THE MORATORIUM DEBATE IN CHRISTIAN MISSION AND THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that **THE MORATORIUM DEBATE IN CHRISTIAN MISSION AND THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA** is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

This study presents the moratorium debate as a phenomenon of its own time. The challenges the moratorium debate poses to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/Central Diocese come under the spotlight. The AICs have taken the lead in attempting to live up to the "four selves" principle, that is, self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and self-theologizing, and areas which ELCSA/CD can learn from the AICs are highlighted. Finally the study explores issues of mutuality and interdependence, and few guidelines are proposed for ELCSA/CD.

KEY TERMS:

Moratorium, All African Conference of Churches, Westerners, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa/Central Diocese, Africanisation, AICS, Mutuality, Interdependence, Reciprocity and Four-selves principle.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Statement of the problem and of the purpose and scope of the study

In the early 1970s, Africa presented a new challenge to mission co-operation between African and Western Christians. The Africans challenged Westerners to retreat from the mission field so that the relationship between these partners could be completely severed for a period of time. The crux of the problem was that the traditional relationship that had bound African and Western Christians together in their mission co-operation was being called into question. It was argued that there was no point in co-operation in mission as long as these relationships, so perceived, were a stumbling block to the existing missionary endeavour. The only solution that could be found was a proposal that would catalyze efforts to find the means of creating a balanced relationship between Africans and Westerners.

The proposal was nothing less than a moratorium on Western missionaries and funds. The imposition of such a moratorium was an issue not only in Africa, but also in Latin America and Asia. For example, the issue was on the Latin American agenda in Uruguay (1968) and in Mexico (January 1971). Further, Christians on the Asian continent also debated a moratorium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (February 1971). Although the moratorium issue was discussed in all Third World countries, this study deals only with the moratorium on Western missionary activity

in Africa. Nevertheless, the discussions on a similar moratorium on other continents have been used as a point of reference to the extent that they contributed to the awakening of the African debate. As far as the moratorium on Western missionary activity in Africa is concerned, John Gatu was the central figure in the controversy, the first person to focus sharply on the issue at a large gathering.

The purpose of this study is to try to look at the moratorium issue as a phenomenon in its own time. It is also the writer's purpose to show how this proposal for a moratorium poses a challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern Africa/Central Diocese (henceforth CD). This being the case, this study aims to answer the following key questions:

- What demands were linked to the proposal for a moratorium?

- How did the issues in the moratorium debate impinge on ELCSA/CD? (For instance, has this church really gained its "selfhood" in terms of resources and theological training, to mention at least one?)

The study covers the period from 1971-1975. The year 1971 was of historic significance in the history of mission co-operation between Africans and Westerners as the year in which a moratorium was proposed. The controversy continued for four years until it was finally laid to rest in 1975. John Gatu first called for such a moratorium in 1971 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (US). Shortly afterwards, various other countries continued to discuss the issue, particularly

Switzerland (Choully and Lausanne), Thailand (Bangkok) and Zambia (Lusaka). Several church leaders argued against it before the World Council of Churches (WCC) during the Fifth Assembly in Nairobi. In view of the intensity of the challenges to the Westerners to retreat from African mission activity, the conferences saw the necessity of finding a solution to the problems in mission co-operation.

In 1975, the controversy over the proposal for a moratorium came to a conclusion without being formally resolved, as other, less radical, means were found to deal with the conditions which had led to it.

1.2　John Gatu: a biography

John G. Gatu, the Presbyterian pastor and church leader, was born on 3 March 1925 in the Kiambu district of Kenya, where he obtained his primary and secondary education. After completing his secular education, he joined the British colonial army in 1941. By the time he was discharged in 1947, he had obtained the rank of sergeant. After his military service, John Gatu joined the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kenya. Before he was ordained, the PCEA sent him to St Paul's United Theological College in Limuru (Kenya) to study theology, which he did from 1951-1958. He served the Kiamathare parish in Kiambu as a parish pastor from 1951-1958. In 1958, Gatu went to study theology at New College, Edinburgh. He received additional theological training in 1963 at the Pittsburgh Theological College and from 1970-1971 at the Princeton Theological

Seminary. Gatu also served as a chairperson of the National Council of Churches in Kenya (year unknown). From 1960-1963, he was the Deputy Secretary General of the PCEA and was made Secretary General of the PCEA in 1964. In 1971, he was given international responsibilities as president of the central committee of the Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). It is clear that John Gatu was not only a pastor but also an experienced soldier, as well as an international figure dealing with matters requiring diplomacy and administrative skills.

Kenya gained her independence from the British in 1963. Kenya is a typical example of an African country where Western colonial capitalism attained its maturity, as here the British monopolized all sectors of the economy and culture. The Europeans (settlers, traders, diplomats and missionaries) monopolized the productive highlands through the so-called White policy. On the basis of this policy the colonial government forcibly took over the best portions of Kenya's land and assigned them to Europeans. Under this policy, the missionaries obtained vast stretches of viable land free of charge. It meant that the natives were removed from their productive land and forced to live in the arid, unproductive areas. Such were the conditions under which Gatu grew up.

In addition, Gatu's church was under the missionary control of the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the United Church of Canada and the Reformed Church in Hungary. One may assume that the white highlands policy and missionary control of his church could have combined to motivate

Gatu to ask how and whether the African church should remain under Western control. The search for answers to these questions led him to become a revolutionary leader (Schwartz 1991:1).

1.3 The relevance of the study

The call in 1971 for a "moratorium on missions and missionaries from the West for a period of five years" (Bosch 1980:5) implied that mission was in crisis. The following statement by Walter Buhlmann captures this state of affairs succinctly:

> The missions in Africa have for many years been in the crossfire of criticism. In an earlier age they were much admired, but nowadays they are attacked and accused, by radical Christians, by cold atheists and by black nationalists (Buhlmann 1980:9).

The fact that the moratorium call came from the so-called Third World, especially Africa, meant that mission inevitably came under heavy criticism.

This study is important for various reasons. First, it could serve as an important source of information for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/CD. Through a study of this nature, the Church may be able to re-examine its selfhood and acknowledge its related failures and successes. This study could also serve as a document for historians, missiologists and scholars in other related fields.

1.4   Personal stance

> The personal position and stance of a researcher is an important aspect of any research methodology. …Neutrality is impossible in any human endeavour (Kritzinger 1988:19).

In the light of this statement, it is important to indicate my personal stance at the very outset. I embark on this study as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/CD, who, from early childhood, has grown up in this church. I am therefore writing as a participant observer. Some of the information contained in this dissertation has been gathered over time in conversations, meetings and personal experience. I am also undertaking this study motivated by serious concern about the power dynamics that are often played out by the ELCSA/CD partners. In my encounter with local members of the ELCSA/CD and leaders alike, the question of the autonomy of the ELCSA/CD has always come under the spotlight, and I bear the scars of often heated debates on the matter. A participant observer has an advantageous grasp of the complex dynamics in the church, but, on the other hand, the adoption of the critical distance necessary for such a dissertation is difficult (Watt 1991:3). Nevertheless, being aware of the problem, I have tried to subject the ELCSA/CD to serious scrutiny. Moreover, this study is an academic undertaking, in which I take the moratorium debate seriously and attempt to understand its relevance in the context of the ELCSA/CD.

1.5   An outline of the study

Chapter Two will present a historical survey of the moratorium debate, i.e. its origin, and its advocates. There is an attempt to provide a contextual interpretation of this debate.

Chapter Three will give a historical account of the ELCSA/CD and the impact of issues such as Africanisation, personnel and resources, on this church as they were raised in the moratorium debate.

Chapter Four will examine how the ELCSA/CD could learn from the AICs in the quest for selfhood.

Chapter Five will explore issues of mutuality and interdependence. Guidelines for the ELCSA/CD are suggested.

1.6   Methodological approaches, sources/ literature and terminology

The study is both a historical account and a missiological analysis. It describes the proposal for a moratorium and the debates it unleashed. The study is based on documentary evidence that includes minutes, reports, other documents of meetings and periodicals, such as, *inter alia*, the *International Review of Mission (IRM*.

Most of this study is based on the published documents of these meetings. Another published source is entitled *Bangkok Assembly 1973: Minutes and Report of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches December 31, 1972 and January 9-12, 1973.* This source was used at the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Bangkok, Thailand, from 29 December 1972 - 12 January 1973. It covers the main issues discussed at Bangkok in connection with the proposal for a moratorium.

The *Engagement of Lusaka* is another source. It presents the issues discussed at the meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, on 12-21 May 1974. Apart from these sources, I have used certain books, which I mention here in order of their usefulness to my study. First is Uka, EM, *Missionaries Go Home? A sociological Interpretation of an African response to Christian missions.* This book discusses the moratorium issue as a sociological phenomenon.   Uka's sociological approach to the moratorium issue includes a detailed analysis that I have found especially useful. Further, the book carries some excerpts from Gatu's speeches, the reports of the meetings in Choully, Bangkok, Lusaka and Lausanne. The book by Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, entitled *A history of the Church in Africa,* also provided useful information.

In addition, I referred to Elliott Kendall's book *The end of an era: Africa and missionary.* It discusses speeches by Gatu, the *Bangkok Assembly Report*, the

Third Assembly of the AACC, which renewed the call for a moratorium, and results of a debate on the proposal for a moratorium. Efiong Utuk's indispensible book *Visions of authenticity: The Assemblies of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Lusaka,* renewed the call for the proposal for a moratorium and gives an account of the issuing of the Lusaka declaration.

When it came to the section on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/CD and the moratorium debate, I relied heavily on the book by R. Elphick and R. Davenport (eds): *Christianity in South Africa*, especially a section on Lutheran missions and churches in South Africa, by G. Scriba and G. Lislerud. Interviews were conducted and I also consulted dissertations, theses on the subject and church records, such as, *inter alia*, minutes of the conference, reports and sermons.

1.6.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a valuable tool for obtaining information. I approached a number of key people for the purpose of conducting interviews. One form of interviewing is structured, whereby a set of pre-established questions is asked of all the subjects in the research (Preston 2007:8). The interviewer controls the interview and there are no opportunities for response. The unstructured interview can be open-ended or in-depth. The aim here is to gain understanding rather than to gather information. For the purpose of this study, I used the unstructured, open-

ended interview. There was one interviewee at a time, using pre-determined questions but providing the opportunity for discussion.

Before each interview I requested permission to use participants' information in a confidential manner. If they did not wish anything to be recorded, I complied. To honour this confidentiality, the questionnaires and interview transcripts have not been included, owing to the sensitivity of the topic, and I have used pseudonyms to protect the names of interviewees. I have all the original transcripts in my possession as source material.

Moratorium is a key concept in this study. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines moratorium as: "an official stopping of an activity for a period of time". Collins *Co-build English Dictionary* defines moratorium as "a stopping of an activity for a fixed period of time usually as a result of an official agreement". Its original sense for the Evangelical Lutheran Church was that a full moratorium meant the cessation of all activity on the part of missionary personnel as well as cessation of financial assistance brought to the African churches from Europe and North America. It also meant that the missionaries were to return home from Africa for a period of five years. In this study I do not align myself fully with this kind of assertion *per se*, but I firmly believe that some aspects of the moratorium debate still warrant attention, especially in relation to the ELCSA/CD. The phrase "churches in Africa" (the 'c' in churches is lower

case) means the entire body of Christians in Africa. Otherwise, capitalization of the word "Church" is generally reserved for denominations.

The term "Westerners" in this study refers to the sending agent churches in Europe and North America. Because it is they who provide the mission service, they are referred to as subjects of mission. The term "Africans" in this study means the receiving churches. As the recipients of mission services they are the objects of mission.

CHAPTER 2

THE CALL FOR A MORATORIUM

2.1 Gatu's speech and the reasons behind the issuing a call for moratorium at the mission festival in 1971 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (US)

The Reformed Church in America (RCA) sponsored a mission festival in October 1971 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Wagner 1975a:166). According to Schwartz (1991:15), John Gatu was at that time taking a year's sabbatical to study in the United States, financed, no doubt, by Western funds. The sister denomination of the RCA, the Reformed Church in the United States snapped up the opportunity of inviting Gatu to attend the mission festival while he was in America. Unfortunately, as Bigambo (2001:7) notes, other than Gatu, who was African, nothing more is known about the different nations or numbers of people who attended the mission festival. Wagner (1975a:17) points out that it was at this mission festival that Gatu first proposed a moratorium on missionary personnel and financial assistance coming to the Churches of Africa from Europe and North America. It seems that the delegates at the mission festival were "caught off guard" when Gatu raised the thorny issue of moratorium. Possibly they even regretted inviting him, because for many participants this controversial issue "was a reality which still haunted them". Wagner (1975b:166) reports that "Gatu caused a major stir when he brought up this moratorium proposal in a gathering called "Mission Festival 71" sponsored by the Reformed Church of America in

1971". Even so, it is even more surprising that the major Christian denominations did not see the signs of discontent sooner. With hindsight we can now see clearly that the challenges being made to colonial political and economic structures were bound to have implications for the Church.

In explaining Gatu's proposal to the Reformed Church, Sundkler and Steed (2000:1027) note that Gatu challenged the missions in the West in words of prophetic seriousness. Presumably, when he was invited to speak, he prepared his remarks knowing full well that he would challenge the missions of the West with his proposal. Feeling confident that he had chosen the perfect time to voice his proposal, Gatu made the following appeal:

> The time has come for the withdrawal of the foreign missionaries from many parts of the Third World, that the Churches of the Third World must be allowed to find their own identity and that the continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to this selfhood of the Church (Gatu, in Sundkler & Steed 2000:1027).

According to John Gatu the proposal for a moratorium was to help the younger churches find their own identity and feet. This prophetic call was contrary to the popular belief that people and the nations needed to be served with the Gospel by co-operating with Western personnel. In other words, Gatu wished the Christian Church to go forward in Africa but, in his opinion, it could not do so because the missionaries were a stumbling block to its development. With their withdrawal, the Church in Africa could regain her identity. Gatu proposed (Sundkler & Steed 2000:1027) that the missionaries should withdraw from the

Third World for a period of at least five years. As if this was not enough, he went

on to say:

> We in the Third World must liberate ourselves from the bondage of Western
> dependency by refusing anything that renders impotent the development of our
> spiritual sources, which, in turn, makes it impossible for the church in the Third
> World to engage in the mission of God in their own areas (in Bigambo 2001:8).

African dependency on the West led Gatu to demand that the Christian Churches

in Africa be liberated from their bondage because they were not participating in

the mission of God. Mugambi (1977:199) points out that, in his view, Gatu was

decrying the fact that the spiritual resources of the Africans were

underdeveloped, as was also the selfhood of the Church.

In defending the authentic selfhood of the Church in Africa, John Gatu told the

mission festival how the Third World's dependency on Western support could be

ended. He maintained that the Church of Africa should be built on its own natural

resources, that is, with people and money obtained in Africa, not in foreign

funding:

> We cannot build the church in Africa on alms given by overseas churches, nor
> are we serving the cause of the Kingdom by turning all bishops, general
> secretaries, moderators, presidents, superintendents into good enthusiastic
> beggars, by always singing the tune of poverty in the churches of the Third World
> (Gatu, in Uka 1989:192).

Gatu's speech contained three main ideas. First, he thought the Church in

Africa could not properly be called African if her growth depended on foreign

assistance. Secondly, Gatu rejected any arrangement that required African

church leaders to beg from the West. In other words Gatu wanted African church

leaders to be home fundraisers rather than beggars for funds and services from

the Western countries, while money and people were available in Africa. If this

were successful, there would be no need for continued African dependency on Western resources. Thirdly, Gatu demanded that mission activity be universal, not exclusively from the West to the Third World. In other words, Gatu demanded two-way mission activity, which was nothing other than reciprocity between the different parts of God's one Church. Gatu's remarks in Milwaukee amounted to no less than a complete rejection of the imperialistic attitude reflected in Western missionary control of the life of the Church in Africa:

> The imperialistic attitude of the West …. must be challenged. This imperialistic attitude, which had prevailed in other countries throughout the mission era, had to be fought because it continued to victimize the churches in Africa (Gatu, in Bigambo 2001:9)

Gatu also reacted against the common assumption by Westerners concerning the weak status of Christianity in Africa. He cited the example of Bishop Neill, who had maintained that in some places in Africa Christianity could not survive without the large-scale presence of Western missionaries. Kendall (1978:88) notes that Neill had also unashamedly argued that, as African Christianity was not deeply rooted, a constant flow of foreign missionaries was necessary. Gatu responded to this assumption by stating:

> Bishop Neill cannot see an African Church surviving without missionaries from the West. He sees the role of missionaries as helpers in areas as administrators, treasurers, accountants, theological teachers, etc. The question one likes to ask is, "What administration, what accountancy, what theological training? I am sure I can mention churches in Africa that have almost all of these posts taken by Africans. But where it is not yet possible it is precisely for this reason that we must ask missionaries to leave in order that Africans can take over these jobs (Kendall 1978:88).

2.1.2 Contextual interpretation of Gatu's speech and the closing of the mission festival gathering

In the light of this background, it can be said that the purposes of the moratorium are to be found in the general framework of the relationships between the African and Westerners relating to missionary enterprises. John Gatu called for the moratorium so that the local churches in Africa would no longer be dependent on missionary funds and personnel from the mission boards of North America and Europe. He also wanted the churches of Africa to attain their selfhood and self-identity by becoming self-reliant and by fighting the dependency syndrome. Gatu envisaged that the churches in Africa were to be run by their own indigenous personnel rather than under Western patronage.

In Gatu's opinion, Africans were victims in the mission enterprise. The relationship between them and Westerners was imbalanced as a result of the tacit assumption that the Church in Africa would always be dependent on Western support for its very existence. While Westerners had become the rulers and were financially powerful, the Africans were poor and economically powerless. As a result, the relationship between the two had developed in such a way that the economic inequalities would perpetuate Western dominance and African dependence.

The framework for Gatu's demands was not only ecclesiastical and theological in nature. Indeed, the cultural imperialism that was being exercised by Westerners over African culture contributed to Gatu's challenge, for he saw Western

missionary activity within the context of Western imperialistic attitudes. According to Uka, Gatu was protesting against the Western cultural chauvinism that made the Westerners discredit African culture with its religious beliefs and practices. These were attacked as being devil worship, superstition and magic. Thus, by extinguishing cultural chauvinism, Gatu wanted to "restore the cultural integrity of the African so that the authentic African religious beliefs and world views could be respected" (Uka 1989:192).

The withdrawal of missionaries aimed at Africanizing the Church. According to Gatu, the process of making themselves indigenous was a primary need and right of the African churches. In fact, selfhood and indigenization are not only characteristics of African churches, but can also be recognized as the need and the right of every church in the world. From this perspective, wherever churches are frustrated or impaired by foreign domination, a change in relationship has to be made. On the other hand, Gatu's call for a moratorium can be recognized as a vehicle for reconstructing and restructuring the unbalanced relationship in mission co-operation, irrespective of the approach he used to find a solution.

Interestingly, Gatu's ideas on mission were the opposite of those of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, another Eastern African, on Western civil servants working in Tanzania. For example, Nyerere (1922-1998), President of Tanzania, made the following statement on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of *Uhuru* (independence) in 1971:

I want everyone here to know that although we greatly dislike colonialism and we will continue to fight wherever it may exist, many of them who came as colonial civil servants became our friends and it is for that reason that we invited them to share the joy of Uhuru celebrations this week (Huddleston 1972:156).

Nyerere's statement was intended to reconstruct unity with Tanzania's colonial friends irrespective of the failures and abuses of previous years. Gatu's self-reliance policy was also not in line with the philosophy of Jomo Kenyatta (1890-1978), the President of Kenya from 1963-1978. Kenyatta advocated a philosophy known as "pulling together" (*harambe*). This means that, in order to do a hard task successfully, you have to learn to cooperate with your friends, so that "pulling together" becomes much easier than "pulling alone".

Paul Hopkins, a Western American scholar in the Presbyterian Church, responded positively to Gatu's call in late 1971, interpreting it as the cry of a desperate man. Hopkins welcomed the call, saying that a moratorium had been proposed because "Westerners had been told for years that the continuation of the colonial attitude was no longer acceptable, yet they did nothing to stop it" (Uka:213). Gatu's proposal for a moratorium was thus engendered by the Westerners' refusal to listen.

To sum up, Gatu's speech called for the withdrawal of the Western missionaries and the funding, recommending a five-year cooling-off period to allow both the Church in Africa and Western mission activity time for review, reflection and reassessment of the old system of mission. As massive support from Europe and North America had eroded the foundation of selfhood of the African Church's

self-identity and self-reliance, growth from within had been stunted. This had entrenched dependency on Europe by the African Church.

Gatu was determined to make the African Church grow by using her own resources. One could say that by the end of the mission festival the Westerners may have heard enough to hesitate about sending missionaries and funds to churches in Africa. This did not at all mean that they decided to stop sending personnel and funds to mission field, but it did increase their fear of the consequences of their continued service. It was true that Gatu's proposal for a moratorium shocked the audience, for it was a radical signal to the old traditional structure of the churches and mission agencies of the West that their model of mission was questionable, actually no longer acceptable. They were called upon to be accountable and faithful to the mandate for world mission inherent in the Gospel.

The Milwaukee proposal for a moratorium launched an ongoing controversy on missionary ecclesiology in the ecumenical movement over the next four years. Unquestionably, from this time on, the call for a moratorium became a burning issue in mission co-operation between Africa and the Western donor organizations.

2.2   The All African Conference of Churches and the moratorium

The proposal for a moratorium was discussed again when the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) held its Third Assembly in Lusaka (Zambia) on 12-21 May 1974 (Carr 1974:1). According to Kato (1975:160), who attended this conference, 600 people came from all parts of Africa and overseas to attend, and Gatu was one of the participants. At this meeting, the call for a moratorium intensified owing to a hostile reception by many evangelicals within and outside Africa. In addition, African radicalism stemmed from what Bigambo (2001:35) terms "home field advantage".

The discussion of the proposal for a moratorium was directed at the African churches that were members of the AACC. For the AACC, the proposal for a moratorium was a matter of concern and urgency. In this meeting, another African church leader, Burgess Carr, who was by then General Secretary of AACC, acted as the main speaker on the proposal for a moratorium.

In the declaration of a moratorium on, amongst other things, foreign missionaries and foreign funding, Carr is quoted as saying:

> The critical issue here relates to personnel and finance. We have discovered that the money allocated for missionary work in Africa by missionary sending agencies is spent on the salaries and maintenance of their own personnel. Therefore, the call for the moratorium is a demand to transfer the massive expenditure on expatriate personnel in the churches in Africa to program activities manned by Africans themselves (Carr 1974:6).

This meant, in Carr's view, that the call for a moratorium seemed to say yes to money and no to personnel. In this respect, Carr departed from Gatu's original concept for a moratorium, which was to be on both money and personnel.

The other thorny issue for Carr was that the Church in Africa, after a hundred years of missionary activity, was not yet autonomous. This was owing to over-dependence on the West, which had destroyed the Church in Africa's self-image and threatened her future. The solution for Carr thus lay in self-reliance for the Church in Africa (Carr 1974:6).

A far as the selfhood of the Church in Africa went, Burgess Carr said it was a powerful salvific tool for enabling it to develop a corporate personality. Moreover, selfhood for the African Church meant self-discovery, African self-expression, African self-determination and African self-development (Utuk 1997:116). According to Carr, the missions constituted a stumbling block to all four.

Carr reiterated the point that had already been made in Bangkok concerning the proposal for the moratorium that the African Church, by suggesting a moratorium, was not cutting itself off from the rest of the Christians in the world. Instead, in renewing the proposal for a moratorium, the process of enhancing the Catholicity of the Church was to be gained through indigenization and revisiting patterns of relationships (Carr 1974:5).

2.3   Where did the idea of a moratorium come from?

Several events and circumstances might have inspired John Gatu to develop the idea of a moratorium. One could argue that Gatu, who had been in the struggle for Kenyan independence, was drawing on his military experience to liberate the Church in Africa from the imperial power of the missionaries. When the Kenyans were fighting the war against the British people, they coined the term Mau Mau (*Mzungu arudi ulaya mwafrika apate uhuru*): a white person must return to Europe and an African must get independence. According to Kendall (1978:88), this spirit of Mau Mau, taking hold in Gatu's mind, may have encouraged him to call for the moratorium in Milwaukee.

A second factor is that missionaries, officials and visiting students from the West had misinterpreted the image of Africa. For example, they reported to the churches in the West that everything in Africa was pagan and primitive. An African was not defined in terms of what s/he was or what s/he had, but in terms of what s/he was not. In addition, Western missionaries acted as spokesmen for Africans. Surprisingly, more attention was paid to a missionary talking about Africa than to an African. African leaders returning from visits to the West refused to accept this. It can be concluded that Gatu spoke out in Milwaukee partly because Africa as a whole had been misinterpreted by the missionaries, officials, and visiting students who had been in Africa, and partly because it was time for African voices to be heard.

In 1970 the local leaders of Gatu's church, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, decided to refuse foreign funds and decision-making on the PCEA in Kenya. For many years, the PCEA had depended on Western sources for finance, and Western authorities were providing personnel assistance, and making important operational decisions. The PCEA's undue dependence on overseas assistance had rendered it incapable self-sufficiency. As a result, its congregants were challenged by the idea of the Swahili word *jitegemee* (self-reliance). It was through *jitegemee* that the PCEA could be rescued from dependence by developing its local resources, limited as they were, demonstrating that the PCEA was tired of depending on Western donors and that they were against paternalistic attitudes.

In 1970, many states on the African continent were seeking freedom from the control of their colonial masters. Likewise, starting in the 1960s, the churches in Africa were seeking freedom from missionary control (Temple 2001:{n.d.};1). In 1973, when the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (Mbulu Synod) was asked whether it wanted more missionaries or fewer, its President, Yonathan Bartholomew, replied that the Synod would prefer its own people to do the work. This meant that the Church desired freedom from missionary control.

According to Adrian Hastings (1979:224), foreign missionaries became essentially redundant during the 1970s because most churches in Africa had a large number of local ministers (the number is not mentioned). In addition,

African theological colleges were full to overflowing with candidates for church ministry. Adrian Hastings (1979:224) states that: "[e]essentially, white clerics had made their voice heard long enough; it was now time for the black". Nevertheless, the continuing presence of missionaries in quite large numbers in Africa in the 1970s fuelled the desire for a moratorium on them and the funds coming from Europe and North American churches to those of Africa.

1970 was a year in which important steps were being taken to rebuild cultural identity in Africa. For example, President Senghor of Senegal introduced the philosophy of negritude to reawaken the African cultural identity, which had been distorted by the colonialists. Its aim was to restore the African personality and uproot any sort of colonial domination. In addition, Africa's cultural awareness caused the Christian communities to separate from the mission Church and to form their own churches, known as independent churches.

African theology, which had been brought to life in 1963 by the AACC in Kampala (Uganda), reached its peak in the 1970s, when it awakened the Africans and called them to fight against Anglo-European theologies. The content of African theology called for Africans to serve God in their own culture in order to liberate it from Western cultural captivity. African Christians became aware that the teaching of Christianity in Africa by Western missionaries did not fully address the African identity and there was a need for change. The Church in Africa therefore

needed a contextual theology rooted in African literature and giving value to African culture.

Gatu's call for a moratorium had precedents in other countries. In 1969, in Uruguay, the missionaries of the Methodist Church decided to withdraw. Uruguay needed a period of time without the influence of the missionaries until the Methodist Church saw fit to call them back. In 1971 the missionaries of the White Fathers in Mozambique also decided to withdraw in order to leave the Church in African hands (Wagner 1975b:10). In January 1971, there was a call for a moratorium by the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico for a period of at least three years, from January 1971-1973. This meant that the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico would be without personnel and financial assistance from the USA. In February 1971, the Church in Kuala Lumpur (not identified), Malaysia, called for the Western missionaries to go home because the day of independence had arrived (Uka 1989:193).

2.4   Western response to the proposal for a moratorium

The Western response did not come directly after Gatu's speech at the 1971 mission festival because of the latter's character as a festival event. It was a time for celebration rather than for disputes. The response thus did not become fully apparent until late 1971.

The Evangelical Mission leaders and three Western critics played an important role in formulating a response to Gatu's call for a moratorium. To begin with, the Evangelical Mission leaders met at Green Lake, Wisconsin, in 1971 to discuss the best model for the structure of the mission activity of the Church. In their discussion, they did not even consider the possibility of withdrawing or reducing the number of their missionaries to be a viable means of resolving the issues that the proposed moratorium sought to address (Uka 1989:215). This creates the impression that the Evangelical Mission leaders were against Gatu's proposal for a moratorium. In their opinion, withdrawing or reducing missionaries and money was not desirable. However, it is not known whether leaders of the Evangelical Mission in the Third World were also in attendance at the meeting.

Three Western critics responded to the call for a moratorium. According to Uka (1989:23) the former President of the American Society of Missiology, Louis J. Luzbetak, argued that the word 'moratorium' was misleading, speaking instead of the need for international and mutual enrichment. Here Luzbetak expressed opposition to the proposal for a moratorium but he also called for increased international interaction.

The second critic was Johannes Verkuyl, a Dutch missiologist, who commented on the proposed moratorium in the following words: "The focus of attention should not be a moratorium but the task which still remains to be done. Hundreds of millions of people stand either wholly or in part outside the range of

Gospel Communication". The point being made here was that it was not a question of whether or not a moratorium was necessary. Instead, the key question should be: "Does our world still need Jesus to be proclaimed?" (Uka 1989:23).Verkuyl's point was that he wanted the cross-cultural international mission enterprise to be carried out in co-operation and on all six continents. In addition, most of the Western critics considered the call to be both unrealistic and irresponsible, and felt that it should not be given any support.

The third critic was G.H. Anderson, who later in the 1970s responded negatively to a moratorium by saying that the accumulated problems of nearly two hundred years of missionary relationships could not be solved by going into isolation, nor would the New Testament allow this (Anderson 1974:137). Anderson insisted on co-operation, making no allowance for separation in spite of the relationship problems. In other words, problems might unite rather than separate people in looking for solutions. The Westerners undoubtedly believed that they still had a lot to do in common with the Africans. Because the task of evangelization everywhere was unfinished (Mt. 28:19), what they had in common was, in their opinion, much more important than anything that would divide them.

A brief summary of the situation can be made here. As has been shown, Gatu's proposal caused divided opinions. While some understood the concern behind Gatu's demands, others were critical. However, the Westerners who responded negatively to the proposal did not mean that they saw the proposed moratorium

as an unimportant issue about which they were not concerned. Rather, they recognized the proposal as a new challenge coming from Africa as criticism of the old tradition of the cross-cultural international mission activity that had been conducted on the African continent. In addition, the Westerners perceived Gatu's proposal for a moratorium to be an issue requiring amendment. Accordingly, they also wanted a change in the dominant/subordinate relationship, as it was jeopardizing the mission enterprise. The primary objective was to work towards international and mutual enrichment that could enable both Africans and Westerners to participate in Christian mission service on an equal basis.

CHAPTER 3

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/Central Diocese and the Moratorium debate

3.1   A brief historical background to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

The history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa-Central Diocese (here abbreviated to ELCSA/CD) should be located in relation to the formation of the ELCSA/Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. The ELCSA dates back to 18 December 1975 in Tlhabane, Rustenburg/present-day North West Province, during the Constituting Assembly that took place from 15⁻20 December 1975 (*Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Southern Africa 1984:9*).

According to Scriba and Lislerud (1997:184) the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (FELCSA), founded in 1966, was significantly instrumental in the formation of ELCSA. All Lutheran churches, both white and black, joined the Federation, except for the Hanoverian Free Church, today known as the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. In 1973, FELCSA's committee on unity and merger matters, along with the Bishops of the former Transvaal Regional Church/Berlin Mission Society of the Church in the Tswana Region/Hermannsburg Mission Society and of the South Eastern Regional Church/KwaZulu-Natal, decided to initiate merger conversation with one another. The Cape–Orange Regional Church also participated in the talks. It can safely be

said that these regional synods were products of the Hermannsburg Mission/Society. The latter laboured largely among the Zulus in KwaZulu-Natal and Tswanas in the present-day North West Province, including certain parts of the present-day Northern Cape Province, along with the Berlin Mission Society, which operated in all the four former provinces of the Republic of South Africa. Hence, different dioceses of ELCSA still have strong relationships with both these mission societies.

Scriba and Lislerud (1997:185) point out that in 1974 in Tlhabane/Rustenburg, a draft constitution of the new church was discussed and it was only a year later in 1975 that a Constituent Assembly was convened. An invitation was extended to the white churches in the "Lutheran Family in South Africa" to be part of the merger, but unfortunately they showed no enthusiasm for being part of this historic event. An executive meeting of FELCSA therefore went ahead with the merger without the "blessings of the white churches". It should be pointed out that there have been attempts in the past towards a "more organic union" between white and black Lutherans, but these efforts have proven "fruitless" owing to reasons beyond the scope of this study. As Steinert (2007:24) has pointed out, it seems that the unification of all South African Lutherans lies in the future.

The formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa on 18 December 1975 was not without drama. Acid bombs were thrown into the Constituent Assembly hall. Scriba and Lislerud (1997:185) note that, sadly, those

who threw them were never arrested by the police. However, these "devious attempts" did not deter delegates but rather strengthened them to unite. When ELCSA was formed in 1975 in Tlhabane Rustenburg, it was organized into four dioceses: The Cape Orange (chiefly Coloured, Afrikaans in language); the present-day Western Cape and Free State Provinces respectively; the Southern-Eastern Province, chiefly Zulu; the Northern Province, chiefly Northern Sotho; Venda and the Western Province (chiefly Tswana). Each was to retain its autonomy under the leadership of an elected bishop. ELCSA is predominantly "Black". Scriba and Lislerud (1997:173) have observed that most black Lutherans are now united in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA).

ELCSA is affiliated to the following ecumenical bodies: the Lutheran World Federation (LWF); the South African Council of Churches; the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) and; the World Council of Churches (WCC). More importantly, it is the official organ for relationships with overseas partners and other church bodies, and serves as the voice of the Church in negotiations with the government (Scriba & Lislerud 1997:185). The ELCSA structure is comprised of dioceses, circuits, parishes and congregations, as well as three administrative bodies: the General Assembly, which meets triennially, the Church Council with a full-time Treasurer and General Secretary and the Presiding Bishop.

3.1.2 The formation of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

At the 30th Anniversary of the ELCSA/CD in 2007, one of the proposals was that the history of this diocese should be documented, for the simple reason that, to date, almost nothing of a scholarly nature has been written on this diocese. A committee has now been established to document the history of this diocese and I have benefitted greatly from some of the material gathered so far.

The Central Diocese was formed in 1977, following the birth of ELCSA in 1975, so it can be said that this diocese is the fruit of the unity of four Lutheran Churches. These were organized along ethnic lines: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Orange Region, present-day Western Cape and Free State Provinces respectively); the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (former Transvaal Region, which would be the area covering the present-day Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces respectively); the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (South-Eastern region, present-day KwaZulu-Natal Province); and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Tswana region, present-day North West Province).

The Central Diocese covers the entire Gauteng Province, including certain parts of Mpumalanga and the North West Province respectively. Owing to the high level of ethnic diversity in the areas where all these churches had congregations, the first Church Council resolved to create a fifth diocese in addition to the four original dioceses (*Highlights of The Thirty Years of the Central Diocese 1977-*

2007:1). The first Synod of the new diocese was held in Eersterust from 24-25 September 1976. Initially the Synod was supposed to take place in Mamelodi, but owing to the Soweto uprisings and political unrest which had spread to other parts of the Reef, it was hurriedly moved to the neighbouring Coloured township of Eersterust. The Eersterust Synod named the new diocese the Central Diocese. The official launch of the Central Diocese took place on 12 December 1977. One of the erstwhile African theologians, Bishop Dr Manas Buthelezi, was elected the first bishop of this diocese. He retired as recently as 2000. The present incumbent is Bishop Dr Ndanganeni Phaswana, 2000-).

3.2   Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa/Central Diocese and Africanisation

Africanisation of the Church was one of the central and fundamental issues behind the call for a moratorium. The process of Africanisation in ELCSA/CD has been moving at a "snail's pace" and both the previous Bishop, Manas Buthelezi, and the present Bishop, Ndaganeni Phaswana, have, for instance, made an appeal for an African dimension "of liturgy in the diocese" which would still bear "the marks and characteristics of Lutheranism".

In his consecration sermon as the second Bishop of the CD, Bishop Phaswana, posed the following question: "Will parishioners feel alienated if a culturally-grounded liturgy is developed which bears the characteristics of Lutheranism but uses African lyrics, drums and marimbas?" (*Challenge Magazine* 2000:23). In a

similar vein, Bishop Buthelezi, the first Bishop of the CD, in his sermon to mark its 20th anniversary, had lamented the absence of an African dimension of worship with the following words:

> What about us today? Unfortunately in our existing traditions of worship there is a lot of artificiality. Expressions of feelings and excitement, wonder and joy, have been driven out of the houses of the worship of God. You only find them in places where people can be true selves: in weddings, football stadiums and beer-drinking parties. We have been made to believe that we are honouring our God most deeply when we look dull, sombre and expressionless.

It is clear to me that both bishops are advocating for liturgy and worship that must shed its Eurocentricism and be informed by the African experience and character.

A black member of staff, Rev M Molale[1] (not his real name), who teaches at the Lutheran Theological Institute/Pietermaritzburg, where the CD sends prospective ministers for pastoral formation, whom I had the privilege of interviewing, confessed that African theology, for instance, is not taught as one of the mainstream subjects in their curriculum. "Somehow we have to smuggle it [in]." This is worrying, because it simply means that our "theological curriculum in ELCSA" does not prepare or equip our prospective ministers sufficiently to deal with some of the complex African problems.

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1 Interview with Rev M Molale, Pretoria, 13 September 2008. This study also relies on primary sources obtained in the main through individual interviews. Because of the sensitivity of the subject, I have chosen pseudonyms for most of the informants.

In his informative book *Mission through Music: A South African Case Study* 2007, published as part of his doctoral thesis in Missiology at Unisa, Claudio Steinert, a German Lutheran pastor (even though he is using ELCSA/Western Diocese as a case study, some of the issues he raises have relevance to the CD) goes to great lengths to show the value of adding an African touch to liturgy and music, based on his extensive experience in this particular diocese. Steinert (2007:2) argues that the pulse of the music experienced in church must be capable of keeping pace with the heartbeat of modern African life. Most importantly, and rightly so, Steinert (2007 :3) believes that this is one of the ways in which we can make the Christian message a truly African heritage and the African Christians the real owners of their church.

This is not an attempt to undervalue earlier efforts by mission societies such as Hermannsburg and Berlin, which contributed zealously to Bible translation into African languages. However, despite their commitment to the African languages, Lutheran missionaries, and often some of the black clergy, tended to be hostile to African world views and African practices in Christian worship and spiritual life. It seems that the CD was no exception. The calls for "Africanisation" by Bishops Manas Buthelezi and Phaswana respectively seem to confirm this "daunting task".

One of the senior ministers in the CD, Rev D. Langa[2] (not his real name), whom I interviewed on 23 February 2007, pointed out to me that an adult seeking baptism must first reject ancestor veneration (as well as rituals connected to this practice). Failure to do so renders one's chances of baptism very slim. Another minister, Rev P Pheyeha[3] (not his real name), in the same diocese, whom I interviewed on 20 June 2007, strongly maintains that members of his church are not allowed to consult *dingaka tja*/ (Sesotho/African traditional doctors/healers). These two cases are classic examples of negative attitudes towards African practices, even when there are calls for indigenization by two of the most prominent heads of the diocese/CD. This does not imply that all ministers in the CD share these negative sentiments when it comes to African cultural practices. It is likely that there exist some ministers in the CD who would hold a progressive and liberal stance, even attempting to integrate the "African style of worship in their churches", but it seems generally not to be the case. One of the questions in the questionnaire circulated to ELCSA/CD members pertaining to the future of theological education in ELCSA is that of what ELCSA could learn from African-Initiated Churches relating to, *inter alia*, freedom of expression in worship and enculturation (Nürnberger 2000:41). Currently, though, there is nothing concrete in this direction.

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2 Interview with Rev D Langa, Naledi, Soweto, 23 February 2007

3 Interview with Rev P Pheyeha, Midrand, 20 June 2007

Finally, I am not trying to suggest that our old Lutheran hymns and liturgy in the CD are without value. I love to sing them with "ample gusto". However, my concern is for the church members in the CD, especially those who find the "Eurocentric" style of worship boring and think it fails to live up to the complexities of the present African world. This being said, students and pastors have to study the theology of justification, incarnation, grace and the two kingdoms, as advocated by Luther, but these concepts would be more meaningful if they addressed African issues of the twenty-first century. It is time for some innovative development, writing and articulation of what Lutheran theology in Africa is really about.

3.3 ELCSA/CD and its partners

The relationship between the ELCSA/CD and certain Lutheran churches, especially in Germany and America, is very strong. This is neither a surprise nor a historical accident. As Scriba and Lislerud (1997:173) correctly point out, it was missionaries from Germany and elsewhere who brought the Lutheran faith to South Africa. Often the form of the relationship between ELCSA/ CD and its partners depended on the nature of the needs of the respective congregations in the diocese. For instance, the CD has partnered with some Lutheran mission agencies abroad in various projects. One large project in the CD deserving of a special mention is the HIV/AIDS project, which is funded by Lutheran partners in America.

The project was launched only in 2003, and workshops on how to prevent the spread of the pandemic and counsel victims of HIV/AIDS are conducted among the clergy and lay people in the diocese. It must be mentioned that the project is fraught with power dynamics; personnel conducting these workshops are American church volunteers and in some cases this has irked certain members and clergy in the CD alike. One female minister, Rev M Tokollo[4] (not her real name), whom I interviewed on the 2 April 2006 in the CD, has this to say: "We requested them to fund the project referring to the HIV/AIDS project [but] now they bring their personnel. Is it because they don't trust us with their money? Who said Africans don't know how to control budgets?" One of the American church volunteers, Rev E. Dalson[5] (not his real name), whom I interviewed on 22 July 2006, pointed out to me that, in past experience, the handling of project funds in the ELCSA/CD has left much to be desired. This is why they bring their own personnel to manage the funds for this HIV/AIDS project. Further, Rev Tokollo claims that during some of the workshops the American volunteers, out of ignorance, ask ministers questions such as "Have you seen a condom before?" Such questions reveal a level of naivety amongst some American volunteers. Such stereotyping could be avoided if lay people with expertise were to be involved in a project of this magnitude in the CD.

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4 Interview with Rev M Tokollo, Unisa, Pretoria 2 April 2006

5 Interview with Rev E Dalson, Edenvale, Ekurhuleni 22 July 2006

3.4   Personnel in ELCSA/CD

Although I do not have the exact figures, the last time (2005) that I checked with Rev OA Buffel, the previous General Secretary of ELCSA/CD from 2003-2006, there were very few expatriates working in the CD, and I am of the opinion that, even now, they are just a very small minority.[6] However, "minority" does not always mean that there is no wielding of power, and we should always guard against the false notion that those in the majority influence everything all the time. The CD is a case in point; disparities between the local pastors and white expatriates, whether or not they are of German origin, are still seen. For instance, a local minister in the CD is still paid a paltry R2000-00 a month. According to one minister, Rev P. Matsapola[7] (not his real name), whom I interviewed on the 20th April 2008, white expatriates working in the same diocese/CD are paid ten times more by their respective mission societies. In a more equal sharing of resources, it might be fair if the mission societies were to make an agreement with the CD for workers' salaries to form one "pool" to be shared equally with the local ministers in the CD. Once again, I am not suggesting that local congregations in the ELCSA/CD abdicate their responsibility for paying the salaries of their local ministers and devolve the responsibility onto a mission society abroad. Such recourse would definitely be tantamount to dependency. My proposal is one of the ways to be explored in remedying a situation where there

6 Correct figures and statistics in most cases are traditionally difficult to come by in African churches and ELCSA is no exception.

7 Interview with Rev P Matsapola, Alexandra, Johannesburg, 20 April 2008. Lutheran German missionaries serving in ELCSA are not paid according to the ELCSA salary scales. They are paid German salaries in Euros, so one can claim that they are paid at least ten times more.

is a "widening gap" in salaries between local ministers in the CD and the white expatriates. Like Duncan (2007:57), I am longing for a return to the Early Church principle that "all things [are] held in common" (Acts 2:44) whereby churches would help each other from a common pooled resource. The same pastor I interviewed decried the fact that at times some of their white expatriate counterparts in the CD, because of their better salaries, undermine them and abuse the situation by making them beggars.

There have been instances when, out of preference, certain key positions, such as treasurer for the CD, is occupied by a white expatriate, while there are some local members with the same expertise. One pastor I interviewed had this to say: "In this diocese/CD we tend to underestimate the gifts and skills of our members. We have accountants, lawyers, architects etc. Do we really have to import these skills from Germany or elsewhere abroad?" The pastor's question is worth pondering, because in some cases it would appear that the CD has not exploited the resources at her disposal.

Maluleke (2001:14) has accurately observed that the gravitational force has moved from North to South, and Africa is part of this reality. One German missionary in the CD, Rev I. Schuster[8] (not his real name), mentioned to me that church membership in his home congregation in Germany is dwindling, so he would prefer to do mission work in Africa where, according to him, there is a

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8 Interview with Rev I Schuster, Germiston, 19 June 2006

"sustainable growth". Many Africans in the CD have ably performed the task of carrying mission even better than some German missionaries in this diocese. I would even recommend that it is possibly time for Lutheran churches in Germany to invite African members from the CD to help them revive their churches. Why neglect your home front where "churches" are empty and waste time coming to South Africa where churches are growing in "leaps and bounds".

There are times when certain white expatriates in the CD seem to find it difficult to submit to the authority of a black pastor. Indeed, there have been cases in the diocese when white expatriates resign before their term expires because of "irretrievable breakdown" in the working relationship with a black fellow pastor, especially if the black minister is his/her superior. It has been known for the white expatriate to cloak the reasons for this with the poor education and "inferiority complex" of a black minister. This is sometimes quite right, but clearly at other times this is just "sheer white superiority". Rev E. Selabe[9] (not his real name) told me how a white expatriate, who had just arrived in his congregation with very little or no experience of African culture, immediately saw himself as an expert, qualified to make important pronouncements on how liturgical worship was to be conducted in his local church. I concur with Mpako (2000:17) that some white missionaries need to undergo a fundamental transformation in the way they relate to local African ministers in the CD. If they were to see their black fellow ministers as equals when executing pastoral duties, it would go a long way

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9 Interview with Rev E Selabe, Roodepoort, Johannesburg, 26 July 2006

towards cultivating a spirit of "collegiality" between white expatriates and African pastors in the CD. Learning to relate in a different way can be painful, as Duncan (2007:61) has correctly observed, because it means trying out, opening up and letting go. Even though "letting go" is a tall order, it nevertheless results in maturity.

3.5 Theological training and the ELCSA/CD

For the most part, prospective ministers in the ELCSA/CD were trained at the Marang/Rustenburg (founded 1958), and at the Umphumulo Seminary/KwaZulu-Natal (founded 1960). Both seminaries enjoyed subsidies and financial help from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). However, in 1992 according to Scriba & Leislerud (1997:189), it was decided that there would be only one theological seminary, and Marang in Rustenburg was closed down. Umphumulo in KwaZulu-Natal survived for some time. In all honesty, I myself never took time to investigate the reasons behind the closure of Marang, but I suspect that the reasons were of a "financial nature".

In 1985, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA), the mainly white Lutheran Church, entered into a joint venture with ELCSA, and, with substantial assistance from the LWF, founded the Lutheran House of Studies for theology students in Pietermaritzburg. Later, the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary paid a heavy price for this innovation. Students were allowed to enrol concurrently at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for their

academic theological studies and at LUTHOS for their pastoral formation. Prospective ministers in the ELCSA/CD who could afford their studies or were fortunate enough to acquire financial assistance would train and study in Pietermaritzburg; those who could not afford to do this went to Umphumulo, which remained the only seminary able to train prospective ELCSA ministers at the diploma level. Moreover, their studies were free.

3.5.1 The closure of the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary

On 5 August 1999, the LWF commissioned a team representative of certain sections of Lutheran family led as convener by the well-known Lutheran theologian Professor Klaus Nürnberger to determine the vision, needs, practical implementation and financing of Lutheran theological education in South Africa at the turn of the millennium (Nürnberger 2000:4). The team extensively explored different options relating to Lutheran theological training and presented its full report on 11 May 2000. Input was solicited from some members of ELCSA, including the CD. The main thrust of the findings was to generally recommend the closure of Umphumulo. For instance, the report pointed out that Umphumulo was located in a remote rural and unilingual area that is predominantly Zulu-speaking. Consequently it was unlikely that that the UELCSA churches, which were predominantly white, would send their students to a seminary that was geographically removed from the University (Nürnberger 2000:22). However, it could be argued that the rural setting of Umphumulo would have familiarized students with this environment for the purpose of their future ministry in the rural

areas. Distance was one of the factors that weighed heavily against Umphumulo, and the report pointed out that it would be taxing for students to travel between Pietermaritzburg and Umphumulo.

The findings of the report were more favourable to moving to the Pietermaritzburg/University of Kwazulu-Natal/School of Theology, which was linked to the Lutheran House of Studies/LUTHOS/Pietermaritzburg. The report argued, *inter alia*, that LUTHOS was located in close proximity to a major university and the premises were located in a peri-urban area. According to Nürnberger (2000:33), the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg had excellent qualities and a strong tradition of Lutheran involvement. It was thus recommended by the committee. UELCSA and LWF had already opted for the University of KwaZulu-Natal/Pietermaritzburg as their training centre, so it was argued that they could not abruptly end the relationship spanning years and opt for Umphumulo, even though this seminary had a dignified tradition. (Incidentally, the University of Natal/Pietermaritzburg is where Professor Nürnberger used to teach.)

There were mixed reactions to the report's findings, which were both positive and negative. Generally, those who supported the closure of Umphumulo pointed out, amongst other things, that prospective ministers would receive quality theological training, as they would also be studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. (I hope this does not imply that Umphumulo was offering inferior theological

training). The move would help towards addressing racial integration in the Lutheran family of churches. In addition, the prospects for inter-Lutheran cooperation between ELCSA, UELCSA and the LWF were excellent (Nürnberger 2000:26).

Some took the "middle way", supporting neither Umphumulo nor the University of KwaZulu-Natal/Pietermaritzburg. They suggested that possibilities should be explored for sending students to other theological training institutions, such as the University of Limpopo or the University of South Africa. This proposal was dismissed on the grounds that the theology of these two particular universities was not "steeped in Lutheran tradition" (Nürnberger 2000:18). Finally, those who were vehemently opposed to the closure of Umphumulo argued, amongst other things, and rightly so, that there had never been any "broader consultation", even before the team was constituted, and that the LWF seemed to be playing "power games". On the one hand, it could be asked why any input by "ELCSA/members" should be solicited when was clear from the findings that the fate of Umphumulo was sealed. On the other hand, the move was perceived by some as "sheep stealing" of particular kind by both LUTHOS and the University of KwaZulu-Natal/Pietermaritzburg. I suspect it was owing to the reason that Nürnberger (2000:36) pointed out, that the response of ELCSA, which was supposed to be a major stakeholder in this theological training undertaking, was appalling, to say the least.

As the saying goes, "He who pays the piper calls the tune"; the LWF was not congenial to the continuation of Umphumulo as provider of theological training for prospective ELCSA ministers. The University of KwaZulu-Natal/Pietermaritzburg thus became the new theological training home for ELCSA. The painful reality was that it was going to be difficult for ELCSA on its own to keep Umphumulo, owing to financial constraints. Consequently, the seminary relocated to Pietermaritzburg. At the present time, Umphumulo is a white elephant; plans were afoot to sell the buildings last year, and in 2003 the first batch of new students enrolled at University of KwaZulu-Natal/Pietermaritzburg.

Most of the black staff members who were teaching in Umphumulo became casualties when the enforced merger with the Lutheran Theological Institute/LTI took place, mainly because it was claimed their qualifications were far below the required standard compared with those of their counterparts in Pietermaritzburg.

3.5.2 Assessment of the closure of Umphumulo

In my opinion, the closure of the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary is a classic example of both how "power" is played out by donors in ELCSA, the CD diocese included, and who lays down the terms of partnership. Those who cried foul when their input was solicited at a later stage, after Nürnberger and his team had concluded their findings, were justified. The fact that the need for consultation was considered "urgent" once the process had been concluded is a matter of interest. Only after the fact were the input and wisdom of partners

sought, as if they had had nothing to contribute to the process when it was ongoing. The only way to avoid misunderstandings and problems of this nature is to consult in depth and, more importantly, to respect all stakeholders. Duncan (2007:60) emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability on both sides of a partnership, and the situation related here is no exception. There should be mutual responsibility when decisions affect the "Other" in a relationship.

There is no attempt here to suggest that the findings by Professor Nürnberger and his team *vis à vis* the closure of Umphumulo were not noble. However, the consultation process left much to be desired. The fact that most black staff members became casualties when Umphumulo was closed down is a clear indication that no provision had been made to absorb them, and it seems that nobody was concerned about their welfare.

Financial aid has too often been linked with power over the receiver, and, in return, this power has at times been abused by donors holding their partners to ransom by threatening to pull the plug on theological funding by LWF. If there is resistance to the move to Pietermaritzburg, it serves only to confirm this point, and it is a worrying sign that whoever controls the "purse strings" still has a mentality of domination.

It would seem to me that the ELCSA/CD has inherited the outward trappings of an autonomous church. However, behind the scenes, white missionaries and funds still play a coercive, if not dominant role. The call for a moratorium remains as valid as when John Gatu proposed it.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING FROM THE AICS

4.1   A brief historical survey of the AICs

4.1.1   What does the term "AICs" stand for?

Masuku (1996:442) points out that, before answering the question as to who the AICs are, the explanation behind this acronym AIC is important. The first two letters seem not to pose a problem, as we know the "A" denotes that these movements are African in their own right, and the "C**"** simply implies that they must be respected and seen as churches. However, the bone of contention has been the "I", because many interpretations can be attached to it. For instance, the "I" is synonymous with "Independent", "Initiated", "Instituted" or "Indigenous". It is therefore common to call these churches "African Independent", African Initiated", "African Instituted" or "African Indigenous".

It should be noted that members of these churches have developed creative ways of defining them. Terms such as *amabandla amaAfrika "Zulu"* and, in Sotho, *dikereke tsa ma-Afrika* are commonly used to show the African character of these churches. On the one hand, some leaders of the AICs, like the late Paul Makhubu and Archbishop Kenosi Mofokeng, two very notable South African AIC leaders, felt very uncomfortable with this description. The following words from Makhubu (1988:23) succinctly confirm this point: "People can call us what they

want, judge us, and put us in a pigeon holes if they wish. We exist and are growing fast."

Daneel (1987:30) has observed that the terminology used depends to a great extent on the premises of the researcher and the field of study. For instance, some political scientists refer to them as resistance movements, while some missiologists use terms like sectarian, syncretism, messianic or prophetic movements. According to Daneel (:30), such terms carry a negative connotation and often put the AICs at risk of being labelled as not "authentic churches".

I am aware that there are several variations of the acronym AIC. For the sake of consistency, AICs in this study refer to African *Initiated* Churches, because this term emphasizes the creative initiative of African Christians in establishing and developing their own churches.

Turner (1979:12), an eminent researcher of AICs, has defined an African Initiated Church as "a church which has been founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans". Much as I agree, however, that the forebears of the AICs are Africans, I share the sentiments of Oduro (2002:17) that it is inadequate to assert that they were founded "primarily for Africans", as if churches founded by Westerners in the West were primarily for Westerners. The origins of a church and the race of its founders do not always exclude people of other races from

membership of that church. For instance, the missiological activities in Africa of churches founded in the West attest to this fact.

In this regard I find the definition of African Initiated Churches by Oduro (2002) very refreshing and, more importantly, it fits/resonates very well with the moratorium debate. He defines African Initiated Churches as

> congregations and or denominations planted, led, administered, supported, propagated, motivated and funded by Africans for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and worshipping the Triune God in the context and worldview of Africa and Africans (Oduro 2002:17).

In other words, even though African Initiated Churches attempt in their worship to locate the Triune God within the worldview of Africa, evangelization is not restricted to Africans. Equally, Westerners cannot claim monopoly over evangelization, even though there are many traces of the Western worldview and philosophy in the life of Western-founded churches, even those in the non-Western world.

4.1.2 Who are the AICs?

African Initiated Churches have been categorized into various typologies. According to Uka (in Masuku 1996:4430), the three typologies generally used by scholars are the "African/ Ethiopian" type, i.e. AICs which were founded on nationalistic and politically-motivated grounds, Zionist (*Aladura*), and Messianic. The Zionist group views the centrality of the Holy Spirit in relation to African cultural practices. The third or last group, the Messianic, characterizes groups

built around a single leader who claims special powers, and who seems to usurp the role of Christ in the mind of the followers. However, it must be said that, as much as these "typologies" have been helpful in the past in categorizing the AICs, lately there seems to be less readiness to grasp and understand these complex phenomena. The African/Ethiopian type, for instance, is nearly non-existent in post-independent South Africa. One would find it difficult to point to an AIC that owes its emergence to political motives. Since the typologies are blurred, it seems to me that before one embarks on categorizing these churches, it will be crucial to ask the members how they perceive themselves.

4.2 Factors influencing the origin and growth of the AICs

Daneel (1987:70-73) states that, some years ago Turner, Oosthuizen and Hastings, amongst others, had worked out causal factors behind the AICs. Their arguments are well captured by Claasen (in Masuku 1996:444):

> African believers questioned the condemnation by missionaries of the ancestor cult, circumcision and polygamy. European scepticism with respect to spirit-possession alienated black church members who found Biblical evidence for their view of world and life. Their accommodation of African culture made AICs attractive. The lack of opportunities for African leadership and Western denominationalism were other causes. The emergence of the AICs represented a reaction to conquest, a reaction to European domination in politics, economics, social and church life. Africans sought to create their own institutions free of white control.

It is clear that the causative factors attributed to emergence of AICs are extensive. However, I will restrict myself to four, namely: bible translation, nationalism, religious paternalism and cultural revivalism.

4.2.1 Bible translation

According to Barrett (1968:26), the translation of the Bible into local languages was one of the main factors in the formation of the AICs. The chief aim of translating the scriptures into an African language was to make them accessible to local people in the vernacular. Mission schools played a very important role in enabling people to read the Bible in their own tongue (Daneel 1987:84). Bediako (1995:72) postulates that translating the Bible into other languages is akin to the doctrine of incarnation; it is a means "by which the fullest divine communication has reached beyond the forms of human words into the human form itself".

The translation of the Bible into local languages marked another significant change: now, for the first time, people were able to draw a distinction between the missionary and Scripture. Daneel (1987:84) indicates, for instance, that intelligent African Christians discovered that the Biblical message conveyed to them by missionaries was reductive, in the sense that it was restricted to the soul and its redemption, but failed to touch issues of social justice. More importantly there was, in Scripture, spontaneity, vitality and dynamism, which were apparently largely lacking in the rigid structures of the missionary agencies.

I would also like to add that while reading the Bible Africans discovered that it resonated with their African world view and was replete with so many things that they knew very well before coming into contact with Christianity, especially the Old Testament dimension. For instance, Africans found Biblical legitimacy for

some of their practices, such as polygamy, which was heavily scrutinized by some missionaries, as the Old Testament does not condemn it, and people like Abraham, to mention but one, were polygamists. As Oduro (2002:31) has correctly discerned, those who translated the Bible into African languages, in a sense provided a means for the Africans to compare and contrast the Christianity which was wrapped in Western philosophies and worldview, and the Christianity that can be inferred from the Biblical world.

4.2.2 African nationalism

Oduro (2002:31) states that colonial interests differed from one African country to another. For instance, the chief aim of colonialists in South Africa was settling on the land, with no intention of returning to Europe. In contrast, the interests of West African colonialists were more economic, i.e. amassing wealth through trading. These different interests dictated how Africans were treated in their own countries and regions. There were, however, some humiliating treatments and perceptions of Africans that were common to the colonialists. African politicians commonly perceived the colonialists as usurpers of the powers, privileges, wealth and positions of Africans.

With the dignity of Africans tarnished by some Europeans, many Africans did not make a distinction between the politician and the missionary, since the churches were patronized by European missionaries and politicians. For instance, in resentment at the inferior status accorded to him the parent denomination, Rev

Mangena Maake Mokone seceded from the Wesleyan Church in 1892 to form the Ethiopian Church (Pretorius & Jafta 1997:214). This bold move by Rev Mangena Maake Mokone heralded a new chapter in the attempt to seek autonomy, and was a clear indication that Africans desired both independence in church matters and the opportunity to manage their own affairs. To them, this meant planting a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating African Church. Furthermore, the break away from the Wesleyan Church awakened the minds of many Africans to question the motives of Western missionaries.

4.2.3 Religious paternalism

Religious paternalism was very evident in most Western mission-founded churches; it was similar to the tendencies that led to the formation of the Ethiopian movement, the only difference being that there were no political inclinations (Oduro 2002:32). Some Western missionaries ostracized many of the African Christians when it came to influential leadership positions in the church, even though many Africans were instrumental in evangelizing, teaching new converts and translating the Bible into African languages.

A case in point is Samuel Ajaye Crowther of Nigeria, who was ordained the first African Bishop of the Church Missionary Society. According to Oduro (2002:32), he served his Church with diligence, but Western missionaries often made a mockery out of his leadership qualities, to the extent of replacing him with a European bishop, which irked the Africans who were members of his church.

In similar vein, Pambani Mzimba broke away from the Scottish Mission on account of squabbles over the custodianship and use of funds. According to Maluleke (2001:11), even though Mzimba had himself raised considerable funds when he was invited to Scotland, the Mission Agency wanted to dictate how he should use those funds. This contentious issue was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. So he declared:

> But to me it is clear that even the Black man in Africa must stand on his feet in matters of worship like people in other countries and not always expect to be carried by the White man on his back. He has long learnt to walk by leaning on anybody except his God so that the work of the Gospel should flourish. The child itself feels it must walk it stumbles and falls takes one step at a time but the end result it walks (Pambani Jeremia Mzimba in Maluleke 2001:11).

I can safely say that paternalism on the part of Western missionaries was tantamount to "ignorance" and caused some African leaders to secede from mission churches to establish their own.

4.2.4 Cultural revivalism

Bosch (1991:84) indentifies the 'Gospel and Culture' as one of the dominant missionary motifs in post-Enlightenment missionary activity.

Many Western missionaries believed that supplanting African cultures with that of the West would bring "the abundance of the good things that modern education, healing and agriculture would provide for the deprived peoples of the world" (Bosch 1991:85).

The results, as we all know, were catastrophic, because Africans sometimes tended to be hostile to this Western worldview. At the opposite extreme, Western missionaries held the African beliefs and practices, i.e. polygamy and ancestor veneration, in contempt. The result was, and still is, a tension between Western Christianity and the African expression of Christianity.

Oduru (202:35) points out that Western missionaries did not posit alternatives to the beliefs and practices they undermined or banned. Their oversight left many African Christians with nothing to hold onto in times of crisis. Many became alienated socially, culturally, psychologically, philosophically and religiously. Bosch (1991:96) sums it up well, saying that "identity crisis was the overall result". These cultural impositions by some Western missionaries and their African allies somehow prepared a fertile ground for the establishment of AICs. These churches have been creative in fusing African culture and Christianity. The positive response by Africans is a proof that people take responsibility for the Church when they can relate its beliefs and practices to their own context.

4.3   Can the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Southern African/Central Diocese learn anything from the AICs?

For the practical purposes of this study, I am not going to investigate whether the moratorium debate was instrumental in the formation of the AICs. However, in my view, these churches have moved a considerable distance in addressing some of the challenges raised in this debate. I have identified five areas which I think ELCSA/CD can learn from the AICs, namely: enculturation, community

development, how AICs handle the phenomenon of urbanization, leadership and theological training.

4.3.1 AICs and enculturation

Daneel (1987:2290) states that one of the most significant features of the AICs and specifically of the spirit-type churches, is the way in which they have applied the Christian faith to the African setting. According to Masuku (1996:450), in doing this, the AICs have somehow made greater strides than have the so-called "mission churches" when it comes to the enculturation of Christianity in African societies. The phenomenal growth of the AICs can be attributed, *inter alia*, to their successful attempt to make Christianity at home in Africa and Africa at home in Christianity.

The example of Father Martin Maduka, an Igbo Catholic priest in Nigeria, as related by Salamone (in Masuku 1996:450), is a classic case of how to ease the conflict between Christianity and African culture. He fostered the integration of Christianity and the local traditions by, amongst other things, playing music that reflected the religious tradition of the local people. He preached that Africans should do away with Western priestly garments, and unwaveringly referred to Jesus Christ's drawing on his Jewish background and images of preaching (Salamone in Masuku 1996:450). Father Maduka further believed that if Jesus had been an Igbo man he would have used yams instead of unleavened bread for the sacrament of the Last Supper. Bediako (1995:4) has pointed out that such

creative attempts were often met with criticism, and Father Maduka was no exception when he was repudiated by the The Vatican. However, after Vatican II, held during the mid-1960s, the Catholic Church hailed Maduka as the champion of enculturation and change.

The ELCSA/Central Diocese could benefit greatly from emulating such figures as Father Maduka. For instance, there could be an attempt at an African dimension of liturgy, as advocated by Bishop Phaswana In *Challenge Magazine* (2000:23).

4.3.2 AICs and traditional religion

Masuku (1996:452) notes that the AICs provide us with a picture of how the Africans could address the question of traditional religion outside the cocoon of the Western religious framework. The efforts by the AICs in negotiating the indigenous African values and customs with the Gospel have, in many respects, been worthwhile. I will mention only two tenets of the indigenized ethos of the AICs, namely ancestor veneration and salvation, to illustrate how these churches have displayed the theological creativity necessary to provide Christian answers to African questions.

(i) Ancestor veneration

Pato (1980:73) indicates that, since the beginning of the Christian missions in Southern Africa two centuries ago, the African practice of communication by the living with their own dead has been misinterpreted as "ancestor worship" and

treated as participation in idolatry. Part of the problem is that missionaries saw their faith as synonymous with the European way of life, and consequently preached against the traditional African ways. Pato (1980:73) has identified two chief assumptions underlying the rejection of the African ideas about the ancestors: "ancestor worship" is the very basis of the religion of Africa and the Africans had no knowledge of God before the coming of Christianity. However, irrespective of these assertions/assumptions, some of the AICs, unlike many historical churches, have assimilated this traditional religious custom more or less intact. Arguments advanced for the inclusion of this African practice among the AICs vary. The two most notable ones are the Christian concept of the communion of saints and the biblical fifth commandment to honour your Mother and Father, which is applied to the dead as well as the living. It is against this background that the double existence on the part of the AICs in relation to this practice is a non-issue.

Mayer (in Pato 1980:75) has observed that many Christians, including full church members, are often committed to ancestor veneration. Even though some admit it openly, others try to conceal it for fear either of being labelled heathens or having their church membership terminated. Members of the ELCSA/CD, of whom the majority happen to be black, are no exception. If we were to take a leaf out of the AICs' book, with special reference to ancestor veneration, the Christian concept of saints, if properly understood, could allow members of ELCSA/CD to relate to their own dead in a real and meaningful way.

Is not the father of reformation, Martin Luther, after all our ancestor, even though he died centuries ago and was not even African, but German? We still subscribe to his teachings and theology, even the songs he composed. I therefore advocate that there should be an open space in the ELCSA/CD for members to communicate with their own dead and thereby avoid the dangers of inner conflict. Moreover, the relationship between the living and the dead encourages the Church to nurture the memory of its predecessors, who are still influencing our own lives by their contributions to the welfare of the Church when they were still alive.

(ii) Salvation

Daneel (1987:77) notes that missionaries often proclaimed a 'superficial, impoverished gospel'. The preaching of the Word was often not geared towards facets of the life or struggle of the African. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of missionaries were shaped by the Pietistic revival in Europe and America, and/or Puritanism. Bosch (in Daneel 1987:251) notes that the Western mentality is conditioned by a dichotomous, dualistic anthropology which divides man into two separable entities - soul and body. For Westerners, then, according to Daneel (1987:78), salvation meant saving souls. Their Puritan background led many of them to equate sin with, *inter alia*, sex, pleasure, or carnal indulgence. The result amounted basically to a litany of do's and don'ts.

On the holistic approach to humanity's physical needs, the daily struggle for existence and human requirement, the missionary was strangely silent (Daneel 1987:78). In other words, the person was not regarded as a whole but as a collection of parts. This misapprehension was conspicuous in the sphere of illness; it resulted in the sick soul being treated in church and the sick body in hospital, without any real integration of the two. For instance, many mission agencies provided medical services with the specific aim of "winning souls", so there was healing of the body, but the salvation of the entire person fell outside the missionary purpose. Hence, as Daneel (1987:79) has observed, for Africans there was a silent, inarticulate yearning for a religion which could embrace all of life and would fill the whole day.

The AICs take the African problems seriously. They present Christ as one who can overcome evil as it is understood and experienced in the African context. The AICs followed a traditional and biblical view of humanity, and a world that, according to Daneel (1987:251), is more intuitive and partly a reaction against the dualistic view as a piece of conscious systematization. In doing this, they have adopted a holistic approach. In some AICs, the prophet embraces the entire spectrum of activities performed by the traditional *nyanga* and combines them pastorally and medically in the context of the church. This comprehensive approach assumes value in addressing salvation in its totality to include sin, disease, sorcery, evil spirits or economic activities.

In this respect, the prophets in the AICs have a ministry which the ELCSA/CD would do well to note. Even though some pastors in the ELCSA/CD might not have some of these gifts, I am sure lay people who possess them could be encouraged to utilize them for the benefit of the church and should be encouraged to do so, rather than suppressing them. After all, Martin Luther believed in the priesthood of all believers, which for me means everyone using their God-given talents, including traditional healing, for the sake of building the Church.

In his recent address to the ELCSA/Diocesan Synod (2008), "My Church, my responsibility: A theological and ecclesiological understanding", the presiding Bishop of ELCSA, JM Ramashapa, lamented the fact that membership of the ELCSA family has dwindled dramatically over the past five years. It is a pity he did not offer any reasons for this state of affairs. However, one former member of ELCSA/CD, who agreed to an interview with me on condition of anonymity, cited the failure of this church to adopt a holistic approach to ministry as one of the reasons she had decided to terminate her membership. She confessed painfully to me that as a practising *sangoma* she was always crossing swords with her pastor over the issue. The AIC she has joined accommodates this practice.

4.3.3 AICs and community development projects

Molobi (2004:118) suggests that the AICs should be seen progressively in the light of the total economic and structural development of the whole of South

Africa. Social maladies, such as joblessness, sickness, homelessness, poverty, and pandemics like HIV/AIDS, are of deep concern among the AICs. Often communities face insurmountable challenges in attempting to address some of these challenges owing to lack of resources and funds. However, Molobi (2004:119) maintains that the AICs have proved to us that such challenges can present opportunities for churches to be self-reliant without necessarily relying on things like external funding. The Tirelo Setshaba, which Dr Molobi, with some members of the AICs in the township of Atteridgeville west of Pretoria, initiated with the Zimbabwe Institute of Religious Research and Ecological conservation, pioneered by Professor Inus Daneel with some AIC leaders in Zimbabwe, deserves a special mention in this regard.

Molobi (2004:118) indicates that the Tirelo Setshaba Community project in Atteridgeville started out as a support group comprised of AIC bishops and ministers, who initiated self-help schemes for job creation for many disadvantaged members of this township. People were empowered with methods of how to start schemes like small farming, recycling and cleaning operations. The results of this project are phenomenal. For instance, some community members are selling vegetable products at a reasonable price. More importantly, in the process, jobs were created. The annual celebrations like arbour are intended to strengthen bonds between members of the project and the community. In an unrecorded conversation with Dr Molobi on 18 September 2007 at Unisa, he indicated to me that, from its inception in 1996 until now, the project

has been sustainable and they have not received any funding from outside donors. He went further to stress that one reason for the project's growing from strength to strength is that members have ownership over it, and they started it from humble beginnings.

The ecological emphasis among the AICs in Zimbabwe through Professor Daneel's initiative remains an outstanding link between the AICs and the environment (Molobi 2000:64). Since the birth of the Zimbabwe Institute of Religious Research and Ecological Conservation (ZIRRCON) in 1988, the tree-planting initiative by the AICs in Zimbabwe has not gone unnoticed, even internationally. Through this project the AICs have been challenged on the basis of their Christian faith to become engaged in tree-planting activities. According to Molobi (2000:63) in an unrecorded interview with Professor Daneel at Unisa in June 1998, this project has generated jobs among some members of the AICs and the income they generate is theirs. Molobi (2000:63) further states that Professor Daneel indicated to him that, even in this case, the project is self-sustainable and the funding they often acquire is meagre. Some members of this project are encouraged to hone their skills in modern agricultural techniques so that they can start small farming.

ELCSA/CD has, understandably, had a long-standing partnership at different levels with agencies and churches of founder missionaries from the North. Some of the projects with partner churches in the ELCSA/CD have not yielded positive

results, because there is sometimes too much control from outside, and members are often discouraged from taking ownership of such projects. In my view, this is a case in point by which the ELCSA/CD could benefit from the AICs, as has been seen in the two models mentioned above. In the interests of relevance and progress, I think the daunting challenge for the ELCSA/CD is evaluating the drivers in terms of the what and who of the relationship. In other words, what constitutes this long-standing partnership? Presiding Bishop Ramashapa, once again in his speech, lamented the fact that financial poverty has turned members of ELCSA into 'cry babies'. When challenged by social issues, their first reaction is that they do not have sufficient money to respond. However, by means of such initiatives by the AICs, ELCSA/CD could learn to use whatever little they have to sustain themselves. After all, Jesus (cf Matthew 15:32-39) reminded his disciples, with seven loaves and a few small fish, that one can make a difference in the lives of the needy.

4.3.4 AICs and the phenomenon of urbanization

Daneel (1987:134) distinguishes between urban congregations of the AICs, which are, in a sense, extensions of a primarily rurally-oriented movement, and those which are not extensions of such a phenomenon. The latter are movements that originate and grow in the city. In such a context, the churches are more specifically urban churches ministering to urbanites. Despite these distinctions, it is clear is that the AICs in urban settings have become places in which to *feel at home* in the midst of the upheaval and insecurity that accompany

city life. According to Daneel (1987:80), their creation of comforting support systems for alienated individuals is the manifestation of the ongoing *quest for belonging*. West (1975:21) points out that in the city a heterogeneous mass of people are concentrated in a limited area. The kinship structure which shapes the social order in rural communities is absent, and new criteria for a satisfactory social structure are needed (1987:21). This is where the AICs make an important contribution, because they become "reorientation centres" in their own right and certain characteristics of *ubuntu* are manifested.

This can be depicted in their fellowship whereby individuals refer to one another as *amaqabane* (a Zulu word for comrade). For Molobi (2004:117), such expressions show a sense of communalism and solidarity. The sense of extended family is also expressed in the common use of the terms "brother and sister", even between people who are not necessarily related by blood.

Through social networks/intercourse *(*Daneel 1987:134)*,* the AICs provide scope for forming networks. In the impersonal metropolis, there is a great need to form strong social bonds with a network of friends whereby the individual can receive recognition and feel at home. The problems of urban life can be unbearable, so such networks are important in helping individuals to cope.

The AICs offer protection to those caught up in urban life, which is fraught with competitiveness and uncertainties. For instance, Daneel (1987:135) points out, in

reference to some parts of urban areas of Zimbabwe, that Zionist and Apostle prophets are constantly giving advice and help in business matters, how to find jobs and the like. In this regard, witness and proclamation are interwoven, in which God's help, protection and healing become central to people's daily lives.

AICs have played an important role in the urban areas in maintaining *social control,* which tends to be lacking on account of the absence of the kinship structure and tribal authorities (Daneel 1987:135). The church leader performs this function by setting up a set of behavioural codes, such as prohibition of liquor and extramarital sex. Discipline is maintained by means of regular pastoral interviews or by the church council.

It seems that the AICs have made inroads in ministering in a complex, diversified urban context. West (in Daneel 1987:136) has, for example, noted that the AICs in Soweto are not run on predominantly ethnic lines and that this provides an opportunity for people of different languages and cultural backgrounds to get to know one another and associate at a meaningful level. The contribution of AICs in this arena is crucial, given the impersonal nature of the urban environment.

The AICs have often played a critical role in providing *information services and mutual aid* to newcomers from elsewhere. At the church services, new members are given useful information such as the workings of the transport system and where to apply for housing. Daneel (1987:136) indicates that, in addition to

spiritual assistance, members are given material help, for example food for the unemployed, or help with funeral expenses. One of the chief aims of the *Manyano/ Women's Association* in the AICs is to reach out to those who need help and to provide relief.

Most churches falling under the ELCSA/CD are concentrated in urban areas, and are therefore urban in orientation. I think this is where the AICs, with wide-ranging activities of this nature, have a lot to offer the ELCSA/CD in terms of discovering and developing new avenues of being a church in an urban setting. I am not in any way trying to underscore the initiatives by certain congregations and groups in the ELCSA/CD who integrate some of these AIC activities into their ministries. However, I retain the sense that compared with the AICs this diocese is still lagging behind. In most cases, such activities fall outside the scope of many congregations in the ELCSA/CD.

4.3.5 AICs and leadership

There are different models of leadership in the AICs (Hayes 1992:86). Scholars tend to differ in terms of the classification of different types of leadership in the AICs. For instance, Sundkler in his earlier work (in Daneel 1987:139) distinguished between chief-type and prophet-type leaders in the AICs. He went so far as to add a third type of leader, which he called "messianic". The chief-type model of leadership closely resembles traditional social structure, whereas leaders like Isaiah Shembe can be categorized under messianic leadership, as,

according to Sundkler, they represent Christ's position as the mediator at the gates of heaven. They thus become *Black Messiah* figures. Vilakazi *et al* (1986: 1114-115) has contested Sundkler's assertion on the grounds that Shembe himself never projected himself as God or saviour, nor did his followers portray him as a messiah.

On one hand, West (1975:49) has discovered that the chief-type model of leadership espoused by Sundkler is not applicable to the urban context, because, as I pointed out earlier, traditional authority is not strong. West, quoting the sociologist Max Weber, distinguishes between "judicial" and "charismatic" models of leadership in the AICs. He found (1975:50) that the bishops exercised judicial leadership, while the prophets exercised charismatic leadership, and that the prophets were excluded from the leadership structures.

West (1975:52) maintains that judicial leadership tends to be assumed by males, while charismatic leadership is restricted to females. For instance, the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission was founded by a woman, Mama Christina Nku, whose ministry was primarily one of prophecy and healing. However, she appointed a male archbishop for the judicial leadership.

It seems to me that the nature of models of leadership in the AICs is multi-faceted, and it depends on a number of things like the social status of the members of the church, socio-political infrastructure in the areas where the

church functions, or traditional perception of the church, to mention but a few. It is clear, though, that their different patterns of leadership are flexible and adaptable to various situations when the need arises. The important thing for me is the way in which those who have been entrusted with positions of leadership utilize their gifts.

For instance, Hayes (1992:86) points out that the Church of the Lord (Aladura) in West Africa has broadened the scope of its ministry by encouraging individuals to utilize the gifts they possess. Those who have the more "spiritual" gifts of visions, revelations and prophecies are recognized by being promoted to the rank of apostle. Those whose gifts are pastoral, preaching or administrative proceed from the office of captain to that of bishop.

4.3.6 AICs and theological training

Khoapa (in Molobi 2004:115) argues that since 1964 the AICs have been concerned about their educational future. The reason behind the need for theological education is well articulated by the late South African AIC leader Paul Makhubu:

> In Africa things are changing fast politically and economically. The indigenous churches have a responsibility to meet these needs. The people are looking to the church for answers to questions affecting their local problems such as crime, educational needs, unemployment, poverty (Makhubu, in Oduro 2007:193).

It must also be noted that some AIC leaders have strongly criticized the "bookishness" of the historical churches, since they themselves have managed to

evangelize more effectively without acquiring any theological training. Daneel (1987:162) maintains that some AIC leaders stress their lack of education so as to illustrate their independence from the mission churches. For instance, Johane Maranke from Zimbabwe declared that he could interpret the books he received in his visions only by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and not by means of any mission-school training. More importantly, Masuku (1997:5) notes that AIC theology is *enacted* rather than written and is observable daily in, *inter alia*, the actions of singing, dancing or attending healing services. Certain sections of the AIC's constituency members who cannot write are congenial to this kind of theology and tend to be repelled by written theology. I would surmise that the upper and middle circles of the AIC would find both theological components appealing.

Many AICs have no particular training program; neither do they possess Bible schools, colleges, or seminaries to train both the clergy and the laity (Oduro 2007:193). However, efforts by some to improve the academic side of their training cannot be underestimated, and they have adopted different creative strategies for dealing with theological training.

Daneel (1987:209) indicates that through the Christian Institute under the late Dr Beyers Naude the African Independent Churches Association (AICA) was formed in June 1965, with the aim of launching theological training programs. Unfortunately, as a result of leadership conflicts, a faction of 46 churches under the Rev Mthembu, first president of AICA, broke away in 1970. With the help of

Rev N. van Loggerenberg of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Reformed Independent Church Association (RICA) was founded. Like the AICA, the RICA placed emphasis on theological training (Daneel 1987:210).

Bishop Ndumiso Ngada and Rev Kenosi Mofokeng have been extensively instrumental in the formation of the African Spiritual Churches Association (ASCA). According to Molobi (204:115), ASCA is one of the remaining semi-active correspondence theological schools for the AICs in South Africa.

In 1972 the *Fambidzano yamaKereke avaTema* of the AICs among the Shona Independent Churches in Zimbabwe was founded. According to Daneel (1987:211), it runs one of the most successful theological training programs of its kind. One of the motives for establishing this ecumenical movement was a need for recognition and more effective leadership through theological training. Daneel (1987:211) points out that the main contribution of *Fambidzano* has been its Theological Training by Extension program, which has enabled hundreds of office-bearers from many AICs and even a number of bishops to do a two-year diploma course.

One of the recent interesting developments has been the partnership between the AICs and universities in the area of theological training. For instance, in 1999 some AIC leaders approached the CB Powell Bible Centre at Unisa with a view to offering training for their members. Professors Francois Swanepoel, head of CP Powell Bible Centre, and Lizo Jafta, at that stage deputy dean of the Faculty

of Theology at Unisa, were enthusiastic about the idea and the Faith in Action Learning Program (FIA) was officially launched in 2000. Some of the modules offered are African Christian Leadership, HIV/Aids and Spiritual Care, Humans and Environmental Issues, to name but a few. Over the past years, many members of the AIC have enrolled for this one-year program. On completing the course, they are awarded a certificate. The spin-off for this initiative is that it has enabled some members of the AICs to gain entrance to the BTh. under-graduate degree. The certificate modules for this program are designed by lecturers together with some leaders of the AICs, which is an exciting development as well.

One could say that the AICs have adopted what Kritzinger (2002:124) terms "parallel training". Despite the noble efforts by the AICs to improve the education of their members, in-service training is still vital. Pre-service training is not always a prerequisite for those who are faithful members of the church, and are found to be capable of using prophetic and healing gifts. They learn by doing, that is, by emulating their role-models (other leaders) (Hayes 1992:87). According to one AIC leader to whom I spoke in an informal conversation/12/09/07, one of the reasons he introduced in-service training among his laity was to ease the pastoral work burden on himself. He was finding it difficult to meet the needs of the ever-increasing members in the church to which he belonged, hence the need to equip the laity, especially those who had gifts, which could benefit members.

In the area of theological education, the AICs have made tremendous progress, and ELCSA/CD has a lot to learn. Maluleke (1998:124) gives an example once related by the doyen of African theology, John Mbiti:

> A young African man had just completed his post-graduate studies abroad and there was a big feast to welcome him home. As the ceremony was on, apparently his sister was possessed by the spirits. The community asked the young man to intervene in this regard, since his sister's problem was a religious one. However, the poor young man pulled out some books to address the illness but to no avail, it only took an ordinary member of the community to shake the sister [so] that she became healed.

Mbiti's sentiments were shared by Bishop Ramashapa. In his speech, with special reference to HIV/AIDS, he contends that: "Our pastors in ELCSA are trained in pastoral theology, yet we continue having new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths in our congregations". He probably meant that even with the high academic standards, ministers of ELCSA are exposed to a certain extent, since they fail to equip ministers adequately for addressing problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Yet enormous resources are spent on the theological training of ministers in ECLSA. It would seem to me that every effort should be made to train as many people as possible for the growing churches of ELCSA. I agree with Kritzinger (2002:129) that it is important to experiment with new ways of structuring theological training, as we have seen with some leaders of the AICs. Mbiti's humorous story is a reminder that the theological training models inherited from Europe are not always relevant to the African context. Africa is different.

The AICs have really tapped into that vital force called the laity in meeting the needs of growing numbers of African Christians instead of over-burdening one

person with the responsibilities, that is, the pastor. Presiding Bishop Ramashapa, in his speech, raised concern over the shortage of ministers/pastors in ECLSA, meaning that the needs of ordinary congregants will be acutely affected in the future. Is it not high time, then, that ELCSA considered using its laity in an attempt to minister effectively to the members? All that is needed is to organize them and to involve more of them in the work of the Church. Kalanda (1976:339) goes even further, arguing that, even if lay persons were to do things their ministers did not want them to do, their full participation in the life of the Church is crucial. The AICs have strategies for inclusive utilization of the skills and time of their members. As a result, they are able to survive a great many challenges because they are dependent on the community as a whole rather than on a few individuals. Once more, I do not wish to imply that lay persons in ECLSA are inactive. However, I do believe that if a cue were to be taken from the AICs, they could be used better to advance God's mission.

The pattern established by missions in South Africa over two hundred years has created two enormous problems. First, control still lies with mission churches and organizations, especially in terms of patterns of theological education and funding. Secondly, local churches have internalized the dependency syndrome to such an extent that they are blind to their potential for taking their own initiatives. These two patterns can be broken only through a moratorium. ELCSA/CD, like the AICs, must start learning to drink from "her own wells". However, as long as

the CD is still trapped in the paternalistic structures of the mission societies which gave it birth, this dream seems very distant.

I could be misconstrued as implying that ECLSA must now surrender her Lutheranism and become completely AIC. As much as ELCSA is rooted in Lutheranism, and there is nothing wrong with that, I maintain that by learning from the AICs in certain areas this diocese could rise to its full potential. Finally, I am not blind to the fact that the AICs have had evinced their fair share of flaws and shortcomings, but which church has not? I maintain that irrespective of such inadequacies the AICs have really lived up to the challenges of the moratorium debate, and ELCSA can tap so much from these churches.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS MUTUALITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter attempts to summarize the topic and draw conclusions about the moratorium debate and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa/CD**.**

5.1   Moratorium: An evaluation

I concur with Bigambo (2001:86) that moratorium was an issue of active and sometimes heated controversy in mission co-operation between African and Western Christians from 1971-1975. There is no doubt that the moratorium proposal continued to be a thorny issue at different conferences and in various places. The conferences added new vigour to the moratorium debate, aiming at re-adjusting, reviewing and modifying the old missionary enterprise to help it adjust to new post-colonialist needs and desires. The moratorium debate was geared towards mature relationships, mutuality in mission and internationalism in future mission work, not to harming the work and funding in Africa by sincere and effective Christian missionaries.

Africans in the world mission movement were relegated to a subordinate position; as a result they were dependent on aid from Westerners. The Africans began to subject the existing patterns of relationship of their European and American benefactors to scrutiny. Their goal was to advocate for a revolutionary change at

all costs in the hope that, in a new era, a changed pattern of relationship would emerge and create balance and reciprocity in the mission activity of Christians all over the world (Bigambo 2001:86).

It was hoped that through moratorium, the African Church would be able to gain her selfhood, indigenization and self-reliance. The Western churches interpreted the moratorium to mean cessation of sending missionaries and funding to the churches of Africa for a period of five years. Furthermore, it demanded that missionaries return home and do mission work on the home front. The moratorium proposal was advocating for the alteration of power relationships between Africans and Westerners by implementing new models of mission so that African and Western denominations would share equally in the mission work of their churches.

In certain quarters, the moratorium was rejected on the grounds that it was unbiblical and a threat to the unity of the church. It was also seen as placing the existing models of mission under threat and as creating a hindrance for the African Church in taking positive, constructive steps to rectify the imbalances and abuses that had deprived it of its initiative and voice. On the other hand, its advocates saw it as a vehicle for addressing the old traditional pattern of mission enterprise and change towards a mature, interdependent relationship. In other words, the proponents of moratorium saw it as a constructive instrument aimed at freeing the African Church from injustice and domination meted out by the

Western Church. The proposal for a moratorium was closely linked to a strategy for self-reliance so that the African Church could find her own solutions to economic problems within Africa.

The proposal for a moratorium signalled the dawn of a new era. It was clear that the structures and attitudes that perpetuated dependency had to change for the sake of mission and the selfhood of the churches in the so-called Third World.

Bigambo (2001:87) observes that no matter how radical the proposal for a moratorium may seem, the call for a moratorium by Gatu and the ensuing debate should not be interpreted as missionary war between Africans and Westerners. Moreover, I wish to add, it should never be understood as the expression of a desire to reject the call to mission.

On the contrary, the call for a moratorium on Western funding and personnel for mission work in Africa sought to improve mission activity by placing it on a new basis. More importantly the call represented the wish to re-establish the African Church's self-discovery, self-expression, self-determination and self-development. It must be noted that, during the subsequent debates, four "selves" relating to the Church as an institution were also emphatically desired. These were a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and self-theologizing Church. The chief aim of these selves was helping to reconstruct the selfhood/self-identity of the Church in Africa. Even though the moratorium debate

called, *inter alia*, for a renewed commitment to mission and evangelism through the denunciation of structures that created a dominant-dependent relationship, it also wished to discourage the begging mentality.

The debate on the proposal for a moratorium did not pose a threat to mission co-operation. Instead it heralded new possibilities for seeking a solution to the problems created by the old model of mission that perpetuated a vicious cycle of dominance and dependence. Furthermore, the call for moratorium was aimed at revisiting relationships and renewing patterns of co-operation to ensure that self-reliance would liberate Africans from the service of Mammon. The 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC was an important milestone as far as the moratorium debate was concerned; for the first time delegates committed themselves to overcoming the obstacles that separated them for the sake of becoming one, sometimes at a high cost in terms of surrendering old attitudes and prejudices.

The proposal for a moratorium was a strategy to find an African answer to the development of the African Church. The idea was to activate and stimulate self-help from the African churches themselves, and, if not self-help, at least an attitude that would ensure that development was dictated by African concepts of life. The Church in Africa considered herself mature enough to determine her own destiny. This chapter in the life of the African Church offered an opportunity to rethink and reassess the relationships between the churches and the role of missionary structures. In my view, the proposal for a moratorium hinged on

mission reform and a reminder that the time had come for African churches to take charge of their own welfare.

My only disappointment in the moratorium debate is its failure to encompass issues relating to women. I must state that the analyses of power imbalances in the church and society pertaining to gender relations and the patriarchal and racist structures that justify, support and worsen the depths of the crises for women, are absent from the moratorium debate. That probably points to the fact that women were still under-represented at the time some of high-profile church meetings took place.

5.2 Partnership

The positive aspect of the moratorium debate was that it raised important matters for discussion that were extremely pertinent to the issue of partnership. Mission has often been understood and practised as a current flowing in a single direction: from North to South, from the rich to poor, from the powerful to the powerless, from male to female, from white to black, from 'Christian' civilization to godless cultures (Duncan 2007:55). This understanding of mission has limitations, as it reduces mission to something that some people do to others, rather than a common sharing in God's mission to the whole world. More often, partnership and power relationships between the so-called older/sending churches and younger/receiving churches has been shaped by this reductionist view of mission. Secondly, paternalistic mission structures can also be traced

from this problematic skewed view of mission. This tendency is reflected in the way the HIV/AIDS project is being run by the American Lutheran partner church in ELCSA/CD. Clearly the methodological approach underpinning this project is characterized by the traditional one-way approach to mission with its Western possessiveness. As a result the approach does not open up space for reciprocity; one would have hoped for a methodological approach whereby all parties consulted together on both allocation of resources and enacting of agreements. This kind of approach would acknowledge the best source of leadership offered locally.

Unfortunately, this sorry state of affairs has had, in certain instances, far-reaching effects, with older churches displaying a colonial/imperial approach to partnership on the one hand, and on the other hand, younger churches tending to resist the vertical, top-down approach to partnership. Hence, partnership on both sides of the relationship is often fraught with lack of accountability. Financial aid has too often been linked to the sending body wielding power over the receiver. As a result, donors fail to see the need to account for the manner in which they have accumulated and allocated resources, while recipients cry foul, claiming they are oppressed when they are not trusted to use the funds received. There is mutual suspicion rather than mutual trust, which amounts to denial of the reconciling purpose of mission.

Verkuyl (in Duncan 2007:56) states that there are cases in which younger churches tend to be recipients of policies formulated by sending churches without consultation, so they have to conform to attract material support. Consequently, the sending church is often tempted to set the terms of the partnership by dominating the partner church. The way in which the Commission on Theological Education, which was tasked by the Lutheran World Federation, as I indicated in Chapter 3, treated the closure of the Umphumulo Seminary is a classic example of this attitude. This begs the question: "Who sets the agenda when it comes to partner-church relationships?" Is it one partner, or both in consultation? It is interesting to note that the Commission headed by Professor Klaus Nürnberger saw the need for broader consultation only once the process was drawing to a close. I therefore share the sentiments of those who lamented the lack of consultation on this issue and challenge the meaning of both concepts of "partnership" and "consultation" in the light of this experience.

For me, decisions of this nature require mutual responsibility that entails consultation when decisions affect the "Other" in the relationship. In this regard Verkuyl is absolutely accurate when he stresses that:

> [t]he young churches also need people whose friendship and partnership are of much longer duration and who are willing to stand with them amid the temptations, threats, challenges, and storms which swirl about their heads (Verkuyl 1978:318).

When it comes to sensitive issues of this magnitude, the only way to avoid misunderstandings and problems is to consult in depth and with absolute honesty

with all stakeholders, with transparency and accountability on both sides. Probably there was a need for reconfiguration of theological education in ELCSA, but I have found the manner in which this process was carried out problematic.

5.3   Guidelines for the road ahead

Having placed the moratorium debate in its context, as well as citing the challenges it poses to ELCSA/CD and its partners, I now offer some guidelines for the future.

5.3.1 Change in mentality

Bosch and Saayman (1987:167) assert that both older and younger churches will need a change in mentality if they are to see one another through new eyes and accept one another with new hearts. Duncan (2007:56) maintains that this will require repentance (*metanoia)* as a turning from independence in relationship towards interdependent community (*koinonia*) so that both partners can begin to listen to each another in a relationship of comparative equality. Respect for the independence, autonomy and separate identity of partners should serve as the hallmarks of interdependence. Partnership requires mutual respect for each other's decisions. Duncan (2007:56) reminds us that, beyond the question of sending mission partners, whatever their experience or qualifications, there ought to be an acknowledgement that the best source of leadership is to be found locally. Partnership has to take account of both the intellectual and spiritual gifts of Christian leaders in younger churches and the desire on the part of these

churches to express their selfhood despite the many positive spin-offs of the missionary movement. I believe true mutuality can take place when both partners benefit or sacrifice together.

The focus on money and personnel has had a detrimental effect on the growth of partner relations, despite many missionaries claiming achievements in their endeavours. Hence, even today the West is battling to overcome its donor mentality and the Third World its recipient mentality. Against this background, the sending church's needs are never defined, and this has always been a problem in partnership. Duncan (2007:66) observes that receiving churches' needs are blatant - personnel and money. But what exactly do sending churches need, and who determines those needs? I would surmise that the sending churches find it difficult at times to declare their needs, for the simple reason that partnership is costly and it means trying out, opening up and letting go of the power with which they struggle to part. In their view, they would cease to maintain dominance in relations. The sending churches need to learn that growth by letting go is painful, but it results in maturity, and that may involve sharing both the threats and the challenges to our common existence.

I must say that by and large the mission partners of the ELCSA/CD are still trapped in relationship dominance; the two cases I have highlighted attest to this. I am suggesting a few practical guidelines for sharing in the true spirit of mutuality

which might be helpful to ELCSA/CD and its partners; the list is by no means

exhaustive:

- The spirit of equality should prevail between ELCSA/CD and its partners regarding decision-making;

- The mission partners should enable ELCSA/CD to recognize the potential and power it has to organize itself;

- Both ELCSA/CD and its partners must open up to one another as friends in mutual trust and accountability;

- They need to share each other's needs and problems in a relationship where there are no absolute donors or absolute recipients;

- Promote the holistic mission of the Church in obedience to God's liberating will;

- The mission partners should also be willing to receive the resources offered by ELCSA/CD, even if these are not in monetary terms;

- Both sides require considerable commitment and responsibility to repent of past errors, and reconcile for future action together through consultation.

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5.3.2 A new definition of reciprocity

Equally crucial to a change in mentality is *redefinition of reciprocity or*

interdependence. Duncan (2007:66) has already alluded to the fact that, owing to

the superiority complex born out of paternalistic mission structures, the sending

church rarely declares her needs, and this has always been a problem in

partnership. In turn, patronizing attitudes on the part of sending churches has

reduced younger churches to the status of beggars, and has created the false

assumption that they have nothing to offer to the sending church. Part of the

problem, as Bosch and Saayman (1987:172) have rightly observed, is that the

commodities given and received in the mutual relationships between older and

younger churches consist exclusively of personnel, money and skills. The older

churches are definitely replete with these commodities and share with others out of their abundance. The younger churches, on the other hand, do not have the luxury of such commodities, but that does not by any means suggest that they have nothing to offer to the older churches.

Bosch and Saayman (1987:173) remind us that genuine reciprocity is not dependent on the question of who has most to contribute in the area of finance. Reciprocity and interdependence must therefore go beyond the narrow confines of material, personnel and technical proficiency. And this means that all parties involved can both give and receive, *but they do not need to give the same elements that they receive*.

What can the younger churches offer the older churches? The churches of the Third World also have much to give that cannot easily be calculated: a dynamic awareness of the presence of the living God, an expectancy of God's action to right wrongs, a conviction that the Church is a community (Duncan 2007:57). In other words, Indigenous peoples are challenging the Western churches to recognize the riches of their culture and spirituality, which emphasize interconnectedness. Secularization has strongly affected the churches of the West more than it has the South, and church membership is declining, while the South is growing in leaps and bounds. For this reason, Verkuyl (1978:332) is at pains to acknowledge that secularization would have been better managed if the Western Church had been willing to dialogue with non-Western Christians.

In similar vein, the Lutheran churches in Africa, including the ELCSA/CD, are vibrant and growing even though they are poor, while the Lutheran churches in Europe are dwindling, even though they are still rich. It is therefore clear that, as far as future relationships are concerned, Lutheran churches in Africa will not need their European counterparts for evangelization, but for other needs. In fact it seems to me that owing the decline in membership Lutheran churches in Europe need evangelization from their African counterparts. The rich African spirituality propagated by African theology (if it is not treated as a mere novelty but engaged in and interrogated seriously, when experienced in a Western context influenced by Western New Age thinking, could go a long way towards helping the older churches to become more vibrant.

In Chapter 4, it was shown how the AICs tap into their laity to their advantage. Bosch and Saayman (1987:175) point out that younger churches all over the world are, for the most part, churches of laity in remote little congregations, some of which see a priest or minister once a month at the most, or even once a quarter; between visits, divine worship and congregational activities go on their way uninterrupted. Most European churches, in their formalism and strong emphasis on orthodoxy, have not yet tapped into this force.

I think the few gifts which I have highlighted above could benefit ELCSA/CD and its partners in a quest for possible strategies and opportunities for future

partnership. This study attempted to look at the moratorium issue as a phenomenon in its own time. Secondly I dealt with the challenges the moratorium debate posed for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa/CD. The AICs have taken the lead in attempting to live up to the "four-selves" principle, that is, self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and self-theologizing. I indicated areas in which ELCSA/CD could learn from the AICs. Finally, the study explored issues of mutuality and interdependence, and a few guidelines are proposed for ELCSA/CD.

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