THE RELEVANCE OF DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE POSTMODERN ERA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Summary

Denominationalism is a concept that the church became used to. Very few people question the concept and simply accept it as part of the make-up of the universal church.

More recently, and specifically with the advent of postmodernism, many people started questioning whether God's will for the church is for it to function within the boundaries of denominations. The natural question to ask then is whether the concept of denominationalism is still relevant within the postmodern context.

At the same time very direct and pertinent questions along the same lines have been asked of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, specifically as to its relevance as a denomination.

To obtain answers with respect to these questions seems simple enough at face value, but it is not really possible to address the relevance of denominationalism in the postmodern era without a thorough understanding of where the church came from and how the concepts of denominations developed over the centuries. Similarly, one cannot ignore the philosophical outlook of the world and how that played a part in the formation of the thousands of denominations we have today.

The study finds that denominations, and specifically the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, have a purpose and are indeed relevant in the postmodern era. Any denomination has two distinct functions that it must fulfil in order to justify its existence: A pragmatic or functional purpose and a custodian purpose. These purposes remain constant, regardless of the era in which the church functions.

Most denominations fulfil the functional role very well. This includes pooling resources enabling it to achieve more together than what individual congregations can achieve on their own. The custodian function is fulfilled less admirably. The church, and denominations in particular, are custodians of Biblical truth. This truth is to be disseminated to members of the denomination in a responsible, yet effective and efficient manner. The issue at hand is that the postmodern mind rejects the possibility to attain any kind of absolute truth. It is in this environment that denominations have a particularly important role to play.

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa is ideally placed to fulfil both the functional and custodian functions, largely due to the way in which it is structured. However, the Union also has many weaknesses that need to be addressed so that the truth of the Gospel may be proclaimed in a responsible, yet efficient manner to a world that denies the very concept of truth. This makes the task particularly difficult and denominations have to consider how they will adapt in order to meet these challenges.

List of Key Words

Denomination

Denominationalism

Relevance

Pre-modernism

Modernism

Postmodernism

Truth

Baptist

Baptist Union of Southern Africa

Church

Church history

Philosophy

Ministerial settlement

Ministerial development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Unity of the church is one of the main themes in the Bible. When passages such as John 17, Galatians 3 and 1 Peter 4 are studied, it becomes obvious that the unity of the church is not only a major theme, but probably also one of the most important in Scripture.

Yet, church history reveals stories of several schisms, rebels, reformers, break-away groups and many others. The first major schism was between the Western and Eastern churches in 1054. The Reformation followed in the sixteenth century and after that the church splintered into many groups and denominations. Talking of the church as "united" has become somewhat of a paradox.

Niebuhr (1929:6) refers to denominationalism as an "unacknowledged hypocrisy" and "a compromise ... between Christianity and the world." He carries on referring to the "evil of denominationalism" (1929:21). Eighty years later Joubert (2009:137) expresses similar sentiments when he says that denominations are human creations. He continues to say that we decided in our own circles that denominationalism is the real truth. However denominational borders are human barriers that often stand in the way of the essential nature of the church as Jesus foresaw it. The essence of the problem is that denominationalism fosters divisiveness among Christians. When each denomination starts to reserve the truth for itself, the focus inevitably gets shifted from Jesus to the church. A phenomenon

that is becoming increasingly common is groups of people who splinter away from formal church movements or denominations – either to form "denominations within denominations", small home churches or practicing their Christian faith independent from any form of formal movement. In the postmodern era, where truth has become relative to the individual's own thinking and preferences, this phenomenon is exploding. This inevitably leads one to ask: what relevance does denominations have in the postmodern era?

1.2 The statement of the problem

1.2.1 The main problem

The objective of this study is to evaluate the relevance of denominationalism in the postmodern era. Specific reference is made to the relevance of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (hereafter referred to as "BUSA").

1.2.2 The key questions

a. What is the importance of being relevant?

The concept of relevance is particularly important to this study. In the postmodern era, the thinking is that truth is relative to the community in which one participates. What may be relevant for one person or a community, may be irrelevant to another. In this study relevance of denominationalism is studied within the Christian community and the relevance of BUSA within its constituency.

b. What is meant by the term "denominationalism"?

The term denominationalism implies an understanding of the term "church". It is a sub-component of the church. The church consists of all

believers (the universal church), yet it is also divided into denominations which is the local church divided into organisational units. Without a thorough understanding of the term "denominationalism", the relevance thereof in the postmodern era cannot be evaluated.

c. What is meant by the term "postmodernism"?

When thinking about the relevance of denominations one has to look at the subject in the context of current thinking. Most scholars define the current age as postmodern, as distinct from pre-modernism and modernism. In order to evaluate the relevance of denominations in the postmodern era, the term "postmodernism" is to be defined accurately and clearly.

d. What will it take for denominations, and specifically BUSA, to survive the twenty first century?

This is the key question of the study and the answer will be a practical evaluation of the answers obtained in respect of the previous questions. Of course this question implies the desirability of denominations. If the study shows that the concept of denominationalism is desirable as well as relevant in the postmodern era (or possibly a simple fact that we live with), the criteria for why this conclusion is reached must be defined. The performance of BUSA must then be measured against these criteria. If the study shows the opposite result, the application of the evaluation will take the form of actions required to bring the church in line with postmodern thinking.

1.2.3 The hypotheses

It is submitted that the research will conclude that denominations are relevant from a practical point of view. It is further submitted that in the postmodern era, denominations will not dictate doctrine on a systematic basis to individual congregations. The binding force of denominations will be (1) communities of faith (with its inherent structures of authority), and (2) practical considerations. The communities will dictate, on an informal basis, the doctrine of the group based on common belief systems within that community. Regarding the question of application of these principles to BUSA, it is submitted that in its current form, the Union is best suited of all major denominations in Southern Africa, to not only survive, but excel in the postmodern era.

1.3 The elucidation of the problem

1.3.1 Delimitations of the study

While the concept of denominationalism is studied in general, within the limits of postmodern thinking, the application of the research results will be limited to BUSA.

It must specifically be noted that no attempt will be made to compare BUSA to other denominations in Southern Africa.

Further, no attempt will be made to redefine terms such as "church", "denominationalism", or "postmodernism". The focus of the research is aimed at applying existing knowledge and defined principles to the current era.

1.3.2 Preliminary definition of key terms

For the purposes of this study the following key terms are defined as follows:

1.3.2.1 Church

Church is the community of all true believers for all time (Grudem 1994:853). Therefore, when discussing issues concerning the church, reference is made to the universal church (not the local church) and to the invisible church (not the visible church). For the purpose of this study, the local, visible church is considered to fall under denominationalism.

1.3.2.2 Denominationalism

The term "denominationalism" is difficult to define as it has so many aspects to it, but also because its use is so widespread that it is a word easily identified by most people. However, Bosch (1991:329) sheds some light on its origins, and hence definition, when he says it was "when religious belief was removed from the realm of 'fact' to that of 'value', about which individuals were free to differ, that a societal system could evolve in which a multiplicity of denominations could exist side by side and have equal rights." Bosch then quotes Newbigin who says, "It is the common observation of sociologists of religion that denominationalism is the religious aspect of secularisation. It is the form that religion takes in a culture controlled by the ideology of the Enlightenment. It is the social form in which the privatisation of religion is expressed."

1.3.2.3   Postmodernism

Since the term "postmodernism" comes logically after the term "modernism", it is probably best to define it in terms of modernism. Grenz (2001:80-81) summarises postmodernism under the following key characteristics: (1) knowledge is not inherently good; (2) truth is not certain and not rational; (3) knowledge is not objective; and (4) there is no such thing as the "dispassionate, autonomous knower". This leads to the understanding that there is no absolute truth, and further that truth is relative to the community in which we participate.

1.3.3   Presuppositions of the researcher

The researcher is an elder of a Baptist church that is a member of BUSA. While the church subscribes to the BUSA Statement of Faith and Baptist Principles, it follows to charismatic practices and expressions with specific reference to style of worship and the belief in the manifestation of spiritual gifts today.

1.4 The value of the study

1.4.1   Theological value

This study is not intended to add to the existing knowledge base of theological principles and definitions. A thorough study is to be performed on the key concepts outlined above with a view to apply it practically to the church today. However, having noted that, it will add theological value in the sense that it will elucidate the important terms that are the subject of this study in respect of our understanding and use thereof in our culture. This is specifically true of the study of "denominationalism" that seems to

have been a key concept in the Protestant community that has, maybe conveniently, been neglected in the past.

1.4.2 Practical value

As noted above, this study is primarily intended as a practical study. The key question to be answered gives an indication of this: "Will denominationalism, and specifically BUSA, survive the impact of a postmodern culture?" If the study yields the answer that denominations *per se* are not relevant in the postmodern era, it will have far reaching consequences, not only for BUSA, but also other denominations – both in South Africa and Internationally. If the relevance is affirmed, the further question that needs to be answered is what the characteristics of an effective denominational structure and practices will be in the twenty first century. Finally, the current structure and practices of BUSA is to be compared to this ideal and, if applicable, improvements are to be recommended.

1.5 The research methodology

1.5.1 Preliminary literature review

This study attempts to combine various concepts into a single, coherent line of thinking in respect of the subject matter – denominationalism. Most of the major terms, defined in section 1.3.2 above, have been and still are the subject of independent studies. There is therefore much literature available in respect of most of the subject matter (the church and its history) and the environment in which this study is done (postmodernism). An exception to this is a thorough study of the concept of

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denominationalism (as opposed to its history). This is not to say that no such literature exists, but there is certainly no abundance available as in the case of the other concepts. Most works refer to denominationalism as part of a wider study, especially denominational history. Also, the concept of denominationalism should not be confused with the ecumenical movement, which is related, but not the focus of this study.

The main sources that will be used in respect of the church and its history will be Grudem's (1994) *Systematic Theology* (doctrine of the church), as well as Cairns' (1996) *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church* (church and denominational history). Grudem was selected as a primary text due to his stature in the evangelical community as respected theologian as well as his obvious interest in the historic development of theology. The book by Cairns, a notable historian, was selected as it contains a section on the development of denominationalism There appears to be only three major works on the concept of denominationalism. The first is Niebuhr's (1929) *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, a series of essays compiled by Richey (1977) entitled *Denominationalism* and a follow-up several years later compiled by Mullin and Richey (1994): *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays*. There is an abundance of literature available regarding the concept of "postmodernism". The first source, focusing more on the enlightenment and modern eras is Bosch's (1991) *Transforming Mission*. Bosch was selected due to the fact that he is a highly respected South African scholar as well as the fact that *Transforming Mission* is

probably the most comprehensive work on the development of theology within the various paradigms to the era preceding postmodernism. Moving on to specifically the postmodern era, the main sources to be used are two books consisting of several essays on postmodernism. The first edited by Erickson (1998) *Postmodernizing the Faith, Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* and the second by Dockery (2001) *The Challenge of Postmodernism, An Evangelical Engagement*. These texts, although they were published a number of years ago, have been identified as the most comprehensive views of current thinking of evangelicalism in the postmodern era. A book by Raschke (2004), *The Next Reformation – Why Evangelicals must embrace Postmodernism*, will be referred to as well, especially with regard to his views on effective denominational structures in the postmodern era. On application of the principles identified in the first sections, the main source of information will be an evaluation of the current structures within BUSA.

1.5.2 The data

The data is to be obtained through the means described in section 1.5.3 below. This will include a literature study of the main concepts outlined above – the church, denominationalism and postmodernism. The main sources used are listed in section 1.5.1 above. The current structures and practice of BUSA will be obtained through the study of existing documentation or, if unavailable, interviews with appropriate office bearers. The researcher has informed BUSA of this research project.

1.5.3 The steps and tools

At first the relevant terms will be defined using the existing theological knowledge base, i.e. a study and evaluation of existing literature. This includes the church, denominationalism, and postmodernism. Thereafter an effective structure and practices within these frameworks will be developed. The current structure and practice of BUSA is to be determined through study of existing documentation and, if there is a lack of appropriate documentary evidence, interviews with leaders within BUSA, leaders of groups within BUSA and of individual member churches will be conducted. Thereafter the ideal will be compared to the existing structure and practices and recommendations will be made.

1.5.4 Research outline

Chapter 2 will introduce the various concepts and state the problem. Chapter 3 will deal with the historical development of the church focussing on the phenomenon of denominations. This will include an investigation into the principles that gave rise to the development of denominations. Chapter 4 will investigate postmodernism and its impact on the present culture. Chapter 5 will trace the specific historical development of the Baptist denomination within the framework of the philosophical trends of that time. This will then be matched against the current postmodern trend. Chapter 6 will explore and identify the most efficient denominational structure in a postmodern culture. Chapter 7 evaluate the relevance of BUSA as a denomination in the postmodern era. Finally, Chapter 8 will conclude this study with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore certain of the key concepts to be taken into account when the relevance of denominationalism is evaluated. First the unity of the church and what that means is explored. Next the term denominationalism is defined. Once the unity of the church and then the seemingly contradictory concept of denominationalism have been defined, the causes of denominationalism are considered. The very concept of many denominations implies that certain groups believe that they are custodians of truth and those who disagree are therefore wrong. For this reason the marks of the true church are discussed. Over the years, denominational leaders have realised that the church is not functioning in the way they believe God intended it to, and hence the ecumenical movement was born. The history of the ecumenical movement is briefly summarised. Once the above terms have been grasped, the term "relevance" has to be explored. Finally, a definition and unpacking of the term "relevance" is conducted.

2.2 The unity of the church

In his book, *The Next reformation – Why Evangelicals must Embrace Postmodernity*, Raschke (2004:110) states that

> religious postmodernism … is the spirit of the Reformation. Luther touched off the Reformation of the sixteenth century by discovering that authentic theological thinking is about cross, gospel, and grace rather than self-glorification, metaphysical disputation, and law. If this is truly so, then the next reformation will be about radical humility and the lack of pride not just in our lives, but in our thought. On both the left and right, Protestantism – with its denominational, ministerial, and ecumenical councils, its political action

committees, its preoccupation with palaces proffered as church buildings, its elaborate financial schemes and fund-raising – has swallowed the theology of glory with one gargantuan gulp. It has buttressed these totally worldly ambitions with a regal rationalism that aggrandizes the institution of the church and its claims at the expense of broken souls crying out for grace and forgiveness.

When Jesus prayed for his followers in John 17:21-23 it seemed as if unity among believers was something very important to him. He prays "that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me." (NLT)

In a similar way Paul is constantly reminding the churches to whom he writes that as believers, they are united in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2, 10, 10:17, 12:12-26; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:3, 12-13; Philippians 2:2).

In addition to clear commands regarding unity, there are also strong warnings against those who cause division in the church (Romans 16:17-18; Galatians 2:11-14, 5:20-21; Jude 19).

Finally, Paul directly commands believers to separate themselves from unbelievers as opposed to believers with whom there is general disagreement (2 Corinthians 6:17 and 2 Timothy 3:4-5). He also commands believers to separate from individuals who cause trouble in the church (1 Corinthians 5:11-13) along similar lines with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:17.

From these references, it is clear that there is a strong emphasis on the unity of the church in the New Testament. Paul can command unity in the church because there

is already a spiritual unity in Christ among believers. Additionally, it is important to note that there is no command to separate based on doctrinal differences unless these differences involve serious heresy denying the Christian faith itself (Grudem 1994:876-877). In fact, as far as doctrinal differences are concerned, Paul specifically states in Romans 14:17 that "the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (NLT)

In addition to biblical teaching regarding the unity of the church, Erickson (1998a:1136-1141) also sites general theological and practical considerations for maintaining unity in the church.

Among the general theological considerations he cites the oneness of Ancient Israel and the oneness of God. Erickson (1998a:1137-1138) takes that further where this unity is symbolised in the temple and the law. There is only one place of worship and there is only one law that everyone is to obey, regardless of tribe or social standing. He (1998a:1138) then states that various New Testament passages make it clear that the church is the successor to Israel and is to follow that unity (1 Peter 2:9). Further, Paul refers to the church as "God's household" (Ephesians 2:19). In verses 20 to 22, Paul continues to compare the church to the temple. Also refer 1 Peter 2:5 for the image of the church as the temple of God. In Ephesians 5:31 Paul compares the church to the "bride of Christ", which, in line with the rest of biblical teaching, implies one bride and not many. Another strong argument for unity in the church is the image of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

Among the practical considerations, Erickson (1998a:1140-1141) refers to the oneness of purpose in the conduct of the early believers and the consequent effectiveness in their testimony. He then states that "the company of believers tends to grow when their witness is united, whereas there may well be a negative or cancelling effect when they compete with or even criticize one another." Another practical consideration cited by Erickson (1998a:1141) is that of efficiency. He argues that when there is no unity among believers, there is a duplication of efforts, resulting in a waste of resources. He concludes that while running the church in an efficient way may be comparable to applying business principles to the church, it is good stewardship of the resources entrusted by God to the church.

Over the centuries theologians systemised their thoughts on the unity of the church. Berkhof (1958:572-574) discusses the unity of the church citing the two extreme examples.

The first is the Roman Catholic conception that "ordinarily recognise[s] only the hierarchically organised ecclesia as the Church" (Berkhof 1958:572). The centre of the church according to the Roman Catholic conception is not to be found in the hearts and lives of believers, but rather in the "hierarchy with its concentric circles." The church of this view is led by the Pope who has absolute control over all those that fall under him in the hierarchy of the church.

The second (Berkhof 1958:572-574) is the Protestant conception that sees the unity of the church not only as an external or visible organisation, but rather first and foremost as the internal and spiritual character of believers. All believers are part of this mystical body that is not organised in any hierarchical fashion, and which is lead

and controlled by its Head, Jesus Christ. The expression of this unity is to be found in the conduct of the lives of believers who share the same faith, sacraments and hope for the future (Ephesians 4:1-6). When the Reformers broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, they did not deny the unity of the visible church. However, the centre of the church was not to be found in the hierarchical organisation but rather in the conduct of the true church which is marked as follows:

> If the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if Church discipline is exercised in punishing sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God; all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself. (Belgic Confession Article XXIX)

Erickson (1998a:1141-1143) refines conceptions of the unity of the church in four different categories: spiritual unity, mutual recognition and fellowship, conciliar unity and organic unity.

2.2.1 Spiritual Unity

Spiritual unity (comparable to the Reformed view cited above) emphasises the commitment to the same Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the head of the church and one day there will be an actual gathering of His body (the church) in visible form. Therefore, the existence of several organisations does not threaten this view of unity.

2.2.2 Mutual recognition and fellowship

Under the heading of mutual recognition and fellowship, *"unity is implemented on a practical level."* This view allows for members to transfer membership from one local church to another, the recognition or ordination of clergy

among different groups, fellowship among different congregations and cooperating where possible. This cooperation is on an *ad hoc* basis and unity is expressed on an informal basis.

2.2.3 Conciliar unity

Conciliar unity refers to cases where churches or denominations form an organisational alliance, while retaining the individual identity and traditions. This view of unity emphasises fellowship and action and results in both visible and spiritual unity.

2.2.4 The organic view

The organic view of church unity means *"the actual creation of one organisation in which separate identities are surrendered,"* and is comparable to the Roman Catholic view of church unity cited above. When denominations unite in this way there is a merging of local congregations as well. The best example of this is the United Church of Canada that was formed by the uniting of Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

If God intended the church to be united, the logical question that follows is why the church is divided through denominational barriers. In the next section the phenomenon of denominationalism is investigated.

2.3 Denominationalism

As a starting point an attempt is made to define the terms denominations and denominationalism. The term "denominationalism" is difficult to define as it has so many aspects to it, but also because its use is so widespread that it is a word easily

identified by most people. However, Bosch (1991:329) sheds some light on its origins, and hence definition, when he says it was "when religious belief was removed from the realm of 'fact' to that of 'value', about which individuals were free to differ, that a societal system could evolve in which a multiplicity of denominations could exist side by side and have equal rights". Bosch (1991:329) then quotes Newbigin who says, "It is the common observation of sociologists of religion that denominationalism is the religious aspect of secularisation. It is the form that religion takes in a culture controlled by the ideology of the Enlightenment. It is the social form in which the privatisation of religion is expressed."

The study of denominations has been approached from several different perspectives. Richey (1977:10) lists these as:

1. Denominational history;

2. Sociologist ideal typology (church, sect, and denomination);

3. Voluntary association;

4. Organisation; and

5. Ethnic group.

Ammerman (1994:111-133) simplifies this by categorising the approaches to studying denominations as follows:

1. Denominations as Beliefs and Practices;

2. Denominations as Organisations; and

3. Denominations as Cultural Identities.

These approaches focus on the denomination as the subject of study and not the concept of denominationalism as such. Richey (1977:11) asks the question, "is it

[denominationalism] a euphemism for sectarianism, a surrogate for the moral indignation against schism, uncharitableness, and division in Christianity?"

Despite numerous and serious commands and warnings concerning church unity, the Christian world is split into many denominational groups such as Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglicans or the Church of England, Protestant, and many more. These groups are subdivided further into smaller groups. It is impossible to obtain an exact number of denominations or churches in the world, but Barrett identified over 33,000 denominations in 238 countries (Barrett, Kurian and Johnson 2001:16). Many authors and scholars see serious problems with the concept of denominationalism.

Niebuhr (1929:6) refers to denominationalism as an "unacknowledged hypocrisy" and "a compromise ... between Christianity and the world." He then refers to the "evil of denominationalism" when he talks about the conditions that make the rise of sects necessary and even sometimes desirable. He further refers to the temptation of groups making self-preservation and extension of denominations the prime objective of their existence (Niebuhr 1929:21). It must be noted that he does not consider the concept of denominationalism to be "evil", but rather the underlying causes. Eighty years later Joubert (2009:137) expresses similar sentiments when he says that denominations are human creations. We decided in our own circles that denominationalism is the real truth. However denominational borders are human barriers that often stand in the way of the essential nature of the church as Jesus foresaw it.

Maimela (1982:1) condemns the concept of denominations saying that they "exist as creatures of sinful disobedience to the expressive will of God for the church, and it is therefore with profound sorrow and penitence that we should talk about the so-called denominations rather than the church."

Grudem (1994:874) approaches the problem of denominationalism from a slightly different perspective. When the purity of the church is our only concern, we may tend to separate the church into tiny groups of very "pure" Christians and exclude those with slightly different views on matters to our own. The risk is therefore division in the church due to minor doctrinal differences.

The problems with denominations can therefore be summarised as follows:

- There is a temptation that denominational structures can give rise to self-preservation and extension – or in modern language, empire building (Niebuhr);
- Denominational borders result in man-made barriers that cause division between believers that worship in different denominations (Joubert);
- Separation of believers due to minor doctrinal differences in an attempt to create a "pure" church (Grudem).

As noted above, denominationalism in itself is of course not necessarily evil. As Niebuhr (1929:21) points out "the rise of new sects to champion the uncompromising ethics of Jesus ... has again and again been the effective means of recalling Christendom to its mission." Joubert (2009:137) agrees with this when he writes that sometimes there are good reasons for faith communities to separate themselves from heretical teachings.

Grudem (1994:877-883) states that the passages dealing with the unity of the church does not imply one worldwide church government over all Christians. In fact, he goes on to argue that co-operation between various denominations often display the unity of the church. Grudem does not give any examples, but it is easy to think of various interdenominational missionary activities, care groups, and celebrations.

Berkhof (1958:573) summarises the question of organisational unity succinctly as follows:

> The only attempt that was made so far to unite the whole Church in one great external organisation, did not prove productive of good results, but led to externalism, ritualism, and legalism. Moreover, the multiformity of Churches, so characteristic of Protestantism, in so far as it resulted from the providential guidance of God and in a legitimate way, arose in the most natural manner, and is quite in harmony with the law of differentiation, according to which an organism in its development evolves from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. It is quite possible that the inherent riches of the organism of the Church find better and fuller expression in the present variety of Churches than they would be in a single external organisation.

Berkhof (1958:574) then offers a solution regarding the quest for unity in the church by quoting from Karl Barth's *The Church and the Churches*:

> The quest for unity of the Church must in fact be identical with the quest for Jesus Christ as the concrete Head and Lord of the Church. The blessing of unity cannot be separated from Him who blesses, in Him it has its source and reality, through His Word and Spirit it is revealed to us, and only in faith can it become a reality among us.

Sweet (1999: 41-64) also strongly supports Barth's ecclesiological understanding.

Therefore, a definition of denominationalism and by implication denominations can be formulated as follows:

"Denominationalism … [is] the tendency toward the fragmentation of the church into religious sects or denominations and the maintenance of those divisions on the basis of an adherence to separate religious principles, organisations [or cultural identities]"

(Maimela 1982: 1). The last part of the definition (cultural identities) has been added by the author to the definition proposed by Maimela in order to take into account all the approaches to the study of denominations proposed by Ammerman. Further, it is important to point out that a denomination is not necessarily a large group of churches, but can also be one local church that is independent of any other organisational body.

2.4 The causes of denominationalism

Berkhof (1958:573) lists two main causes of divisions in the church (when using the term "church" in this section, reference is made to the universal church). The first is due to the practical considerations caused by locality or language, which he believes are perfectly compatible with the unity of the church. This would be commensurate with the "cultural identity" approach proposed by Ammerman. The other, which he says impairs the unity of the church, is "doctrinal perversions or sacramental abuses". Berkhof continues to explain that disunity resulting from this is "due to the influence of sin: to the darkening of the understanding, the power of error, or the stubbornness of man."

Grudem (1994:880-882) discusses a number of reasons for church separation. He groups these reasons according to the motives of those who separated from existing churches and started new movements. He correctly states that there can be a number of wrong reasons for church separation such as personal ambition and pride, or differences on minor doctrines or practices. However, he also lists several correct or possibly correct reasons for church separation. These are (a) doctrinal

reasons, (b) reasons of conscience, and (c) practical considerations. These reasons are discussed briefly below.

2.4.1 Doctrinal differences

A need for the separation from a church may arise when the doctrinal position of the church deviates in such a manner for biblical standards, that the church cannot be said to be part of the true church anymore, or part of the body of Christ. This can happen when people who are not necessarily believers become part of the leadership structure of a church, and eventually take over the government of the church. Christians would seem to be required to separate from a church that does not endorse biblical doctrine on major issues (for example doctrine regarding the Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement, or the resurrection) on the basis that Christians should not associate with those who bring false doctrine (for example 2 John 10-11).

One of the best examples of a church split based on doctrinal differences is that of the Reformation. Luther parted ways with the Roman Catholic Church on the basis that he did not consider it to be the true church anymore due to doctrinal error (Gonzalez 1985:20).

2.4.2 Matters of conscience

If a Christian has no freedom to preach or teach as his or her conscience leads, as informed by Scripture and confirmed by other believers, it might indicate that separation is necessary or wise. Practically this situation will arise when a person becomes or is "unequally yoked" as referred to in 2 Corinthians 6:14. This will be the case when a Christian gives up control over

his or her activities and loss of freedom to be obedient to God's call to someone who does not show evidence of saving faith in his or her life.

A similar situation may arise when a governing authority within the church or denomination commands one to act sinfully. In those cases a person will be in a position where one has to either disobey authority or act sinfully. Scripture references citing cases where it is not wrong when disobeying an order that may result in sinful behaviour include Acts 5:29 and Daniel 3:18 and 6:10.

2.4.3 Practical considerations

Separation from a church due to practical considerations may be appropriate when a Christian, after prayerful consideration, comes to the conclusion that staying within a particular church structure will result in more harm than good. Examples of this would include cases where the work of the Lord becomes ineffectual due to opposition to it from the denominational parent or cases where there is little or no fellowship with others in the church or other churches in the denomination (for example due to cultural reasons).

When considering the above three reasons for divisions in the church, the overriding factor to consider, and apparently the only valid reason for church split is when the denominational parent leadership becomes unbelieving or promotes heretical doctrine and thereby causing the believers to be unequally yoked.

Of course this implies that one group must claim to be in possession of truth and that the group being split from has moved so far away from the truth that there is no reasonable possibility for them to return to the truth as outlined in Scripture. It is here where the Christian has to beware of the traps of personal ambition and pride.

The problem with denominationalism is therefore not the concept itself, but rather the results thereof. Grudem (1994: 879) lists 3 kinds of separation of religious groups:

- Formation of separate organisations (mostly resulting from valid considerations outlined above);

- No co-operation (where groups refuse to join in evangelistic campaigns, joint worship or mutual recognition of ordination);

- No fellowship (where personal fellowship with members of another church is prohibited, such as Bible study or social contact).

Calvin was correct in saying, "Pride or self-glorification is the cause and starting point of all controversies, when each person, claiming for himself more than he is entitled to have, is eager to have others in his power." [Grudem quoting Calvin from commentary on 1 Corinthians 4:6, (1994:879)]. In Calvin's commentary on Numbers 12:1 he says, "Ambition has been, and still is, the mother of all errors, of all disturbances and sects" [quoted by Grudem, (1994:879)].

2.5 The marks of the church

As stated above, a division within the church will be justified when the denominational parent has veered so far away from Scriptural truth that it can no longer be seen as the true church and hence separation from that church is not only desirable but actually commanded by Scripture. (As with the previous section, the word "church" refers to the universal church)

The key question to be asked is when this point is reached, or phrased in a different way, "how will a person know when it is appropriate to separate from a denomination or whether it is best to remain and attempt reform from within?"

Berkhof (1958:576-578) discusses the marks of the church at some length.

2.5.1 The need for marks of the church

Clearly, if there was only one universal church, there would be no need for a doctrine on the purity of the church as it would be implied by its unity. However, when the preaching of heresies arose, it became necessary to be able to point believers into the right direction when they needed to identify a true church. This need was already present in the early church, was less apparent in the Middle Ages, but became strong during the time of the Reformation. At this time the church was not only divided into two main groups – the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, but Protestantism itself was further divided into smaller churches and various sects. As a result of the ever increasing number of splits, it became very necessary to be able to distinguish the true church from the false. In all of this the Reformers assumed the existence of a standard of truth to which the true church must correspond.

2.5.2 The true church

The Reformers differed on the number of marks of the true church. Some, such as Beza, Alsted, Amesius, Heidanus and Maresius, spoke of only one – "the preaching of the pure doctrine of the Gospel." Others such as Calvin, Bullinger, Zanchius, Junius, Gomarus, Mastricht and à Marck, spoke of two – "the pure preaching of the word and the right administration of the sacraments." Others, such Hyperius, Martyr, Ursinus, Trelcatius, Heidegger and Wendelinus, added a third – "the faithful exercise of discipline." In time, and especially in Scotland, a distinction was made between those features

that were necessary to the *being* of the church, and those that are necessary to its *well-being*. Some believed that even though discipline is necessary and good, it would be wrong to say that a church was not a church if there was no discipline at all. Others wanted to exclude the right administration of the sacraments on the basis that this would exclude the Baptists and the Quakers (due to the doctrine of believer's baptism).

Berkhof (1958:577) concludes that where there is a true preaching of the Word and its recognition as the standard of doctrine and life, the other marks, such as the right administration of the sacraments and the exercise of discipline will follow.

Grudem (1994:874) defines the purity of the church as follows: "The purity of the church is its degree of freedom from wrong doctrine and conduct, and its degree of conformity to God's revealed will for the church." However, he also states, and I believe correctly, that one cannot talk about a definition of the purity of the church without also talking about the unity of the church, which he defines as the "degree of freedom from division among true Christians." The reason for this, he states, is that there are many churches that are filled with unbelievers who have not had a genuine experience of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, yet they still call themselves "Christian". It would therefore be futile to attempt to work for the organisational or functional unity of the world-wide church as a church filled with (mostly) true Christians will then be organisationally bound to non-Christians. Because every church will also include those that are non-Christian, one will also never find a completely pure church, and therefore Grudem refers to "signs of a more pure church."

He lists these as (1) Biblical doctrine (or the right preaching of the Word); (2) proper use of the sacraments (or ordinances); (3) Right use of church discipline; (4) Genuine worship; (5) Effective prayer; (6) Effective witness; (7) Effective fellowship; (8) Biblical church government; (9) Spiritual power in ministry; (10) Personal holiness of life among members; (11) Care for the poor; (12) Love for Christ.

He concludes that there may be other signs of a pure church, but that the above mentioned are some factors that will increase a church's conformity to God's purposes for the church. Furthermore, Grudem (1994:875) agrees with the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 25.5) that states "the purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error". This means that a Christian does not have an obligation to seek the purest church he or she can find, and, if a more pure church comes to his attention, to leave the first church. A Christian has an obligation to find a true church where he will experience Christian growth and is able to minister. He is also to work continuously for the purity of the church. Having said this, we must realise that not all churches will respond to influences that will result in greater purity. The leaders of a church may be set on a direction that is not leading to greater purity in the church. These churches often become cults, close their doors, or drift into liberal Protestantism. Unless God intervenes in these churches, a Christian will be justified in leaving the church and either seeking a new, true church, or in certain circumstances start a new church that is based on biblical teaching.

2.6 The ecumenical movement

According to Erickson (1998a:1144-1152) the start of the ecumenical movement can be traced back to 1517 onwards. However, he continues to say that the modern ecumenical movement began in 1910 as a co-operative missionary endeavour. Erickson (1998a:1144) refers to the revivals in Europe and North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where the participants realised that they had a common theology and experience, even coming from different denominational traditions. More importantly the participants realised that they had a common task in the evangelisation of the world. These revivals gave birth to organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (1844), the Evangelical Alliance (1846), the Young Women's Christian Association (1855), and the World's Student Christian Association (1895). These organisations were not ecumenical in their own right, but provided the foundation for the ecumenical idea.

Missionaries started to realise that divisions among churches constituted obstacles for their work, and as a result of that international conferences for the advancement of missions were organised from around 1878, with the most significant of these conferences held in London and New York. The last of these initial conferences, held in 1900 was designated the Ecumenical Missionary Conference. The conference that is regarded as the start of the ecumenical movement was the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. The purpose of this conference was to plan the next steps in the evangelisation of the world.

One of the delegates from the Far East, whose name is unknown, made the following remark regarding the missionary effort:

> You have sent us your missionaries, who have introduced us to Jesus Christ, and for that we are grateful. But you have also brought us your distinctions and divisions: some preach Methodism, others Lutheranism, Congregationalism or Episcopalianism. We ask you to preach the Gospel to us, and to let Jesus Christ himself raise from among our peoples, by the action of His Holy Spirit, a Church conforming to his requirement and also the genius of our race. This Church will be the Church of Christ in Japan, the Church of Christ in China, the Church of Christ in India; it will free us from the isms with which you colour the preaching of the Gospel among us (Erickson 1998a:1144-1145).

This speech had a profound effect on the delegates of this conference, and immediately various denominations started calling for a conference to study matters relating to "faith and order." These included the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Disciples of Christ and the National Council of Congregational Churches. Widespread support developed for such a conference, but World War I broke out before this conference could be organised.

After the War, the conference was convened in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1927. However, two years before that, Bishop Nathan Soderblom of Sweden convened a Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. He was very pragmatic and wanted to ignore matters of doctrine. It became clear, however, that for a co-operative endeavour to succeed there had to be a clear understanding of the term "church".

In 1937 the Faith and Order movement met in Edinburgh and the Life and Work movement in Oxford. Out of these meetings came a provisional committee that were to unite the work of these two movements. Out of this the World Council of Churches was established. World War II interrupted the further organisation of the movement and the actual formation of the World Council did not take place until 1948 in Amsterdam when 147 denominational groups became members (Erickson 1998a: 1145).

The initial "statement of faith" of the World Council of Churches was a simple one: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour." This was not considered sufficient and in 1961 a revised version was adopted that read as follows: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." In that same year the International Missionary Council merged with the World Council (Erickson 1998a:1146).

In 1941, another ecumenical organisation was formed; the American Council of Christian Churches and the global equivalent, the International Council of Christian Churches a while later. According to Erickson (1998a:1146), it became obvious that the American and International Councils opposed the aims of the National and World Councils. The American Council opposed those of liberal persuasion as well as inconsistent evangelicals who have not broken ties with the National Council. A further body, the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action (later the National Association of Evangelicals) were formed in 1942 (Erickson 1998a:1147).

Erickson (1998a:1148) states that evangelicals insist that fellowship is not possible without agreement on certain basic truths. Similar emotional experiences and co-operative endeavours are not sufficient grounds for unity – there must at least be agreement on the most basic items of belief. While this may seem to be a natural or logical barrier to ecumenism, it appears to have the opposite effect. Because of their concern for the truth, evangelicals are inclined to cooperate only with those who hold to the same or very similar beliefs. An example of this is the origin of

"fundamentalism" that started with a series of Bible conferences and pamphlets issued by those who shared a set of distinctive beliefs which was termed the "fundamentals of the faith" (Erickson 1998a:1148).

Erickson (1998a:1148-1151) quotes William Estep who raises a number of issues that arise when evangelicals consider ecumenism. These are briefly outlined below.

2.6.1 The Theological issue

Evangelicals will generally not consider union with any group that fails to subscribe to certain basic doctrines such as: the supreme authority of the Bible as the source of Christian faith and practice; the deity of Jesus Christ, his miracles, atoning death and physical resurrection; salvation as supernatural work of regeneration and justification by grace through faith; and the second coming of Christ. Evangelicals criticise ecumenical movements in that they seem to settle for the lowest common denominator as far as statements of faith are concerned, and as a result the evangelicals suspect that some who are included with the fellowship may not be genuine believers.

2.6.2 The Ecclesiological issue

Most evangelicals insist that there must be a basic agreement on what makes a church a church. Clarity on what is meant by the term "church" must be obtained; is reference made to a local church, a denomination, a federation of denominations, or is the universal church consisting of all believers what is referred to? Further, consensus must be obtained on the government of the church. It is unlikely to achieve an unstrained merger of convinced Episcopalians with convinced Congregationalists. Then there must be

agreement on the purpose and strategy of the church, translated into levels of social and political involvement, and the relationship between church and state.

2.6.3 The Methodological issue

Evangelicals raise the question of how effective the ecumenical movement is in carrying out the task of world evangelism. Evangelicals would criticise the World Council of Churches on this count, who in turn asks the question of whether it is not as important to shed the "light of the gospel on the great human problems of our time" (Visser't Hooft quoted in Erickson 1998a:1150).

2.6.4 The Teleological issue

A final issue raised by evangelicals is to ask what the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is. Is it to merge all denominations into one large organisational unit, or is it to achieve some other goal? According to Estep (as dealt with by Erickson 1998a:1150-1151) it seems as if there is a drive to attain organisational unity of all denominations despite the official declaration by the World Council is that this is not the case. However, should this happen, the question of what is orthodoxy and what is heresy will arise all over again. The only way in which this can be avoided is to lower the standards of membership. Related to this would then be the requirement for all Christians to belong to such an entity, raising the question of whether those who do not belong to the church are in fact true believers.

All in all, the ecumenical movement seems to be doomed for failure, but it does highlight the important theological issues that need to be raised in the evaluation of

the relevance of church in general and denominationalism in particular in the postmodern era.

2.7 Relevance

The question in this study is not whether denominations are scriptural or whether the existence of denominationalism contravenes the requirement of unity found in the New Testament. The question is rather whether denominationalism is relevant in the postmodern era. This question is asked because denominations are an integral part of the Christian life. Some Christian believers may agree that denominationalism is essential for the continued existence of the church; others may believe that it is another scheme of Satan devised to destroy the church through divisiveness. Despite one's view on denominationalism, all Christians should ask the question: what is the relevance of denominations in the society that we live in today?

2.8 Conclusion

To answer this question, it is best to evaluate the history of the church. Cairns (1996:21) states that "we can understand the present much better if we have some knowledge of its roots in the past." Shelley (2008:xvi) adds to this when he says "in every age we find residue of the past and germs of the future". It will be worth the effort to study the history of the church with reference to divisions, schisms and the origins of denominations so that we may understand exactly how we find ourselves in the current age within the context of the history of the church seen as a whole.

The next chapter will therefore focus on some of the more important sects that originated in the early church, schisms that followed thereafter and finally the development of denominations.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHURCH AND DENOMINATIONALISM – A SURVEY OF ITS

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

There are several theories for the development of denominationalism. As noted in chapter one, the main reason for denominationalism is given as different opinions regarding matters of doctrine (Erickson 1998a:1148). The beginning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century is the most well-known example of this. Further factors are the development of organisation as well as cultural forces (Ammerman 1994:111-133).

Many church historians seem to believe that denominations developed as a result of the separation between church and state which was accentuated most with the formation of the American colonial landscape in the seventeenth century onwards (Cairns 1996:355).

I believe that the development of denominationalism is the result of a combination of these factors and not necessarily even mainly one of the factors listed above. However, one cannot hope to gain a proper understanding of the development of denominations and separations in the church unless one surveys the history of the church with an emphasis on various divisions and schisms within the church. As Sweet (1999:87) says, "to live faithfully in the twenty-first century, we must live out of the full two-thousand year history of the Christian church and not lobotomize the last nineteen centuries to get back to the first century. God did not put us through the past two thousand years for no reason." Sweet (1999:90) continues to stress the

importance and relevance of studying the history of the church by stating that "true leaders offer the future what the saints of the past have lived and died to defend. Looking at our faith history, we can distinguish genuine newness from nowness."

From the beginning of the church there seems to be an emphasis on the unity of the church – this is something that church leaders believed had to be preserved at all costs. However, there have always been elements within the church that threatened this unity. In Cairns' (1996:95) discussion of the religious landscape of the first centuries, he cites two fronts where the Christian faith had to deal with attack. The first is persecution – which largely had the effect of unity in the church (refer to the Donatist split described below for a notable exception) – and the second is differences in doctrine. Converts to Christianity came either from the Jewish faith or from the Gentiles who were all influenced by Greek philosophy. In Acts 15 the first church council in Jerusalem is described. The occasion was to resolve and decide on a difference of opinion in whether the Law should be applicable to gentile converts. On the face of it, the matter seems to have been resolved speedily and without further incident. However, the later letters of Paul and a survey of the early history of the church do not bear this out.

What follows is an attempt to highlight some of the major divisions, separations and schisms within the church with an attempt to categorise each according to one of the categories listed by Ammerman. The background information gained in such a survey should place one in a position to evaluate the current state of affairs in the context of history as it developed over the last twenty centuries. This in turn should form a foundation for the further development of the answer to the question of the relevance of denominationalism in the postmodern era.

3.2 Ebionites (first and second centuries)

While the Biblical account of the first doctrinal disagreement within the church described in Acts 15 gives the impression of a clear and orderly resolution to the dispute and a swift restoration to unity, history does not bear that out. In fact, right after this event, the split between Paul and Barnabas is described – conceivably the first recorded "denominational split".

The events of the council of Jerusalem certainly did not end the potential for schism based on the Law, as groups of Ebionites persisted for some time after the council. These groups emphasised the unity of God, they accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but regarded him as a man (in other words, the deity of Christ was at issue), His creatorship of the universe and that the Jewish Law (Torah) was the highest expression of God's will and still binding on man. They believed that Jesus received a divine "injection" with His baptism. Salvation was to be maintained through circumcision, observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws (extended to include a prohibition of meat). They rejected the virgin birth of Jesus, but believed that Jesus taught the resurrection of the dead and that He Himself rose from the dead. He then came to destroy the temple and the cults surrounding it and instituted water baptism to replace the sacrificial system for the forgiveness of sin. The group ceased to have much influence after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 135 (Cairns 1996:96) and (Ferguson 2003:615-616).

The primary reason for this separation from the orthodox Christian position seems to be that of doctrinal differences and a seeming inability of this group to part with their

Jewish roots, indicating that cultural factors also played a major part in the development of this sect.

3.3 Gnosticism (mainly first to third centuries)

A greater threat to the doctrinal purity of the church came from the influence of Greek philosophy. The greatest of these threats was Gnosticism. Gnosticism is dealt with by both Cairns (1996:96) and Ferguson (2003:300-312) This movement reached its peak around 150AD, but its roots can clearly be traced back to the teachings of Paul – especially in the letter to the Colossians. Christian tradition cites the origin of this movement with Simon Magus – the magician Peter had to rebuke in Acts 8:14-24 because he wanted to buy the power to impart the gift of the Holy Spirit to people.

While there is much debate whether Gnosticism was a heretical form of Christianity, whether it developed before Christianity (adherents to the latter view believe that Christianity borrowed from Gnosticism rather than originating from historical fact) or whether it developed at the same time under the same conditions as Christianity, the consensus is that there have been many variant schools of Gnostic thought. Some of these schools, for example Valentinianism, were more akin to Christianity, whereas others were possibly from a non-Christian origin. Ferguson (2003:309-310) describes Valentinus' system as the best known among the Gnostic systems. His follower, Ptolemy, devised an elaborate "myth of origins". He taught that a "perfect first principle" created a spiritual universe made up of *aeons* (ages or realms). As a result of a "fall" in this world, matter came into existence. An inferior heavenly being then created the material world and humanity. Fortunately a "spark of the divine" was

planted in some of the souls created. A redeemer (Jesus Christ) came to reveal the way in which to escape from the material world to the divine world. Ferguson (2003:308) describes another variant and possibly pre-Christian version of Gnosticism as "a supernatural being, a cosmic Man, descended to earth to redeem the saved; this provided the category in which the meaning of Jesus' mission was explained in Christianity." Gnosticism originated from the human desire to obtain an explanation for the origin of evil. The world or material matter was considered evil whereas spirit was considered good. The Gnostics wanted to develop a philosophical system in which the "good" God as spirit could be freed or disassociated form the "evil" material world, but at the same time man should be able to relate to the divine. The philosophical roots of Gnosticism lie in the dualistic concepts in Platonic thinking, thus there was a syncretism of Christianity and Hellenistic philosophy.

Adherents to most of the Gnostic schools considered salvation to be from ignorance and not from sin. Therefore "knowledge: was not only the means to salvation, in a real sense it was salvation" (Ferguson 2003:310).

The false teachings opposed in some of the New Testament books bear many similarities to Gnosticism, sometimes referred to as "incipient Gnosticism". Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles oppose heretical teachings regarding angelic mediators, asceticism, secret teachings, people claiming superior knowledge and denying Christian doctrine of creation and resurrection.

Due to a lack of information as well as the many variants of Gnosticism, it is uncertain as to exactly when this movement died out. However, one Gnostic sect – the Mandaeans of southern Iraq survived to modern times.

One of the most famous of the Gnostic schools was led by Marcion. Even though some dispute whether he was in fact a Gnostic, his teachings resembled that of Gnosticism to a large degree – principally that the material world is evil and that God the father of Jesus is not the same as Jehovah of the Old Testament. Gonzalez (1985:61-62) explains that instead of creating a long series of spiritual beings like most other Gnostics did, he simply taught that Jehovah of the Old Testament – either through ignorance or evil intent – created the world and placed humans in this world. The purpose of God the Father of Jesus was that there should only be a spiritual world. This father requires nothing from human beings but to be loved. Everything, including salvation, is given freely to all. He taught that Jesus was sent by the Father to save humanity. However, he was not born from the Virgin Mary as this would make him subject to the world of Jehovah. Instead, he simply appeared as a grown man during the reign of Emperor Tiberius. At the end there will be no judgment, as this loving God will simply forgive us.

Marcion posed a greater threat to the Orthodox Church than most of the other Gnostic belief systems. While he also rejected the Christian doctrine of creation, incarnation and resurrection and re-interpreted them, he went beyond this by forming his own church with ordained bishops and a canon of scripture (a portion of the Gospel of Luke and ten of the letters from Paul). His teachings lingered on for centuries after his death.

While Gnosticism in general seems to have originated as a result of doctrinal beliefs and practices against that of orthodox Christianity, Marcionism certainly must have had elements of organisational schisms and motives in forming its own church. Any comments regarding cultural, ethnical or social forces would be mere speculation.

3.4 Montanism and Tertullian (second and third centuries)

This movement is named after its founder, Montanus. He was a pagan priest until the time of his conversion to Christianity in 155AD. The movement emerged as an attempt to combat formalism in the church and the dependence on human leadership instead of the Holy Spirit. This led to an emphasis of the doctrines of the Second Advent and the Holy Spirit. Montanus started prophesying and declared that he was possessed by the Holy Spirit. He contended that he was the Paraclete through whom God spoke to the church. He further taught that revelation was continuous and that revelation to him was on the same level as that to Paul and the other apostles. He also taught an extravagant eschatology – that the heavenly kingdom will be set up on earth soon in Phrygia and that Montanus would have a prominent place in this kingdom. Montanus and his followers practiced strict asceticism. At the council of Constantinople in 381AD the Montanists were declared heretics (Cairns 1996:100).

One of the great mysteries in the history of the church is the fact that Tertullian joined the Montanists. He may have been attracted to the movement because of their rigor. Tertullian, with his legal training sought perfect order and an explanation for certain questions such as why there is still sin in the church, hence his attraction to the extreme eschatology taught by the Montanists. Towards the end of his life,

Tertullian became dissatisfied with the Montanists and found his own sect – the Tertullianists. Tertullian continued his writings and laid the groundwork for much of later Christian orthodoxy (Gonzalez 1985:76-77).

There seems to be many factors involved in the formation of these groups. However, the main factor seems to be that of doctrine in the case of both Montanus and Tertullian. However, especially in the case of Montanus, an over-emphasis of a specific doctrine led to heretical doctrine and practice. After the movement was condemned as heretics in 381AD, it seemed to have died out.

3.5 Cyprian (third century) and Donatism (fourth century)

The Christian church suffered a brief period of persecution through Emperor Decius from around 249 to 251AD (Gonzalez 1985:88-90). Decius wanted to reform society in returning to the Roman religion. He was therefore not persecuting Christians *per se*, but rather enforced worship of the Roman deities and of the emperor himself. A certificate was issued to those who performed the required worship. This had obvious implications for the Christians who would not bow before any other god. Some Christians weakened during this persecution and either performed the required worship services or obtained forged certificates. They were called the "lapsed". During this time, a new "class" of Christian arose – the "confessors". These were the Christians who did not bow to other gods and suffered torture as a result. When Gallus succeeded Decius in 251AD, the policies of Decius were set aside and the persecution ceased.

At this time the Christian church was faced with the problem of what to do with the lapsed. The issue was that there were many different classes of lapsed Christians.

Some offered the sacrifices; others offered sacrifices but returned to the faith while the persecution was still in progress; others never performed the sacrifices, but obtained fraudulent certificates. Because of the prestige of the confessors, they believed that they had the authority to determine who among the lapsed would be allowed back to the church. In North Africa, the Confessors claimed this authority and started restoring some of the lapsed. The bishops opposed this, claiming that only the hierarchy of the church had the authority to restore the lapsed. Others felt that the lapsed were treated too leniently. Cyprian and Novatian were two of the major role players in this debate.

Cyprian became a bishop shortly before the persecution. He fled to a secure place and continued to guide the church through correspondence. Some believed that this was an act of cowardice. As a result of this, his authority was questioned and some of the Confessors believed that they had more authority than Cyprian, particularly over the question of restoration of the Lapsed.

The issue caused a schism in Carthage and Cyprian called a synod (a gathering of bishops in the region) where it was decided how to deal with each category of the Lapsed. The restoration was to be performed by the bishops and not the Confessors and, even though the schism continued for some time, it ended the controversy.

The reason why Cyprian was so insistent on the need to regulate the readmission of the Lapsed was because of his understanding of the church. He wrote that "outside the church there is no salvation," and "no one can have God as Father who does not have the church as mother." He believed that the unity of the church was of supreme importance and the actions of the Confessors threatened this unity.

Novatian on the other hand, clashed with the Bishop of Rome, Cornelius, believing that the lapsed was readmitted to the church too easily. The end result was a schism of the church in Rome so that there were two bishops in the city. This schism lasted for several generations before it was resolved.

The concern about what to do with those who sinned shows the seriousness with which this was viewed by the church. The division that this caused within the church was a major concern and as a result of these episodes the penitential system was developed. This system played a major role in the rise of the Reformation several centuries later.

The Donatist controversy occurred in North Africa and was the result of the persecution of the church by Diocletian. Donatus wanted to exclude Caecilian from his election as Bishop of Carthage because he was consecrated by another Bishop – Felix [or Philip according to Bosch (1991:217)]. The reason for this is that Felix was accused of betraying the faith during the Diocletian persecution. Because of Felix's failure to remain true to the faith, Donatus claimed that he committed an unpardonable sin and was therefore disqualified from ordaining other bishops. Donatus and his group then elected Majorinus as bishop and after the death of Majorinus in 313AD, Donatus became bishop. A synod in Rome declared that the validity of a sacrament did not depend on the character of the person administering the sacrament. This was confirmed at a later council in Arles in 314AD (Cairns 1996:101). The support of the state was very important, since that secured certain benefits such as exemption from taxes. Since the Roman authorities supported Caecilian, all government benefits went to his group. As a result the Donatists developed the doctrine of separation of church and state (Bosch 1991:217).

In essence, what the Donatists did was to hold to the belief that the church at large was corrupt, and that they were the true church. According to Gonzalez this schism had theological, political and economic roots (1985:152-157). From a theological point of view, and the immediate cause of the schism, the dispute turned on whether the administration of a sacrament is valid if administered by someone with a flawed character. The supporters of Caecilian argued that one will never know the true state of the soul of a minister offering a sacrament, and therefore the argument is not valid. This deteriorated into a situation where one person who moved from the Caecilian party to the Donatists had to be re-baptised, but those who moved to the Caecilianists did not have to be re-baptised.

As one would expect, the political and economic factors that influenced this schism was more complicated than the theological factors. However, one gets the distinct idea that these are more relevant to the schism and that the theological factors were used as a "smokescreen" to justify the schism.

Gonzalez (1985:154-157) discusses this in detail: Among the Donatists there were some who delivered the Scriptures to the authorities, and others made inventories of objects in the church used for worship in order to hand these to the authorities. One of the first leaders of the Donatist movement is said to have murdered two nephews. It can therefore hardly be said that the only reason for the schism between the Donatists and the rest of the church was that of their concern for purity. There was also a geographical spread – in Carthage and surrounding areas Caecilian and his followers were the stronger party, whereas further west, in Numidia and Mauritania, the Donatists were more popular. Carthage was more Romanised whereas the less Romanised areas (such as where the Donatists were more popular) retained their

ancestral language and customs. Some scholars have argued that the Donatists may be regarded as the first "African Independent Church" (Bosch 1991:527). Before Constantine, the gospel spread around Numidia, Mauritania and the lower classes of Proconsular Africa in Carthage. A small number of higher classes in Carthage also converted to Christianity and as a result had to break social links. With the advent of Constantine and the peace of the church, the higher classes flocked to the church. This corroborated the decisions of those of the same social rank but for those of the lower classes, that which was despised of the Roman Empire now entered the church. When Caecilian was elected as bishop of Carthage, he had the support of the Romanised Christians of Carthage, whereas the lower classes and people and clergy of Numidia opposed him. When Rome decided in favour of Caecilian, there was a natural political opposition to this decision.

The economic factors related to a militant group of Donatists, the Circumcellions, who were a group of peasants that resorted to violence in order to enforce their views. Travel was not safe at this time in the areas where they operated. This forced the Roman authorities to also use force and what followed was further persecution, massacres and military occupation. The Roman Empire was not able to stamp out this movement. The Donatists and Circumcellions continued for a number of centuries until such time that they finally disappeared after the Moslem conquests in the seventh century.

As can be seen above, these controversies resulted in major schisms in the early church and all the factors listed by Ammerman seem to be present in these events.

3.6 The Greek Orthodox Church in the East

The next major event in the history of the church as far as schisms and divisions are concerned, only came to a head in the eleventh century – the Great Schism between the Western and Eastern churches. To believe that this schism is something that happened as an isolated event and because of very specific circumstances is naïve. History shows that this schism developed over many centuries and only culminated in mutual excommunication of pope and patriarch over the issue of the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist – a relatively minor issue and clearly not the driving force behind the schism. Out of this and many other debates, "the first permanent schisms developed within Christianity, giving rise to separate churches that still exist" (Gonzalez 1985:252).

Cairns (1996:196-198) summarises the events surrounding the schism: Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Byzantine in 330AD (from then on Byzantine was renamed Constantinople). This paved the way for both political and ecclesiastical separation between the East and the West over time.

On a political front, Theodosius placed the political administration of the two areas under separate heads in 395AD. When Rome fell in the fifth century, the separation between the two areas became more formally realised. In the East, the church was under the jurisdiction of the emperor. However, Rome was too far away from Constantinople for the emperor to exercise effective control over the Roman pope. Because of a lack of political leadership in Rome, in times of crisis, the pope became both temporal and spiritual leader of Rome. Cairns (1996:196) says that "emperors were almost popes in the East, and in the West popes were almost emperors."

Naturally this state of affairs gave the already distinct churches a completely different outlook concerning temporal power.

The philosophical outlook of the two churches also differed substantially. While the Romans were very practical in their thinking and practice, the Greek minds were more concerned with solving theological problems, especially along philosophical lines. The theological controversies that arose in the fourth and fifth centuries in the East caused very little problems in the West.

Over time, many practical differences arose between the two churches. The celibacy of clergy was one of these issues. In the East, all clergy below the rank of bishop was permitted to marry, whereas in the West, none of the clergy could marry. More banal issues such as the wearing of beards also caused controversy. In the West, priests were allowed to shave their faces, but in the East, the clergy had to wear beards. The cultural differences between the people in the East and West also played a role in the separation of the churches. While the church in the East used Greek, the Western church used Latin. This caused misunderstandings from time to time. For the most part, the differences related to Slavonic liturgy proposed by the brothers Constantine and Methodius in Moravia. The brothers, under the authority of the Eastern Church, were sent as missionaries to Moravia. While here, they translated some of Scripture into Slavonic, and also made changes to the liturgy – particularly in terms of language, preferring to use native languages above Latin. This caused some serious friction between the church in the East and the West, but was eventually resolved under Pope Hadrian II. Under the western pope, Methodius was appointed archbishop over the see of Sirmium and was the special legate of the pope with powers over the Slavonic areas of Pannonia and Moravia. The disputes

that arose over which areas were under whose ultimate control caused major friction between the church in the East and the West (Neill 1964:82-88).

Theological controversies also played a major role in the centuries leading up to the schism. In 867AD, the Eastern patriarch Photius charged Nicholas I and the church in the West with heresy because they included the *filioque* clause in their version of the Nicene Creed. Emperor Michael deposed the patriarch Ignatius in 858AD when he refused to administer the Eucharist to the emperor's brother. The patriarch was replaced by Photius. Ignatius then approached Pope Nicholas I to assist him, which he did by declaring Photius deposed. In response to this, Photius and an Eastern synod declared Nicholas I and the Western Church heretics because of the *filioque* clause. Nicholas attempted to assert his authority over the church in the East, as he did with temporal and ecclesiastical rulers in the West, but failed (Cairns 1996:195).

Much earlier, in the second century, controversy arose regarding the appropriate date to celebrate Easter. The church in the East held that Easter should be celebrated on the fourteenth day of Nisan (according to the Jewish calendar). The Roman bishop, Anicetus, opposed this view stating the Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday following the fourteenth of Nisan. The churches of Asia were excommunicated by the Roman bishop Victor in 190AD over this issue. It was finally resolved with the council of Nicaea in 325AD (Cairns 1996:101), but the issue lingered on over the following centuries, making amicable relations between the leaders of the respective branches of the church difficult (Cairns 1996:197).

A further matter that increased the differences between the East and the West was the iconoclastic controversy in the Eastern Church in the eighth and ninth centuries.

In 726AD, Leo III, emperor in the East forbade the kneeling before any pictures or images and in 730AD he ordered all these, except for the cross, to be destroyed. This was largely to refute the Muslim claims of idolatry. In the West, the church and later emperor Charlemagne took a stand in favour of the use of visible images as symbols of divine reality. The church in the West continued to use statues and icons whereas the church in the East eliminated statues, but continued using icons in worship.

The final controversy revolved around a minor matter. The patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, condemned the church in the West for using unleavened bread in the Eucharist. Pope Leo IX then sent Cardinal Humbert to the East in order to end the dispute. He was unsuccessful and on 16 July 1054, he put a decree of excommunication of the patriarch on the altar of the cathedral church of Saint Sophia. In response the Eastern patriarch anathematized the Roman pope and his followers. This schism finally broke the formal unity of the church. It was only on 7 December 1965 – over nine hundred years later- that the mutual excommunication was removed by Pope Paul VI and patriarch Athenagoras.

From this brief overview of the separate development and eventual schism between the churches in the East and the West, it is clear that all factors listed by Ammerman came into play with the formal separation of the churches. As with many other schisms, political motives manifest in organisational and cultural factors were the real reasons for the schism. Theological differences often seem to have been the tool used by the various leaders to achieve their personal goals.

3.7 Waldensians

In the mid 1170's, a wealthy merchant of Lyons, Peter Waldo, read a translation of the New Testament and thereafter experienced a radical conversion to a relationship-based Christianity (Cairns 1996:222). Waldo heard the story of a monk who practiced extreme poverty and this impressed him so much that he gave up all his wealth (Gonzalez 1985:302), just leaving enough to feed his family, and then organised a group called the "Poor Men". They wished to preach to the community in the vernacular, but were refused to do so by the pope. They continued to preach and in 1184 the pope excommunicated the group for their refusal to stop preaching. The Waldensians believed that everyone should be able to read the Bible in their own language and that it should be the final authority for faith and life. They accepted the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism and their organisation consisted of their own clergy, bishops, priests and deacons (Cairns 1996:222). Due to severe persecution, they were forced to withdraw to remote areas in the Alps. They continued to exist in those areas until the Protestant Reformation (Gonzalez 1985:302). In 1552 they became a Presbyterian "branch" of the Reformed Church, but only received religious freedom in 1848 (Renwick and Harman 1999:125).

In the case of the Waldensians, it seems that the primary reason for their formal split was of a theological nature and not any of the other reasons cited by Ammerman.

3.8 The Great Schism

Even though this event in the history of the Roman Catholic Church did not result in the formation of a separate movement, this is probably the best illustration of the destruction that personal ambition and greed can cause within a church or

denomination. Any study of the history of schisms and separations within the church will be incomplete without a survey of the events surrounding the Great Schism.

The so-called "Babylonian Captivity" (1309 – 1377) and the "Great Schism" (1378 – 1417) could be regarded as a low point in the history of the Roman Catholic Church when the papacy specifically and the church generally lost the respect of many under her control.

Cairns (1996:206-210) provides an excellent background to the events leading up to the Schism. While the power of the papacy reached its zenith under Innocent III (1161 – 1216), it quickly declined after his death. In 1215 he called a general council, the Fourth Lateran Council. This council made an annual confession to a priest mandatory for all laymen. It also required that all must be present at Mass at least at Easter. More importantly, it declared the doctrine of transubstantiation as official dogma of the church. Essentially this meant that in a metaphysical way the bread and wine in the Eucharist change to the actual body and blood of Christ after consecration by the priest. Therefore, the priest performed a sacrifice each time he held mass, placing him and the church in general in a very powerful position, especially in the eyes of the general populace.

Following Innocent's death in 1216, stories of nepotism, simony, drunkenness, and neglect of their people by the priests caused the people to view the church and the papacy with contempt. It was at this time that nation states started rising, and with it came the inability of the papacy to control and humble temporal rulers. The rulers of rising nation-states such as England and France were inclined to dispute with the papacy because of their backing by a wealthy middle class and powerful national

armies. The decline of the power of the papacy started with the pontificate of Boniface VIII (1294-1303). He suffered many humiliations at the hands of the rulers of England and France.

In order to finance the war between England and France, the respective rulers – Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France – taxed the clergy. Philip then issued the bull *Clericos Laicos* which forbade the clergy to pay taxes to a temporal ruler without the consent of the Pope. Edward met this challenge by outlawing the clergy and getting Parliament to pass an act forbidding them to acknowledge the Pope's claims to temporal power. Philip forbade export of money from France to Italy. This battle for power between Philip and Boniface came to a head when Philip arrested a papal legate for treason. The Pope in turn ordered Philip to release the legate and summoned him to Rome to explain his actions. Philip called the French legislative body, the Estates General, which upheld Philip's actions. In response to this Boniface issued the papal bull *Unam Sanctum*. This decree claimed that *"neither salvation nor remission of sins"* was available outside the church, the Pope, as head of the Roman church had spiritual and temporal authority over all, and that submission to the Pope was necessary for salvation. Unfortunately for Boniface he could not back up his claims of power and Philip had him imprisoned to prevent him from proclaiming the excommunication (Cairns 1996:209-210).

After the death of Boniface the Frenchmen Clement V was elected Pope by the cardinals (1305) and he moved to Avignon in 1309 after first moving to France on his election. Clement was a man of dubious morality and had a weak character. The move to Avignon was the beginning of the "Babylonian Captivity" as the Pope was continuously under pressure and influence of the French monarchy. The Pope

retained its residency at Avignon through to 1377 (except for a short period from 1367 to 1370). Catherine of Siena strongly encouraged Pope Gregory IX to return to Rome which he did in 1377, ending the Babylonian Captivity. He died shortly thereafter and in 1378 the cardinals elected a new Pope, Urban VI. His bad temper and arrogant manner soon won him the disapproval of the cardinals and they elected a different Pope, Clement VII. Clement moved his residence back to Avignon, while Urban retained his claim to be the legitimate Pope and successor to Peter. Now there were two popes who were both elected by the same College of Cardinals – one in Avignon and one in Rome. The people of Europe were then forced to align themselves with one or the other of the Popes. Northern Italy, most of Germany, Scandinavia and England followed the Roman Pope whereas France, Spain, Scotland and southern Italy sided with the Pope in Avignon (Cairns 1996:241).

It was at this time that theologians from the University of Paris started to propose that a council of the church should decide on the issue of two seemingly legitimate Popes. There was sufficient support for this and in 1409 the Council of Pisa met. At this time Benedict XIII was in control in Avignon and Gregory XII in Rome. After declaring its authority, the council deposed both Benedict and Gregory and appointed Alexander V. The other two Popes refused to recognise this decision, so now there were three Popes, all properly elected. Alexander died in 1410, and was succeeded by John XXIII.

The important Council of Constance (1414 – 1418) was then called by Emperor Sigismund and John. At this council Gregory resigned his position and Benedict and John were deposed and Martin V was elected as the new Pope. This effectively ended the Great Schism and after the subsequent Council of Basel dissolved itself in

1449. From this point the Roman Catholic Church returned to the system of despotic papal power which is still in force (Cairns 1996:249-250).

While all this activity that ranged over more than a century did not result in a permanent schism within the Roman Catholic Church, it is clear to see the power of greed and personal ambition at play. At this time, the call for formal unity within the church was a stronger force and won the day. However, the schism did play a significant part in a much greater historical event, the Protestant Reformation (Cairns: 244) which is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

3.9 The Protestant Reformation – a survey of circumstances leading up to the Reformation and its implications

The Protestant Reformation is probably one of the most important events in the history of the world. When studying the sources of the development of denominationalism, it can be said with justification that the concept of denominationalism was birthed during the Reformation.

The rise of nationalism, the circumstances surrounding the Great Schism, the lack of morality of the clergy in general and the papacy in particular, and the requirement to pay papal tax to the church all led to a negative sentiment towards the church during the time of the schism, and it was during this time that John Wycliffe (1329 – 1384) lived. Wycliffe, who was a scholar at Oxford for most of his life, wanted to reform the church by eliminating immoral clergy from office and by stripping the church of its property – which he believed was lying at the root of ecclesiastical corruption. He taught that ownership property was not to vest in the church, but that they had to act as responsible stewards with that which God entrusted to them. The church did not

dare to confront Wycliffe directly because of the support he enjoyed from John of Gaunt and the English nobles.

After 1379, Wycliffe started to oppose the dogma of the Roman church, first by attacking the authority of the Pope, insisting that Christ and not the Pope is the head of the church. He further insisted that the Bible and not the church was the sole authority for believers. In 1382 Wycliffe completed the first translation of the New Testament in English and most of the Old Testament was completed by his death in 1384. In addition to his high view of Scripture, Wycliffe opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. However, his views were condemned in London in 1382 and he retired to his rectory in that year. He founded a group of lay preachers, the Lollards, to continue preaching his ideas and they continued to do so until Parliament ruled in 1401 that the death penalty would be the punishment for preaching Lollard ideas. Bohemian students studying in England carried the writings and ideas of Wycliffe back to Bohemia and these became the foundations of the teachings of John Hus (Cairns 1996:244-246).

John Hus (1373 – 1415) was the pastor of Bethlehem Chapel from 1402 to 1414 and became rector of the University of Prague in 1409. He read and adopted the ideas of Wycliffe and started preaching ideas similar to those of Wycliffe. This coincided with a rise of national feeling in Bohemia and resistance to control of the Holy Roman Empire. Hus was ordered to go to the Council of Constance under a promise of safe conduct by the emperor. This was not honoured and at this council both his and Wycliffe's ideas were condemned. After refusing to recant, Hus was burned at the stake by order of the council. Hus' more radical followers were called the Taborites and they rejected everything regarding faith and practice in the church that could not

be found in Scripture. It was from this group that the Moravian church, which still exists, developed (Cairns 1996:246-247).

During this time an important trend arose – one that would later form the basis of many denominations. It was the rise of nation-states and the middle class. The classical world was dominated by city-states. This was the largest political unit into which people could organise themselves. Even the mighty Roman Empire was an extension of the concept of city-states. With the Holy Roman Empire being such a strong force, the Middle Ages was dominated by the ideal of political and religious unity under Rome. However, in practice, feudalism played a much larger role in providing stability to citizens in surrounding areas. A progressive development of the feudal system gave rise to a system of nation-states. England, France and Spain were the pioneers in the development of nation-states. This did not only result in a desire for political unity within these nations-states, but also ecclesiastical unity (Cairns 1996:259). This is a trend that becomes obvious with the rise of church organisations within national boundaries.

There were many factors that made the Reformation a certainty. Cairns (1996:267-270) lists some of these as:

1. The unwillingness of the Roman Catholic church to accept reforms suggested by sincere reformers such as the mystics, Wycliffe and Hus, the reforming councils and the humanists;

2. The emergence of nation-states, which opposed the papal claim to universal power; and

3. The rise of a middle-class who disliked the drain of wealth to Rome.

All of these culminated in changes of geography, politics, economics, sociology, intellectualism, and religion.

The foundations of the medieval society were breaking up, and replaced by a completely new way of thinking. Radical ideas for the day started emerging: that the universal church be replaced by national or state churches or even free churches; scholastic philosophy tied to classical Greek philosophy gave way to Protestant biblical philosophy; justification by faith, the sacraments, and works (all through the church) gave way to justification by faith alone; and the Bible alone, rather than the Bible <u>and</u> tradition as interpreted by the church, became the norm.

All of this also laid the foundation for the rise of denominationalism. Schisms and scandal in the Roman Catholic Church led to the formation of national or free Protestant churches. While these churches – especially the Anglican and Lutheran churches – were under the control of the rulers of the nation-states, the authority over life and faith moved away from the Roman church and was replaced by the authority of the Bible, which the individual was now allowed to read freely.

3.10   The direct causes of the Protestant Reformation

Cairns (1996:275-277) summarises the direct causes of the Reformation. The discontent among the people of Europe in the face of adverse conditions opened the way for a leader who would be used to bring about the revolutionary changes. This leader was Martin Luther.

The direct cause of the Reformation was the glaring abuse of the indulgence system. Archbishop Albert wanted the vacant archbishopric of Mainz in 1514. Albert was only 23 years old at the time, and canon law forbade one person to hold more than one

office. He therefore had to pay Pope Leo X a sum of money in order to be allowed to do this. At the time the papacy was in need for funds to complete the building of the St Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Albert borrowed the money required from the Fugger banking family in Augsburg. A papal bull authorising the sale of indulgences in Saxony was provided as security for the loan. Leo received half the proceeds of the indulgences whereas the other half went towards repayment of the loan.

After one confessed sin and repented, the priest would provide absolution, provided satisfaction was made. The thinking was that even though God forgave the sin and released the sinner from eternal punishment, there was a temporal satisfaction that the sinner had to fulfil in order to complete the process – this could be done either in life or in purgatory – the halfway house between this life and heaven. The satisfaction could take many forms, but would include the payment of money to a church. The purchase of an indulgence was such an act of satisfaction. Clement VI declared this doctrine to be dogma in 1343 and Sixtus IV extended the meritorious value of indulgences to souls in purgatory, provided the living relatives of the dead purchased the indulgences.

The Fugger family employed a Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, to sell these indulgences. He was paid the equivalent of eleven hundred US dollars per month and his expenses were reimbursed. An agent of the Fuggers accompanied the sellers of the indulgences to ensure that the correct amount of money was handed over to the bankers. The amount paid for an indulgence depended on the wealth and social standing of the sinner. It was primarily this practice that Martin Luther criticized with his ninety five theses.

The Protestant churches that developed from the Reformation were mostly national churches. These churches differed in the extent to which they departed from Roman Catholic doctrine and practice. Luther retained many of the rituals not prohibited in the Bible, whereas the Anglican Church retained most of the ritual practice of the medieval church. The Presbyterian churches that followed Calvin did not follow any practices not explicitly allowed or commanded in the New Testament. The Anabaptists that were not among the national churches, wished to form a church that was patterned after what they could see in the New Testament. The Latin speaking nations in southern Europe generally remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church and the pope.

3.11 The Protestant Reformation in Germany

Cairns (1996:280-291) summarises the events of the Reformation in Germany. Luther was born in 1483 from free peasant parents. His father became a man of considerable wealth from mining operations and wanted Luther to study law. In 1505 Luther became frightened during a severe thunderstorm and promised Saint Anne, the patron saint of mines, that he would become a monk if spared. Shortly thereafter he entered an Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. In 1508 he started lecturing theology at the new University of Wittenberg. He visited Rome in 1510 where he saw and experienced the luxury and corruption of the Roman church first hand. He was transferred to Wittenberg in 1511 where he became professor of Bible and he also received his doctor of theology degree. He held the position as lecturer in biblical theology until his death. He lectured in the vernacular and to do so effectively he started to study the original languages of the Bible. As a result of these studies, he gradually came to the realisation that true authority is only found in the Bible. During

the period 1515 to 1519 he lectured on the Psalms, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. It was when he lectured on Romans that he "stumbled" upon the realisation that "only faith in Christ could make one just before God." (Cairns 1996:282) It was from this time that the three main points of his theology became entrenched in his thinking: *sola fide* (by faith alone)*, sola scriptura* (Scripture is the only authority for faith and life) *and sola sacerdos* (the priesthood of all believers).

It was at this point in the life of Martin Luther that Johann Tetzel started selling indulgences at Jueterbock near Wittenberg. Luther resented the exploitation of the people through this system and decided to make public protest. Luther posted his famous ninety five theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg 31 October 1517. The theses contained mainly Luther's criticism of the indulgence system.

At first Luther was ordered to debate the issue before members of his own order of monks, the Augustinian order, but nothing came from this, except a widening of his influence and acceptance of Luther's ideas. By 1518, Luther insisted that his only authority in settling this dispute with the church would be neither the church tradition nor the Pope, but Scripture only. At the diet of Augsburg Luther was required to retract his views by Cardinal Cajetan, but Luther refused until he was convinced otherwise by Scripture. At the same time Luther denied the final authority of the Pope in matters of faith and morals. Luther appealed to a general council to deal with his issues and in July of 1519, he debated John Eck at Leipzig. After that, in 1520, Luther published three pamphlets: *The Address to the German Nobility*, refuting the claims of the papacy from Scripture; the *Babylonian Captivity*, widening his attack on the Roman sacramental system (the means of grace dispensed by the priesthood); *The Freedom of the Christian Man*, attacking the theology of the Roman Church by

asserting his view of the priesthood of all believers. Luther now clearly attacked the hierarchy, the sacraments and the theology of the Roman Catholic Church.

In June of 1520 Pope Leo X issued the bull that eventually led to the excommunication of Luther. After Luther's books were burned in Cologne, he in turn publicly burned the papal bull. The new emperor, Charles V, then called for a diet at Worms in 1521 where Luther was to defend his views. Luther agreed to go under the protection of his friend Frederick, the elector of Saxony and founder of the University of Wittenberg. He again refused to recant, stating that only Scripture or reason can convince him of any error. On his way back to Wittenberg, he was kidnapped by his friends and they hid him at Wartburg Castle where he remained for two years until 1522. After the Diet of Worms Luther was ordered an outlaw and all his writings was to be burned.

During this time, Luther's friend and colleague, Philip Melanchthon, published a short work on the theology of the Reformers, *Loci Communes*. In essence, this booklet rejected the authority of the Roman Church, the Fathers, the canon law, and the Scholastics and asserted that the Bible has final authority over the lives and morals of Christians. Luther approved of this publication as an accurate expression of his ideas.

While at Wartburg Castle, Luther completed his German translation of the New Testament using Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament. By 1534, the whole Bible, including the Apocrypha, was translated into German. This translation set the standard for the German language. Luther also wrote *On Monastic Vows* in which he encouraged monks and nuns to leave the cloister and to marry.

While Luther was at Wartburg, Nicholas Storch and Markus Stuebner (also known as the Zwickau prophets) came to Wittenberg and started to preach ideas similar to the Anabaptists. They taught that the second coming of Christ was imminent and that their followers would receive special revelations. Luther then returned to Wittenberg where he preached against the prophets, emphasising the authority of Scripture and the need for gradual reformation of the church. In 1535, Luther openly broke with the Anabaptist movement.

The Lutheran movement lost the support of Erasmus by 1525. He did not want to break with Rome and also disagreed with Luther's view on the freedom of the will.

Luther also opposed the peasants' revolt in 1525. When reading Luther's denunciation of the authority of the church, the assertion of Biblical authority and the right of the individual to approach God directly, they applied these same arguments to their social and economic problems. They demanded reform of the feudal system, but this was resisted by the lords. Luther initially supported the peasants, but when he realised that their actions might endanger the Reformation he urged the princes to restore order. Using severe measures, the princes slaughtered about hundred thousand peasants. The peasants felt that they were betrayed by Luther and partly as a result of this, much of Southern Germany remained in the Roman Catholic Church.

An important event that had a major impact on the development of the Reformation in Europe was the contact between Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, who was leading the Reformation in the Northern Cantons of Switzerland. Luther could not see his way open to join forces with Zwingli. The two met at the Marburg Castle of Philip of

Hesse in 1529 and agreed on fourteen out of fifteen propositions. They disagreed on how Christ was present in the elements of the Communion. Zwingli contended that communion was a memorial to what Jesus Christ did on the cross whereas Luther maintained that there was a real physical presence of Christ in the elements of Communion even though the substance did not change.

Another important event in the development of the Reformation in general and denominationalism in particular was the Diet of Speier in 1526. At this council, the decision was made that each ruler should follow what he felt was correct in faith, in other words, the ruler was to choose the religion of his state. At this time, Emperor Charles V was fighting his French enemy Francis I from gaining control of Italy and the Turkish threat on the Eastern borders of the Empire. There were also many Catholic princes absent from the council. All of these factors aided towards the rapid growth of the Reformation and Lutheranism. During this time Luther developed church organisation and drew up the German Mass and Order of Service. In 1529, at a second Diet at Speier, the decision of the previous council was reversed and it was asserted that the Roman Catholic faith was the only legal faith. Six princes representing fourteen free cities read a "Protestation" against this decision at this council, and since then the group was called the "Protestants". In 1530, at the Diet of Augsburg, Melanchthon presented the Augsburg Confession which became the official creed of the Lutheran Church. In 1529 Luther drew up the *Short Catechism* and by 1535 the Wittenburg faculty began to examine and ordain ministerial candidates.

Luther died in 1546 and left the leadership of the Lutheran Church to Melanchthon. Germany was plagued by religious wars from this time until the Peace of Augsburg

in 1555, where the decision of the original Diet of Speier was reinstated and each ruler allowed choosing the religion of his state. What was of course very significant is that this decision gave each prince religious authority in his area. The territorial churches included all who were baptised and superintendents were appointed by the princes to ensure uniform worship and discipline of pastors.

Lutheranism was plagued by disagreement and controversy in its early years. One of the major disputes arose around the issue of preaching the Law over the Gospel. Some were of the opinion that even though one is saved by faith alone, the Law still had an important place in the lives of believers. Others felt that this would only be a return to the Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation by works. Other arguments revolved around Communion and on whether or not the human will was able to cooperate with God in accepting salvation. As a result of these disputes, the German princes decided to settle it and the result was the publication of the *Book of Concord* in 1580 that contained the three universal creeds of the early church as well as various Lutheran formulas. These disputes made the Lutherans very conscious of doctrine which led to an overemphasis, ignoring subjective and spiritual aspects of Christianity. The Pietistic movement arose in reaction to this strong intellectual emphasis.

3.12 The Protestant Reformation in Switzerland and the Anabaptist movement

3.12.1 Ulrich Zwingli

Cairns (1996:293-305) describes the development of the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland. By the time of the Swiss Reformation,

Switzerland was divided into thirteen cantons, each a free, self-governing republic. This meant that each canton was free to select the form of religion it would follow.

There were three types of Reformation that developed in the Swiss territories. The first was the German-speaking parts in the north, led by Zwingli and who followed his views. Second, there were the French-speaking cantons in the south that followed the views of Calvin. Finally there were the Anabaptists that first worked with Zwingli. This group spread throughout Switzerland, Germany and Holland.

Zwingli came from a wealthy family and he received a good education, receiving his Master of Arts degree from the University of Basel in 1506. The humanities were his chief interest and Erasmus was his idol. As parish priest in Glarus, he interpreted the Pauline letters through Platonic reasoning and as a result of his humanist interests, emphasised ethics. Because of the influence of Erasmus, he moved away from scholastic theology towards studying the Bible. From 1516 he served as pastor at Einsiedeln, where he began to oppose the abuses of the system of indulgences. When Erasmus' Greek New Testament was published he copied the letters of Paul so that he may have his own copy. He also memorised the letters of Paul in Greek. He was called to be pastor in Zurich in 1519, by which time he could be considered a biblical humanist. In this year the plague and contact with Lutheranism led him to an experience of genuine conversion. He started teaching that tithing was not a matter of divine authority, but a voluntary decision. This struck an obvious blow to the Roman financial system. He

secretly married Anna Reinhard in 1522, and only publicly legitimised their marriage in 1524.

In 1523 Zwingli was challenged to a public debate by the authorities where his views were to be debated. Before this debate, Zwingli published his Sixty-seven Articles, which emphasised salvation by faith, the authority of the Bible, the headship of Christ over the church, and the right of clerical marriage. The town council decided that Zwingli won the debate and his ideas were given legal status. The Reformation was thus adopted in Zurich by governmental action. Some of the actions instituted in Zurich included the elimination of fees for baptisms and burials, monks and nuns were allowed to marry and images and relics were banned. In 1525 the Mass was abolished in Zurich, completing the Reformation process.

Zwingli believed that ultimate authority resided in the Christian community which exercised this authority through an elected civil government based on the authority of the Bible. The church and state were therefore linked in a theocratic manner.

Several cantons accepted Zwingli's Reformation ideas and in 1527 a synod of the Swiss evangelical churches was formed. The Catholic cantons in response formed the Christian Union of Catholic cantons and open war broke out. Peace was negotiated at Cappel in 1529, but when Zwingli forced reform in certain cantons, war broke out again in 1531. Zwingli was killed in this fighting. Heinrich Bullinger became successor to Zwingli and later the

Zwinglian movement merged with the Calvinist movement through the Consensus of Zurich in 1549.

3.12.2 The Anabaptists

The Anabaptised was at first closely linked to the Zwinglian movement in Northern Switzerland (Cairns 1996:297-300). The Anabaptist views were encouraged by Zwingli's teaching of the authority of the Bible.

Conrad Grebel, regarded as the founder of the Swiss Anabaptist movement, was educated at the universities of Vienna and Paris. He worked closely with Zwingli after his conversion in 1522, sharing the initial view of Zwingli that infant baptism had no Biblical basis, but then broke with him in 1525. In this year the Zurich council ordered Grebel to cease Bible studies. Shortly after this, Grebel baptized George Blaurock, who in turn baptized Grebel. Several others were also baptized and they formed their own voluntary congregation (Roy 2000:1). This led to widespread persecution by the authorities that included fines and exile and many Swiss Anabaptists fled to other countries. Later a group that emerged from the Anabaptists, the Amish – led by Jacob Amman – went to Pennsylvania where they are still in existence.

Balthasar Hubmaier is regarded as the founder of the German Anabaptist movement. He also had an excellent education receiving his doctor of theology degree from the University of Ingolstadt under John Eck. His pastorate was near the Swiss border and he came into contact with the Swiss radicals and adopted their ideas. He and three hundred of his followers were baptised in 1525 and as a result he had to flee to Zurich. From there he was

banished to Moravia where he became the leader of those who fled under the Zwinglian persecution. He was burned at the stake by the order of the emperor in 1528 and his wife was drowned. He insisted on the separation of church and state, the authority of the Bible and the baptism of believers.

Around 1532 Munster started adopting Anabaptist ideas under the leadership of Bernt Hoffman. They proposed socialism and selling property to aid the poor. At this time Melchior Hoffman was in Strasbourg awaiting the coming of the Millennium in 1533. He was superseded by the baker Jan Matthys who proclaimed himself to be Enoch. He later decided that the Munster and not Strasbourg would be the New Jerusalem and moved there with his wife. He was killed in fighting and was succeeded by John of Leyden who married his widow as well as fifteen other wives. Polygamy was decreed based on the practice of Old Testament patriarchs. They believed in community of goods and there was a fanatical anticipation of the heavenly kingdom. All of this led to disorder. The city was retaken by the Catholics and the Anabaptist leaders were executed. Because of their fanatical practice as well as the Munster incident, the ideas of the Anabaptists were denied by both Zwingli and Luther. It also brought condemnation and persecution by both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The stigma associated with the Anabaptist movement was abated under the leadership of Menno Simons. Simons embraced the ideas of the Anabaptist movement and gave up his priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church in 1536. The movement in the Netherlands adopted the name "brethren" and after the

death of Simons they were known as the Mennonites. The group was granted religious freedom in 1676.

While it is difficult to give a comprehensive statement of Anabaptist beliefs due to the diversity of groups in various areas, there are some doctrines that all Anabaptists held in common. These were (1) the authority of the Bible as final and infallible rule for faith and practice; (2) complete separation between church and state; and (3) the practice of believer's baptism. Most Anabaptists are inclined towards pacifism and object to taking oaths (Roy 2000:1-2).

As can be seen from the history of the Anabaptist movement, it is clear that it's rise was initially motivated by doctrinal differences, but some leaders ended up interpreting the Bible in ways that were to their own advantage.

3.12.3 John Calvin

John Calvin (1509 – 1564) is ranked as the leader of the second generation of Reformers (Cairns 1996:300). He was born at Noyon in Pacardy in north-eastern France. His father was a notary and therefore of the professional class. Calvin was well educated, first obtaining his MA at the University of Paris (which is also where he was introduced to Protestant ideas) and then studied law at the University of Orleans. He transferred to the University of Bourges in 1529 where he received his law degree in 1532. It was around this time that he was converted and also when he adopted the ideas of the Reformation. He went to Basel after he was forced to leave France in 1534, after he collaborated with the rector of the University of Paris calling for biblical Reformation similar to that of Luther. Here, at the age of twenty six, he

wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion. This was initially a small work, addressed to Francis I to defend the French Protestants. Over time, the work went through several additions, until 1559, by which time it consisted of four volumes and eighty chapters. The influence of Luther could be seen in the first edition published in 1536.

While Luther emphasised salvation by faith alone, Calvin emphasised the sovereignty of God. In recent years, the acronym TULIP was developed to summarise the theology of Calvin: the **T**otal depravity of all men so that man can do nothing for his own salvation; salvation is **U**nconditional election based on the sovereign will of God; **L**imited atonement, meaning that the work of Christ on the cross is limited for the benefit of those elected to salvation; **I**rresistible grace, meaning that the elect will be saved apart from any desire on their part; and the **P**reservation of the saints, meaning once saved, the salvation cannot be lost.

During his travels, Calvin stopped over in Geneva for one night in 1536. Guillaume Farel, who started the Reformation process in Geneva, asked Calvin to remain in the city to organise the church. Calvin reluctantly agreed and worked with Farel until 1538 when they were exiled due to differences between them and the authorities over church discipline and the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. Between 1538 and 1541, Calvin ministered in Strasbourg where Martin Bucer led the Reform. Here he also met his wife Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist pastor. In 1541 Calvin was invited back to Geneva. Shortly thereafter the Ecclesiastical Ordinances were promulgated. These provided for an association of pastors to teach and administer

discipline, a group of teachers to teach doctrine, deacons to administer work of charity and the important Consistory that consisted of a group of ministers and elders who were to supervise the theology and morals of the community. Members of the community were punished by excommunication when necessary. The state was used to inflict more severe penalties when warranted. In this time, fifty-eight people were executed and seventy-six exiled. Calvin died in 1564 and Theodore Beza took over the leadership of the church in Geneva.

Calvin's legacy included the Institutes, his letters, commentaries and other writings. He also encouraged education and set up a system that is the basis for the current school system in most western countries. From a denominational point of view, the church in Geneva became the model for representative church government for many Reformed and Presbyterian churches. He also believed that the church and state should work together in order to further Christianity.

It is impossible to overstate the influence of Calvinism over Protestant denominationalism. In terms of doctrine Calvin was in a real sense the author of Reformed theology. Even in modern times, many will classify themselves as a "Calvinist" using the term as synonymous with the term "Reformed." The influence of Calvinism on the development of denominationalism from an organisational perspective is equally significant. In 1542 Calvin promulgated the Ecclesiastical Ordinances in Geneva (Cairns 1996:304). In this "system there were four classes of ecclesiastical officers: Ministers or preachers, elected by the college of ministers and approved by the council … elders,

chosen as above, whose business it was to watch over the morals of all classes and, as members of the consistory … to exercise church discipline; deacons, whose office was to administer church charities and to look after the sick; and teachers or doctors, who were to give instruction in Greek, Hebrew, and other branches of learning to students for ministry" (Newman 1903:218). Cairns (1996:305) states that this "representative government of the Genevan church became the model for the Reformed and Presbyterian churches."

3.13 The Protestant Reformation in England

The Protestant Reformation created four main branches – the Lutheran movement under Martin Luther, the Anabaptist movement under several leaders but then consolidating under Menno Simons, the Reformed movement under John Calvin and finally the Anglican Reformation in England. With no dominant ecclesiastical leader, this movement was dominated by the civil ruler until the Church of England was established under Elizabeth I (Cairns 1996:320-335).

During the reign of the Tudor monarchs a strong national identity was developed in England. The King and the rising middle class united to promote the welfare of the country. Many factors were present that paved the way for separation of the church in England from the papacy. These included control of much land in England by the Roman Church; papal taxation resented by the middle class; and church courts which rivalled the royal courts. Intellectual and theological factors also played a role. The teachings of Wycliffe still did the rounds through the teachings of the Lollards that were never completely stamped out. The biblical humanists (or the Oxford reformers) started to study the Bible in its original languages, and brought the

meaning of the Bible to their people. William Tyndale published the New Testament in English, and even though he was martyred for this, his work lived on in the English Reformation. Luther's Babylonian Captivity was studied by scholars in Oxford and Cambridge, fuelling their dissatisfaction of the abuses of the Roman Church. (Henry VIII attacked this work, earning him the title "Defender of the Faith" from the Pope.) These were some of the issues that caused the nation to support Henry VIII when he eventually broke with Rome.

The direct cause of the break with Rome was more Henry's desire to have a male heir for the throne than his actual love affairs. Henry VIII ruled from 1509 to 1547. He was a well-balanced man, knowing theology, a musician, gifted at languages and sport. His father, Henry VII, endeavoured to relate his line with the important families in Europe. His son, Arthur, was married to the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon. When Arthur died, Henry VII persuaded Pope Julius II to grant a dispensation that would allow Catherine to marry Arthur's younger brother, Henry. They had one daughter, Mary.

When it became apparent that Henry would not have a son by Catherine, he became anxious as he believed that England would need a male ruler to see it through the turbulent times Europe was undergoing. He also thought that God punished him for marrying his brother's widow. Henry then ordered Cardinal Wolsey to negotiate a divorce from Catherine with the Pope. The Pope could not grant the divorce as he was under the control of Charles V from Spain – Catherine's nephew. Henry accused Wolsey of high treason, but Wolsey died before he could be executed.

In 1533 the Protestant, Thomas Cranmer, was made archbishop of Canterbury and in the same year declared the marriage to Catherine as invalid in his church court and Henry married Anne Boleyn in that same year. Henry then turned to Parliament who forbade the residence of English clergy outside the country, the payment of annates to Rome, and banned appeals from church courts in England to the papal courts in Rome. Parliament also declared that the king was the "only supreme head" of the Church in England which caused the formal break with Rome.

From this time Parliament ordered the closing of many monasteries and their property was taken over by the crown and the king kept part of this to himself, while the rest was sold cheaply to the new middle class. Even though there was a complete political break with Rome, in theology Henry remained true to Rome. He did, however, authorise the English translation of the Bible.

Only a daughter, Elizabeth, came from Henry's marriage with Anne and she was eventually tried and beheaded on charges of adultery. Henry then married Jane Seymour. Before she died, she bore a son, Edward. He then married Anne of Cleves, whom he divorced. After that Catherine Howard became his wife, but she was executed. Finally he married Catherine Parr who outlived him.

When Henry VIII died in 1547, his son Edward VI became king at the age of nine. Because he was so young, his uncle, the duke of Somerset was appointed regent. Somerset had Protestant sympathies and he helped Edward make changes. During Edward's reign, Parliament granted the cup to the laity, repealed certain heresy and treason laws and the Six Articles, legalised marriage of priests and ordered the dissolution of chantries. Church services were held in English rather than Latin and

the Act of Uniformity provided for the use of the Book of Common Prayer (the work of Cranmer) to be used in all church services. It also provided for the reading of the Bible and the participation of the congregation in worship services. Cranmer, with the help of John Knox produced the Forty-two articles of Faith (later the Thirty-nine Articles) that were Calvinistic in tone. These articles became the creed of the Anglican Church. This was adopted by Parliament in 1553, and shortly thereafter Edward died.

With the death of Edward, Mary Tudor became queen. She was thoroughly Catholic and immediately started to repudiate the acts of reformation instituted by Edward. She restored religious practices to those in place at the time of her father's death and Parliament agreed to this with the exception of restoring the land taken from the Roman Church during the life-time of Henry. Mary married Philip II of Spain in 1554, but this was not a happy marriage and he went back to Spain in 1555. Most of the English clergy refused to accept the changes brought about by Mary and many fled to Geneva and Frankfort. About 275 were martyred for their faith during the reign of Mary Tudor – among these Cranmer, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. Mary was very unpopular with the people and when she died and Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, the people were again ready for reform.

Elizabeth could only be Protestant as the Roman authorities would not acknowledge the marriage of her parents. However, she avoided the extremes of her siblings Edward and Mary Tudor and instituted moderate reform that was palatable to the English people. In 1559 she passed the Act of Supremacy, which made the queen "the only supreme governor of this realm" in church as well as civil matters.

The Act of Uniformity was passed, providing for the use of the Book of Common Prayer with slight modifications. Absence from church was punishable with a fine and the Forty-two Articles were revised to omit the condemnation of antinomians, Anabaptists, and millenarians. This became the Thirty-nine Articles which was accepted by Parliament in 1563, and remained the creed of the Anglican Church, with slight modifications in 1571.

These reforming actions aroused the enmity of the Pope and a bull excommunicating Elizabeth was issued in 1570 by Pope Pius V. Measures were also taken by the Jesuits to minister secretly to the followers of the Pope in England, and more than a hundred of them were executed. The Bible was made available to Roman Catholics in English in 1582. The Pope then requested Philip of Spain to assist him in regaining England for the Roman Church. In 1588 the Spanish Armada arrived in England but was defeated by the English fleet. This victory destroyed the last hope of the Roman Church to gain a strong foothold in England.

With the Spanish and Rome convincingly defeated and the Anglican Church firmly established, the authorities could turn their attention to the problem of the Puritans who were a dominant force in England from 1567 to 1660.

3.14 The Puritan movement

The Puritans consisted of many lawyers, merchants and country gentry who felt that the Reformation in England retained too much of the liturgy and practice of the Roman church. They wanted to purify the Anglican Church from the remaining Roman vestments, hence their nickname, "Puritan".

After the threat from Rome and Spain passed, Elizabeth passed an act against the Puritans giving the authorities the right to imprison Puritans who refused to attend the Anglican Church services. The Puritans did not want to dissent from the Anglican church, but rather wanted a Congregational state church (the Independent Puritans) or complete separation between church and state with a Congregational form of church government (the Separatist Puritans). The roots of all the English nonconformist groups were in the Puritan movement and according to Cairns (1996:329) "the principle of denominationalism, which was to supersede the state church of the Reformation, began with them."

There were many important individuals that had a lasting effect on the way the religious and denominational landscape panned out over the centuries to follow.

The first of these was Richard Hooker (1554-1600). He wrote the Treatise of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity – a primarily philosophical work. In this work he asserted that obedience to the ruler is necessary because the ruler is head of both church and state. He asserted that members of the state are also members of the state church and that both state and church are subject to divine law. He taught that bishops were subordinate to the king, and were to supervise the state church. He opposed the Puritans who wanted to separate church and state, but also the papal claims of authority over the state (Cairns 1996:329).

Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) was a professor of theology at Cambridge. He shifted the Puritan emphasis of reform in liturgy to reform in theology and church government. He insisted on the final authority of Scripture which led his followers to adopt a firmly Calvinistic theology. He opposed the government of the church by

bishops, but that it should rather be controlled by a presbytery of bishops or elders. This was essentially the same as the Calvinistic form of church government and he laid the foundations of English Presbyterianism (Cairns 1996:329-330).

Henry Jacob (1563-1624) is considered the founder of the Independents or the Puritan Congregationalists. Jacob was one of the signatories to the Millenary Petition to James I in 1603 asking for a change in episcopacy to Presbyterianism. He was imprisoned for teaching that each congregation was to operate freely in the state church with the power to appoint its own pastor, determine policies and manage its own affairs. Jacob migrated to Holland in 1606 and returned to England in 1616 when he became pastor of an Independent congregation in Southwark, London. Independent Puritanism grew slowly to a powerful force in England. One of the notable adherents of Independent church polity was Oliver Cromwell (Cairns 1996:330).

Robert Browne (1550-1633) pastored a church of Separatists from 1580 to 1581 in Norwich from where he fled with his congregation to Holland. What set the Separatist Puritans apart from other Puritans was that they bound themselves together by covenant in loyalty to one another, but apart from a state church. In Holland Browne wrote *Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* in which he asserted that congregations were to be a voluntary covenant with each other, united in Christ. He taught that officers were to be chosen by the members of the church, and that no congregation should have authority over another. Browne returned to England in 1591 when he was ordained in the Anglican Church which he served until his death. The ideas of Browne continued to live on and under a slightly modified version emerged in a congregation in London under the leadership of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow

– both of whom were hanged in 1593 for their views. Many of the Separatists emigrated to Holland and a group under the leadership of John Robinson finally migrated to America in 1620 on the Mayflower (Cairns 1996:330-331).

A group that formed in Gainsborough migrated to Amsterdam in 1606 under the leadership of John Smyth where they came under the influence of the Mennonites. In 1608 Smyth and Thomas Helwys as well as other members of the congregation were baptised. Thomas Helwys returned to England in 1611 and organised the first English Baptist Church. They were later known as General Baptists because they held the view of general atonement rather than particular atonement (Cairns 1996:331).

A stronger group of Baptists emerged as a result of a schism of Henry Jacob's congregation in 1633 and 1638. This group held to the baptism of believers and a Calvinistic theology that emphasised limited atonement. They were later called Particular Baptists. It was this group who were the antecedents of the American Baptist movement (Cairns 1996:331).

When James I became king of England in 1603, many hoped for further reform. This was not to be and James insisted on retaining the episcopal state church. He did authorise a translation of the Bible into English which became known as the Authorised or King James Version. Charles I, who ruled from 1625 to 1649 until he was executed believed in the divine right of the monarchy and the episcopacy and insisted on a subservient Parliament. Many Puritans got weary of his pro-Catholic sentiments and as many as twenty thousand Puritans left England for America between 1628 and 1640 (Cairns 1996:333). After much political strife, Charles was

executed in 1649 and England was ruled by a Puritan parliament under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. After Cromwell's death in 1660, Parliament voted itself out of existence and recalled Charles II as ruler and adopted the episcopacy again. At this time the Puritans were placed under a huge amount of pressure by the Anglican authorities and became part of the English nonconformist tradition. It was not until 1689 that toleration was granted to nonconformists in England when Protestant William of Holland was invited to become king of England (Cairns 1996:328-335), (Roy 2000:3-4).

3.15 The development of denominationalism

Many take the view that denominationalism is an American phenomenon and if the origins of denominationalism are to be studied, one has to study the history of the church in America. This is largely because the characteristics of modern church history have not been as pronounced anywhere in the world as it has been during the formative years of the United States of America (Cairns 1996:357). According to Cairns (1996:355) "denominationalism grew out of the separation of church and state. The rise of toleration and freedom of religion brought about the necessity of voluntary support of the church and more democratic control over its affairs by the laity." While this may be partly true, it is clearly not the case in an absolute sense, as can be seen from the survey of the history of the church up to this point. However, what can be said with certainty is that denominationalism became entrenched in western society as a result of the ecclesiastical activities that occurred at the time of the formation of the American colonies.

The following diagram, adapted from Cairns (1996: 356) gives a visual impression of the diverse denominational heritage that played such a crucial part in the development of the American colonies.
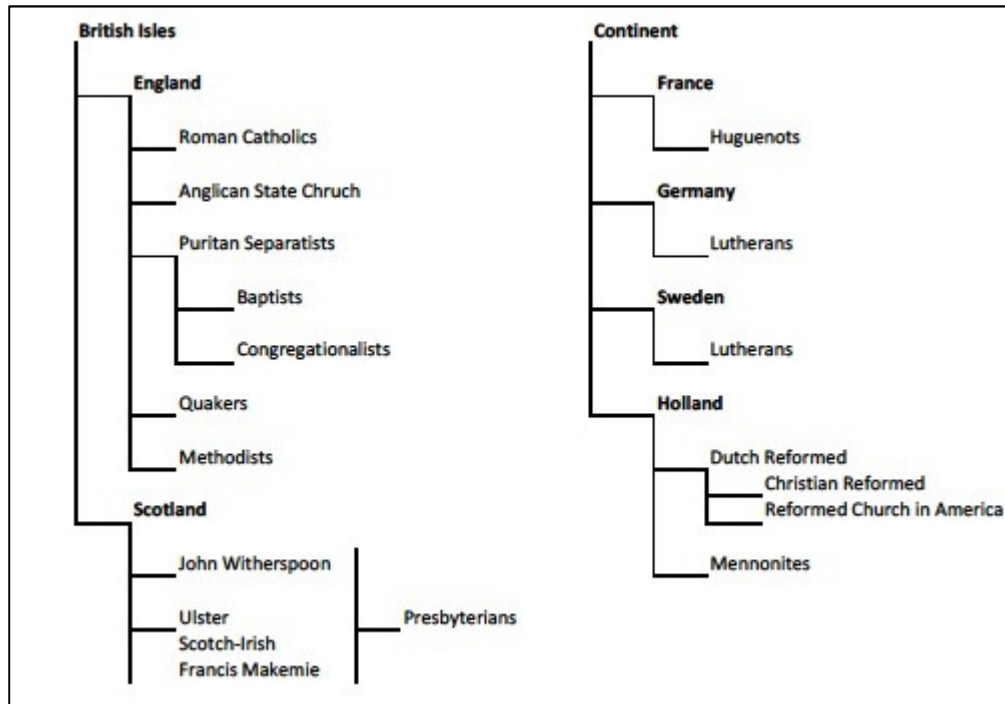
Figure 3.1 A visual impression of the diverse denominational heritage that played a part in the development of the American colonies.

3.15.1 The Anglican Church in America

The Virginia Company was given a charter to establish a colony in America and they settled in Jamestown in 1607. Provision was made for the establishment of the Anglican Church. More and more Anglican Puritans migrated to the colony and the Puritan, Alexander Whitaker became the leading minister of the church from 1611. John Rolfe, who married Pocahontas, laid the economic foundations of the colony by successfully growing tobacco. The colonists established slavery by purchasing slaves from

the Dutch traders in order to obtain labour for the tobacco plantations. The Anglican Church became established in Maryland, parts of New York, North and South Carolina and also Georgia. It was only after the American Revolution that this pattern changed (Cairns 1996:358).

3.15.2 New England Congregationalism

The Congregational movement in New England had its roots in the Scrooby congregation. They were a group of congregational separatists who lived in Scrooby near Nottinghamshire but fled England to avoid persecution. In 1620 a group of over one hundred colonists set sail for America on the Mayflower. They landed at Plymouth in New England rather than Northern Virginia as planned. Before they landed, they drew up the Mayflower Compact which was an extension of the covenant ideas of the Separatists towards civil government. This compact remained the constitution of the group until Plymouth was incorporated with the Salem settlements into Massachusetts in 1691. A large number of non-Separatist Puritans settled in Salem and Boston. In 1631, the Massachusetts General Court limited the right to vote to church members and in that way Congregationalism became a state religion – quite contrary to the ideas of the Separatists. The theology of these Puritan churches was Calvinistic.

A desire for more religious freedom as well as economic consideration prompted Thomas Hooker and his congregation to apply for permission to move to the fertile Connecticut River valley to the west. In 1638 the constitution of the new colony was drawn up. Only the governor was required

to be a church member and the government was based on the consent of the people.

After the Cambridge Synod in 1646 representatives of the four Puritan colonies adopted the Westminster Confession as an expression of their faith. The Cambridge Platform was drawn up in 1648 which declared that each church was autonomous, but related to other churches for fellowship and council. Pastors were ordained by neighbouring ministers when required (Cairns 1996:358-360).

3.15.3 Baptist Churches in America

Roger Williams, part of Henry Jacob's congregation on London, left England in 1631 and arrived in Boston. From there he moved to Plymouth where he ministered for two years. The church in Salem called him as pastor in 1635, but the general court interfered. It exiled him from the territory under the influence of John Cotton because he upheld the Indian ownership of land; he opposed a state church; and insisted that magistrates had no power of the religious life of citizens. In 1636 he founded Providence and in 1639 a church was formed and all members were re-baptised. The twelve members organised the church along Baptist lines and this was probably the first Baptist church in America (Roy 2000:9). Williams' greatest contribution was the emphasis on the separation between church and state, freedom of conscience, and the fair treatment of Indians. Shubal Stearns carried the Baptist message to Sandy Creek, North Carolina and South Carolina (Cairns 1996:362-363).

The Civil War of 1861 to 1865 resulted in many denominations splitting into a northern and southern section. This was no exception for the Baptists. After the war, the Southern Baptist Convention decided to remain separate from the Northern Baptists. Despite possessing few resources, the Southern Baptist Convention showed remarkable growth, with more than fifteen million members by the end of the twentieth century, making it one of the largest individual denominations in the world (Roy 2000:11).

3.15.4 The Quakers, Lutherans, Moravians and Mennonites in Pennsylvania

The Quakers appeared in Boston in 1656, but found that they were not welcomed due to their ideas of separation of church and state and their indifference to doctrine. They became a great influence in Pennsylvania thanks to the efforts of William Penn.

Charles II owed sixteen thousand pounds to Penn's father and in order to settle the debt, gave Penn control over Pennsylvania. Penn opened the colony, welcoming anyone who was oppressed because of their faith to find refuge, explaining the great diversity of faith in the area.

In 1683 large numbers of Mennonites settled near Philadelphia and in 1740 a large number of Moravians also settled in Pennsylvania. Count Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians, visited Pennsylvania in 1741 in an attempt to unite the German "denominations". Lutheranism in America was formalised in 1748 when Henry Muhlenberg formed a Lutheran Synod in Pennsylvania (Cairns 1996:363).

3.15.5 Methodism

While Methodism was introduced to the colonies in America in 1760, John Wesley sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor as official missionaries in 1768 and Francis Asbury in 1771. When Methodism was formally organised in the colonies in 1784, Asbury became the first bishop. He developed the system of circuit riders who offered services to the settlers in the area. The system of the circuit riders, together with the Baptist farmer-preachers, caused a rapid expansion of Baptists and Methodists on the frontier (Cairns 1996:364).

3.15.6 Presbyterianism

By 1750 about two hundred thousand Scotch-Irish migrated to the colonies as a result of the "economic discrimination" practiced against Ireland by the English. Most of these immigrants moved to New Jersey and New York. Many others moved into central and western Pennsylvania and settled in the Pittsburgh area, which became the leading centre for American Presbyterianism (Cairns 1996:364). Francis Makemie (1658-1708) became the father of American Presbyterianism. He upheld freedom of religious speech at his trial for preaching without a license. In 1706 a presbytery was organised in Philadelphia and in 1716 the first synod of colonies were held. In 1729 the synod adopted the Westminster Confession as the standard of faith.

3.16   The consolidation of denominationalism in America

The American Revolution had a profound effect on the denominational landscape in America. It forced the various denominations to take sides, establish principles and

measuring decisions and consequent actions against the express Word of God. The ending of the war in 1783 resulted in a right to free exercise of religion and it brought about the separation between church and state where this has not yet been established. America was the first of the modern countries to establish a constitution guaranteeing a complete separation between church and state (Roy 2000:10).

The churches followed the example of the nation, and set up constitutions and national organisations. In 1784 the Methodists formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Anglicans set up the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1789. The Presbyterians created a national church in 1788, with the first national assembly meeting in 1789. The Dutch Reformed Church was formed in 1792 and the German Reformed Church in 1793 (Cairns 1996:371).

3.17 Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement and the "Third Wave"

Where the Reformation in the sixteenth century was more concerned with justification and issues around church polity, the twentieth century was marked by issues surrounding the authority of Scripture, the Second Coming and the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The Pentecostal movement started among the urban and rural poor and middle class since the early 1900's; and the charismatic movement in the Roman Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant denominations in the 1960's. The Third Wave emerged in the 1980's as independent churches and organisations. All these groups stress the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The traditional Pentecostal movements emphasise baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues as evidence thereof, whereas the charismatic movements and the Third Wave emphasise signs and wonders and the gifts such as

prophecy and healing (Cairns 1996:489). All the groups are generally noted for modern worship.

3.17.1 The Pentecostal movement

This movement started with the opening of Charles Parham's Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas in 1900. Early in 1901 students were studying the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts and one of the students, Agnes Ozman, asked the other students to lay hands on her so that she would receive the Holy Spirit. She started to speak in tongues and later some of the other students also started to speak in tongues. Parham started another school in Houston, Texas in 1905. One of the students, William Seymour, became the leader of a church in Los Angeles situated at 312 Azusa Street from where the movement spread throughout the rest of the world (Cairns 1996:491).

In addition to orthodox evangelical belief, Pentecostals believe that baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by the speaking in tongues is a necessary event that should complete the conversion experience (Renwick and Harman 1999:249).

Charles Mason's Church of God in Christ was by the end of the previous century the largest Pentecostal body in America with about 6.5 million members. The Assemblies of God, with its 24 million members worldwide was formed in 1914. This is the largest Pentecostal body in the world today. At around the same time the Chicago Pentecostal Church was started by Andrew Argue. Pentecostal churches were started in Toronto and Montreal

and by 1919 the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was formed (Cairns 1996:490).

3.17.2 The Charismatic movement

From the late 1950's many believers who worshipped in mainline denominations started to speak in tongues. These included the Episcopalian clergyman, Dennis Bennett in 1959, and after him, Larry Christenson in the Lutheran Church, Harold Bredesen in the Dutch Reformed Church, James Brown in the Presbyterian Church and in addition to Bennett, Richard Winkler in the Episcopalian Church. The movement then spread to other parts of the world, including the Roman Catholic Church. Most charismatics remained in their denominations and in addition to speaking in tongues, placed greater emphasis on divine healings (Cairns 1996:492).

As part of the charismatic movement another arose, the Word of Faith or Positive confession movement. This was started by Kenneth Hagin, who in turn was influenced by Esek Kenyon. Kenyon used New Thought to create positive attitudes, which will in turn result in health and wealth. Kenneth Copeland was greatly influenced by Hagin and he used the media of television effectively since 1979 (Cairns 1996:493).

3.17.3 The Third Wave movement

This movement was coined by Peter Wagner in 1983 and includes those who do not link up with either Pentecostals or charismatics. Their theology is marked by the work of the Holy Spirit in healing, casting out demons, prophecy, and other "signs and wonders". Adherents to this movement will

often join large mega churches. John Wimber organised the Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth at Fuller Seminary in 1975. He offered a course, The Miraculous and Church Growth, following each lecture with a time of healing and signs and wonders. Wimber founded the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in 1986 (Cairns 1996:493).

Adherents to these movements tend to be more experiential than theological in their approach to faith and life (Cairns 1996:494) and hence are less inclined to side with a particular denomination on theological grounds.

3.18 Conclusion

I want to return to the question cited in the introduction to this chapter: Why is it so important to study the history of the church and its traditions? Sweet (1999:100) answers the question by stating that we should retrieve the traditions of the past and re-appropriate it into twenty-first-century settings for ministry. However, he continues to say that,

> it is not a nostalgic capitulation of the present to some romanticized 'golden age'. Rather it is a 'recapitulation' (Irenaeus) or 'retrieval' (David Tracy) of our two-thousand-year past into our twenty-first-century future. It is a recovery of the past and its appropriation into new contexts, or what some Asian theologians call 'repeat without repetition'.

Through various historical events, we now have thousands of denominations. Some of these are very large and powerful organisations, whereas others – especially in Africa – are very small, but with a powerful local influence.

It is clear that with every schism or with the formation of every denomination, at least one, but in most cases all of the factors listed by Ammerman that contribute to the formation of denominations, were present: Theological, organisational and cultural

considerations. Of course it will be naïve to think that all the division and schism within the church over the years were the result of pure motives from the schismatics. It is clear that in many cases, the true motivation was greed, hunger for power, and personal ambition, to name but a few.

Nevertheless, as part of the universal Christian church, we must acknowledge the existence of the phenomenon of denominationalism, but still have to ask the question of its relevance in the postmodern era.

Sweet (1999:37) gives an indication of what the answer could be when he says,

> Every generation needs a shape that fits its own hands, its own soul. Each generation, every person, needs a different handle from which to receive the living waters of Jesus. Our task is to pour the living water into anything anyone will pick up. By 'anything' I mean that literary: anything. If I want to reach my twenty-second-century children … with the gospel of Jesus, I must be prepared to pour the living water into containers out of which I myself would never be caught dead drinking. This is what Paul meant when he talked about our 'becoming all things to all men' that we might win some (1 Corinthians 9:22).

This statement personifies on various levels the concept of postmodernism. It also asks a question: how are we to effectively minister to the postmodern world?

To begin answering this question, we must have a thorough understanding of what is meant by postmodernism and how this thinking impacts our present culture. This is the topic of the next chapter – a historical survey of the philosophical landscape from pre-modern times to the current postmodern era.

CHAPTER 4

POSTMODERNISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PRESENT CULTURE

4.1 Introduction

"Many philosophers … have held the view that the understanding of anything either depends on or is profoundly facilitated by obtaining the correct definition of it at the start of one's investigation" (Lawson-Tancred 1998:xi). There are almost as many definitions of the term postmodernism as the number of authors writing about the topic. In a way, this typifies the postmodern times that we live in.

When one talks about a term such as postmodernism, the simple answer is that the "post" signifies that it follows the modern period (Erickson 1998b:13). This implies that in order for one to understand postmodernism, one will need to understand modernism, and even what went before that. Soren Kierkegaard summarised this aptly when he wrote that "life can only be understood looking backward, but it must be lived forward" (Malikow 2009:x).

In the preface to the first edition of *A New History of Philosophy*, Matson (2000) states that "there are no elements in philosophy … instead of one philosophy triumphing over its rivals and forcing them out, we find a few conceptions of reason and the good life standing the test of time, continually reappearing modified to fit altered circumstances of life and seeming in no danger of being permanently discredited, however much their relative popularities may wax and wane."

Stiver (2003:525-526) makes the same point when he writes that the "history of modern philosophy is in many ways the failed attempts of one philosopher after another to satisfy … a craving for a second-order rational discourse that cannot be

gainsayed [sic] – rather than for testimony to revelation." He cites philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl and early Ludwig Wittgenstein as good examples of thinkers who tried to lay a firm foundation for knowledge. He states that postmodernism is the recognition that these failed attempts are instructive: rather than unsuccessfully attempting to lay the foundation for truth, one must rather "question the question", realising that it is rather "difficult to give a good answer to a bad question". The criteria for recognising truth must be questioned; no longer is the requirement one of universal application and acceptance, but rather contextual and cultural.

The aim of this chapter is to obtain a thorough understanding of the term "postmodernism". Once this understanding has been sufficiently solidified, the impact of postmodern thinking on the present culture is studied.

4.2 Historical background of postmodernism

While it is not possible to provide a comprehensive definition of the term postmodernism, it will be instructive to have some idea of what its main tenets are at the outset of this survey of the historical development of this philosophical outlook.

Grenz (2001:80-81) summarises postmodernism under the following key characteristics: (1) knowledge is not inherently good; (2) truth is not certain and not rational; (3) knowledge is not objective; and (4) there is no such thing as the "dispassionate, autonomous knower". This leads to the understanding that there is no absolute truth, and further that truth is relative to the community in which we participate.

This very brief summary of the term postmodernism will assist the reader in identifying postmodern elements throughout the course of the historical development of western philosophy.

Erickson (1998b:14) states that it is best to understand postmodernism as "an intellectual movement growing out of and supplanting modernism." Carson (2005:60) makes a similar statement when he says that whereas many scholars and thinkers anticipated postmodernism, they "tended to influence fellow scholars and academics, but never gained the popular approval that postmodernism has in many academic and media circles today … So considered, postmodernism is nothing but the popularisation of one strand of modernist [and I submit pre-modernist] thought."

4.2.1 Pre-modernism

Erickson (1998b:15) defines the pre-modern period as that which preceded the Enlightenment and includes with this the medieval and ancient periods. While this long period contained varied ideas, there were some common elements. These included (1) a belief in the rationality of the universe; (2) a belief that the observable nature was not the whole of reality (i.e. there was a dualism involving an unseen component of reality); (3) reality was teleological – there was the belief that there is a purpose in the universe. In the Western tradition, it was believed that an omnipotent, omniscient God created the entire universe with a plan that he was bringing about; (4) the metaphysical conception involved the belief in the objective existence of the physical world; (5) there was a belief in the correspondence theory of truth, i.e. something is true if it correctly describes the reality it purports to describe and false if not;

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and (6) all of these conceptions were closely related to a referential understanding of language, i.e. language does not simply refer to another language, but something extralinguistic.

Having said this, it does not mean that there were no thoroughly postmodern elements amongst the ancient or pre-modern philosophers. The first philosophical movement that may be seen as a forerunner of postmodern thought are the Sophists who held a sceptical view of knowledge. This is associated with the second, third and fourth of Grenz' (2003:6) tenets of postmodernism: the notion that truth is neither certain nor rational, knowledge is not objective and the perceiver/observer can never be truly autonomous or dispassionate. Stumpf (2003:115) describes the three categories that Sextus Empiricus divided Sceptics into: those who claim that they have discovered the truth; those that confess that they have not found the truth, but also confess that it cannot be found; and those who persevere in trying to find the truth. The Sceptical movement *per* se is discussed in more detail below.

The word Sophist stems from the Greek *Sophos* meaning 'wise' or 'skilled' (Matson:2000a). They were the first professional intellectuals, not unlike 'professors' in our own time. They moved from city to city, giving courses and lectures in return for a fee. The lessons focussed on public speaking, but were not limited to that. In order to speak impressively, they believed one should be aware of the latest developments in science, mathematics and technology. Stumpf (2003:31-32) writes that "their encyclopaedic knowledge of different cultures made them sceptical about the possibility of attaining any absolute

truth by which society might order its life." The Sophists had the reputation of being able to make a good case look bad, or a bad case look good.

The most important and influential of the Sophists is considered to be Protagoras (Russel 1996). His most famous statement is that "man is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (quoted from Stumpf and Fieser 2003:32). Stumpf interprets this by saying that the person making a judgment is also the standard by which the judgment is made. This means that any knowledge I achieve is limited to my personal capacity. Stumpf sums it up by saying that according to Protagoras, "knowledge is limited to our various perceptions, and these perceptions will differ with each person" (2003:32). We all perceive things in a different way and since we perceive things differently, there is no standard for determining whose perception is correct and whose is wrong. To obtain full knowledge of any object, would mean that we must perceive the object through the eyes of everyone perceiving (or potentially perceiving) the object – which of course is impossible. On this theory of knowledge, it is impossible to obtain any absolute scientific knowledge of an object – due to the fact that each observer will perceive something unique about the object. He therefore concluded that knowledge is relative to each person.

Another Sophist, Gorgias (late 5th century BC), took this concept further by denying that there is any truth at all. He made three assertions: (1) that nothing exists, (2) that if anything existed, it would be incomprehensible, and (3) because something that may exist would be incomprehensible, it cannot be communicated (Stumpf and Fieser 2003:33-34).

The development of sceptical thought was interrupted by three of the greatest philosophers the world has ever seen: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Stumpf (2003:34) states that it "was Socrates' chief concern to unravel the logical inconsistencies of the Sophists, to rebuild some notion of truth, and to establish some firm foundation for moral judgments."

Since the influence of these three men, philosophy was a search for truth against the allegation that nothing is knowable as asserted by the Sophists and Sceptics. A study of the development of postmodernism and its underlying sceptical thinking would require some study pertaining to the notion of fixed ideas, structures or truth based on sensory experience – such as those originated by Plato and Aristotle and developed further by those following them, primarily Plotinus, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. However, space will not permit an in-depth study. Since the notion of a fixed truth is intuitive to most people, the remainder of the survey of the development of postmodernism will focus on the Sceptics and how this philosophical outlook affected thinking to the present time.

While Stumpf (2003:6) defines scepticism as the "tendency to doubt some fundamental component of knowledge," Russell (1996:224) adds that it is more than merely doubt. He states that the philosophical Sceptic makes a dogmatic statement about doubt: "nobody knows, and nobody ever can know." Matson (2000:205) says that with Scepticism "knowledge as such is declared to be an ideal impossible of attainment … the philosophical Sceptic rejects the claims of non-Sceptical philosophers, called 'dogmatists', to have attained certain knowledge about anything."

Adams (2000:50) states that the apparent founder of Scepticism was Pyrrho. He was in the army of Alexander the Great and travelled with him as far as India. He spent the rest of his life in his native city, Elis, where he died in 275BC. He wrote no books and his disciples spread his oral teachings. He taught that we should neither trust, nor reject, any sense impressions or any other apparent knowledge (Adams 2000:50). To scepticism of knowledge through the senses, Pyrrho added moral and logical scepticism. He maintained that there is no rational ground for preferring one action over another, and in practice this translated by conforming to the customs of the country where one lives (Russell 1996:224).

Russell (1996:225) sets out how Timon, a disciple of Pyrrho, argued against the possibility of attaining absolute knowledge or proof of anything. The only logic admitted by the Greeks was deductive, and all deduction has to start somewhere: for example from general principles or something that is self-evident. Therefore, everything has to be proved by something else. This will lead to a circular argument or asserting a truth that hangs on nothing. Russell (1996:225) makes the point that this "cuts at the root of the Aristotelian philosophy which dominated the Middle Ages."

When Timon died in Athens in 235BC, the school of Pyrrho came to an end, but its doctrines were taken up, surprisingly, by Plato's Academy. What most people interpret from the teaching of Plato is his doctrine of fixed "ideas", which of course is translated into the assertion of absolute truths. However, Russell (1996:225-226) points out that Plato had many sides to him. He cites the example of the Platonic Socrates who claimed to know nothing, and then

referring to the many dialogues who end with no firm conclusion (for example the latter half of Parmenides), but which seems to have been written with the aim of leaving the mind of the reader in a state of doubt. He goes on to state that the "Platonic dialectic could be treated as an end, rather than a means, and if so treated, it lent itself admirably to the advocacy of Scepticism." This is the way in which Timon's contemporary, Arcesilaus, interpreted Plato. He maintained no thesis regarding any matter, but rather set out to refute or disprove any thesis advanced by a pupil. No one seems to have learned anything from Arcesilaus, except to be clever through argument and indifferent to any assertion of truth. His influence was so great, that the Academy remained Sceptical for about two hundred years after his death.

After Arcesilaus, Carnaedes (circa 180 to circa 110BC) and Clitomachus started to develop a more constructive version of scepticism by concerning themselves with degrees of probability, that is, even though we can never be certain of anything, "some things are more likely to be true than others." (Russel 1996:228) After Clitomachus, the academy ceased to be Sceptical and became for a time almost indistinguishable from the Stoics.

Matson (2000:209-210) describes another concept advocated by the Sceptics, namely relativism or perspectivism. Aenesidemus, who lived in the first century AD, compiled a list of ten considerations showing that our senses are not infallible. These include the question of why a bird's perspective should be less valid than that of a human. Among humans one may experience cold weather, while another is hot; some may find oysters tasty, while it disgusts others. For the same person the same object may be both

pleasant and unpleasant: Camembert smells unpleasant, but tastes pleasant. The personal condition of a person also affects his or her perception: is the person sane or insane? Awake or asleep, well or ill? Location also affects perception: from far a mountain looks blue and smooth, but as you move closer the colours and texture of the vegetation on the mountain becomes dominant. He lists many others, but the point should be clear – what is true for one person may be completely false for another, depending on perspective.

After Aenesidemus, another Sceptic – Agrippa, set out five considerations against the possibility of being able to prove something on a logical basis. He essentially says that if the proof of a dogmatic statement relies on another statement that needs to be proved in a similar way, one will infinitely argue in circles proving the previous assertion. Later Sceptics took this further making two statements: nothing is self-evident, and nothing can be proved.

The Sceptic of whom we know most through his voluminous writings is Sextus Empiricus. He lived around the turn of the third century AD, and wrote primarily against the "dogmatists" he wrote that "the fundamental principle of the Sceptical system is especially this, namely, to oppose every argument by one of equal weight, for it seems to us that in this way we finally reach the position where we have no dogmas" (Matson 2000:209).

Russell (1996:229) describes the end of pre-modern Scepticism somewhere during the third century AD as "contrary to the temper of the age, which was turning more and more to dogmatic religion and doctrines of salvation. Scepticism had enough force to make educated men dissatisfied with the

State religions, but it had nothing positive … to offer in their place." The ancient world turned from the Sceptics without answering them and it was not until the age of modernism that Scepticism re-emerged on the scene.

4.2.2 Modernism and enlightenment

Before discussing the modern movement further, it is important to note that the "Enlightenment project" referred to a movement in western philosophy whereas "modernism" refers more to the outworking of the Enlightenment philosophy. Many authors use the terminology interchangeably and for this purpose of this study it is not necessary to define the terms in any finer detail.

Bosch (1991:262-274) asserts that the modern enlightenment period began in the seventeenth century with the gradual destruction of the "God-Church-Royalty-People-Animals and Plants" cosmology. To their surprise people discovered that they can "ignore" God and nothing much would change. People started to subscribe to the ideas of scientists and philosophers such as Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650). When John Locke (1632-1704), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) and Isaac Newton (1642-1717) appeared, the Enlightenment worldview was already firmly established.

Two scientific approaches characterised the Enlightenment period: First, Empiricism of Bacon and Locke and second, the Rationalism of Descartes (Bosch 1991:263). It is important to note that neither of these figures saw their theories as jeopardising the faith in any way.

Bosch (1991:264-267) draws contours of the Enlightenment project, identifying several elements thereof:

1. The Enlightenment was the Age of Reason. In time Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum* came to mean that the human mind was the indubitable point of departure for all knowledge.

2. The Enlightenment operated with a "subject-object scheme." Humans were separated from their environment, enabling them to study the animal and mineral world from the vantage point of scientific objectivity.

3. The Enlightenment eliminated purpose from science. It introduced direct causality as the starting point for understanding reality. In this era, the question of by whom or for what purpose the universe was created could not be answered. In fact, the question was abandoned as irrelevant.

4. The Enlightenment believed in progress. A result of this was that expediency became more important than values or morality.

5. In the Enlightenment it was contented that scientific knowledge was "factual, value-free and neutral."

6. In the Enlightenment, all problems were considered to be solvable in principal. (an example of this is the explanation of difficult Biblical teachings – we do not have enough information to solve the problem – yet.)

7. The Enlightenment regarded people as "emancipated, autonomous individuals." A central theme of the Enlightenment was faith in humanity.

Bosch (1991:267) summarises by saying that

the individual experienced himself … as liberated from the tutelage of God and church, who were no longer needed to legitimise specific titles, classes, and prerogatives. There were, in principle, no longer any privileged persons or classes. All were born equal and had equal rights. These were … not derived from religion, but from 'nature'. The human beings were, on the one hand, more important than God; on the other hand … they were not fundamentally different from animals and plants.

Pre-modernism was supplanted by modernism which retained and modified some of its features, but also diverged in certain major ways. Erickson (1998b:15-18) explores the similarities as well as where the conceptions diverge.

What modernism shared with Pre-modernism is the belief in metaphysical realism, the correspondence view of truth, and referential theory of language. It also held that there was a discernible pattern to history.

It diverged in abandoning the transcendent conception of reality. Rather than locating the reason and pattern of history above or beyond it, it is found within. The forces that determine history were believed to be imminent within it – such as Immanuel Kant's noumenal world. Moderns were also looking for all-inclusive explanations of reality, but believed that this could be done without recourse to anything supernatural. Final causes or purposes to the creation and sustenance of the world were eliminated and replaced by efficient causes – events would therefore not occur because of some unseen deity, but will be brought about by certain physical or social realities.

Erickson (1998b:16-17) lists the following salient features of modernism:

(a) Naturalism – reality is restricted to the observable;

(b) Humanism – the human is the highest reality and value, the end for which reality exists;

(c) The scientific method – knowledge is good and attainable by humans. Observation and experimentation are the sources for knowledge;

(d) Reductionism – the scientific method became the only method for gaining knowledge, and humans were regarded as nothing but highly developed animals;

(e) Progress – knowledge in itself is good, humanly attainable and the body of knowledge is growing. For this reason there is progress towards overcoming the world's problems;

(f) Nature – nature is not fixed or static, but rather dynamic, growing and developing. For this reason it was possible for nature to produce changes in life forms through evolution rather than a creator;

(g) Certainty – knowledge was seen as objective and could therefore be attained with certainty. Foundationalism, the belief that there is a set of base or absolute first principles, was required. This is seen in the theory of Rene Descartes who found that there was one indubitable truth – that he doubted. He could then proceed to produce deductions from that;

(h) Determinism – this was the belief that what happened in the universe followed from fixed causes. Science could therefore discover the laws that controlled the universe;

(i) Individualism – the knower was an individual who protected his objectivity by weighing up all options. Because truth was considered objective, it could be discovered through the efforts of individuals; and

(j) Anti-authoritarianism – the human was considered the final and complete measure of truth. Any externally imposed authority – whether the community or a supernatural being – was subject to scrutiny and criticism by human reason.

Stiver (2003:527) summarises the main distinguishing factor between pre-modernity and modernity as the tendency "to privilege reason over faith".

Erickson (1998b:17-18) classifies modernism in two categories: soft and hard modernism. Soft modernism believes in the rationality of the universe and the human ability to know and understand the truth and that "integrative metaphysical schemes of worldviews can be constructed." Hard modernism goes further by asserting that "reality is limited to what can be experienced." Supernaturalism of any kind is excluded. Knowledge is limited to what can be extracted through reason and experience – in other words, if it is not logical, it cannot be real.

This modernist rationalism is evidenced by philosophers such as John Locke in England who spoke about the inherent "reasonableness of Christianity" (Raschke 2004:27). Locke's philosophy was in a large measure based on his study of Descartes (Urmson 1960:159), but his contention that "all ideas come directly from sense experience" was largely influenced by Francis Bacon from a century earlier (Raschke 2004:27). Locke was the first Western thinker to advocate religious toleration. This was mainly because he held that natural knowledge cannot be reconciled with revealed truth. He maintained that Biblical claims are not open to theoretical dispute and what makes Christianity

reasonable is not the Bible's account of the miraculous and supernatural, but rather its ethical effect on believers – it has a pragmatic purpose (Raschke 2004:28).

It was however the Scotsman, Thomas Reid, who had a lasting impact on the theory of knowledge in the philosophical and theological context (Raschke 2004:28-30). He founded the "common-sense school of philosophy" or identified as "common-sense realism". Reid argued that the objects we experience through our senses are not ideas or representations, but rather the things themselves – what you see is what you get. He further asserts that common sense is the foundation of our knowledge of God. Reid's impact was felt in England, but its impact was largest in America when his common-sense realism was married with evangelical Methodism and Calvinism in the nineteenth century along the American frontier. This later laid the foundation of what is now called "fundamentalism". He believed that the Bible is a collection of facts about God and his workings in the history of the human race. The consequence of his thinking was that evangelicals unwittingly succumbed to the rationalism that the Reformers exposed in Catholic doctrine and fought to expunge from Christian practice. In time, this common-sense hermeneutic "undermined the testimony of the Holy Spirit" while contributing to the "preoccupation with a factually inerrant Bible" (Raschke 2004:30). The Reformation emphasis on *sola fide* was replaced by an emphasis on *sola Scriptura*.

Toulmin (1990:5) suggests that if an historical era is ending, it is the era of modernity. Rather than assuming that the tide of modernity still flows strongly

and that its momentum will carry the world to a better place, it is rather like an irresistible river that has disappeared into the sand. The project of modernity has lost its momentum and a successor program is to be fashioned.

I will now return to the concept of "scepticism" that seemed to have ended in the third century AD after Sextus Empiricus. Even though modernism was born with the advent of empiricism, it also started to lay the foundations for postmodernism.

I will describe the thinking of a number of modern philosophers whose thought eventually developed into what we describe as postmodernism today. They are Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

4.2.2.1 Rene Descartes

Descartes was born near Tours in France on 31 March 1596 "of a noble and moderately wealthy family" (Matson 2000b:316). In November 1619 he claimed to have discovered the "foundations of a wonderful new science." This was not new knowledge, but rather a certain way of investigation. Matson (2000b:316-317) quotes from Descartes' Discourse on Method to explain the basic rules of this new way of investigation:

> The first was to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognise to be so: that is to say, carefully to avoid participation and prejudice in judgments, and to accept in them nothing more than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it.

> The second was to divide up each of the difficulties which I examined into as many parts as possible, and as seemed requisite in order that it might be resolved in the best manner possible.

The third was to carry on my reflections in due order, commencing with objects that were the most simple and easy to understand, in order to rise little by little, or by degrees, to knowledge of the most complex, assuming an order, even if a fictitious one, among those which do not follow a natural sequence relatively to one another.

The last was in all cases to make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that I should be certain of having omitted nothing.

Descartes is here describing a deductive system of discovery. While conceding much to scepticism, Descartes remained hostile to the idea, rather attempting "to purge thinking of all elements that are in the least doubtful, in order to find out what if anything remains" (Matson 2000b:319).

Descartes attempts to find something that he cannot doubt – something that he can use as a starting point for gaining knowledge. He says that all our knowledge derives from our senses. This, he says, is not very reliable. As an example, we could be dreaming while experiencing something making the experience not real. As an example, I may be typing and therefore experiencing the existence of a computer, the books around me, the table, chair and so forth. However, that does not make the existence of these objects real. Descartes recognises that there may be other facts that will always be true, regardless of whether I am awake or dreaming. In this category he lists mathematical facts. If I dream about two books on my left hand side and three books on my right hand side, they will always be five books in total, regardless of whether I am awake or am dreaming. However, to deal with doubt regarding this kind of truth, he introduces "a malignant demon, who is at once exceedingly potent and deceitful, who has employed all his artifice to deceive." Almost like a modern-day hypnotist this demon can make me to consistently think that two and three equals five, but in reality it actually

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equals six and a half. While unlikely, the possibility cannot be rejected. "Descartes carried doubt systematically further than it had been brought by the ancient sceptics" and left himself in the position of doubting everything, even whether there is an external world or the truth in the most basic arithmetic assumptions (Matson 2000b:321).

Descartes found one thing that he could not possibly doubt – his own existence. He may even be a bodiless spirit floating in a void imagining all his surroundings, but he cannot possibly be doubting his existence if he asks the question, "Do I exist?" In the Discourse on Method he employed the phrase "Cogito, ergo sum" – "I think, therefore I am." Scepticism is therefore not total and there is one thing that cannot be doubted and which is absolutely certain. Descartes is laying the foundation for the notion that "knowledge and certainty are … to be found in the mind" (Matson 2000b:322). Matson continues to describe how Descartes develops this idea. He takes the example of wax. We can see wax, touch it, taste it, smell it and then conclude that it is wax. However, this does not mean that our conclusion is based on the experience of sense. What happens when we heat the wax? It melts, loses form, becomes a liquid and is hot and almost impossible to handle. It changes colour and smell. The conclusion is that we do not perceive the object based on our senses, but rather uses data gathered by the senses and apply this data to our minds and make the conclusion that even though the wax looks, feels, and smells very different, it is still the same wax. He also uses the example of looking out onto the street from his balcony. In the street below he sees large broad-brimmed hats and flowing cloaks. He does not see people,

but based on the data gathered by his senses, he makes the assumption that there are people underneath the hats and cloaks. He is therefore making a judgment. Matson (2000b:323) concludes that "in making judgments, there is always the possibility of error. The problem of knowledge for Descartes, then, is just the problem of finding out how to guarantee these judgments against error." Because everything is an image of our minds (for example when we see a tomato, the image in our mind is not a literal tomato, but rather something "inner" that associates this image with the idea of a tomato. The question that Descartes asks is "how can I know that this mental picture is a faithful picture, or indeed a picture at all, of something out there?" Of course, we will never have absolute certainty regarding the faithfulness of our judgments regarding things perceived and therefore "one will be led to the sceptical suspense of judgment, the modest wisdom of knowing that you don't know …" Descartes was intent on and distinctive in his attempt to build positive results from this sceptical foundation.

Descartes started this building process with his proof of the existence of God which is summarised as follows:

> There only remains, therefore, the idea of God, in which I must consider whether there is anything that cannot be supposed to originate with myself. By the name of God, I understand a substance infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself, and every other thing that exists, if any such there be, were created. But these properties are so great and excellent, that the more attentively I consider them the less I feel persuaded that the idea I have of them owes its origin to myself alone. And thus it is absolutely necessary to conclude, from all that I have before said, that God exists: for though the idea of substance be in my mind owing to this, that I myself am a substance, I should not, however, have the idea of an infinite substance, seeing I am a finite being, unless it were given me by some substance in reality infinite (Matson 2000b:328).

The argument for the existence of God – even though it is open for criticism – was then used as the foundational basis for the certainty of all knowledge. Scepticism was overthrown for a while, but the seed has been sown.

4.2.2.2   John Locke

John Locke was born in 1632 and died in 1704. While he had a long and productive life, his influential writings were from 1687 to 1693 – of which the majority was written in Holland where he lived from 1683 to 1689. His father was a Puritan and fought on the side of the Parliament during the time of Cromwell. Locke was influenced to a large degree by the philosophy of Descartes.

Russell (1996:553) describes the main characteristic of Locke's theory of knowledge as a "lack of dogmatism". This is something that descended from him to the Liberal movement after him. He continues to say that

> wherever [Locke's] doctrines differ from those of his forerunners, they are to the effect that truth is hard to ascertain, and that rational man will hold his opinions with some measure of doubt." Russell importantly makes the point that Locke's temper of mind must be connected with "religious toleration, with the success of parliamentary democracy, with laissez-faire, and with the whole system of liberal maxims.

Locke was strongly opposed to "Enthusiasm", meaning a belief in a personal revelation to a religious leader and his followers. When there is such a multiplicity of "revelations", it becomes clear that what passes as truth becomes purely personal and it loses its universal character. Locke concludes that "revelation must be judged of by reason" (Russel 1996:554). Locke uses the word "reason" as consisting of two parts: the first is regarding an inquiry into things that we know with certainty, and the second where we investigate

or inquire into things that we suppose wise to accept as true – even though these things will only have probability and not certainty in their favour. Russell quotes from Locke's chapter 'of Degrees of Assent' to illustrate how Locke supports tolerance of the views of others:

> it would … become all men to maintain peace and the common offices of humanity and friendship in the diversity of opinions, since we cannot reasonably expect that any one should readily and obsequiously quit his own opinion, and embrace ours with blind resignation to an authority which the understanding of man acknowledges not. For, however it may often mistake, it can own no other guide but reason, nor blindly submit to the will and dictates of another (Russell 1996:554-555).

One of Locke's most important contributions to the philosophical world (and the world in general) is that he may regarded as the founder of empiricism – that is the doctrine that all our knowledge is derived from experience. In Book two of the Essay Locke writes

> let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer in one word, from experience: in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself (Russel 1996:556).

Russell comments on this by stating that empiricism is "faced with a problem to which, so far, philosophy has found no satisfactory solution. This is the problem of showing how we have knowledge of other things than ourself and the operations of our own mind" (1996:557).

As with Descartes, Locke has made tremendous strides away from the blind acceptance of existing dogma or tradition handed down to the enquirer towards the ability of man to observe and enquire, making his own

conclusions based on what he has observed. However, as pointed out by Russell, the question that remains unanswered by both Descartes and Locke is this: How can the observer be completely objective and removed from the observed object? How can what is observed be interpreted without bringing one's own experience and presuppositions to the interpretation?

4.2.2.3   David Hume

Russell (1996:600) introduces the importance of David Hume in the most eloquent manner:

> David Hume (1711-76) is one of the most important among philosophers, because he developed to its logical conclusion the empirical philosophy of Locke and Berkeley, and by making it self-consistent made it incredible. He represents, in a certain sense, a dead end: in his direction, it is impossible to go further. To refute him has been, ever since he wrote, a favourite pastime among metaphysicians … I find none of their refutations convincing … [and] cannot but hope that something less sceptical than Hume's system may be discoverable."

Hume could therefore be seen as a precursor to Derrida who popularised Hume's thinking 200 years later.

Hume's most important work is the *Treatise of Human Understanding* which is divided into three books dealing with understanding, passions and morals respectively. For the purpose of this study, the book dealing with understanding is the most important. Russell (1996:601-612) deals with his theory extensively.

Hume begins with a distinction between 'impressions' and 'ideas'. He states that impressions have more force than ideas. Ideas are faint images of impressions. Simple ideas represent simple impressions, but more complex

ideas do not need to represent a single impression. We can imagine the idea of a winged horse without ever having seen one. However, this idea will come from individual impressions that are put together in our minds as the idea of a winged horse.

Hume then continues to assert that there can be no impression of *Self.* The way we perceive ourselves is only a collection of perceptions. The rather complicated reasoning reaches a conclusion that "is important in metaphysics, as getting rid of the last surviving use of 'substance'. It is important in theology, as abolishing all supposed knowledge of the 'soul'. It is important in the analysis of knowledge, since it shows that the category of subject and object is not fundamental" (Russel 1996:603).

However, the most important part of this book is the section called "Of Knowledge and Probability." Russell summarises the intent of this part as follows: "What Hume is concerned with is uncertain knowledge, such as is obtained from empirical data by inferences that are not demonstrative. This includes all our knowledge as to the future, and as to unobserved portions of the past and present. In fact, it includes everything except, on the one hand, direct observation, and, on the other, logic and mathematics. The analysis of such 'probable' knowledge led Hume to certain sceptical conclusions, which are equally difficult to refute and to accept. The result was a challenge to philosophers, which in my opinion, has still not been adequately met" (Russell 1996:603).

In the Cartesian philosophy as well as that of the Scholastics, the connection between cause and effect was considered as necessary as logical connections. Hume was the first to seriously challenge this view.

Hume started by asserting that we can only know the results of cause and effect from experience or observation, but not from reasoning or reflection. He explains that if we constantly see A conjoined with B, it creates the expectation of B when we observe A. Therefore, when we say that A causes B, we really mean that A and B are constantly conjoined and there is not a necessary connection between them. The mind leads one to associate B with A preceding it. 'Necessity' is therefore something that exists in the mind and not in the objects themselves.

Russell explains as follows:

> When we judge that A causes B, what has in fact happened, so far as A and B are concerned, is that they have been frequently observed to be conjoined, i.e. A has been immediately, or very quickly, followed by B; we have no right to say that A must be followed by B, or will be followed by B on future occasions. Nor have we any ground for supposing that, however often A is followed by B, any relation beyond sequence is involved (Russel 1996:605-606).

The rejection of this inductive method makes all expectation regarding future events irrational. The conclusion that we suppose future events to resemble past events is not founded on any argument, but is rather derived from habit. This, in turn, leads to a conclusion of complete scepticism.

Hume, however, does not maintain this extreme scepticism in practice. He says that "The sceptic still continues to reason and believe, even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason." He continues to say that

there is no such thing as a rational belief, but only "if we believe that fire warms, or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise."

4.2.2.4   Immanuel Kant

Russell (1996:639-641) writes that "Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) is generally considered the greatest of modern philosophers." Kant's most important book is *The Critique of Pure Reason* (published as first edition in 1781, and the second edition in 1787). The purpose of this important work is to show that "although none of our knowledge can transcend experience, it is, nevertheless, in part a priori and not inferred inductively from experience."

Raschke (2004:37-40) proposes that the process of postmodernism began with Immanuel Kant, whose critical philosophy undertook to sketch the limits of human reason. He said that our knowledge of the world is construed in terms of prior subjective structures of understanding. Using the word "subjective" does not mean that Kant proposed a system of relativism. Coming from the Enlightenment era and unlike Hume, he had a conviction that "reason held sway over all matters and could make definitive judgments that were 'universally' valid."

Kant insisted that our perceptions are "extrapolated from peculiar concepts inherent in the human mind, and those perceptions remain prior to experience." The term he used for this concept is "a priori" knowledge. Although our individual knowledge of "things" is subjective, knowledge is

ultimately objective because of the "universally consistent structure of rational thought and knowledge."

What Kant held in common with Derrida and the deconstructionists (see below) is that reality is not as we see it, but rather a system of signs and sign-relations that form part of a rational architecture that helps us to explain things as we see it. Kant termed this system "transcendental concepts" whereas Derrida identifies it simply as "writing". Raschke (2004:38) uses the effort of systemising theology to explain this concept: "the efforts of … theologians to explicate the sovereign nature of God by concentrating on the systematic and interlocking scaffolding of relations that constitute the Bible as the Word of God betray this inimitably modernist trait."

What "post-structuralism" undertook was "to 'see through' the structures that claimed to be pure substance, to flush out the structures of structuralism itself" (Raschke 2004:39). This is exactly what Stiver means when he refers to "questioning the question" (2003:526). Post-structuralism, later known as deconstruction, sought to finish the agenda that Kant has inaugurated generations earlier. Raschke (2004:39) continues that "modernist structuralism sought to ground truth in some clear consensus about the intelligible structure of truth rather in any doctrine of truth itself." The Platonic custom of stating that true statements were really true copies of the real universe, gave way to the tendency to characterise truth as the "absolutely incontrovertible starting point from which particular truths could be explored and confirmed." Descartes named this point the "Archimedean point" of philosophy. The Greek mathematician, Archimedes, envisioned a position of

leverage from where he would be able to move the world. Kant called this the Copernican revolution of thought. Copernicus taught in the sixteenth century that the earth moved around the sun and not the other way round. In general terms, this is called perspectivism which maintains that when we claim to "know something, we have to take into account the factors and circumstances under which that knowledge can be known" (Raschke 2004:39). Kant identified this approach as "critical philosophy" or "critical metaphysics."

Ever since Kant, the problem of metaphysics has been the preoccupation of modern and postmodern philosophy. He posed what he called the most fundamental enquiry: "How is metaphysics possible?" Metaphysics was defined by Aristotle by asking amongst others, "What is being and what are the things that are" (Lawson-Tancred 1998:xxiii)? Christian thought dealt with the metaphysical question of being as cognate with the issue of God – what Heidegger and Derrida named "ontotheology."

According to Raschke (2004:40) "the very idea of metaphysical thinking only makes sense if we understand its task to be the mapping of the basic conditions of thinking itself." Metaphysics is therefore "critical" rather than descriptive.

4.2.2.5 Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) was most important for his ethics as well as his criticism of religion. His father was a Protestant pastor and had a pious upbringing. Although he was the son and grandson of Lutheran pastors, "he was nevertheless the herald of the judgment that 'God is dead' and undertook

a 'campaign against morality" (Stumpf and Fieser 2003:378). Russell (1996:687-689) considers the primary importance of Nietzsche to be in the field of ethics and his criticism of religion. He was a philosopher in profound and conscious opposition to the dominant political and ethical trends of his time. For example, of John Stuart Mill he says,

> I abhor the man's vulgarity when he says 'What is right for one man is right for another'; 'Do not to others that which you would not that they should do unto you.' Such principles would fain establish the whole of human traffic upon mutual services, so that every action would appear to be a cash payment for something done to us. The hypothesis here is ignoble to the last degree: it is taken for granted that there is some sort of equivalence in value between my actions and thine.

Nietzsche objects to all religion, and his particular objection against Christianity is the acceptance of what he calls "slave morality". He is not interested in the metaphysical truth of religion, but rather judges it by its social effects. He is even against the French Revolution as he considers these identical in spirit with Christianity – "he will not treat all men as equal in any respect whatever" (Russel 1996:691).

Stumpf (2003:380) outlines Nietzsche's outlook on philosophy as follows:

> Nietzsche wrote philosophy in a manner calculated more to provoke serious thought than to give formal answers to questions. In this regard he resembled Socrates and Plato more than Spinoza, Kant, or Hegel. He produced no formal system because system building, he thought, assumes that we have at hand self-evident truths on which to build. He also believed that building a system is to lack integrity, since honest thought must challenge precisely these self-evident truths upon which most systems are built.

This outlook sounds uncannily unlike that of Rene Descartes dealt with above, and like that of Jacques Derrida dealt with below.

Regarding *truth*, he wrote that it "is that kind of error without which a certain species of living being cannot exist", and also saying that "nothing is needed more than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only secondary value" (Matson 2000b:519). Matson comments on this statement saying that what we "in fact call truth at a given time and place is that set of beliefs that helps us to get on with living. This set includes many dubious items and many that are patently false." Nietzsche equated truth with God or indirectly with our faith in God. However, he announced that "God is dead." Matson (2000b:520) continues:

> When He was 'alive,' belief in Him had provided the focus for morality and the reason for all other existence; He had made life worthwhile. However, European thought had passed beyond the stage where it was any longer possible to regard the universe as the effect of a superhuman cause. The death of God prepared the collapse of the whole moral system and the onset of 'nihilism,' that is, rejection of moral distinctions and a policy of complete permissiveness.

With the announcement that "God is dead", Nietzsche also announced the death of the notions of absolute truth and the existence of an ultimate being. This is reminiscent of the ancient radical sceptics who maintained that we cannot be certain of anything and that nothing exists, reviving the extreme scepticism of Gorgias and Pyrrho described above.

4.2.3 Postmodernism

Raschke (2004:35) starts his discussion on the origins of postmodernism by tracing it to when it first appeared in academic literature in the 1970's. Then, he writes, "it had nothing to do with the things it now stands for". It was first used with theoretical intent by architect Charles Jencks when he described the new pluralism in building styles. As far as Jencks was concerned 'postmodernism' signified "a rampant eclecticism that melded the Oriental with the classical, modern functionality with playfulness" (Raschke 2004:35). However, the ideas of postmodernism took root much earlier. As an example, in 1959 the holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, speculating on the meaning of life concluded that "there is no single meaning to life. Rather each of us is responsible for making meaningful the innumerable life situations in which we find ourselves" (Malikow 2009:ix).

Erickson (1998b:18) describes the advent of the postmodern period as a "convergence of several movements in different intellectual disciplines." The beginnings can be traced back to the French school of literary criticism known as deconstruction led by Jacques Derrida. Of course, this is a subjective view as one could easily trace the roots of postmodernism to Herodotus' concept of *nomos* (law, custom or convention) which differs from place to place and nature (*phusis*) which is the same everywhere (Stalley 1995:viii).

However, Raschke (2004:37) states that Derrida "simply carried through to its inevitable climax a relentless critique of Western philosophy that had been

underway in Germany since the late eighteenth century", starting with Friedrich Nietzsche.

Erickson (1998b:18-20) summarises the basic tenets of postmodernism as follows:

(a) The objectivity of knowledge is denied;

(b) Knowledge is uncertain, in other words, the notion of foundationalism (that knowledge can be built on a bedrock of certain indubitable first principles) has to be abandoned;

(c) All-inclusive metaphysical or historical systems of explanation should be abandoned;

(d) The inherent goodness of knowledge is questionable. The notion that the discovery and control of the truths of nature can overcome evil or ills in the world has been disproved.

(e) Progress is rejected;

(f) Truth is defined by and for the community. The idea of the individual knower is rejected and replaced by the concept that all knowledge occurs within community; and

(g) The scientific method as a method of objective inquiry is questioned. Truth is not known by reason only, but also through, for example, intuition.

As with modernism, Erickson (1998b:19-20) categorises postmodernism into a soft and hard version. Soft postmodernism rejects the extremes found in hard modernism, such as the emphasis on naturalism and the dogmatic anti-supernaturalism; the reductionistic view of reason; the limitation of knowledge

to sense experience; and it rejects the kind of objectivity that denies the effect of historical or cultural situations.

Hard postmodernism on the other hand is best represented by deconstructionism. It rejects any notion of objectivity and rationality and maintains that "all theories are simply worked out to justify and empower those who hold them" (Erickson 1998b:19). Furthermore, postmodernism rejects the idea that language has any objectivism or extralinguistic reference. It moves from relativism to pluralism in truth, meaning that all knowing and speaking is done from a particular perspective and holding that each perspective is equally valid. The meaning of a statement is not found in what the speaker intended, but rather in what the hearer finds.

One very important aspect of postmodernism deserves special mention – that truth is defined by and for the community. Gueras (2002) deals with Richard Rorty's view of communal truth when he writes that Rorty "emphasizes the social influence upon the individual and his beliefs. Truth, or what for Rorty substitutes for it, is an intersubjective agreement among members of a community. That intersubjective agreement permits the members of the community to speak a common language and establish a commonly accepted reality. The end of inquiry, for Rorty, is not the discovery or even approximation of absolute truth but the formulation of beliefs that further the solidarity of the community." In essence what Rorty is doing is substituting truth with communal solidarity.

Grenz (2001:75-82) provides an excellent summary of the difference between the modern and postmodern minds. This summary is presented in tabular form below:

Table 4.1 The difference between the modern and postmodern mind

Modern mind	Postmodern mind
Assumes that knowledge is certain, objective, good and such knowledge is obtainable.	The postmodern mind refuses to limit truth to its rational dimension and thus dethrones the human intellect as the arbiter of truth.
Knowledge is not only certain, but also objective. This objectivity leads to a claim of dispassionate knowledge.	Knowledge is not objective, but relative, indeterminate and participatory, and therefore there can be no dispassionate, autonomous knower.
The assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge means that the modern outlook is optimistic and progress is inevitable.	The optimistic outlook has been replaced with a gnawing pessimism, not assuming that the world will continue to become better with each generation.
This optimism, coupled with reason, elevates individual human freedom in its concept of truth.	The postmodern mind operates with a community based understanding of truth, leading to the conception of relativity of truth.

4.3 Conclusion

The Sophist and Plato's nemesis, Gorgias, claimed that (1) that nothing exists, (2) that if anything existed, it would be incomprehensible, and (3) because something that may exist would be incomprehensible, it cannot be communicated (Stumpf and Fieser 2003:33-34).

2,500 years later Gorgias seems to have gained the upper hand over Plato. The postmodern mind claims that there is no ultimate being that determinates truth, and hence there is no truth. This concept was revived by Nietzsche. Derrida built on this through his theory of deconstruction claiming that even if an ultimate being did exist, we could not comprehend it and because we are not able to comprehend it, it is not possible to communicate it. Rorty took this one step further, by substituting the concept of truth with communal solidarity.

Markos (2000:41) summarises that the postmodern mind marks the polar opposite of the Christian faith. Taking the doctrine of the Trinity as a reference point, the denial of an ultimate being, denies the existence of God the Father; the denial of the comprehension of such a being should it exist, denies the incarnation of Christ; and the denial of the incommunicability of such comprehension should that exist, denies the relational aspect of God found in the Holy Spirit.

Carson (2005:27) also focuses on epistemology when analysing the move from modernism to postmodernism:

> the fundamental issue in the move from modernism to postmodernism is epistemology – i.e., how we know things, or think we know things. Modernism is often pictured as pursuing truth, absolutism, linear thinking, rationalism, certainty, the cerebral as opposed to the affective – which in turn breeds arrogance, inflexibility, a lust to be right, the desire to control. Postmodernism,

by contrast, recognizes how much of what we 'know' is shaped by the culture in which we live, is controlled by emotions and aesthetics and heritage, and in fact can only be intelligently held as part of a common tradition, without overbearing claims to being true or right. Modernism tries to find unquestioned foundations on which to build the edifice of knowledge and then proceeds with methodological rigor; postmodernism denies that such foundations exist (it is 'antifoundational') and insists that we come to 'know' things in many ways, not a few of them lacking in rigor. Modernism is hard-edged and, in the domain of religion, focuses on truth versus error, right belief, confessionalism; postmodernism is gentle and, in the domain of religion, focuses on relationships, love, shared tradition, integrity in discussion.

In short – modernism was a quest for absolute truth; postmodernism is a denial of that truth and it is replaced by the notion of communal solidarity.

As can be seen from chapter 2 above, denominationalism became an acceptable practice more or less at the same time when the philosophical outlook we now call modernism emerged.

As the quest for absolute truth developed through empiricism, so denominations started to develop – each with its own variation of the truth. Many were prepared to offer their lives for what they believed the truth is. The Anabaptists on the Continent and the English Reformers in the time of Queen Mary are two of the many groups in view here.

Many denominations, including the Baptist tradition, function in much the same way as when it was formed in the seventeenth century. The motive of the modern denominationalists was to join forces in defending their version of absolute truth. The postmodern denominationalist (and in particular the emerging church movement) seems to be motivated by agreeing on a communal version of truth, often based in relationships within the particular community.

In the next chapter, I will evaluate the factors that gave rise to the emergence of denominationalism in the context of the modern era. Particular attention will be given to the formation of the Baptist tradition. These factors will then be compared to the postmodern context.

CHAPTER 5

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAPTIST

DENOMINATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE

PHILOSOPHICAL TRENDS AT THE TIME MAPPED AGAINST THE

CURRENT POSTMODERN TREND

5.1 Introduction

As noted in the preceding chapters, denominationalism became accepted practice at around the same time that the modern era started. While it is evident that most mainline denominations are trying to come to grips with the postmodern era, they still function in very much the same way since inception. Carson (2005:25) states this problem as follows: "The post-evangelicals [or postmodernists] are shaped by a different culture from that which helped to shape evangelicalism [modernism]. This is the shift from modernism to postmodernism. Evangelicals think about the integrity and credibility of their faith in the culture of modernism; post-evangelicals think about the integrity and credibility of their faith in the culture of postmodernism."

The aim of this chapter is to identify the key factors that gave rise to the formation the Baptist tradition and then to evaluate the current status of these factors against the current trends in postmodern thinking.

One of the underlying driving forces (as opposed to specific factors) behind the formation of denominations in general is the epistemological view of the society within which a denomination develops. Carson (2005:88) states that the pre-modern epistemology began with God. In other words, God is the ultimate authority, the

delegator of authority and the source of all wisdom and knowledge. This means that God appoints both secular and religious leaders and society has a duty to God of obedience to these divinely appointed leaders.

With the advent of the modern period the primacy of God was replaced with "the finite 'I'" (Carson 2005:93), famously expressed by Rene Descartes in his maxim, *I think, therefore I am.* From both a denominational and secular point of view, this had far reaching consequences. No longer is the Roman Catholic Church the only expression of God's will and influence on earth, but many church leaders, primarily through the Reformation, showed that those who previously were thought to be untouchable because of their divine appointment, may have erred grossly. It was also during this period that the Holy Roman Empire in Europe gave way to the formation of nation states and a national identity.

The various groups that were formed into organisations during this period each issued some sort of confession of faith, Baptists included. The primacy of the "I" combined with the confidence in attaining absolute knowledge resulted in like-minded groups forming what would later be known as denominations – each distinguished by a particular emphasis in belief and/or a structure of church government. This emphasis was embodied in its creeds, confessions or other literature.

In the postmodern era epistemology, as with the moderns, also begins with the finite "I". However, Carson (2005:95) observes that the inferences drawn are quite different: "Each 'I' is different from every other 'I', so the point of view expressed is bound to be different."

The postmodern era is therefore not that much different from the modern era. The difference lies mainly in the fact that instead of the point of view expressed by a few individual and very charismatic leaders are considered valid, <u>every</u> point of view expressed by <u>any</u> person is considered as valid as any other. It is in this epistemological environment that denominations are forced to carve out their unique identity and relevance to society.

5.2 Detailed survey of formation of Baptist tradition in the modern era

The Baptist tradition formed early in the seventeenth century as an outgrowth from the Puritan and Separatist movements. The first Baptist congregation was formed in London by Thomas Helwys after he returned from Holland in 1611 (McBeth 1987:38).

The Puritans believed that the Church of England did not institute sufficient reforms and retained too much of the Roman Catholic Church from which it broke away in the time of King Henry the Eighth. The Puritans were split into two groups: The Independents (called "pragmatic Separatists" by McBeth) and the Separatists (called "principle Separatists" by McBeth). While both groups subscribed to the congregational principle of church government, the Independents separated from the state church out pragmatism; "they preferred to be part of the state church, but separated temporarily to promote reform" (McBeth 1987:25). The Separatists on the other hand, "separated out of principle; they had come to the conviction that the church ought to be free of government connection" (McBeth 1987:25). He (1987:25) continues that the "principle Separatists" figure more prominently in Baptist beginnings than the Independents. Underlying separation from government is the

notion that, unlike the belief of the Magisterial Reformers on the Continent, you do not have to belong to the state church in order to be part of civil society. Conversely, when you are born into civil society, you are not automatically born into the believing community.

A group of Separatists, led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, fled to Holland as a result of persecution in 1607. When they arrived in Holland, they were not yet Baptists. In 1609, Smyth came to the conviction that baptism should only be applied to believers after a voluntary confession and that this confession/baptism should form the basis of church membership. McBeth (1987:35) says that "perhaps Smyth's most basic concern was not for baptism, but for a pure church. Such a church must include only true Christians; therefore baptism must be applied only to professed believers." McBeth (1987:36-38) continues to describe the group's early battle to come to terms with the concept of believer's baptism: "Instead of seeking baptism from some other group, such as the Mennonites, Smyth took the novel approach of baptizing himself." After he did that, he baptized Thomas Helwys and about 40 others in the group. Within a few months, Smyth came to regret his self-baptism as "hasty and disorderly". About half the church agreed with this and it was disbanded. Smyth and those who agreed with him joined a Mennonite group and thus disappeared from history. Helwys and the rest of the group left Holland to return to England and in 1611 they formed the first Baptist church on English soil.

The *Declaration of faith of English People remaining at Amsterdam* that this group drew up in 1611 gives an idea of their beliefs and practices. They continued to adhere to the principles announced and then rejected by Smyth. They applied baptism to believers only, and departed from the Calvinism of their earlier separatist

experience, "making room for free will and even falling from grace" (McBeth 1987:38). They allowed each congregation to elect their own officers such as elders and deacons. This was the start of what was later known as the "General Baptists."

According to McBeth (1987:39) the Particular Baptists (who held a view of particular atonement as opposed to the general atonement held by the General Baptists) had entirely different origins from the General group. He continues to describe their origin, more than a generation after the formation of the General group, as emerging from "more moderate semi-Separatist congregations." McBeth emphasizes the fact that the Particular Baptists did not "divide" from the General Baptists, but that "instead, they had quite different origins, at different times and places, and with different leaders" (1987:39).

The person that can be credited with the formation of the Particular Baptists, even though he never became a Baptist, is Henry Jacob (1563 – 1624). McBeth (1987:40-44) calls him a "moderate Separatist" due to his unwillingness to break completely with the Church of England. In 1605 Jacob wrote a treatise entitled *Reasons taken out of Gods Word and the best humane Testimonies proving a necessitie of reforming ovr Chvrches in England*. Even with its moderate views on separation, it was enough to be committed to prison. On his release, he went to Holland where he pastored a church in Leyden. Despite the strong Separatist sentiment that was present in Holland at the time, Jacob retained his moderate views on Separatism. He returned to England in 1616 and together with other like-minded individuals formed a church in Southwark, often called the JLJ church after its three leaders – Henry Jacob, John Lathrop and Henry Jessey. Jacob left for Virginia in 1622 and died there in 1624. John Lathrop took over the pastorate and continued much the same

practices as Jacob. After several difficulties within the church (for example, a certain Mr. Dupper and several others withdrew from the congregation and formed a Separatist church in 1630), a group led by Samuel Eaton in 1633 separated from the original church, but on "friendly" grounds. Included in the leadership were Martin Luker, a Greek who was advocating immersion and Richard Blunt, who later journeyed to Holland in order to "recover immersion by succession." Records are scant regarding exactly what happened after this, but "we do know that by 1633 there was a church of Calvinist theology in London, at least some of whom had experienced rebaptism" (McBeth 1987:44). There is evidence that definitely by 1638 there was at least one Particular Baptist church in London, another in the following year and by 1644 seven Particular Baptist churches around London issued a joint confession of faith.

McBeth (1987:49) concludes regarding the Baptist origins that many formidable scholars explain it as the "flowering of Separatism, or following Separatist teachings to their logical conclusions. They see no need for other explanations, such as Anabaptist influence, to account for Baptist theology and practice. These scholars tend to minimize Anabaptist presence and influence in England before 1600, and they are more impressed with Baptist/Anabaptist differences than similarities. They maintain that every distinctive Baptist belief and practice is inherent within Puritanism/Separatism."

It is therefore clear that the Baptist movement did not originate, as is commonly believed, as a result of its commitment to believers baptism, but rather, and primarily, as a result of the doctrine of separation between church and state. Most of the other principles contained in the Baptist Principles follow from this original doctrine.

5.3 The formation of the Baptist tradition in general set against the philosophical backdrop of the seventeenth century

When discussing the relevance of a denomination in a particular era, it is important to map the factors and circumstances of the era in which the formation of the denomination occurred, to the factors and circumstances of that time. The question must then be asked: How relevant are the factors and circumstances which gave rise to the formation of the Baptist movement and its subsequent principles, to the factors and circumstances in today's postmodern world?

The Baptist movement originated at approximately the same time as the start of the modern period, which also coincides with the rise of liberalism. Hudson-Reed (1977:9) writes that "in the 18th Century … the Baptists imbibed the spirit of the age". This was no different a century earlier when the Baptist tradition was in its infancy.

Russell (1996:544-550) describes the early modern/liberal time period as a product of England and Holland. Interestingly, these two countries are also the countries where the Baptist movement originated. The "well-marked characteristics" of this era is described by Russell as (1) religious toleration; (2) Protestant (importantly making the point that it is latitudinarian rather than fanatical Protestantism); (3) regarding the wars of religion as "silly"; (4) valuing commerce and industry; (5) favouring the rising middle class rather than the monarchy; (6) had immense respect for rights of property; (7) the hereditary principle was restricted in scope; and (8) "every community has a right to choose its own form of government".

The table below provides an outline of the characteristics present with the rise of modernism, with the response (or influence) of the Baptist tradition mapped against

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each of these characteristics. The corresponding characteristic of Western postmodernism is indicated in the right hand column.

Table 5.1 Modernist characteristics, the response of the Baptist tradition and the corresponding characteristic of Western postmodernism.

Rise of modernism Characteristic	Baptist principle/belief Response	Western postmodernism Characteristic
Religious toleration	Religious liberty	Universalism/pluralism
Protestantism	Direct Lordship of Christ	Atheism
Disdain for religious war	The church universal	"God is dead"/egocentrism
Rise of commerce and industry	Congregational principle – serving/involvement	Highly regulated economies
Rising middle class	Priesthood of all believers	Established middle class
Property rights	The church local	Stable property rights
Restriction of hereditary principle	Congregational principle - independence	Stable legal system
Right to choose own government	Separation of church and state	Democracy
Empiricism	Revealed truth (statement of belief)	Relativism

The final characteristic – empiricism versus relativism – is not explicitly listed by Russell in this section, but is clearly implied elsewhere. What is in mind here is the epistemological views of modernism and postmodernism as outlined above and in the previous chapter. The church responded to empiricism through a continued emphasis on revealed truth (primacy of knowledge known through the revelation of God, objective knowledge is discovered, not invented). Similarly the church responds to relativism (knowledge is subjective and in a sense invented through the community) by asserting again that truth is known through revelation by God. The

Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) response is embodied in the 1924 Baptist Statement of Belief. The epistemological impact of postmodernism on the church in general has been evaluated at length in the previous chapter and will receive further treatment later in this chapter. This section focuses on the other factors that characterised modernism and postmodernism respectively.

Every reader with a basic understanding of Baptist principles will recognise in the table above some of the more important doctrines held by most Baptist Associations (refer appendices 1 and 2 for the Baptist Statement of Belief and Principles respectively). In the Southern African context, this would include the principle of Separation between Church and State (which, as was shown above, is one of the most important doctrines held by Baptists). This is closely aligned with the right of every community to choose its own form of government. What follows from that are the rest of the principles, in reverse order. Separation between church and state implies that there must be religious liberty as no individual should be coerced by the state in religious matters. This aligns with the first principle identified by Russell – religious toleration. The individual belief of each person, tying in with the principle of religious toleration, means that he or she acts as priest in the exercise of faith with direct access to God. There is therefore no need for an intermediary appointed by a government or denominational hierarchy. The priesthood of each believer implies that each member of the local church has the privilege and responsibility to use his or her gifts and abilities to participate fully in the life of the Church. This bears a direct resemblance to the right of each community to choose its own form of government. Participation in the local church is not limited to appointed officials, but rather each believer participates fully. The principle of Believers' Baptism, as pointed

out above, has to do with the doctrine that, unlike as in ancient Israel or the state churches of the seventeenth century, a believer is not born into the community of faith through natural birth, but rather through faith in Christ Jesus. This rebirth is manifested in the Christian forming part of the new community, the universal church, of which the local church is in turn a physical manifestation. Finally, the church is accountable to Jesus Christ as the head of the church and not to the government of the day. This brings one back in a full circle to the first principle of separation between church and state. Article XVII of the Southern Baptist Faith and Message (Southern Baptist Convention n.d.) summarises the abovementioned principles succinctly under the heading Religious Liberty:

> God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Probably the most influential thinker of the time around the formation of the Baptist movement in England was John Locke (1632 – 1704). Even though Locke did not write at the time of the formation of the Baptist tradition, Russell (1996:552) considers him one of the primary descriptors of the era. Russell (1996:552) writes that Locke's "influence on the philosophy of politics was so great and so lasting that he must be treated as the founder of philosophical liberalism as much as of

empiricism in theory of knowledge." Russell continues to say that "Locke is the most fortunate of all philosophers. He completed his work in theoretical philosophy just at the moment when the government of his country fell into the hands of men who shared his political opinions." Of significance is that most of Locke's writing was done in Holland, and that his father was a Puritan who fought on the side of parliament in the time of Cromwell. His thinking is outlined in the previous chapter, and partly reproduced below.

Russell (1996:553) describes the main characteristic of Locke's theory of knowledge as a "lack of dogmatism". This is something that descended from him to the Liberal movement after him. He continues to say that "wherever [Locke's] doctrines differ from those of his forerunners, they are to the effect that truth is hard to ascertain, and that rational man will hold his opinions with some measure of doubt." Russell importantly makes the point that Locke's temper of mind must be connected with "religious toleration, with the success of parliamentary democracy, with laissez-faire, and with the whole system of liberal maxims."

Russell quotes from Locke's chapter 'of Degrees of Assent' to illustrate how Locke supports tolerance of the views of others:

> it would … become all men to maintain peace and the common offices of humanity and friendship in the diversity of opinions, since we cannot reasonably expect that any one should readily and obsequiously quit his own opinion, and embrace ours with blind resignation to an authority which the understanding of man acknowledges not. For, however it may often mistake, it can own no other guide but reason, nor blindly submit to the will and dictates of another (1996:554-555).

Another aspect of Locke's philosophy and one that had a profound influence on his successors is that he "may be regarded as the founder of empiricism, which is the doctrine that all our knowledge is derived from experience" (Russel 1996:556).

In his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690:176), Locke lays the foundation of empiricism as follows:

> let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either, about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.

What is of greatest importance for the purpose of this study is the fact that through his lasting political views and, for his time, his radical views on gaining knowledge through experience (empiricism) as opposed to gaining knowledge through derived authority, the modern epoch started.

Coinciding with the birth of the modern epoch, and as mentioned above, was the formation and rapid spread of denominations among which counts the Baptist tradition.

The characteristics of the modern epoch are dealt with in detail in the previous chapter. However, for the purposes of clarity, the main tenets of this epoch are repeated below:

The modern mind assumes that knowledge is certain, objective, good and such knowledge is obtainable; Knowledge is not only certain, but also objective. This objectivity leads to a claim of dispassionate knowledge; The assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge means that the modern outlook is optimistic and

progress is inevitable; This optimism, coupled with reason, elevates individual human freedom in its concept of truth.

It could be said that the Baptist movement arose as a result of the political climate or philosophy of the time, but that it did not follow the empiricist doctrine of the modern epoch as far as gaining knowledge through experience is concerned. The principles of separation between church and state, religious liberty and the others that follow from there are clearly described in Lockean philosophy.

5.4 The formation of BUSA and its current state as a denomination

5.4.1 A brief history of Baptists in South Africa

Baptists arrived in South Africa with the 1820 Settlers. William Miller was their first leader, holding services under a tree in the Eastern Cape (Hudson-Reed 1977:13). In 1857 around 2,400 German soldiers were permitted to settle in the Eastern Cape. Some of the settlers were Baptist and they asked John Oncken for a minister. He sent Hugo Gutsche in 1867. Within twenty-five years, Gutsche built twenty-five churches. By the time the Baptist Union of South Africa was formed in 1877, there were more German than English speaking members. The first Afrikaans Baptist church was established by JD Odendal in 1886. The Baptists, under the leadership of Carl Pape, preached the gospel to the Xhosa community. This work was officially recognised in 1868 and in 1892, the South African Baptist Missionary Society was formed. In the early twentieth century, Protestant missionary policy held that native converts should be organised into separate churches in order to promote self-reliance and self-government. In time the Baptist Union was made up of white,

English speaking congregations; most black churches gathered in the Baptist Convention and coloured congregations under the Baptist Alliance. Indian congregations formed the Baptist Mission and the Baptist Association, whereas the Afrikaans speaking Baptists formed the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk (Roy 2000:22-28).

5.4.2 BUSA as a denomination

Denominationalism has been defined in chapter 1 as "the tendency toward the fragmentation of the church into religious sects or denominations and the maintenance of those divisions on the basis of an adherence to separate religious principles, organisations or cultural identities."

The concept of a particular "denomination" is easily derived from this and can be stated that it *is any division or fragmentation of the universal church into organisations or associations based on separate religious principles or cultural identities*.

From this definition it is clear that BUSA should be regarded as a denomination. Of specific reference is the organisation of Baptist congregations into organisations and/or associations based on particular religious principles – the primary set of principles in South Africa being the Baptist Statement of Belief adopted in 1924 and the Baptist Principles adopted in 1987.

The Constitution and By-Laws of BUSA as revised and adopted at the Annual Assembly in 1933, and amended at subsequent Assemblies states in clause 3.1 that members shall comprise of:

3.1.1. All Member churches at the date of adoption of the Amended Constitution and such Churches as shall be admitted to membership by vote of the Assembly.

3.1.2. All Territorial Associations in membership with the Union at date of adoption of the Amended Constitution and such Territorial Association as shall qualify for and be admitted to, membership by vote of the Assembly

BUSA is therefore an organisation of member churches. It is governed by certain basic principles. The constitution lists these principles as follows:

4. Declaration of Principle

The basis of the Union is:

4.1. That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer His Laws.

4.2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day."

4.3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

While the Declaration of Principle quoted above does not make full reference to the complete, published Statement of Belief (passed in Assembly at Durban in September 1924 and amended in Krugersdorp in 2000) and Baptist Principles (1987) the objects of the Union does make reference to churches wherein Baptist Principles are practiced. It is important to note that it is not a legal prerequisite for a church to practice Baptist Principles or subscribe to the Statement of Belief, but it is a practical consideration. The references to Baptist Principles are underlined below for the purpose of emphasis. The objects of the Union are as follows:

5. Objects

The objects of the Union are:

5.1. To advance the cause of the kingdom of God primarily in Southern Africa.

5.2. To promote unity and brotherly love among its member churches and churches moving towards membership.

5.3. To disseminate Baptist Principles and to maintain religious liberty.

5.4. To establish and assist Churches wherein Baptist Principles are practised.

The functions and powers of BUSA are listed below. These are reproduced to emphasise the fact that BUSA *functions in practice* as a denomination (as defined above) despite any claim that it may not be a denomination, but rather an association of churches (which would in any event fall into the definition of a denomination).

6. Functions and Powers

6.1. To collect information respecting the history, organisation and work of Member Churches and Associations.

6.2. To co-ordinate and combine the efforts of Member Churches in all matters affecting the general welfare of the Union, and its Members.

6.3. To engage in medical, educational, relief and other benevolent work and to confer and co-operate as occasion may require with Member Churches and other Christian communities and philanthropic societies.

6.4. To make provision for retiring and relief allowances for its staff, Ministers, Missionaries and their wives or widows.

6.5. To provide for theological education and for training for service in the churches.

6.6. To control admission to and deletion from the Union's lists of accredited ministers.

6.7. To provide for the supply of church and mission requisites.

6.8. To give services of advice or arbitration in cases of difference or dispute, with the consent of the parties concerned.

6.9. To receive, purchase, hold, hypothecate, sell, donate, lease, exchange and partition movable and immovable property.

6.10.   To act as Trustee for any Church or Association whether established or to be established.

6.11.   To invest funds of the Union in such manner as may be prescribed by By-Law

6.12. To confer and co-operate as occasion may require with Member Churches and Ministers in connection with ministerial settlement and the like.

6.13. To tender advice to Member Churches and Ministers on all matters appertaining to ministerial settlements and the like.

6.14. To borrow money with or without security for the purposes of the Union, and Associations, in such manner at such times and on such conditions as the Executive may determine.

6.15. To appoint and dismiss staff.

6.16. To make or amend such By-Laws as it may deem necessary for the proper administration of its business.

The functions and powers of BUSA are exercised through the Assembly of member churches. It is also important to note that it is a legal body that exists in its own right.

The provisions regarding that are as follows:

7. Method of Functioning

7.1. The Union shall function through its Assembly.

7.2. The Union as a legal body shall exist in its own right, separate from its members.

7.3. The Union shall continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office bearers.

7.4. The Union shall be able to own property and other possessions.

5.4.3 The purpose of BUSA

The purpose of BUSA can be categorised under two headings. The first is practical and can be called the functional purpose. The second is more abstract and has to do with its role as custodian of the Baptist Statement of Belief and Principles. This can be called its custodian purpose. The concept of categorising the purposes of the denomination into these two categories is supported by the Swanwick Statement of 1961 issued by the English Baptist Union. The statement emerged from numerous meetings held at Swanwick in response to the "continual numerical and spiritual decline of English Baptists"

(McBeth 1987:503). McBeth summarises the main point raised in the report as follows: "The historic independency that has marked Baptist churches needs to be supplemented by a recognition of the interdependency of Baptist churches, <u>both on biblical and pragmatic grounds</u>" (my underlining).

5.4.3.1   Functional or pragmatic purpose of BUSA

The formation of the English Baptist Union in 1813 was preceded by the following extract from an article in the Baptist Magazine 4 of 1812 (Early 2008:89-91):

> What business would probably engage the attention of such an Assembly? He suggested, it had been thought,—That one of the first and most important duties of it would no doubt be solemn Prayer to the God of all grace for the eminent out–pouring of his Holy Spirit on the Churches, and the whole world…That at such meetings our Missions in the East Indies would necessarily present a signal object of regard; when we should be able to recommend Auxiliary Societies, or Annual Collections for its support, in the far greater part of our Congregations.
>
> That the yearly Accounts of the state of religion transmitted from the Associated Churches, and others, would create an endless variety of claims, either on our sympathy, our gratitude, or our benevolence; and, some of them, on the united exertions of the whole body.
>
> That our Academies, the larger and smaller, would have their demands on our attention. How can they be more effectually supported? Can any other assistance be given to such whose views are towards the ministry?
>
> That here suitable methods might be proposed by which the talents and influence of the most valuable members of every church might be brought into action, for the good of the whole.
>
> That it would be natural to consult on the best methods of Catechizing, and to recommend the same to our families and churches.
>
> That such an Assembly might deliberate on the most effectual means of supporting, all through the kingdom, aged respectable ministers—and on the provision which might be made for the education of the children of our Ministers deceased, as among the United Brethren, and other denominations of Christians.

That such an assembly would afford the best opportunities to concert plans for the encouragement and support of Village preaching—of Sunday Schools—and for the establishment of Penny, and also of Mite Societies, resembling those of our Brethren in various parts of America.

That here an opportunity would be given of recommending interesting publications, and of selecting, and disseminating through the country, such small tracts, and pamphlets, as the general state of religion, and of our own denomination might require.

That the Brethren assembled from the various districts would be able to advise where it is proper that New Meeting-houses should be erected; and of determining that, henceforward, no Case for building, enlarging, or repairing any place of worship, shall be countenanced, unless it has, previously to such erection or alteration, obtained, in writing, the direction, encouragement, and recommendation of the principal Ministers of their own district.

The important point made here is that even though Baptist congregations have formed associations and issued widely accepted confessions as early as 1644 (indicating that theological unity existed at least to some extent), the first Union of Baptists Churches formed in England in 1813 was a result of practical considerations. McBeth (1987:291) comments that "failure to organise nationally may be attributed at least partially to such causes as theological differences, jealousy for the independence of each local church, reluctance on the part of outlying areas to see Baptist power concentrated in London, lack of adequate information and awareness of one another, and above all lack of some motivating cause or mission to demand unified effort" (my underlining). This was recognised by the Baptist leaders, particularly Joseph Ivimey who published a paper in 1811 entitled *Union Essential to Prosperity* (McBeth 1987:291). The emphasis in the formation of the English Baptist Union was not that of establishing or even formalising a church government system, but rather recognising that more can be achieved for the Kingdom of God through united effort than by trying to perform these functions

as individual congregations. McBeth (1987:505) summarises the formation of the English Union by saying, "before they had only a loose collection of churches and individuals. The congregations became to some extent local units of the larger church, and the pastors were tied more closely to the Baptist Union by various funds and salary supplements. As in similar developments among Baptists in other nations, this shift came not so much from new convictions in ecclesiology as from a search for greater efficiency in the practical world." The roots of BUSA lie partly in the church of John Ivimey (McBeth 1987:332), one of the main drivers behind the formation of the English Baptist Union. Bearing this in mind together with the close association of the South African Baptists with the English Union over the years, it follows that similar factors lay behind the formation of BUSA.

While the specific functions of the various unions may have changed over time, what did not change was the desire to "pool resources" to operate more efficiently as a group (or voluntary association) of churches. The benefits of this association or formation of a union was not to be done at the cost of giving up the principles Baptists have stood for before this time. Therefore, while there was a pooling of resources, each congregation remained autonomous and under the direct Lordship of Christ, accountable only to Him in faith and practice. In his paper referred to above, Ivimey showed that "'some general bond of union' need not compromise the independence of local churches" (McBeth 1987:291).

The purposes of BUSA differ only slightly from those of the English Baptist Union when it was formed. This purpose is defined in the BUSA constitution

under the headings "objects" and "functions and powers". Under the heading of Objects these would include "to advance the cause of the kingdom of God primarily in Southern Africa; to promote unity and brotherly love among its member churches and churches moving towards membership; and to establish and assist Churches wherein Baptist Principles are practised." Under the heading of functions and powers, these would include, *inter alia* "to collect information respecting the history, organisation and work of Member Churches and Associations; to co-ordinate and combine the efforts of Member Churches in all matters affecting the general welfare of the Union, and its Members; to engage in medical, educational, relief and other benevolent work and to confer and co-operate as occasion may require with Member Churches and other Christian communities and philanthropic societies; to make provision for retiring and relief allowances for its staff, Ministers, Missionaries and their wives or widows; to provide for theological education and for training for service in the churches; to control admission to and deletion from the Union's lists of accredited ministers; to provide for the supply of church and mission requisites; to give services of advice or arbitration in cases of difference or dispute, with the consent of the parties concerned."

The current activities of BUSA line up with its constitution. At the 2012 National Finance Committee meeting, the Secretary General of the Union presented a list of functions performed by the Union in response to criticisms of some of the regional associations that the Union is primarily an administrative body and that many of the members of the association do not feel that the Union provides adequate value to warrant monetary support from

the regional associations. The list of BU activities is reproduced as appendix 3. It should be clear that the perception of the regional associations is unfounded in reality. However, what is clear, is that the work actually done by the BU is either not properly communicated to regional associations and members or if communicated, not appreciated in terms of the value that it offers the individual congregations or regional associations. This is vaguely reminiscent of the English Baptist Union meeting in the 1830s and 40s which McBeth (1987:293) describes as "thinly attended, and perhaps many would have agreed with the delegate in 1847 who asked himself, 'For what purpose are we gathered? … Are the authorities themselves quite clear upon the matter?" It seems that even then, there were questions around the functional usefulness of the denominational body.

5.4.3.2 Custodian purpose of BUSA

The pragmatic or functional purpose of BUSA must be seen as distinct from its other primary area of concern – its confession of faith or the statements of its beliefs and principles. As defined in the definition of denominationalism, one of the distinctive characteristics of any denomination is the adherence to a set of religious principles. What follows from the fact that an organisation adheres to a set of religious principles, is that the organisation will regard these principles as its measure of truth or absolute knowledge.

The Baptist tradition was formed in an era when confidence in attaining absolute truth or knowledge was high. As a result, several confessions of faith were drawn up over the years specifying the beliefs of the tradition. McBeth

(1987:64) comments that the basics of the seventeenth-century faith (of the first Baptists) "will be familiar to most Baptists today." For this reason, I will not trace the history of Baptist confessions in any detail, save to say that "Baptists have been from the first a confessional people, always ready to give an answer for the faith within them" (McBeth 1987:66). The First London Confession (Particular Baptists) were drawn up in 1644, the Second in 1677 and then revised and reissued in 1689 (McBeth 1987: 67). The last is still used in a more modern language by many Baptist Associations. Baptist confessions stated in absolute terms what the authors of the confessions and their constituencies believed. This was natural for a time period when people had confidence in attainting absolute truth.

This is not to say that the "absolutism" of Baptist confessions has never been under attack. Probably the most famous disputation on the doctrinal purity and practice of Baptists occurred with the Down Grade Controversy. The controversy revolved around two Baptist leaders, Charles Haddon Spurgeon and John Clifford. McBeth (1987:302) comments that "some have found the seed of the controversy as early as 1873, when the Baptist Union modified its constitution away from a doctrinal to a more functional base. Unhappy conservatives had complained for years about doctrinal deterioration in the union but attracted little notice until they gained the powerful voice of Spurgeon." While it is impossible to summarise the full extent of the controversy in a few words, Spurgeon himself, as quoted by McBeth (1987:303) probably does it best when he wrote, "many ministers have

seriously departed from the truths of the gospel, and that a sad decline of spiritual life is manifest in many churches."

McBeth (1987:510-511) describes the state of the English Baptists regarding their attitude towards doctrinal statements as follows:

> In the twentieth century, English Baptists have lived with minimal doctrinal moorings. Pastors and laymen alike have enjoyed remarkable freedom in framing and expressing their theological views. As the Down Grade crisis revealed in the late 1880s, Baptists had little inclination and almost no means to hold individual Baptists to any kind of confessional stance. The Baptist Union maintained only minimal doctrinal standards, devised partly to accommodate the General Baptist merger of 1891. In 1904 the union adopted the Declaration of Principle …"

This Declaration of Principle is exactly the same as that contained in the BUSA constitution under the heading "4. Declaration of Principle" quoted above. McBeth (1987:511) continues to say that a "desire for a more comprehensive confession of faith surfaced in the 1970s. Many felt that English Baptists had retreated too far from the difficult task of defining their doctrines. Repeatedly in the nineteenth century, and especially during the Down Grade crisis, they had declined to spell out their faith for fear such a document might lead to creedalism. More recently fear of doctrinal looseness seems to be gaining on fear of doctrinal rigidity, resulting in calls for a new confession." However, a search of the English Baptist Union website (Baptist Union of Great Britain n.d.) reveal no new confession of faith or a substantially expanded declaration of principle. However, towards the end of the 1990's the Baptist Union of Great Britain went through a process of consultation and reflection. As part of this work a document was produced called 'Five Core Values for a Gospel People'. These were summarised as:

A Prophetic Community
- Following Jesus in confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy.
- Challenging worldly concepts of power, wealth and security.

An Inclusive Community
- Following Jesus in transcending barriers of gender, language, race, class, age and culture.
- Identifying with those who are rejected, deprived and powerless.

A Sacrificial Community
- Following Jesus in accepting vulnerability and the necessity of sacrifice.
- Seeking to reflect the generous, life-giving nature of God.

A Missionary Community
- Following Jesus in demonstrating in word and action God's forgiving and healing love.
- Calling and enabling people to experience the love of God for themselves.

A Worshipping Community
- Following Jesus in engaging in worship and prayer which inspire and undergird all we are and do.
- Exploring and expressing what it means to live together as the people of God, obeying his Word and following Christ in the whole of daily life (St Peter's House n.d.).

When evaluating BUSA's stand as far as its custodial function is concerned, a good starting point is to evaluate the Statement of Belief, passed in Assembly at Durban in September 1924, and to compare the principles emanating from that to the modern theory of knowledge. The Statement of Belief is reproduced under appendix 1.

From the Baptist Statement of Belief it should be clear to the reader that the Baptist movement followed a hybrid model of the modern and pre-modern philosophical systems.

Erickson (1998b:15) describes the religious aspect of pre-modernism as follows: "There was usually something of a dualism, involving an unseen component of reality. In religious views, this was supernaturalism, a belief in the existence of a god or gods. In less overtly religious views, this took a

different form of expression. For Plato, for example, reality was most fundamentally found in the Forms or ideas."

The beliefs outlined in the Baptist Statement of Belief above clearly fall within this aspect of pre-modernism.

The Baptist Principles (appendix 2), adopted in 1987, on the other hand reveals a thoroughly modern outlook as it concerns itself primarily with governance issues, many of which are outlined in the discussion of Locke's influence above.

The hybrid model followed by the BUSA is therefore thoroughly modern in its political or governance outlook (as outlined in the Baptist Principles) but thoroughly pre-modern in its theological outlook (as outlined in the Statement of Belief referred to above).

As with pre-modernism and modernism, postmodernism was also described in detail in the previous chapter. For the sake of clarity, the main tenets of this philosophical outlook are reproduced below:

The postmodern mind refuses to limit truth to its rational dimension and thus dethrones the human intellect as the arbiter of truth; Knowledge is not objective, but relative, indeterminate and participatory, and therefore there can be no dispassionate, autonomous knower; The optimistic outlook has been replaced with a gnawing pessimism, not assuming that the world will continue to become better with each generation; The postmodern mind operates with a community based understanding of truth, leading to the conception of relativity of truth (Erickson 1998b:18-20).

A cursory glance at these tenets should make it clear to the reader that the postmodern mind poses a significant threat on the one hand and an encouragement on the other to the *status quo* as far as current Baptist thinking and models of governance are concerned.

Baptist <u>thinking</u> (as outlined in the Baptist Statement of Belief) is <u>threatened</u> by the postmodern denial of objective knowledge and Baptist <u>practice</u> (mainly as outlined in the Baptist Principles) is <u>enhanced</u> by the "community based understanding of truth."

The Baptist thinking can also be termed its theology whereas its practice can be termed its ecclesiology. In the preface to his Readings in Baptist History, Early (2008:7) says that he included several confessions of faith in order to assist the reader in tracing the development of Baptist <u>theology</u> and <u>ecclesiology</u>.

The pre-amble to the Southern Baptist Convention 2000 Statement of Faith and Message (Early 2008:248-250) makes a clear statement regarding the rigidity (meant in a "good sense") of the Baptist theology, but also warns of the impending threats in the postmodern era. The pre-amble is reproduced in part below:

> <u>Baptists are a people of deep beliefs and cherished doctrines.</u>
> <u>Throughout our history we have been a confessional people, adopting</u>
> <u>statements of faith as a witness to our beliefs and a pledge of our</u>
> <u>faithfulness to the doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture</u>. Our
> confessions of faith are rooted in historical precedent, as the church in
> every age has been called upon to define and defend its beliefs. Each
> generation of Christians bears the responsibility of guarding the
> treasury of truth that has been entrusted to us [2 Timothy 1:14]. Facing
> a new century, Southern Baptists must meet the demands and duties
> of the present hour. New challenges to faith appear in every age. A

pervasive anti-supernaturalism in the culture was answered by Southern Baptists in 1925, when the Baptist Faith and Message was first adopted by this Convention. In 1963, Southern Baptists responded to assaults upon the authority and truthfulness of the Bible by adopting revisions to the Baptist Faith and Message. The Convention added an article on "The Family" in 1998, thus answering cultural confusion with the clear teachings of Scripture. <u>Now, faced with a culture hostile to the very notion of truth, this generation of Baptists must claim anew the eternal truths of the Christian faith</u>. Your committee respects and celebrates the heritage of the Baptist Faith and Message, and affirms the decision of the Convention in 1925 to adopt the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, "revised at certain points and with some additional articles growing out of certain needs...." We also respect the important contributions of the 1925 and 1963 editions of the Baptist Faith and Message. With the 1963 committee, we have been guided in our work by the 1925 "statement of the historic Baptist conception of the nature and function of confessions of faith in our religious and denominational life...." (my underlining).

From the above quotation, it is clear that the Southern Baptist Convention recognises the historical and practical importance of ensuring a consistency in its theology. It is also evident that it recognises the need to affirm these doctrines amidst an all-out attack against the profession of truth in any form.

This affirmation of truth is also present in the BUSA through the mere existence of the Statement of Belief. In a postmodern culture where truth is denied it is exactly this that makes the BUSA relevant in today's society. As recognised by the Southern Baptist Convention "faced with a culture hostile to the very notion of truth, this generation of Baptists must claim anew the eternal truths of the Christian faith" (Early 2008:248-250).

A comparison between the English Baptist Union Declaration of Principle, the BUSA Statement of Belief and Baptist Principles, and the Southern Baptist Convention Faith and Message reveals a very significant difference. The Baptist Union of Great Britain's declaration of principle is so vague that it

would include almost anyone with Christian or almost Christian affinities. The BUSA Statement of Belief is more comprehensive and deals in no uncertain terms with its evangelical understanding of the gospel. The Southern Baptist Convention Faith and Message on the other hand is a very comprehensive document, outlining its beliefs in much detail. One can only ask whether the relative successes regarding the witness of the respective Baptist bodies have anything to with the detail of their statement and declaration of faith.

The BUSA Statement of Belief remains thoroughly entrenched in the Baptist community in South Africa. This can be seen by both the adoption of the 1689 confession of faith by the Sola 5 group of Baptists (who has a more Calvinistic or Reformed outlook on theology) and the inclusion thereof by the Isaiah 58 group of Baptists (who has a more postmodern/emergent outlook on theology).

The relevance of the BUSA is threatened with religious liberty taken to its extreme conclusion. With no or little accountability with respect to adherence to the Statement of Belief thereby including all variants of faith and under the banner of "religious toleration" the gospel and the biblical truths surrounding it, the gospel may be compromised.

George Washington Truett, president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1927 to 1929 quotes John Locke as saying, "The Baptists were the first propounders of absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty" (Early 2008:167).

Truett (Early 2008:166-167) then relates the following tale emphasising the Baptist principle of religious liberty:

> Years ago, at a notable dinner in London, that world-famed statesman, John Bright, asked an American statesman, himself a Baptist, the noble Dr. J. L. Curry, "What distinct contribution has your America made to the science of government?" To that question Dr. Curry replied: "The doctrine of religious liberty." After a moment's reflection, Mr. Bright made the worthy reply: "It was a tremendous contribution."" He comments on this saying, "Indeed, the supreme contribution of the new world to the old is the contribution of religious liberty. This is the chiefest contribution that America has thus far made to civilization. And historic justice compels me to say that it was pre-eminently a Baptist contribution.

As noted above, this foundational Baptist principle is exactly what makes the Baptist denomination vulnerable. Whereas the assertion of truth unifies the denomination under the common banner of the Statement of Belief, the principles of religious liberty and the consequent autonomy of each congregation regarding matters that fall outside the confessional creeds, threatens to tear the denomination apart.

It is important to note that congregational autonomy does not necessarily follow religious liberty. However, the point is made that these principles are related. It is difficult to argue the case for religious liberty and at the same time insist on submission to an ecclesiastical authority.

The danger lies in the extremism of the postmodern epoch. John Cotton responded to Roger Williams in 1644 when the latter criticised the government of the day for its practice of persecuting non-conformists:

> Now in points of doctrine some are fundamental, without right belief whereof a man cannot be saved; other are circumstantial, or less principal, wherein men may differ in judgment without prejudice of salvation on either part. In like sort, in points of practice, some concern

the weightier duties of the law, as, what God we worship, and with what kind of worship; whether such as, if it be right, fellowship with God is held; if corrupt, fellowship with him is lost. Again, in points of doctrine and worship less principal, either they are held forth in a meek and peaceable way, though the things are erroneous or unlawful: or they are held forth with such arrogance and impetuousness, as tends and reaches (even of itself) to disturb the peace" (Early 2008:33-34).

Cotton is correct in making the assertion that certain points of doctrine are fundamental whereas others are of lesser importance and men may differ on these without prejudicing their salvation. The issue in the postmodern era is that even the matters of lesser importance are driven to a conclusion that may have far reaching consequences for the salvation of souls.

There has always been one aspect of doctrine over which the denomination has been at odds. As referred to above, right from the very beginnings of the Baptist tradition there were two streams of theology – the General and Particular Baptists. The first Baptist congregation in London which was formed in 1612 by Thomas Helwys was a General or Arminian church (Roy 2000:3). A few years later there were also many Particular or Calvinistic Baptist congregations in London. McBeth (1987:32) describes the General Baptists as representing "the older and more Arminian version of Baptist faith in England. They believed that man has the freedom to believe in Christ; that whoever will believe may be saved; that none are predestined to damnation; that the saved may renounce their faith and thus lose their salvation; and that all the local churches make up only one church." The Particular Baptists on the other hand believed in "particular atonement … that Christ died only for the elect. They also differed at other points, including ecclesiology, eternal security, and relation to government" (McBeth 1987:39). What is important to

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the weightier duties of the law, as, what God we worship, and with what kind of worship; whether such as, if it be right, fellowship with God is held; if corrupt, fellowship with him is lost. Again, in points of doctrine and worship less principal, either they are held forth in a meek and peaceable way, though the things are erroneous or unlawful: or they are held forth with such arrogance and impetuousness, as tends and reaches (even of itself) to disturb the peace" (Early 2008:33-34).

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note is that both the General and the Particular Baptists made propositional statements regarding their interpretation of Scripture.

The tradition of making strong propositional statements regarding belief has always been present within the BUSA. Jonsson (1977:33) writes of the time that the BUSA was formed in the late eighteenth century that "there was a contention for Biblical truth which contributed to their theological fervour and spiritual outlook."

As referred to earlier, there are two distinct networks operating within the bounds of BUSA, but who are not recognised by the BUSA as official ministries. The one group is called Sola 5 which consists of churches with a "Calvinistic" theological point of view. Another group, the Isaiah 58 Network, was formed that consist of churches with a "charismatic" theological point of view. While the Sola 5 group clearly asserts reformed theology in a strongly propositionally worded confession of faith adopted in September 2005 (Sola 5 2006:6-18), the Isaiah 58 Network seems to focus more on emerging trends and the continuance of the gifts of the Spirit. The Isaiah 58 Network describes their goal "to see God bringing into being an awesome network of <u>non cessationist</u> leaders and churches who are passionately modelling Christ in their communities, helping each other to be the salt and light that God has called us to be in the world" (my underlining) (Isaiah 58 Network n.d.). The network also states their purpose as understanding

> that we are moving into a <u>new and different era</u> and want to be on the <u>cutting edge</u> of the <u>emerging church</u> God is wanting to bring forth to meet the needs of a diverse, <u>post modern</u> and <u>post Christian</u> society. We will allow ourselves to become vulnerable in the interests of a

desire to be moulded into what God wants us to be" (my underlining) (Isaiah 58 Network n.d.).

While in theory, a member of either group would be able to join the other group, it is clear that the Sola 5 group focuses much more on stating its theology as a propositional truth (as is clear from the publication of The Sola 5 Handbook, containing its Confession of Faith, Core Values and Constitution). The Isaiah 58 Network on the other hand acknowledges its commitment to the Baptist Statement of Belief, but adds to that the following:

> We long to be a Spirit-empowered people obeying all that Christ has commanded. Our desire is to be as <u>inclusive</u> as possible across cultures, generations and gender, and thoroughly <u>holistic</u> in our understanding and outworking of the gospel of the Kingdom. We cherish our heritage, share one evangelical statement of faith and embrace the principles that have distinguished the Baptist family through the years. Our desire is to compliment and supplement what is already offered to our pastors and churches to develop holistically and effectively as Spirit-filled <u>missional communities</u>. Isaiah58net is for everyone, but will seek to positively affirm and empower pastors and church leaders in particular, to be <u>relevant and effective</u> in the 21st century" (my underlining) (Isaiah 58 Network n.d.).

The Isaiah 58 Network makes less or almost no propositional statements in the traditional sense with a possible exception in the statement that they are "non cessationist." The other statements are so vague, that it is not possible to gauge exactly where they stand. Examples of the statements made include "cutting edge", "emerging church", "post modern", "post Christian", "inclusive", "holistic", "missional communities", "relevant and effective". Since they do not say exactly what is meant by each term, it leaves open the opportunity to indeed be "inclusive" as each term can be interpreted in a number of ways with each interpretation emphasised differently.

The assertion of doctrinal propositions is a thoroughly modern phenomenon. Glodo (2001:109) writes that "for modernism, there is still a universe to be known, truth to be found. The project of the mind is to go about its discovery." He goes on to describe the modern mind by saying that "many consider the task of an exegete to be that of reformulating Scripture into propositions" (Glodo 2001:112). It seems as if the modern mind could not help but want to find and formulate propositional truth from Scripture. It therefore does not make a difference as to whether one asserts a proposition and defend it from Scripture or whether one attempts to assert a proposition from your interpretation of Scripture in a way that both the General and Particular Baptists of the seventeenth century has done, and in the same way that the Sola 5 group in Southern Africa is doing.

Glodo (2001:116) summarises his point of view by quoting Pierre Babin who says that "the greatest catastrophe that can happen to communication today is for it to be governed by reason alone." Glodo asserts that this kind of communication cannot be effective when addressing the postmodernist with his "deep distrust of logo-centrism." Of course, a pre-occupation with propositions is nothing but logo-centrism. This is one of the central tenets of the modern epoch which has been utterly rejected by the postmodern mind-set. Every word points to another word so that one will end up moving in circles and never reach a conclusion. The modern mind will search for the first premise, the first word or first signifier into infinity. The secular postmodern mind asserts that there is no first premise, no first word or no first signifier. However, the postmodern evangelical will recognise that the first Word is

presented to humankind as Jesus Christ incarnate – fully God, but also fully man, saviour of mankind who died on the cross, victor over Satan and evil through resurrection, but still warning believers to be alert against the roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8). The triune God presented Himself to man in human form, and after the resurrection the Father and the Son, sent the Holy Spirit – one God in essence yet three distinct persons. This wholly good and holy God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, yet evil surrounds us. We recognise that God is in control of every aspect of our lives, yet each believer has to make the decision from his own free will to accept Jesus as Saviour.

Any attempt to focus on one of these propositions to the exclusion of another seemingly contradictory proposition will lead to heresy. However, the modern mind can only try to fathom these concepts through reason. The postmodern mind says that it is impossible to reason this out and may or may not accept the propositions based on what makes sense to him or her at the time. Of course, this is subject to change as the criterion for evaluating a proposition is not objective, but rather subjective. Instead, the postmodern mind wants to relate truth in the form of stories. Carson (2005:20-21) relates the experience of prominent emerging church leader saying "no longer did they talk in propositions: they told stories, not least stories that admitted their own failures, and stories that disclosed their interaction with God." He goes on to explain how propositional truth is related through stories by postmodernists: "Stories … are easy to remember; more importantly, they are 'the most effective way to combine complicated and difficult-to-explain truth into simple, understandable bites of reality we can grasp."

All denominations face the challenge of presenting the Gospel truth to an audience that denies the very concept of truth itself – whether through propositional statements or stories. The Baptist tradition and BUSA also face that challenge, not only through the Union, but also the "unofficial" groups within the Union. The world, on the other hand, has not waited. Information, so-called truth (or whatever is true for you) and entertainment are communicated *en masse* through the media via internet, Facebook, Twitter, television screens and movies. Sadly, the Baptist tradition, together with other mainline denominations, is lagging far behind. James White (2001:170) says that "the church was once the dominant institution in most communities. Today, morality and truth are more often the property of the media. For example, television may not tell us what to *think*, but it certainly tells us what to think *about*". The church has to re-evaluate its relevance to society today and in today's terms. The terms of the modern mind must be left in the twentieth century and the postmodern mind must be engaged in the twenty-first in terms that it can understand and that makes sense to his mind.

5.5 Conclusion

Where the Sola 5 group is asserting a strong confessional faith in a "modern era" style, the Isaiah 58 network wishes to be very "postmodern", "missional" and culturally inclusive. As we have seen above, both these stances have problems: (1) the postmodern mind refuses to admit a strong statement of propositional truth and is therefore not open to the message. (2) The postmodern/inclusive stance on the other hand drives towards a tendency to compromise on essential truths for the sake of inclusiveness and toleration/pluralism.

The BUSA seems to stand right in the middle of these groups as far as epistemology is concerned; neither taking a very strong stance on its theology (yet not compromising on the essentials of the gospel), nor being postmodern and "emergent". Instead, the BUSA seems to focus more on the pragmatic functions as an administrative organisation and less on the assertion and dissemination of doctrinal truth.

In light of this, it will be worth looking again at the table presented earlier in this chapter:

Table 5.1 Modernist characteristics, the response of the Baptist tradition and the corresponding characteristic of Western postmodernism.

Rise of modernism Characteristic	Baptist principle/belief Response	Western postmodernism Characteristic
Religious toleration	Religious liberty	Universalism/pluralism
Protestantism	Direct Lordship of Christ	Atheism
Disdain for religious war	The church universal	"God is dead"/egocentrism
Rise of commerce and industry	Congregational principle – serving/involvement	Highly regulated economies
Rising middle class	Priesthood of all believers	Established middle class
Property rights	The church local	Stable property rights
Restriction of hereditary principle	Congregational principle - independence	Stable legal system
Right to choose own government	Separation of church and state	Democracy
Empiricism	Revealed truth (statement of belief)	Relativism

What seemed to have been a very concrete response to a very concrete characteristic, the move towards the postmodern characteristics is much more

blurred. Some characteristics have developed in stable and orderly way such as regulated economies, an established middle class, stable property rights and legal systems and democratic government. Other areas, however, developed into the opposite direction: pluralism becoming the norm under the style of political correctness, atheism and egocentrism is the norm, and truth (primarily manifested through ethics and moral standards) have become relative to community. A natural reaction to this is to focus on the areas that are not blurred – in this case the more pragmatic issues, and ignore the areas that are uncertain, in the hope that they will pass away.

It is under these circumstances that BUSA and denominations must carve out a relevant existence in the postmodern era.

The next chapter will look at principles governing the way in which the church or denomination can be structured so that the Gospel can be presented to the postmodern mind in a relevant and efficient manner.

CHAPTER 6

AN EFFECTIVE DENOMINATIONAL STRUCTURE IN A

POSTMODERN CULTURE

6.1 Introduction

Mohler (2001:65) quotes Grenz's view regarding the evangelical response to postmodernism: "The contemporary situation demands that we as evangelicals not view theology merely as a restatement of a body of propositional truths, as important as doctrine is. Rather theology is a <u>practical discipline</u> oriented primarily toward the believing community" (my underlining). Grenz therefore believes, regarding the response of evangelicals to postmodernism, that there should be relatively less emphasis on theoretical statements of truth, as important as it is, and relatively more emphasis on the practical outworking of the faith within the believing community.

Carson (2005:42-44) on the other hand states that "at the heart of the emerging reformation [or postmodernism] lies a perception of a major change in culture." He then continues to ask the question whether there is "some danger that what is being advocated [by the postmodern movement or the emerging church] is not so much a new kind of Christian in a new emerging church, but a church that is so submerging itself in the culture that it risks hopeless compromise."

These two views pit the two groups within BUSA against each other. The Sola 5 group emphasises propositional truth whereas the Isaiah 58 network emphasises the practical discipline of working one's faith out toward the believing community into the postmodern culture. As seen in the previous chapter, BUSA falls right in the middle of these two groups. Its emphasis on propositional truth is adequate as far as the

essentials are concerned, but it is not emphasised. The Baptist Statement of Belief and Baptist Principles are in view here. The official Declaration of Principle contained in its constitution is so wide that it will accommodate almost any belief system that can be considered "more or less" Christian. This is not to say that the early Baptists in South Africa were not moored in doctrinal truth. Jonsson (1977:35) writes that in the evangelical climate of the time of the BUSA formation

> the Bible could be accepted unquestioningly as the crucible in which all doctrinal thought was to be tested. Under such circumstances the Baptist Union could be established on a simple but deliberate declaration of principle and an enumeration of the objects of the Union, without any direct reference to the authoritative place and function of the Bible. There was little need to expound the elaborates of the Christian faith. Issues Christological and Biblical were not seriously brought into question, and as a consequence they were not in immediate need of defence in any creedal form or statement of faith.

Within the BUSA the outworking of practical faith towards the believing community is also adequate, but seems to be hampered by inadequate manpower, poor communication and general lack of resources. As a result, this is not emphasised either, with the resultant image of an administrative organisation rather than presenting an image of an organisation that is active in ministry.

Sweet (2000:119) adds to Grenz quoted above by saying that "the church needs to reinvent the concept of 'connection' and 'connectedness' to fit a postmodern context." What he means is that evangelicals have been working in isolation from each other and that one practical response to the challenge of postmodernism is to "reinvent" our concept of "connectedness".

With the independence of each Baptist congregation set out under the principle of congregational church government, re-inventing our concept of connectedness will be, to say the least, a challenge for BUSA as an organisation as well as for the

individual congregations who are members of the Union. However, there appears to be a desire for closer networking. This can be seen from the formation of the Sola 5 group in 2005 and the Isaiah 58 network in 2006. There also seems to be some organic growth in the activities of the various regional associations.

In this chapter I will attempt to arrive at a denominational structure that will be effective in presenting the Gospel to a postmodern culture.

6.2 The purpose of the denomination

The important issue that is at stake for the church in general and each denomination in particular has to do with the dissemination of the truth of the Gospel to congregations and the world in general. Of course, and as stated at the end of the previous chapter, this is a statement that the postmodern mind will object to. Gary Phillips (2001:132) quotes Steward and Blocker who says "Shots going up, down, north, south, east, and west [are] … equally accurate … Everyone's opinion is as good as anyone else's. The main criterion … becomes how you, as an individual, feel about it." The postmodern mind rejects any statement of propositional truth, yet, this goes directly against Jesus' Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20: "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you" (NLT).

The last sentence of this passage can only mean that Jesus commands his disciples to teach truth (as "given" by Jesus to the disciples) to their disciples. This is corroborated in John 8:31-32: "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You

are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (NLT). The church therefore does not only have an obligation to proclaim truth. The church exists so that it can proclaim the truth as it is contained in Scripture. It is not an optional extra against some organisational efficiencies, but rather the core business of the church.

As referred to above, the postmodern mind will object to this stating that absolute truth is impossible to attain and therefore also impossible to communicate. Carson (2005:115-124) deals with this problem by concluding that the epistemological standard for postmoderns is omniscience in the sense that God is omniscient. He agrees that no human will ever attain that standard. However, along with many other authors he says that we live in a world where a lot of "knowing" happens and works out in practical life. He calls his solution to this the asymptotic approach which can be depicted by the following graph:
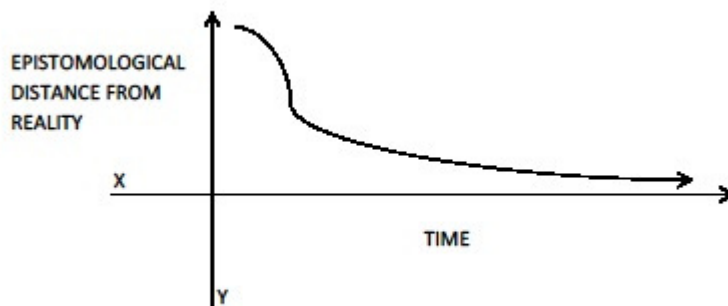
Figure 6.1 The asymptotic approach to truth (Carson 2005: 119)

In this graph the x-axis measures time and the y-axis measures how far a person's understanding of a thing is from the reality of the thing in itself. What Carson is

saying is that we will move closer and closer to perfect understanding, while we must at the same time acknowledge that we will never achieve omniscient knowledge.

The efficiency in which a church (or denomination) discharges its core business – that of proclaiming the gospel in terms that is understandable and factual – is what makes a church or a denomination relevant and effective. We may not understand the gospel in the same omniscient way that God does, but we do understand it sufficiently to communicate its truth to a lost and broken world.

The effectiveness of a denominational structure is therefore not dependent on whether it performs the various pragmatic functions as outlined in the previous chapter (with reference to the formation of the English Baptist Union and BUSA) and which most denominations do very well. The effectiveness of a denominational structure should be evaluated against how well it manages to communicate to the nations how to "obey all the commands" Jesus has given to the church.

The first principle in an effective denominational structure is therefore that it must proclaim Biblical truth in an efficient and coherent way. Again and as mentioned above, the postmodernist will claim that this is impossible as there is no such thing as "absolute truth". Yet, that is not the Biblical message. Jesus says that "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6 – NLT). A few passages later in John 17:17, Jesus prays for his disciples, asking "Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth."

For the Christian church it is therefore not a debatable issue. However, it is important that the church knows what it considers truth. It is here where the Baptist movement is extremely well placed within the postmodern era.

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Jonsson (1977:37) writes that an "emphasis on Biblical authority coloured Baptist life and thought. The Bible remained the creed of the Union, the Churches and the people." Therefore, while Baptists have traditionally been "a people of the Book" as is evidenced by the first article of BUSA's statement of belief, it has also been a movement that has right from the very start made a very narrow distinction as to what it considers non-negotiable core truths and what are issues that may be open for debate.

As stated above, it was not necessary to issue a comprehensive statement of faith at the formation of the BUSA in 1877. However, in the third decade of the twentieth century the veracity of Scripture was brought into serious question, thus "necessitating the formulation of a Statement of Faith for the guidance of the Churches" (Jonsson 1977:35).

However, from the beginnings of the Baptist tradition there has been a difference of opinion between General and Particular Baptists (as outlined in the previous chapter). In more modern times, the differences of opinion continue in other areas as well (for example the Isaiah 58 and Sola 5 movements), yet the core beliefs as contained in the Baptist Statement of Belief remain (voluntarily) subscribed to by all churches within BUSA. A similar principle can be observed in many other denominations through its adherence to the various creeds. The classical example of this would be the Apostle's Creed that is still read in many churches all over the world, despite these churches having differing opinions on several other theological and even secular issues (such as leadership).

Many authors make suggestions regarding the way the truth should be presented in the postmodern era. Sweet uses the analogy of water and container – the water representing the truth and the container the way it is presented. He concludes that as long as the water (truth) does not change, it really does not matter in what "container" it gets presented (1999:36-39). However, this focus is on the actual worship service or even style of worship. While a commendable analogy, it has little to do with denominational structures. Other authors like Jonker (*Die Relevansie van die Kerk,* 2008) focuses on the relevance of the church as a whole, calling the church to a proclamation of the gospel as its ultimate function (2008:152).

Raschke focuses on structural change to the way the church functions within the denominational paradigm. He says, "the postmodernist paradigm, though it can hardly be made explicit or concise, can be boiled down to the following broader traits: (1) the flattening of hierarchies at all levels or organisation; (2) the development of webs of interconnecting nodes and modules, none of which have any priority over the other and which do not represent in any important sense a "chain of command"; and (3) constant and dynamic change with ephemeral and superficial phenomena taking precedence over deep and abiding structures" (2004:146). Raschke continues with a call for what he terms "two-winged churches". He explains as follows:

> Both mainline and evangelical church leaders have the ingrained habit of conceptualising a church as a vertical structure, with God at the top, the denominational administrative hierarchy just below, the pastors and the individual church governing bodies struck smack in the middle, and the congregation along with its outreach programs at the lower tier. Both ecclesiastical authority and ministrations of the Holy Spirit are imagined to flow down from the heavens and reach individual believers, whose lives are then altered and "sanctified" within the familiar vertical matrix of top-down relationships. But vertical sanctification is only one way in which God works

with believers … A church that only concentrates on Sunday assembly and corporate worship is like a great bird with only one wing. It takes two wings to soar. The other wing is the horizontal dimension of corporate Christian life … Postmodern churches are two-winged. The Holy Spirit does not merely cascade down from above, but is the wind beneath their wings that provides uplift and supports the body in praise and adoration of God Almighty … The two-winged church looks upward toward the most holy and transcendent God, but it also looks outward toward community. It is founded on a relational ontology, the ontology of the Trinity" (2004:154-155).

The two wings represent the two functions of a denomination identified in the previous chapter – the custodian (of truth) function and the pragmatic function. Raschke is saying that most churches focused entirely on the vertical (truth) wing and not on the horizontal (pragmatic/community) wing. The one should not exist without the other.

Raschke is correct in his evaluation of the historical church. Article 7 of the Lutheran Confession of Faith (the 1530 Augsburg Confession) defines the church as "the congregation of saints in which the gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered" (Grudem 1994:864-865). Grudem (1994:865) also quotes John Calvin as saying, "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists." Grudem then continues to argue that it is appropriate "that we take Luther and Calvin's view on the marks of the true church as correct still today." I concur with this view, but have to add in agreement with Raschke and in South Africa the Isaiah 58 Network, that the pragmatic/community aspect of the church should not be neglected.

6.3 An effective denominational structure

From the above, five principles can be derived for an effective denominational structure in the postmodern era:

1. It should proclaim Biblical truth or the Gospel in an uncompromising way.

2. It should do away with hierarchical structures;

3. It should develop nodes or modules within the structure, none of which has priority over the other;

4. It should be able to adapt to change rapidly; and

5. It should focus as much on the vertical as the horizontal aspects of worship (with an emphasis on relationship with God and community);

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the first point goes against the grain of postmodern thinking and it is worth returning to this important point briefly. Despite the postmodern opposition to this concept, there is a middle ground. Using the asymptotic model of Carson described above as a basis, one must acknowledge that we will never be able to attain absolute truth in an omniscient way. However, the church can and should move closer and closer to a complete understanding of the cross and the revealed truth of God as individuals mature into Christ-likeness. The Sola 5 Group (Sola 5 2006:25) includes under article 23 of their Core Values the statement of Philip Melanchthon, Martin Luther's successor: "Therefore we affirm that in essentials there must be unity, in nonessentials liberty and in all things charity." Grudem (1994:865) unpacks the difficulty of this:

> In some cases we might have difficulty determining just how much wrong doctrine can be tolerated before a church can no longer be considered a true church, but there are many clear cases where we can say that a true church does not exist. For example, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormon Church) does not hold to any major Christian doctrines concerning salvation or the person of God or the person and work of Christ. It is clearly a false church. Similarly, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach salvation by works, not by trusting in Jesus Christ alone. This is a fundamental doctrinal deviation because if people believe the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses, they simply will not be saved. So the Jehovah's Witnesses also must be considered a false church. When the preaching of a church conceals the

gospel message of salvation by faith alone from its members, so that the gospel message is not clearly proclaimed, and has not been proclaimed for some time, the group meeting there is not a church.

Brown (2001:164-165) summarises the point aptly when he says that "Christians must never forget that truth is essentially Christus Nexus, Christ at the center. The historical and theological significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ constitute the message of Christianity (1 Cor. 2:2; 15:2-8). The centrality of Christ forces the issue in confrontations with other worldviews and allows no measure of compromise or syncretism on the essentials."

Therefore, according to the Lutherans, Calvin, Grudem and many other evangelicals, the essential message of the church is the Gospel defined as proclaiming salvation through faith in Christ alone.

It should be noted that the criteria outlined above mentions nothing of "practical ministries" or programmes within the denomination and goes straight up against hierarchical structures. Raschke relates Max Weber's version of the formation of denominational structures as follows: "'Religion' is born with the fervent instruction of luminaries and prophets, so-called charismatic figures. Over time, the volcanic magma of these original inspirations cools and solidifies. Spiritual communities coalesce into churches, churches into complex organisations with their tiers of authority, hierarchical systems of administration, dogmas, canons, and legal and ceremonial strictures. The end product is 'religion'" (2004:160).

6.4 Conclusion

According to Raschke, the point that Weber makes is that a denominational structure that is dominated by complex tiers of authority, hierarchical systems of

administration, very importantly dogma and other legal structures and ceremonial rituals fall into the trap of dead religion as opposed to a living relationship with God. Such structures are bound to fail in the postmodern period as more and more congregations and individuals embrace postmodern philosophical pluralism and relativism.

The next chapter will evaluate the current structures of BUSA and then compare that to the effective denominational structure outlined above.

CHAPTER 7

THE RELEVANCE OF BUSA AS A DENOMINATION IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

7.1 Introduction

Brian McLaren [discussed by Carson (2005:31)] asserts that it "is difficult to see how one can be faithful to the Bible … if philosophical pluralism and relativism are given free play." Yet, he also asserts that "absolutism cannot be allowed to rule: the criticism of absolutism is too devastating, too convincing, to permit to stand." An alternative way of thinking and practising denominational life has to be found in order to remain relevant in the move from modernism to postmodernism.

This chapter will evaluate the way BUSA is structured, including its epistemological stance pertaining to the proclamation of truth, as well as the functions it performs on behalf of its member churches. This structure will be compared against the ideal presented in the previous chapter.

7.2 Current structures of BUSA

When discussing the structures of the BUSA, it is essential to understand how the Union views itself. Parnell (1977:64) writes that the BUSA derives this understanding of itself from the basis of the Union, being "That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each church has liberty to interpret and administer His laws." This emphasis on the sole authority of Christ means that the "Union acts as an aid to the churches and not as their master. The Union gives advice and help, sometimes it admonishes, but it never rules the

churches. The churches govern the Union, not the Union the churches." Parnell (1977:70) emphasises this further when he writes about the formation of the BUSA: "The Union basically consisted of established churches and of individuals who had a desire to assist weaker causes and to reach out into new fields."

The above philosophy of church governance is clearly seen in the BUSA organisational structure. The diagram below provides an outline of the BUSA structure as it functions currently. BUSA functions through the Annual Assembly which consists of delegates from the member churches and territorial associations as well as the Executive. The Executive consists of BUSA office bearers, Territorial Association representatives, Board representatives and co-opted members. The General Secretary and other BUSA office bearers are responsible for the effective functioning of BUSA. While independent in theory, the seminaries are closely linked within the BUSA structures with representation on the Executive and with Executive representation on the Boards of the seminaries. BUSA is funded by membership fees of churches (making up approximately one third of its expenditure budget) and the balance is funded by voluntary giving by churches. The ideal is that the voluntary giving by churches be split 60% towards the territorial associations, 30% towards BUSA and 10% towards the seminaries.

Diagram of BUSA Structure

Assembly → Delegates / Executive → Consists of:
Office bearers
Territorial Association Representatives
Recognised Board Representatives
Co-opted members

Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa
Cape Town Baptist Seminary

Territorial Associations

Member churches
as at 31/12/2009

	Churches	Members
BBA	73	6,735
EPBA	41	3,088
BANC	12	536
NBA	95	6,569
BNA	178	12,110
FSBA	25	3,321
WPBA	98	10,969
BUSA	522	43,328

60%

10% General secretary and office bearers

30%

Co-ordination and Unifying of Associations, Departmental Ministries and Local Churches
Facilitate theological education, church planting, missions/evangelism and national events
Mobilising local churches (Equip 2000-2005; Impact 2006-2010; Local Church Alive 2011-2015)
Assisting Associations in local church development
Promoting departmental ministries
Caring of pastors and pastoral widows/widowers
Communication: BU Website, Baptists Today, BU Express
Conflict resolution in associations and local churches, confidential pastor consulting
Liaising with international Baptist bodies and other national organisations
Administration
   Legal counsel and constitutional advice to local church
   BU Personnel
   BU Ministry lists
   Departmental Ministries
   BU Publications and Annual Handbook
   BU Assets and properties
Finance
   Overseeing BU/BMD Finances and Trust funds
   CW Parnell Fund, BU pension fund and medical aid

Isaiah 58 Network
Sola 5
Unoffical Networks

Figure 7.1 Denominational structure of the BUSA

7.3 Evaluation of the structure of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa against the ideal outlined in the previous chapter

The previous chapter listed five key areas for an effective denominational structure in the postmodern era. These are:

1. It should proclaim Biblical truth in an uncompromising way;

2. It should do away with hierarchical structures;

3. It should develop nodes or modules within the structure, none of which has priority over the other;

4. It should be able to adapt to change rapidly; and

5. It should focus as much on the vertical as the horizontal aspects of worship (with an emphasis on relationship with God and community).

In the context of the previous chapters and the diagram presented above, even a cursory glance at these five criteria, will lead the reader to the conclusion that the current structure of BUSA is ideally placed to reach the postmodern mind, despite its origins at the start of the modern epoch.

In respect of the **second criterion**, Baptists have traditionally been non-hierarchical in their structures. In fact, the English Baptist Union was formed 200 years after the first Baptist church was formed in London in 1612 by Thomas Helwys. The congregational principle, which is one of the founding principles of the Baptist denomination, provides for very flat structures within the denomination. This can also be seen by the way the BUSA is structured, despite the apparent "levels" within the organisation. The structure rather indicates that the BUSA is broken down into various sub-entities, each with its own unique role within the organisation taken as a whole. Each of these sub-entities has representation at the annual assembly, either through delegates or representation on the Executive. The implication of this is very broad representation at leadership level.

This ties in with the **third criterion** – the formation of nodes or modules of which none take priority over the other. The independence and autonomy of each congregation (or any one of the other sub-entities, for example the seminaries) makes it an independent node or module that is of equal rank across the denomination. The effect is that each congregation, and ultimately church member, has an equal say in the direction the denomination is moving, but also on how it organises its own affairs. This has been the case from the very start of the denomination. In 1881 Hugo Gutsche spoke of the polity of the German Baptists in South Africa, saying that "each church remains independent, but no so independent

that it could not be influenced by an outside directing or modifying power" (Parnell 1977:66).

The **fourth criterion**, the ability to adapt to change rapidly, is something that the Baptist denomination is ideally suited to. With its fluid and non-hierarchical structures, change should be able to happen easily, with hardly anyone noticing as there are no major denominational statements made that have to be managed to steer the organisation in a particular direction. Change happens as the environment and the community changes on a sub-entity level. However, this is also a weakness. Inasmuch that there is the ability to adapt to change rapidly on sub-entity level, the wide representation on the Executive and at the Annual Assembly makes it much more difficult to achieve consensus on major changes at denominational level. Where a strong hierarchical structure (an episcopal model of church government is in mind here) is able to make rapid changes at the highest levels and then disseminate that through the ranks to the individual members, a widely representative structure can take years to communicate the rationale behind required change and then convince the various role players that this is or is not in the best interest of the larger group as a whole.

The **fifth criterion**, that of vertical and horizontal relationship follows logically from the previous criterion of adaptability to change. Again, taking the analogy of water in a container, the Biblical truth should never change, but the container must change as the environment changes. The vertical relationship represents Biblical truth (analogous to the water) and the horizontal relationship represents sensitivity to community (analogous to the container) and the ability to change the mode of presentation as and when required without compromising on the core message. With

the autonomy of each congregation coupled with the principle of the priesthood of all believers, Baptists are ideally suited to move quickly and adapt to the changing environment with a strong sensitivity to community needs. Again, it must be emphasised that this is true on a local or congregational or sub-entity level, and much less so on a denominational level. The ability to respond to community needs (horizontal relationship) at denominational level is hampered by the fact that the BUSA ministries operate independent from local congregations. The independence or autonomy of each congregation means that it would want to respond to the particular needs within that particular community and be less inclined to support or get involved in national or even regional denominational initiatives. The same problem was addressed by Rev. H.J. Batts, in his Presidential address at the Kimberley Assembly in 1896. Without wanting to compromise on the principle of congregationalism, he nevertheless complained about the "independency" idea prevalent in the churches. Jonsson (1977:41) writes that this "was restricting autonomous churches in their co-operative planning and operation. In this respect Mr Batts preferred the German Baptist modus operandi, which stressed both congregationalism and inter-dependence, autonomy and co-operative operation in the work of extending the Kingdom." Jonsson (1977:43) concludes on this by saying about the cherished concept of individual liberty "that excessive stress on this to the exclusion of other matters, could breed isolationism, individualism and non-cooperation."

The **first criterion** listed above is probably the most important (and for this reason left to last in this section), being that of proclaiming Biblical truth in an uncompromising way. This is something that the Baptist denominations all over the

world have <u>claimed to do</u> *par excellence* over the 400 years of its existence. All the Baptist confessions have started with the primacy of Biblical authority over all matters of faith and practice. If there are a limited number of distinctives that distinguish the Baptist from other denominations, one of the major ones is the passion with which the Word of God is studied and preached (Jonsson 1977:37). This is however a tradition and nothing more. There is nothing within the current BUSA structures that can ensure or enhance the faithful proclamation of the Gospel by individual congregations. Of particular concern is the lack of specific accountability to anyone regarding the proclamation of the Gospel in a faithful manner. There also seems to be very little input from denominational structures regarding the continuing development of church leaders and pastors. Each congregation has the intrinsic right to call pastors and leaders without reference to the denomination's ministerial recognition board. This means that a pastor who lacks doctrinal training (in general as well as far as Baptist Principles in particular is concerned) may be called to lead a Baptist congregation. Entrance requirements into a position of leadership of Baptist congregations are therefore very low, or even non-existent. The implication of this is that there is no safety net in terms of doctrinal orthodoxy from entry into ministry, to continuous development, to accountability. This is an issue that has been highlighted at the end of the nineteenth century already in the Presidential address of rev. H.J. Batts at the 1896 Assembly in Kimberley. Jonsson (1977:40-41) comments on this address when he writes that "a dangerous situation arose [when] … untrained men could be called to churches and assume ministerial status. Some churches, [Batts] pointed out, 'have been well nigh wrecked.'" Jonsson concludes by writing that "a minister may continue to mismanage

a church without the Executive of the Baptist Union being able to intervene [until it is too late for any interference]."

7.4 Conclusion

It must therefore be concluded that BUSA is ideally suited to the challenges of postmodernism from a structural point of view, but there are certain serious shortcomings that need to be addressed.

These shortcomings are:

(a) Inability to adapt to change rapidly at a denominational level;

(b) Denominational ministries are not adequately supported on a national basis due to individual congregations running their own ministries. This means that while individual congregations respond to needs within micro communities (congregational or even regional level), the denomination finds it difficult to respond to needs within macro communities (national level);

(c) Individual congregations are not held accountable in a formal way with respect to the way in which the Gospel is proclaimed. This is seen in the low or non-existent entry requirements for Baptist pastors, the lack of continued development of pastors and the lack of individual (pastor/leader level) and congregational accountability regarding adherence to Baptist Principles.

The next chapter will put forward recommendations to deal with each of the short-comings identified above.

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

When making recommendations regarding structural changes, one is tempted to make fleeting statements of wholesale change. In 2006 the Commission on Restructuring and Finance presented its report to the Annual Assembly. It called for a radical restructuring of the BU leadership: for the executive to be replaced by a National Leadership Team consisting of individuals who have the gift of leadership, the appointment of an administrator (with the gift of administration), establishment of a number of regional fellowships or hubs and one central budget. The recommendations of the commission were rejected by a two thirds majority vote at this Assembly (Scheepers 2008:110-111).

In his evaluation of the surprising trend towards paleo-orthodoxy, Thomas Oden (2001:189) writes that "individuals and cultures come and go, but the faithfulness of God endures from everlasting to everlasting. Finite minds see the river of time from a particular vantage point in the stream, but God, as if from above in eternal simultaneity, sees the entire river in its whole extent, at every point synchronously. The One who meets us on the Last Day is quietly present already in the death of cultures as the judge of sin both corporately and individually chosen." It is therefore with great trepidation and humility that one will venture some recommendations.

BUSA consists of 644 member churches and fellowships across 14 cultural groups and 11 languages throughout Southern Africa. This represents approximately 45,000 members. These figures have remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. The

following table, from the South African Baptist Handbook, presents total number of Baptist members over a 10 year period:

Table 8.1 BUSA individual member statistics over a 10 year period

Year	Number of members
31 December 1999 (2001: 342)	48,215
31 December 2000 (2001: 342)	50,597
31 December 2005 (2007: 328)	44,056
31 December 2006 (2007: 328)	45,329
31 December 2008 (2011: 292)	45,612
31 December 2009 (2011: 292)	43,328

The trend indicates stability in member numbers over the last 10 years. The negative aspects of this is that (1) the denominational membership represents only approximately 0.1% of the country's population and (2) the stability actually meant negative growth as the numbers did not keep up with the growth in population. In fact, there has been a slow and steady decline in numbers. In 1980, the total of members in member churches, Natal Indian churches and Convention churches numbered 57,648 (Baptist Union of Southern Africa 1981).

The well-known maxim that "standing still, means moving backwards" seems to be applicable. If BUSA does not deal with its structural shortcomings, it will be in danger of becoming irrelevant to its constituency and fade into insignificance over the next few years. The position of the denomination within the postmodern era must be improved – its strengths must be taken advantage of and its weaknesses addressed.

The weaknesses identified in the previous chapter are less obvious since neither the dissemination of propositional truth nor the outworking of practical faith towards the community is <u>emphasised</u> within the current denominational structures. It is important to note the lack of emphasis, as both functions are performed adequately, but clearly not sufficiently. The modernists, represented by the Sola 5 group, clearly believe that BUSA places insufficient emphasis on expression of propositional truth through the promotion of a detailed confession of faith such as the one published by this group. The postmodernists, represented by the Isaiah 58 network, on the other hand clearly believe that BUSA places insufficient emphasis on expression of its practical faith towards the community. Each group has a valid point and BUSA will be well advised to take note of this trend.

BUSA will only remain relevant as a denomination if the organisation manages to show its constituents the value it adds under both functional drivers. If the constituents can see the value added by the denomination in these areas, its relevance will increase, and the denomination will function more efficiently in line with its original purpose – that of advancing the Kingdom of God.

8.2 Adapting to change at denominational level

Sweet (1999:18-20) discusses the currency of maps (of countries, roads et cetera) as an analogy for our changing world. He says that "our environment is ever-changing, fast-paced, unpredictable. I fully expect to wake up to a different world than the one I went to bed in." He continues with many examples to prove his point: The national Geographic Society had to revise its world map six times within the first six months of 1992; There is a new Web page every two seconds; There is a new

product every thirty seconds; World knowledge doubles every eighteen months; More new information was produced in the thirty years leading up to 2000 than in the previous five thousand, Micro processing speed doubles every eighteen months; Change has become exponential.

In order to remain relevant any organisation must be able to adapt to change rapidly; whether it is a multi-national corporation, a small family owned business, a non-profit organisation, a local church or a denomination,

The modular structure, which includes the congregational principle of church government, of BUSA places the individual congregation in an ideal position to respond to and plan for change almost as soon as it happens or it is about to happen. However, this is also a weakness, in the sense that there is generally only a response to change and not necessarily anticipation thereof. Pastors who are progressive in their thinking will make sure that they remain abreast of the latest developments in the fields of theology and general philosophical trends (such as postmodernism and the emerging church movement). However, there is no support from a denominational level to assist local pastors to deal with these kinds of changes. The result is that churches who embrace some of the latest developments will align themselves in a group (such as the Isaiah 58 network) or others will work against it and align themselves with like-minded conservatives (such as the Sola 5 group) – there seems to be no denominational direction to respond to these changes. This is a crucial function that the denomination should fulfil as a support to local congregations.

In addition to this, BUSA itself is not structured in a way that will facilitate rapid change. As mentioned in earlier chapters, BUSA functions through the Annual Assembly. As its name suggests, the Assembly meets once a year and at this meeting crucial decisions affecting the future direction of the denomination is made. The wide representation at the Assembly seen together with the phenomenon of "so many people, so many opinions" makes any significant change in any direction a slow and cumbersome process. Processes need to be devised to enable the Executive (who meets more often) to deal with certain strategic matters on a more regular basis.

8.3 Effective functioning of denominational ministries

As identified in the previous chapter, the denominational ministries function ineffectively due to a lack of national support and co-operation between denomination, region and local congregations.

The Mission Statement of BUSA expresses the desire of the denomination to impact its community through a co-operative framework: "Under the Lordship of Christ we exist as a multi-cultural fellowship of Inter-dependent churches to impact this generation with the gospel." The inter-dependency of churches conveys the same connotations as that expressed by the Southern Baptist Convention at the beginning of the previous century in their search for efficiency. McBeth (1987:610-612) describes this search as a time "used to strengthen their work in missions, evangelism, and Christian education." The "spirit" of the time was a search for more efficient ways to conduct its work. "In 1898 the SBC reacted favourably to a suggestion from Georgia to form a Centennial Committee for proper observance of

the new century. What began as a celebration of past achievements quickly turned toward the future, laying plans 'to better organize and equip [Baptists] for the mighty work which lies before them in the century to come.'" This committee was duly formed, and in 1900 suggested a "continuing Committee on Co-operation to devise more efficient ways for Southern Baptists to raise and disburse funds for benevolent causes." This committee said "'we earnestly invite every State Association or Convention, and every State Board, to co-operate with us in a vigorous, specific movement' toward greater cooperation involving every level of Baptist life." McBeth states that from that time onwards, the term "cooperation" assumed a "large place in Southern Baptist vocabulary."

Some twenty years later, the drive towards greater efficiency and cooperation between the various levels of Southern Baptist organisations culminated in the "Seventy-Five Million Campaign" (McBeth 1987:618-621). This campaign was an effort to raise $75 million for Baptist causes over a five-year period from 1919 to 1924. By the end of this campaign, despite pledges of almost a $100 million, an amount of $58,591,713.69 was collected. McBeth (1987:621) summarises the effect of the campaign as follows:

> The overall benefits … far exceeded any financial gain. During the campaign, Baptist churches experienced a major spiritual renewal. They baptized more converts than ever before and enlisted thousands of young men and women as volunteers for Christian service … As a result, Baptist schools were crowded with new students, and after graduation these new pastors and other church ministers led a period of unprecedented Baptist growth. The campaign also brought a new spirit of unity, convincing Baptists they could accomplish big things. Baptists became more stewardship conscious, and many churches adopted the budget system to regulate local church finances.

While this campaign was successful in various ways, the SBC appointed a Conservation Committee in 1920 to preserve the results of the campaign. McBeth (1987:621-622) describes the formation of this committee and its outflows as follows:

> Clearly Southern Baptists did not regard the Seventy-Five Million Campaign as a one-time shot. Out of it came a permanent convention financial plan startling in its simplicity, yet revolutionary in its impact. Launched in 1925 and called the Cooperative Program (CP), the plan called for churches to send their offerings for denominational ministries to their state conventions. The states, in turn, would retain a portion of the funds for work within the state, forwarding the rest to the SBC office in Nashville. There the Executive Committee, made up of representatives from each state, would recommend percentage allotments for the work of each agency, the final decision to be ratified by the convention.

It is clear that this system is dependent "upon a high degree of trust and mutual confidence and a willingness to forego most designated gifts and special offerings in favour of casting most Baptist funds into a common pool for convention distribution."

Often described as the 'life-line of Southern Baptist ministries', the Cooperative Program has been a major factor in the growth of missions, evangelism, and Christian education among Southern Baptists (McBeth 1987:622). The success of this programme could only be achieved through the trust of individuals, congregations, and state conventions in the vision and abilities of the Executive Committee in Nashville. It became a serious thing within the Southern Baptist community to be "non-cooperative", and "independence" has become a severe criticism.

The BUSA had a similar experience in its early days. Following the success of the £5,000 Extension Fund of 1939 to 1946, the denomination immediately commenced the Thanks-giving Fund. The aim was to raise not less than £15,000 for the development of Baptist work and evangelical witness. The effort proved to be equally

successful, with £16,500 being raised (Parnell 1977:94-95). The membership of the denomination more than doubled during the period 1918 to 1947 from 9,946 to 21,423 members (Parnell 1977:92).

The lessons BUSA can learn from its own experience as well as that of the Southern Baptist Convention are two-fold:

(1) Too much emphasis is placed on the independence and autonomy of each congregation and territorial association. Independence leads to each congregation re-inventing the wheel, so to speak, with regard to ministry activities. Instead of cooperating (becoming inter-dependent), congregations develop their own programmes and ministry activities. It must be acknowledged that local initiatives are essential for each congregation or territorial association, exclusive focus on that will jeopardise the efficiencies that are available from a cooperative programme run at a national or denominational level.

(2) A lack of a common vision across the denomination will necessarily result in the various congregations, territorial associations and the denomination as a whole, moving in several directions. Without proper cooperation, there is even a risk that with a common vision, the various ministries may move in different directions, resulting from inefficient and even contra-effective ministry efforts. Shawchuck and Heuser (1996:148-150) explains the concept of organisational alignment by stating that the organisation is aligned "when all of its structures and resources function in unanimity in accomplishing the corporate vision … A congregation [or denomination] is nonaligned when two or more of its entities work at cross purposes. The primary characteristic of a nonaligned congregation, or team, is wasted energy. By contrast, when a commonality of direction is achieved, then

individual and organisational energies are harmonised. Even very diverse elements can have focused energy in a design that creates and sustains common vision. The diagram below explains the effects of ministry effort working at cross-purposes.
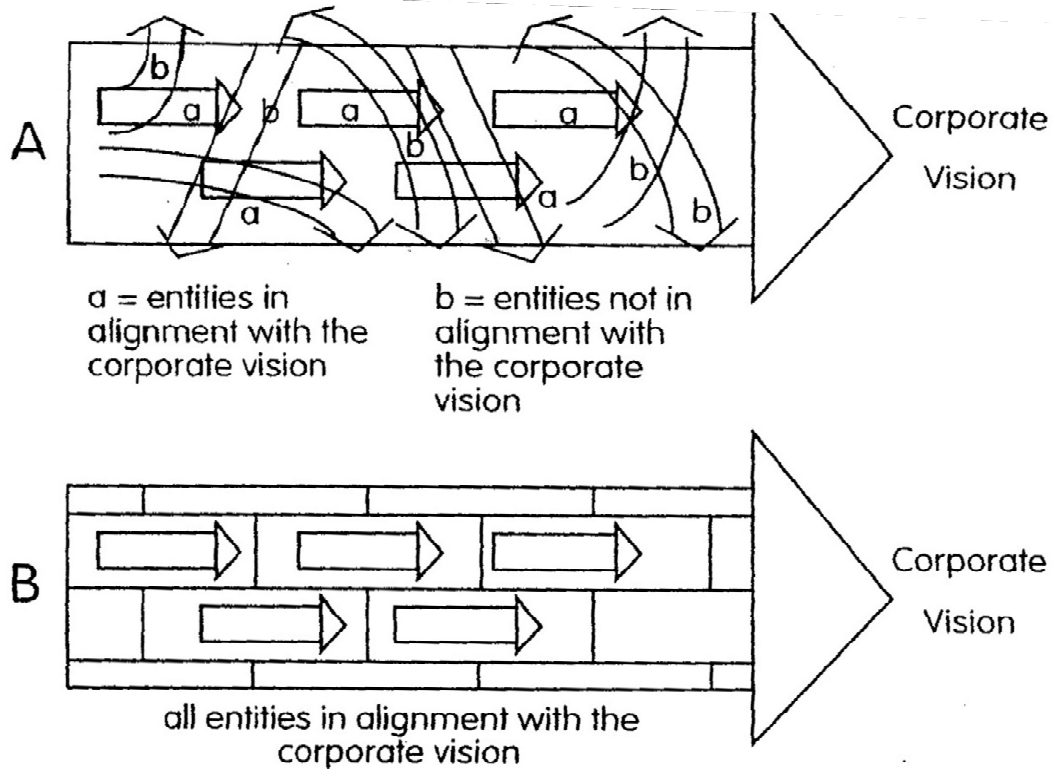
Figure 8.1 Visual representation of non-aligned corporate vision versus aligned corporate vision (Shawchuck and Heuser 1996:150).

Two requirements therefore have to be met. The first is to ensure that there is a common corporate vision, and second that all ministry activity lines up with this corporate vision in its individual activities. This should be at all levels of the organisation – from individual member, right through to the BUSA Executive. This is what gave impetus to the Southern Baptist Convention early in the twentieth century, and this momentum is still going strong a hundred years later. The requirement then is a common vision and cooperation to achieve that vision.

Of course, cooperation toward a common vision cannot possibly be achieved without sophisticated communication across the denomination. Vision has to be communicated, and member churches and territorial associations have to buy into the vision. John Maxwell (1998:151) says that "success is measured by your ability to actually take the people where they need to go. But you can do that only if the people first buy into you [or the Executive or office bearers of the denomination] as a leader."

8.4 Congregational accountability

Congregational accountability has to do with the dissemination of Biblical truth as understood by the Baptist denomination and as codified, whether adequately or not, in the BUSA constitution, the Baptist Statement of Belief and the Baptist Principles. There seems to be little or no accountability in respect of the faithful representation thereof by individual congregations through pastors and leaders. Carson (2005:99) says that "in a culture where many people read and substantially know the Bible, the Bible's absolute claims regarding God, salvation, many forms of right and wrong, and

the like will discourage the rapid spread of postmodern relativism. Where biblical illiteracy abounds, one of these barriers is taken away."

The importance of accountability is a lesson learned in the early 1950s. Rev. AJ Barnard was called as principal of the newly formed Baptist Theological College of South Africa. However, two years after his appointment, the Executive decided to terminate his employment and to close the college. At the 1954 Assembly, the reasons of the Executive were outlined as follows (Parnell 1977:108):

> There is no reflection upon the scholastic ability of the principal or zeal and competency with which he has conducted his office, nor has he in any way violated the Statement of Faith which he signed and affirmed. It must, however, be realized that the Statement of Faith did not specify in detail the doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures which the majority of the Executives requires to be taught in the College, and which the majority of the ministers of the denomination believe. On his own statement, Mr Barnard's views are seriously at variance with those beliefs and would cause misunderstanding and division in the denomination …

I believe that the solution in respect of this lack of accountability and the risk of widespread biblical illiteracy lies in three primary areas:

1. Ministerial settlement;

2. The continuing development of pastors and leaders; and

3. The review of pastors and leaders by their peers in a mentoring relationship.

It must be pointed out that the terms "pastor" and "leader" are in many senses used synonymously. In the Baptist context, the term "elders" may also be used to describe this group, but it should be extended to the function of deacon as well as other ministry leaders. For the sake of clarity and to keep the conclusion of this study within the context of the current structures of the BUSA, reference will be made to pastors from this point forward. It must however be emphasised that these

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recommendations can easily be implemented in respect of other functions and/or positions in the church.

8.4.1 Ministerial settlement

Currently, the Baptist Union of Southern Africa maintains a list of pastors that are accredited as Baptist Pastors. It falls under the Ministerial Recognition Board and the accreditation process works as follows:

(a) A candidate must apply for ministerial recognition through the completion of an application form. This form consists of various questions pertaining to personal, professional and academic experience and qualifications. The application form must also be accompanied by a section completed by the candidate's spouse (where applicable) and his or her local pastor;

(b) The application form is evaluated based on the contents, taking into account factors such as calling, the personal circumstances of the candidate, the section completed by the local church and academic qualifications. Once approved, the candidate is scheduled for an interview by BU executive members.

(c) The interviews are broken down into two areas – one focusing on personal circumstances, convictions and calling, and the other on theological beliefs and understanding.

(d) The result of the interview is taken to the executive and after proper scrutiny the candidate's name is placed either on a probationer's list or a candidate's list. Those who are placed on the probationer's list already

have a calling or are in ministry, whereas those who are on the candidate's list are awaiting a calling.

(e) Once a candidate has been placed on the probationer's list, he or she is required to enter into a mentoring relationship (approved by the executive) for a period of at least two years. The candidate is required to meet with the mentor at least once every three months.

(f) After this period the candidate will receive full recognition as a Baptist pastor.

It is important to note that the Union does not have a say in who the individual congregations call as pastors, or what the qualifications, experience or background of those pastors are. The congregational principle states clearly that it is the responsibility of the local church to ensure that a pastor is called that is appropriate to its unique circumstances. The recognition on the ministry board is simply a guideline for congregations so that they can know the candidate pastor has already gone through a process and is recognised as competent by the Union to act as pastor in a church.

Issues surrounding ministerial settlement have been problematic in the Union for many years. Parnell (1977:98-100) deals with the history around this issue as it developed over the years. The Executive of the BUSA set up a Ministerial Settlements Committee in February 1927. The purpose of the committee was "to act in a consultative and advisory capacity with churches desiring guidance when a vacancy in the pastorate occurs." The work of the committee did not achieve the desired outcome and in 1937 the Executive submitted a draft scheme to the churches proposing centralised control over

ministerial movements. This was rejected, amended and in 1939 rejected finally. However, the problems remained, and at the Assembly in 1941 a conference on denominational policy was held. From this a Denominational Policy Committee was birthed. In 1944 the committee presented its final recommendations which were adopted at the Assembly. The recommendations included the establishment of a Ministerial Settlements Committee; the committee had to be consulted with any movement in the pastorate of a church; yet it recognised that each church had the final authority over pastorate movement. This committee operated for a few years, but in 1949 the Assembly decided to rescind the policy adopted earlier. The committee was retained, "but the authoritative tone was hushed" (Parnell 1977:100). Parnell (1977:100) concludes by saying that "at last, the Union had found a modus operandi which fitted into its basic understanding of Christ's church and which met most of its needs. Although there are nearly always some who wonder whether we could not introduce a better system of ministerial settlement, no better system has come forward since 1949, and the position remains substantially the same today." Even though this comment was written in 1977, the process has not changed in any substantial manner.

The closest to a change came in the wake of the dismissal of Rev. AJ Barnard as principal of the Theological College. At the 1957 Assembly an amendment to the by-laws was approved stating that "the Executive shall ascertain by personal interview that the views of each applicant for admission to any of our ministerial lists shall accord with the accepted theological position of the Union before recommending him to the Assembly for recognition" (Parnell

1977:125)*.* This by-law was, however, declared to be *ultra vires* in that it went beyond the declaration of principle. The current by-law, coming closest dealing with this issue, is contained in clause 5.2 of the BUSA Ministry Regulations: "The Executive shall remove from the list the name of any person who has acknowledged theological views considered by the Executive to be a radical deviation from the declaration of Principle or from accepted Baptist Principles as enunciated and accepted at the 1987 Assembly."

An important principle that must be noted is clause 3.1.4 of the same regulations: "acceptance on to this list does not necessarily imply suitability for the pastorate, but acknowledges adequate training, equipping and spiritual maturity for some form of recognised ministry."

The process outlined above and the specific by-laws associated with ministerial settlement makes it clear that there is:

1. a specific amount of training required;
2. the theological view of the recognised minister must not differ radically from the Declaration of Principle and the 1987 Baptist Principles; and
3. the minister must have displayed to the satisfaction of the Executive a spiritual maturity.

Over the years there seem to have developed a tension between a requirement for ministers to adhere to certain theological beliefs (as expressed with the dismissal of Rev. Barnard referred to above) and the independence of each congregation to "interpret and administer His [Christ as head of the Church] Laws" as codified in the Declaration of Principle.

In conclusion therefore, the denomination has no standard against which ministers are accountable to the denomination with the exception of a radical deviation from the Declaration of Principle. Of course, this is only applicable to ministers who are on one of the ministerial recognition lists. Because a congregation does not have to call a pastor who is on a ministerial recognition list, there is no denominational protection for the congregation with respect to sound evangelical teaching.

This protection is essential in the postmodern era where what is considered to be truthful is defined by the community wherein one lives. A denomination that does not emphasise and protect the foundational principles on which it has been established will fade into insignificance and become irrelevant to its constituency as each community forms its own unique foundational principles.

The remedy to this starts with a more regulated environment in which ministers are recognised as suitable candidates for ministry within congregations. Whereas there is already sufficient emphasis on the formal academic training of candidate ministers, there seems to be little emphasis on practical training as a pastor once the formal training process has been completed.

The recommendation is that each candidate minister, once the formal training process has been completed, should undergo a period of apprenticeship under the guidance of an experienced and accredited minister in a local church. The apprenticeship should be based on a predetermined set of criteria that have to be met over the period at a satisfactory level and should

include an assessment of the ability of the young pastor to disseminate propositional truth effectively as well as his ability to practically work out his faith towards the community.

Going hand in hand with this, should be effective communication to Baptist congregations highlighting the advantages of appointing a properly trained pastor.

8.4.2 The continuing development of pastors and leaders

The only requirement for the Baptist pastor regarding continued development is contained in the BUSA code of pastoral ethics under the heading "Responsibilities to Self": 2. "I will continue to grow intellectually through personal study, a planned programme of reading, and attending appropriate conferences, workshops and seminars where possible."

While the requirement to grow in the way described in the BUSA code of pastoral ethics does exist, there is no formal programme to firstly monitor compliance and secondly to ensure that pastors obtain the kind of training required to keep them up to date in terms of the latest developments with respect to areas in which they minister.

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa has adopted a system of compulsory continual development in 2007 (NGKa 2009) in line with most of the large and classical professions. A brief review of their reasoning and the way it was implemented will be instructive. The programme of continued ministry development was phased in over a period of five years, ending in

2011. The commission that was tasked with its implementation identified the following five core values:

- The continued development of knowledge, insight and faith in the gospel;
- The advancement of spiritual growth and personal development;
- The development of ministry skills that are relevant for the minister's environment;
- To remain true to denominational tradition and to improve ability to discern theological truths accurately; and
- The retention and improvement of the joy and courage of ministry.

These core values are admirable, but also very relevant to this study. Not only does a programme like this address a discernment of theological truth, but also the effective dissemination thereof.

8.4.3 The review of pastors and leaders by their peers in a mentoring relationship

Pastors and leaders are not only required to grow professionally, but they are also required to grow spiritually. Included with this is an inherent process of accountability. Baptist pastors and leaders are accountable to their congregations and to the head of the church – Jesus Christ. However, on a personal level, there is no accountability required from these leaders.

In the preamble to the BUSA code of pastoral ethics the prospective pastor declares that "as a minister of Jesus Christ, called by God to proclaim the Gospel and gifted by the Spirit to pastor the church, I dedicate myself to conduct my ministry according to the ethical guidelines and principles set forth in this Code of pastoral Ethics, in order that my ministry be glorifying to God, my service be beneficial to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and the wider Christian community, and my life be a witness to the nation and the world."

The concluding remark before the signature area states that "recognising that no code of pastoral ethics can cover every eventuality, I pledge, by the grace of God to conduct my pastoral ministry and my life in accordance with the spirit of Paul's injunction, "And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17), that the Lord's name and the reputation of the pastoral ministry may be enhanced through my life."

While these declarations are admirable in its wording as well as intention, it must be recognised that our "enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8, NIV). No-one is exempt against the attacks of Satan and part of the privilege of ministering within a denomination is the ability to hold oneself accountable to your peers. This is probably the most effective way of ensuring that the truth preached by the pastors and leaders are not only preached, but practiced.

As with the compulsory continued ministry development programme, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa also adopted a mentoring programme in 2004. Participation in the mentoring programme is also compulsory. The aim of the programme is to assist pastors to prevent burn-out and to restore or maintain the joy of being in ministry. Added to this is the acknowledgement that pastors within the denomination are to support each other in addition to be accountable to each other (NGKb n.d.).

Accountability to one's peers is an essential safeguard against the particularly postmodern temptation to deviate from Scriptural truth. While the implementation of such a system will in no way compromise any of the Baptist

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Principles, it will provide the required safeguard against deviation from Baptist beliefs.

8.5 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, the Baptist denomination is ideally suited for not only survival, but to excel in the proclamation of Kingdom truth as required in the Great Commission:

1. Most of the member churches of the BUSA accept and have adopted the Baptist Statements of Belief and Principles in their constitutions. These statements are aptly worded and widely accepted;

2. Since the BUSA is structured in a way that is conducive to its self-understanding being that the Union *"acts as an aid to the churches and not as their master"* (Parnell 1977:64) it lends itself to flat, non-hierarchical structures, enabling churches to be interdependent, while retaining their independence;

3. The structure of churches within the BUSA also ensures that, because of its independence, no congregation has priority over another, ensuring strong nodes or modules within the structure;

4. This in turn facilitates the ability to rapidly adapt to change at the local level, giving the denomination the ability to respond to the needs of an ever-changing community; and

5. This ability completes the circle in that it enables the churches within the denomination to focus as much on the horizontal (relationship within the community) as the vertical (relationship with God) aspects of worship.

The key to effective ministry in the postmodern era is to take this foundation that is inherent in its structure and remain flexible enough so that the gospel may be truthfully proclaimed to a constantly changing audience. There must therefore be a balance between ensuring the truth remains constant, and the ability to adapt to change within a changing environment, ensuring effective ministry at all levels not only within the denominational boundaries, but also as an outward focus into the local, regional and national community. To this end, the denomination needs to be able to rapidly adapt to a changing environment not only at congregational level, but also at regional and national levels; co-operation between local congregations, regions and national ministries should provide a clear vision to all ensuring efficient and effective ministry; and local congregations should be accountable on local, regional and national level in the message it proclaims. To this end, pastors must firstly be sufficiently trained on both a theoretical basis (to ensure foundation for truth) and on a practical basis (to ensure appropriate experience in presentation of truth). These foundations must then be maintained through constant training (presentation) and a formal mentoring programme (truth)

A STATEMENT OF BELIEF
Passed in Assembly at Durban in September, 1924

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.

The following statement was passed at the
Assembly in Krugersdorp in 2000:

That God has ordained marriage as a heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural women.

STATEMENT OF BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

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.

KEY MINISTRY FUNCTIONS OF THE
BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
SUMMARY

1. Co-ordinating and unifying Associations, Departmental Ministries and Local Churches
    - 7 Regional Associations
    - 8 Departmental Ministries
    - 508 Full Member Churches   ) in 14 cultural groups and 11 languages
    - 136 Fellowships/Church plants   )

2. Facilitating theological education, church planting, missions/evangelism and national events, e.g. BU Annual Assembly

3. Mobilising Local Churches to fulfil the Great Commission
    - Equip 2000-2005
    - Impact 2006-2010
    - Local Church Alive 2011-2015

4. Assisting Regional Associations in the area of local church development

5. Promoting the various ministries of the departments

6. Caring of Pastors and Pastoral Widowers/Widows
    - 815 Pastors on Ministry Lists

7. Communication: BU Website, Baptists Today, BU Express

8. Assisting with Conflict Resolution within Associations and Local Churches Confidential consulting for Pastors and Churches

9. Liaising with continental/international Baptist bodies, Para- church organisations, State Departments and national/civic organisations

10. Administration:
    - Providing legal counsel, constitutional advice to local church
    - BU Personnel
    - BU Ministry Lists
    - Departmental Ministries
    - BU Publications and Annual Handbook
    - BU Assets and Properties

11. Finance:
    - Overseeing: BU/BMD Finances, BU Trust Funds,
    - CW Parnell Fund (BU Foundation), BU Pension Fund, Medical Aid

These ministry functions are carried out by the General Secretary, Departmental Leaders, promoted by the Presidents of the Union and the Associations who are "the Union in action" within their local context.

**NATIONAL MINISTRY FUNCTIONS OF THE
BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

1. **Baptist Union**
    - Regional Associations   7
    - Full Member Churches   508) in 14 cultural groups and 11 languages
    - Fellowships/Church Plants   136)
    - Ministry departments   8

2. **Mission Statement**
    "Under the Lordship of Christ we exist as a multi-cultural fellowship of Inter-dependent churches to impact this generation with the gospel"

3. **Core Business** - Serving the Local Church through the following:

    (a)   ***Church Planting and Discipleship***
    - ❖   Equip 2000-2005
    - ❖   Impact 2006-2010
    - ❖   Local Church Alive 2011-2015
    - ❖   New Church Plants
    - ❖   New Church Buildings assisted (approx R1 Million Loans)
    - ❖   Unreached Areas
    - ❖   Facilitating Local Church Partnerships (stronger/weaker)

    (b)   ***Theological Education and Training***
    - ❖   BTC: 78 full-time & 147 part-time students
    - ❖   CTBS: 71 students (day & eve) & 111 distance learners
    - ❖   Seminarium: 11 students
    - ❖   Christ Baptist Seminary: 52 students
          Total students: 470

    - ❖   Rural Theological Training
    - ❖   Regional Training Seminars/Roadshows
    - ❖   Biblical Literacy
    - ❖   BYSA National Ministries Conference and Summer Camp
    - ❖   National Scripture Exam
    - ❖   Resources and publications (e.g. Equip 2005 manuals, etc.)
    - ❖   BWD Annual Training Seminar
    - ❖   BWD Bible Way Correspondence Course
      - 28 Satellite Centres
      - 3 000 prisoners
      - 300 local church folk

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(c) **_Pastoral Care_**
- ❖ Screening applicants for Ministry
- ❖ Administration of Ministry Lists
- ❖ Ministerial Service Awards
- ❖ Acquiring of Marriage Licences
- ❖ Pastoral Care at National/Regional Level (Brian Jardine)
- ❖ Care of Retired Pastors and Widows (Trevor Swart)
- ❖ Ministerial Settlements Committee
- ❖ Pastors' Medical and Pension Funds
- ❖ In-Service Training of Pastors' and Students' Wives
- ❖ National/Regional Pastors and Wives' Retreats
- ❖ BWD Ministry to Pastors' Wives (Naomi Scheepers)
- ❖ Annual Christmas Gift to Retired Pastors/Widows
- ❖ Local Church Pastor's Appreciation
- ❖ Annual Meeting/Lunch with Theological College graduates

(d) **_Global Missions_**
- ❖ World Missions
- ❖ Local Church Missionaries – 230 (mostly serving in para-church organisations)
- ❖ BU Missionaries
  - ▪ Angola: Zambas
  - ▪ Malawi: Mollers
  - ▪ Namaqualand: Vorsters
  - ▪ Inner-City: Durban (Paul Richardson)
                      Pietermartizburg
                      Berea (Johannesburg)
- ❖ Medical Missions Fellowship
- ❖ Mission to Chinese in Africa (Swaziland and Lesotho)
- ❖ Missions Partnerships in Africa
- ❖ Liaison with Para-church Mission Organisations, e.g. AFC
- ❖ Facilitating Short-term Missions
- ❖ Prison Ministry
- ❖ Admin through the Missions Board

(e) **_Compassionate Ministries_**
- ❖ DOLM HIV/AIDS Education/Ministry
- ❖ DOLM Orphans Programme
- ❖ DOLM Agricultural Project (Campbell)
- ❖ BYSA Impact SA Project
- ❖ BWD Dorcas Aid Skills Project
- ❖ BWD Hidden Treasure Project
- ❖ Local Church Community Projects, e.g. King of Kings

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