short in a hierarchical sense of denominationalism; laity ruled by clergy, and clergy by bishops. In spite of theological understanding, bishops become and are recognized heads. As episcopacy appeared, prophecy and the other gifts declined. "But when these gifts ceased to be common and finally vanished away the elders increased in importance. In time they came to be overshadowed by the monarchical bishop" (Morris 1968:80).

Episkopoi/ἐπισκόποι must be defined in local churches as synonymous with presbyteroi/πρεσβύτεροι in dual-type relation to the spiritual gifts in serving fellow ministers. In common phraseology we can therefore say that special ministers are never beyond or above lay people and lay people can serve in denominational offices. If ministers are equipped and pastured in local congregations they certainly will not lead denominations into any more heresy than denominational hierarchy of ministers have done down through church history.

The idea of a differentiated elder, pastor or minister, fits biblical data for he is a person differentiated because he is called to live by the Gospel and is also endowed with the spiritual gifts of teaching and pastoring (1 Tm 5:17; 1 Pt 5:1-4). This makes sense as a local church should have a pastor. It must be noted that there has been introduced into the biblical view of ministry, a dichotomy between clergy and laity. The clergy are elevated, a hierarchy is formed. The laity need equipping, therefore this necessity "brings us once again to a recognition of the importance, worth, and strategic centrality of the pastoral office" (Middleton 1969:73). There is certainly an appreciation of the lay structure of the church, but the pastor still holds a key position (Beyerhaus 1977:32).

> If we want to take seriously the importance of both
> the congregation and its leader, we shall have to
> distinguish between the general authorization of

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each and every Christian in virtue of the universal priesthood and the particular mandate of the congregational leader in virtue of his special calling to public ministry in the congregation as such (Kung 1972:97).

This emphasis has transferred the responsibility of ministry from the people to the pastors.

> The unbiblical distortion has placed pastors under an unbearable burden. They have proved completely unequal to the task of evangelising the world, counseling the distressed and broken-hearted, ministering to the poor and needy, relieving the oppressed and afflicted, expounding the Scriptures, and challenging the entrenched forces of evil in an increasingly darkened world. They are never meant to do it. To even attempt it is to end up frustrated, exhausted, and emotionally drained (Stedman 1976:79).

Upon closer examination we see that the managers of the local church are elders, never single pastors. They do not necessarily possess the spiritual gifts of pastors/teachers for in context being able to teach and to pastor are part of a quality of life which examples the Kerygma. They live what they have been taught and give the Kerygma rationale for that direction of life which they can pass on to others by speech as well as by model of life (Ac 20:17, 38; 1 Tm 3:2; 2 Tm 2:24; Tt 1:9; Heb 13:7; 1 Pt 5:1-4). Those who work particularly hard at their task can be paid a living wage for their work by the church (1 Tm 5:17; Heb 13:17). This is never intended to lift them to an office or position above the other elders or bishops. No elder is to bully or tyrannise the flock, elders are not the

church bosses (1 Pt 5:3). "They are not to act as the final authority within the church, so that whatever they say goes" (Stedman 1976:77). Their effort is not to perfect the organization of the church while ministering to its needs, but rather to perfect the saints, building Christian personalities. The deacons are to help so that this emphasis toward people is maintained. The spiritual gifts are to make sure that all ministry of the church is informed by the Kerygma. Elders should not avoid intimacy or repel people by selfish motives or evidence immaturity in office-glorification – they are servants. If a man evidences the gift of pastor/teacher, and also the quality of life to be chosen as elder, and also be paid by the church, he must exercise *special* care not to promote himself above fellow ministers and elders. As an elder he is a servant of fellow ministers and subject to the teaching of spiritual gifts. If he comes from another church he must be particularly careful not to run roughshod over the church's elders. He will have to conduct himself carefully to become a true elder in that place where he models what he teaches and builds a good reputation in the non-Christian community (1 Tm 3:1-7). Such an elder (known today as a pastor or minister) is not to consider the local elders a lower order in the church's organization; neither is he to be considered as the elder of the church and the lay leaders as deacons. Emile Cailliet gives this grave warning that the "godlike power of the superior man" must be shunned. The most richly gifted faces the peril of substituting "his presence for the presence of God." If he is successful he can ascribe this to divine power and blessing, but along the line "a transvaluation of values is taking place." He begins to feel responsible only to God and deems his way to be God's way (Cailliet 1968:83, 84). He becomes the central figure of the church; for all practical purposes he is head of the church, with the real possibility of dethroning Christ.

It *is* a legitimate question to ask if our local churches are organized according to New Testament order and if our denominations truly seek to increase the viability of local churches under the Lordship of Christ. Without dismissing "para-church" organizations as unscriptural, it is more legitimate to ask if they are informed in

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their work, service, and organization by the doctrine of the church. Scripture teaches that each believer has the authoritative presence of Christ mediated by the Spirit and the Word. As they congregate, leadership surfaces to serve so that all are equipped for the ministry. Their mutual responsibility for ministry is an accepted fact by their acceptance of water baptism under the continuum of discipling (Mt 28:18-20). The local church organization prescribed is to ensure that each baptized member is equipped to teach the Kerygma in such a way that an ecclesiastical hierarchy does not develop which denies the Lordship of Christ either by model or by word; only Christ is head of the Church.

The doctrine of the Church is one of the foundational doctrines of the Gospel. Any distortion of this doctrine diminishes the power and effectiveness of the Kerygma. Local churches have acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, which lordship is both individual and corporate. Christ Himself set the pattern for the church when James and John asked to sit in state with Him (Mk 10:42-44). Christ is master of the Church for He is present (Mt 18:20; 28:20). Elders are to administer the affairs of the church according to the will of Christ. The plurality of elders means that the mind of the Spirit is not expressed by one person. Being respected comes from godly visibility producing confidence and influence of Christ's will. They do not rule *over* people as some translations affirm. 1 Th 5:12 uses the verb proistasdai/προϊστάσθαι which has a basic meaning of to preside, to rule, to head. But in the New Testament usage the emphasis on this leadership is to care for others or to join with them in assisting and protecting. The idea conveyed is not action which brings attention to official position but action which conveys sincere care (Friederich Vol 6 1968:700-702). Their labour is "in the Lord." In 1 Tm 3:4, 5 this word is defined by epimelisetai/ ἐπιμελήσεται, to care of. In Heb 13:17 the command, peidesde/πείθεσθε, is in the middle voice and therefore the implication of obedience is based upon trust and confidence in, so that one is persuaded or convinced, but not against one's will: "To be won over by persuasion" (Friederich Vol 6 1968:3,4). There is no

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right to command but only inspiration to the will of Christ. Obedience is not forced by domination or decree.

Paul writes, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel" (Gl 1:6). This is primarily concerned with the admixture of faith with works, but is not removed from concern about t6he doctrine of the Church. The Spirit as the source of life is also to direct life. One who challenges another to rivalry is to be set right (Gl 5:25-6:2). Church history reveals how quickly a hierarchy of organization developed and became secured by biblical interpretation which disregarded Christ's command that this should not be so in the church; only the present ruling Christ is Head of the Church. The apostles were very explicit in their instructions to warn against "the danger of developing ecclesiastical bosses" (2 Cor 1:24; 11:20; 1 Pt 5:1-4; 3 Jn 9, 10). Enforced by cultural patterns of government, the church has repeatedly "borrowed en toto the authority structures of the world." If this is true of the Church, how much more true it must be of Christian organizations which operate outside the Church with presidents, directors, managers, heads, chiefs, etc. In most churches today, an unthinking acceptance has been given the idea that "the" pastor is the final voice of authority in both doctrine and practice, and that he is the executive officer of the church with respect to administration. Christ desires His authority to be visualised in a way which preserves His Lordship by a Body which does not nullify His grace by command structures which are no different from the world "outside of Christ." In many cases this will call for radical restructuring which will be revolutionary.

1.10.4.   **All Members are to Minister**

All believers are mutually responsible to minister without waiting for a special appointment. The angels of the churches in Revelation do not signify their pastors but rather symbolize each church being on the side of Christ. "The fact that John sees seven lamps, and not simply one, indicates that it is in the local

churches that *the* Church is to be seen, and these cannot be understood apart from the Christ in their midst" (Beasley-Murray 1972:15). This does not minimize the need for recognizing particular ministers. In the local church there are strong and weak (Rm 14:1-15:6), mature and immature (1 Pt 2:2). There is need for discipling and growth in spiritual quality and living. By the sovereign working of the Spirit, the leadership necessary emerges which serves to build the church with sacrificing the authority of Christ. The Bible teaches that office-bearers in the church must relate their leadership to Christ Himself so they will not be tempted to overshadow Christ's office (1 Cor 10:12). This is true for all ministers and especially recognized leaders since they function only "in recognition of the authority of Christ Himself, who does not allow His church to be governed independently but who truly governs it Himself" (Berkouwer 1965:80). If this is not properly recognized he also points out that in their self-governing for Christ who alone has authority can there be particular ministers. "Their ministry is no different from the church's ministry, but they are given by Christ to His Church to lead it towards that ministry which only a corporate fellowship can fulfill" (Paul 1965:110). Ministry is for service and not rule. Their work is of the same character as that of the church's ministry and its validity is measured by the spiritual standards and values of the New Testament.

Particular ministers are to be recognized by appointment or ordination. This does not invest their office or function with a sacred character which distinguishes them from fellow-ministers. Their willingness to serve in the will of Christ is not to be regarded as partly-magical, elevating them over "lay people." Their ordination pictures for the church its own ministry and they respond by becoming completely immersed in the ministry of the congregation which precludes a ministry for them separate from the local assembly. This means that no matter what liturgy of ordination is adopted, he local church has a right and a duty to test and confirm ordination candidates (Mt 18:17; Ac 6:3; 1 Cor 5). This is just as fellow ministers have the right to judge and evaluate by the Bible the Kerygma presented (1 Cor 14:29; 1 Th 5:19-22). If equipping for the ministry and ordination are divorced

from the local church, the historical pattern of a hierarchy of ministers fast develops, whether as pastor of a local church or as monarchial bishops of a denomination. Local churches must be free to be the church, the body of Christ.

It is a known fact that there is a certain tension between the clergy and the laity. It is therefore crucial to diffuse this tension by giving attention to this problem in order for us to see how we can overcome this problem so that the "whole church" may be involved in ministry.

By the "whole church" we usually mean the organic oneness of all the people of God, that unity or wholeness which is better defined by "catholic" rather than the geographical word "universal". Part of this essential wholeness of the Church is the oneness of the clergy and laity.

We are reminded that in the New Testament,

> κλῆρος/kleros (clergy) and λαικός/laikos (laity) denote the same people and that these biblical concepts are essentially different from our 'clergy' and 'laity'. All Christians belong to the λαός/laos, the chosen people of God; all belong to the new community in Christ because they are incorporated in the Son (Greeves 1960:143).

Kraemer says that the laity can only be understood as "the huge majority of the membership of the Church, which does not belong to the ordained ministry" (1958:165). There are many ways of defining the word, irrespective of its origin. A sociological definition denotes those who earn their living in a secular occupation rather than in the service of the church. Members of a church must never be thought of as "numbers on collection envelopes". There is something in the soul that revolts at being just represented by a "card in a filing case". The

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pastor who has the mind of Christ will set themselves to the recovery of this ideal of a place for every member in their place.

We often speak of a "theology of the laity". Rather than speaking of this, we should speak of a "theology of the whole church" as the people of God. Both the ordained and the lay ministry are ministries *in* and *to* the world. Such a statement, when taken seriously, will broaden the scope of activity of the ordained and will establish the importance of the labours of the laity as people of potential rather than people with problems. The people of God in the local church must listen to the people of God in the world and also to the non-Christian neighbour in the world.

Actually, the lay ministry – the ministry of people of God – is the only ministry. Those who make up the Church are distinguished by their knowledge of God and their use of His power to do His will. The New Testament knows no distinction between clergy and laity other than in function. The "every-member" ideal of the New Testament declares the equality of every church member in privilege and duty. No more revolutionary doctrine was taught by Jesus than that of the equality of all believers before God. He rejected the stratified social order of His day, according to which the rulers of the Gentiles lorded it over those under their authority, and their great ones in turn excercised authority over them (Mt 20:26, 27).

All Christians are God's laity, and all are God's clergy. There is a great temptation to put the ministers in a class by themselves.

> The church has been crippled by clericalism for far too
> long, resulting in a largely passive and theologically
> uneducated laity who leave it to the paid professional
> to get on with the job. The New Testament church

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would not have understood this at all (Watson
1978:250).

When we put ministers in a class by themselves, we violate the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the Reformation doctrine of vocation. Though the minister is to carry out certain activities, this does not mean that the lay person is any less a minister. The great power of the church in the future is not going to come from the theological seminaries but from lay people who recognize and use the gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit. Hence, we see that the tension between clergy and laity has no biblical backing.

Laypeople are often disillusioned, dissatisfied and disorientated because they cannot figure out how to become vitally involved in a church which appears to be merely struggling to survive rather than seeking to fulfill a God-given mission.

There has been a widely prevailing and grave misconception among laypeople of what it means to be a church member. Many regard the church as a society in which a few speak and many listen. Others have the impression that the church is a society where a few speak and work while the majority listen and make financial contributions. A true church is not just a collection of individuals attached to an organization, but an organism in which each person is related to every other person and to the church as a whole as the body of Christ. In this conception a church is a family.

> The place to begin the serious effort to implement the
> vocation of the laity is not by placing obligations or
> guilt on the individual. We need to start with a better
> understanding of the call and mission of the people of
> God (Foley 1986:22).

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The concept of the centrality of the minister has led many churches to feel that the key to their success or failure rests in him/her. But the conception of the minister as a little king or queen of a little kingdom is an affront to the faith and intelligence of the members of the church. It brings constant frustration to the individuals and groups within the church who would like to become active. They come to feel that the church is ruled by the clergy and that the talents and gifts of the laity are not needed or wanted. It is vitally important for every minister to plan and be open to growth in the church and also in the life of every believer. This may sound an obvious objective for every pastor, yet many pastors who are part of the "hierarchical system" are immediately threatened when a member wishes to become involved more actively. Many pastors feel that if someone were to emerge as, perhaps, a counsellor, or teacher, that the pastor would lose a certain "control" or worth, and so often the enthusiastic Christian worker is hindered rather than helped. In his book, *Pastoral Care in the Church*, Brister quotes Juan Carlos Ortiz as saying,

> The pastor can often be the cork in the church. Nobody can go out because the pastor is not perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry. Rather he is preventing the saints from becoming ministers. It is not that he does not want his people to grow, rather, there is no room in the church structures for growth (1964:87).

A layperson in this kind of situation either fades into the background or moves on to some other place for possible service.

During the last 30 years there has been a discovery of the laity. The church has traditionally regarded the laity as those to be served, protected, and nurtured. But in these more recent years, the church is seeing the laity as an entity which should assume a major responsibility for the life and work of the church.

The pastor needs, in some cases, to be a "catalyst" and become an agent of the Holy Spirit to bring about an awareness of "team ministry" or "every-member ministry". Obviously this must be done tastefully and with due sensitivity toward each person spoken to, elder, deacon, or member. Unanimity in these instances is the goal, because there ought to be no divisions in the Christ's church (1 Cor 1:10-13), especially in the area of teaching, and so it is wise to pray for wisdom and sensitivity before approaching an issue of this nature.

The development of specialization within the church has led many laypeople to feel that they should leave church work to those who are better trained. We now tend to hire to carry our rightful lead of church responsibility. When specialization leads to alienation, then our problem are increased.

The right to name the officers and leaders of the church should never be insisted upon apart from the duty to serve if called upon and to support those who have been elected. The right to freedom of worship involves the sacred duty of worship. The clergy who would build an every-member church must teach their people that equality of privilege must always be balanced by equality of responsibility.

Many churches do not have the programme calculated to kindle the interested and call forth the participation of strong men and women. In some cases this problem has been in the church leadership, which has failed as leaders to open doors for service and guide laypeople toward these doors. Laypeople need to be made aware of the claims of Christ to every believer, and their mature response to these claims. This essentially can only be done by modeling as well as teaching. Pastors and their families will be required to have open, loving, long-term relationships with people and an open home whereby members are able to "see" the Gospel message being put into practice and worked out daily. However,

> The ordained have too often been thermostats, controlling the 'temperature' of their congregations. This is unfortunate. In many cases, spiritual temperature would rise rather rapidly if the ordained 'thermostat' were either removed or turned higher (Perry 1977:109).

The people in the pew should have more freedom in the local congregation. They should be allowed to be more than assistants or maintenance men and women for the church.

Out of the Reformation came Luther's basic concepts of the Church and the laity. He emphasized that, before God, all Christians (clergy and laity) have the same standing. Each Christian is a priest and needs no mediator save Christ. Each Christian, not only the priest, has a duty to pass on the Gospel which they have received. The phrase *"priesthood of all believers"* took on special significance. This was not meant to emphasise individuals to the exclusion of the organized church but to emphasise that every man or woman was a priest to every other man or woman. The Reformers proposed a return to the biblical concept of the Church as a single, unified body in which all are saints and priests. The layperson, in medieval worship, had been a spectator; the Reformation made them a participant again.

If one to recognize the function of local churches, one realized it is to make disciples of all nations by equipping the saints to mature in Christ (Eph 4:11-16).

We might illustrate this truth by a diagram by Macdonald (1956:7/3). The circle in the centre depicts, let us say, a teacher. He / She ministers to those in the circle around him/her so that they become perfected (that is, built up in the faith), and they then go forth to minister to others. This is the divine method of reaching the

greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. This is the way the laity contribute to the church growth.
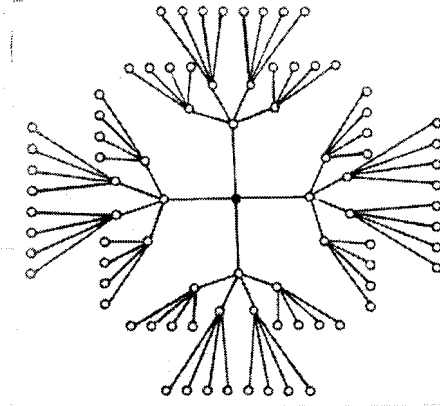
There is encouragement for developing and using the charismata by all members of the body for ministry (1 Pt 4:7-11). Unity is preserved by teaching that understands the Apostle's Doctrine, by maintaining orderly worship, by enforcing discipline and protecting the purity of the Lord's Table. There is a sensitivity to the Spirit's leading. There is fiscal responsibility so the work of the ministry can take care of the widows and the poor and also move across cultures in the obedience of faith among all nations (Rm 1:5). The emphasis of the priesthood of all believers develops with proper leadership into what is known in all six continents as "every-member ministry".

It is of utmost importance that clergy and laity actively participate in dialogue. Dialogue means a shared conversation out of the context of a shared life. Congar goes to great lengths to discuss the role of the laity in the church. He says that,

> Relationships between clergy and people [laity] are able to have that mutual confidence and loyalty, those exchanging of views and sharing of ideas, which, as everything shows, ought to distinguish the Lord's followers today as the distinguished, the Church (1957:269).

There is a sharing and learning about the real things in life. Conversation about the Apostle's Doctrine is basic and dialogue does not take place without it. Useful and essential information is conveyed, not to give all the answers or secure consensus from personal points of view, but to affirm persons, to bring for the persons by knowledge of the truth reuniting them with God and His people.

Every Christian is commissioned for ministry and is *accountable* for the use of his/her spiritual gifts in the perfecting of Christians (1 Pt 4:10). Ministry is not a specialized occupation for a few people with professional training. All believers are to be accountable for the development of other believers.

The vital truth of the priesthood of all believers has sometimes been lost or badly obscured. Its recovery has meant restoration of life within the Christian community. Among the vital results of the recognition of the priesthood of all believers are the following:

a) It removes the misconception that the ministry has a special knowledge of divine things and an experience of Christ different from the laity;

b) It leaves no ground for the doubt that the layperson, as well as the minister, has an finely tuned consciousness that God Himself has given them His work;

c) It places the responsibility for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom upon the entire membership of the Christian community;

d) It ensures the full impact of the Christian community upon the non-Christian world.

Therefore, God requires that every Christian, clergy and laity, get involved in the lives of others, to break down the barriers of tension, in order to help them in whatever way possible, in order that each believer may reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, becoming mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

CHAPTER 3 – THE STATUS OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Life in South Africa has changed over the last ten to fifteen years. There have been changes in technology, national politics, lifestyle choices, education, health care and family dynamics. During these years, there have been shifts in a number of areas pertaining to the religious beliefs of the Christian Church in South Africa as well as the religious beliefs of the population in general. With the great number of changes, it is only natural to expect important and observable changes in the spiritual life of the nation, as well.

It is well known that South Africa is the richest and most industrialized country in Africa and the world's biggest exporter of non-petroleum minerals, such as, gold, platinum, chrome, diamonds and coal. It has a well diversified economy which is making constant progress.

There is a freedom of religion with a strong push to give all religions equal say. According to *Operation World* (Johnston (ed.) 2001:576), the following figures were recorded of percentages of people for the population (41 million) of their religion in South Africa in 2001:

- Christian   73,52%   29 684 861
- Traditional ethnic   15%   6 056 487
- Non-religious/Other   8,08%   3 262 428
- Muslim   1,45%   585 460
- Hindu   1,25%   504 707
- Baha'i   0,5%   201 883

- Jewish   0,17%   68 640
- Buddhist/Chinese   0,03%   12 113
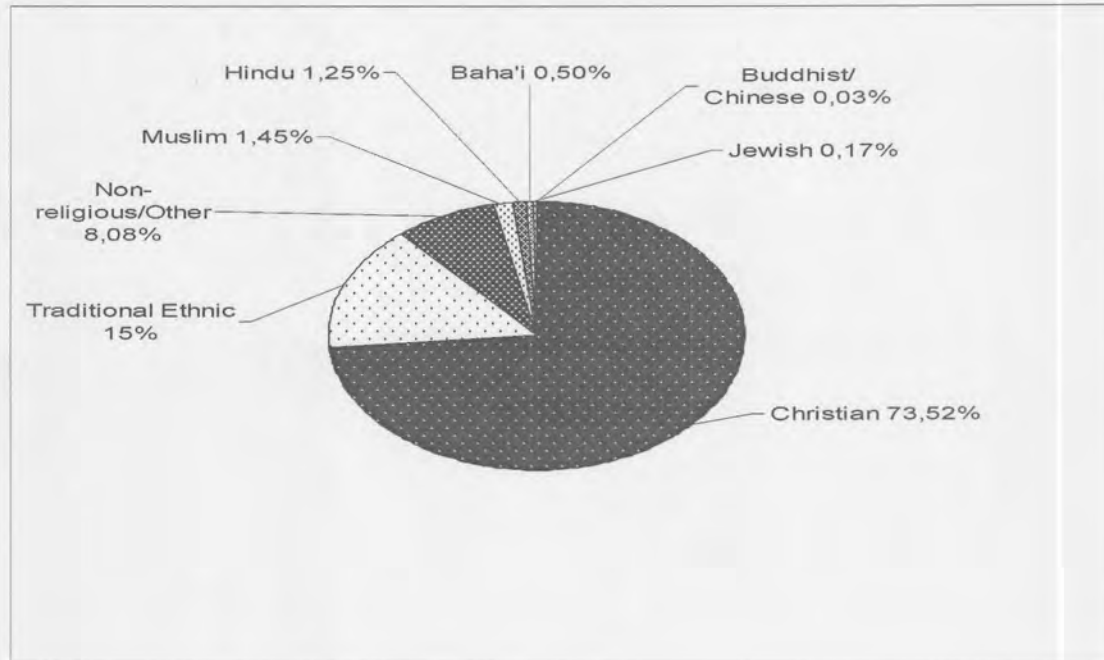
According to an article written by Erasmus and Hendriks in *The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* introducing the World Value System's 2001 set of data on religious affiliation in South Africa, "reflects a country that strongly associates with Christianity (77%) or with religion, as such (82,4%)…" However, "this data suggests that Christianity is set to decline, while the Muslim religion and the cluster that does not associate with denominational religion, will grow" (November 2003, 96).

Like any census, data compilation can be filled with errors. According to a report titled "*Religion in South Africa: The 2001 Population Census Data*" by Hendriks and Erasmus on an overview on "how the count was done and how it differed from previous censuses" (March 2005:88), realistically, they point out "there are serious classification and compilation errors which render some of the trends really unreliable" (March 2005:110).

This is obviously somewhat of a frustration. It is still believed that data can help to point and indicate which direction one is to go in.

The people of South Africa have moved well through the transition from an *apartheid* system to a non-racial democracy – despite the feared bloodbath just before the first democratic elections in 1994. The country is functioning adequately after two successful elections – 1994 and 1999 – under the new democracy. There is another upcoming election in 2009 which is being planned and is in the process. Over the last 20 years, active efforts have been, and continue to be, made to try and reverse the anomalies of the past. Much progress has been made but there is still quite a way to go. There has been a major growth in strategies by organizations aiming to serve and support wherever possible – both locally and beyond the South African borders. There has been a tremendous growth in groups and institutions helping those who are disadvantaged, such as, the homeless on the streets, those living in "squatter camps", the unemployed, those having being affected by crime, the many who have been abused, and the millions who have been distressed by AIDS.

While observers admit that the post-apartheid government is doing its best to transform society into a prosperous, well-administered modern society, the fact remains that there is a widespread perception among South Africans that things are not moving fast enough.

Young people in particular are demanding jobs; education and health care are still sorely lacking; and many citizens in South Africa these days walk around with a gun since they say there is not enough of a police presence to combat crime.

According to page 1 of *The Star* newspaper of 04 July 2007, murders, violent house robberies, hijackings, cash-in-transit and bank heists have shot up. The number of police officers slain is the highest in three years. But the police claim

they are winning the war against crime. The spike in violent crimes, and yet another failure to meet the government's annual target of decreasing crime by seven to 10 percent painted a grim picture at the release of the national police statistics on Tuesday, 03 July 2007. In an interview on the national television broadcaster (SABC) on the same day, Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula and National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi acknowledged concerns about the increase in home robberies, saying that during such break-ins "people get raped, children get abused, there is often a car hijacking involved."

South Africa, where nearly 53 people are killed each day, has among the highest murder and rape rates in the world – and an international reputation as a violent society. The South African public, however, has become increasingly critical of the government's handling of crime, particularly after ministers' comments about people "whinging" about crime and comments by President Thabo Mbeki saying there was no evidence people thought crime was spinning out of control.

Since the 1990's, South Africa has developed a reputation for being "the crime capital of the world" – in other words, that crime levels here are at least as high, but usually higher, than those with which the rest of humanity must contend. This consensus is at the core of any conversation and has become so entrenched that arguments to the contrary often come across as either disrespectful of crime victims or as politically distressing. Attempts to compare crime across different jurisdictions – an exercise which is necessary to rank South Africa at the top of a world crime league table – must confront and overcome a number of enormously difficult challenges.

With the above in mind, these challenges obviously affect people – both physically and spiritually. The insecurity of many unstable leaders in government, some unfair laws, many injustices, the decline in the moral integrity of the country, and the corruption, has left many people – Christian and non-

Christian – quite unsatisfied. It is for this reason that these statistics are mentioned because the above is on most people's minds when answering a questionnaire or the likes.

One cannot make great strategic decisions unless one is well-informed about the community one is dealing with and wishing to influence. The objective of the statistics recorded in this study is to provide one with a viewpoint on the current faith of the approximately 48 million people in the country of which approximately 51% are female (according to "*Mid-year population estimates 2007*" from Statistics South Africa – available online from www.statssa.gov.za). The statistics collected will help to understand a way forward as we interpret the behaviours, observations and decipher the findings.

We have examined the religious perspectives and beliefs of some of the population of South Africa. The information described in this report is based on telephonic interviews and questionnaires completed with a nationwide random sample of 300 adults conducted during June 2006 and April 2007. Those interviewed or those who completed questionnaires were from throughout the geographical spreading of the country. Of those contacted to participate in the survey, 72% responded positively thus giving 216 interviews and questionnaires of completed, useable information to be used for this research and report.

2. OUTCOME OF QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED

A format of the questionnaire is attached but to follow are the questions and feedback with observations.

Do you consider yourself to be Christian or of some religious faith?

South Africans are increasingly designing their lifestyles in ways that meet their needs more efficiently. This is true even in the spiritual realm, as evidenced by

the rapid growth of participation in house churches across the nation. Whereas most people think of "going to church" as attending a service at one of the many church buildings located throughout their community, it seems that millions are trying out new forms of spiritual community and worship, with many abandoning the traditional forms altogether.

It is no overstatement to say that multitudes of people in the organized church are very busy, and even too busy, and this busyness seems to be spreading speedily throughout the culture. It is especially evident in the leadership positions of churches in South Africa – it seems that both genders have been affected. In many cases, people affected display a lifestyle that is so congested that the infected individual can neither enjoy nor nature a healthy relationship with God.

South Africans have overwhelmingly viewed themselves as Christians since the nation became a Republic in 1961. There are minor fluctuations that occur from year to year in the statistics, but the figures generally hover around 75%-83%. It is the younger generation (born 1985-2002) that is not overly comfortable with the label "Christian" and is not ready to abandon the faith that they are most comfortable aligning with. Those born in the 1960's and 1980's went through a similar period 20 years ago before emerging somewhat less likely to embrace the "Christian" identity, but largely associating with it.

Of note are also some minor demographic variations that are worth noting. Women are typically more likely than men to adopt "Christian" as their religious identification (80%). Also, university/college graduates are consistently less likely than less highly-educated adults to claim to be Christian (77% of university/college graduates compared to 87% of adults with some university/college training and 84% without any university/college background).

Adults who say they are mostly conservative on political and social matters are far more likely than those who describe themselves as mostly liberal on such issues to say they are Christian (92% versus 63%).

What is the denomination or affiliation of the church you attend most often?

During the early-nineties, Christian churches increased slightly in affiliation. This could be contributed to the fear among people just before the 1994 democratic elections. Toward the late nineties, Christian churches suffered slight losses in affiliation (0,3%). That appears to have been reversed since the turn of the century. Christian churches – all 185 varieties found in South Africa (Johnstone 2001:111) – now consistently claim 72% of the Christian public.

However, there is a distinct pattern that the younger a person is, the less likely they are to affiliate with a Christian church. This is due to younger adults being less likely to call themselves Christian and partially attributable to the distaste for labels of any sort, or "membership" in religious organizations.

Demographic patterns of interest show that woman were more likely than men to claim to be associated with a Christian church (60% versus 51%). Political conservatives were twice as likely as self-defined liberals to align with a Christian church (71% versus 36%). The gap between these two segments of the population appears to be widening as time goes on.

Among people of the Christian church in South Africa, 18% are Evangelical, 23% Charismatic and 7% are Pentecostal.

Overall, how committed are you to the Christian faith? Are you absolutely committed to it, moderately committed to it, not too committed to it or not

at all committed to it? (Asked only among those who describe themselves as "Christian")

- Absolutely committed: 54%
- Moderately committed: 37%
- Not too committed: 6%
- Not at all committed: 2%
- Do not know: 1%

Not at at all
committed
2%

Not too
committed
6%

Do not know
1%

Absolutely
committed
54%

Moderately
committed
37%
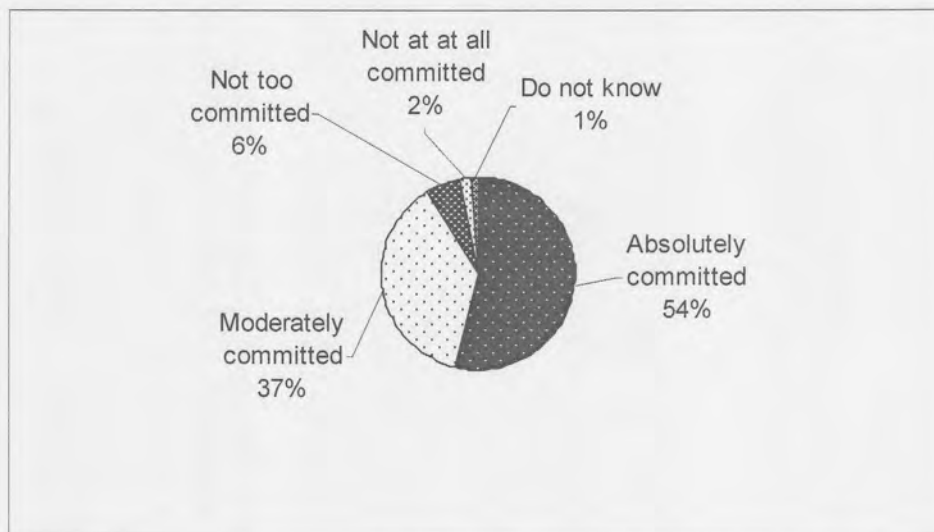
The current level of absolute commitment (54%) generally means that half of all adults who are self-described Christians claim to be absolutely committed to Christianity. What is more interesting though is the massive gap between levels of commitment registered among the four adult generations. 65% of adults older than 60 years of age claim to be absolutely committed, compared to about 58% of those between 40 and 60 years of age. There is a minority (42%) among those between the ages of 24 and 59 years of age that are absolutely committed and just 27% among those aged between 18 and 23 years. If these patterns remain stable for a number of years, they spell trouble for the Christian church.

From the data collected, another pattern of interest is that the more highly educated an adult is, the more likely he/she is to claim to be absolutely committed to Christianity. Presently, 64% of university/college graduates make such a claim, versus 56% among those who attended but did not graduate and 47% of adults who did not attend university/college.

Political conservatives are far more likely than liberals to be absolutely committed (70% compared to 43%). Likewise, Protestants were much more likely to be absolutely committed than were those of other denominations (58% versus 43%).

A huge gap in commitment was discovered between evangelicals (97%), non-evangelical born again adults (58%) and notional Christians (39%). Overall, 92% of radical Christians said they were absolutely committed.

From a "big picture" point-of-view, it is notably realized that only half of the people who call themselves Christian are mentally committed to the faith. Given that this is a "costless" question – that is, it requires no genuine commitment other than verbal consent to the significance of the faith in their mind – this level is unfortunately low.

There are many different beliefs about God or a higher power. Please tell me which one of the following descriptions comes closest to what you, personally, believe about God.
1. **Everyone is god.   (5%)**
2. **God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect Creator of the universe who rules the world today.   (65%)**
3. **God refers to the total realisation of personal, human potential. (8%)**
4. **There are many gods, each with different power and authority. (3%)**

5. **God represents a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach.   (9%)**

6. **There is no such thing as God.   (5%)**

7. **Do not know.   (5%)**

Everyone is god ☐ 5%

God is the all-powerful, ... ☐ 65%

God refers to the total realisation ... ☐ 8%

There are many gods, ... ☐ 3%

God represents a state of higher ... ☐ 9%

There is no such thing as God ☐ 5%

Do not know ☐ 5%
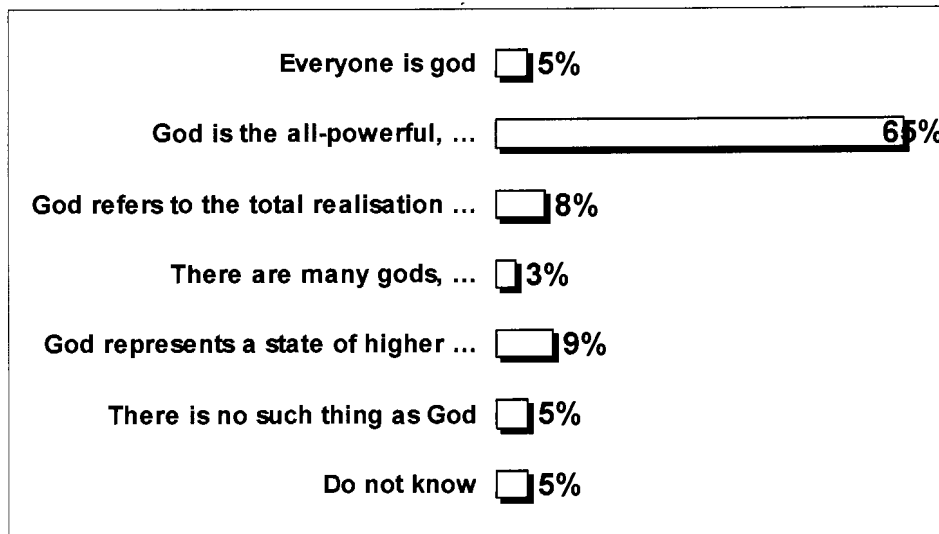
From the statistics and feedback given, it would seem that the younger a person is, the less orthodox their view of God tends to be. It was not surprising that 78% of women interviewed had an orthodox view compared to 64% of men having that belief. It also seems that the more affluent people are, the more likely they are to possess an alternative view of God. Liberals were also more likely to reject the orthodox description of God (just 46% endorsed it, compared to 83% among conservatives). What was also of interest is the fact that 35% of the adults associated with faiths other than Christianity, and 20% of all atheists and agnostics held an orthodox view of God.

Some statements were read about some people's beliefs. People have a variety of beliefs on these matters. People were asked to respond to these statements: "The Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches." Do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree with that statement?

135

- Agree strongly   47%
- Agree somewhat   19%
- Disagree somewhat   14%
- Disagree strongly   12%
- Do not know   8%
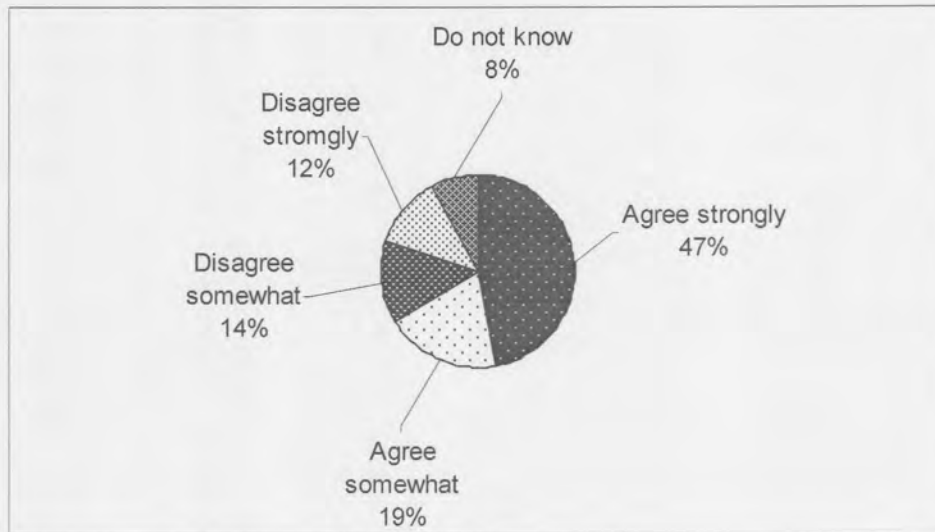
It seems that there is a slow increase in the number of adults who embrace the teachings of the Bible as accurate. This may be because of the situation people find themselves in – many times, a place of insecurity. Also, from those interviewed, the older a person is, the more likely they are to accept the accuracy of the teaching in the Bible. Women remain considerable more likely than men to accept the accuracy of the Scriptures (59% of women versus 38% of men). The less well-educated and the less affluent a person is, the more likely they are to embrace the Bible. Conservatives are almost four times as likely to view the Bible as accurate in the principles it teaches (68% versus 18%).

People were asked whether they agree or disagree – no matter whether they believe what other people believe. People were asked, "Do you, personally, have a responsibility to tell other people your religious beliefs?" People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   40%
- Agree somewhat   17%
- Disagree somewhat   16%
- Disagree strongly   20%
- Do not know   7%
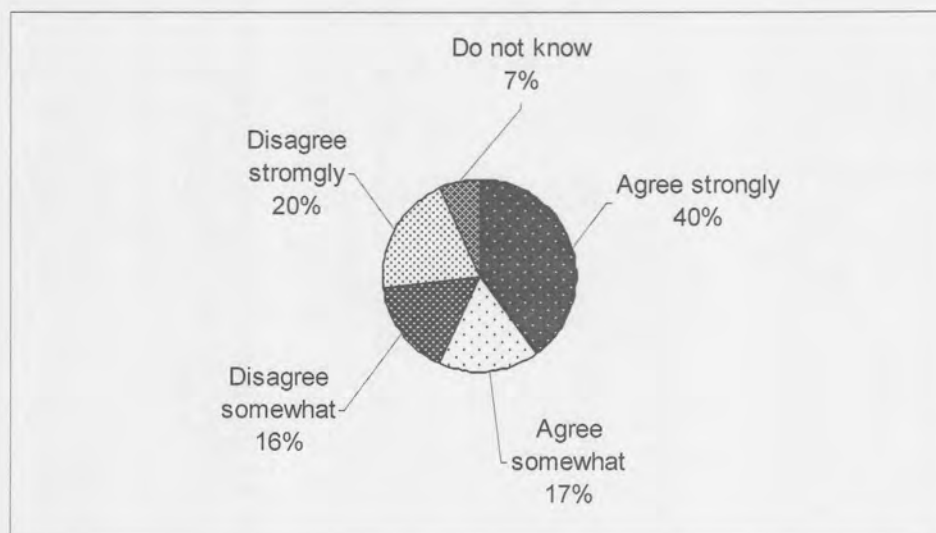
Although some people do not firmly believe that they have a duty to share their religious beliefs with other people, there seems to be a sense of responsibility that people are prepared to embrace with reference to the evangelistic perspective. Currently, two out of every five adults hold that position. Surprisingly, men and women reflected a very similar level of agreement on this factor (37% men and 41% of women).

Poorer individuals were considerably more likely to strongly agree with the notion of having a responsibility to have spiritual conversations. Conservatives were three times more likely than liberals to do so – a majority of conservatives strongly affirmed this idea (52% of conservatives versus 14% of liberals). It must be said that only 34% of whites strongly agreed that they have this responsibility, 58% of blacks claimed it.

People were asked, "Your religious faith is very important in your life." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   68%
- Agree somewhat   17%
- Disagree somewhat   9%
- Disagree strongly   5%
- Do not know   1%
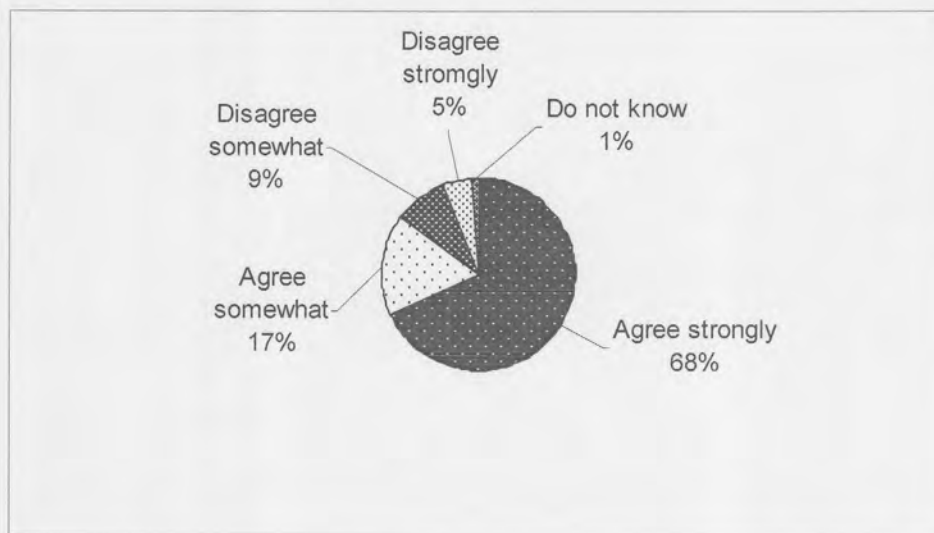
Nearly seven out of ten people interviewed strongly assert that their religious faith is very important in their life these days. While South Africa has been

described as a "religious nation", this is a very high level for the perceived significance of personal faith.

Age plays an important role in understanding this phenomenon. Women emerged more likely than men to agree with this statement and people without a formal education were more likely than those with one to state this. Nine out of ten blacks strongly concurred, compared to two out of three whites.

Four out of five conservatives agree with this statement, compared to less than half of all liberals.

People were asked, "If a person is generally good, or does good enough things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   35%
- Agree somewhat   20%
- Disagree somewhat   9%
- Disagree strongly   28%
- Do not know   8%
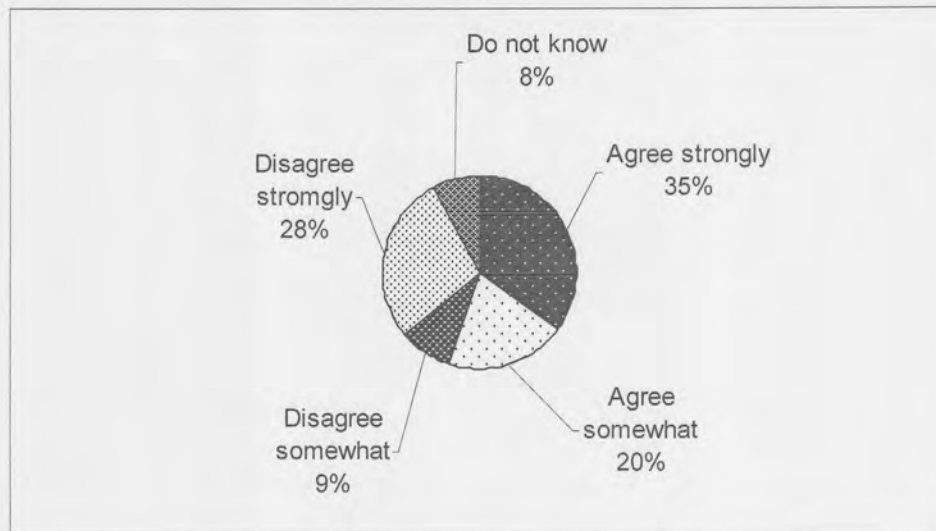
The demographic distinctions related to this measure are limited. Political conservatives are twice as likely as political liberals to strongly disagree with this statement (46% of conservatives versus 24% of liberals). It was interesting to record that there are nearly twice as many blacks that strongly agree as opposed to whites. There is no real explanation for this.

The most intriguing insight drawn from this question, however, is the fact that just 37% of the non-evangelical born again adults strongly reject the idea of salvation by works. In other words, even though they personally claim that their salvation is a result of grace rather than works, they hold open the possibility of people gaining salvation by either means.

People were asked, "The devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   33%
- Agree somewhat   19%
- Disagree somewhat   9%

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- Disagree strongly   30%
- Do not know   9%
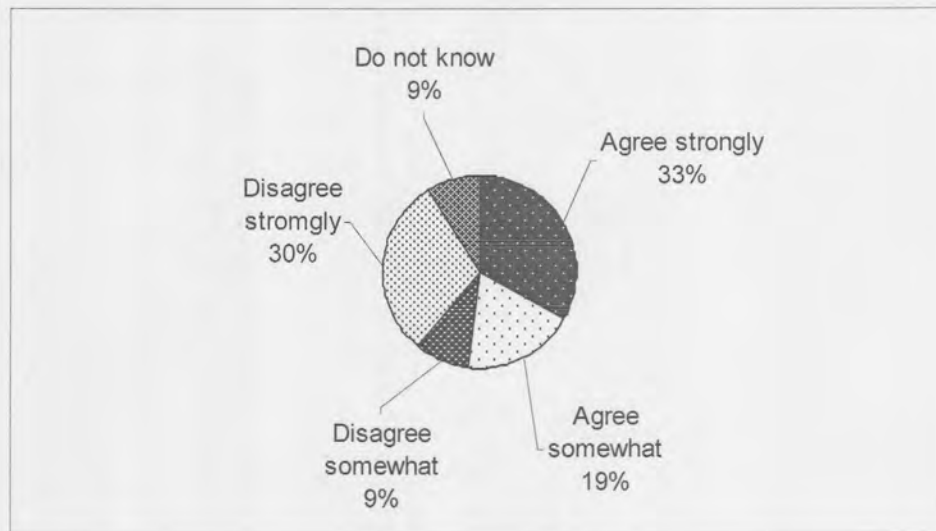
Given the stated commitment to the Bible and to the Christian faith, it is cause for concern to learn that only three out of every ten adults strongly disagree that Satan is merely a symbol of evil. People believe in the concept of evil, but not the embodiment of evil, or the implications of a living agent of evil.

The greatest challenge to Church leaders is to address the fact that only one out of every four non-evangelical born again adults strongly disagrees with the idea of Satan as merely symbolic. To place this in context, that proportion is statistically equivalent to the percentage among atheists and agnostics.

As might be expected among people who see their life as immersed in a spiritual battle, a large majority of devout Christians (65%) strongly rejected this statement.

People were asked, "When He lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people." People were asked whether they agree

strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   22%
- Agree somewhat   18%
- Disagree somewhat   8%
- Disagree strongly   44%
- Do not know   8%
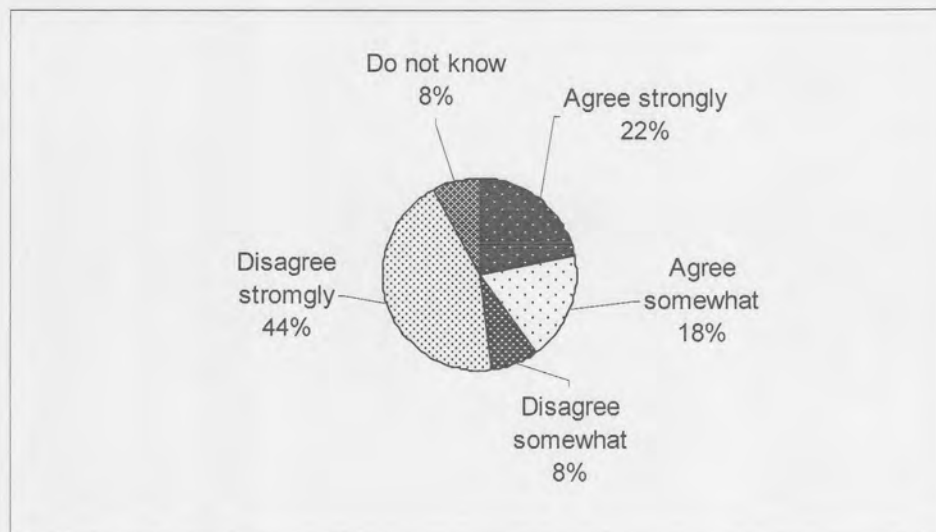
The divinity of Jesus has been questioned for centuries, even in best-selling novels such as *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown (2003). A large share of the South African population – including millions of Christian – have bought the idea that Jesus Christ was a historical figure and a great man, but not God incarnate. Just four out of ten adults firmly reject the notion of Jesus having sinned on earth.

Again, the biggest gaps relate to ideology (68% of conservatives strongly reject the idea that Jesus sinned, versus only 22% of liberals).With reference to ethnicity, 58% of Blacks reject the sin claim, while 39% of Whites do so.

Among the non-evangelical born again adults only half firmly dismiss the statement. That pales in comparison to the more than four out of five devout Christians who do so. Four out of ten adults associated with non-Christian faith strongly disagreed with the statement, while only one out of eight atheists and agnostics joined in the dissent.

People were asked, "The single, most important purpose of your life is to love God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   64%
- Agree somewhat   18%
- Disagree somewhat   10%
- Disagree strongly   5%
- Do not know   3%
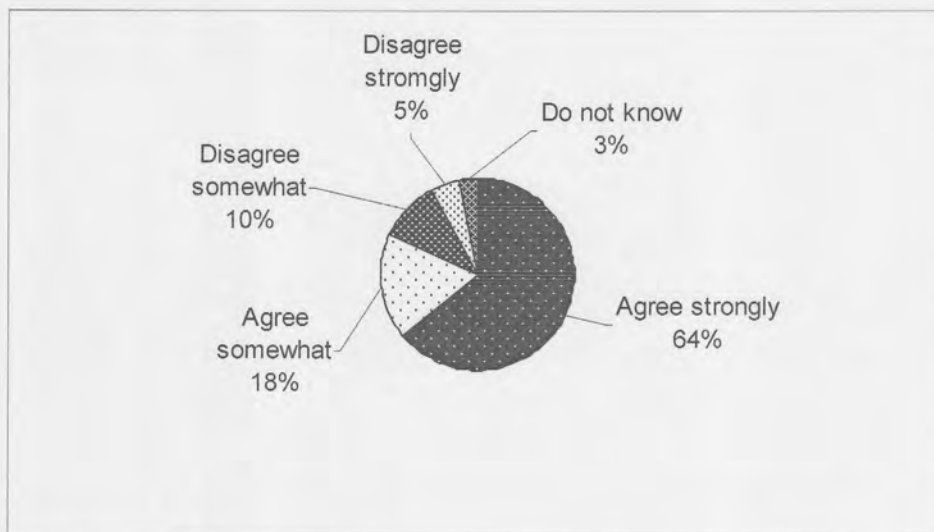
While the results of this question at first glance looked encouraging, placing the outcome in context dampens the enthusiasm considerably. The fact that nearly

two-thirds of adults firmly accepted this sentiment as representative of their life is undermined by the finding that when they were asked earlier in the survey to identify the highest priority in their life, a majority of people said "family" was their top priority.

There were demographic gaps worthy of noting. Women were more likely than men to strongly affirm their life objective (73% versus 52%). The positive correlation with age – the older a person was, the more likely they were to strongly agree – was again evident, ranging from less than half of those under 21 years of age to more than three out of four among people 60 years of age or older. More wealthy individuals were far less likely than poorer people to embrace this statement (44% versus 78% respectively). Just over 90% evangelicals strongly affirmed the statement, which was higher than the 74% of non-evangelical born-again adults, the 56% among notional Christians, 48% among those aligned with other faith groups, the 12% of atheists and agnostics, and even 46% among the "un-churched".

People were asked, "Success in this life is determined only by your obedience to God; nothing else matters." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   29%
- Agree somewhat   20%
- Disagree somewhat   23%
- Disagree strongly   19%
- Do not know   9%
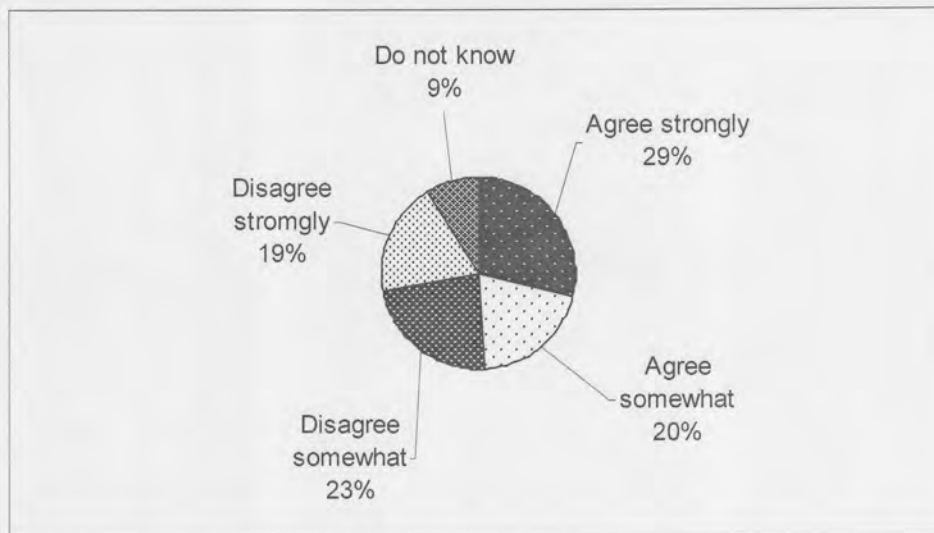
Most South Africans do not see life success in spiritual terms; they define it in tangible, physical, material, achievement-oriented terms. That explains why less than one-third of all adults strongly agreed that success in life is determined solely by their degree of obedience to God.

Women are somewhat more likely than men to embrace the idea of obedience as success (39% versus 22%). Adults older than 40 years of age were much more likely than those under 40 years of age to accept the idea (38% versus 21%). One out of four adults strongly agreed with the notion, except in poorer communities (42%) where nearly half accepted the concept.

Surprisingly, just over half of the evangelicals (56%) strongly accepted the statement, 36% among non-evangelical born-again adults, the 32% among notional Christians, 21% among people of other faiths, and 6% of the atheists and agnostics.

People were asked, "You are completely committed to personally making the world and other people's lives better." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

145

- Agree strongly   41%
- Agree somewhat   29%
- Disagree somewhat   19%
- Disagree strongly   8%
- Do not know   3%
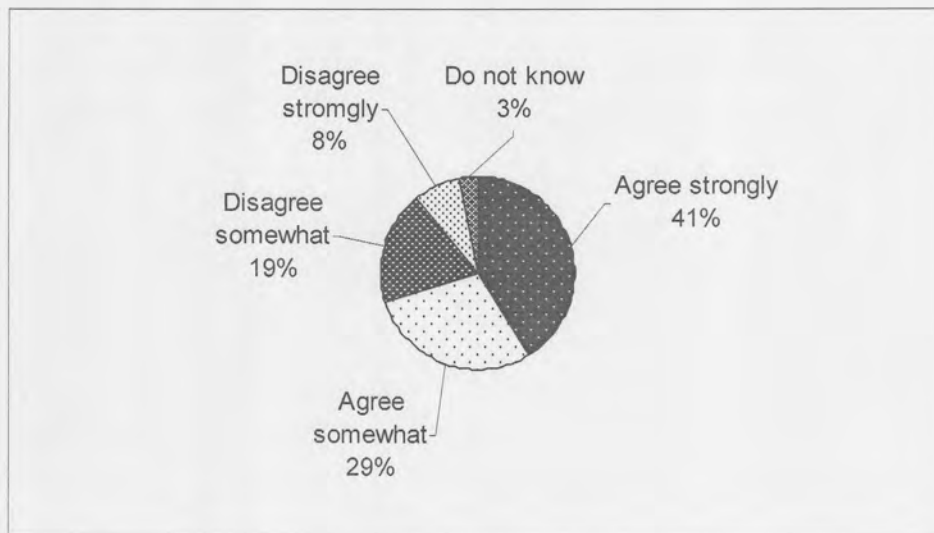
The most intriguing realization emerging from the feedback from this question is that people apparently do not see the idea of "making the world a better place" to be a spiritual notion or a biblical command. Sincere interest in improving lives, which described a minority of the population, were across-the-board demographically, with a few noteworthy exceptions.

People over 40 years of age were more interested in pursuing this ideal than were younger people.

It is surprising that even in a costless survey question, less than a minority of people admits to be compelled to make the world a better place. The survey did not explore the reasons why people did not embrace the idea, but other research

suggests that people's selfishness, busyness and feelings of powerlessness amidst a large and complex world contribute to the commitment to global enhancement.

People were asked, "You cannot become a complete and mature person unless you belong to a community of faith that influences you." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   21%
- Agree somewhat   18%
- Disagree somewhat   31%
- Disagree strongly   28%
- Do not know   2%
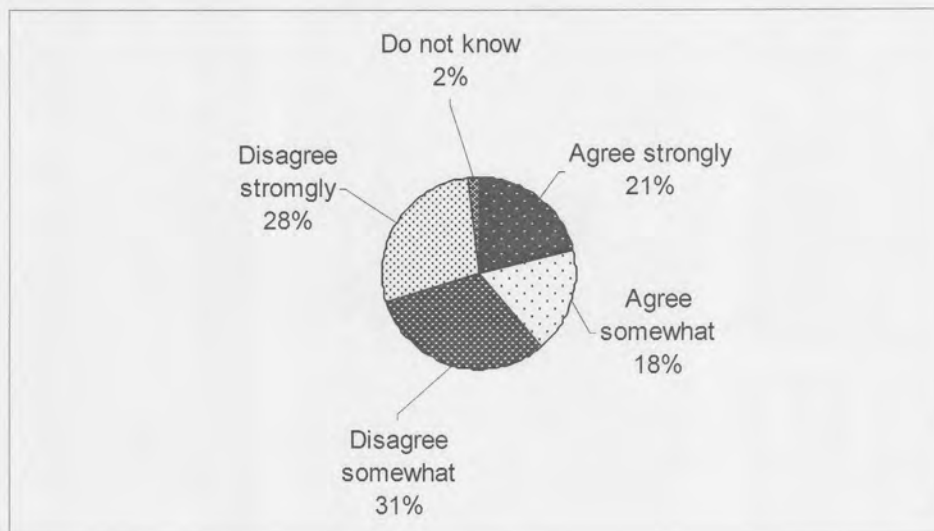
Very few South Africans are sold on the idea that you cannot become a complete and mature human being without the influence of a faith community. As an independent, democratic nation of self-absorbed individuals, relatively few people

see the value of, much less the biblical command for, significant involvement in a faith community.

People who stood out because of their belief in the power of community to transform a person were, surprisingly, those between 18 and 22 years of age (25% strongly agreed with the statement). Black South Africans were also a high percentage (39%) in their belief in the power of community to transform a person. Evangelicals were 21% and those more conservative were 22%.

The groups least likely to assign great importance to such community life were atheists and agnostics (3%), the un-churched (8%), and liberals (6%).

People were asked, "You are in control of your life." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly   42%
- Agree somewhat   27%
- Disagree somewhat   15%
- Disagree strongly   12%
- Do not know   4%
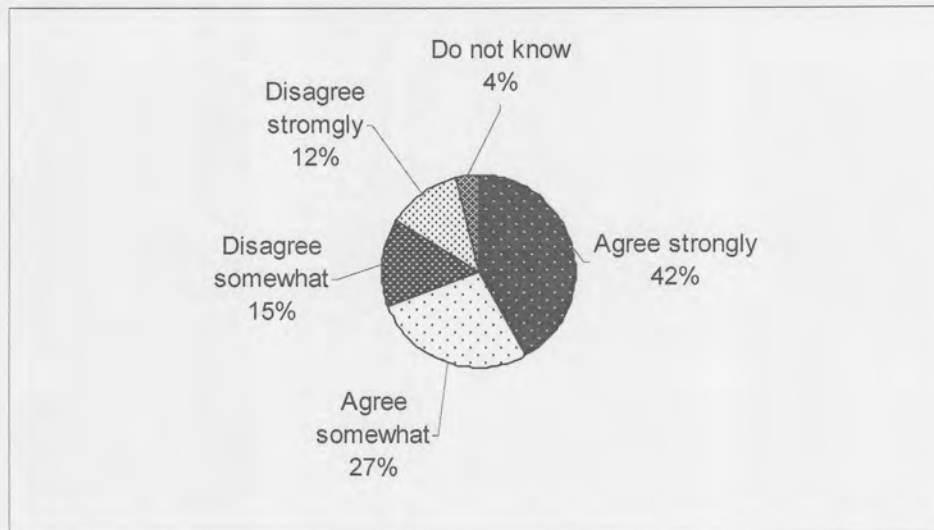
Nearly half of all South African adults firmly believe that they are in control of their life. Just 12% strongly reject the idea.

The types of people most likely to believe that they are in control of their life included men (56% versus 31% of women); adults who were not born again (57% compared to 33% of all born again adults); unchurched people (57%) and 56 % of liberals.

Born again Christian – this question was asked to those who called themselves "Christian" as per the third question above.

- Have you ever made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in your life today?

Some statements were read to people about what will happen to them after they die. They were asked which statement best describes their own belief about what will happen to them after they die. (The following statements were read).

Which one of these comes closest to what you believe? 1. When you die you will go to heaven because you have tried to obey the Ten Commandments. 2. When you die you will go to heaven because you are basically a good person. 3. When you die you will go to heaven because you have confessed your sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. 4. When you die you will go to heaven because God loves all people and will not let them perish. 5. When you die you will not go to heaven. 6. You do not know what will happen after you die.

Of those that answered the third question, (54%) said they were absolutely committed to the Christian faith. Numerically, this 54% is the equivalent of about 26 762 000 born again adults – that is, people over the age of 20 and 80+ – as per the statistics given by South Africa's *"Mid-Year Population Estimates of 2007"* (available online from www.statssa.gov.za). More than two-thirds of that number is drawn from the age group of 20-44.

Interestingly, it was found that six out of every ten adults who have an "active faith" – that is, they read the bible, prayed, and attended church in the past seven days – were not born again.

PERSONAL RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT TO CHRISTIANITY

The following question was asked: "In the last seven days, did you read from the Bible, not including when you were at church?"

32% of people answered this question positively. It seems that the older a person is, the more likely they are to read the Bible during the week. The same could be said for women in contrast to men; and people from lower income groups in contrast to those of greater means.

The following question was asked: "In the last seven days, did you attend a church service, not including a special event such as a wedding or funeral?"

35% of people claim that they attended church. Overall, it seems that women remain more likely to attend than are men. Among the religious sector, 78% of evangelicals and 63% of non-evangelical born again adults attend church in a typical week, compared to 58% of people who attend church but would not put themselves under the criteria of those who would be classified as "born again". It is also interesting to note that there are a significant number of people who associate themselves with non-Christian faith groups.

The following question was asked: "How often, if ever, do you attend a religious service in someone's home or some other place, that is _not_ associated with a local/congregational type church: At least once a week, two or three times a month, once a month, less than once a month, or never?"

Once a week or more	8%
Two or three times a month	5%
Once a month	7%
Less than once a month	17%
Never	61%
Do not know	2%

Once a week or
more
8%

Do not know
2%

Two or three
times a month
5%

Once a month
7%

Never
61%

Less than once
a month
17%
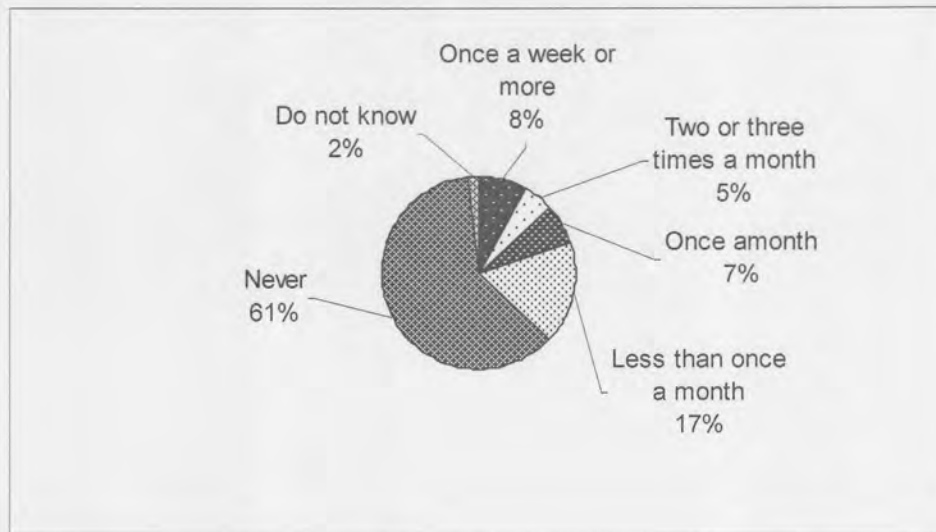
The growth of involvement in home-cells or house churches in recent years has been significant. It seems that, currently, nearly one out of every ten adults participates in a house church in a typical week, with a similar number participating once a month, and an additional nearly two out of ten involved less often. Overall, this constitutes nearly four out of ten people participating in a house church.

The report of the most regular house church participants (that is, those who attend once a week) shows that men and women are equally likely to participate, as are people across the age groups and socioeconomic divisions. This growth is especially noteworthy among evangelicals – one out of every three (32%) participate on at least a weekly basis.

The following question was asked: "In the last seven days, did you volunteer some of your free time to help a church?"

19% of the people interviewed said they had volunteered to do something in the church. These volunteers still tend to be the older members of the congregations (one out of every three among those over 60 years of age compared to one out of five among those under the age of 40 years). Women and married adults are

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more likely to volunteer to do something in the local church. More than half of these that volunteered were evangelicals.

The following question was asked: "In the last seven days, did you pray to God?"

86% of the people interviewed claim that they have prayed to God in the past week. Prayer is more common among those in the poorer financial bracket as opposed to the more affluent people. Also, almost every evangelical interviewed had prayed. It was also interesting to note that three out of four adults associated with other faiths prayed in a typical week and even four out of ten atheists and agnostics admit to praying.

The following question was asked: "In the last seven days, did you participate in a small group that meets regularly for Bible study, prayer or Christian fellowship?"

It seems that there is one out of every four people who participate in a "small group" or "cell group". The "Alpha Course" and "Purpose Driven Life" courses that have been very effective in drawing people to these groups. A majority of evangelicals are engaged in a small group (62%) which is nearly double the amount of the non-evangelical born again adults (29%).

The following question was asked: "In the last 12 months, did you explain your religious beliefs to someone who had different beliefs, in the hope that they might accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour?"

We need to acknowledge that evangelism means many things to many people. To born again Christians, it is most likely to be practiced by trying to live in a way that attracts attention and hopefully generates questions regarding the reason for their faith-driven behaviour. However, many born again adults share their faith

verbally – especially those in the Charismatic movement – in the hope of bringing an "unsaved" person to the cross of Christ.

Presently, it seems that 38% of born again adults share their faith in Christ, in some manner, with non-believers during a 12-month stretch. It is those in their mid-twenties that share their faith the most with others – quite opposite to any other statistic discovered. It seems the older people get, the less likely they are to share their faith openly. Men are also more likely to share their faith as opposed to women.

The following question was asked: "In the past seven days, did you read from your Bible, not including when you were at church? Did you attend a church service, not including a special event such as a wedding or funeral? Did you pray to God?"

The current level of faith activity is a good measure of simple faith engagement in our culture today. That level is presently 29% of those interviewed meet the above criteria. Displaying an active faith increases with age, ranging from just 11% among those aged between 18-21 to 24% among those aged between 22-40, 46% of those aged between 41-60, and 72% of those between 61-80. Women remain more widely engaged than men (53% versus 24%).

3. INSIGHTS FROM THE INFORMATION COLLECTED

3.1. General Comments

There are many who will say that their faith is very important in their life (64%). Nearly two-thirds of those participating in this survey firmly embrace the idea that, "the single, most important purpose of [their] life is to love God with all [their] heart, mind, strength and soul." However, a deeper look at people's full range of

spiritual beliefs, behaviour and commitment, raises a number of interesting observations.

Most South Africans still embrace the traditional view that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect Creator of the universe who rules the world today (65%). There are very few who possess the traditional orthodox views about Jesus and the devil. Currently, 33% agree strongly that "the devil is not a living being but is a symbol of evil". Also, 22% agree strongly that "when He lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people." Twice as many (44%) disagreed strongly with this statement, which is a better indication – however, not an excellent one. Each of these beliefs is fundamental to the Christian faith and certainly a more moral lifestyle.

From a Christian perspective, it is rather disheartening to see that less than half (47%) of those participating in this survey agree strongly to the statement, "the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches".

There are only 20% of those participating in this survey that found it crucial to tell others about their belief. 40% of the people disagree strongly with, having a responsibility to tell other people about their religious beliefs – despite 68% of those participating in this survey agreeing strongly that their religious faith is very important in their lives. There is somewhat reluctance to sharing one's faith with others.

To the statement whether "a person is generally good, or does good enough things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven", it was interesting to note the mixture of response. One would have imagined there to be more people agreeing with this statement (35% agree strongly and 20% agree somewhat as opposed to (9% disagreeing somewhat and another 28% disagreeing strongly). This indicates to people's belief is one of "good works" directing people to heaven.

Less than a third (29%) of those participating in this survey felt that "success in this life is determined only by your obedience to God; nothing else matters." Another 20% agree somewhat. This is concerning as there is a strong perception that success is measured by the amount of material possessions one can accumulate. Success is not measured by one's commitment to spiritual matters – even though there are many who are "spiritual" but not committed to any institution or organization per se.

On the contrary, there are many (41%) who "are completely committed to personally making the world and other people's lives better" – that is the statement they agree strongly with. Adding the 29% who agree somewhat with the same statement, makes it seven out of ten people wanting to make the world and other people's lives better. The irony is that when it comes to practically putting the intention into practice, the figures do not make sense to the intention.

3.2. Issues of a Spiritual Nature

Edging in to issues of a more spiritual nature with those participating in this survey, one-fifth (21%) felt strongly that one "cannot become a complete and mature person unless you belong to a community of faith that influences you". Many have become immersed with their own activities and agendas and do not see the need for community. There seems to be extremes in this regard. Some are very involved while others are not involved at all. This is certainly true amongst the younger generation where it is the black youth (39%) who believe in the effectiveness of community – what is called "*Ubuntu*", which is the African philosophy of "*people are people because of other people!*" There is still an underlying philosophy that has enabled many people to see the effectiveness of the community and where people can meet, recognise and understand one another.

What also needs to be kept in mind is that "Modernistic Western churches are being challenged to reframe themselves in nothing less than a new theological paradigm. In this regard it is advantageous to be in Africa where realities are sobering, as well as challenging" (Hendriks 2001:64).

More than four out of ten (42%) of those participating in this survey felt that they are "in control" of their lives. This is hard to believe when one looks at the high rate of crime, suicide, dysfunctional families, etc.

3.3. Personal Religious Engagement

With reference to personal religious engagement – only asked to those who are Christian – one sees that not even one-third (32%) read their Bible on a regular basis (not including when they are at church). Also, 35% claimed that they attend church on a weekly basis yet only 25% of those 35% attend a "home-cell" type gathering during the week. From a "missional" perspective, this is very real cause for concern. It makes sense, therefore, why only less than one out of every five (19%) Christians participating in this survey volunteered to do something in their free time at a local church. Ironically, most of these volunteers were elderly people.

It was somewhat more encouraging to see 86% of the Christians participating in this survey claimed to have prayed to God in the past week. Again, what is alarming is the low amount of people participating or attending a "home-cell" or "cell-group" (25%). Many feel that attending church occasionally will be sufficient for them to grow spiritually and make an impact or difference in the society they live in – even though 38% of the Christians participating in this survey shared their faith in Christ in the past 12 months.

Of those who were Christians participating in this survey, less than one-third (29%) read from their Bible, attended church and prayed in the last seven days.

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It would be an adequate observation, therefore, to state that most South Africans do not have strong and clear beliefs, largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview – that is, they lack a consistent and holistic understanding of their faith. Many South Africans say they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ yet they believe He sinned while on earth. Many believers claim to trust what the Bible teaches, but they reject the concept of a real spiritual enemy or they feel that evangelistic activities are not a priority but rather optional. Millions of South Africans feel personally committed to God, yet they have their own "belief system" or are "spiritual people" in their "own way".

Although one needs to be cautious about reading too much into figures, one needs to be cautious not too become too casual among those who move too far from basic accepted, traditional views. It eventually raises the question, to whom and what are people committed to? Also, people are spiritually active, but to what end in their "own way"?

We are well aware that behaviour is driven by core beliefs. It is possible to find changes in behaviour without concurrent shifts in beliefs related to that behaviour, but without change in the underlying beliefs, the changed behaviour is unlikely to remain changed. In most cases, the behaviour will eventually revert back to its original state because there is not a mental, emotional and spiritual support system to sustain the alteration in activity.

There is always the possibility that the changes in the behaviours observed will produce some permanent transitions in beliefs. For example, it may be that there may be a dramatic increase in Bible reading that could produce a new understanding of biblical content. It is possible that more church attendance would lead to a deeper relationship with God. It is reasonable to expect more widespread involvement in home-cells and small groups to produce some degree of change in people's lives – if there is correct and appropriate teaching and if

there is a conscious effort toward this intention. While such transitions do not occur often, there is always the hope that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, lives will be changed. Since God works through people to accomplish His purposes, it is an exciting challenge for Christian leaders to seek His guidance toward facilitating a genuine period of renewal and revival in this country.

Hendriks makes an excellent observation in mentioning some of the challenges facing South Africans:

> "If South Africa wants to face and even have a future,
> it must face the past. The different groups of people
> in this country can learn to trust each other (then start
> working together) only if they are allowed to tell one
> another their stories. The Truth and Reconciliation
> Commission could not achieve this ideal for the
> population as a whole. The church has a vital role to
> play in this regard" (2001:65).

CHAPTER 4 – AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (BUSA)

1. BACKGROUND OF THE BAPTIST WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

At the end of 1819, and the beginning of 1820, between four and five thousand emigrants left England for the Cape. The British government promised aid for the support of a minister of religion if a party of 100 families or more could be gathered by any one denomination. The Wesleyans fell just short of this goal, and Baptists would never have attained it in the first place, so a group of 11 Baptists associated themselves with the Wesleyans and arrived at Algoa Bay in 1820. At first they met for worship in a cottage in Salem near Grahamstown, and one of them, William Miller, became their "tent-maker" pastor. They were without an ordained pastor until William Davies was sent out to South Africa from England by the Baptist Missionary Society in early 1832 – and he came despite a shipwreck, in which his son was lost.

Meanwhile, the church was moved to Grahamstown, and a work was begun at Kariega. However, tensions between Calvinistic and Arminian factions resulted in a split in the Grahamstown church, and the building at Kariega had to be abandoned in 1834 due to a conflict. But, within a few years several Baptist churches had emerged in the Eastern Province and Border areas. A Baptist church was formed in Cape Town in 1876; its first pastor was sent out to South Africa by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Shortly after the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, a Baptist church was established in the bustling mining town of Johannesburg in 1888.

In addition to British settlers, German settlers immigrated to South Africa in the 1850's. These included a number of Baptists, among whom was Carsten

Langhein, who founded a Baptist church in Frankfort in 1861. From this base, Baptist works were also commenced in Braunschweig, Berlin and Hanover. The German Baptists in South Africa appealed to Oncken for pastors, and in 1867 the German Baptist Assembly meeting in Hamburg appointed Oncken's assistant, Carl Hugo Gutsche, to the work. Gutsche was an outstanding and godly man. In twenty-five years he built twenty-five churches in the Border area. Emphasising planned giving, he never opened a church that was not debt-free. "Although thwarted by internal quarrels and dissensions, and characterised by puritanical strictness which over-emphasised the unimportant, [the German Baptists] demonstrated a persevering faith and hope, and a loyalty to the church which made for growth and progress second to none in the annals of our history" (Hudson-Reed nd:23). By the time of the formation of the Baptist Union of South Africa in 1877, German-speaking Baptists slightly outnumbered English-speaking Baptists, and there is still a strong German Baptist tradition in the Border region.

In 1867 an Afrikaans-speaking farmer by the name of J D Odendaal was converted to Baptist views. He was baptised by Gutsche, and for some years served as a lay preacher. In 1875 he was ordained by the German Baptists, and in 1886 he founded the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk. Unfortunately, the Afrikaans Baptist work never grew as rapidly as the English and German works owing to strong resistance from some of the local churches and the suspicion that Baptists were a "sect".

From very early on, Baptists had dreams of taking the gospel to the interior of the country. In 1873 the "Baptist Sustentation Fund" for home missions was established – the first attempt at meaningful co-operation among South African Baptists. The formation of the Baptist Union of South Africa in July 1877 seemed almost accidental. A new pastor was inducted, the Rev. G W Cross, at the Bathurst Baptist Church in Grahamstown, where pastors and deacons from six other churches were present. One of the pastors suggested that the opportunity be taken to form the Baptist Union of South Africa. This they did immediately.

The next day, a constitution was adopted. Its objects were as follows:

> 1. To promote unity and brotherly love among its members.
> 2. To promote the evangelisation of the country.
> 3. To disseminate Baptist principles.
> 4. To plant and assist Churches in which those principles shall be or have been adopted
> (Hudson-Reed nd:39).

The success of the new Union is surprising in that it contained both English-speaking Baptists (who held to "open communion" and the autonomy of the local church) and German-speaking Baptists (who took a "closed communion" position and advocated the centralisation of power in the denomination). As things developed, the congregational principle was a strong emphasis from the start, and Baptist Principles (especially the authority of Scripture) frequently constituted the topic in Presidential addresses in the early days.

The Union's desire "to promote the evangelisation of the country" found expression in a number of ways. This desire was stated by the Rev. H J Batts in his 1883 Presidential address:

> It is not for us to ask a neglected people who know not their spiritual needs to provide a salary, to give us subscriptions, and then we will send them a minister. Ours is to take them the Word of Life, to teach them their need, and to direct them to the 'Mighty to save', and God will not forget the labourers who are sent (Batts nd:12).

The needs of the indigenous peoples of South Africa thus slowly came into the Baptist vision. In 1892, Baptists formed the South African Baptist Missionary Society (SABMS) for Gospel outreach to the indigenous peoples of the country (home missions was for Europeans, the SABMS for Africans). Among the Baptist Union churches in 1898 (not all Baptists had joined the Union) there were 3033 "European" members and 172 "Native" members; but by 1918 the figures had increased to 5 156 and 4 185 respectively (Hudson-Reed nd:84).

In 1894 the *South African Baptist* magazine was established; it remained the denomination's mouthpiece until the late 1980s, when its name was changed to *Baptists Today.*

In 1899 South African Baptists launched a programme called the "Forward Movement" to provide funds for church extension, and they planned to employ a full-time General Secretary and travelling missionary evangelists. But the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) dashed these hopes and dealt severe setbacks to the Baptist work.

In 1908 an effort to alter the structure of the Baptist Union surfaced. F B Meyer, in one of his visits to South Africa, suggested that the "loose union" be altered into "The United Baptist Church of South Africa", a more centralised structure apparently motivated by a desire to give the denomination more direct control over the appointment and movement of pastors, and to group smaller churches in a given district to enable them to support a joint minister. In 1910, when the plan was publicised to the churches, only one out of thirty-seven objected. But the plan never got off the ground, and eventually it lost favour and was abandoned.

By 1911, four new ventures took place, which indicate that Baptists had recovered from the war, and were again ready to move forward: 1) the

establishment of a Sunday School Department and promotion of the concept of Sunday Schools; 2) the foundation of the South African Baptist Women's Association in 1911; 3) a pension scheme for Baptist pastors; and 4) the formation of a book depot, mainly to supply literature to the Sunday Schools.

As early as 1902, the Rev. T Rangiah had come from India to introduce Baptist work among the many Indian labourers on the sugar plantations in Natal. This work was carried on completely independently of the Baptist Union until 1923, when Rangiah applied to become a minister of the Baptist Union and the Indian Baptist Association affiliated with the SABMS. Internal dissension led to a split and to the formation of the Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA) and Indian Baptist Mission (later called simply Baptist Mission).

The period from the 1890s to the 1920s was a period of theological turmoil for Baptists – and those Baptists in South Africa were not exempt. The period was characterised by the heyday of liberalism and the fundamentalist/modernist controversy. In the South African Baptist scene, the controversy resulted in the adoption of a Statement of Faith at the Baptist Assembly which was held in Durban in 1924, a Statement which has served the Union over the years with very few amendments. The preamble read:

> Resolved, that having no authority to accept a
> doctrinal statement on behalf of our churches,
> but knowing that there is unsettlement in some
> of our Churches, we agree to commend this
> statement to them for their consideration as a
> general expression of our Baptist belief (from
> Baptist Archives, Randburg, South Africa).

The 1924 Statement of Faith was later adopted into the Union's Constitution. The work among the black people of South Africa continued under the SABMS,

and in 1927, the Baptist Convention, a "union" of black churches, was formed under the SABMS.

As elsewhere, Baptists in South Africa suffered from a shortage of trained pastors. Consideration was given to the possibility of providing theological education in South Africa already before 1900, but in 1898, G W Cross wrote, "The time has not yet come for establishing a theological school here." Such students as presented themselves for ministerial training were placed under the tutelage of experienced pastors, and provision was made for a comprehensive course of part-time study which, already in 1902 required Hebrew and Greek. The great majority of pastors, however, had been trained in the United Kingdom. As late as 1936, 37 out of the 55 accredited ministers of the Baptist Union had been trained overseas. Ernest Baker formed a "Baptist Bible School" on his own initiative in 1928; in 1931 it was reported that "the relationship of the Baptist Bible School to the Union was still under consideration". By 1932 the school had lapsed. Meanwhile, the Union set up a "Ministerial Education Committee" which oversaw part-time studies. However, in 1935 it was reported that of the 15 registered ministerial students, only two were working hard at their studies.

After World War II there were more determined efforts to provide ministerial education. In 1949 the Assembly voted 59 to six in favour of establishing a theological college, but there were 35 abstentions, so the project was deferred. The difficulties were worked out, however, and in 1951 the Union opened the Baptist Theological College of South Africa in Johannesburg. The first Principal of the College was A J Barnard from Birmingham, and within two years, the College had 21 full-time students.

Problems arose in 1954 when Union leaders learned that Barnard neither held nor taught "the doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures which the majority of the Executive requires to be taught in the College, which the majority of the ministers of the denomination believe." By his own admission, Barnard

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was seriously at variance with those beliefs. Barnard was dismissed and the College was temporarily closed. It was soon reopened, however, with the well-known Baptist linguist Dr. C M'Doke serving as acting Principal before the appointment of Dr. J C Stern to the position in 1956. In 1958 Dr. J D Odendaal was appointed the first full-time tutor in addition to the Principal. In 1968 the College moved from Wellington Road, Parktown to an elegant mansion on the Parktown ridge, which served the College well until its move to the present premises in Randburg in 1993. In 1973 a branch of the College was opened in Cape Town; in due time, this college gained its independence as the Cape Town Baptist Theological College (now, Cape Town Baptist Seminary). The SABMS ran a training school for black pastors, the Baptist Bible Institute, at Fort White near King William's Town.

When the Nationalist government was elected to power in 1948, Baptist structures already reflected the political *status quo*. Until the 1960s, most of the churches affiliated with the Baptist Union were white. The black "Bantu Baptist Churches", as they were often called, of the Baptist Convention, were affiliated to the SABMS, and overseen by white "Missionary Superintendents". The so-called "Coloured" churches were grouped together in the Baptist Alliance, and there were two Indian groups, Indian Baptist Mission and Baptist Association. Although a number of statements were passed at Assemblies protesting some of the grosser abuses of apartheid, they made little practical difference to Baptist life, and there was very little contact across the colour bar in Baptist churches. In 1976 the Baptist Union Assembly passed the following "resolution re: absence of race or colour discrimination in churches of the Baptist Union":

> 1. Assembly reaffirmed that the Baptist Union is open to all churches which qualify in terms of its constitution, regardless of race or colour; affirmed that such churches would be welcome into the Baptist Union, and charged the

Executive to make this known to all churches within Baptist Union Associations.

2. In the light of the Scriptural doctrine of the church, and recognising the importance of the church's witness and the need to work for cordial relationships between all groups in society, Assembly, while recognising the autonomy of local churches, affirmed that, Scripturally, a local church should be open to all persons, irrespective of race or colour, in respect of membership and attendance at services. Assembly charged the Executive to make this known to the various Associations of the Baptist Union

(Hudson-Reed (ed) nd:136, 137).

But once again, this policy made little practical difference. Relationships with the black churches of the Baptist Convention deteriorated to the extent that in 1987 the Convention withdrew from the Union, and an embittered relationship ensued for several years. It was particularly unfortunate and embarrassing that this conflict was played out on the world stage before the Baptist World Alliance. More recently, the various Baptist bodies in South Africa (Baptist Union, Baptist Convention, Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk, Baptist Association of South Africa and Baptist Mission) have agreed to form the South African Baptist Alliance (SABA), an umbrella organisation which, it is hoped, will lead to much deeper fellowship and co-operation between the various bodies, and perhaps even merger in the long run. SABA was launched in August 2001.

The Baptist Union has never joined the World Council of Churches, although it did hold membership in the South African Council of Churches for a time. In 1967 it reduced its status with the SACC from "Member" to "Observer", and in

1975 the Union voted – by a large majority – to withdraw from the SACC completely, largely on political and theological grounds. The Baptist Union has generally stood aloof from ecumenical affairs, although there have always been a few lone voices within it advocating closer relationships with other churches. For some, the Baptist Union policy over the years has been an attempt to remain faithful to Biblical principles; for others, it has seemed like denominational snobbery and isolationism. A few years ago, the Assembly agreed to appoint a committee to investigate, yet again, the pros and cons of membership in the SACC; at the next year's Assembly, the committee itself was voted out of existence!

An important development in recent years has been an increasing emphasis on regional affairs in Baptist life, and correspondingly less emphasis on national affairs. The six territorial associations which comprise the Baptist Union are the Baptist Northern Association (BNA – essentially the old Transvaal), the Central Association of Baptist Churches (CABC – the Free State and Northern Cape), the Natal Baptist Association (NBA), The Border Baptist Association (BBA), the Eastern Province Baptist Association (EPBA), and the Western Province Baptist Association (WPBA).

In an attempt to enhance fellowship with other Baptist bodies, the Baptist Union is also a member of the Baptist World Alliance and the All Africa Baptist Fellowship.

It is difficult to conceive of a time when Baptists will not be grappling with issues on which there will be conflict. Motions relating to the nature and authority of Scripture have regularly come before the Assembly; a high view of Scripture has been maintained, although some would like to see the Union's affirmations on Scripture made even more explicit than they are. The changing political and social structure of the country has brought enormous challenges, and Baptists have not always been as prompt or effective in responding to them as they

should have been. The AIDS crisis is a case in point. Furthermore, although there have been some encouraging signs, there is still a long way to go before there will be meaningful racial integration at all levels of Baptist life. Affirmative action has sparked much debate. The rise of the charismatic movement and the influence of liberation/social theology have brought into the Union a theological diversity with which some have found it difficult to live. Congregationalism and the role of leaders within it is under the spotlight at the moment. This is a major contributing factor why the BUSA is finding it difficult to grow the churches – there is no real understanding of the role that leaders have to play and the role that the laity have to play. No progress can be made unless the understanding of the role of the laity is taken seriously.

The role of women in Baptist churches and the structure and financing of the Union are also burning issues on which agreement will probably not be found in the immediate future. For many Baptists, the reality of the African context still needs to be taken earnestly. It is for these reasons that some churches have left the BUSA.

Nevertheless, despite a mind-boggling degree of diversity and an array of challenges, the work continues to move forward. One of the noteworthy features is that more than 200 new Baptist Union churches have been planted during the last decade.

2. BACKGROUND AND METHOD OF IMFORMATION COLLECTED

This study was carried out among the churches affiliated to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA). Data about these congregations were collected via a questionnaire (questionnaire attached) given to leaders of congregations. Information was gathered about multiple aspects of congregations' social composition, structure, activities, and programming.

Congregations – the relatively small-scale, local churches in and through which people engage in religious activity – are a basic unit of South African religious life. They are the primary site where religious activity takes place. They also provide for a place where people can socialize and are a place of community (κοινονία) for many. Local churches encourage religious identities through education and practice and opportunities are created where congregants can engage in a variety of community and social activities. The congregations under BUSA are a significant number of people (498 churches with 44 077 congregants in 2005 and 501 churches with 43 986 congregants in 2006).

There are a number of ways of conducting studies on congregations and their significance in the population and organization. One way is to examine a single congregation to examine some fundamentals of the congregants, the change over time of the congregation, how it has adapted in the community, and many other things. Another way, larger numbers of congregations can be surveyed – in this case, congregations under the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA). In surveys like this one, one can examine the growth and decline of the denomination – and even of local churches within the denomination – finances, leadership dynamics, involvement in social activities, to name a few. The positive side of a survey like this is the accuracy one can have – if affiliated congregations have submitted the correct figures. One is not randomly taking churches of different denominations – even some which are unaffiliated – and doing research. Major gaps have been discovered in surveys that take churches randomly because of the above point mentioned: the unaffiliated congregations. Research has also shown that many churches do not respond to the survey undertaken as they are independent and therefore do not feel accountable to others.

From surveys conducted mainly by Professors Hendricks and Erasmus through the Centre of Religious Demographic Research in 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, about the "religious landscape" of South Africa, there have been a number of

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shortcomings that are present and are errors when it comes to compiling an effective survey. These errors are listed in these surveys. These listed errors are but a few of a larger number of questions that congregations need to answer. One can go into much detail in such surveys and get congregations to answer more descriptive questions, however intrinsically interesting they might be – that is not the purpose of this denominational survey though. Broader theoretical questions also could be explored. Questions about religious practices and the formation of culture in congregations, questions about activities shaped by social contexts, and so on, could be asked.

The statistics in this paper have been conducted by field research in order to show the condition of congregations under the BUSA. Leaders from local congregations have answered questionnaires, interviews have been conducted and observations and discussions have been had by learners of the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (BTC) in Randburg, Gauteng, South Africa. 86% of those that had answered questionnaires or interviewed were actually on the staff of their local church being represented. The other 14% were non-staff congregation leaders of some sort of ministry in the church. Approximately half of the questionnaires were completed and returned by mail while others were done by personal interviews. The response of the questionnaires completed was good with a response rate of 56%, that is, 384 questionnaires.

Even with a response rate at high as 56%, it is worthwhile to assess whether those whom did not respond may affect the data collected in any discernable way. It is assumed "probably not" and can therefore conclude that the representativeness of this survey is very good. One needs to also mention that those reporting on their congregations' characteristics are reliable and would have no reason to submit false numbers or information. One always faces the danger of people answering questions with their own biased views and can always over-estimate figures or even give beliefs or attitudes of other. Another

danger is that there may not be interrelated and unified goals of the one completing a report and the congregation being represented. Different people have different perspectives on issues and are more passionate about different parts of the congregation and this can result in different, sometimes conflicting goals and may see the congregation's mission in very different ways.

There might, of course, be official and formal goals or missions in the congregation that are not consistent with the practices of the congregation. It would be ideal to have people who are transparent and do not fear the threat of getting into trouble in being honest about completing the questionnaire – in this case, anonymity was advantageous.

It is of importance that those completing the questionnaire are clear about the questions about the congregation and that their response is consistent with their judgement on the goals and mission of the congregation. The questions were set up in such a way that there is no ambiguity or uncertainty in understanding them. With all of the above in mind, it is understood that questionnaires have been answered with reduced known threats of validity and reliability.

3. RESULTS OF THE INFORMATION AND STATUS OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (BUSA)

A number of very important questions were asked in the questionnaire (Covering letter and full questionnaires are attached in the Appendix). These questions help us to understand the tangible cultural facts of the congregations rather than a guess about the internal lives of congregants or a private and possible peculiar interpretation of a congregation's set of activities. Always keeping the purpose of this research and information collection, one needs to evaluate the results in order to move to a positive contribution – from knowledge to resultant action. As a survey of the representative congregations in BUSA, one of the most obvious contributions this study might make is to enable the description of the most basic

features of these congregations' members to respond and take action. It is hoped that the results will make it sufficiently clear of what the status of BUSA is and the scientific knowledge will allow movement for change.

**Number of Churches and Fellowships in the Baptist Union**
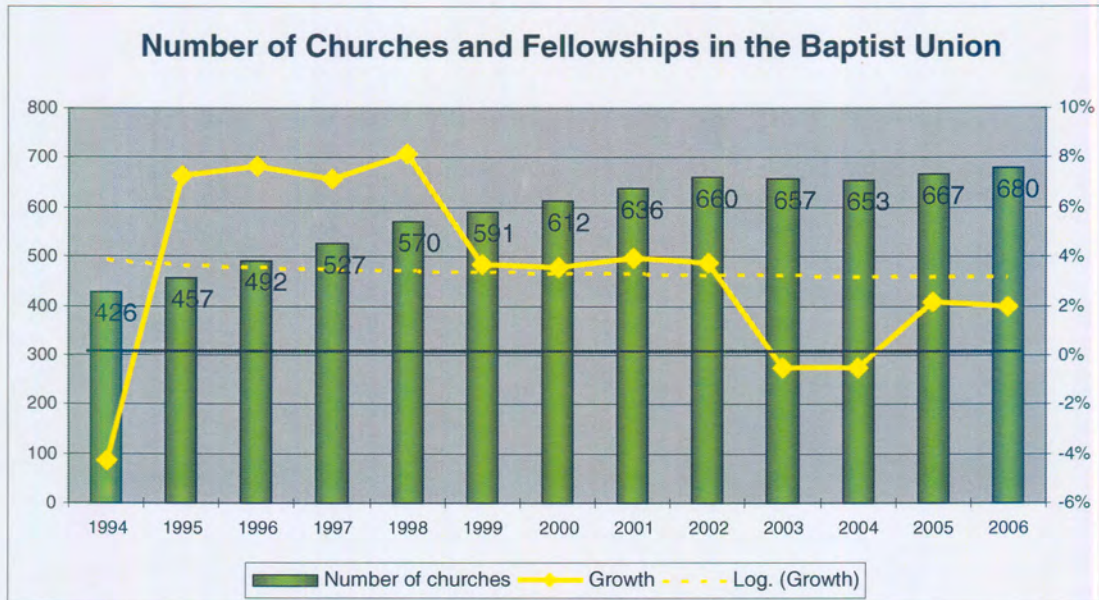
From the above graph, we see that there has been a steady growth in the number of new churches in 1994 (426 new churches) to 2002 (660 new churches). There seems to have been a drop in 2003 and 2004 but the number of churches started growing again in 2005 and 2006.

**Number of Churches and Fellowships in the Baptist Union**
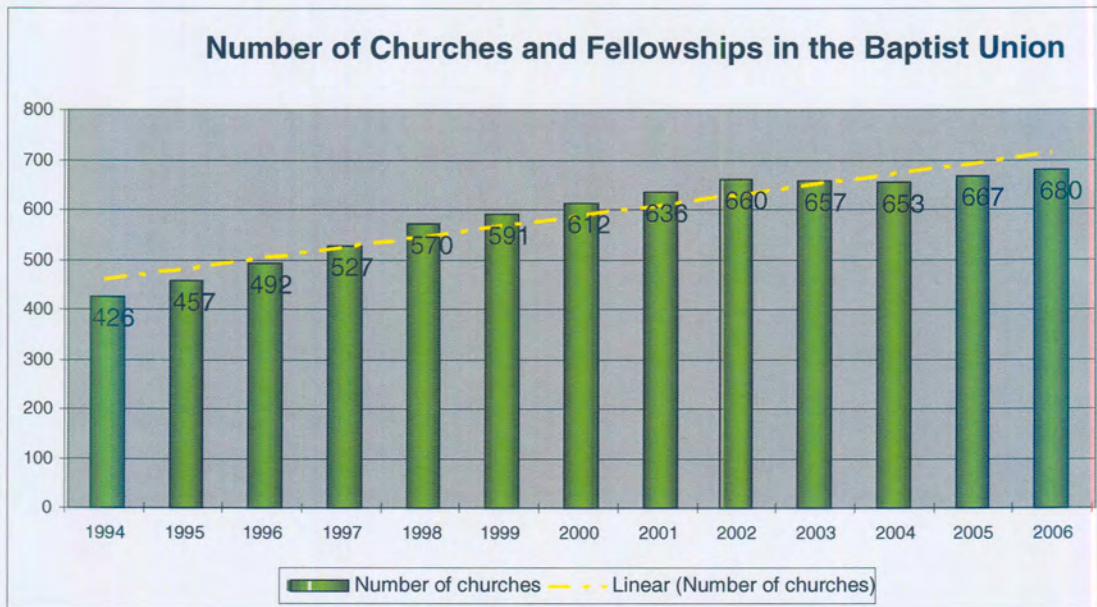
If one were to plan a projected growth rate to 2010 to be approximately 3% per annum, this would give us 694 churches in 2007, 715 churches in 2008, 736 churches in 2009 and 759 churches in 2010. However, the graph below shows the reality of the situation.

**Number of new churches added each year to the Baptist Union**
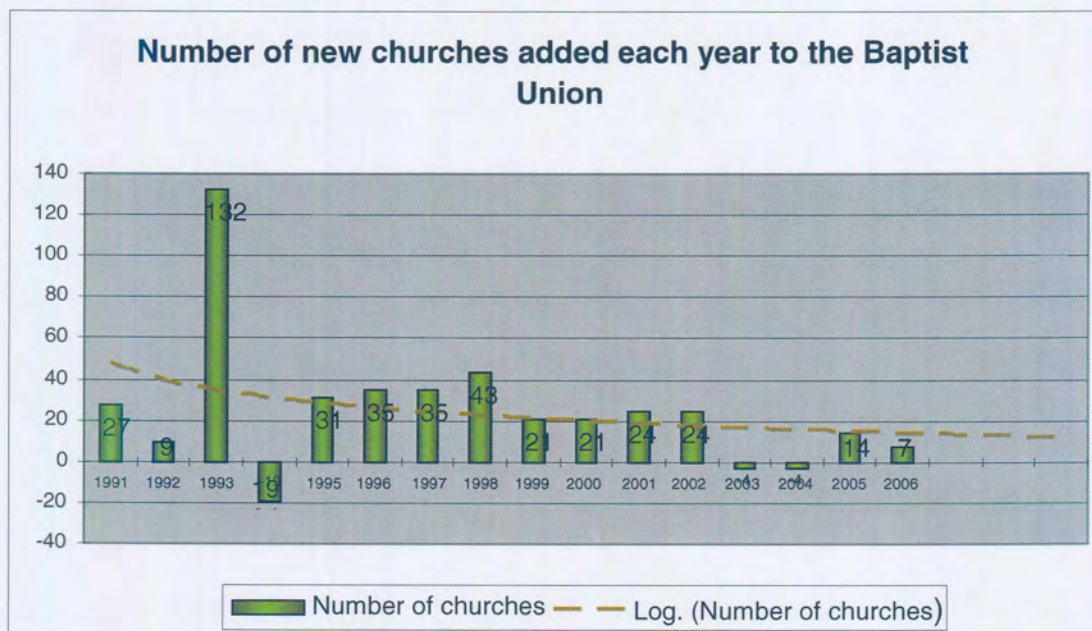
From 1991 up until 2002, for a period of 12 years, there was an average growth of 32 new churches per year. Since then, there has been a significant drop in the number of new churches – from 14 new churches in 2005 to 7 new churches in 2006.
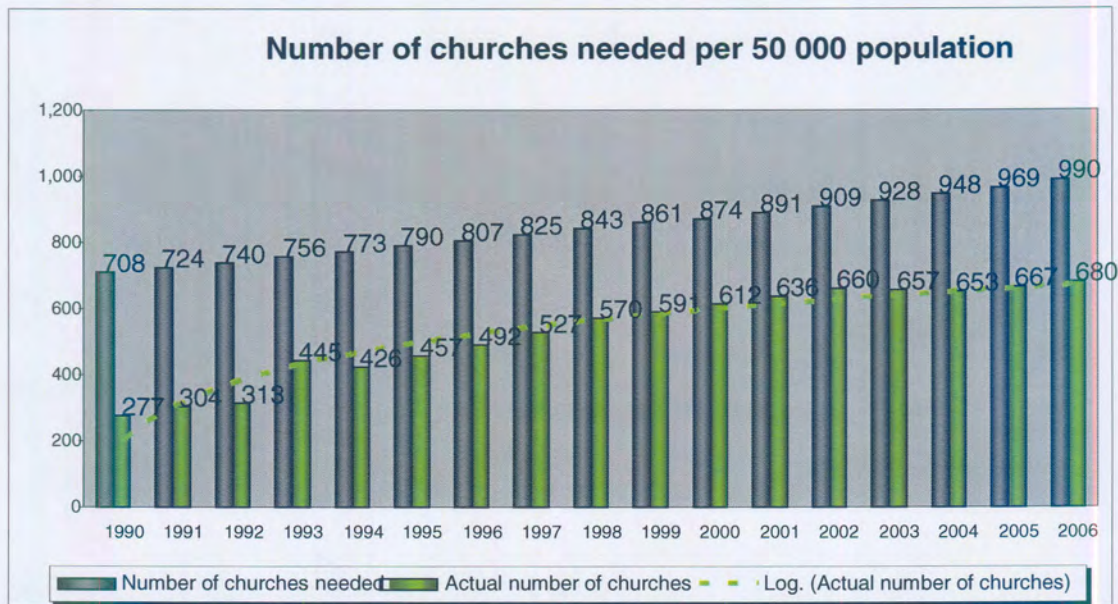

From the graph above, it seems that the BUSA is doing well if one were to compare it to a church per 50 000 people. However, the growth needs to be seen against some benchmark. If one were to take the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in America which has 44 000 churches within an American population of 240 million people, an average of 5,000 Americans per SBC church. If we work on a benchmark of one Baptist Church per 50 000 South Africans, we ought to have about 1 000 churches. To achieve this goal we will need to launch 80 churches a year over the next four years. This is an annual growth of about 10%.

**Number of new churches and lost churches per year**
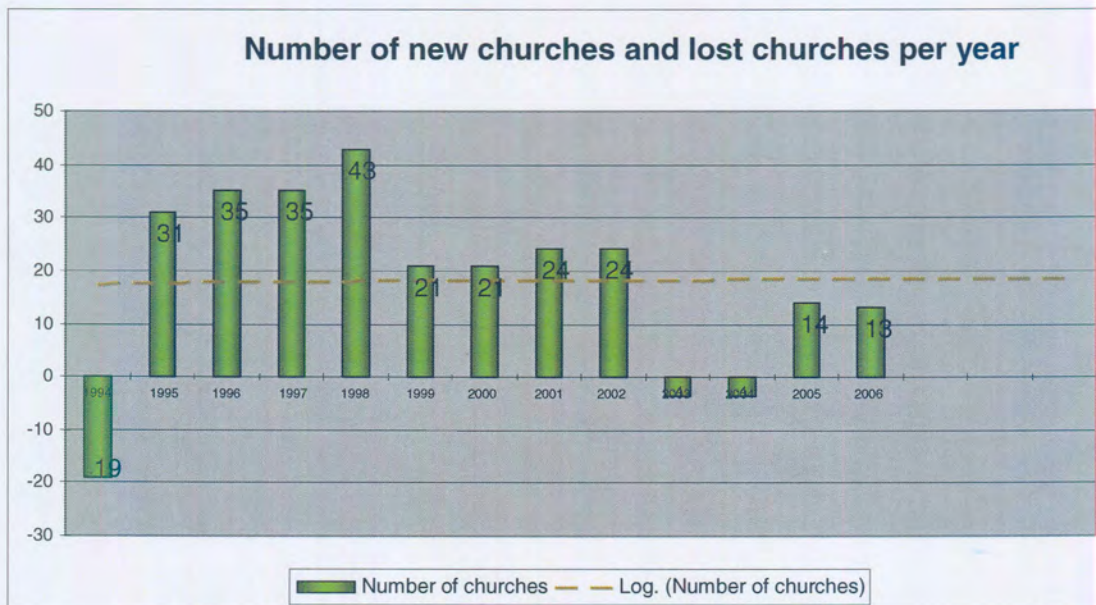
According to the graph above, there seems to have been a steady growth in the number of new churches in the mid-1990s. At the turn of the century, there was a consistent medium growth in the number of new churches. However, in 2003 and 2004, the BUSA actually "lost" churches – four per year in these respective years. This is, in fact, alarming as it not only shows no growth but rather a negative state of affairs. The next two years, namely 2005 and 2006 were more encouraging years as there were 14 and 13 new churches respectively. The existing situation is not a pleasant one. The current trend line suggests we will only achieve about 30 new churches a year, unless we do something exceptional or change our structures and strategy. This poses an enormous challenge to BUSA – hence this study of the role of the laity and its rediscovery in its function in the local mission of the Church.

Number of new churches formed per month
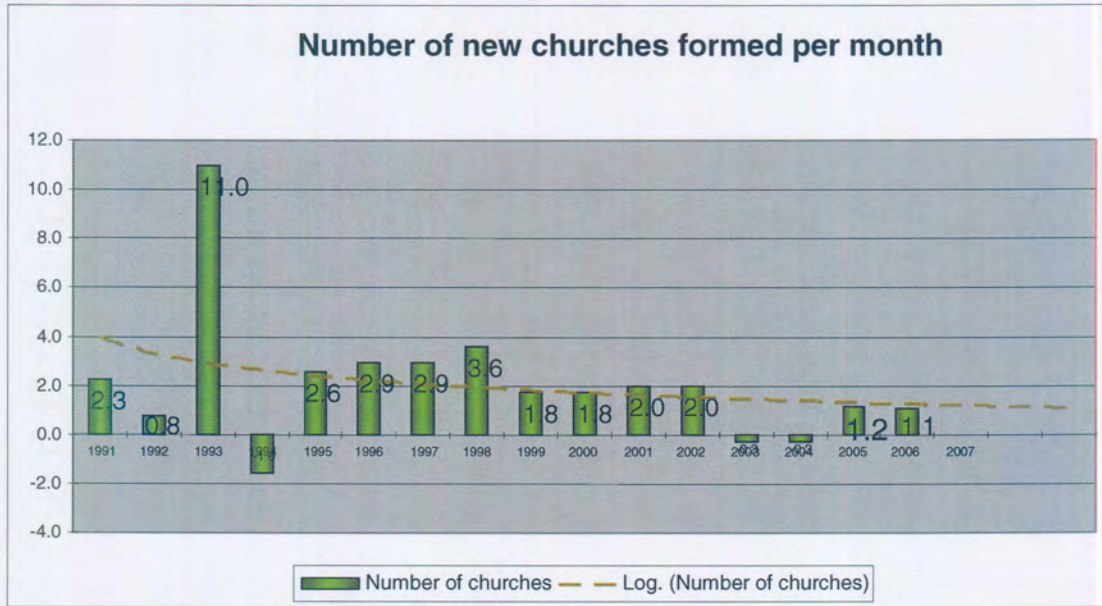
To achieve the desired goal of reasonable growth in the number of churches per annum, the required number of new churches would be 80 new churches per annum, which translates to seven per month or two per week. At the moment the BUSA are launching two per month, so there needs to be an increase in new churches launched of 350%. A new church every two weeks, for ten years is what is ideal!

## Number of Members of all churches in the Baptist Union
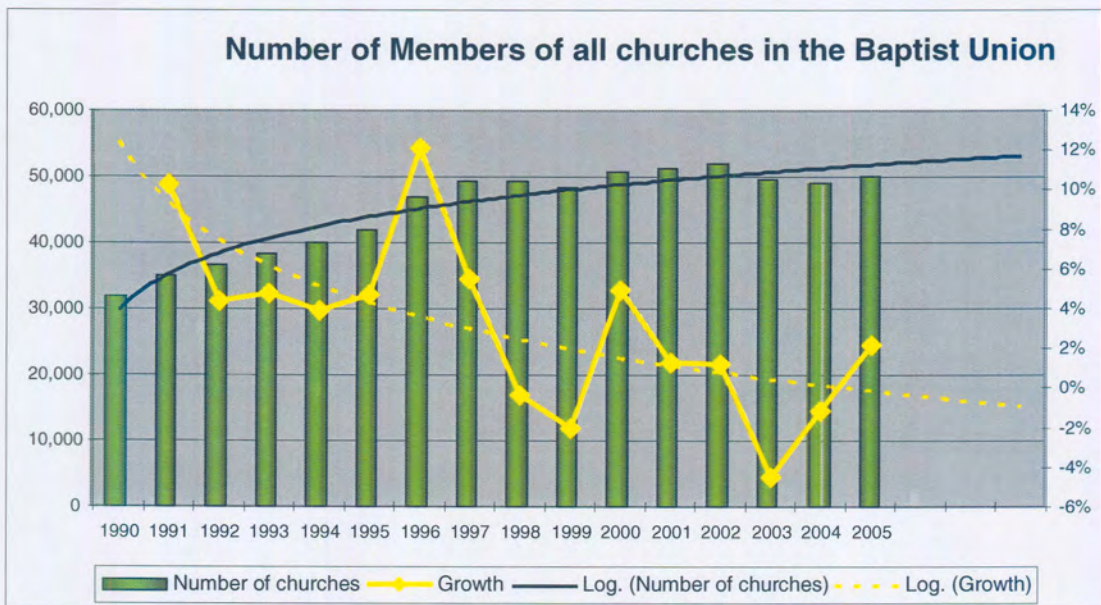
It makes sense that the growth in the number of churches was in the mid-1990s. Subsequently, the number of churches remained constant yet the number of members dropped significantly. If one examines the number of church members in 1995 (41 792 members) through to 1999 (48 215 members), there seemed to be a steady growth – even if it was a small percentage. From the year 2000, there has been a steady decline of members in the BUSA. From 2002, the numbers did not drop significantly but despite the small decline in church members, there should have been an increase. If one followed the average growth trend, there was an increase in church members of 0,90 % growth rep annum from 1991 to 2001. Since 2002, there has been an average decline of 0,43 % per annum. The distressing result is quite simple: many of the churches have become "empty shells".

Growth in Baptist Church Membership compared to Growth in the SA Population
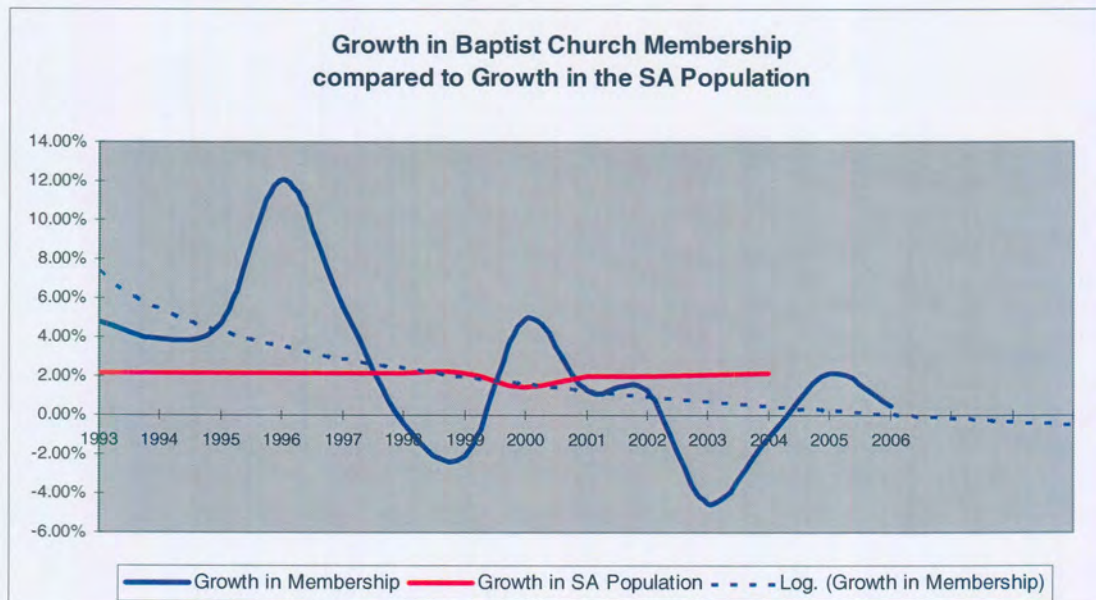
The South African population growth has been at roughly 2 % per annum. Baptist membership growth has historically been at higher than this 2 % per annum – certainly between 1990 and 1997. However, the trend is downwards and the projection is for it to fall below the population growth into the future.

Target membership at one percent of the SA population
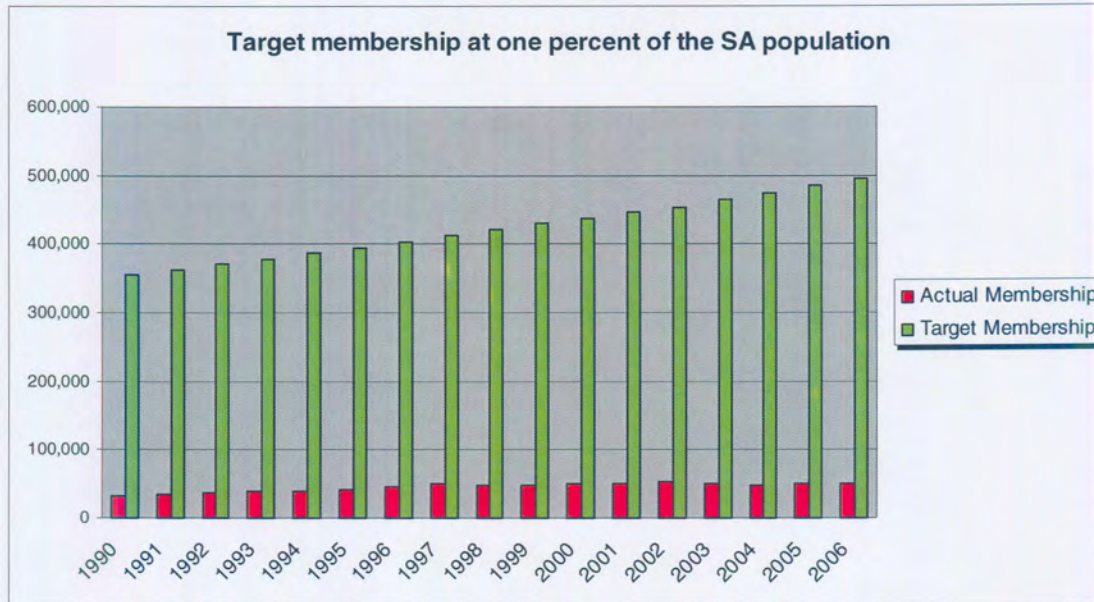
To get to a level of 1 % of the South African population, the BUSA will have to grow 10 fold. This does not necessarily mean that more churches need to be built. It does, however, mean that there needs to be a significant growth in the involvement of the church members so as to get participation and contribution of more church members and their role in the local church.

Average Membership per Church in the Baptist Union
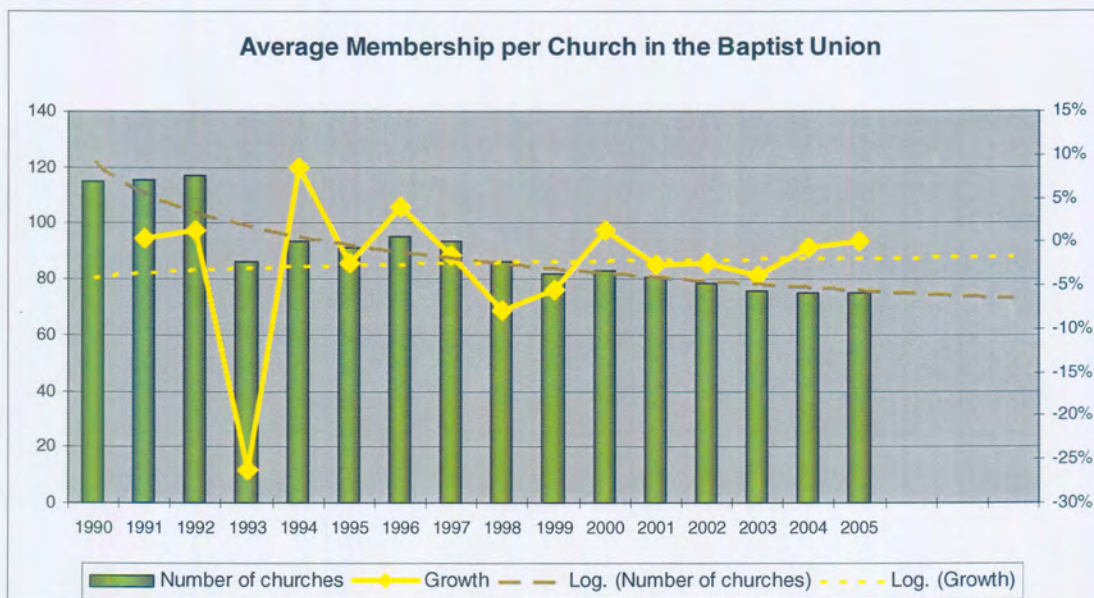
It would seem that the average church membership numbers have been irregular over the years. If one were to follow the trend, it seems that there is a decline in the average church membership – just as there is a decline in the number of new churches. Even from the graph below, one can examine the numbers and see that even if there are no new churches, the numbers of new members should be growing. However, this is not the case. So, one can deduce that there is no increase in new churches as there is no need for new churches as there are no new members to "occupy" these churches. This should raise an urgent alarm for the BUSA.

Average Membership per Church in the Baptist Union

Legend: Number of churches — — Log. (Number of churches)
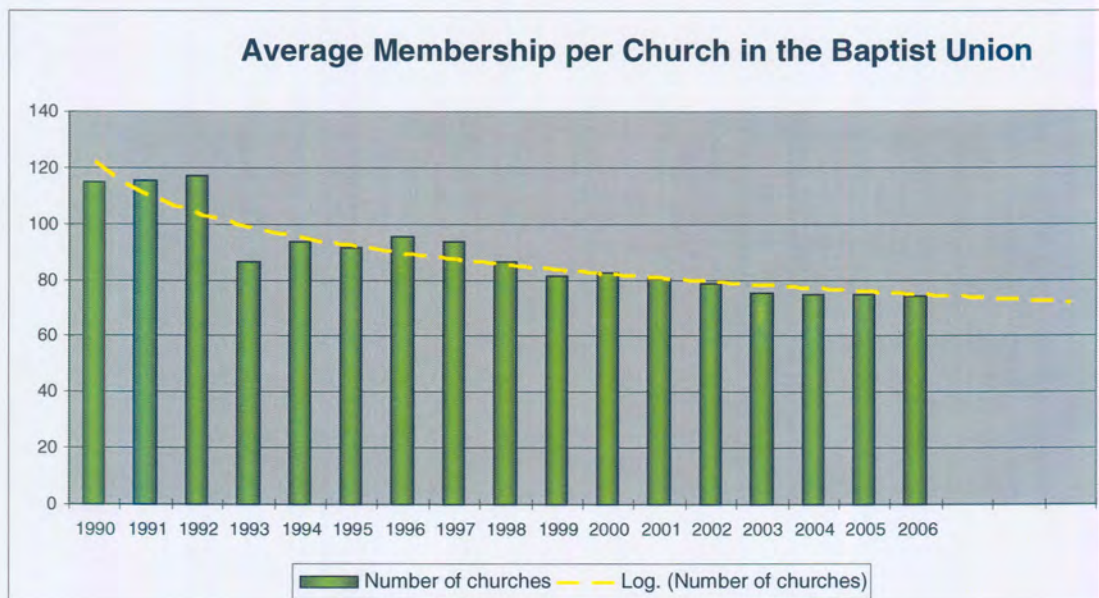
As per the figures in the chart above, there was a time in the BUSA that numbers were growing steadily – in the early 1990's. Then there was a major drop in the year before the first free and democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 and it seems a conscious effort was made to increase membership in the churches of the BUSA – only for two years though. Since 1996, there has been a steady decline in the average membership per church. This is not a good indication for the BUSA in the future especially if the population in the country is increasing. One does not always measure success by numbers but if a church or any organization is growing, numbers do represent growth – it is certainly true in this case.

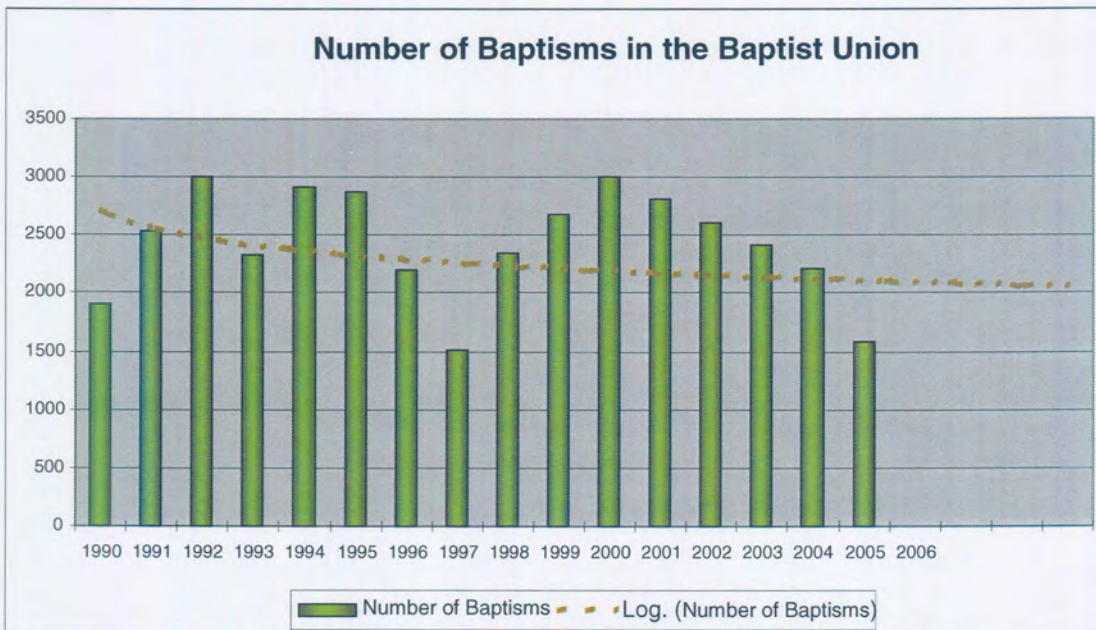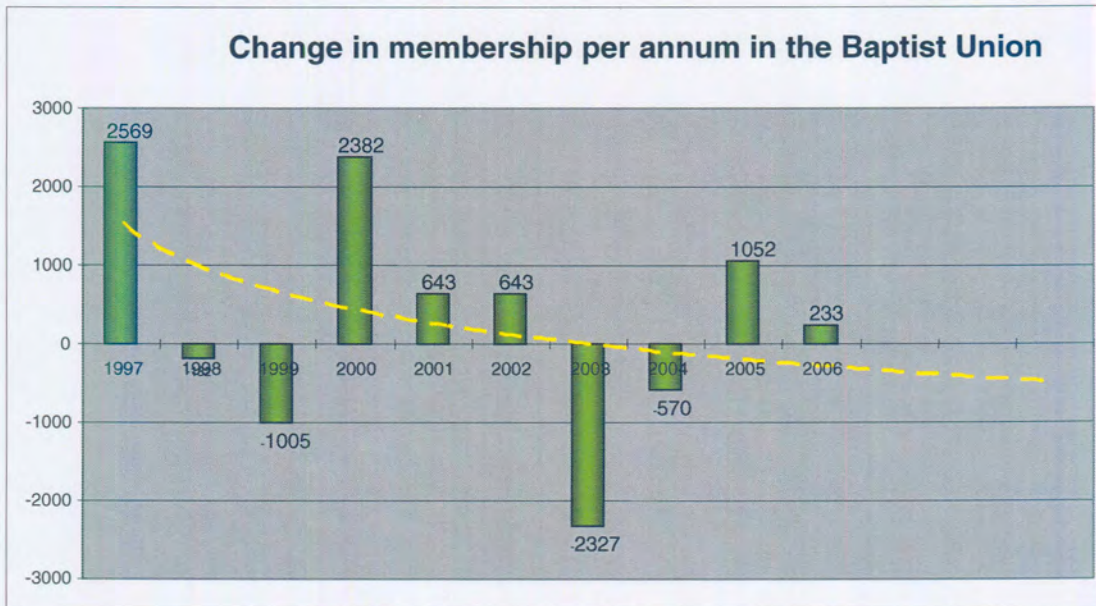## Change in membership per annum in the Baptist Union
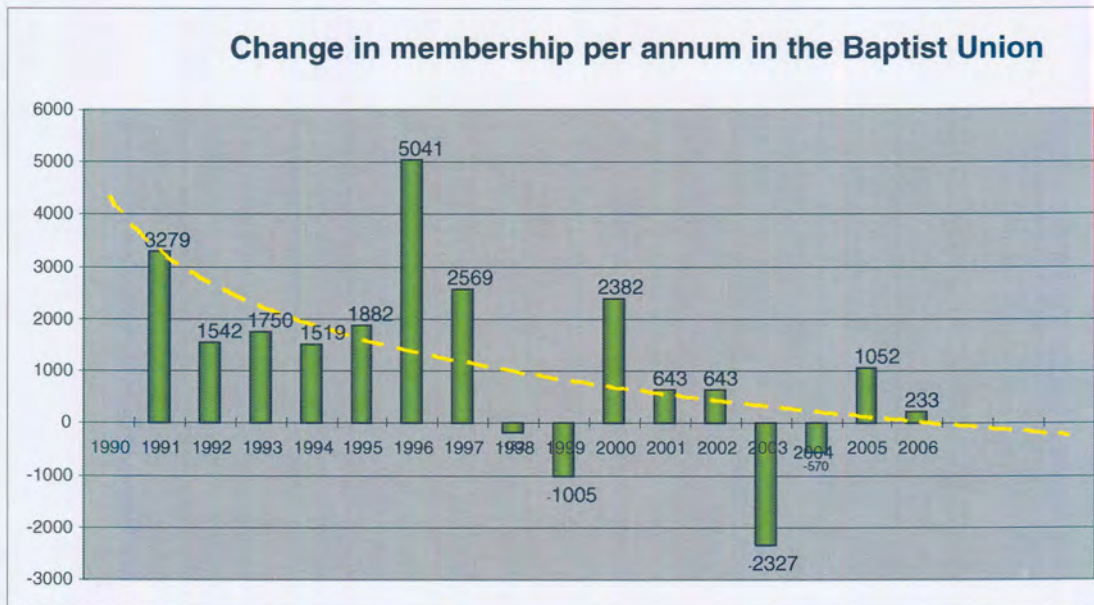
As one considers the chart above, it is concerning that a church would actually decrease ever. If one were to consider that members are putting their gifts into practice and sharing their Christianity with others, the church should be "attracting mankind to the availability of His life-changing grace" (Aldrich, 1981:25). There should be no reason why numbers should be on the decline – ever! One needs to also consider that members may have immigrated to other countries or moved to other denominations – these figures would be hard to discover – surely there would be others coming to South Africa. Essentially, it could be assumed that these figures could balance one another out.

As the chart below indicates, there is a slight increase in numbers of people joining the BUSA, however, these numbers are so miniscule that there are not worth really mentioning. If one considers an increase of 233 persons in 2006, out of 50 270 members in the BUSA, this is less that 0,5%. According to Stats SA, the overall growth rate for 2005-2006 was 1,06% (according to "*Mid-year population estimates 2007*" from Statistics South Africa – available online from www.statssa.gov.za). These figures put things into perspective as they show the "negative" portion in the growth of the members of the BUSA. The BUSA will need a radical agenda which will change this situation in order to ensure the Word of God goes out and that people will be committed

to the cause of evangelism and discipleship – which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Change in membership per annum in the Baptist Union

Year	Change
1997	2569
1998	(small)
1999	-1005
2000	2382
2001	643
2002	643
2003	-2327
2004	-570
2005	1052
2006	233

Number of Baptisms in the Baptist Union

Years: 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

Number of Baptisms — Log. (Number of Baptisms)

The number of baptisms could represent the rate of evangelism that is happening in the BUSA. The report is of approximately 2 500 baptisms per year. If this is true and one assumes that the BUSA are seeing some 2 500 converts every year, then the problem

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of the growth or addition of church membership per annum is even worse than was anticipated initially. The reason this is of concern is that it would seem that there are 2 500 new people coming into the church, however, overall there is a much smaller growth in numbers of the BUSA.

Number of baptisms per church per annum
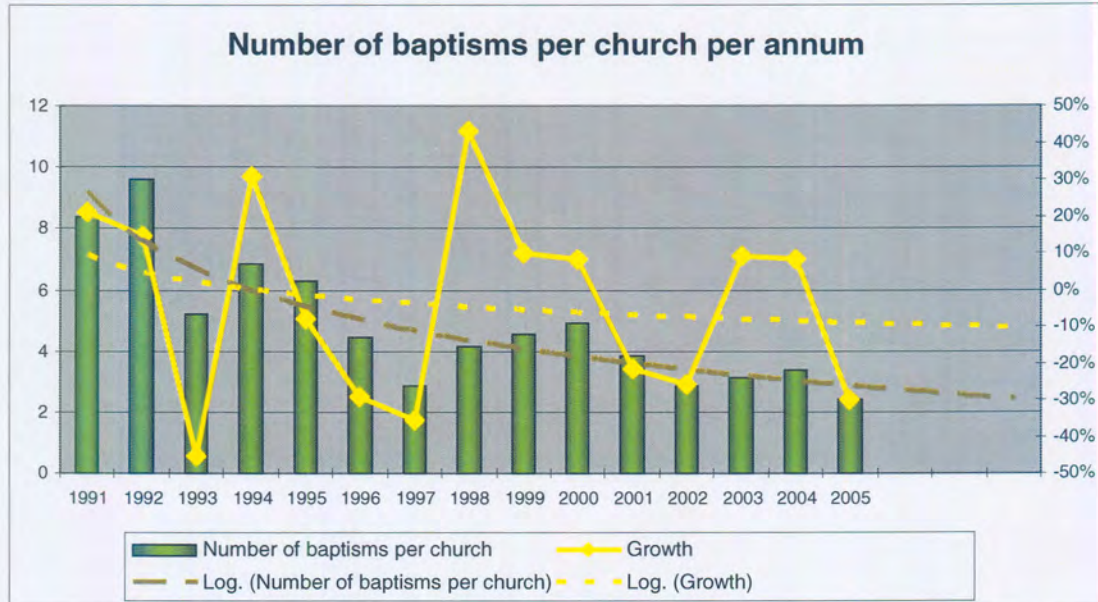
If one considers the graph above and the graph below, one realizes that even the baptisms per church per annum are decreasing at a rapid rate. This does not show a bright future with reference to the growth in the BUSA unl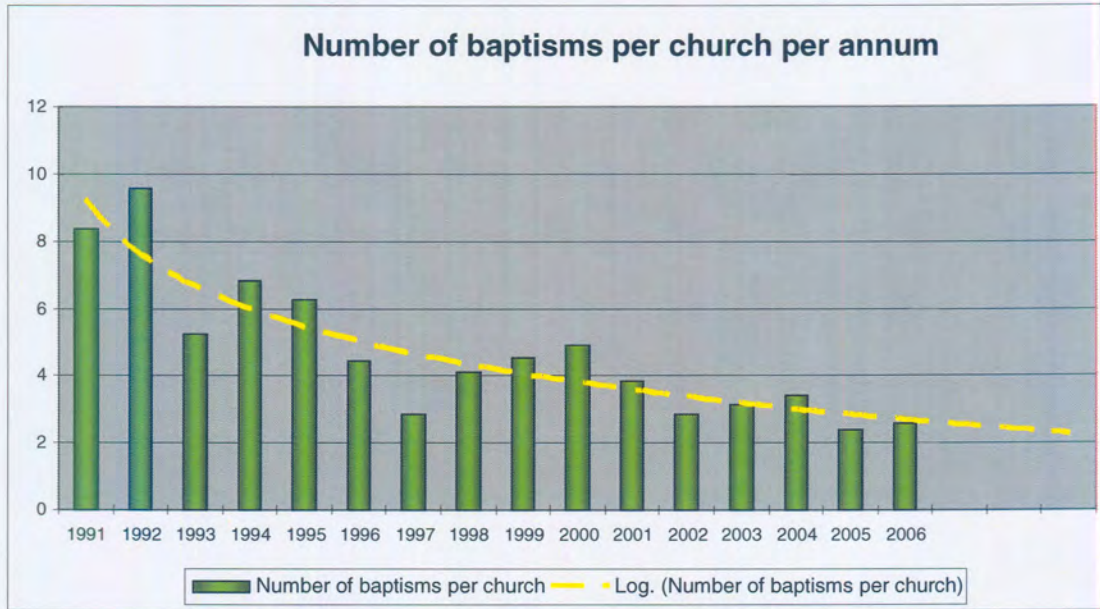ess, as mentioned before, radical measures are taken to begin to put a strategy into place which will allow churches to become "missional churches" and get each member of the congregation to see the plan purposed from the Bible – as mentioned in Chapter 1. The trend is a downward one which should be a concerning one for the BUSA. If one connects conversions and baptisms, the growth pattern is non-existent and of major concern. The BUSA will need to be active in setting a policy into place which will educate and empower members in the local congregations to be more "missional" and endeavour to understand their gifting and put them into practice. This must be treated as a matter of urgency.

Number of baptisms per church per annum

Number of baptisms per church — ■ Log. (Number of baptisms per church)

After evaluating the figures of how many people remain in the church after they have been baptized, one sees from the graph below that there is a major shortfall in the rate of people who stay on in the church and become members and actively participate in the church. Not since 1997 have there been more people joining the BUSA than people being baptized. This begins to show us that the problem may lay in discipleship. It would be a major tragedy if people are converting to Christianity, becoming aware of their need for baptism, becoming baptized, and then leaving the church or not getting involved in the local congregation. It will not help if there is an intention in reaching all the peoples of the earth with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ if people are leaving the church after they have been baptized. If they are going to other churches or denominations, this would not be a major problem. However, this does not seem to be the case as figures would have balanced out if other Christians from other denominations joined the BUSA. The problem seems to be one of lack of discipleship and perseverance in mentoring people after baptism – as the two graphs below point out.

Rate of conversion of baptisms into membership

New members ■   Baptisms ■
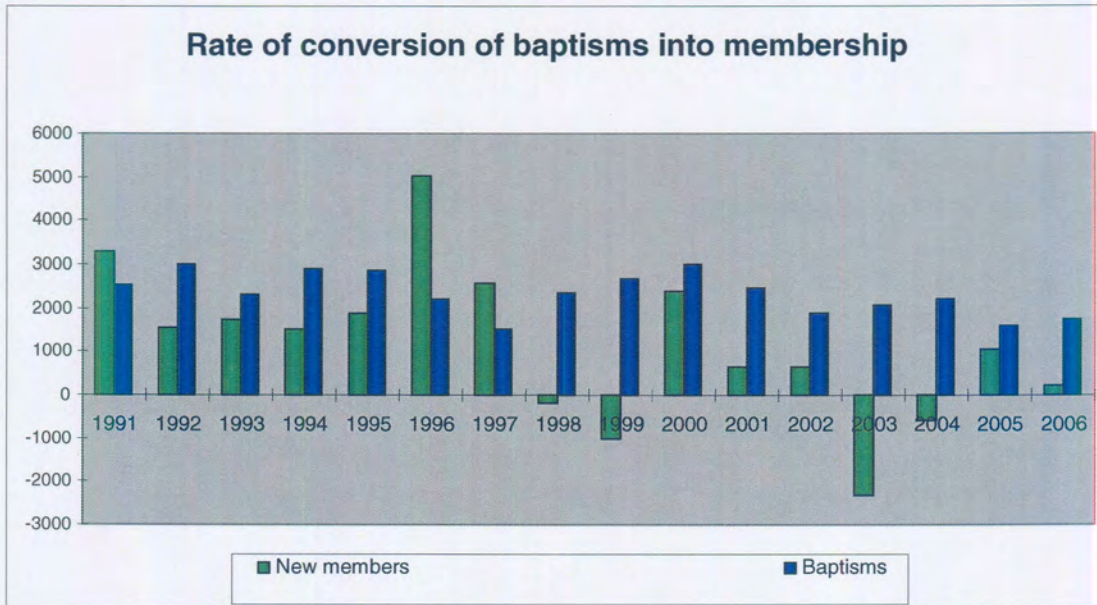
As mentioned above, not since 1997 have there been more members taken into fellowship in the local congregation than have been baptized. It is imperative that the church in our day study the Scriptures and obey the teachings of Jesus Christ. The laity is to discover the task of the church and put it into practice.

Rate of conversion of baptisms into membership

New members ■   Baptisms ■

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Number of Sunday-School Children in the Baptist Union
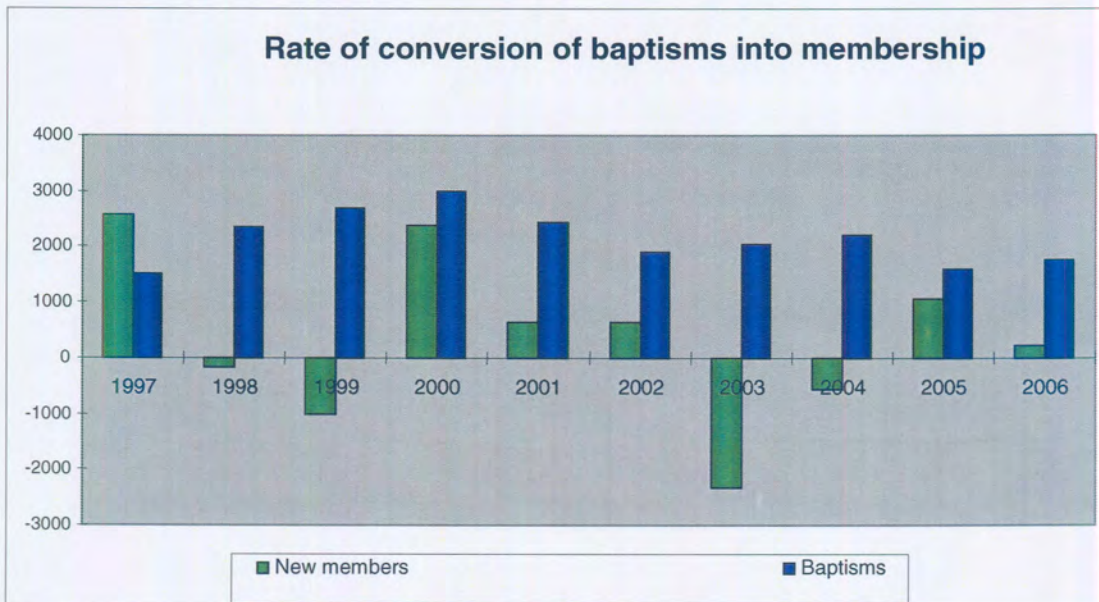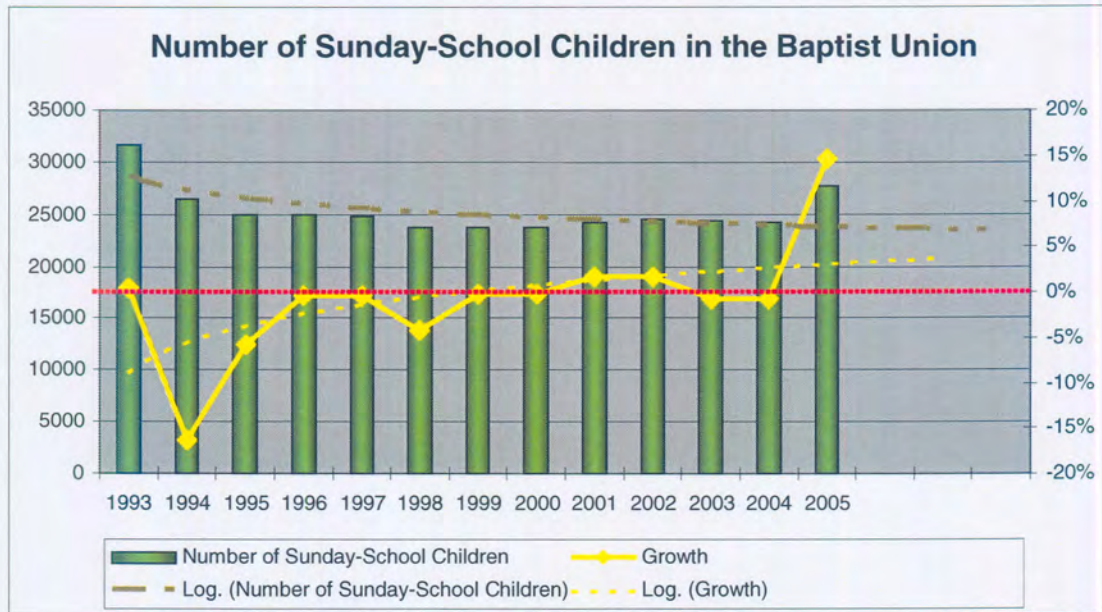
From the graph above and below, we understand that there has been a steady growth in the number of children in the BUSA. One needs to be cautious not to lose these children in the future as members of the church. Plans and strategies will need to be implemented – including discipleship arrangements – in order to keep these children in the church. Mentors to these children will need to realize that these children are not the church of the future but rather the present church and need to keep them involved in the church. These children will need to be educated from the Scriptures in all the different facets of theological education. These children will need to be developed in areas of the church where there are needs and people will need to model a way of life to them that will keep them in the church and encourage to participate in activities and programmes in the church. Goals and objectives will need to be set up in order for the children to get a good grasp of the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers as well as empowering children to think "missionally" and eventually grow up to be effective leaders who will train others to do the same.

Number of Sunday-School Children in the Baptist Union
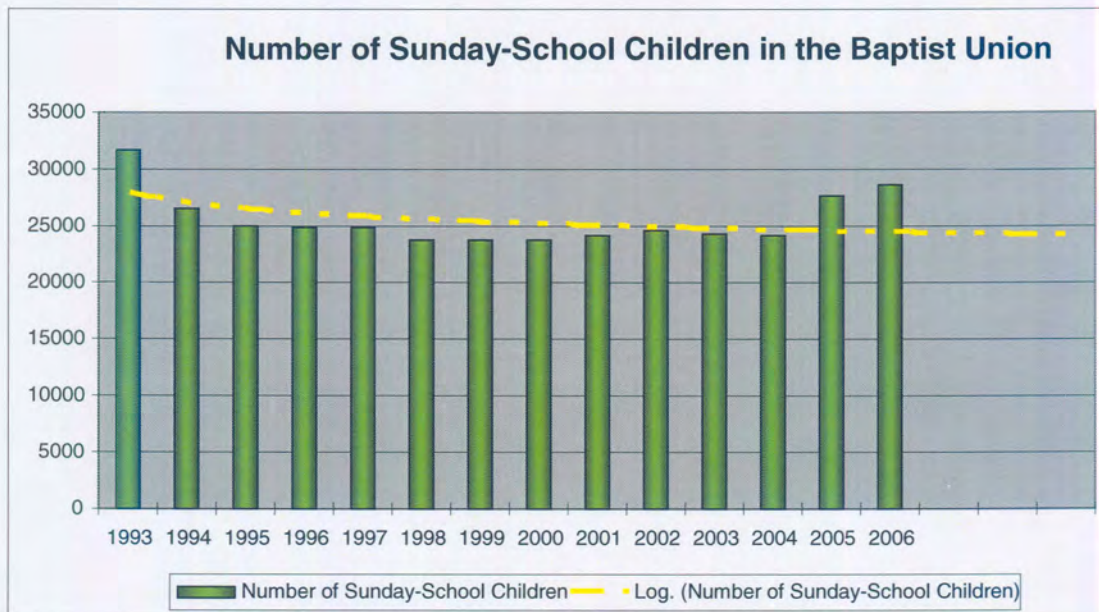
From the graph above, we see that more than half of the people in the BUSA are children. There has been a pleasant increase in the number of children more recently. From the graph below, we understand that there has been a radical increase in the number of children per church. Whatever programmes are currently in operation, these need to be continued as the growth has been good. It is the follow up to keep these children in the church that is crucial in order for there to be a sustainable growth for the future of the church. This process may be an emotional one that affects the whole church as adults will need to get involved in order to model and develop an ideal paradigm that children will be able to follow in order for them to remain and grow in the local congregation. In this process, there will constantly need to be the understanding of why this is being done as well as the set goals that are in mind – these would be to keep the children in the church in order for them to grow up, develop and mature in the church. The objective and history of the church must regularly be revisited and examined – for the sake of growth.

Average number of children per church
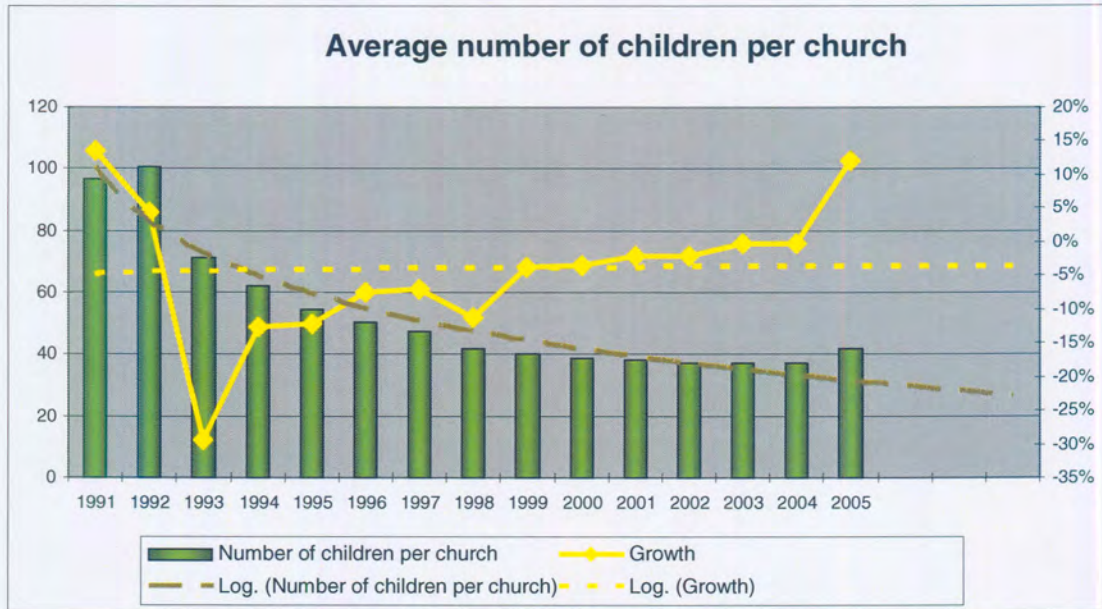
There are a fair number of Sunday-School teachers in the BUSA – as seen by the graph below. There seems to have been a steady growth over the years in the number of teachers that are teaching.

Number of Sunday-School Teachers in the Baptist Union
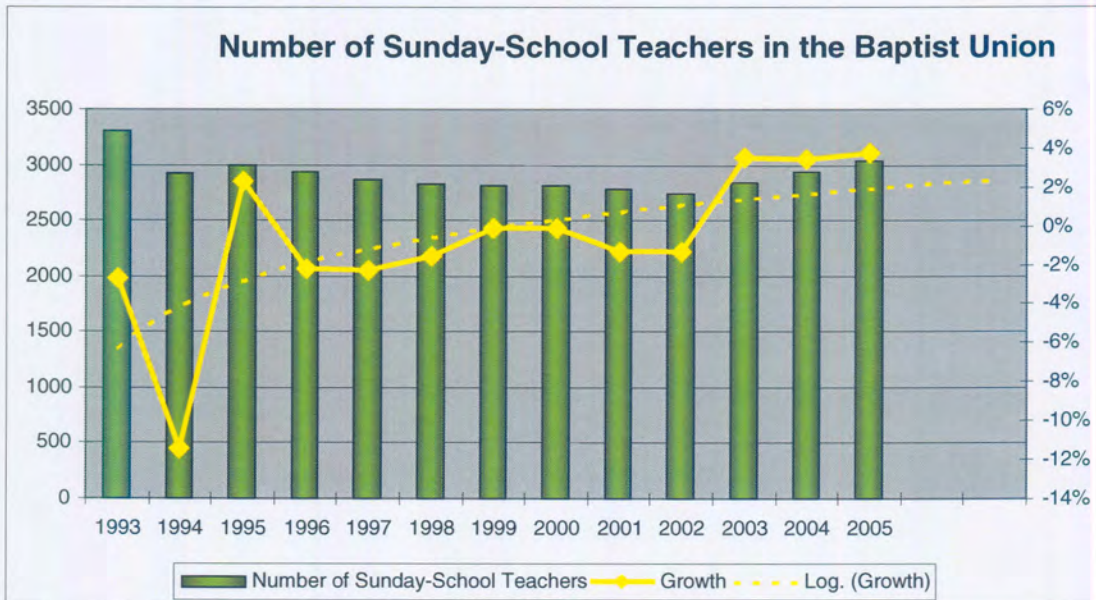
Although there is a steady growth in the number of teachers in the denomination, the ratio of scholars to teachers is rising. This could imply that we are losing teachers faster than we are losing children. From the graph below we see that the number of children per member has dropped from 0.8 to 0.5. This further suggests that we are gaining

church members who are post-family age, or we have churches that do not cater for children. This raises an alarm and a serious rethinking in the planning for the future.

Number of Sunday-School Children per Church Member in the Baptist Union

Number of Sunday-School Teachers per Church Member in the Baptist Union
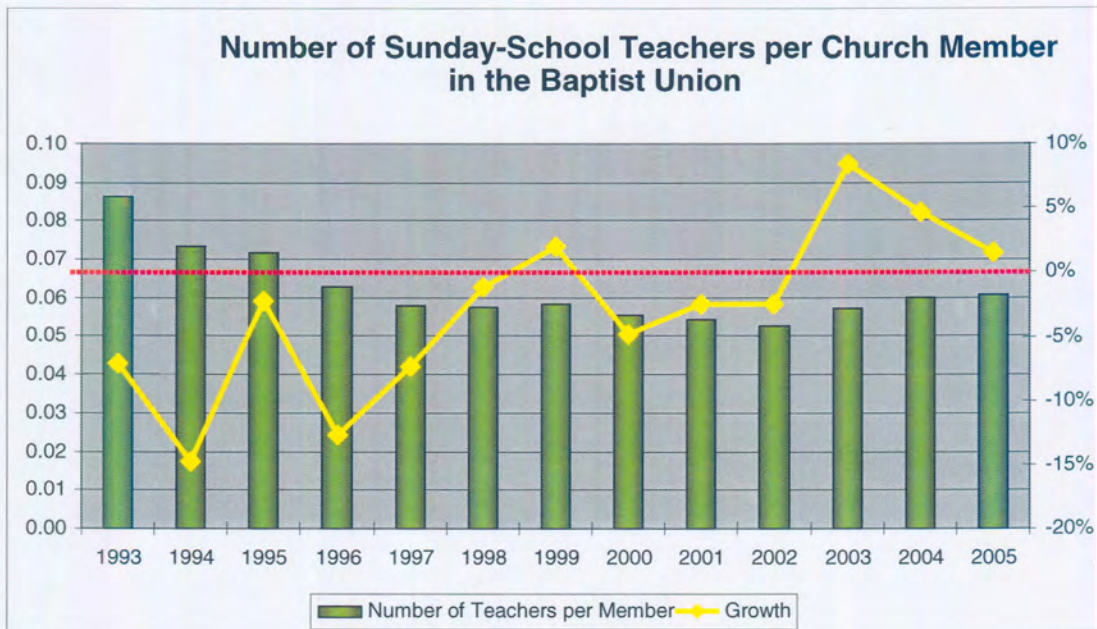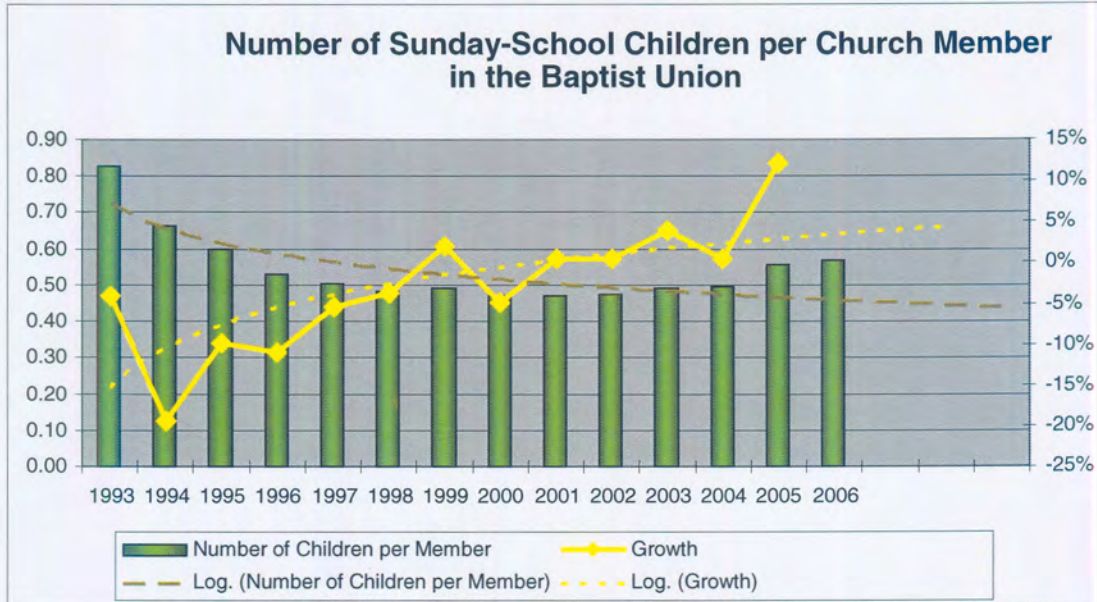
Eight percent of all church members used to be involved in teaching children, as seen in the graph above – although this was in 1990. As we can see, in 2002 that ratio has dropped to five percent. We can deduce, therefore, that fewer and fewer people are

committing themselves to reaching children. Planning in the future will need to take this into account.

Total Members plus Adherents
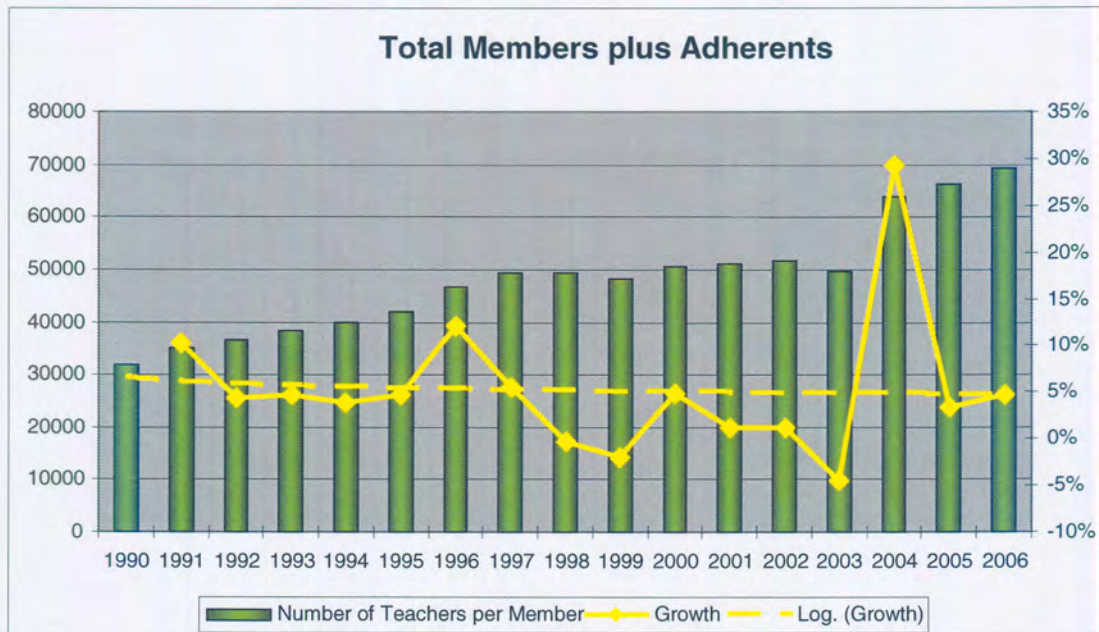
In the BUSA, not all people who attend the local congregations are members of the church. Many people are simply "adherents". From the graph below, we see that there is a fair growth in adherents as opposed to church members. This should raise an alarm in the denomination and question what the problem is why people are more comfortable in remaining adherents rather than becoming members. From all of the above statistics, it would make sense to suggest that adherents do not have to take on the responsibility of doing tasks in the local congregation, never mind the world. Again, there will be serious thinking that will need to be done when planning ahead. If this trend continues, the BUSA will be made up of "church-goers" rather than "disciple-makers". More emphasis will need to be placed on adherents becoming aware of responsibility toward God and the local congregation. This responsibility should lead to further vision and desire to minister to non-believers. If there is no responsibility, as an adherent, the trend will cripple the church and when difficulties are faced, there will be no people to deal with the difficulties. Without going into detail, adherents will need to

be educated on their role in the local church and be empowered to participate in the programmes and lives of the people in the church.

Growth in Membership versus Growth in Adherents
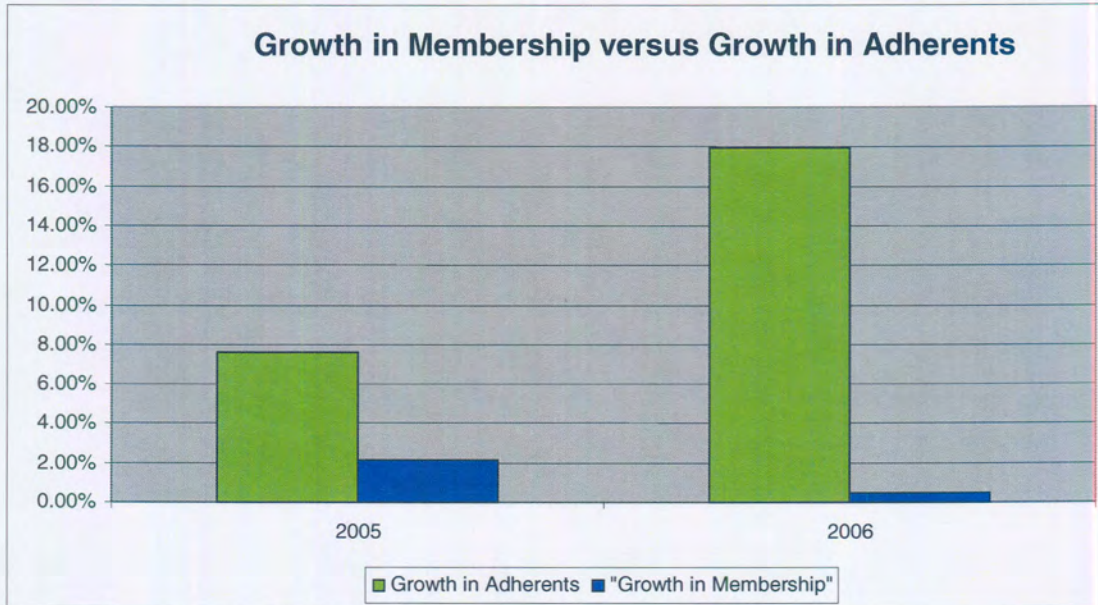
Without wanting to just make a difference on paper with figures, it would be wonderful if the adherents represented in the graph below would be members – not just members, but active participants in the affairs of God and the local congregation. This would make a major difference in the BUSA.

Total Members plus Adherents
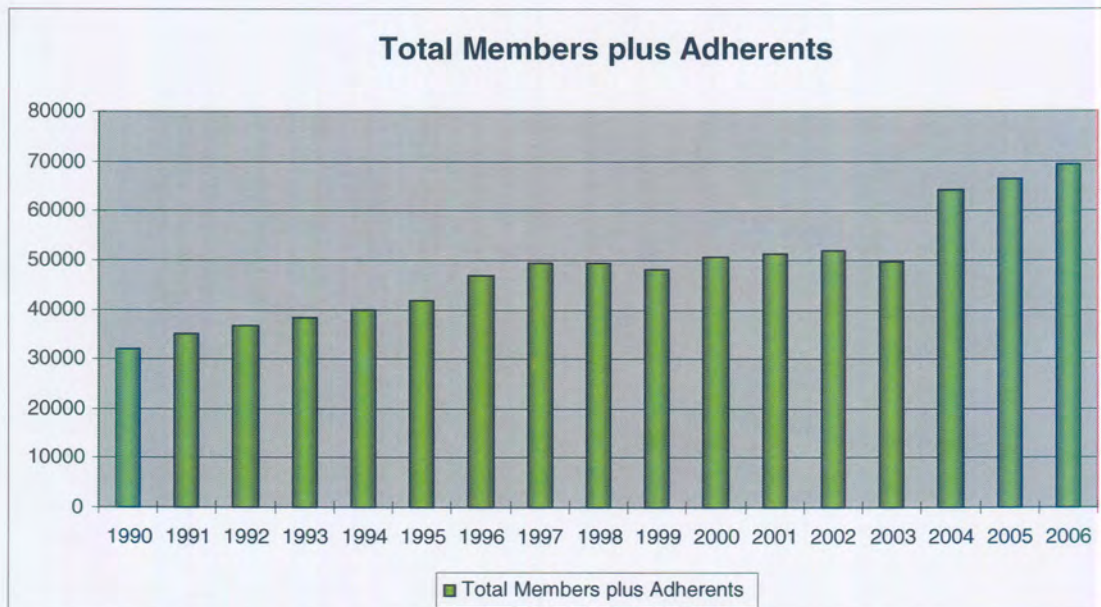
Suggestions as a way forward will be made in the next chapter, however, it should be noted that unless the BUSA takes a serious look and active consideration with reference to its members, and non-members (also known as adherents), the church will not have a decent effect in the world in which it exists – as Christ intended it to have. It is interesting to note that although the BUSA has approximately 50 000 members, unless the figures above are considered in planning for the future, the church will become less and less active and have a minimal impact in the society.

1.   IS THE BUSA A MISSIONS-MINDED CHURCH?

Although the figures shown from the research seem to be quite concerning with regards to the future of the BUSA, to follow are some of the activities that are managed by the Baptist Missions Department (BMD) of the BUSA. These do not include the activities and programmes facilitated by the 645 local congregations of the BUSA. To follow are some of the events that are/have recently – 2007 and 2008 – taken place:

There are many missionaries serving across the world through various agencies sent out by the local congregations who have sent out from their own "flock". The BUSA continues to be active in Africa, such as Malawi and Mozambique. Much work is also being done in Morocco as well as Mauritius. There have also been people training at a theological seminary in Zambia. A couple has recently been sent out to Angola and there are wonderful reports that come from a couple in India.

The BMD has also forged a good relationship with the Northern Baptist Association of Zambia (NBAZ). A team of ten pastors and leaders preached through the Book of Joshua in June 2008. They covered about 5 different Satellite Centers including equipping about 200 pastors and leaders. The hunger for God's Word is evident in Africa, and the BUSA need to take every opportunity to minister to those who are not able to attend theological colleges etc.

New opportunities are being made available in Africa. Through various missions' trips across the South African borders, partnerships are beginning to develop with Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as well as Ethiopia.

Early in January 2008, representatives from the BUSA attended Baptist Convention meetings in Zimbabwe. This has opened the door for the BMD to get involved with Trans Africa Training (TAT) as well as other ministry opportunities.

Church planting continues to be one of the thrusts of the BUSA. But the focus has also been on discipleship. Part of the criticism has been that the Union has not always planted viable churches, but work is being done in this department presently. The BUSA have also been helping churches to develop their "mission's involvement" and also have material available to be used by local churches.

Another effective ministry of the BUSA is Deeds of Love Ministries (DOLM). It was initiated in 1995 as a catalyst and facilitator of development and relief. DOLM aims to sensitize the churches and civil society to the social problems facing local communities, and to empower them to reverse the effects of poverty. DOLM is currently involved with leaders' skills development, job creation assistance and training in all HIV/AIDS matters, many social services which could bring relief and social aid.

The slogan that is being publicized by the BUSA is:

"Each one reach and disciple one; Each one plant and nurture one; Each one send and support one; Together impacting this generation for Christ!"

The current goals of the BUSA are:

"Doubling local church membership; Doubling of BU member churches; Doubling the number of children and youth being reached; 300 churches with Youth / Young Adult ministries; Doubling number of Children's Workers / Teachers; 300 churches 'Missions involved'".

In planning for the future, as a Christian denomination, the BUSA needs to be relevant and ask whether the church – and in this case, the BUSA – are working towards a goal of reaching all peoples of the earth with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The apostles were very aware of the importance of the local congregation in God's strategy of bringing the message of salvation "to the ends of the earth". In planning, it is to be remembered that the Church is different from any other organization or institution. The Church derives its nature from Christ. This is crucial in the planning process as it is in Christ that the Church originates and is

sustained and will come to maturity (Eph 1:4; 4:11, 13). This relational aspect of the Church to the Lord can easily be overlooked or even only theoretically ascribed to. This may be one of the reasons why the above figures are prevalent in the BUSA. It is crucial that the BUSA plan with this relational virtue at hand in order for the Church to fulfill its task of reaching out with the Gospel.

As the BUSA plans to rediscover the role of the laity in the mission of the Church, both locally and universally, people will be encouraged to plan their lives around biblical values and commands. If the above statistics are true, people (more especially the majority of the adherents) have become "spectators" rather than "participators" in the local congregations in the BUSA. If people are genuinely "born again" according to Jn 3:3, Jesus will be acknowledged in their lives and the task which He has given to the Church of making disciples of all nations becomes a priority which in turn shapes the lifestyle of church members individually, so that corporately the Church seriously undertakes its responsibility to reach other people so that they too may come into a relationship with the Lord and so participate in the reconciliation with God achieved through Christ for all people everywhere who respond to Him as Saviour and Lord of their lives (2 Cor 5:18, 19).

In considering the nature of the Church, it must be stated that the Church is part of the Kingdom of God which exists before Christ comes back to earth, for a second time. This is imperative to understand in the forward planning of the BUSA or else it will become "inward focused" rather than "outward focused" and easily become selfish in its outlook. The sovereignty of God extends to the whole universe and not solely to a limited number of people or any specific denomination. The BUSA will constantly need to remind itself that it is not an end in itself but that its very existence is for the purpose of bringing the Good News of how humanity may enter the Kingdom of God, according to Col 1:12, 13).

When a person has come into a relationship with Christ, the person will join with others and so be part of a local congregation. Such congregations of people would be "expressions" of what the Kingdom of God is like. This they do by living lives, based on Kingdom principles, before a watching world.

The nature of the local congregation is therefore that group of believers, disciples of Christ, who worship and adore their Lord together (λειτουργία), who study the Word of God all together (κήρυγμα) who meet together for fellowship and prayer (κοίνονια), who serve and care for one another (διακονία), and who reach out as individuals, and together, to neighbours and so be salt and light in their immediate communities. From within these people, some will be sent to other parts of the world to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with other peoples of the world (Ac 2:36-42; 13:1-3).

In the following chapter we identify some points for the church to observe where they are in the process of growth and maturity.

CHAPTER 5 – THE CHURCH'S ACTIVE ROLE IN THE CHRISTIAN MISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is obvious that accomplishing the Christian mission is a progressing enterprise; it is not accomplished all at once. In this chapter, we will identify some components for the Church to observe in order for growth and maturity to take place. It is crucial for the Church to understand the sending process from a Biblical perspective – as this is the call to obedience. Discipleship also has a major role to play in this regard. Coupled with the above, effective teaching is imperative. If the "mission field" does not become the "church field", and again the outworking onto the "mission field", then effective teaching may not have taken place.

2. THE WITNESS OF ALL CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD

A functional church which has engaged in every-member ministry where each member knows and understands their giftedness will also be involved in the world and be concerned to do what is good and right for others. When the laity of the local church understand that each are to be involved in ministry in the world, all the time, poverty and social injustices will not go unnoticed. Any voice of need in society will be addressed.

> The church is a community gathered to be sent out to the world. Community entails an understanding of the church as sacrament to the world. The church does not exist for itself but to continue God's work in the world (Foley 1986:52).

It is strongly acknowledged that a change needs to take place in the church structure before there can be a significant impact outside of the church. As we get together as a "family of God" – speaking together in love, men and women, of all cultures – our eyes and ears will be opened to the needs of those around us.

Care can be displayed in many different ways. What is needed is local churches – made up of people – that desire nothing more than to love and to serve God and allow the Lordship of Christ to be displayed in a corporate lifestyle. There is a desire to not only seek the best for the Body of Christ but also seeking the best for the people who are around.

When Christians fail to do good and serve the world, the witness is deafening. Essentially what is being said is that there is no concern for people and society. It is a choice to basically disobey God's commands in the world.

God expects His people to live righteously and this includes what *is* done and not merely what *is not* done. Active participation in the Kingdom of God leads to active participation in the world in areas such as forgiveness and generosity. Congar adds to this by saying,

> The Christian's position as God's faithful servant in the world makes two principal demands, corresponding respectively to an aspect of detachment or transcendence and one of engagement or immanence (1985:433).

Running through the Bible are expressions of God's concern for the poor and the afflicted. The ministry of Jesus evidenced compassion for persons in their physical as well as spiritual needs. Christian's are their brothers' keeper and they are to love their neighbour. The ministry in the world requires witness and

work. It needs to always be remembered that souls have bodies and that the whole person is to be ministered to.

Caring for the neighbour in need applies to more than persons who live next door or across the street. Deeds of kindness are to be directed toward those persons who are in need of assistance – wherever they might be in the world. In our day, persons who live great distances from us become our neighbours as news and media or other forms of communication make us aware of these needs. A known need triggers a response in the lives of concerned persons.

This was true in the early Church where we find Gentile Christians sharing their limited resources for the relief of Jewish Christians. As the Church grew, it cared for the needs of all persons, even those outside of the immediate circles of fellowship.

Again and again the Gospels record the Lord's compassion and action when He encountered persons with needs. We live in a world that is gripped in selfishness and we often conform to the ways of self-centered humanity rather than take on the ways of the new person in Christ with the renewal of our minds to do the will of God.

There are neighbours in the community God would have us help. The Church (people) should be sharing food, clothes and medicines with needy persons in the community. However, physical needs are not the only kind of help needed. Let us consider the emotional burdens of parents of the retarded child, the frustration of the woman whose husband left her, the widow or widower, the alcoholic, the teen rebel, the school drop-out, and the family of the young man who gave his life up in battle. The aged, the unemployed, the crippled, the lonely, the status-seeking person in the rat-race of weekdays and weekends are all people in need and opportunities for God's people to reach out to. Heartache and genuine need are all around us, but we are blind to these needs or

disobedient to God's call to ministries of assistance. The church is not helpless in the face of complex and social problems and is able to do something to help people as we move through life.

Genuine care can be a form of pre-evangelism, but whether or not people will relate to the Lord in whose name we offer them assistance.

Motives for serving society are varied. Among these are concern for the needy, obedience to the direct commands of God, and a realisation that God is being served when help is given to a needy human being. Doing good and serving others is a way the laity could contribute to the society and the world they live in.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

We have already stated that it is Christ Who builds His Church. He does this by giving to people His own life through the new birth, as they respond to Him in repentance, faith and obedience. By virtue of the relationship of the Lord to His people they become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, and therefore they live lives based on Kingdom principles.

It is through the church, which is "Bible-based" and "world-faced" that the ministry of Christ in the world must take place. Since there is no favouritism with God and since all people stand before Him as sinners and all those who have been born again, according to Jn 3:3, have come into Christ through His giving of Himself for them there is no place for pride in the heart of a disciple of Christ (2 Cor 10:17,18).

The higher gifts are not given to a person for their own use, but are given to the church for the purpose of building up the body to do the work of the ministry. These teaching gifts are given by the Head of the church so that they may teach

the Word as the Holy Spirit, who moved men to write it down, helps them to understand the mind of God, so that what is understood is spiritually discerned. Each believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit for the particular work the Lord has prepared for each one of His disciples and so in the case of those gifted to teach in these capacities, it is their particular ministry in the body, to teach.

These gifted teachers like all the other members of the church, also have needs, are also struggling with their own sinfulness and so they too must belong in a small shepherding group where they along with the other disciples of Christ can be brought to maturity in Christ as together all in the group are free to express experiences, conflicts, joys, needs, encouragement and where responsibility and care for each other is brought about through interaction. It is in this context that the many "one-another" commands of the New Testament can operate. Needs are met as together we encourage each other through the application of the Word of God, as we learn to pray together, as we learn to spur one another on to good works and all this in an attitude of love.

The elders and deacons are to lead the church with an attitude of servanthood. The idea of submission of the elders to the teaching gifts is to be seen not as an act of "lower office" to a "superior position," but rather as a submission of the elders and deacons to the Word of God, which is the authority for life and practice. The teaching team and the eldership team should exhibit in the church an attitude of submission to each other out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21). Without this type of example set, it will just be a matter of time before a hierarchical (secular) type of leadership develops, where Christ will not be honoured as the only Head of the local church.

When people who have been shepherded in the small groups by caring elders, gather together in the larger body of believers, the fellowship learned in the smaller groups will enhance the fellowship and worship and prayer of the congregation of believers. As these believers come together in the Body to

worship the Lord in prayer, in praises, in song, in giving, in communion, in baptizing of new disciples of Christ, and as they gather together to be instructed more formally in the Word of God, by those with the spiritual gift of teaching, the people in the different groups will be able to feed into the lives of each other and so minister to those in other groups according to the several gifts which Christ has given to the Body, so that it might be healthy and alive, a Church fulfilling its calling both locally and globally. The larger Church consisting of all the small groups, will possess more gifts to enable it to meet the various needs within the Body. Also, needs in the community may more easily be met as the gathered church becomes aware of them.

The church structured to meet peoples' needs in a shepherding/teaching ministry, will, through these various ministries, be "growing people" who are concerned for people. Missionaries who have this church life experience will go out from such churches to plant new churches in other cultures which will also be true to the Biblical pattern, that is, churches whose members are concerned for people.

Being part of the Body of Christ, each person, no matter what his giftedness and ministry, is to serve the Lord of the Church. Each is responsible to obey Jesus as Lord. He is the Head of the body, His Church. When the church responsibly allows the spiritual gifts to inform it concerning the will of God as revealed in Scripture, it will recognise those with the qualities of shepherds/elders, so that those gifted to teach and those who qualify as elders may guide the whole local Body to do the work of the ministry, so that, in unity and love, they may grow up in Christ, together.

Local churches growing in this way will make an impact for and in Christ, in their own membership, their own families, their own communities and on into the wider world as their own members become "world Christians" in their thinking, in their life – style and so they will train "missionary-minded" people who will reflect their

missionary minded Lord's concern for His world, in both thought and action. Churches built in this way will eventually send their own members out as missionaries to plant churches in other cultures which will also regard the Lord Jesus Christ as their Head and recognise that they too must be "lights" in their own communities and continue with the Christian mission as they eventually send out their own members as missionaries.

4. NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR THE LAITY (Missional Member Ministry – MMM)

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen tremendous social changes. After World War II the process of secularization gained momentum, urbanization proceeded rapidly and the world became much smaller because of improved communication. The church forfeited much of its significance and authority in society. This prompted reflection on ecclesiastic structures as well as the position of members, both within the church and in society. One even hears talk of a second reformation:

> "We are in the midst of a second reformation. The first
> had to do with getting the Scriptures into the hands of
> the laity. This one has to do with getting the ministry
> into the hands of the laity"
> (Henrichsen & Garrison 1983:9).

A significant gain is that church members have been set free from their position of passive dependence and are now permitted an independent position of their own. One could almost call it a revolution, the difference being that this is not a mere reversal of roles but the emergence of a completely new relationship between clergy and congregation. Each has its own distinctive contribution to make to make to the life of the church and the expansion of God's kingdom in the world. In order to clarify the position of church members and clergy in relation to

one another, Paul uses the image of the body of Christ – 1 Cor 12. Being Christ's body, believers are linked in a special way. The bond between them is not accentuated primarily by the image of a body, but by the fact they are the body of Christ. The church's bond with Christ creates a bond between its members (Ridderbos 1975:414, 415). Those who belong to Christ belong to one another. But this does not mean that the image of the body should not be used to portray the bond that unites believers.

With the above in mind, the church does not exist for its own sake. It is sent to serve the world and recreate it so that it may once again be the kingdom of God. The church may and should be occupied with itself. In Paul's letters he is continually admonishing, training, equipping strengthening and guiding churches to spiritual maturity. Such up-building is not the ultimate goal; believers are equipped in order to conduct their ministry in the world. The church are the called out ones who are laden with the fruit of the Holy Spirit ready to disperse love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gl 5:22, 23). The church cannot accomplish this witness and ministry to the world through its formal structures. It is the task of its members. The church as a formal organization sometimes pronounces on ethical or other topical issues, and sometimes takes part in negotiations; but the actual task of witness and ministry are performed by its members. They are God's representatives in the world. They live and work in the world, are part of its decision-making processes and move in all its inner circles. This is where believers act as witnesses of Christ and render service in His name.

In the past such witness was understood to consist in talking to people about their personal relationship to Jesus Christ; service was seen in the same context. Naturally this is important. But witness and service encompass far more than just reaching out to individuals and creating personal relationships with Christ. Christians have a duty to introduce a religious perspective into decision-making processes. Christians do not have their own rules for the economy, agriculture,

scientific work, medicine, the law and all the rest. Decisions should be taken according to the established rules of a particular sector. But this does not preclude the introduction of a religious perspective. Concepts such as justice, love, peace, humaneness, respect, equity, service and care are all religiously laden.

5. THE FOURFOLD CHALLENGE OF MISSIONS AT THE START OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

When looking forward to the challenges faced by the Church, one sees that faith in Christ makes the doctrine of the Church a foundational truth of the Gospel. The Church refers primarily to local churches whose congregating is to visualize, image, what Christ is like. Christ speaks, therefore the Church is characterized by teaching the Scriptures – Kerygma (Κήρυγμα). There is an openness to be taught by abiding in God's Word and by seeking the higher gifts. Teachers with spiritual gifts emerge and through Christ's love, the church is characterized by fellowship – Koinonia (Κοινονία) – and love for one another is created. Elders begin to pastor, care and disciple. In this process, Christ ministers and therefore the church is characterized by service to the whole person – Diakonia (Διακονία). These ministries are lead by Deacons who love the Lord and are committed to seeing His Hand at work in people's lives. This is done as an act of worship to God – Leitourgia (Λειτουργία).

Most Christians know little other than Christ had twelve disciples and that He commissioned these men to make disciples of all nations. But just what is a 21st -century disciple and how do you go about becoming one? In a world of scepticism, one is left behind with little ground for hope or vision. We are left only with ourselves, our own lives. There is no common good to be searched for; we have only personal preference to guide us. The isolated individual is left only with the struggle for self-fulfilment as we hire a new generation of counsellors to soothe us through our demise.

Can one try and find something positive amidst the wreckage. Through discipleship, Christianity is always holding on to what is good and yet reforming itself around a fuller vision. Christianity claims that a discipleship that is understood can provide purpose for us as humans, yet a purpose that does not cage us in, or deny our individuality, but rather opens us up to creatively seek new solutions, solutions that create and excite.

Discipleship has to do with holistic ministry – a service that engages the whole person. Discipleship involves itself with an incarnational approach – a "ministry of presence". People who decide to serve in this way are determined to make themselves available to people on a significant level. Incarnational ministry presents a challenge. It is easy to sit and debate the effectiveness of time limits on welfare or whether certain people deserve help or not. You do not incur much risk when you lash out those who are hurting and are vulnerable. However, it is more difficult to care by coming alongside a person. Yet, people are more likely to change when a caring person works with them instead of remaining far removed from their problems. Lawmakers can have some impact on people's problems, but it is usually from a distance. Caring Christians have the ultimate impact because they get close enough to bring change – this is discipleship!

Discipleship is something people do to other people. Men and women are not, on the whole, converted by texts pushed under their doors or messages on the Internet; they are converted by others who share the Good News with them. And of course, for sharing to take place, means that there has to be a presence.

The Church has experienced great problems of late, because of the limited number of ordained ministers who are available for community work. As a result, the untrained (laity) are being obliged to take over some of the duties of the ordained ministers. This has resulted in a shift of emphasis to lay ministries in the organised congregation. Through discipleship, the laity can work side by side

with the ordained ministers to live in the secular worlds as believers. The unique role of the laity is that they can carry the gospel into their life-worlds – their families, working environment, social and church life.

Many South African churches have made good progress towards incorporating lay members in the ministry of their local churches and equipping them for service to the world. Other churches and congregations take a more traditional view, leaving all spiritual responsibility in the hands of the ordained ministers.

Recent developments have done much to promote greater lay involvement in the work of the Church. More and more emphasis is being laid on the equality of all believers. Also, in many circumstances of discipleship, ordained ministers are unmarried, and therefore somewhat isolated from social problems. Lay members can contribute in many areas – family life, sexuality, injustice, racism, the role of women in spirituality and Church life, technology, ecology, and so forth. Lay people know what is going on in the real world and what the problems are.

More recently, there seems to be a willingness of the laity to be involved. There is a whole range of possibilities that seem to be emerging where lay members are prepared to join clerical leaders in formulating questions and considering the role of the laity in congregations and their contribution to the life of the church. It is no longer he trained theologians only who ponder the implications of discipleship: a wider spectrum of lay Christians are involved in the same task. Both trained and untrained are prepared to revaluate the church, to consider what it really is, and both are prepared to jettison some of the ancient ecclesiastical baggage. There is, more and more, the desired relationship of "co-responsibility". One might also describe it as teamwork.

Because of these changes, room is being made for the charismatic gifts of members. Social justice, love and compassion are biblical concepts extremely relevant to social structures. In the past Christians have often confined

themselves to the purely religious sphere. Today there is a growing awareness that social responsibility is an integral part of the Christian life, and it falls mainly within the province of the laity under the umbrella of discipleship. What is meant by social involvement is not primarily charity or handouts of essential commodities: it is the involvement of Church members in the decision-making process that determines the lives of people – politics, science, technology, culture, education, industry, business and so forth. It is the lay believer who lives in the world, knows its needs and is in a position to apply the principles of justice and love. Social justice and community service are often geared to the perception of a disadvantage in respect of material possessions, political and human rights, education and other opportunities. Unless the privileged identify with the disadvantaged, spiritual pride is a real hazard. This will result in a great obstacle on the road of discipleship.

The Church consists of people who will deliberately set themselves apart from all they know to be wrong in order to be of service to their friends and acquaintances who are yet strangers. Discipleship is real sacrifice, but the reward is great – the satisfaction of knowing you have followed obediently in the footsteps of the Disciple-Maker Himself, Jesus Christ.

In our understanding of the Christian mission and the responsibility of every local church to participate in it, as set out in this thesis, we become aware that something needs to be corrected so that the church may, once again, act more responsibly on her Lord's commission to make disciples of all nations. Andrew Murray asserts that,

> The missionary problem is a personal problem. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Author and Leader of Missions. Whoever stands right with Him, and abides in Him, will be ready to know and do His will. It is simply a matter of being near enough to Him to hear

His voice, and so devoted to Him and His love as to be ready to do all His will. He loved me and gave Himself for me... He tells me that as a member of His Body, He needs me for His service, and in love I gladly yield myself to Him... Every missionary sermon or meeting must give the love of Christ first place (1979:134, 135).

Secure in His love it is essential that the Church reaches out in His love to make Him known to people of all nations. The place to start is through prayer, that is, asking for directions from the Lord Himself.

5.1. Praying for the Nations

Jesus said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mk 11:17). Jesus moved from town to town preaching the Good News of the Kingdom. Moved with compassion as He saw the helpless state of people "without a shepherd", He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field" (Matt 9:35-38). These are just two references which indicate the responsibility of the body of disciples of Christ, to pray. Such prayer must be in accordance with the will of God, therefore, it is essential that it lines up with Scriptural directives. In other words, the prayer of the local church must be prayer, prayed through the Bible. It is through the Bible that we understand the nature, the power and the concerns of God. We, therefore, in Christ, approach, in prayer, our loving Father, Who is not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should be saved (2 Pt 3:9). As we make our way from Genesis through to Revelation, our understanding of God as One who is deeply concerned for all people everywhere will motivate us to pray along the lines of His concern. Prayer will bring to the Church a greater understanding of what God wants to do in His world through

churches whose members are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33).

David Bryant relates how a group of six church leaders, dissatisfied with the impact for Christ their church was having on the world agreed to meet for six weeks of prayer, four nights a week for two hours a night. Not knowing quite how to go about it, a suggestion that they pray through Scripture led them to choose Ephesians as their guide for prayer. Bryant continues,

> And what an unforgettable six weeks. You can't pray through Scripture like Ephesians and stay the same. Paul swept us along in God's purposes for the nations and the Church. And I believe we saw some key evidences of spiritual awakening as a result. We grew, as a congregation, in a new appreciation for world evangelisation and in a desire to begin giving ourselves to whatever God would ask of us in serving Christ's global cause. This was a new experience for me, and it could have been spawned only in prayer. Previously, I had run from missions, even in seminary. In thrilling ways, God has worked through that little church over the past 15 years to bring Christ to the nations (1984:30).

Prayer, as described above, and a vision for the world which the Holy Spirit gives to people, like the group of six as described in this story, led them to deeper commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ as they grew step by step in faith and obedience. They were able to view their lives in terms of what part they were playing in bringing the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Such thinking affects the entire lifestyle of a person. It leads one to evaluate use of time, use of money, choice of career, use of talents and abilities and to evaluate

all decisions made regarding life on earth, in terms of their contribution to making disciples of all nations.

There is a movement across the world today where people, churches are banding together to pray through the Bible for spiritual awakening in the churches and for world evangelisation. To quote Eric Alexander, a Scottish pastor and world missions leader, "The frontline in world evangelisation is the Word of God and Prayer" (Bryant 1984:1).

The local church which is keen to truly be light in its own community and to reach further afield needs to start seeing people in the world, the way God sees them. This understanding comes as His Word is searched and as members of His body echo in prayer the yearnings and desires God has for people. His desire is that they might know Him and come to Him in repentance and accept the forgiveness purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ and as they serve Him as Lord of their lives and become part of a local body of believers to live lives which will actively be involved in prayer for the people not yet reached by the Gospel.

Prayer focusing on God's world leads us to view continents, countries, religious groups, unreached peoples from God's perspective. Churches praying for God's global concerns need not fear that local issues will be neglected. A cliché which aptly describes how focusing on the world will bring to the attention of prayers the needs at home, is:"The light that shines the farthest, shines brightest at home". As we view, through the Bible, God's concept of His world and in prayer cry out to Him to help us make Him known throughout the world, He works in us a new vision for those in our own area of the world, so that while our global vision increases, our vision for the Kingdom of God to come in our local area intensifies. We begin to understand the reason why God initially blessed Abraham in Gn 12, namely, "to be a blessing". Again, put in cliché terms, "the reason for the filling is the overflow".

There are many helps available to the churches to teach us to pray in line with God's will. The task is tremendous and therefore the Church, often because of fear of the implications of total commitment to Christ, quietly ignores the call of Christ to be a house of prayer for all nations. The time has arrived – in fact, it is overdue – when each local church should stand before her Lord and in prayer ask Him to help her to become just what she should be. Such prayer will lead her away from selfish planning, spending, etc, and she will begin to give herself more conscientiously to her Lord in service for His Kingdom.

5.2. Developing Potential Missionaries

The church carrying out its responsibility to Christ's mission in the world must be involved in a shepherding/discipling ministry where every person is being guided to do the work of the ministry using the gift/gifts which Christ has given to each one for the good of the whole body. The local church is where potential missionaries are trained to be church people who are caring for other members of the body (as discussed earlier).

It is important that missionaries have the right concept of what the Church is all about and that the place of practical training for missionaries, is the local church. A Bible college training, which is essential for the understanding of the Scriptures, can never replace the training potential of the local church where elders model what the Christian life is all about and where gifted teachers, "speak the truth in love". The understanding of the local church which the missionary has formed in his home church is the model which he will seek to reproduce in the foreign culture. It is therefore imperative that our local churches see the importance of placing the emphasis of their ministries where the Bible places it, that is, on proper relationship to Christ as Head of the Body and of each individual and proper relationship in Christ of each member to each other, and with these in order reaching out to the lost – both locally and further afield. The local church is responsible to "grow" people who are moving away from

selfishness and who are learning to submit to each other out of reverence for Christ. People who are being trained to participate in the Christian mission, must be involved in the 2 Timothy 2:2 concept of teaching, training in an ongoing process, for the making of disciples in all nations.

It should also be in the local church that those who are gifted to go as missionaries should be recognised and encouraged to develop their gifts and to undergo any further training required for them to be able to minister in a different culture. The New Testament emphasizes the corporate initiative of the congregation or the informed initiative of missionaries in selecting suitable people as missionaries, e.g. Saul and Barnabas were set apart by the local church at Antioch (Ac 13:1-4); Barnabas took Mark (Ac 15:39); Paul chose Silas (Ac 15:40); Timothy was well spoken of by the church at Lystra, and was chosen by Paul (Ac 16:3) (Griffiths 1974:12, 13). Kerry Lovering, SIM missionary, states,

The Scriptural role of the local church as the sending authority and financial base for world evangelisation needs to be brought back in clearer focus (1975:11).

This thinking does not override the responsibility of the potential missionary candidate to respond negatively or positively, but it can mean that the individual's subjective sense of a calling is confirmed by the objective call of his local church body and together reinforces his assurance of the Holy Spirit's guidance (Griffiths 1974:17).

A missionary sent from a church which has nurtured him and has taught him the importance of caring for others, will go to the mission field in the sure knowledge that his church, which has sent him will: "Stand with him; Go with him; Sacrifice with him; Pray with him; And underwrite his support" (Peters 1972:221). Peters suggests that in the laying-on of hands at the missionary's commissioning service, we should see it as, "A divine authority we exercise and a responsibility we assume" (Peters 1972:222).

A local church where the Christian mission has high priority, will therefore, be training world Christians who will go to plant churches in other cultures and world Christians who will remain at the home base actively engaged in every aspect of support essential for the task of the ones who have gone.

5.3. Local Cross-Cultural Involvement

In our South African society we have many opportunities for the Christian mission because of the many different cultural groups which make up our total population. Each local church should be careful not to be blind to other cultural/language people in their neighbourhood, or nearby. Remembering that in God's sight, there is no such thing as an inferior or a superior people, but that each people group is in need of the same forgiveness purchased by the one Saviour, each local church must prayerfully consider its responsibility to "be good news" in its own culture and to the other cultures, locally. Bearing in mind the relational nature of the Body of Christ and how that emphasis is always moving us away from self-centred interests towards love of others for their good (Biblically defined) , we shall see how this continues to dictate our involvement in other cultural groups.

The domestic worker or gardener who works in the home of a church family is the closest other cultural person to whom the believer has the opportunity to be good news so that he/she may share the Good News of the Gospel. On the other hand it may be the Christian domestic worker or gardener who works in the home of a non-Christian family, who has the responsibility to share the Good News with her/his employer.

A case study of the involvement of a small church in the Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa area could serve as an encouragement for other churches to reach out to people of cultures different to their own, with the Gospel Message. Aware of local domestic workers who were keen to learn skills such as cooking,

dressmaking, knitting , crochet and English literacy, a group of church members offered tuition at a "College for Domestics" in the church premises. A domestic's employment agency was also set in motion. Side by side relationships were built as teachers and students met together each week. Included in the programme was a 15-minute devotional talk. Occasional Sunday services were held, when the Gospel was presented in the languages of the students by visiting pastors. For various reasons (lack of staff, etc), it was no longer possible to continue the college – but a couple of the students expressed a desire for Bible Study. Through the years the Bible Study Group has grown and as a result of shepherding and discipling in the group, various material needs have been met by different church members. Through the study of the Word of God, the spiritual needs of the students are being met. Several ladies have completed some Bible courses. These courses which are offered in most of the South African languages have been of great value to these domestic workers and they have encouraged others to enroll. These students are developing growing concern for their families who are living in the rural areas of our land. When these ladies go home for weekends and holidays, they share the Good News of the Gospel with their families, relatives and friends – by personal testimony of their relationship to Christ, and by using literature (records, tapes and visual aid charts) , all of which are available in their own languages. The interaction between the members of this Bible Study Group has made the participants aware that the different languages have different cultural nuances and norms, but as they get together under the authority of God's Word, they find that they all have the same need, Biblically defined, which is to know Christ as Lord of their lives and to share the Good News with others by "modelling the Gospel" and by verbally expressing what life in Christ is all about. In effect it can be said that this local church through the love of Christ expressed through those members who initiated the "College for Domestics", is having an impact for the Kingdom of God in and also among the domestics and gardeners locally, as well as further afield in South Africa, while the witness of these ladies in the Bible Study Group is also not unnoticed by their, in most cases, non-Christian employers.

At present there is much talk about cross-cultural reconciliation in South Africa. The only true reconciliation possible is reconciliation with God, brought about through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross which has dealt with the cause of our separation from Him – our sin. To the Christian, Christ has given the ministry of reconciliation, that is, the task of helping others to be reconciled to Christ. It is only as people stand together in Christ that they can truly stand together with each other. Therefore, local churches must reach out to other cultural groups for the purpose of building relationships centred in Christ, with Christians in those groups so that we may more effectively help each other towards fulfilling our Lord's commission to make disciples of all nations. People from different cultures must encourage each other. This will involve getting to really know each other – not only as members of churches meet together for church meetings, but as members get together informally in homes. It is Christ who has brought us into union with Himself, so it is important that He and His purposes in the church and in the world must be the focus of our attention. In developing such encouragement we must be careful that we are directed by Biblical principles. Prayerfully we must help each other build churches which, because of its Bible-based shepherding/discipling ministry, will be light and salt in our own communities (cultural groups), and houses of prayer for all nations.

5. 4. <u>Involvement with Particular Missionaries</u>

There are many missionaries who have left their land of birth for the sake of the Kingdom of God who are not being cared for adequately. There may be many reasons for this state of affairs. One possibility could be that in earlier days of mission sending the importance of sending people who were church-based was not as clearly understood as it is today, so that many people went off to the field without the support of a caring church, interested in them and in their work.

Involvement with members of your local church who are missionaries will of course be your first responsibility, but in cases, particularly of a young church where missionary vision is still developing and no one is ready, as yet, to serve as missionaries, it is of vital importance for such a church to find a missionary for whom the members can care. One of the many mission agencies in South Africa will be able to give details of missionaries who are not fully supported financially and will also supply the church with information regarding the work in which such missionaries are involved.

In a local church where the small shepherding groups are in operation, it is possible for each one of the groups to "Adopt a Missionary" (as we mention the word "missionary", we include his/her family). Whether the missionary is part of the church membership or whether he is adopted, the responsibility of the shepherding group is to care for him. The following are some suggestions of how to go about it:

1) Through regular correspondence. A member of the group volunteers to write regularly to the missionary and so develops a close link between the missionary and the group. What is written must be news for the missionary as well – keep him informed of church events, city events, country events and anything which is of particular interest to him, e.g. sport, new trends in his particular field of interest, latest books, etc,. Ask questions regarding the hopes, fears, goals, needs which he has regarding himself personally and also regarding the people he is working with. In this way the one who writes regularly will be building up an understanding of the battles, victories, difficulties and joys the missionary may be experiencing and also an understanding of how the people to whom he has gone are responding to the Gospel. Tapes, CD's, photographs, slides may be exchanged so that faces and people become more real to both missionary and care group. Other members of the group must feel quite free to write to the missionary – but one person must be responsible to see that regular communication takes place.

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2) Through regular prayer. Each week as the shepherding group meets, time must be given to sharing news of the missionary and his work and then prayer must be made accordingly. As members in the group pray for each other during the week, the missionary must be included as part of the group. It may be that the Holy Spirit moves members of the group to become part of the answer to those prayers, e.g. by meeting some particular need – financially or in whatever way necessary.

3) When the missionary comes home on furlough the caring must continue as the group in a practical way helps with accommodation, transport, groceries, clothing, and in any other material way necessary. They must also surround the missionary with lots of love and understanding as he moves back into his home culture, which for some can be rather traumatic, depending on the measure of cultural difference experienced on the mission field and also on the period of time he has been away from home. It is important to remember that the missionary, like any other Christian, needs to be refreshed spiritually, as well as physically, so that he may return to the field with new motivation and strengthened for the task to which the Lord has called him.

Involvement with missionaries in the small groups must be shared with other members from time to time when they get together in the larger body of the church. As churches become more involved with particular missionaries their vision for world mission will grow. Such involvement in the life and work of missionaries is another way in which the Body of Christ is moved away from just thinking in terms of their local interests, because a church, like a person, can be so involved in caring for itself that it may forget its purpose of seeking first the Kingdom of God.

5.5. Setting up a Missions Programme

If any local church is asking the question: "We're interested in world evangelisation. What can we do?", then here is a simple way to get going. If this programme can be widely promoted, many will be challenged to get involved and adopt it. Once implemented, radical change in the nature of world missions will be seen in just a few years.

3 Keys to a Missions-Minded Congregation

1. Centrality: Missions will become a vital part of your ministry and the life of the church when it is seen as central to the purpose of the church and not merely a department for those who are keen.

2. Motivation: Once the missions vision is seen as central the key role of the pastor is the motivation of his/her leaders and congregation. This will be achieved by a demonstration of personal commitment and by the evidence of clearly expressed goals and aims. Leaders have to know where they are going before they can take people with them.

3. Involvement: The third key to a vibrant commitment to missions is creating opportunities for people to be involved. Missions must not be seen to be the domain of a few "special" Christians, but rather the responsibility of all believers – Missional Member Ministry (MMM) (Griffiths 1983:8-16).

Practical Steps
1. Leaders need to make sure they are convinced about missions themselves. Missions-minded churches follow missions-minded leaders.
2. Evaluate the current situation. Identify key people and get to know missionaries currently supported by the church and by individuals in the

church.   As one goes through the process, build on what is good and sensitively bring to an end that which detracts from the strategy.

3. Set up a committee of committed people.

4. Start praying together about involvement in world missions.   Make sure everyone is active – Missional Member Ministry (MMM).

5. Begin to draw up a strategy of where the church needs to go.   This should include things like:

   - Priorities.   What areas of missions will the church seek to be involved in? Unreached, education, social needs, local, foreign, etc.
   - How will this be funded? Giving, budgeted, faith promise.
   - What type of missionaries will be supported?   How will suitability be determined? What criteria will be applied?
   - What kind of involvement and commitment will you have with a missionary?
   - How will levels of support be determined?   What happens if there are currency fluctuations?   What happens if the missionary retires or returns ill?
   - How will the congregation be motivated?
   - How can the congregation become involved?
   - What will your relationship with missions agencies be? Which agencies will you be happy to work with?
   - How will the missions committee function?   What sort of decision making power will it have? Who will be on the committee, how are they selected, and how long will they serve for?
   - How will the church's progress be evaluated?

6. From the above information begin to draw up a missions policy.   Remember that a policy should be there to describe procedure and to guide not to restrict and hinder – See Appendix E (Example of a Missions Policy).

7. Implement.   Start small and do not overextend.   Do not spread support and finances too thin, at the same time trust God for what is needed.

Implementation

- Preach about missions, study missions in Bible studies and Sunday School.
- Choose one or two suitable missionaries (if you do not already have contacts) and introduce them to the congregation.
- Start by regularly praying for them.
- See if there are any one-off projects that the church can undertake.
- Launch the missions program with a focused week or weekend.
- Determine how much regular support the church can afford (by faith).
- Keep in regular contact with the missionaries. Expect communication from them on a regular basis. Make use of modern technology such as faxes, email & telephones.
- Organise for members of your congregation to be involved in some form of short-term missions.
- Visit the missionaries.
- Identify potential missionaries from amongst the congregation. Begin discipling them and providing opportunities for ministry.
- Never stop communicating the missions visions with the congregation, and encouraging them to be involved.
- Keep promoting the missionaries. Find creative ways of allowing the non-communicators to share with the church.
- Build credibility. Choose missionaries carefully, with as much care, if not more, than you would another pastor.
- In bigger congregations it may be necessary to form smaller interest groups for individual missionaries so that they don't get lost in the crowd.
- Make the maximum use of missionaries when they are on furlough/home assignment.

5.6. Establishing a Missions Committee

For a church to participate more effectively in the Christian mission, it soon becomes apparent that a missions committee is needed. As the church is

exposed to missions through prayer for spiritual awakening in the church and for world evangelization; through local cross-cultural involvement; through a caring ministry to missionaries – people who have a particular concern for the Christian mission will surface. From such people, whom the Holy Spirit has particularly burdened, a missions committee should be appointed or elected.

The missions committee should be concerned with:

1) Creating interest, because interest in mission is not a spontaneous thing – it needs to be motivated.

2) Maintaining interest, because without constant renewal it will die out.

3) Encouraging commitment. Interest is not the same as commitment and for the Church to fulfill her role in mission, its members must commit themselves to "go" as missionaries or to "stay" as supporters.

4) Liaising with missionaries, so that the church is made aware of their situations (Lovering 1975:8).

A missions policy is included as an example – Appendix E. It does not claim to be perfect or the only way to do it. It is however one that has seen to operate with success in a local Baptist church. Two things need to be kept in mind with regards policies such as this. One, they must reflect the realities of the specific church for whom they are relevant and must constantly be reviewed and updated. Secondly, they must always balance being detailed enough to be useful, but brief enough to be accessible and actually be read and used.

5.6.1. The Overall Responsibility of the Missions Committee

1) To stimulate intercessory prayer by the congregation for world mission and for particular missionaries, by exploring ways to encourage prayer for missions.

2) To educate and inspire the congregation in the field of world mission by identifying areas where education is needed and by developing programmes in the different departments of the church which will help church people of all ages to become mission-minded.

3) To encourage members to enter missionary service by requesting them to pray that God will raise up people from their membership, who will be willing to go into missionary service, and then to help such people with appropriate literature and information front missionary societies and to help them assess their sense of calling.

4) To encourage members in the area of financial support, by making the needs of missionaries known. In giving it is important to maintain a personal interest in the missionary by the church, so that the missionary will not just be a worker "out there" informing the church, but will be seen as a person and part of the local body, still aware of what is happening in the local church and therefore praying for the members at home, as they in turn pray for the members on the field and meet their financial needs.

5) To develop a "missions policy" so that the church is kept going in the right direction and to prevent important decisions being made in a haphazard or emotional manner. Such a policy would be a tool for the church leadership to assess the missions strategy in the context of the whole ministry of the church. Once a missions policy has been agreed upon by the selected committee and approved of by the church it should be worked from carefully with much prayerful consideration and caution being exercised when an issue contrary to the policy comes up.

Although the above is the ideal in the steps to advance the missionary enterprise, there needs to be some recognized measurement to comprehend whether progress is being made. The simple task at hand is for each generation in their different geographical locations to be reached with the Gospel as well as ministry of the Word and service to all nations.

The above suggested ways for the local church to participate in the Christian mission are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to encourage churches in their own local setting to determine what direction they should be taking.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION AND PROPOSAL FOR A WAY FORWARD

1. The Need To Rediscover the Priesthood of All Believers

In this analysis, the researcher put forward what seemed to be a position of passive dependence of the laity on the clergy and that this was certainly the case in the BUSA. The researcher suggested that each member, both clergy and laity, had their own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the church and the expansion of God's kingdom in the world.

The proposition and hypothesis that was suggested at the outset of this research was implemented and put into operation. The researcher believed that the biblical view of the priesthood of all believers or every-member ministry (EMM) illustrates that empowering the laity at grass roots level to be ministers of the Gospel should be standard. This view alerts churches to change their priorities so that more people can engage in ministry that serves the nations of the world. This was certainly the outcome of the findings of this research. It was suggested that from the analysis and data ascertained, diagnosis would help establish a way forward to produce responsible and mature churches in the BUSA.

The research conducted made some interesting observations about the laity in the BUSA. It discovered that the laity is generally seen to be a threat to the leadership – although this was not felt by the leadership but rather by the laity. Indeed, there is a very shallow understanding of the priesthood of all believers by the clergy as well as the laity. This was, and still is, evident in discussions with members of BUSA churches – as the researcher is a participant observer and a lecturer at one of the two theological colleges of the denomination. Gifts have not been understood or discovered by the laity in local churches in the BUSA or even laity among other denominations of churches in South Africa. Generally speaking, it is apparent that most believers do not know how the church functions

or even how it should function. There is a major lack of education and an exclusion of church members in the activities of local churches.

The fact that believers constitute the church is indisputable; this circumstance cannot be overestimated. The theological attention paid to this fact has however in no way been proportionate with its significance. Although renewed interest in a "theology of the laity" developed in the late 1950's and continued to flourish for a decade or more, it has not really become an accepted field of theological interest. Only more recently has there been a renewing in this area.

At the climax of His ministry, Jesus said, "I will build my church ..." (Matthew 16:18). This was no afterthought but a declaration of His purpose which He had from the beginning. He was getting ready to build His church during the silent years of His preparation, during all the happenings in history and He has been building His Church until now.

However, it is no secret that the organized Church today is in trouble. Not only has the institution lost momentum, but in the eyes of many, has lost direction. Unless persons in the Church and theology come forth who can lead the church to renewal, there is little hope that the situation will change for the better. This has been established from the data collected on the status of the laity in South Africa.

In this research, the Scriptures have been searched to mediate Christ's authoritative presence which prompts responsible acknowledgement of His Lordship. Christ baptizes the believer in the Spirit into His body emancipating from individualism and isolation. Christian life is turned from ego-centric planning out toward service for others with Christ in the world through the Church. This faith in Christ leads to obedience of faith among all nations of the world (Rm 1:5).

2. The Importance of Local Churches

Local churches free these leaders by ordination to serve the church in equipping all believers to be ministers of the Gospel (Every-Member Ministry or Priesthood of all Believers). What sounds more practical in thought and action is the term "Missional Member Ministry" (MMM). There is resistance to the development of an elevated hierarchy which separates clergy from laity. Teachers and elders complement one another so that the Gospel can be seen and heard, that is, the Gospel is modeled through their lifestyles and families.

Local churches obey Christ's plans and purposes. The sacrament of baptism initiates believers into the local church where they serve in the continuum of discipling among all nations. Obedience to the Christian mission informs the life and activity of local churches and so they exist and plan accordingly.

Local churches select, equip and send missionaries across cultures in Apostolic Teams to present the claims of Christ to peoples. This proclamation of the Gospel results in Christian families from which elders emerge who are enlisted from the beginning to serve with the missionaries. Indigenous teachers are empowered to help in reflecting on the Gospel and in perfecting contextualization. The mission field is now becoming the church field.

In the field of discipleship, local churches understand that genuine responsibility for the Christian mission by sending their own missionaries. Socio-political action is only part of the Christian mission when it is informed by the Gospel of Christ as understood by responsible local churches. Denominations and Mission Societies must not hinder the development of viable local churches responsible for Christ's mission in the world.

Our study of the Christian mission leads us to conclude that people of every group must be reached with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is

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God's desire that all men everywhere should turn to Him in repentance from sin, and through the sacrifice of His Son, be forgiven and thus be reconciled to God. This reconciliation to God results in people, previously at enmity with Him, becoming children of God. Such people are made alive in Christ, by virtue of His Presence in them. Together with other believers they serve Him as Head of the Church. Local churches, where He is served as Lord, will be Bible-based in their teaching as gifted teachers unfold the Word of God and thus the membership will be prepared for the work of the ministry as the Holy Spirit directs them in particular avenues of service.

Local churches which are obedient to their Lord in what they have learned as the Word has been faithfully studied, will be characterised by a shepherding / discipling ministry in which the principles of the Kingdom of God are adhered to, and where its members show in their lifestyle what citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are like. Churches living like this will be salt and light in their own communities and will be involved in taking the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard it, both locally and then to other parts of the world where He is not known.

The task is tremendous and millions still need to hear that they can be reconciled to God. Let us, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, not be overcome at the immensity of the task. Rather let us, in faith, be obedient to the command to take the Gospel to all nations. Paul reminds us that, "...we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith" (Rm 1:5). •

The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is clearly prescribed in the New Testament – especially in 1 Pt 2:9, 10 – and totally ignored by most all Christians. It appears most Christians accept the two tier system where there is an "educated class" of Christians known as "clergy" and a "mediocre class" known as "laity."

Martin Luther, in the Reformation, reestablished the doctrine of "priesthood of all believers" from Peter's statement and from Paul's equality teaching in Galatians. Yet most Christian denominations – religious systems – establish and enforce a two class society of "clergy" and "laity." This has been examined and this idea seems an anomaly. But this was never Jesus' intention

The list of offices in Eph 4:11-16 clearly are gifts to be used for the good of the whole body of Christ. Paul did not imply or assign authority for one Christian to hold over another. It appears, few either know or care about Jesus' original words and ways as recorded in the Bible.

Therefore, the clergy and laity are to remember: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; one you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." (1 Pt 2:9, 10 – RSV).

3.   Issues to be Addressed by the BUSA

Each local body of believers must assess whether they have realised that their church has come into being for the purpose of making their Lord known in their own community and beyond. When Jesus is served as Lord, the selfishness in us which keeps us from moving out towards other people, is dealt with as we move with Him in the direction He wants us to go, that is, sharing His love and telling the Gospel message to those who still need to hear it. The church must fulfill her responsibility to be a bearer of the Good News of Christ, until He returns in power and glory. For some, it will mean going and for the rest, supporting in every way possible.

What is of imperative importance for the BUSA – as well as the Church universally – is to acknowledge there is a great challenge ahead and for the church to begin to put into practice its distinguishing factors: 1) The church's understanding in the sending process from a biblical perspective; 2) The role

discipling has to play in the process; 3) How effective teaching should be in the context (the mission field becoming a church field); and 4) The church field becoming a mission field in turn. These distinguishing factors are crucial for the end goal to be reached, which is the obedience of the Great Commission.

Although these distinguishing factors represent real steps in the advance of missionary endeavour which can be recognized to measure progress, they actually represent a continuous over-lapping and dynamic growth because of the goal of the Christian mission. Each generation in geographical locations must be reached as well as a ministry of Word and service to all nations.

As the planning for a better future for the BUSA takes place, the above basic concepts need to be the root basis of planning and discussion. The following must also be kept high on the agenda of planning:

> All believers have gifts which must be used to serve one another and the world. Thus everybody has a ministry.

> Although the church is the body of Christ and a living organism, it cannot exist in the world without necessary structures, organization and leaders. These people and structures are however in the service of their church and their position is secondary to those of church members.

> The fact that Christians have charismatic gifts does not rule out the need for training, teaching and education. Formerly comprehensive education was largely confined to the clergy.

> Training does not mean that church members become mini-Pastors. But this qualification does not exclude the possibility of church members performing certain functions which are currently fulfilled mainly or entirely by the Pastor.

> Examples of functions for which for which church members may be trained include the following:

- Visiting the sick, possibly specializing in visits to hospitals, chronically and terminally ill patients;
- Visiting newcomers to the neighbourhood;
- Taking charge of parts of the service of worship, including preaching;
- Certain facets of pastoral work – why should the Pastor be considered the best person to counsel young couples preparing for marriage?
- Care of the aged – here the possibilities are endless;
- Bible study group leaders;
- Home Visitation;
- Youth Workers.

This list could be extended.

Two important areas of training need to be mentioned. The first is the training and equipping of members to live and work in society as Christians. The focus should be on training people to conduct dialogue and to play a Christian role in decision-making processes. In such a training programme, members of a particular profession or engaged in a certain type of work, may gather in groups in order to work out a strategy and identify problems.

The second is to train and equip parents to be able to give their children religious and spiritual guidance. Research has shown that the home is the principal venue for spiritual moulding. Yet the church does very little to give parents active support in this regard. No institution will appoint people to posts for which they have no training or, if they are not fully qualified, will fail to train them. The education and upbringing of children is one of the very few tasks for which people are considered to be qualified. A detailed comprehensive programme will have to be drawn up if such training is to be at all effective.

It would also be important to allow the laity to do more courses through the two denominational theological colleges, namely, the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa (Randburg) and the Cape Town Baptist Seminary (Cape Town). These colleges equip members for ministry for the local church and the world. It would be wise to get more of the laity to attend more conferences on evangelism and missions – as it is observed that the clergy in the denomination are the ones attending most of these conferences. Short-term mission trips can be of great benefit to the laity if they are planned and executed effectively.

A few possibilities have been mentioned. Once this approach is applied in practice, certain weaknesses will emerge, as well as other fields where church members can play a greater role. Actually, the possibilities are innumerable.

All these possibilities will fade away overnight unless the church – Pastors and congregations alike – are prepared to radically reappraise the position of church members. The members are not the poor relations of the church; they are not a part of the church and they do not belong to it: they are the church (ἐκκλησία).

It is obvious that accomplishing the Christian mission is a progressing undertaking; it is not accomplished all at once.

May this proposed research result in stronger mature churches in the BUSA taking responsibility for the task of making disciples of all nations. Therefore,

> "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in
> the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another
> – and all the more as we see the Day approaching"
> (Heb 10:25).

4.   Future Research

It goes without saying that the researcher did not touch upon all the issues pertaining to the role of the laity in the church today – especially in the context of South Africa.   Future research needs to be done in a number of areas, for instance:

a) A thorough study of the relationship between the New Testament teaching on discipleship, and the empowerment of the laity in our time;

b) Peculiar challenges that await the BUSA at the beginning of the 21st century, such as, understanding of the socio-political context of South Africa, enabling the members to understand – and enjoy – the diversity in the South African society;

c) The role of women in the BUSA, in the offices of the church as well as in the positions of the laity;

d) The understanding and the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church today – especially in the ranks of the BUSA.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire – Religious State of the Laity in South Africa

SECTION 1

Sex: Male / Female _____

Age (in years):   18-23 _____   24-39 _____
                        40-60 _____   61 or older _____

Population Group: Black _____   Coloured _____
                      Indian _____   White _____

Marital Status: _____

Highest Educational Qualification: _____

Politically: Open-minded _____Conservative _____Medium _____

If a Christian, Religious Classification: Born Again _____
Evangelical _____   Charismatic _____   Pentecostal _____
Radical _____   Notional (not practicing) _____

Ever Heard of: Alpha Course _____   EE3 _____
                       Purpose Driven Life _____

SECTION 2

Do you consider yourself to be Christian or of some religious faith?

_____

_____

_____

What is the denomination or affiliation of the church you attend most often?

_____

_____

_____

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Overall, how committed are you to the Christian faith? Are you absolutely committed to it, moderately committed to it, not too committed to it or not at all committed to it? (Asked only among those who describe themselves as "Christian")

- Absolutely committed: _____
- Moderately committed: _____
- Not too committed: _____
- Not at all committed: _____
- Do not know: _____

There are many different beliefs about God or a higher power. Please tell me which one of the following descriptions comes closest to what you, personally, believe about God.

- Everyone is god.   _____
- God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect Creator of the universe who rules the world today.   _____
- God refers to the total realisation of personal, human potential. _____
- There are many gods, each with different power and authority. _____
- God represents a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach.   _____
- There is no such thing as God. _____
- Do not know.   _____

"The Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches." Do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree with that statement?

- Agree strongly: _____
- Agree somewhat: _____
- Disagree somewhat: _____
- Disagree strongly: _____
- Do not know _____

"Do you, personally, have a responsibility to tell other people your religious beliefs?" People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly: _____
- Agree somewhat: _____
- Disagree somewhat: _____
- Disagree strongly: _____
- Do not know _____

"Your religious faith is very important in your life." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- Agree strongly: _____
- Agree somewhat: _____
- Disagree somewhat: _____
- Disagree strongly: _____
- Do not know _____

"If a person is generally good, or does good enough things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"The devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"When He lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"The single, most important purpose of your life is to love God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"Success in this life is determined only by your obedience to God; nothing else matters." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"You are completely committed to personally making the world and other people's lives better." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"You cannot become a complete and mature person unless you belong to a community of faith that influences you." People were asked whether they

agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

"You are in control of your life." People were asked whether they agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with that statement.

- **Agree strongly:** _____
- **Agree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree somewhat:** _____
- **Disagree strongly:** _____
- **Do not know** _____

Which one of these comes closest to what you believe?

1. When you die you will go to heaven because you have tried to obey the Ten Commandments. _____

2. When you die you will go to heaven because you are basically a good person. _____

3. When you die you will go to heaven because you have confessed your sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. _____

4. When you die you will go to heaven because God loves all people and will not let them perish. _____

5. When you die you will not go to heaven. _____

6. You do not know what will happen after you die. _____

SECTION 3

"In the last seven days, did you read from the Bible, not including when you were at church?"

"In the last seven days, did you attend a church service, not including a special event such as a wedding or funeral?"

"How often, if ever, do you attend a religious service in someone's home or some other place, that is <u>not</u> associated with a local/congregational type church: At least once a week, two or three times a month, once a month, less than once a month, or never?"

Once a week or more: _____

Two or three times a month: _____

Once a month: _____

Less than once a month: _____

Never: _____

Do not know: _____

"In the last seven days, did you volunteer some of your free time to help a church?"   _____

"In the last seven days, did you pray to God?" _____

"In the last seven days, did you participate in a small group that meets regularly for Bible study, prayer or Christian fellowship?" _____

"In the last 12 months, did you explain your religious beliefs to someone who had different beliefs, in the hope that they might accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour?" _____

"In the past seven days, did you read from your Bible, not including when you were at church? In the past seven days, did you attend a church service, not including a special event such as a wedding or funeral? In the past seven days, did you pray to God?"   _____

APPENDIX B

Letter requesting information about churches in the BUSA

September 2007

Dear Friend

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am examining the *role of the laity in the local church – with reference to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa*.

I would be most grateful if you were to take some of your precious time to complete the enclosed questionnaire.

There seems to be a position of passive dependence of the laity on the clergy. I believe that each member, both clergy and laity, has their own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the church and the expansion of God's kingdom in the world.

Although the BUSA may be growing numerically, there is a growing concern over the stability of many of the churches. Without a greater emphasis on church strengthening, education and equipping, churches under the banner of the BUSA are going to be faced with troubling consequences.

It would be much appreciated if you could take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to me at the Baptist Assembly or post it off to BTC, for my attention (address on the letterhead).

The intention of the research done from this study is for the laity to develop, in order for the Christian mission to stay strong on the church's agenda in planting and maturing local churches for the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many thanks for your willingness.

Yours, in Service of our Master,

Dr. Peter Christofides
Fax: 086 696 0327
Cell: 082 491 1461
Email: peter@btc.co.za

APPENDIX C

Statistical Returns for the BUSA churches for 2007
BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7" align="center">NAME OF CHURCH
……………………………………………………………………………………</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7" align="center">Indicate Membership in BU Territorial Association (use X)</td></tr>
<tr><td>BANC</td><td>BBA</td><td>BNA</td><td>EPBA</td><td>FSBA</td><td>NBA</td><td>WPBA</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

N.B. Please keep a copy for your records or the Association And submit the original to:

Rev J I Grant (statistical secretary)
42 Skaamrosie Street
Protea Valley
Bellville, 7530

Phone 021 9132296 cell 0835643296
E-mail :   jigrant@netactive.co.za
(cc a copy to the Association office)
Fax: 0866848372

			Actual @ 31 Dec 2007
1	Total Membership on 31 December 2007.		
2	Number of regular Adherents (adult non – members).		
3	Number of people attending Service's on an average Sunday	**Morning**	
		Evening	
4	Number of teachers involved in Sunday School & Children's Ministry.		
5	Total number of children ministered to in Sunday School.		
6	Total number of children ministered to in Weekday meetings.		
7	Number of Youth workers / Youth Leaders		
8	Total attendance at Youth Groups (ages +-13 up /High School).		
9	Total attendance at Young adults, 20 Something, post-Matric Groups		
10	Number of men involved in a Men's Association/ men's ministry.		
11	Number of ladies involved in a Women's Department/ women's ministry.		
12	Number of midweek Bible Studies/ Cell meetings.		
13	Total attendance at midweek Bible studies / Cell meetings		
14	*Each one reach one* - Number of Baptisms during 2007		
15	*Each one disciple one* – Number of Converts discipled during 2007		
16	*Each one plant one* - Number of Churches planted in 2007.		
17	*Each one nurture one* - Number of weaker Churches assisted in 2007		

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| 18 | **_Each one send one_** - Number of Mission trips by the Church in 2007. | |
| 19 | **_Each one support one_** – Number of Missionaries supported on a regular basis. | |

Name of Church and Secretary: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone number: _____e - mail_____

Name & Phone number of Pastor: _____

BU234/7

APPENDIX D

BAPTIST UNION CHURCH STUDY
Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this Church study. Please know that your personal details are not required and neither is the name of the Church whose information you are giving. Once again, I am very appreciative of your time.

SECTION 1

1. What province is your Church in?　　　　　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

2. What is your position in the Church?　　　Pastor / Leader / Lay Person

SECTION 2

3. In what year was your Church officially founded?　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

4. Is your Church affiliated with any of the following associations?
   (If so, please circle the appropriate one/s)
   - Baptist Association of the Northern Cape
   - Baptist Northern Association
   - Border Baptist Association
   - Eastern Province Baptist Association
   - Free State Association
   - Natal Baptist Association
   - Western Province Baptist Association
   - South African Baptist Women's Department
   - Baptist Youth of Southern Africa
   - Baptist Missions Department
   - Other　　　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

5. What kind of building does your Church meet in?
   (Please circle the appropriate one/s)
   - Church Building
   - School
   - Non-Church Community Centre
   - Hotel
   - Theatre
   - Private Home
   - Shopping Mall
   - Other　　　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

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6. Now I would like to ask you some questions about the size of your congregation. I am interested in the several ways you might measure the size of your congregation.

First, how many persons would you say are associated *in any way* with the religious life of this congregation – counting both adults and children, counting both regular and irregular participants, counting both official or registered members and also participating non-members. What is the total number of persons associated with this congregation to any degree at all?
NUMBER _____

7. How many persons – counting both adults and children – would you say *regularly participate* in the religious life of your congregation – *whether or not* they are officially members of your congregation?
TOTAL NUMBER _____
ADULTS _____

8. Is there one person who is the Senior Leader / Pastor in your Church?
YES _____   NO _____

9. If you answered YES for the above question, what is the highest level of education received?
(Please circle the appropriate one/s)
- High School
- Some College studies but not a recognised Diploma
- Four-year College Degree
- Post-graduate studies
- Other _____

10. How many people currently work in this Church as *full-time paid staff*? ____

11. How many people currently work as *part-time paid employees*? ____

SECTION 3

12. In a *typical* week, how many services does your Church hold? ____

13. Which one of these services would you say is the main service of the week?
DAY _____   TIME _____

14. In this main service, how many people regularly attend, including adults and children? _____

15. Of the regularly participating adults in this Church, how many would you say attended *more than one* of the services held during the previous seven days?

_____

16. How often is the Lord's Supper celebrated at the Church? _____

17. For about how long would you say that people in this congregation usually mingle and socialize informally with each other before and after the service?
HOURS _____ MINUTES _____

18. At any of the services held, is there a time for people, other than the leaders of the service, to testify or speak about their own religious experience?
YES _____ NO _____ If YES, please give an example of the laity having participated in the service.

_____

_____

SECTION 4

19. Does your church have religious education classes for children, teens, or adults? YES _____ NO _____ If YES,
   - How many different classes meet at least once a month? _____
   - How many children age 12 or younger would you say attend at least one of these classes in a typical week (including Sunday School)? _____
   - How many teenagers – those aged 13 to 18 – would you say attend at least one of these classes in a typical week? _____
   - How many adults would you say attend at least one of these classes in a typical week? _____

20. Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups of people from your Church meeting *once a month or more* for religious, social, recreational, or other purposes? YES _____ NO _____ If YES,
   - How many such groups have met within the past 12 months? _____
   - How many people – adults and children – would you say have participated at least once in one of these groups within the past 12 months?

   _____

   For what purpose or purposes do these groups meet?
Purpose

_____

_____

21. Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities?

	YES	NO
• An event to organize or encourage volunteer work?	_____	_____
• To discuss people's problem or concerns?	_____	_____

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- A class for prospective or new members? _____ _____
- A meeting specifically to pray? _____ _____

SECTION 5

22. Has your Church participated in or supported social service, community development, or neighbourhood organising projects of any sort within the past 12 months? Please *don't* include projects that use or rent space in your building but have no other connection to your congregation.
YES _____   NO _____   If YES, please give an example of the project having participated in.

_____

_____

23. Has anyone from your congregation done any volunteer work for one or more of these projects within the past 12 months?
YES _____   NO _____   If YES, of the regularly participating adults in your Church, how many of them would you say did volunteer work at least once for one or more of these projects within the past 12 months?_____

24. How often, if any, does the laity have an opportunity to preach? _____

25. Does your Church make any effort to recruit new members? If YES, how?

_____

_____

26. Within the past 12 months, have you done any of the following?

	YES	NO
- Placed an ad in the newspaper?	_____	_____
- Encouraged people from the Church to invite others?	_____	_____
- Conducted or used a survey of your community?	_____	_____
- Mailed or distributed pamphlets in your community?	_____	_____
- Followed up on those who have visited your Church?	_____	_____
- Have a special formal committee to work on recruitment?	_____	_____

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27. *Theologically speaking*, would your congregation be considered more on the conservative side, more on the liberal side, or right in the middle?
- MORE ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE _____
- RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE _____
- MORE ON THE LIBERAL SIDE _____

28. In every congregation, disagreements and conflicts occasionally arise. Within the last two years, has your congregation experienced a conflict for which a special meeting was called specifically to deal with the disagreement?

    YES _____   NO _____

SECTION 6

I would like to ask a few questions about the people in your Church please.

QUESTION	ENTER NUMBER OR PERCENT	TICK DESCRIPTION
29. Thinking of the [NUMBER FROM **Q7** above] regular <u>adult</u> participants in your Church, about what percent would you say are new to this Church in the past year? That is, how many have become involved since September 2006?		Number _____ Percent _____
30. Thinking again of these regular adult participants, what percent would you say are female?		Number _____ Percent _____
31. About what percentage would you say have four-year qualifications or more?		Number _____ Percent _____
32. About what percentage of the regular adult participants have less than a high school education?		Number _____ Percent _____
33. Of the regular adult participants, about what percentage would you say are over 60 years old?		Number _____ Percent _____
34. What percentage of the regular adult participants would you say are under 35 years old?		Number _____ Percent _____
35. Still thinking about the regular adult participants, what percentage		Number _____

	QUESTION		ENTER NUMBER OR PERCENT	TICK DESCRIPTION
		would you say live within a ten minute *walk* of the place where you meet?		Percent ____
36.	What percent would you say live within a ten minute *drive* of the place where you meet?			Number ____ Percent ____
37.	What percent live more than a 30-minute drive away?			Number ____ Percent ____

	QUESTION	**ENTER NUMBER OR PERCENT**	**TICK DESCRIPTION**
38.	Of the regular adult participants, what percent would you say live in households with income under R96 000 a year (R8 000/month)?		Number ____ Percent ____
39.	What percent would you say live in households with income higher than R240 000 a year (R20 000/month)?		Number ____ Percent ____
40.	What percent would you say own their own business?		Number ____ Percent ____
41.	Of the regular adult participants in your congregation, about what percent live in households in which there are two married adults with children living at home?		Number ____ Percent ____
42.	What percent live in households in which there are children with just one parent?		Number ____ Percent ____

SECTION 7

43. Of the regularly participating adults, how many would you say have served in some sort of *leadership* role in this congregation – such as chairing a committee, serving as an officer, teaching a class, or other leadership roles – within the past 12 months? _____ Of these people who have served in leadership roles in the past 12 months, how many of them are male and how many are female?

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MALE _____   FEMALE _____

44. Have any official congregational committees or boards met in the past 12 months? If YES, how many committees have met in the past 12 months?
   _____

45. Is there one committee that is the most important governing body or coordinating committee in your congregation? If YES,
   ▪ How many people are currently on it? _____.
   ▪ How many of the people currently on it are male and how many are female?
   MALE _____   FEMALE _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION –
MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.

APPENDIX E

Example Missions Policy

MISSION POLICY

SECTION A

1. The Scriptural purpose of the involvement of our church in missions

Our church will be involved in missions in order to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20), in response to God's grace towards us.

2. Definition of missions

Missions will mean "the communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to non-Christians, both locally and abroad, both within and without our culture". The purpose will be to give individuals and groups a valid opportunity to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. The goal of our mission will be to urge non-Christians to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ and to serve Him in the fellowship of His church, as well as to establish multiplying congregations who will bear the fruit of Christianity.

The missions committee will deal with:
2.1 Evangelism amongst people of a different cultural grouping from ourselves, who live either near or far away (cross cultural evangelism).
2.2 Evangelism amongst people of a similar cultural grouping to ourselves who, by virtue of geographical distance, will not likely become members of our congregation upon conversion.

3. The purpose of our missions policy

The purpose of having a missions policy is:
3.1 To help us achieve a clear sense of direction in our missions work.
3.2 To help us avoid making decisions on an emotional or haphazard basis (for example, the charisma of missions speakers, connections with those seeking support, or the mood at the time a decision is made).
3.3 To ensure that money given to missions is spent as we believe God would have it be spent (stewardship).
3.4 To inform and orientate new committee members.
3.5 To work in harmony with the church leadership.
3.6 To encourage the commitment of the leadership and the church at large to the missions programme.
3.7 To develop an accountability in our missions programme.

4. The overall responsibilities of our missions committee

The overall responsibility of the committee is:

4.1 To ensure that the church is fully informed at all times regarding the missions programme.

4.2 To stimulate the intercessory prayer of our congregation for world evangelism and for our missionaries.

4.3 To educate and inspire our congregation in the field of world evangelism.

4.4 To help identify, stimulate, and encourage potential missions candidates.

4.5 To stimulate missions giving.

4.6 To administer the funds allocated to missions in consultation with the diaconate.

4.7 To serve as a liaison and/or channel between our church and the Baptist Missions Department, missions societies and missionaries.

4.8 To care for our missionaries.

4.9 To administer and evaluate our missions programme.

4.10 To update our missions policy as needed.

5. Goal Setting

The committee shall set goals in respect of the above, against which to evaluate progress. The goals should be measurable but involve a measure of faith. The goals should be set and evaluated on a regular basis.

6. The Flexibility of the interpretation of our Mission Policy

The policy is intended to give general direction and not to be an inflexible set of rules.

7. The revision of our Mission Policy

The Missions Policy will be revised as often as needed, with a thorough review and/or revision every five years, commencing from the adoption of this policy.

SECTION B - THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

1. Manner of selection of members of the Missions Committee

Committee members will be church members invited to serve on the committee by the pastor/s and committee chairman, subject to the approval of the elders. The pastor/s shall be de facto full members of the committee. In addition the committee will have power to co-opt anybody who can meaningfully contribute to the goals of the committee.

2. Criteria for selecting members of the Missions Committee

The member should:

2.1 Have a vision for and a commitment to missions as an essential function of our local church.

2.2 Accept the missions policy.

2.3 Have a willingness to reliably perform special portfolios which they accept.

2.4 Agree to attend at least 75% of the committee meetings.

3. The size of our committee

The committee shall consist of a minimum of four members. The committee shall appoint its own chairman.

4. Term of office

This shall be three years. Approximately one third of the members shall retire annually, and one year should elapse before regaining eligibility for re-appointment to the committee.

5. The responsibilities of the members of the committee

The function of the chairman of the committee shall be:

5.1 To call meetings.

5.2 To preside at meetings.

5.3 To represent the committee to the church leadership (or to utilise a representative for this purpose).

The function of the secretary of the committee shall be:

5.4 To keep and distribute minutes of meetings, including a copy to the church secretary.

5.5 To prepare an agenda in co-operation with the Chairman.

The function of the treasurer of the committee shall be:

5.6 To plan the finances of the committee in co-operation with the committee members.

5.7 To maintain suitable financial records.

5.8 To administer and dispense funds as directed by the committee.

5.9 To present a quarterly statement of missions fund.

6. Frequency of the committee meetings

The committee shall meet at least eight times per annum, including an evaluation and planning meeting.

7. Officers and manner of appointment

The officers of the committee shall be the chairman, treasurer and secretary. They shall be appointed by the committee from among its members. In the

absence of the chairman and/or secretary at any meeting, the members present shall appoint a chairman and/or secretary, as the case may be, for that particular meeting.

8. Quorum

50% of the members shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION C - FINANCE

1. Scope

The missions' committee operates an account which is independent from the Church's general account. This section deals with the principles for operating the missions account and reporting into the Church's general financial structure.

2. Principle of Independence

The missions account is kept independent from the church general account in order to uphold the principle of disciplined, regular giving to missions. In addition, the maintenance of an independent account facilitates the provision for projects or support which spans more than one financial year.

3. Funding

3.1 Allocation from general Church income

3.1.1 The Church financial policy makes provision for a fixed monthly amount to be allocated from the general Church income to the missions' account.

3.1.2 The level of this allocation is established by the Church officers as a percentage of the Church's general income at the beginning of each financial year, according to the financial policy.

3.1.3 The allocated money is transferred monthly to the missions' account.

3.1.4 The amount transferred may only vary by instruction from the Church officers in exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Designated

3.2.1 The Committee is responsible to ensure that all moneys which are specifically designated by the giver for a particular purpose are utilised for that purpose.

3.3 Special

The Committee must motivate a request to the Church officers and receive their approval for any special fund-raising programmes.

4. Operation

4.1 Annual Budgeting

4.1.1 The Committee is responsible to prepare an annual budget of proposed expenditure and provisions.

4.1.2 The budget preparation should take into account the level of allocation proposed from the Church budget.

4.1.3 The budget should consider the following categories of spending and provisions:-

Support for people
- education
- establishment of missionaries
- regular support
- home assignment
- enrichment
- retirement
- emergency

Support for projects
- planned projects
- unreached people groups
- pastors' travel
- missions promotion

4.1.4 All budgeted items must be prioritised. Regular support for persons should generally receive the highest priority, with preference given to member missionaries.

4.1.5 Balances against budgeted items from the previous financial year are brought forward.

4.1.6 The committee may propose re-allocation of "brought forward balances".

4.1.7 The finalised, prioritised budget must be submitted to the church officers for approval.

4.2 Account management

4.2.1 The treasurer may make payments from the account against budgeted items, in the agreed order of priority.

4.2.2 Subject to the approval of the church officers the treasurer shall endeavour to invest surplus funds with a low-risk, interest-bearing, institution or Church fund which allows reasonable access to invested funds.

4.2.3 The committee may not, without prior consent of the Church officers, seek other funding or raise loans.

4.2.4 The treasurer shall present a monthly financial statement to the Church officers for approval and maintain a proper set of accounts.

4.2.5 The committee is answerable to the Church officers and account shall be audited annually by the Church auditor.

5. Budgeting Guidelines

5.1 Support for people

This item should normally be the highest priority, since the principle aim of the missions' committee is to support and encourage missionaries, particularly those sent from our own Church/country.

5.1.1 Education

This item should cover educating prospective missionaries, missionaries in the field and missionaries children.

5.1.2 Establishment

This item is typically a fund which is accumulated with the intention of covering the one-time costs of sending out a missionary (family) to the field.

5.1.3 Regular support (highest priority item)

This item is the regular monthly support paid to a missionary or mission society. It is recommended that a commitment should be made to the individual or society to cover one full term of engagement. The specific level of support may be reviewed annually. Consideration should be given to supporting a missionary (family) during the periods of home assignment.

5.1.3.1 Personal Support

This covers all costs of a personal nature.

5.1.3.2 Ministry Support

This covers all costs relating to the missionaries specific ministry.

5.1.4 Home Assignment

This item is a fund to assist the missionary (family) with travel expenses.

5.1.5 Enrichment

This item is a fund to provide for enrichment of the missionary's life by means such as seminars, literature, gifts, etc.

5.1.6 Retirement

This item is to allow for a regular contribution to a retirement funding scheme, for either active or retired missionaries.

5.1.7 Emergency

This item is a fund to assist with emergency evacuation, medical treatment or return home.

5.2 Support for Projects

This item is proposed to provide an injection of funding into a specific area of development or need to enable a missionary or society to advance in their ministry.

5.2.1 Planned projects

Projects which are known at the time of budgeting are referred to as planned projects. The committee is responsible to select projects which are in keeping with the strategy in the missions' policy, and if funded, will result in the strategy advancing.

5.2.2 Unreached people groups

This is a specific instance of a project related to reaching an as yet "unreached people group".

5.2.3 Unplanned projects

This is the same as 5.2.1, except the project was not known at the time of budgeting; however, a provision was made for this eventuality in the budget.

5.2.4 Pastors' travel fund

This item is a fund, accumulated to enable one or more members of the Church pastoral staff to travel to the mission field and minister there. The committee is responsible to administer this fund.

5.2.5 Missions Promotion

This item makes provision for mission promotion, including the pulpit fees for visiting missionary speakers.

These items are offered as guidelines for effective budgeting and planning.

SECTION D

1. Procedure for sending members as missionaries with other organisations.

1.1. Selection Procedure

1.1.1 A written motivation by the candidate/s to be submitted to the committee.

1.1.2 The committee to establish clear call and suitability by interview and other suitable means.

1.1.3 The committee to make recommendation to the Eldership.

1.1.4 The Eldership to interview and make a recommendation to a Church meeting.

1.1.5 This shall be approved by the same majority required for the calling of a pastor.

1.1.6 The line of communication during the above procedure to be through the senior pastor.

1.2. Relationship between church and missionary

An agreement shall be entered into between the church and missionary, including the following:

1.2.1 Responsibility of church to missionary

1.2.1.1 to take a prayerful interest in, and to communicate officially with him/her at least every three months, through the committee.

1.2.1.2 to provide guidance and direction in his/her ministry, as requested.

1.2.1.3 to establish a working relationship with the relevant missions board.

1.2.2 Responsibility of missionary to church

1.2.2.1 to submit a written report through the committee at least every three months.

1.2.2.2 to spend a portion of his/her home assignment in the church.

1.2.2.3 where possible, to attend all church missions conferences.

1.2.2.4 where possible, to meet annually with the committee, or combined Eldership and the committee for in-depth discussion.

1.3. Administrative Procedure

1.3.1 The level of support shall be determined as set out in Section C of this policy.

1.3.2 Payments shall be made to the mission board (or, if relevant, to the missionary) by the missions treasurer.

2. Procedure for sending Church members as missionaries employed by the church (This situation to be clarified at a later date when necessary)

3. Procedure for supporting other missionaries

3.1. Selection procedure

3.1.1 A written motivation by the candidate/s to be submitted to the committee.

3.1.2 The committee shall establish the acceptability of both the individual and the missions board concerned, using the criteria set out in Section C of the policy.

3.1.3 The committee shall inform the Eldership and the church of its decision.

3.1.4 This decision shall be reviewed annually.

3.2. Administrative procedure

3.2.1 The level of support shall be determined as set out in Section C of this policy.

3.2.2 Payments shall be made to the missions board (or, if relevant, the missionary) by the missions treasurer.

4. Procedure for supporting short-term missionaries

4.1. Selection procedure

4.1.1 A written motivation by the candidate/s to be submitted to the committee.

4.1.2 The committee to establish clear call and suitability by interview and other suitable means.

4.1.3 The committee shall inform the Eldership and the church of its decision.

4.1.4 This decision shall be reviewed annually if necessary.

4.2. Administrative procedure

4.2.1 The level of support shall be determined as set out in Section C of this policy.

4.2.2 Payments shall be made to the missions board (or, if relevant, the missionary) by the missions treasurer.

APPENDIX F

A PERSONAL EVALUATION TO THE CALL OF MINISTRY

A good beginning step, if you feel you may be experiencing a call to serve, is to study and reflect upon how your gifts, talents, and strengths, may be used in ministry, and/or in your daily life, community, and church. Take some time to consider your passion. What inspires you? What areas of mission or ministry excite you? What issues in the church or community bring you the deepest concern? When you use your spiritual gifts in conjunction with an area of ministry that you are passionate about wonderful things can and do happen.

Another step is critically important as you explore and prepare yourself for any form of ministry. Remain steadfast in the basic Christian practices or spiritual disciplines which are given by God's grace. These gifts of grace include prayer, Bible study, the Lord's Table, worship, fasting, and Christian dialogue. You may join or form a small group that will help you grow spiritually and stay faithful in your spiritual practices.

Small groups for support and accountability are a rich part of our Christian heritage and continue today in many churches with a renewed vitality and relevance for growing in discipleship. These groups help their members witness to Jesus Christ in the world and follow His teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They focus on a balanced discipleship through good works (personal devotions and public worship), and works of mercy (acts of compassion and acts of justice).

Effective small group leaders should lead the laity of the church in developing their discipleship. They are to help form faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Classes may organize as Bible studies or small groups. Groups help discover certain elements that are important for ministry in the local church. In these groups, one can:

- Assess your spiritual gifts. The gifts of teaching and leadership are helpful for this ministry.

- Participate in a spiritual gifts study to determine your spiritual gifts or complete a spiritual gifts assessment.

- Share the results of your spiritual gifts assessment with your pastor and/or the chair of the Lay Leadership Committee.

- Develop a good working knowledge of the Bible through study books.

- Make your interest known to the pastor or nominating committee in your congregation so your name may be considered for opportunities of ministry.

- Attend conferences for the laity.

Becoming a Lay Leader

Lay leaders function as the primary representatives of the laity in the local church. The role of a lay leader is not only to represent the laity, but also to support the pastor. In correlating positions, laity can share in mutual ministry with the ordained leaders.

Lay Speaker

Lay speakers can be gifted in areas of speech in order to challenge and encourage the members in their spiritual growth. After a sermon by the pastor a speaker can give practical applications of the sermon to the church members. A lay speaker is to be a professing member of a local church who is ready and desirous to serve the Church and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of the Church and who has received specific training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries.

<u>Lay Missioner</u>

Lay missioners are committed lay persons, mostly volunteers, who are willing to be trained and work in a team with a pastor-mentor to develop faith communities, establish community ministries, develop church school extension programmes, and engage in congregational development.

<u>Professional Lay Ministry</u>

Lay people serving in the church can enhance their learning and increase their knowledge and skills to become more effective workers in their areas of service. Official recognition in various areas of ministry within the church is available. These include Christian education, youth ministry, music, evangelism, camp/retreat ministry, spiritual formation, and older adult ministry.

Leaders at any level set an example for others to follow. People will look to you as a leader, whether you are lay or clergy, for an example of how to live out their faith.

More formalized education is available on the two Baptist colleges in South Africa:

Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa – www.btc.co.za
Cape Town Baptist Seminary – www.ctbs.org.za