

FROM REDUCTIONISM TO CONTEXTUALIZATION: TOWARDS A RELEVANT
PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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INTRODUCTION

1. The statement of the problem:

It is said that the mainline Pentecostal churches in South Africa are silent about certain contextual issues that have arisen in Missiological circles recently. These issues concern race, class, gender and inter-faith dialogue. The purpose of this dissertation is to ascertain whether this is indeed true.

2. A Working hypothesis:

If the above statement of the problem is correct, then I will propose a way forward for Pentecostal missiology, in this case, dealing with the issues of race, class, gender and inter-faith dialogue. However, if this statement is incorrect, then I hope to evaluate the Pentecostal stance on the above mentioned issues.

3. Sources:

Two primary sources will be consulted:

- a) Written material: found in libraries, church archives, and personal notes of pastors in these mainline Pentecostal churches.
- b) Interviews: I have chosen the way of qualitative interviews. I will interview the leaders of the 3 Pentecostal churches concerned.

While reading a small booklet entitled "A relevant Pentecostal witness" my attention was captured by a thought provoking headline which read, "The silent Pentecostals".

Under this heading the author argues that the Pentecostal churches in South Africa are silent about certain crucial issues. issues pertaining to apartheid, racial discrimination, poverty, sexism, economic exploitation and inter-faith dialogue. On the basis of this he draws four assumptions:

Firstly, that the Pentecostal heritage did not take root locally, secondly, that the Pentecostal message was highly spiritual, thirdly, that the Pentecostals are preoccupied with heaven, and finally that their witness is irrelevant!

Being in the Pentecostal denomination since birth, attending their Theological College and serving as both an Ordained Pastor and a full-time Lecturer, I am somewhat embarrassed to agree with the above author's argument. At the outset let me say that while I agree with the above author, my loyalty and allegiance will always be in the Pentecostal church.

I do suspect, however, that the Mainline Pentecostal churches in South Africa are silent about certain contextual issues that have risen in missiological circles recently. These concerns are stipulated as follows.

Firstly, what is the Pentecostal motivation for mission?

Secondly, to what extent, if ever, is the Pentecostal church involved in socio-political issues like racial discrimination, apartheid, reconciliation and poverty?

Thirdly, what is the role of women in the Pentecostal churches?

Finally, since South Africa is a pluralistic society, what would be the stance of the Pentecostal church on issues such as inter-faith dialogue?

By Mainline Pentecostal Churches, I refer to the following three churches: The Apostolic Faith Mission, The Assemblies of God, and The Full Gospel Church of God. These churches, confirms South African church historian, Gerald Pillay (1994:193) are the three oldest, and most influential Pentecostal churches in South Africa. Most independent Pentecostal churches existing in South Africa today can trace their history back to these three churches. These three 'mother churches', began between 1905 and 1910 moulded Pentecostal theology as accepted today by most Pentecostal churches.

Hence, in order to understand Pentecostal missiology, it would only be right to investigate these churches, since their influence can be found in almost all South African Pentecostal churches

My objective in this study is to find out if Pentecostal churches in South Africa are silent or perhaps not, about issues of race, reconciliation, social justice, gender and inter-faith dialogue. I personally think that the outcome of this study will show that the Pentecostal churches are silent concerning these contextual issues. The outcome of this study will either confirm or deny my suspicions. However, since this is a scholarly study, I will try my utmost not to let my prejudice influence the outcome of this study.

There is a good possibility that my suspicions will be incorrect. If my suspicions are incorrect, then I will evaluate the 'Pentecostal voice' concerning race, gender, socio-political action and inter-faith dialogue.

However, if my suspicions are correct, and the Pentecostal churches are silent about the issues mentioned, then I would like to propose a way forward for a contextual, relevant Pentecostal missiology. A Pentecostal missiology that is neither shy nor inadequate in speaking out on crucial issues, and taking action.

4. Defining the terms

I have already defined what I mean by the term 'Mainline Pentecostal Churches' in South Africa. I shall now go a step further and give a definition of the term 'Pentecostals', as it will be used in the rest of this study.

The term Pentecost refers to the 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit' on the church on the day of Pentecost, as described in Acts chapter 2. The term Pentecostal implies that the first Pentecost shall be repeated in the life of all Christians! Pentecostals are those who have received a significant ministry of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, which has not only manifested Himself in the realm of blessing and empowerment, but has also affected every phase of their lives.

Widely accepted in Pentecostal circles, is T.B Barratt's (in Bloch-Hoell 1964:1) definition of Pentecostalism:

“Much of what is being taught is fundamental truths, accepted in all Evangelical denominations. Yet there is a difference, as Pentecostals seek to return as much as possible to the doctrine, faith and practice of original Christianity in all manners. What really distinguishes us from others in this way is our definite claim to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, in the same way as the 120 on the day of Pentecost, a Spirit baptism accompanied by the speaking in tongues, as was also the case on the other four occasions related in the Acts.”

Duffield (1983:XV), the co-author of ‘Foundations of Pentecostal Theology’, supports Barratt's statement, and adds the following information:

“The Pentecostal movement is not just based on an inspirational experience. It is grounded upon the entire Bible as the word of God. We are a Bible believing people.”

According to the ‘World Christian Encyclopaedia’, edited by D.B Barret and published in 1982 by the Oxford University Press, there are over 51 000 000 Christians in the

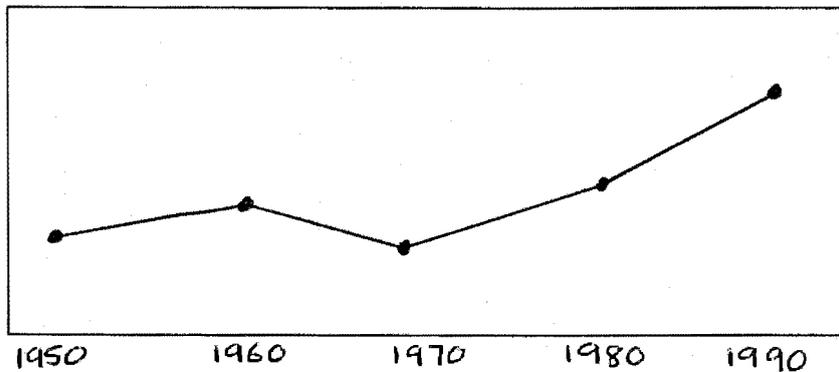
Pentecostal Denominations around the world, plus some 11 000 000 more within other denominations who worship in Pentecostal fashion. This movement, he says, appears to be the fastest growing segment of the Christian Church in the world today.

According to Froise's 1999/2000 edition of the ‘South African Christian Handbook’, the Pentecostals in South Africa in 1992 represented 4.5% of the Christian church. In 1996 the percentage rose to 8.9% and it is rising continually (2000:60).

Concerning the three mainline Pentecostal churches under discussion in the study, the following statistics are given by Froise (2000:60-61):

	Blacks	Coloured	Asian	Whites	Total
Apostolic Faith Mission	786 586	111 158	8 062	211 340	1,124 067
Full Gospel Church	125 079	34 084	27 359	49 181	237 761
Assemblies of God	254 322	23 707	704	12 999	293 594

Froise (1999:76) goes on to show the growth of these churches in this graph below:



5. Defining the term 'mission'

In interviews with pastors of these Mainline Pentecostal churches it was confirmed that 'mission' is reduced to the saving of souls. This reductionist understanding of mission has led the Pentecostal church to put all its efforts into the saving of souls. Mission means proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen, taking them out of spiritual darkness and bringing them into the light.

The zeal and desire to save souls lies at the heart of Pentecostal mission. Hence any mission activity in the Pentecostal church that does not lead to the saving of souls is quickly disregarded. To a great extent missions are measured by either the number of souls saved or the number of new churches planted.

While I see absolutely nothing wrong with saving souls or the planting of churches, I must admit that this is a reductionist understanding of mission. This reductionist understanding of mission in Pentecostalism has led to the denial of the purpose and plan of God in the political, economic, and social context in which individuals finds

themselves. Hence political, social and economic issues either do not appear on the agenda of the Pentecostal church or if it does, it is given a secondary position at best.

In essence, I can say that the Pentecostal understanding of mission was exactly like that of the Evangelicals prior to Lausanne (The International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne – Switzerland, July 1994).

6. Structure of dissertation

In Chapter One I wish to briefly describe the history of each of the mainline Pentecostal Churches under discussion. The very history of these churches, I believe, gives one a working understanding of how they perceive mission. In their history one is able to see how European and American Pentecostal churches took root in African soil. In their history one is able to see the challenges that the African culture posed to Pentecostalism. These issues range from racism and paternalism to syncretism and independence.

In Chapter Two I would shed light on the traditional understanding of missiology in South African Pentecostal churches. Chapter One forms an integral part of Chapter Two, since the history of these churches shaped their understanding of missiology. Issues like their emphasis on “saving souls” are part of their heritage as well as being one of their fundamental statements in missiology. Viewing “Africans as objects of missions” is both a missiological dilemma as well as a historical pattern. Other issues that will be dealt with in this chapter will be the churches “anti-social, anti-political, and anti-ecumenical” stance and also their pre-occupation with syncretism and paternalism.

Since this is a dissertation about Pentecostal churches it would be incomplete if the work of the Holy Spirit is not given a chapter on its own. Thus Chapter Three deals with the work and person of the Holy Spirit and His pivotal role in Pentecostal circles. Pentecostals see the Holy Spirit as the initiator of missions (Acts 2:1-13), the sender in missions (Acts 1:8) and the One who equips the believer for missions (Heb.

4:13.Eph 6:17). This chapter will also look at the role the Holy Spirit plays in areas like reconciliation between races, and social justice. I would also like to answer the question “Is the roll of the Holy Spirit used as a smokescreen in Pentecostalism, aiding pious Pentecostals to ignore questions about social concerns?”

In chapter four I will investigate the legacy of racism and apartheid in the mainline Pentecostal churches. While there were a few exceptions to the rule, most Pentecostal leaders, I would think, supported the status quo or were not willing to “disturb the peace”. Reasons will be given as to why these churches were so silent about racism, and also to what degree racism was an accepted part of their church structure/policy during the apartheid era. Two important questions will be addressed in this chapter.

- i) Is racism still alive in the Pentecostal churches?
- ii) Is authentic reconciliation possible?

Chapter Five will deal with social concerns that either finds themselves at the bottom of the Pentecostal agenda, or are totally ignored. When placed at the bottom of the agenda, issues of social justice are usually “departmentalised.” By this I mean that the area of social justice usually becomes a small under-staffed, under-funded, peripheral department in Pentecostal churches. Issues of politics and economics are either deemed as a “waste of time” or “worldly.” I would like to examine the reason for this pietistic attitude and then propose a way forward for Pentecostal Missiology.

Chapter Six deals with the rights of women, their place in the church and their rights in active ministry. The rights of ordination of female ministers have raised much concern in Pentecostal churches. While this issue is widely discussed in Pentecostal circles, action is very slow. While the Full Gospel church and the Apostolic Faith Mission allow the ordination of women the Assemblies of God condemns outright any clerical positions for women. The debate, however, is still very polarised in these

churches. Again, I will examine the reason for the various attitudes in these churches and propose a way forward for Pentecostal missiology.

Chapter Seven will deal with the challenges that the reality of religious pluralism poses on Pentecostal churches. While interviewing some Pentecostal pastors, I realised that these pastors are either hostile to, or isolate themselves from other religions. There were some pastors who were prone to having competition with other religions. I would like to investigate the reasons that lead to this attitude. Finally, I will conclude by placing these attitudes in the four models that Lockhead (1988) formulates in his book "The Dialogical Imperative".

The conclusion of this dissertation will prove whether my suspicions about the Pentecostal churches remaining silent about certain contextual issues are correct or not. I will also present a way forward for Pentecostal missiology by using the 'Pastoral cycle'.

Part One: A historical and theological perspective on mission in Pentecostalism in South Africa.

Chapter 1

A historical survey of the Pentecostal churches in South Africa:

Exposing the reductionism.

1.1 AMERICAN HERITAGE

Before discussing the history of Pentecostalism in South Africa it would be correct to trace its history starting in North America. This task must initially be undertaken because Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal ideas were “either borrowed from overseas, especially American “fundamentalist writings or from white missionaries and some of their movements ” (Pillay 1994:xxxii). Roth (1998:122) for example, claims that American Pentecostalism has a strongly conservative political agenda coupled with highly individualistic piety. South African churches have adopted this same trend.

1.2 NORTH AMERICAN ROOTS

“The Pentecostal movement was a direct offshoot of the holiness movement which in turn had grown out of Methodism in North America” (Pillay 1994:ix). Perfectionism was strongly emphasized by the Pioneering Methodist ministers in North America, like Thomas Webb, Francis Asbury and D Jarret. In its early years this movement experienced rapid growth followed by ‘rivalistic’ and ecstatic worship accompanied by dancing and even some evidence of glossolalia. This ecstatic worship and glossolalia later became characteristic of typical Pentecostal churches throughout North America.

Oosthuizen (1975:66) confirms this development by stating that Methodism had Pentecostal tendencies and actually became the source of Pentecostalism in the U.S.A. “Camp meetings” marked the second stage in Pentecostal development. In the 1850s Baptists and Methodists called for camp meetings – these religious meetings lasted for days and even weeks and were marked by ecstatic worship, dancing and glossolalia (Pillay 1994:x). These meetings marked the beginning of the Holiness movement, which was the next development towards Pentecostalism. The Holiness movement sought for a balance between ecstatic worship, glossolalia and holy living with true fruits of repentance from sin. The message of the Holiness Movement, says Oosthuizen (1975:67) is more closely related to Moody, Sankey and Torrey’s demands for serious penitence before conversion.

The list of names that contribute to laying the foundation for the Pentecostal movement is too vast to mention in this restricted discussion.* However, let me to mention three men who most impressed me. Irving, under the influence of the writings of John Fletcher that began the use of nomenclature such as “baptism with fire” and “baptism with the Holy Ghost”. Glossolalia featured strongly in the meetings of Edward Irving (1831), D.L.Moody (1875) and during the Welsh Revival (1904) as well as in other Holiness Meetings (Pillay 1994:xii).

*For a more exhaustive study of the contributions of different people in the Pentecostal movement see, Burgess, S & McGee, G, 1988 *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

However, it was largely through the teachings of Charles Parham, a Methodist priest, who left the church in 1895, that glossolalia became a distinguishing feature and experience in the Pentecostal Movement. He was the founder of the Bethel Bible College that produced men like William Seymour, whose name is synonymous with the Azusa Street Revival (Oosthuizen 1995:68).

At 214 Bonnie Brae Street (Los Angeles), humble home of William Seymour developed into the “hot-bed” of religious ecstasy, glossolalia and the birth of the Pentecostal movement. The historian Frodsham, (Bloch-Hoell 1964:38) writes about the house at Bonnie Brae street: “The shouts of praise were so tremendous that it was noised abroad that there was a gracious visit from on high.”

The crowds of people were too much for the little house at Bonnie Brae, and by 19 April 1906 the Pentecostal believers moved the meetings to rented premises at 312 Azusa Street (Bloch-Hoell 1964:38). The building was situated in a poor Negro neighbourhood (it is no wonder that both American and South African Pentecostals talk about the “black roots” of Pentecostalism).*

The similarities between North American and South African Pentecostalism are many, since American Pentecostalism influenced and shaped South African Pentecostalism. I will elaborate on at least four areas of similarities between them.

*However, in many books written on the rise of Pentecostalism, the Pentecostal movement is credited to people like Charles Parham, rather than to William Seymour. Many deny the impact that Seymour and other Black ministers had on the movement.

1.3 Similarities between North American and South African Pentecostalism

My intention here is not to offer an extensive discussion on the four issues, but merely to illustrate the similarities.

a. Vacuum caused by industrialization

Oosthuizen (1975:66) observes that during the 18th century Industrial Revolution, established Christianity could not give direction to an era in which people and human problems accumulated. At this time non-conformist Christianity stepped in and Pentecostalism stepped in to fill the gap. The same scenario can be seen in South Africa. Around the 20th century orthodox Christianity and the state Church could not give direction to an era in which people were plagued by racial segregation, economic exploitation and political alienation. This left a large vacuum of despondency in 20th century Christianity.

The South African war of 1899-1902 between British imperialism and Afrikaner republicanism widened the religious vacuum (Hofmeyer 1994:150-151). 20th century capitalism, industrialization, the discovery of minerals and civil war caused Indian, African, Coloured and some White communities to be weak and divided, hence causing the religious vacuum to grow even bigger. Similarly to their counter-parts in North America, the South African Pentecostal Churches seized the moment. It was not long before Apostolic Faith Mission (1908), the Full Gospel Church (1910) and the Assemblies of God (1917) denominations were established.

During this unstable era fragmented groups of Africans, Coloureds, Indians and White people found some sort of stability, acceptance and freedom in the Pentecostal churches.

Early Pentecostalism provided a “safe haven” for different cultures and colours to join together in ecstatic worship and to speak in one common language – glossolalia.* Bloch-Hoell (1964:39) confirms the same kind of colour and cultural acceptance at the Azusa street revival. In that downtown Negro community in Los Angeles, blacks, whites, and even Chinese gathered together daily in worship.

b. Education:

“It is a movement of primitive Christianity, of the less educated, in which adherents express their freedom and emphasize the fundamental aspect of Christianity” (Oosthuizen 1975:67). It is the less educated that makes up society’s poor. In the above statement Oosthuizen states that Pentecostalism attracts both the less educated and the poor. This is true in South Africa; since the 1900s Pentecostal Churches were made up of society’s poor and less educated. Large percentages of Black migrant workers from the “homelands”, Indian indentured workers from India, Coloured farm workers and unemployed White people all formed a large percentage of the Pentecostal population. Today, things are a little bit different; many wealthy, educated people are in Pentecostal churches. Huge modern buildings are a proof of this change. However, poor and lesser-educated groups of people still continue to attend these churches.

*Glossolalia or better known as “speaking in tongues” was sign of being “filled with the Holy Spirit”. It is said, in Pentecostal circles, that Glossolalia has the tendency to unite people of different colour and cultures – since they all speak in one common language.

Hence, the extensive growth among the Black population of Soweto, the Indian population of Phoenix, the Coloured population of the Cape Flats and even the Nigerians and Mozambicans living in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

c. Static institutionalism

“In North America,” says Oosthuizen (1975:67); “the Pentecostal movement was a Puritan reaction to static institutionalism in the established American churches.”

This was also the case in South Africa. The Pentecostal movement was a direct reaction against this static institutionalism of the established churches. Pentecostalism argues that churches like the Roman Catholic Church (started in 1737), the Anglican Church (started in 1848), the Presbyterian Church (started in 1814) and the Dutch Reformed Church (of 1665) evolved into a static organisations with nothing to offer other than dead liturgical programs. By the 1900s the institutionalization of these older churches created a vacuum in South African Christianity, which was timely filled by Pentecostalism.

Being against stringent church policy, strict liturgical formats and high hierarchical orders in these older churches, the Pentecostal churches introduced sporadic worship, instantaneous liturgical formats and loose leadership models. There was much freedom in church services, including dancing, shouting, crying, testifying and contemporary exposition of scripture. To date Pentecostals argue that “The church is not a dead organisation but rather a living organism”. Hence emphasis is placed on sporadic worship, the operations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Word of God, in the indigenous Pentecostal style. Very little, or even sometimes no emphasis is placed on church organisation, structures or even management. This very characteristic of

the Pentecostal churches led to an increase in the number of people joining them, having left the older “mission churches”.

It is ironical that what the Pentecostal churches were fighting against (static institutionalism) soon became part of their own structures. It was not too long and hierarchical orders crept in, not to mention the “new church orders, rules and regulation”. This led to more and more splits within the Pentecostal church. It seemed as if no matter where you turned you always ran into the arms of “church legalism”. Each new Pentecostal church offered “freedom” but it did not last for too long.

d. Raising the standard of morality

North American Pentecostalism, says Oosthuizen (1975:67), reacted against the developing evils and degrading morality in society, and hence gave direction to those who lost their bearings in a situation of religious apathy. It is precisely these factors that, I believe, led to the spread of Pentecostalism among the Hindus in Durban, the Coloureds in the Western Cape and the Africans in the old Transvaal.

While the Pentecostal movement did not speak out much against the sin of apartheid or economic exploitation of the masses, it did speak out extremely loudly against alcohol, smoking, drug abuse, idolatry, witchcraft, and adultery. It seemed, when weighing sins, that the sins of alcohol, smoking, and adultery were more evil and hideous than apartheid. Or was it sheer piety mixed with some State theology?

Not much has changed nowadays, since the Pentecostal church continues to speak out against drugs, alcohol and adultery. There has not yet been a full-scale stand against racism, the sins of the past, or even any talk about authentic race reconciliation in these

so-called multi-racial churches. One can easily conclude that Pentecostals are pre-occupied with the “sins of the flesh”, thus blinding them to other contemporary issues, such as race reconciliation, economic exploitation of the masses or any other social concerns of justice.

However, Pentecostal churches continue to grow. The strong emphasis on morality attracts thousands of South Africans, because of the moral vacuum in our country. For example, because of the high rate of HIV/AIDS in our country, Pentecostals preach on adultery, fornication and other sexual immoral acts, and thus attract many adherents. Their strong preaching against drug abuse, alcohol, violence, and crime has brought about excessive growth in these churches, particularly in the Black townships, the Cape Flats, and the densely populated Indian and White communities in South Africa.

1.4 The influence of North American Pentecostalism on South African Pentecostalism.

From the four similarities indicated above one is able to discern the influence of the North American church. Roth (1998:122) for example, claims that American Pentecostalism has a strong conservative political agenda coupled with highly individualistic piety. This American trend or thought pattern has been adopted by the earliest leaders of the South African Pentecostal churches since their inception in the early 1900's. From the 1900s to date, a large majority of Pentecostals held a strongly conservative political agenda in a nation that was being torn apart by institutionalized racism. Individualistic pietism also became a shield that protected White Pentecostals from the criticism that was being levied at them by their Black counterparts.

The obsession of dealing with the “sins of the flesh” was also something that was passed on to the South African church by their American counterparts. This was the key teaching of the American Puritans, the American revivalists and the teaching that flooded the American seminaries, and were carried to South Africa by the American missionaries. There is nothing wrong with this type of preaching and teaching. However, when it blinds the eyes of the church to other evils like racism, and economic injustices, then, one should be sceptical of its agenda.

Also, the supreme deity of Jesus Christ as Lord gave rise to hostility towards any other religious group, both in America and in South Africa. To a large extent, the Pentecostal church in South Africa became pre-occupied with fighting the demonic forces of Hinduism, Islam and Traditional African Religions, while the fight against race, gender and economic inequality was neglected. The same paradigm is seen in American Pentecostalism. All these trends can be traced in the histories of all three Pentecostal churches under investigation in this dissertation.

I shall now proceed to discuss the history of each of these churches individually, highlighting American influences and also the absence or arrogance towards other major crises that was pertinent in South Africa at those historic times.

1.5 A Brief History of the Church

Before I start with the history of these churches, let me say that my goal is to be as objective as possible when interpreting history. However, the writing of value-free history is, in fact, not possible. I am fully conscious that my interpretation might not necessarily represent the views of all the members of these three churches.

However, I will endeavor to pursue my research according to accepted critical scholarship norms.

In all fairness I admit that my objectivity may be influenced by the following factors.

Firstly, I write from an Indian English speaking perspective. Secondly, I write from a position of experiencing first hand oppression under the apartheid regime. And finally, I write as a fully-fledged Pentecostal and long-standing member of the Full Gospel Church, which means that I accept as true the doctrinal claims of my denomination.

1.6 A brief history of the three mainline Pentecostal churches in South Africa.

The three Pentecostal churches under discussion all began as independent missions, at first mainly to the Blacks in South Africa, and steadily they grew into fully-fledged denominations. With this development, says Pillay (1994:193), the initial revivalistic nature of these churches lasted well into the second decade of the 20th century, but became somewhat muted for a time. However, this movement was “refueled again by new congregations joining, by new leaders emerging, by visiting revivalist preachers from the U.S.A* and most of all by small groups seceding and reaffirming their original stance on holiness, divine healing and spirit baptism.” (Pillay 1994:193).

*To date a year does not pass without these Pentecostal churches hosting seminars and conferences for their American counterparts.

One observation that I made about the early history of these denominations is the lack of Black evangelists and ministers. I believe that the Black evangelists and ministers played a crucial, even a leading role in the development of these churches. Then, why are they not given credit in the written history of these churches?

Pillay (1997:193) gives a valid argument, when he states:

“The adoption of apartheid policies within these church organisation often meant that the full contributions of these Black pioneers was not recognized. Also, under White supervision these Black evangelists had little room to assume leadership and many of them left to found their own churches.”

It is for this reason that one will not find many Black names in the written history of these churches. This is one of the reasons that the piece of history that I record will have recurring names of European (white) leaders.

1.6.1 **Apostolic Faith Mission**

1.6.1.1 Roots in the Christian Zion church

The rise of a new group of African independent churches and the birth of Pentecostalism in South Africa were both to be influenced by the founding of the Zion church (Pillay 1996:187). This began in the early 1890s when a Dutch Reformed Church minister, Petrus Le Roux, came under the influence of his teacher Andrew Murray. Le Roux started his mission work in Wakkerstroom and within seven years he had 2000 members (Pillay 1994:187).

Because of his teaching on Pentecostal divine healing Le Roux was asked to resign from the Dutch Reformed Church. By 1897 Le Roux and a friend, Buchler, began affiliating with Dowie's Zion church. John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907) was the founder of Zion City in Illinois U.S.A. Le Roux remained attracted to Dowie's interpretation of holiness and especially his emphasis on divine healing. Commissioned by Dowie, Daniel Bryant and Nicholas Rideout arrived in South Africa in 1904 to officially plant the Zion Church, and appointed Le Roux as elder of this local church.

“The arrival of the four Pentecostal ministers in South Africa on 15 May 1908 led to the Zion Church receiving the Pentecostal message of Baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to the baptism with water and evidenced by the speaking in Tongues (glossolia) after the experience of the first Christian's day of Pentecost” (Pillay 1994:189).

The four ministers were John. G.Lake, Thomas Hezmelhalch, A.Lehman and a Miss Sackett. The Pentecostal Church that these ministers started mainly reached out to those “poor and socially uprooted whites, a large number of whom were Afrikaners, flocking to the city after the devastation of the South African war” (Pillay 1994:195). At this time Le Roux left the Zion Church and joined Lake's Pentecostal Church. When Le Roux left the Zion Church many of his African followers and leaders went with him, but the rest moved away forming their own African-led Zion Churches (hence the formation of the African Independent Churches).

1.6.1.2 Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa

The four overseas missionaries later formed the Executive Committee of the newly found Apostolic Faith Mission. On 27 May 1909 the people represented on the Executive Committee were, President: Tom Hezmalhalch; Vice President: John G.Lake, Treasurer: H.M.Turney; Secretary: J.H.L Schumann and members; Lehman, Van De Walt and Elliot (De Wet 1989:82).*

By 1910 this church was registered with the Government as the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.** As usual this newly registered Pentecostal church was non-racial at the beginning.*** But as it developed, it accepted the status quo of the state. This attitude was present from the earliest days of the A.F.M. Allow me to elaborate on the three specific instances that stood out, during this time. Firstly, it was Lehman who held separated services for the Blacks because of the language difficulty (Pillay 1994:190).****

* De Wet, C.R 1989 *The A.F.M. Church in South Africa 1908-1980* Ph.D. Thesis: U.C.T

** Hollenweger, W (1972:120) *The Pentecostals* Minneapolis:Augsburg.

***Even in the U.S.A. the Pentecostal churches started out non-racial and as they developed into an institution, racism crept in.

**** Like the D.R. Church, a method of practicality during one time in history later evolved into a doctrine.

Secondly, it appears that Lake favoured this segregation (Lindsay 1952:22). The idea of segregation became more formal under Lake's leadership. This is shown clearly by South African Church historian, G.Pillay (1994:191):

“In 1908 the church decided that the baptism of Natives shall in future take place after the baptism of White people. A year later it decided that there would be a different baptism for White, Coloured and Black members. The Black church was given a White superintendent and White and Black branches were required to have financial autonomy. White superintendency of the African branch was also a Government pre-requisite.”

Thirdly, when Le Roux was elected president from 1915-1943, “he concentrated mainly on the White section of the A.F.M and only retained limited supervision of the African mission station in Wakkerstrom” (Sundkler 1976:55).

The stage was already set by the three founding members of the A.F.M for a segregated church. The rest of the leaders, thereafter, just followed this set pattern.

However, despite the racial tension, Black leaders were seen to emerge. While this “new Pentecostal gospel” did not break down the walls of racial segregation or dilute anti-black feelings in South Africa, the preaching of the gospel by Black evangelists still thrived.

Elias Letwaba was an outstanding example. He joined the A.F.M. in 1913, obtained a marriage officer's license by 1921, and founded the Patmos Bible School in 1930. All this was done, says Pillay (1994:191), without financial assistance from any White church or the White leadership of the A.F.M.

Alongside Elias Letwaba emerged D.S.Mokwena. These were the first Black ministers in this church who obtained permission and authority to administer marriage officer's license. Other prominent leaders, says Sundkler (1976:55) were Daniel Nkoyane and Elijah Mahlangu. The latter two, however left the A.F.M and founded their own churches because of the racial tension in this church. This attitude did not stop with the A.F.M; the A.O.G. and the F.G.C. adopted it as well. The case of the latter two churches will be discussed separately.

Racism was not the only trend that could be found in A.F.M. history, but also the paternalistic attitudes of the white leaders posed another serious problem. "Black churches", says Pillay (1994:191) "were given white superintendents. White superintendency of all Black branches was also a governmental prerequisite" which the A.F.M followed without any questions. Because of the governmental implementation of white supremacy, the problem of paternalism in this church grew all the stronger. White supremacy fed the virus of paternalism.

Under constant white supervision, Black pastors and evangelists had little or even no room to assume leadership or to develop their leadership abilities. Hence, the recognition of Black pioneers is so lacking in the written histories of these mainline Pentecostal churches. Subsequently, this led to many Black leaders like Daniel Nkoyane and Elijah Mahlangu leaving the church and forming their own churches.

Another trend that is evident through the history of the A.F.M. church is the tendency to neglect the contributions made by pioneering women, both Black and White.

“The Pentecostals’ theory about women and the actual roles which women play in the Pentecostal movement are not so easily reconciled.”* This is true in the history of the A.F.M church, only in passing are women mentioned, yet their names and contributions are ignored.

In his chapter on the role of women in the A.F.M church, De Wet** can only conclude:

“Women workers formed an important part of the A.F.M’s task force during the early years... the dynamic growth of the Pentecostal movement is due to its ability, since it’s inception to mobilize and effectively deploy women into missionary service.”

He does, in passing, mention the names of a few prominent women in the A.F.M church. Names like Aimee Semple Mac Pherson, Maria Fraser and Johanna Nxumalo. He also makes mention of a ‘certain’ Sister Turney and a ‘certain’ Miss James.

Marius Nel (in Landman 1996:243-257), a minister in the Krugersdorp A.F.M church, writes an extensive and impressive piece of work on Eva Stuart as the first pioneer woman of the A.F.M. De Wet, however makes no mention of her!

Let me stop here, since the subject of ‘women in the Pentecostal churches’ will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter.

*Hollenweger (1977:486) *The Pentecostals*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

**De Wet (1985:85-88)

3.3) Growth in the A.F.M. church

The history of the A.F.M church was not altogether marked by faults or error however, its history is also characterized by remarkable growth and by men and women who were determined to evangelize South Africa at any cost. It is filled with the determination to spread the gospel, to heal the sick and to proclaim the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Writing about Le Roux, De Wet adds:

“After seven years ministry the church members in South Eastern Transvaal and Zululand numbered 2000”*

Lindsay reports that when John G. Lake returned to the U.S.A in 1913 he left 125 White assemblies and 500 Black assemblies behind. De Wet (1989:49), in commenting on Lindsay’s figures, argues:

“Although Lake’s early ministry made a big impact in South Africa, this figure seems to be a little exaggerated.”

Many years have passed since the early beginnings of this church and the number of members has grown astronomically. In fact, this is the largest of the three mainline Pentecostal churches in South Africa.

Froise (1999:60), commenting on the growth of this church, adds:

“The oldest and largest denomination in this group is the A.F.M in South Africa, with 3.7% of the total Christian market share and 1.1 million members.”

*(De Wet 1989:31) this was round about 1902.

“Its membership is 70% black, mostly in the Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province.”

Using the 1996 Government Census on Religion, Froise gives the following demographics on the A.F.M church:

“Blacks 786 586

Coloureds 111 158

Asians 8 062

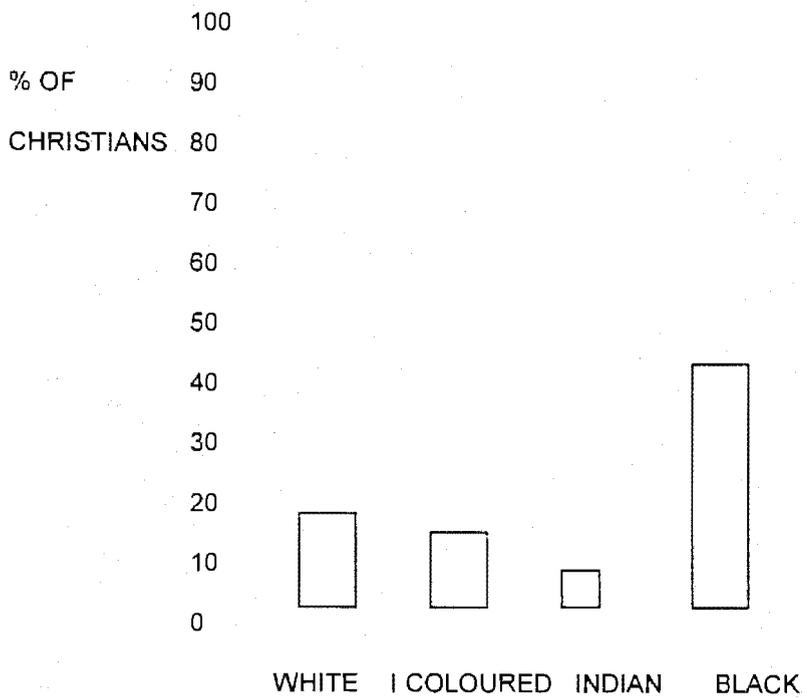
Whites 211 340

Other 6 921

The figures total up to 1, 124 067 members in South Africa in 1996.”

Froise adds that the A.F.M now has 1200 churches, 1670 clergy, 18 evangelists, 8 missionaries working in Swaziland, 11 in Mozambique and 42 in other countries around the world. This growth did not come instantaneously however, it was sheer hard work, determination and a passion for souls. For this the A.F.M church in South Africa must be applauded. Below are two diagrams from De Wet (1989) showing the growth of the church over the last eight decades:

Diagram One

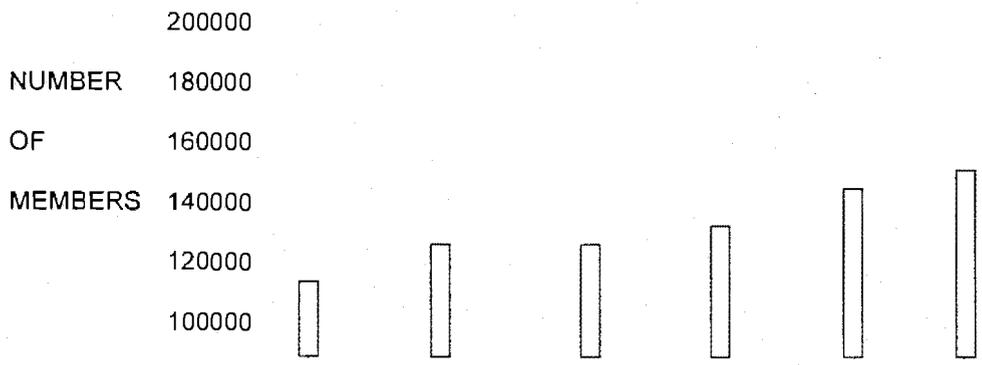


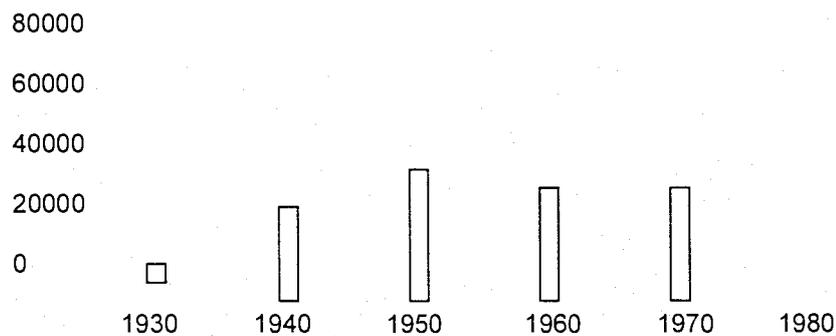
CHRISTIANS
ETHNIC GROUPS

Diagram Two

A.F.M IN AFRICA

NUMERICAL GROWTH 1930 - 1980





CONCLUSION

The above chapter offers a very brief description of the history of the A.F.M church in South Africa. This is sufficient for the purpose of this study, since the aim of this dissertation is to concentrated on the missiological implications of the practices in these churches and to present a way forward in Pentecostal missiology. The past decade has witnessed the most dramatic changes in South Africa, from an Apartheid government to a new Democratic government. Hence, many changes are taking place in our nation, history is being re-written, past mistakes are being amended and new ways for a better future are being implemented.

Is the A.F.M church changing with these times? Is it undergoing a paradigm shift in these times of reconciliation, dialogue and justice? Is it ready to break the silence and become a prophetic voice in our nation? All these questions concern all three of the mainline Pentecostal churches under discussion. I will attempt to answer these questions in the following chapters.

1.6.2 Full Gospel Church of God

1.6.2.1 From A.F.M to F.G.C (Full Gospel Church)

“The A.F.M and the F.G.C”, says Du Plessis (1984:50) “respectively dates back to the years 1908 and 1910. Both organizations were more or less the product of the mission enthusiasm of American preachers.”

Reading through the history of these churches, one also notices that these churches laid emphasis on the New Testament character of the church; both administered baptism by way of immersion; both revealed a strong belief in the imminent return of Jesus. Also, the preaching of divine healing and holiness was always at the centre of their teachings; both were also highly evangelically orientated.

Thus it comes as no surprise when Du Plessis (1984:50) concludes that there has been an intimate bond and an attraction between these two churches from their inception. It is also important to note that they shared the same leaders for a while, leaders would ‘hop’ from the one church to the other ‘seeking greener pastures’*.

1.6.2.2 The beginning of the F.G.C.

“What was to become the F.G.C in South Africa, in its early years evolved around two Pentecostal preachers, A.H. Cooper and George Bowie” (Hofmeyer, J.W. 1994:191).

I will first begin with the contribution of Cooper.

*This type of exchange continued regularly in the early days, better positions and sometimes vehement arguments led to change of allegiance.

Archibald Haig Cooper was born at Seacombe in the country of Cheshire in England on 5th October 1882. On 3rd of March 1901 he stepped ashore at Cape Town to do military service in the South African Constabulary. In October 1906, he received his conversion experience and by 1908 he found himself as a member of the A.F.M church. *

By this time Cooper was already quite influential, since he is mentioned as an office bearer in the first minutes of the A.F.M church. At this time Cooper joined John G. Lake and Le Roux for about a year. This unity did not last long however. Hofmeyer (1994:191) records that in the following year tensions emerged between Cooper and the other leaders of the A.F.M church, and he was not re-elected to the 7 member council. He left the A.F.M to establish a mission in the Middelburg district.

Meanwhile, George Bowie of the U.S.A based Bethel Pentecostal Mission arrived in South Africa, as a missionary, with the aim of establishing a church. In 1909 this newly formed church was strengthened by the arrival of a Welsh couple filled with the wonders and zeal of the Welsh revival of 1904. They were Eliezer and Elizabeth Anne Jenkins (Du Plessis 1984:15). In 1910 Cooper joined Bowie and the Jenkins couple to form the New Pentecostal Mission. Then, unfortunately, due to differences of opinion a schism occurred in this newly formed church in 1916.

*Du Plessis, 1986:15-17.

Cooper moved out, forming yet another church under the name, Church of God. In 1920 the two groups under Cooper and Bowie re-united forming the now well known Full Gospel Church in South Africa (Hofmeyer 1994:192).

According to the present Missions Director of the F.G.C, Rev. R.H. Roberts (Roberts 2000:1-2) this newly constituted church continued to receive funding from Bethel Pentecostal Mission in Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A. However, during the 'Great Depression' years the Bethel Pentecostal Mission discontinued its support. This led to William A. Du Plooy introducing the Full Gospel Church to the Church of God in Cleveland Tennessee.

1951 saw the historic amalgamation of these two churches, which produced the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa, and also secured financial support from the U.S.A on a monthly basis *

While at the time this seemed like a good idea, this decision created new problems that last until today. The continual financial and 'advisory'** support that comes from the U.S.A has caused what I term the 'Big Brother syndrome.' Many of the leaders that I have interviewed concerning this 'syndrome' deny that it exists, arguing that the relationship between the two churches is reciprocal.

*This support continues until today (2002); 52 years later.

**To date (2002) it is a standing rule that there must be American representatives at the biennial General Conference of the F.G.C.

This syndrome has effected the church negatively in two ways:

Firstly, until today the U.S.A partner pours finances into the F.G.C in South Africa. This has led to the South African work becoming dependent on the monthly support from the U.S.A. This has stagnated the growth to maturity of this church, not to mention its financial dependency on foreign donors, and the development of a “recipient mentality”.

Secondly, since the U.S.A pours finances into this church, it has also secured the capacity to continually flood the church with biblical material that was originally written for U.S.A seminaries.

Two other problems arise: firstly, the advice given from the U.S.A is held in ‘high esteem,’ sometimes even at the cost of sacrificing local advice. Secondly, the local church has not published much of its own theological material, since there is a never-ending supply of Biblical material from the U.S.A.* Financial and theological dependence are not the only problems facing this church.

Roberts (2000:3) writes:

“The extension of the church in South Africa carried on unabated, despite South Africa’s political problems from 1948 onwards, as the separation of races became a

*The year 2002 will see the introduction of a new curriculum from the U.S.A being implemented in all the colleges in the F.G.C. Even a correspondence course from the U.S.A is being implemented. The question that always comes to my mind is this: Do we not have theologians in our church who can assist in the writing of indigenous South African curriculums?

government priority and was enforced by edict. This caused the church to grow into separate departments, which was placed under White Superintendents, who were answerable to the Executive Council of the church at her head office, which by April 1960 had become permanently located at Irene, near Pretoria in the Transvaal province. Even the official history of the church became departmentalized.”

The 1948 ‘Separation of Race Act’, posed another dilemma in the history of this church. Since 1948 until today, the separation of races in this church has become a contentious issue. Many black, Indian, Coloured and a few White churches were outraged when the church opted to follow the status quo of the then racist government. The anger of these Pastors was further agitated when racist policies were enforced in the church’s constitution and by-laws. These laws were boldly spelled out in the 1958 constitution and by-laws of the F.G.C (Article VI Sect. 1 A; Sect. 2 C(b); Sect. 2 E).

Hence, Robert (2000:5) is correct in stating:

“Because of these changes, which had many political overtones, the growth of the church in South Africa was stunted. This resulted in the majority of the Black, Indian, Coloured and a few White congregations forming the United Assemblies of the Full Gospel Church in 1990. The White churches on the other hand became known as the Irene Association of the Full Gospel Church.”

However, 7 years later in 1996 the two churches reunited, forming the F.G.C. of God in South Africa under the leadership of Rev. G.A.Honey.

Whether this new unification was authentic or not, will be discussed in detail in the following chapter on ‘race relations’.

However, despite the racial problems in this church, its history is marked by the rise of some prominent Black leaders. In his article on the history of the church, Roberts (2000:1-5) makes mention of the contributions of leaders like Rev. J. Malambo who penetrated Botswana in 1954, and Evangelist Samuel Biyo who penetrated Swaziland in 1955. He also makes mention of Rev. E. Mkwazi who was the first Black principal of the Jacobus Saayman Bantu Bible College, which was opened in August 1952 in Alexandra, Johannesburg.

Du Plessis (1984:87) goes back as far as 1936, making mention of Johannes Thusaga, known as the 'big elephant' because of the more than 12 churches he planted from Groblersdal and Middelburg right up to Hammanskraal and Tzaneen. He also makes extensive reference to Lamech Masekwameng who was ordained by the church in 1962 and became the first Black Pastor on the Executive Council in 1981.

Mention is also made of Jaret Mvalase, the first principal of the Soweto Bible College, and also the first Black Pastor sent by the church to Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A to study for the Masters degree in Theology.

Du Plessis (1984:114) also refers to a few Coloured Pastors, and pioneers in the church. One such person was Pastor Fred Abrahams who pastored a flourishing church at Salt River, Cape in 1932. The house of Pastor Abrahams, says Du Plessis, 'became a haven of rest for preachers passing through'. Among those who enjoyed his hospitality,

Du Plessis, records well-known personalities like Stephen Jeffreys, Smith Wigglesworth and J.F. Rowlands.

The Indian work, says Du Plessis (1984:124), started during July of 1925 in Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg. While Du Plessis places much emphasis on the founder of this

work, J.F. Rowlands, G.C. Oosthuizen* records the names and contributions of many Indian pioneers. He records the names and influences of E.Theophilus, John Rufus, and Joseph Hensman, all of whom labored tirelessly in the Longmarket Street assembly. Other leaders serving on the first official working committee of 1934 were Pastor D.R Joseph, D. Ligamoney and T.J. Nair.

Oosthuizen also records the church planting and evangelistic achievements of Pastors like Frank Victor, A.A. Kenneth, Angamuthoo Nagiah (Arthur) Naidoo, Paul Lutchman, Cyril Geoffrey, Michael Dennis and, lastly, my very own Pastor, Ivan Kanni Moonsamy. Pastor Ivan was converted in 1951 and since then has planted churches in Benoni, Springs, Germiston, Heidelberg, Lenasia, Azaadville, Witbank and even as far as Mauritius and the Reunion Islands. So, despite the 'Group Areas Act' of 1948 and the racial tension that brewed in the F.G.C, the rise and contributions of Black, Coloured and Indian leaders still continued strongly. The human spirit once again triumphed over the evils of racism, segregation and oppression. I am sure that among these leaders there were some outstanding female leaders, missionaries and evangelists who contributed to the growth of the F.G.C. However, as with its predecessor, there is no mention of these contributions in the official written history of the F.G.C. In some Pentecostal churches, like the Assemblies of God, women are not allowed to hold any office in the fivefold ministry, the F.G.C on the other hand did make some allowance for the ministry of women.

*G.C. Oosthuizen (1975:16)

Already, as far back as 1958, the constitution of the church made the following allowance:

Article VIII Section 4 (G)

“The title, Licensed female minister, evangelist, certificate Christian worker, and local preacher shall be used in accordance with the nature of their ministry.”

Article VIII Section 4 (G) No. 4 – offers the following privileges to these women:

- i) bona-fide member of the District Council
- ii) bona-fide member of the General Conference
- iii) opportunity to attend Bible College and exercise preaching

(1958 Constitution of the Full Gospel Church, pages 84-86)

1.6.2.3 Growth in the F.G.C:

Using the 1996 census on religion in South Africa, Froise (1999:60) calculates:

“The highest Christian market share in the Pentecostal churches is the Asian population group which is 30.5%”

The largest percentage of these Asians* belongs to the F.G.C. they number 27 359.

*Asians, in this thesis, refers specifically to the Indian population in South Africa; while we are referred to as Asians in governmental documentation, we are always referred to as Indians everywhere else, since we originate from India.

The A.F.M has approximately 8 062 and the A.O.G has 704 Asians.

The 1996 government census also gives the following statistics on the population groups in the F.G.C:

Blacks 125 079, Coloureds 34 084, Asians 27 359, Whites 49 181, Others 2 058

This gives a total of 237 761 members.

Conclusion.

From its beginning in 1910 through its first conference in Wonderbbom in 1913, the F.G.C has become an ever-expanding enterprise, attracting thousands of people across the racial spectrum. The F.G.C. has become a haven for many Christian pilgrims on search of an experience with God.

Its history, to some extent, has been marked by racism, paternalism and support of the status quo, yet it still provided a home for many South African Christians. The mere fact that its membership has increased so dramatically since its inception is proof that the F.G.C, like the A.F.M was not altogether bad and insensitive.

As children of their time, they tried to do *what they thought was best* for the survival of the church. Du Plessis, in the last chapter of his book, writes:

“The church will always be ready to put its hand into its own bosom and to seek purity by self-examination.” (1984:197)

My hope is to see the F.G.C. ‘put its hand into its own bosom,’ examine its past mistakes, and undergo self-examination with a view to becoming more contextual and pragmatic in this new millennium.

1.6.3 ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

1.6.3.1 The beginning of the A.O.G

Similarly to the A.F.M and the F.G.C, the A.O.G. also started with the early foreign missionaries who came to South Africa with the intention of planting an indigenous African Pentecostal church. This history can be dated back to 1908 (Watt 1992:19). The earliest of these congregations, says Hofmeyer (1994:192) was founded by Charles William Chawner of the Canadian Pentecostal Missionary Society.

Chawner worked mainly in Ladysmith, Weren and in Zululand – and entirely among the Black people. He was later joined by a missionary couple, R.M Turney and his wife. By 1908 the Turney's met with a Miss Hannah James, thereafter starting their mission station in the Middleberg district (Hofmeyer 1992:192).

In 1914 a conference of Pentecostal ministries in Arkansas, U.S.A resulted in the birth of the Assemblies of God of the U.S.A. The Turney's and Hannah applied to be recognized as missionaries of this new organisation. Their request was granted in 1917. Henry Turney registered the Assemblies of God church with the Department of Interior in Pretoria, and thereafter was given official government recognition (Watt 1992:21).

For the next few years a growing family of missionaries from North America, United Kingdom, Europe and Scandinavia entered South Africa and worked under the banner of the A.O.G, mainly among the Black people.

1.6.3.2 Common trends in the A.O.G

About there earlier work among the Black people, Watt states:

While other Pentecostal churches worked mostly among Afrikaans-speaking White

people, the A.O.G missionaries worked almost exclusively among the Black people. Even though the A.O.G was controlled by expatriate missionaries, the movement was a Black church before any White congregations were formed – it did not develop as a daughter church of a White church.” (1992:22)

According to Watt there were no White churches/congregations in the A.O.G right up to 1930. However, from 1936 onwards, says Hofmeyer (1994:193), the number of White churches steadily increased and hence the church had to deal with the question of race, as this effected who would lead this church.

Typical of Pentecostal reasoning at this time, the A.O.G followed the A.F.M and the F.G.C. and decided to adopt the racial segregation policy. From then onwards, the White and the Black sections of the church functioned independently of each other (Hollenweger 1972:122). Each church became financially autonomous.*

Another characteristic of all these early Pentecostal churches was the role that the many Black evangelists played. The adoption of apartheid policies within these church organizations often meant that the full contributions of the Black pioneers was not sufficiently recognized. Watt (1992:33-42), however, gives much attention to earlier African leaders in the A.O.G, recognizing their significant contributions. He mentions leaders like Alfred Gumede, Gideon Buthelezi and the well-known Nicholas Bhengu.

*It seems that every time there is a separation of White and Black churches, the first step to be taken by the White leadership is to call for financial autonomy! Much emphasis was placed on ‘who kept the purse’.

About Nicholas Bhengu, Watt writes that he was, “the outstanding African apostle and father-figure in the A.O.G.”

Compared to the other two Pentecostal churches, it must be noted, that the A.O.G was the first church with a standing majority of Black leadership on their General Executive. They should be commended for the step that they took, even long before democratization in South Africa! However, there is a concern about the chairman that presided over the General Executive.

Anderson,* for example raises this issue about a majority Black leadership always presided over by a White Chairman.** One needs to ask the question, ‘will there ever be a time for Black leadership in this church, since these churches are almost 100 years old?’

Like the above two Pentecostal churches, the history of the A.O.G has also been marred by certain issues.

Firstly, time and again racial tensions have caused splits in this church, as in the other churches, many Black pastors left the church taking with them their members (Anderson 1993:75).

*Anderson, A.H ‘The struggle for unity in the Pentecostal Mission churches’ *Journal of theology for South Africa*, (March 1993) 67-77.

** To date (2002) all three of these churches have White Chairman’s. Non of these churches has ever had a Black chairman since their inception in 1906! Almost 100 years have passed !!!

Secondly, “White members feared that the Black members would overpower them...” (Watt 1992:73). This caused much tension and distrust in the church.

Thirdly, one of the features of the A.O.G ecclesial structures from its inception in South Africa has been its division of the different races into ‘associations’.

While the leaders of this church argue that these associations were not based on racial lines – the outsider sees it differently, interpreting it as supporting the status quo of the then racist government.

Fourthly, the absence of women in its official historical documents follows the pattern of its predecessors. This becomes a serious issue, since the A.O.G does not permit female pastors. Female pastors are strictly forbidden, officially. This certainly hinders the gifts that women have to offer the church.

1.6.3.3 Growth in the A.O.G

However, there are some positive aspects in the history of this church. For example, they have produced completely autonomous congregations, especially in the Black section of the church. “These churches” states Anderson, are “self governing, self supporting and self propagating.”* Charismatic leadership and a move towards autonomous churches have contributed to the large scale growth of this church, pushing it up to the third largest Pentecostal church in South Africa.

*They have simply adopted the “Three-self formula” of Venn-Henry.

Using Froise's 1980 and 1990 statistics on the number of adherents in South African Pentecostal churches, Watt (1992:155) projects the following statistics:

1980 - 144 662 members

1990 - 250 000 members

In Froise's 2000 projection, the membership of this church stands at 293 594 members.

The growth in the A.O.G is a reflection of their passion for souls. It reflects their commitment to hard work and perseverance. In the area of soul-winning, I would think that all three churches under investigation should be commended.

Conclusion

Like the other two Pentecostal churches in South Africa, the A.O.G has contributed much to the spiritual, moral and ethical growth of the South African community, affecting all races. This church has also served as a melting pot of different colours and cultures.

However, like the other churches, it also needs to re-evaluate its purpose in the New South Africa. It needs to break the silence on issues that are affecting its people. Issues of race relations, the dismantling of the so called 'associations' that are based on color lines and also the recognition of women in ministerial leadership, and the ordination of female pastors must all be dealt with constructively.

1.7 An evaluation of the contributions of the 3 mainline Pentecostal churches.

The three mainline churches all started out as mission churches. The American and European missions that started these churches, brought with them their own understanding of what missions is, and what constitutes service to the people of South Africa. To them missions meant the “saving of souls”, that’s all. This reductionist understanding of mission simply meant that the Christian gospel had nothing to do with social, political and economic issues.

The gospel had nothing to do with injustice, oppression or economic imbalance. This reductionist understanding also meant that all other faiths were demonic and hence enemies of the church. This led to hostility to all other religions, and closing the doors on authentic dialogue and witness.

The mission enterprise in South Africa was driven by White males from the start. It is no wonder that the spirit of paternalism was so deeply ingrained in these churches. Handing over the reigns of leadership to the indigenous people of the land eventually became an impossible task, even until today.

Since its inception in the 1900s, these trends were well ingrained in the minds of missionaries and church leaders. These mission trends were imposed on Black Pentecostals by their White counterparts. This brought about much unrest in these churches, eventually leading to racial division within the church of Christ. Many Black leaders left the church and formed their own churches. White leaders who did not feel free to worship with Black people also left the church to operate independent.

Her reductionist understanding of mission plus its support of the status quo, led to mass criticism by Black leaders and other human rights activist, within the church.

“Where is your prophetic voice?” was the cry of the Black majority in these churches. The Pentecostal voice could not be heard at the Sharpeville massacre or the forced removal in District Six in the Cape. Instead of uttering a prophetic cry for justice, the church rather sheltered ‘right wing politicians’ and accepted their attitudes.

Prophetic leaders within the church like Jonathan Leach, Moss Ntlha, Jappie Lapoorta, Pravin Maharaj and Dean Reddy to mention just a few, criticized the hypocrisy in these churches in their magazine, the “Relevant Pentecostal Witness”.*

The church was sharply criticized for emphasizing personal piety, while ignoring the glaring sin of racism. Today, in a new dispensation, in a new South Africa, can the Pentecostal church still be the proud custodian of the gospel that was once passed on to them by their forefathers?

Today, are Pentecostals able to say that they are part of the bigger “*Missio Dei*”? The future of the Pentecostal church’s participation in the *Missio Dei* rests on the pillars of authentic forgiveness, mutual trust and the redistribution and sharing of resources.

**Relevant Pentecostal Witness* 1:1 (March 1990) RPW Publications. Durban.

Only two issues were written before this magazine was banned.

There is a long way to go before real unity is achieved. The ugly rags of the past have to be shaken off, and only God is able to dress us up again with the garments of forgiveness and reconciliation. A divided church cannot heal or reach out to a dying world. A church with strife and pride cannot be used in the hand of a righteous God. The Pentecostal church needs to emphasize freedom, equality and dignity of all people, in the sight of God. It must make provision to do this by taking heed of the words of Pentecostal theologian, A.H. Anderson:

“ The Pentecostal experience of the power of the Spirit can be a unifying factor in a deeply divided society, and the catalyst for the emergence of a new community.”

(Anderson 1999:89-107)

May this be the “Pentecostal dream” that all Pentecostal, Black, White, Indian and Coloured can work towards in future.

CHAPTER 2

A Pentecostal Understanding of the Term Mission

Chapter Two will shed some light on the *traditional* understanding of mission and the discipline of missiology in Pentecostal churches in South Africa. Chapter One forms an integral part of Chapter Two, since the history of these churches have shaped their understanding of mission.

I will start off by defining the terms ‘mission’ and ‘evangelism’ as understood by these churches. Thereafter I will discuss their emphasis on ‘soul-winning’ and finally present a way forward for a holistic understanding of mission.

2.1 Mission and Evangelism

While interviewing leaders of some of these churches, I noticed that in their discourse they used the words mission and evangelism interchangeably. One of the leaders argued that “these terms are synonymous.” The truth however, is that many leaders of these churches never took time to reflect on the definitions and term that they so often used.

Another leader stated, “We are so busy doing missions and evangelism that we do not find the time to sit down and define these terms.” Two, of these three churches have a director or overseer for the department of ‘mission and evangelism’.

However, this trend will not continue for long, since there are serious discussions in Pentecostal churches about giving attention to definitions of the terminologies they so freely use. Terms such as mission, missions, evangelism and evangelization are all coming under investigation. Nothing, however, has officially been written on these

definitions yet. Below are some examples of the typical trends that seem to surface in Pentecostalism.

“Mission”, says one of the leaders, “is much wider than evangelism. While evangelism has got to do with saving souls and extending the kingdom of God in areas around you, mission on the other hand is the act of going to pagan lands to preach the gospel and to plant churches.”

This definition of mission is further enhanced by a fellow Pentecostal leader, who states that, “Mission has to do with ministering to people particularly in the Third World countries.” Yet another leader emphasizes that, “Evangelism is done ‘at home’ while mission is done in a foreign land.”

In the above definitions, the difference between mission and evangelism is merely geographical. In other words, evangelism is done ‘across the road’ while mission is done ‘across the sea or across the border’. In a document entitled, ‘A Challenge to our mission ideology of the church in the twenty first century’ Pastor A.G. Hayward (1999:4) of the F.G.C discusses the two most typical understandings of mission in Pentecostal churches: Firstly, he states, “It seems as though the church distinguishes between mission and evangelism on a geographical basis ... observing, that the further the distance the greater the claim towards being a missionary.”

Secondly, he comments, “We are living in the third and the fourth generation Pentecostal church in South Africa. There is a theological difference between mission and evangelism. The ‘not yet Christian’ are people who cling to the non-Christian religion, or who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. In comparison there is the second, third and fourth generation who are now ‘no-more-Christians’ and somehow

became estranged to the church. Many of these folks were dedicated (some infant baptized or christened) and have now subsequently lost all contact with the church. These people are seen as targets for evangelism in comparison to the 'no-yet-Christian' who are mission targets.”

One is able to notice a slow, but distinct change in the attitudes of Pentecostals in the area of defining the terms that they use (especially in mission and evangelism). Pentecostals have been criticized for not being academics. However, I believe that there is a new younger breed of Pentecostals who are entering University and hence bringing about constructive change. The future will see a more complete and comprehensive Pentecostal missiology, with its unique definitions of both missiological and theological terms.

2.2 Mission and Missions

In his book, “World evangelization” Steef van’t Slot (2000:8), a minister who teaches missiology in Pentecostal circles in South Africa, gives the following definitions of mission and missions:

“Mission, is the plans of committed believers to accomplish the mission of God.

Missions, are the practical implementation of the mission of God. Missions without mission is empty – like a body without its spirit.”

This type of understanding of mission and missions from a Pentecostal indicates that there is a paradigm shift in the understanding of missiology in Pentecostal circles. This is a radical break from the typical understanding of mission and missions.

In the past, says Slot (2000:8) “ The term mission(s) has come to mean: Evangelization of which the Black population is the recipient.”

He concludes by challenging the Black churches with these words:

“The time has come, and is now, that the Black churches of South Africa should take responsibility for their share in world evangelization, as sending churches rather than receiving churches.”

One is able to see that there is some development in Pentecostal missiology, however slowly. This new millenium may just see a breakthrough in Pentecostal missiology.

2.3 What do Pentecostals believe about mission?

“Pentecostal mission theology has tended to be a ‘theology on the move,’ its character often having been experiential rather than cognitive, more activist than reflective. Early Pentecostals were characterized by ‘urgent missiology’ that caused them to seek immediate world evangelization in light of their conviction of the imminent return of Christ” (Burgess and McGee, 1988 *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids).

In South Africa, the systematic theologizing, research, and writing on the world mission of the church were therefore postponed until a few years ago, and the task is far from complete. It may not be possible to isolate the Pentecostal statement on mission. The theology of the Pentecostal movement, like its history, personalities, and politics is far from being monolithic, typical or generic, since the river of Pentecostalism flows from many streams and tributaries. However, this should not erase the fact that from its inception, the movement has had underlying theological assumptions that have formed the impulse for its missionary expansion. In scanning the field of Pentecostal literature, Burgess and McGee (1988:607) state at least five major theological themes that relate to mission. These five themes are also entrenched in South African missiology.

a. A Literal Biblicism

Pentecostals have been marked by their exactness in following a literal interpretation of Scripture. For Pentecostals the issue of Biblical authority is non-negotiable and it is the beginning point for mission theology and strategy. If the Bible says, "Go into all the world..." and records the actions of the early church in obeying this commission, then Pentecostals have believed that this is a command and a model to be taken literally for this generation. Every major Pentecostal group has strong statements regarding the authority of Scripture and the missionary obligation of the church.

b. An Experiential Christianity

South African Pentecostal pioneer, David du Plessis called it "truth on fire".* In spite of accusations of shallow hermeneutics and subjectivity, Pentecostals have remained insistent that God is to be personally experienced through the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals, there need not be any polarization between doctrine and experience.

If the Holy Spirit is the originator and impetus for world mission and if Christians are to experience the Holy Spirit personally, then (as Pentecostals believe), the natural outflow of this personal experience is the involvement in the world mission of the Holy Spirit.

*Slosser, B. 1977. A man called Mr. Pentecost, New Jersey: Logos International. (181-182).

c. The Personality and Power of the Holy Spirit.

For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is personally active, living in and directing His servants in world evangelization (Acts 8, 13). Missiologically speaking, the Holy Spirit is not just a force or influence but is also personally and powerfully potent in the frontiers of mission. Pentecostals also understand the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an indispensable endowment of power for world evangelization (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8) and insists that it is normative and imperative for each believer to seek for his/her own “personal Pentecost”. Chapter three deals extensively with the role that the Holy Spirit plays in Pentecostal missiology.

d. A Strong Christology.

Since the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues has been central to the Pentecostal experience, the movement has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on one person of the Godhead, namely, God the Holy Spirit. In fact, however, early Pentecostal writings* reveal the opposite; their literature is replete with a strong Christology.

*The most well known literature in the F.G.C in its early years was “Moving Waters” a Bethesda Publication. The A.O.G produced the magazine, “Fellowship: A Pentecostal magazine for all people”, and the A.F.M. a magazine called ‘Comforter’. All these magazines were very Christ centred, since most of their articles were based on the life, teachings and works of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is personally present as the Lord of the harvest and in experiencing the empowerment of this harvest. He is also seen as the "*Baptizer in the Holy Spirit*" (Matt. 3:11, Mk. 1:8, Luke 3:16, Jn. 1:33).

Most of the conferences held by these churches offered Christ as the central theme. J.F. Rowlands of the F.G.C. and Nicholas Bhengu of the A.O.G. were both well known for the yearly conference known as the "Back-to-the-Bible Campaign". Christ was the main topic in all these conferences. Most of these churches displayed large signs inside and outside their buildings, tents and even homes, displaying Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives.

e. An Urgent Missiology.

Eschatological urgency is at the heart of understanding the missionary fever of early Pentecostalism. It is difficult to understand Pentecostal missiology fully apart from its roots found in premillennialism, dispensationalism, and the belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. These beliefs have propelled the churches towards major world evangelism programs; it was also the catalyst that was used to collect large amounts of finance for missions and evangelism. It attracted hundreds of students, both young and old, to enroll at Bible colleges, and to give their lives to missions.

However, this school of thought was also the catalyst that propelled the Pentecostal church to neglect social and economic upliftment, since Christ was coming so soon. Using this concept of the "eminent coming of Christ", these churches thought it a waste of good time to get involved in humanitarian activities – the salvation of souls was hard pressed on the heart of the church.

This school of thought also gave rise to the vehement criticism and hatred of other religious groups, especially Islam, Hinduism and African Traditional Religions. Hence all avenues of dialogue with these religions were completely shut.

2.4 The 'Objects' of Mission:

Van t' Slot (2000:8) is correct in his statement,

“The term mission(s) has come to mean: Evangelization, of which the Black population is the recipient.”

At this juncture, it is clear that in Pentecostal circles (as in the historical churches) the Black population (including Blacks, Asians and Coloreds) of South Africa were focused on as the objects of missions and evangelism. Hence, most of the missionaries were European or Caucasian people sent to the Black people of South Africa. Hayward (2000:2) confirms this fact by stating that, “Most missionaries were European or Caucasian.” The Black communities were always on the receiving end. Hence, when churches were planted in these communities, a European pastor always resided as ‘overseer’. It was always the ‘haves’ giving to the ‘have-nots’; the ‘enlightened’ giving to the ‘un-enlightened’ mission was never a reciprocal relationship between Black and White.

Today, however, a major paradigm shift is taking place, because the so-called ‘objects of mission’ are fast becoming the ‘bearers of this gospel’. There is no way that the Pentecostal church in South Africa can ignore this phenomenon.

Hence, I call upon our Pentecostal churches to re-evaluate and restructure their mission policies and their mission boards, in order to make place for *young upcoming Black*

leadership. To date not even a 50% representation of Black leadership on mission boards in Pentecostal churches is in evidence.

2.5 Mission as 'Soul winning'

In Pentecostal churches mission is merely seen as the 'saving of souls'. This I believe is a reductionist understanding of mission and/or evangelism. This reductionist understanding of mission in the Pentecostal churches has come under attack by Historical churches, the Ecumenical movement and recently by its own scholars.

Pentecostal churches have given primary priority to soul winning at the expense of social justice. They have turned a blind eye to the social, political and economic context in which these 'souls' live. Whether that 'soul' is socially oppressed, economically exploited or even politically marginalised, seems to be of very little or even of no concern. Has it ever occurred that when these 'souls' are saved that they would go back to economic exploitation, marginalization, poverty and sickness? Is the 'soul' the only part of a person that needs liberation and redemption? Is the 'soul' the only part that needs healing and uplifting? Can a 'soul' live in racial oppression, poverty and sickness and still be 'blessed', while those that propagate this 'message of salvation' go home to a hot meal, a warm bed and another exciting 'evangelism/missions planning committee'?

These are the types of questions that the Pentecostal churches need to ask themselves. If ever they want to be contextual, they need to find answers to these urgent questions.

This 'Reductionist' missiology has led to many Pentecostal leaders vehemently opposing 'Liberation Theology' – even calling it a 'Communist Theology'. For this reason those Pastors that were involved in Politics during the struggle were expelled from the church.

Pastors like Frank Chakane (A.F.M), Danny Chetty (F.G.C), and many others became victims of the churches opinion of what mission entails.

Today, much has not changed! Theological seminaries continue to promote missions and evangelism as merely the act of 'soul winning'. It is still 'misconduct' for a Pastor to hold any political position. Social justice has become 'departmentalized' and given the task starting 'soup kitchens'. In this study I wish to present a way forward in defining a more holistic understanding of missiology, an understanding that would stimulate other Pentecostals to work out a 'Pentecostal missiology' that is authentically South African.

2.6 A Way Forward: Towards a More Holistic Understanding of Mission and Missiology

Using David Bosch's discussion on "Elements of an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm"* I would like to examine at least four paradigms that he discusses, which I think that Pentecostals need to take these into cognizance if ever they want to become serious about the discipline of missiology.

The four paradigms that I have adapted from Bosch, are the four areas in missiology that I perceive need to be given attention by Pentecostal missiologist. These four areas are sometimes mentioned only in passing, but for the main part they are deliberately ignored in Pentecostal missions.

*Bosch, D. 1991. *Transforming mission* Maryknoll: Orbis Books. (368-488)

2.6.1 Mission as *Missio Dei*

This concept of *Missio Dei* is fundamental to the discipline of missiology. Any branch of Christianity that does not begin their explanation and work of mission with the concept of *Missio Dei* is bound to venture in the wrong direction. The concept *Missio Dei* came into general use at the conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) at Willingen in 1952. It simply means *the mission of God* and was intended first of all to mean:

- a) Mission belongs to God, not to any church or mission society. Hence no church denomination or missionary society can monopolize on mission. No church or mission organisation is the 'founder' of mission; hence no human organisation has the last word on mission. Mission belongs to God.
- b) *Missio Dei* was meant to emphasize the *Trinitarian* character of Christian mission. Mission originates in the love of God, who always reaches out in love to the whole of His creation, sending His Son to bring about reconciliation and renewal and sending out His Spirit to revitalize the new creation. The Spirit therefore sends the church out to carry forth this message, every individual in the body of Christ therefore becomes a bearer of this good news.
- c) As Christians we are privileged to *participate* in this *Missio Dei*; we cannot *inaugurate* the *Missio Dei* – God does that through His Son and His Spirit. Saayman* explains it like this:

*Saayman, W.A. 1991. Missiology: Study guide for MSA200-6 Pretoria: Unisa. (Pg.8)

“God always moves ahead of us; whenever we engage in mission in any context, God has already been active before us, and it is our privilege and responsibility to join Him *in His mission*.

It is my hope that the Pentecostal church and its missiologist (and Mission Directors) will take heed to these last words of Prof. David Bosch and include them in their mission statement:

“The recognition that mission is God’s mission represents a crucial break-through in respect of the preceding centuries. It is inconceivable that we could again revert to a narrow, ecclesiocentric view of mission.” (1991:393)

2.6.2 Mission as the Quest for Justice

In Pentecostal circles, there is no doubt that the relationship between the evangelistic and the social dimensions of the Christian mission constitutes one of the thorniest areas in the theology and practice of mission. Participation in any form of social justice is played down, while the saving of souls is emphasized as true evangelism, and being faithful to the call of God.

The Evangelicals adopted this attitude. However the Evangelical movement over the years has re-evaluated its stance and later saw the importance of participation in social justice. I will briefly discuss the changes that occurred in the Evangelical movement, and maybe this may be an avenue that the Pentecostal church can follow:

Up until the 1950s the evangelical movement resented any involvement in social justice issues, saving souls was the highest priority on their agenda. This attitude is currently still held in Pentecostals circles.

However, in 1966 the “Wheaton Declaration” (produced by an Evangelical conference) conceded that Evangelicals stress the importance of ministering to physical and social needs, but still emphasizing the supreme concern for the saving of souls*. This was a breakthrough for the then very conservative Evangelical movement. In his address, Billy Graham spoke for many Evangelicals when he included a social dimension within evangelism.

Further breakthroughs happened in 1974 during the International Congress on World Evangelization, which met in Lausanne. John Stott (1975:23), renowned Evangelical theologian and author, made the following statement after this conference:

“I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus”**.

This was in line with the understanding that the conference confirmed:

“(evangelism and socio-political) involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ.”

*Bosch, D. 1991. *Transforming mission* Maryknoll: Orbis Books. (Pg.404)

**Stott, J.R.W. 1975 *Christian mission in the modern world* London: Falcon (Pg.23)

In South Africa, one of the most remarkable Evangelical documents in this respect was the *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, produced by a group of “Concerned Evangelicals” in 1986 (Bosch 1991:407). In the context of the apartheid system and the experience of repression and police brutality during the state of emergency, Evangelicals felt forced to respond and articulate their views on evangelism, mission, structural evil and the church’s responsibility with respect to justice in society.

This sparked the gathering of a few Pentecostal pastors who responded to the evils of apartheid. They drafted a document called *Azusa*, which became the *Official magazine of the society for relevant Pentecostal studies*, published in March 1990. The leaders of this movement came from the three Pentecostal churches under discussion. All these leaders were stigmatized, and the three mainline Pentecostal churches rejected their magazine.

Pentecostals remained silent during these turbulent times in our nation.

The voice of the Pentecostal church or even a pledge of the allegiance *could not be heard* in the 1968 document, “A message to the people of South Africa”, nor in the 1986 “Kairos Document”, or the 1989 “Road to Damascus” consultation, or even at the “Cottesloe Consultation” nor at the “Rustenburg Conference”.

This was to be a wake-up call for such a large body as the Pentecostal church in South Africa to reevaluate their thoughts, their theology and their teachings concerning the need to see justice done in South African society. The question was: how long would they be silent, while everybody speaks out against injustice?

2.6.3 Mission as Liberation: Preferential option for the poor:

Much can be discussed under the title 'Mission as liberation'. However I will concentrate on one area of 'mission as liberation' and that is concerning our '*Preferential option for the poor*'. It is important to discuss this concept since the Pentecostal church has an extremely large population of 'poor people'. Therefore, how the poor are treated, helped and liberated from poverty by these churches is vitally important.

Christian mission is concerned with continuing the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth: "As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). One of the unique features of Jesus' ministry was his intense concern for poor and suffering people.

The Roman Catholic bishops of Latin America have quite rightly spoken of God's *preferential option for the poor*, which is revealed in the life of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament (Daneel 1989:viii)*. At the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Puebla in 1978 it was put thus: "When we draw near to the poor in order to accompany and serve them, we are doing what Christ taught us to do when He became our brother, poor like us" (Gutierrez 1983:137).**

This should, however not be understood as a patronizing "charity" approach to the poor. Jesus acted to empower and challenge the poor, to liberate them from the yoke of poverty and oppression. His followers are called to enlighten the poor about their dignity and help them in their efforts to liberate themselves from all their wants.

*Daneel, M.L. 1989. *Christian theology in Africa (Study guide 1 for MSB301-F)*. Pretoria: Unisa.

**Gutierrez, G. 1983. *The power of the poor in history*. Maryknoll: Orbis. (Pg.137)

Many Pentecostal leaders whom I have interviewed, argued that the “*preferential option for the poor*” was a priority on their list – to eradicate poverty is extremely important.

However, their efforts at eradicating poverty are reduced to *soup kitchens!* While talking about the eradication of poverty within society and the church, these leaders continuously made mention of the number of *soup kitchens* that their congregations operate.

Soup kitchens, food parcels, small donations and some amount of free literature is as far as Pentecostal churches go, in their fight against poverty! No structures or programs are put into place that will continuously uplift the poor, and help them break the cycle of poverty in their lives, and lead them on to live liberated lives. Giving people soup and blankets does not do much to restore the dignity of people. All the preaching and teaching of “living by faith” is not equivalent to having access to clean water, proper sanitation, a roof over one’s head and a job. Many of those interviewed made numerous comments concerning the failure of government to eradicate poverty. It seemed as if these Pentecostal leaders are waiting for the government to act, as if eradicating poverty is a governmental problem and not a divine commission by Christ to the church.

Next to our high-class suburbs, where the rich and famous might live, one will always find poverty stricken townships and many R.D.P* houses to cater for the people in the so-called “lower income bracket”. It is a sorrowful sight to see the great schism between

*Houses built under the government policy of “Reconstruction and Development Programme”.

those who have a great surplus of food, finances and other luxuries and on the other hand those who do not know where their next plate of food will come from.

The same sorrowful sight is seen in Pentecostal churches. Next to the large 1000 seater churches, equipped with the latest musical equipment, and all else that goes with it (including some expensive cars for the Pastors), one would most definitely find those churches which hold their services in shacks, small tents, and in small school classrooms, with Pastors sometimes earning less than R1000,00 per month. All these churches belong to the same denomination, call each other 'brother and sister' and attend the same general conference.

Another problem that is prevalent is the 'tithing system' that is imposed on pastors and churches. In the F.G.C. for example, each pastor needs to pay 10% of his income to the regional office, then a further 10% of his church's income must be paid to the head-office. The wealthy churches and their pastors can afford this amount. However there are some pastors that live below the breadline and cannot afford these payments. This is the saddest part: Pastors who cannot afford this amount are restricted from voting at the general conference, nor are they allowed to stand for any position in the church.

This only means that the poor in these churches are marginalised, silenced, and to some extent even oppressed! This seems like a well-planned, systematic form of silencing the voice of the poor in the church. It is, therefore, imperative for the Pentecostal churches to review their financial policies. They need to investigate more closely the implications of the concept of "preferential option for the poor". They need to identify the "poor" in their churches and in society, and thereafter find constructive ways of helping them to

help themselves. Soup kitchens are not the only programs to help the poor. They need to help the poor to come to a place of:

- positive self acceptance and identity
- positive well being in the community
- authentic faith and witness
- self-reliance and prosperity.

“*The preferential option for the poor*” needs to become an integral part of the mission of the Pentecostal church. The poor need to be taken seriously, and dealt with, as Jesus Christ Himself would have dealt with them.

2.6.4 Mission as Witness to People of Other Faiths.

We live in a pluralistic society, one where people of different faiths rub shoulders each day. We live next to each other, work with and sometimes for each other, and our children go to school to sit in a multi-religious classroom. Hence, there is no way that we cannot have an authentic dialogue with each other.

In the 1900s religions were still vastly separated from each other, and the structures of apartheid aided in keeping adherents of different faiths separate. During these times (1900's) many churches including the Pentecostal church adopted an *attitude of isolation* from other religions. This was basically because of the fear of being ‘contaminated’ by foreign religions. It was not long after this, that the Pentecostal church adopted an *attitude of hostility* towards all non-Christian religions. Vehement crusades were launched against all other religions, calling them ‘anti-Christ’, ‘demonic’ and ‘religions that were birthed in hell’. Those who converted to Christianity were urged to break ties

with everything that even reminded them of their previous religious alliance. This meant breaking family ties, and much separation in homes and communities was instigated.

Today the attitude of hostility can still be sensed. However there is a slight move towards an *attitude of competition*. Since we live so close to each other, the attitude of hostility is undergoing a change, and competition is becoming the new attitude adopted by Pentecostals. The main fight now, is which religion is better. Religions now 'compete in an open market' each appearing on television and radio, each produces its own magazines which are sold side by side in the same shop.

I believe that the time has come for us Pentecostals to move to the next level, where an *attitude of dialogue* needs to be adopted. Before any person labels me as a 'deserter of the faith' let me say at the outset that I do not believe that all religions are equal nor do I believe that Pentecostal should compromise their religious convictions or that they lose their evangelistic fervour. My opinion is that we Pentecostals begin to set down and understand other religions and also initiate dialogue with them. In our dialoguing with them, it will give us an opportunity to intelligently tell them the reason for our faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot go on forever, standing on either side of our fences and 'slinging mud at each other'. We do not need to be afraid of 'being contaminated' by other religions.

In a democratic, pluralistic society, inter-religious dialogue can become a powerful tool of evangelism. This can be the time of openly sharing our faith with those around us, sharing the gospel of Christ and His crucifixion, and Jesus the only way of salvation.

However, our dialogue should not be sneaky, conniving or deceptive. Kritzinger (1991:

5) sets out the following guidelines for an authentic dialogue:

- Constant interaction with the claims of the Christian tradition.
- Honest dialogue and co-operation with the adherents of other religious traditions.
- Intensive study of these traditions.
- Giving an intelligible account of your faith to people of other religions in situations of mutual witness.

May this be both a challenge and a guideline for Pentecostals. May it lead to a dedicated study and production of an authentic “Pentecostal theology of religions”.

Conclusion

It is possible to see clearly how the history of the Pentecostal churches has shaped their understanding and definition of mission(s). Pentecostals have a reductionist understanding of mission with a heavy emphasis on saving souls. This understanding has been integral to the church since its inception (1900). As we move into a new millenium and a new dispensation in politics, economics, technology, religion and society, it becomes incumbent on the Pentecostal church to change its century old perception of people, religions, society and the mission of the church.

Definition affects praxis, hence to be able to practice a biblical, contextual missiology the Pentecostal church firstly needs to begin to review its understanding of mission(s). It then needs to dispense with past ineffective models and adopt, or even, invent newer models of mission that will take people and society seriously.

The few definitions that I have presented above should be seriously considered by upcoming younger Pentecostal theologians and missiologists it might just be what the Pentecostal church needs to catapult itself forward.

Chapter 3

The purpose of the Holy Spirit in the advancement of Missions

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit as understood by Pentecostals has been the source of many debates over the last century particularly, the doctrine of “Spirit baptism”. This doctrine has also caused much tension within the Pentecostal church itself. Pentecostals have debated among themselves as to whether a person is baptized “with” or “in” the Holy Spirit. While this is an interesting topic to explore, it is not the purpose of this chapter. The purpose of the chapter is to evaluate the role that the Pentecostals attribute to the Holy Spirit in the discipline of mission(s). Hence the nature of this chapter will be more missiologically orientated than dogmatically orientated. However, for consistency I will use the term “baptized in the Spirit”.

3.1 “Spirit baptism” and Missions.

According to Pentecostals, ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ opens the doors for the operation of the Spirit’s gifts in the life of an individual and also in the life of the church. Every individual and the church, therefore, become empowered by the Holy Spirit to initiate mission. The Holy Spirit becomes a catalyst that initiates a greater awareness of mission in the life of a believer. Thus, openness to the fullness of the Spirit’s work as portrayed in the Book of Acts, establishes the paradigm of mission spirituality.

For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is personally active, living in and directing His servants in world evangelization (Acts 8:13). Missiologically speaking, the Holy Spirit is not just a force or influence but is also personally and powerfully potent on the frontiers of mission.

Pentecostals also understand the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an indispensable endowment of power for world evangelization (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8) and insist that it is normative and imperative for each believer to seek his/her own “personal Pentecost”.

The key passage of scripture used by Pentecostals, when addressing the relationship between the Holy Spirit and missions, is Acts 1:8*. I think that a short reflection on this passage will be in order, before further deliberations are made concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in missions.

Reflection on Acts 1:8

This passage of scripture plays a pivotal role in the relation between the work of the Holy Spirit and missions. In this passage one sees the following features:

- a) a command by Jesus
- b) the availability of power for the task
- c) strategy for missions

In terms of viewing this passage a command (as in their literal interpretation of Matthew 28:19-20), Pentecostals also interprets this passage as an imperative from Jesus. The call to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and to continue preaching the gospel is not even debatable, it is a given.

* But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Pentecostal missionaries subscribe to this command, as a prerequisite to mission involvement. Leaders of this church argue strongly that no person should be allowed on the mission field without being “baptized in the Holy Ghost”. A question that appears on the application forms for prospective missionaries, in all three of these mainline Pentecostal churches, is “Are you baptized in the Holy Spirit” if the answer is no, an application is bound to fail. As far as the availability of Power is concerned (You shall receive power...) Pentecostals believe that the power recorded here refers to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Adding to this argument, Michael Griffiths (1980:171) says,

“Already, in a former generation, missionary pioneers like Paget Wilkers of Japan urged the necessity of an anointing with the power of the Holy Spirit for effective missionary work.”

Those that left the Azusa Street church, to take the Pentecostal message to the ends of the earth, were all “equipped with the baptism in the Holy Spirit”. Spirit baptism was the characteristic of all overseas missionaries and evangelist. In those early years the baptism in the Spirit experience held stronger sway than a college diploma in theology.

According to Pentecostals, Acts 1:8 is not just a command, but it is also a strategy for missions. A strategy that emphasizes the necessity to first begin where one is placed, then only is able to extend his/her influence and resources to the ends of the earth.

3.2 Divine Enduement and Leadership in Missions.

When Christ gave the Great Commission, “Go ye...and make disciples of all nations,” He linked it with the preceding affirmation, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” and the succeeding assurance, “Lo, I am with you always”. In this promise He

provided for the extension of His presence co-equally with the extension of the Church's missionary activities. This was achieved through the presence of the Holy Spirit. One of the interviewees commented that, "The Holy Spirit became His vice-regent on earth, in the same way as Jesus represented the Father here on earth, the Holy Spirit represents Jesus in the same way."

Another interviewee argued that Christian mission and the experience of Pentecost are inseparable. He stated very emphatically:

"It is to be noted that in every one of the five statements of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-20; Lk. 24:46-49; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8) some reference is made to or implied about the Holy Spirit. This fact is significant. World-wide missions constitute a divine enterprise directed not merely from heaven, but by the Holy Spirit in person sent down to earth for that particular purpose. And since He was to be the Commander-in-Chief of the great campaign, its inception must await His arrival."

In his book, *The bible and missions*, Robert Glover (1946:56-57) also discusses the inseparable link between missions and the Pentecostal experience:

"We are accustomed to speak of Christ's one post-resurrection command – the Great Commission. In reality He gives two commands: 'Go ye'; and the other 'Tarry ye'. At first thought these may seem contradictory the one to the other. Actually they were not so, but they were complementary the one to the other, and both were vitally important. To 'go' without first 'tarrying' would make the going in vain. On the other hand the 'tarry' without the 'going' would make the tarrying spurious. The disciples know that all their efforts would be futile without the coming of the Holy Spirit."

In other words, Christian mission and Pentecost are inseparably related, Pentecost being the essential preparation for mission and missions being the logical and inevitable result

of Pentecost. In agreement with Robert Glover, another interviewee added briefly that, "the 'day of Pentecost' was the natal day of the Christian Church, and the inauguration day of world wide missions, which constituted the Church's great God-given task."

Another leader in the Pentecostal church, wasted no time to explain what his companion meant:

"It was no accident or mere coincidence," he said, "that Christian missions began at Pentecost. It could not have been otherwise. The Spirit was necessary as a divine spark to kindle the flame that was to produce the power, and as the vital breath to fill the sails that was to impel the Gospel ship around the world. It is impressive to observe the divine order: Christ went *up*, the Holy Spirit came *down* and the disciples went *out*."

Wherever spiritual life has become cold and feeble, missionary zeal and effort has declined as a result. A notable example of the fact was the Constantine period, when the purity and separation of the church were lost, and a flood of worldly evils and compromising features was admitted. There inevitably followed the Dark Ages, when the Pentecostal missionary fire burnt so low upon the altar as to almost be extinguished, and the missionary work of several centuries which followed was reduced to the efforts of a few individuals rather than an entire church.

On the other hand, wherever a fresh infusion of the Spirit has been experienced by an individual, or group, or church at large, there has invariably followed a period of quickening missionary zeal and stimulated missionary endeavour.

Illustrations of this order, states Robert Glover (1946:59), are to be found through Church history. It was pietism, he says, in Germany under Spener and Francke that aroused the Church to a deeper spiritual life and produced Count Von Zinzendorf and the great Moravian missionary movement. It was the mighty Evangelical revival under the

Wesley's that quickened the pulse of foreign missions in England. The faith and power emanating from the godly life of Hudson Taylor brought into existence the China Inland Mission, which God has been pleased to use as one of the main agencies for the evangelization of China's teeming millions. It was the spiritual awakening through Dwight L. Moody's visit to Cambridge and the going forth of the famous "Cambridge Seven" to China, together, with the holy influence of those early years of the Keswick Convention for the deepening of the spiritual life of believers, that led to the great 'Church Missionary Society'. The fiery preaching of Andrew Murray that to passion for souls and the multiplication of churches in South Africa, which contributed infinitely to the birth of South African Pentecostalism.

We cannot press too earnestly the importance of recognizing, seeking and receiving the endowment of the Holy Spirit as transcending all intellectual and other qualifications and preparations for effective missionary service. The saintly South African revivalist, Andrew Murray wrote:

"If there is to be any of our working like the Church of Pentecost, we must have a new era in our missions. There must be a real restoration of the Pentecostal life and power in the church. The Great Commission was given in connection with Pentecost, and its fulfillment was made entirely dependent on it."

(Glover 1946:61)

Whenever, in any period of the church's history, a little company has sprang up, surrendered to the Spirit and became so filled with His presence as to furnish the pliant instruments of His will, then a new Pentecost has dawned, and as a consequence the Great Commission has been republished.

The Pentecostal church in South Africa has been this 'small company' that rose up in the early 1900s and it has contributed to the salvation of tens of thousands of people by carrying out the Great Commission.

3.3 Pentecostal's Ten Fold Purpose of the Holy Spirit.

During interviews with leaders in Pentecostal churches, I have noted ten recurring reasons listed by them as to why the Holy Spirit is needed so much in missions. I shall now list these twelve reasons which demonstrate the necessity of the Holy Spirit in missions, and attach a short explanation to each of them.

3.3.1 He is the Comforter.

The predominant word used by Pentecostals to describe the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is *Parakletos*. A close study of *parakletos* reveals something of the Spirit's ministry in missions.

William Barclay (1975:378), a British New Testament scholar, describes the role of the Holy Spirit as Comforter:

“A *parakletos* is therefore an encourager, one who puts courage into the faint-hearted, one who nerves the feeble arm for fight, one who makes a very ordinary person cope gallantly with a perilous and dangerous situation.”

The lives of William Carey, Adoniram Johnson, David Livingstone, and Mother Teresa clearly show how the Holy Spirit encouraged these ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary feats. The infinitive form of the word is *parakalein**.

*Vine. E.R. 1981 *Vines Expository Dictionary*. World Bible Publisher: Iowa

This word applies particularly to the encouraging of persons, cheering them on to great deeds and lofty thoughts. It is used in connection with battle. The *parakletoi* or 'encouragers' were veterans that encouraged the soldiers both before and during the battle. In modern missions, the Pentecostals argue, the missionary, faced by rapidly changing social conditions, militant opposition from political and religious philosophies, and at time extreme nationalism, looks to the Comforter who readies him/her for the battle of life.

One of the interviewees concluded by stating: "Although hard pressed on every side, the Christian count on One who stands at his/her side as the powerful presence of the living Christ. The *paraclete* concept helps us Pentecostals understand how the Spirit works both in the Christian's life and in the missionary enterprise."

3.3.2 He is the Guide.

In addition to His role as Comforter and Companion in missions, the Holy Spirit is also seen as 'the Guide'. He exercises His sovereign authority in the sections of personnel, in choosing the field, and in opening and closing doors in the missionary activity.

He not only endues the individual missionary with power but also directs the entire enterprise. He chose Paul and Barnabas in Acts Chapter 13; He directed Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8; He closed Asia to Paul in Acts 16:6; and He opened the limitless opportunity of Europe in Acts 16:9. Concerning this statement, one of the interviewees argued:

"Perhaps the contrast between the fruitfulness of that day and the lesser results in our own day rests in the willingness of the early Church to follow the plans of the Spirit in every instance."

Another leader added that:

“If we see the term with no irreverence, the Holy Spirit is the Coach or Mentor of missions. In military terms He is the Field General.”

It can therefore be seen in Pentecostalism, that from this vantage point of the perfect knowledge of the will of the Father, the intent of the Son, and the movement of God in history, He is able to select, direct and send ‘the proper elements into battle.’

Conclusively, this means that to refuse to listen diligently to the Spirit’s direction is to assure failure in missions. On the other hand, to follow His direction is to assure victory!

3.3.3 He Gives the Power.

Jesus promised power (*dunamis*)* with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).

He told the disciples that the Spirit’s coming would endue them with dynamic power (Acts 1:8). Only after possessing this personalized divine power, were they able to undertake the otherwise impossible task of evangelizing the world. Paul stated that his preaching was not characterized by human wisdom and astute psychology but by divine power (1Cor. 2:4,13). The Spirit’s power made effective the presentations of Paul. Speaking on the absolute necessity of the power of the Spirit in missions and the presentation of the gospel, one of the interviewees stated:

“The Easter message can be brought to the nations only by the reality of Pentecost.”

Jesus’ promise to His disciples in the Great Commission is accomplished by His presence through the Holy Spirit (Matt.28:20). His presence in missions and in the entire mission

*Vine, E.R. 1981 *Vines Expository Dictionary*. World Bible Publisher: Iowa

of the church is God's seal, His guarantee that Jesus will be exalted and that His people will have power.

3.3.4 He is The Transformer

To best describe the role of the Holy Spirit as the Transformer, I will quote directly from an illustration that one of the church leaders gave to me. This is a present day experience that illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit as Transformer:

“A missionary in a series of evangelistic services in a boarder town between Guatemala and Mexico was preparing the films on the life of Christ. The film began and was flashed on the screen. Because the power was low, the image of Christ was dim and hard to distinguish. Although the crowd listened intently, the spoken words of Christ were garbled and unclear. The people could not get the message of Christ clearly. However at the end of the film many gave their hearts to Christ, claiming that they understood the message clearly. Hence the Holy Spirit plays the role of *Transformer* in the mission task. The words and the illustrations in the film may have been unclear and difficult to understand. Then the Holy Spirit comes and makes application of the truth to the hearer's heart. His transforming power makes the person of Christ clear; He makes the words of Christ understandable and meaningful. The Holy Spirit makes the words live.”

The power in missions can be clearly seen in the preaching of Peter at Pentecost. When Peter finished, a remarkable thing happened: “Now when they heard this they were *cut in the heart*, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles. “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37-38).

3.3.5 He is The Supplier.

The New Testament uses two terms to refer to the gifts that the Spirit gives to the church for the carrying out of its ministry, its mission and its testimony. The first word “*pneumatikon*” means spiritual gifts, thoughts, opinions and precepts that come from the working of the Spirit in the life of a Christian. This term appears in the opening verse of 1 Corinthians 12.

A second term “*charismata*” is used in 1 Corinthians 12 and also in Romans 12. The *charismata* are gifts of grace, freely and graciously provided by God. They are special gifts of a non-material sort that God bestows on individual Christians for the building of the body of Christ and for the extension of God’s mission (*Missio Dei*).

The special significance of these gifts for missions is that Christ, through His Spirit, equips His Church for the task He has for it. The Spirit of God, expressing the heart of the Father, makes plans for reaching a rebel world. He plans the strategy and he chooses whom he will use for the task. Those who are chosen are also empowered. Another of the leaders that I interviewed concluded by adding:

“If those whom God chooses are Spirit directed, they will go forth in His name conquering and to conquer. The Spirit of God is the effective presence of Christ in His people, guiding and empowering them to exalt Christ in the world.”

3.3.6 He Convicts and Converts Sinners.

On the day of Pentecost and throughout the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit convicted those thousands of proud conservative Jews who had just violently rejected and ignominiously crucified Jesus. These people could only change if the Holy Spirit convicted them. Subsequently He did convict thousands of these people in the book of Acts. Today He still convicts the most hardened sinner in their need for a Saviour.

Christians will work endlessly, and tirelessly trying to convict people of their sins and they achieve no results; they may also be given the task of speaking to sinners. However, because the active work of convicting sinners is done by the Holy Spirit, it surely makes the task much easier and much more rewarding. Through the message of His word, the contact with believers or even through a crisis in one's life, the Holy Spirit is able to use these circumstances to convict and lead a lost sinner to the cross of Christ.

3.3.7 He Performs a Mighty Work in Grace in The Believer.

It is impressive to observe what insignificant and unlikely instruments the Spirit of God chooses and empowers. I will quote directly from one of the leaders concerning his interpretation of the above thought:

“He took the craven hearted Peter who had quailed before the pointed finger of a servant girl and miserably denied his lord, and suddenly turned him into a lion hearted apostle who dared to face the populace of Jerusalem, and even the august Sanhedrin, proclaiming that Jesus is the risen King.”

According to a Pentecostal understanding, it is only by the grace of God that individuals like William Booth,* Mother Teresa and many others could accomplish as much as they did. It is impossible to achieve greatness in the mission field without having the divine grace of God. This is a key teaching in missiology, in the Pentecostal seminaries and Bible colleges.

*William Booth is the founder of the “Salvation Army”.

3.3.8 He Disciplines The Church.

The Holy Spirit as the true active leader in the Church demands loyalty, holiness and righteousness from His followers. One leader commented on this statement by stating:

“The only effective church discipline, and the only true means of maintaining the purity of any local church is such a manifest presence of the Spirit of God within that church that genuine believers will be attracted while false teachers will be restrained.”

Concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in discipline, Pentecostals usually quote the incident of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3-14). This incident is used to demonstrate the seriousness of working for God, and loyalty to the commission He had called us to. It calls workers to dedication, loyalty and commitment to the cause that Christ has laid before them.

3.3.9 He Exercises Authority and Sends Forth Workers.

Several specific instances are recorded concerning the role of the Holy Spirit. Firstly is the case of Philip (Acts 8:26-39), whom the Spirit calls to leave Samaria in the midst of an evangelistic crusade and journey to the desert to contact one lonely individual who will then take the gospel to the continent of Africa. Then there is the case of Peter (Acts 10), definitely ordered by the Spirit to go to Caesarea on a mission perplexing to himself and contrary to his Jewish prejudice, but in line with the Divine missionary program, namely, the extension of the gospel message to the Gentile world.

Finally in Chapter 13 we have the account of what is commonly spoken of as the beginning of the church's 'foreign missionary enterprise', the work of taking the gospel beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria "unto the uttermost parts of the earth".

Thus we have a beautiful picture of perfect harmony and co-operation between the divine and the human agencies in the ordination and appointment of Christian workers. Later in the book of Acts we see the same Holy Spirit, who sent these missionaries forth, empowering them to witness (13:9) and also sustaining them through trial and opposition (13:52).

3.3.10 He Presides Over Deliberative Councils.

In Chapter 15 of Acts the Holy Spirit is seen as presiding over the first recorded missionary conference, held in Jerusalem, and so guiding its deliberations that when the findings were written they read thus:

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (15:28)

We have here a model for church and missionary conferences that we must adhere to daily. Under the prompting and the control of the Holy Spirit, every conference will lead to some kind of concrete action, since the Spirit is a Spirit of action, where He is there must be movement. In Pentecostal circles this is seen as the ideal type of meeting. However, many meetings that I have attended (both local and national) have been marred by long deliberative sessions, the intrusion of petty jealousies and bitter rivalries, or even by resorting to worldly diplomacy and temporizing expediency, with the result that the Holy Spirit is grieved. His voice is silenced and His guidance is withheld. Much still needs to be done in Pentecostal circles, in order to return to the type of meetings held in the New Testament. These Meetings that are:

- a) led by the Holy Spirit
- b) leads to concrete action

In the above ten statements one is able to see that the work, the presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in missions is indispensable to Pentecostals. He is the sender, the guide and the preserver in missions. There can be no missions without the active involvement of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals argue that one should not move until prompted by the Spirit. Much emphasis is placed on having a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Hence it is not strange, but perfectly normal when one dialogues with a Pentecostal, to hear him/her say:

“The Holy Spirit said that I should do this...” or “The Holy Spirit says that I should not go there...”

To a great extent this type of “dialoguing with the Holy Spirit” leaves room for much abuse of the Holy Spirit. One is able to justify whatever one wishes to do or not to do by simply saying, “the Holy Spirit said to me...”

This leads on to a discussion of what I term the “Holy Spirit smokescreen”, since He is used on many occasions as a smokescreen for *a few* selfish ambitious Pentecostals or even for neutral Pentecostals who walk in piety.

3.4 The Holy Spirit as Smokescreen.

I wholeheartedly believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit in missions is imperative, and that Pentecostals have a unique understanding of the person and the working of the Holy Spirit, which can make authentic contributions to ecumenical bodies.

However, I am also of the conviction that some Pentecostals in the past and also presently misuse their relationship with the Holy Spirit and use Him as a smokescreen, hiding away their personal agendas.

It is a fact that in Pentecostal circles one often hears common people and church leaders say, “The Spirit said...” or “The Spirit led us to do this...” Hence, by using the argument which commences with, “The Spirit said...” it is possible to dispel all doubts or speculation about any authenticity of the particular person or church organisation. It is very difficult to question that person’s/church’s motives or *modus operandi*. Opposing this person/church would be equivalent to opposing the Holy Spirit Himself.

Pentecostals worldwide began to implement their own humanistic ideas, their own selfish motives and means in mission work and then accrediting their work to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Selfish ambitions, personal kingdom building and solo mission trips were all done in the name of the Holy Spirit, the One who prompted these endeavours. In tracing the history of the Pentecostal church it is possible to find many Pentecostal churches planting churches in each other’s *territories*, arguing that their work was Spirit-led. There were many vicious fights among members of these churches, over membership and territories, and each side claims to being led by the Holy Spirit.

During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the Holy Spirit was misused as a smokescreen by leaders who were not willing to stand up as prophetic voices of truth and justice. During my interviews with many leaders in these churches, I asked the question, “Why was the Pentecostal church not fully involved in the struggle for liberation under the apartheid regime?”

The answers were always the same: “We cannot just move without the prompting of the Holy Spirit.” or “The Spirit led us to do more important tasks, like that of proclaiming salvation.” One of the leaders said quite plainly:

“Democracy will not take anyone to heaven neither will it offer salvation. the most important message during the time of apartheid was liberation from the yoke of sin.

that is the way of salvation, that is the way of the church, and at that moment, like today, the message of salvation still is paramount to the true church.”

My question was: “Is the Holy Spirit not the Spirit of liberation, peace, justice, unity and reconciliation?” Many did not give me an answer that could satisfy me. However, I did pick up the spirit behind all these answers. It seemed to me that many leaders misused the Holy Spirit as a “*Deus ex machina*”. A “*Deus ex machina*” was a type of “Jack in the box” that was used in Greek mythology. In Greek mythology, it was said that whenever there was an extremely difficult problem or situation facing a person the “*Deus ex machina*” would “pop out of a box” and give an answer to the problem and thereafter vanish, until the next problem arose. To a certain extent the some Pentecostals use the person of the Holy Spirit as their “personal *Deus ex machina*”. They draw up their own programs and implement their own ideas, and as soon as something goes wrong or when somebody challenges the authenticity of their work, they quickly bring out their “*Deus ex machina*” (their convenient strategy) and say; “The Spirit said...”

3.5 The Pentecostal Dilemma: A Distinct Difference between the Manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the Purpose of the Holy Spirit.

There appears to be a problem in the understanding or differentiation of the manifestation and the purpose of the Holy Spirit. To some extent the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is also seen or understood as the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

a) The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues, and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit are what I call the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Each time a person speaks in tongues, or prophesies, or when any of the spiritual gifts are in operation, then one can call that the manifestation of

the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself in a person in the forms of the various spiritual gifts. When the gifts are in operation then the Holy Spirit is manifested.

b The Purpose of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit, however, is not the same as the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to empower the individual in the work that God desires. This work includes evangelism, missions, disciple making and church planting, etc. The remainder of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is outlined at the beginning of this chapter under the heading: Pentecostals Ten Fold Purpose of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is *not* just to “baptise a person” so that he/she can speak in tongues or operate in any of the other gifts. The purpose is distinctly for the work that God desires the church to carry out. The dilemma in the Pentecostal churches is that many adherents see the speaking in new tongues and the operation of the other gifts as the sole purpose of the Holy Spirit. Some will argue that this is not true, however, the church gives more time in the form of conferences, books, and seminars to the subject of the ‘Gifts’. Very little time is given to the purpose of the Holy Spirit, to empower Pentecostals for work.

c The Example of Jesus.

Jesus outlines the purpose of the Holy Spirit, in the gospel of Luke 4:18-19.

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

¹⁹“To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Jesus systematically outlines the manifold purpose of the Holy Spirit. If anybody know the purpose of the Holy Spirit, that I think Jesus is that person! The Pentecostal church will do well if they take cognizance of the words of Jesus.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is:

- i) to preach the good news to *the poor* (all emphases mine)
- ii) to proclaim *freedom* to the *prisoner*
- iii) to recover *sight for the blind*
- iv) to *release* the *oppressed*
- v) to proclaim the *acceptable year* of the Lord

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to empower the believer to become active in society, dealing with the spiritual, social and economic issues in any given society. The Holy Spirit is a “Spirit of boldness” which removes fear from the believer and enables the believer to be an active agent of God, in the midst of oppression and injustice.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is not just to give us “goose bumps” all over our bodies and make us feel good, so that we can speak in tongues and prophesy to each other.

Luke writes,

“So Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit...” (Lk. 4:14)

Jesus’ mission was not to create a “feel good” religion, His mission was to create an army of soldiers that would take instructions from Him and bring about a revolution wherever they are commissioned to go.

CONCLUSION

Within Pentecostal circles, there can be no missions without the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He becomes the pivotal point around which missions rotate, since he

empowers the saints and convicts the sinners. There is no doubt that the mission enterprise has reached this place of success, only because of the participation of the Holy Spirit. Unique to Pentecostals is the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" that further empowers the church to participate in God's mission with success.

However, also particular to Pentecostals is the misuse of the person of the Holy Spirit, for an individual's selfish gain. Hence, what is needed in the Pentecostal church is an official Biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit that is free from emotionalism and irrationalism. An understanding that can be accepted across the board, not just one that suits each church for that time only. There needs to be a consensus about who the person of the Holy Spirit is, and the role that He plays in the discipline of missions. This, I assume, should be easy, since there is only One Spirit, though many congregations. It is only when we have reached this consensus that we are able to make a dynamic contribution to the ecumenical church, and current discussions concerning the person of the Holy Spirit.

Part Two: Towards Contextualisation in Pentecostal Mission:

Identifying Issues in Mission.

Chapter 4

The Legacy of Racism within the Pentecostal Church: Mission as Anti-Racism.

4.1 WHY DEAL WITH THIS SUBJECT IN MISSIOLOGY?

It is imperative to deal with this issue because Christian mission is concerned with continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). One of the features of Jesus' ministry was his intense concern for those who were oppressed.

Luke 4:18 states "He has anointed me to set at liberty those that are oppressed...."

In this passage Jesus is seen as a liberator. He liberates people from sin, negative self-images, cultural subjugation, oppressive social structures (like apartheid), poverty and its destructive effects, illness, fear of death and evil spirits. As his church, we are called to the same type of mission. While our mission is primarily to preach the gospel of salvation, it is also of paramount importance to speak out with a prophetic voice and to act against oppressive social structures, like the remnants of apartheid, here in South Africa, since it affects all God's children.

The mission of the church, therefore, is to be agents of liberation – liberating its people from oppressive social structures. Failing to do so is not just being inconsistent in ministry but it is also a sin. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and does

it not, sins”(James 4:17). The church’s stance during the era of apartheid would therefore reflect much on the spirituality of the church and its mission in the society that God has placed it in. The Pentecostal Church is a Christian Church. It is part of the body of Christ. Like every other Christian Church it receives its instruction from the written word of God - The Holy Bible. It also follows the example of Jesus in his mission here on earth. Hence like every other Church in South Africa during the apartheid era, it is only fair that the Pentecostal Church should also reflect on some critical questions concerning their past.

As I said in the introductory remarks of this dissertation that I am of the conviction that the Pentecostal Church was not just silent, but also supported the status quo during that period of South African history. With the help of some interviews with leaders plus a historical survey of these churches I will now ascertain whether my suspicions are real or imaginary.

I also wish to answer, to the best of my ability, two more questions:

- i) Is racism still alive in Pentecostal Churches?
- ii) Is authentic reconciliation possible?

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit in South Africa was no different from the outpouring in the United States. Racism in the Pentecostal movement in South Africa, says Horn (1991:154), was not restricted to the apartheid era (i.e. after 1948 when the National Party gained power and introduced political apartheid). Although not started by Blacks, the first services conducted in a Black Church in Doornfontein were by the early Pentecostal missionaries. John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch (Horn 1989-128).

These first few services (which did not last for long) were multi-racial. However, only six months after this initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1908, the Executive Council of the A.F.M decided, "That the baptism of natives shall in future take place after the baptism of white people" (De Wet 1989:57). Soon after that the A.F.M. resolved that the superintendent over the 'Native work' *had to be a white man* (De Wet 1989:161).

From this time onwards, the A.F.M, the biggest and the oldest Pentecostal church in South Africa, moved towards separate congregations for Whites and Blacks – hence paving the way for other Pentecostals churches to follow. Although all three of the mainline churches practiced racial segregation, I place much emphasis on the A.F.M. because it was the forerunner in this instance. The other Pentecostal churches merely copied the pattern, the policies and leadership structure of the A.F.M. A closer look at the history and the legacy of apartheid in the A.F.M. church, followed by the F.G.C. and finally the A.O.G. church, will now be in order.

4.3 THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION

4.3.1 Neo-Calvinistic Kuyperian Theology.

Neo-Calvinism Kuyperian theology, says Horn (1989:117), set the foundation upon which early Pentecostalism was comfortably built. The role of the Afrikaans speaking Calvinist churches (especially the Dutch Reformed Church) in the formation of apartheid and its moral justification of the system over the years are well documented. Although scholars differ on the extent of the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church, few would dispute the fact that neo-Calvinism Kuyperian theology provided an ideal theological framework for the apartheid structure.

Commenting on the influence of neo-Calvinism Kuyparian theology, Horn (1989:118) concludes:

“It is ironical that although the South African Pentecostals shared so many of the sentiments of the evangelical section of the Dutch Reformed Church and opposed the theology of the neo-Calvinist, they supported the un-Pentecostal theology of the nation (volks­theologie*) based on Kuyparian theological structure to a great extent. The three biggest historical Pentecostal churches, the A.F.M, the F.G.C and the Pentecostal Protestant Church, all practiced apartheid to a greater or lesser degree. Despite the common out-cry against apartheid among different Pentecostal traditions during the seventies, the Pentecostals kept a low profile. Not that there was no struggle against apartheid in the Black Pentecostal Churches! But the struggle centered around internal church policies and theological questions: mainly the unity of the church.”

4.3.2 John .G. Lake

John G. Lake, the father of the A.F.M, (already mentioned), had considerable influence on the church’s policies and thinking, concerning the area of race-relations.

* Volks­theologie is an Afrikaans term meaning “state theology”. It was a theology that supported the status quo of the government. Parts of this theology are found in the constitution of three of the mainline Pentecostal churches.

Quoting from Gordon Lindsay's book on the autobiography of Lake, Horn (1991:57) states:

"Lake was the brain behind the segregation laws of the Union of South Africa. Lake gained influence with the Prime Minister, General Louis Botha, after he had assisted him during a national crisis. General Botha later invited Lake to address the parliament on the racial issue."

Lake (in Horn 1991:57) makes the following comment concerning his invitation to speak in Parliament:

"I outlined a native policy and submitted it to the Government. In receipt of this I was invited to come to Cape Town and address the Parliament on this issue. I did so – something remarkable for an American in a foreign country. I framed the policy in harmony with our American policy involving the Indian tribes, having as an example the United States and other missions in regard to their handling of the native nations. This policy, as outlined by me was practically adopted by the Boer party."

De Wet (1989:158) concludes from this that Lake was a proponent of racial segregation.

Commenting on the above statement one of the interviewees argued, "Lake supported racial segregation, but that does not mean that he propagated it in the church."

Another respondent argued, "Lake was paternalistic, and possibly even a proponent of political segregation but he was definitely not a racist."

Yet another also argued that, "Lake started the first A.F.M church in Doornfontein among the Blacks and also worked closely with the black evangelist Elias Letwaba, during early stages of his ministry, so how can he be labeled a racist?"

None of the respondents wanted to admit that Lake was a racist, or even that his position on racial issues was somewhat dubious and disturbing. Could these respondents not even notice that the decisions made by the Executive Council (on which Lake featured prominently) since 1908 were racially inclined?

According to Anderson (1999:94):

“The first Pentecostal meetings in South Africa were racially integrated, only four months after the founding of the A.F.M in 1908 its all White Executive Council minuted ‘the necessity of getting adequate accommodation for the holding of services

in Doornfontein especially for the Coloured people”.

De Wet (1989:160-161) later adds that:

“ Less than two months later it decided that the baptism of Natives shall in future take place after the baptism of the white people. In February 1909 it was resolved that the superintendent over the native work had to be a white man. The minutes of the July 1909 report read: ‘In future, the baptism of Whites, Coloureds and Natives shall be separated’. A year later separate annual national conferences for White and Black people were held. In 1910, a ‘Native Council’ was formed consisting of three White and three Black members. All decisions of this council had to be rectified by the Executive Council. By 1915 no ordination or leadership appointments could be made by a black church official except with the consent of the White Superintendent.”

By 1917 the following ambiguous resolution was adopted by the Executive Council, which clearly illustrated the prevailing prejudice:

“... we do not teach or encourage social equality between Whites and Natives. We recognize that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. We therefore preach the gospel equally to all people, making no distinction. We wish it to be generally known that our White, Coloured and Native peoples have their separate places of worship.”

Concerning the above statements made by Anderson and De Wet, respondents of this church (whom I spoke to) merely argued that the above resolutions passed by the Executive Council could be attributed to their ‘paternalistic’ attitude and not because they were racist. But surely one can see that these men were not just driven by paternalism but by feelings of White supremacy and racist attitudes. Lake was in the midst of these decisions his vote passed those resolutions. Is Lake therefore a paternalistic leader or a racist? One has to agree with De Wet that “Never in his wildest dreams would Lake have foreseen that the practical arrangement he advocated would change into the rigid apartheid ideology”. But, unfortunately, this typical Western paternalism, very popular even among early Pentecostal missionaries, laid the foundation for the A.F.M to go along with many apartheid laws when they were implemented in the post 1948 period.

4.3.3 Historical Development in the A.F.M

Horn (1991:157-166), in his article entitled “South African Pentecostal and Apartheid” divides the history of the A.F.M into two sections. He discusses their policies and

structures before and after 1948. Since this division of Horn offers a better overview of the developments in the A.F.M, I will therefore adopt it in this dissertation.

4.3.4 The A.F.M before 1948

Before 1948 there were no Blacks among the first appointed leaders of the Church. Blacks were later appointed as elders in the Native work. Only a White male could be appointed as superintendent of the so-called "Native Work". This trend is also seen in the other two Pentecostal Churches under discussion. The "Native Council" that governed the Native work from 1910 consisted of three White leaders and three Black leaders. The three so-called Black 'leaders' were merely 'interpreters' and 'guides' who took the White leaders to areas where Black congregations were stationed. Ironically, the White Church was called the 'mother church', despite the fact that the Pentecostal revival actually started in a Black Church in Doornfontein. De Wet (1989:162-163) points out correctly, in mitigation of the racial attitudes of the pioneers, that many of these paternalistic actions were taken to meet the expectations of the government.

With the pressures of the government on the one side and the stringent commands of Christ for unity on the other side, the A.F.M Church left with a difficult decision to make eventually succumbed to the pressures of the government. This led to separate baptism, separate Churches, all of which eventually laid the foundations of racism. Even a well known South African Pentecostal leader like David du Plessis (1977:112) built on and strengthened the growing alienation between Blacks and Whites by making the different 'sections' autonomous and giving them their own separate constitution in the thirties (Du Plessis, 'A man called Mr. Pentecost' 1977:112). According to Anderson (1999:99) these three separate, racially determined Black, Coloured and Indian sections of the church

were controlled by a Missions department and a Missions Director appointed by the White Church. These three sections were to have no legal standing, as only White persons could become 'legal members' of the A.F.M. – which situation remained until 1991. However on a different note, there were a few within the A.F.M. who did stand up against the Afrikaner Nationalism that was rapidly becoming acceptable in the Church. Horn (1991:160-161) highlights the ministry of P.L. le Roux (who succeeded Lake as President in November 1913 until 1943) in his struggle against Afrikaner Nationalism, Nazism, and other Right Wing movements, in the columns of 'The Comforter', the official publication of the Church. Le Roux went so far as to hint that the former Dutch Reformed minister and prominent leader in the National Party, (Dr D.F. Malan) who became Prime Minister in 1948, was the false prophet of Revelation 13.

I firmly believe that the influence of Le Roux and like-minded pioneers prevented the A.F.M in its early years from totally accepting ideological White racism, anti-semitism and the theology of the Afrikaner as an elect nation. However, the church's paternalism and reluctance to take an explicit stand against racism laid the foundation for later ideological influence upon the A.F.M after 1948.

4.3.5 The A.F.M after 1948

Owing to limitations of time and space I am unable to give a detailed historical survey of the A.F.M. after 1948. This section will merely draw on a short discussion of racism and reconciliation as evident in the period 1948 to 1996.

The 1940s

Towards the end of the 1940s a time of bonding between the A.F.M and the Afrikaner culture occurred. For instance, Horn (1991; 161) documents the time when the worker's council of the A.F.M decided in 1946 to celebrate the Day of the Covenant with Christmas and Good Friday as a day of thanks and a Sabbath. The Day of the Covenant was an important symbol of rising Afrikaner Nationalism. It celebrated the victory of a small band of Afrikaner settlers in Natal over a mighty Zulu army, as an act of God. The 1940s therefore set the stage for A.F.M commitment to the National Party Government in the 1950s.

The 1950s

The 1950s saw the election of G.R. Wessels, the Vice-President of the A.F.M, as a Nationalist senator in 1955. It was during this period that the National Party gained power and in its election campaign promised to implement apartheid (Horn 1991:162). Hence by allowing its Vice-President to become a senator, the A.F.M became an active partner in the process of taking away the political rights of the Coloured, African and Indian communities, many of whom were members of the A.F.M and other Pentecostal Churches. It was no means an extraordinary decision by the A.F.M to allow a Pastor to become a politician whilst keeping his credentials and staying on as Vice-President. Frank Chikane, however, was not given this opportunity, but rather was ex-communicated from the Church. Also, during this period of history, Horn (1991:162-165) in his article 'South African Pentecostal and apartheid' records various incidents of racial intimidation and strife in the A.F.M. He lists incidents of Churches advertising 'Whites only' outside their churches, removal of Black children from White Sunday

schools and propaganda supporting racism, using radio and magazines. (Read Horn's article for a more detailed investigation into these incidents).

The 1960s and 1970s

Although Wessels resigned as Vice-President in 1969 (Pastors were not allowed to participate in party politics after this date), the bond between the A.F.M and the National Party remained strong, though informal. The clearest sign of the Church's insensitive political approach of those years is to be found in the new constitution of 1961 which stated that 'Members, are White baptized members, while the Church also has Non-White, that is the Indian, Coloured and Black followers' (Private law no.24 of 1961, articles 1 and 2 of the statutes). This era is best described by Horn (1991:161):

“Throughout the years of Verwoerdian apartheid, the A.F.M never raised its voice against the crude oppression of the vast majority of the people. The forced removals of 3,5 million people, the banning of hundreds, if not thousands, without a chance to defend themselves, the detention of thousands without trial and vulgar implementation of the dehumanizing Mixed Marriages Act and article 16 of the Immorality Act, never caused an eyebrow to be raised amongst White Pentecostals. On the contrary, there are, as we have seen, indications that the White section of the A.F.M actively supported the System”.

The 1980s and the 1990s

These two decades saw the beginning of talks about unity between the four different sections of the A.F.M. but progress was slow. “ In 1986 the White Church eventually rejected apartheid as unbiblical but there were still no concrete plans for unity. Frustrated

by the delays the three Black sections of the Church went ahead and united without the White Section and Frank Chikane was elected President” (Musa Ndwandwe 1996:36).

In April 1987 the A.F.M presented an interim constitution to the three sections, but this was rejected, leading to a stalemate in the process of unity (Anderson 1993:69). An important meeting was held in Port Shepstone in May 1988, when six delegates from each of the Black Workers Council met. It was agreed that the Committee for unity should continue to negotiate with the White section, but that the three sections should themselves unite and become a legal entity within the A.F.M. Expert legal opinion was sought as it was “increasingly clear to the Black members that the White members were not interested in moving towards real unity” Anderson (1993:69). A new constitution for the entire Church was presented and took effect on 25 May 1991 allowing for two sections in the A.F.M, so that the White Churches remained separate. For the first time in the 80-year history of the A.F.M, Blacks were now legal members.

This can be construed as a progressive step since it paved the way for “The great Pentecostal reconciliation” of the A.F.M Church on Good Friday, 1996.

4.3.6 The Great Pentecostal Reconciliation

The above heading is taken from the cover story that appeared in the 1996 June/July issue of the Challenge magazine. At the Centurion Park Stadium in Pretoria on the Good Friday afternoon of 1996 the leaders and members of the two sections (Black and White) officially united, to become one Church. Dr Izak Burger of the White section and Dr Frank Chikane of the Black section shared the podium and addressed the people.

Izak Burger is quoted as publicly saying the following words to Frank Chikane (recorded in the ‘Challenge’ magazine 1996:36):

“My brother, as the leader of the Black section of our Church, I would like to say from the bottom of my heart, and I am sure my words, which are not part of the Programme for this service, represent the true feelings of many of my White brothers and sisters. I am asking today for your forgiveness for the sins I have committed against you in my support of the divisive apartheid policy in this country”.

Frank Chikane responded by saying that in his anger and frustration he might have also sinned. He in turn asked for forgiveness.

4.3.7 Black Prophetic Voices and Publications

Each of the three Pentecostal Churches had their “freedom fighters” those who fought for equality in the Church. Two persons of noted in the A.F.M Church are Frank Chikane and Jappie La Poorta. (Although there were many others, allow me for the sake of brevity to mention the contributions of these two A.F.M. Pentecostal ministers. Anderson (1993:69) states very plainly that “while Frank Chikane was becoming somewhat of a National Hero to the Black people, at the same time was becoming an embarrassment to the White A.F.M”.

He was clearly seen by many Blacks in the A.F.M as the champion of their struggle, raising a prophetic voice against racism and White domination. In 1981 he was suspended by the A.F.M’s West Rand District Council for being ‘active in politics’, something that was not done to their Vice-President G.R. Wessels. A part of the suspension letter read as follows:

“that you are still active in politics, but that on the 31st January 1980, you have promised the committee to be away from politics. The committee found that you are still appearing in the newspaper”. De Wet (1989:147)

His suspension was upheld by the National Executive Council in October 1981 because he:

“did not keep the promise he made regarding the conditions of his ordinations, and because the council finds that there is no change in his attitude” De Wet (1989:148).

In September 1982 he became full time co-ordinator of the Institute of Contextual Theology and was appointed as its Director in 1983. He also was appointed as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches in July 1987. He was also instrumental in the writing and publishing of the well known South African document known as “The Kairos Document- A Theological comment on the Political crisis in South Africa”. It was from a platform such as this that Chikane fought his fight against racism and injustice. This platform led to the “Great Pentecostal Reconciliation” on Good Friday 1996.

4.3.8 Jappie La Poorta and the Azusa: Theological Journal

The Azusa: Theological Journal, the official magazine of the Society for Relevant Pentecostal Studies, was the platform used by La Poorta in his fight against racism and injustice. Not only was he at the forefront of the negotiation for unity in the A.F.M, but his vision extended to reconciliation in all Pentecostal Churches in South Africa. With other writers and freedom fighters like Moss Ntlha, Pravin Maharaj, Nico Horn, Dean Reddy and Jasper Cecil, La Poorta wrote against racism in these Pentecostal Churches and challenged the White brethren to find a place of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. This was his platform from which he fought in the struggle.

Leaders like these, and also many more local preachers and their congregations, with the help of God, who eventually brought about the Great Pentecostal Reconciliation.

4.4 THE FULL GOSPEL CHURCH

4.5 From 1910 to 1975.

In the first constitution and the by-laws passed by the General Council of the F.G.C in 1922 up until the one approved on the 4th of April 1979, one is clearly able to see the entrenchment of apartheid laws. In the Preamble to all the constitutions up to the 1979 constitution one is able to read the lines:

“It is incumbent on us as a church, to be subject to the higher powers, which have been ordained of God (Rom.13:1) and to the existing governmental policies of the Republic of South Africa, and to the laws relating thereof.

We deem it incumbent upon us to comply with governmental policies, which are in force.”

The meticulous following of apartheid laws by the General Council of the F.G.C led to the entrenchment of segregation policies in the church, which caused much heartache to the children of God who were of any other colour but White.

In the next section I will trace the struggles of the Black people, then the Coloured people, and finally the Indian people, during the time of apartheid.

4.4.1 The Black Community

Little written history on the Black department of this church exists. Much of the history is oral and very vague hence I will rely heavily on the unpublished English version of Lemmer Du Plessis's (1984) book originally entitled in Afrikaans as. “*Pinkster Panorama*”.

The Black community has always been viewed as missionary objects. Thus the relationship between the Executive Council and the Black members of this church has always been one of Paternalism, and reciprocity has never been developed. Work among the Black community started around 1914 (Du Plessis 84:81), and from that time white missionaries ministered to black people. During that early time Eleanor Bowie in an outreach to Vrededorp (Johannesburg) in 1918 reports:

“It is here that the greater parts of the slums are located. It is called the modern Sodom and Gomorrah, and justly so, for the social conditions existing there was almost of beggar description. Sin of every kind abounds. Horse racing, gambling and smuggling are the order of the day, as well as the night.”

(Du Plessis 84:84)

In those early years sins were described by outer appearances, and the greater sins of racial segregation, poverty, and oppression were given a blind eye. In the early fifties, approximately 40 years after their mission to the Black community, the Executive Council met at Florida, a small town outside Johannesburg to elect a new Mission Committee to continue the work of missions among the Black community (Du Plessis 84:93). Six persons were chosen to work with and represent the Black people. The incongruous result was that of the six members chosen, all were White males. There was no Black representative nor any Black consultation regarding this new committee.

During 1951, it was suggested that the services of the newly planned Bible School for Whites at Florida should also provide training for the Black workers of the church. However this did not eventuate. Du Plessis (1984:94) offers a reason for this:

“... this idea was rejected for obvious reasons, and on economical grounds.”

Needless to say these *obvious reasons* were certainly racial/racist in origin, to keep Black leaders untrained so that they would need to depend on the leadership of Whites. However, in August 1952, the Jacobus Saayman Bantu College was opened near Alexandra in the Transvaal. The first question that was raised, says Du Plessis (1984:96), was:

“...whether Non-European Christians who were not baptized in the Spirit should be allowed to teach in the college.”

Also, Du Plessis (1984:96) adds that when Saayman was on leave in America,

“there was nobody with the necessary interest who could keep a watchful eye on the spiritual standard of the school.”

This statement was made while Rev. E. Mkwazi was present at the College as a member of the faculty (Roberts 2001:2). It seemed as if Rev. Mkwazi's experience as a teacher and a member of the faculty was not sufficient for the post of 'acting principal'.

Paternalism, coupled with racism, seemed to be the order of the day, in the church. Black leadership was suppressed, and paternalism was encouraged. One is left with asking, whether this was a well-planned systematic form of deliberate oppression?

Eventually in 1986, the Black community willingly separated themselves from the leadership of the White Executive Council. They formed their Head Office in Soweto; there they elected their own Executive Council and hosted their own General conference. The presiding moderator was Rev. L.E.S Maskwameng. Anderson (1993:69) gives a clear reason as to why the Black community moved out so willingly:

“It was felt that the blacks were not adequately represented on the Ordained Ministers Council because of the academic and theological qualifications that were conditions

for membership. Blacks felt heartache at their virtual exclusion, as they did not have adequate training facilities, and were the victims of an inferior education system that denied them many of the opportunities which were accorded to the Whites.”

It is abundantly clear that apartheid did exist in the church and the Black community felt its oppressive effects. Whether it continues to exist is an issue I will investigate before the close of this chapter, but let me move on to the next group of people that felt the pressure of apartheid.

4.4.2 The Coloured Community.

As in the case of the Black community, there is little written documentation/history on the development of this group of people in the F.G.C. Thus, as in the previous case, I will have to rely heavily on the work of Du Plessis (1984:112). According to him, the F.G.C. officially did not have its own work among the Coloured population before 1929, when P.N. Lotter began preaching the gospel in the Cape Peninsula. The Coloured community was and still is the smallest group in this church; hence they also felt the full lash of apartheid.

The earliest account of discontentment with White superiority took place as early as 1934. According to Du Plessis (1984:114), a letter was written at this time to the Executive Council complaining about the influx of White Pastors in the Coloured districts. Pastor Fred Abrahams, representing the Coloured community, complained that these ‘White Pastors lacked the knowledge and appreciation of the relationship that previously existed’ between the Executive and the Coloured community. It was stated by one of the interviewees that the new White Pastors wanted to “take charge” of the already established work.

Another account of White domination occurred shortly after this confrontation. The Coloured community complained about Pastor J.J Badenhorst who, only weeks before the latest district council meeting had arrived in the Cape and was elected as vice-chairman in the place of Dr Fallon (Du Plessis 1984:115). It is also recorded by Du Plessis (1984:115) how Lotter had taken over the Parow work without any consideration of Pastor Abrahams, who was the Coloured overseer of that branch.

In March 1934 four leading Pastors in the Coloured community broke away from the F.G.C and formed their own movement called the Full Gospel Mission (Du Plessis 1984:116), a church now led by Coloured ministers. This was a break from White domination. Those churches that remained with the F.G.C. were provided with White superintendents. M.D Badenhorst presided over the Coloured work in 1941 and also again from 1944 to 1946. J.F. Nel and W.O. O'Kelly served as superintendents in 1942 and 1943 respectively (Du Plessis 1984:117).

Like the other communities, the Coloured community was also provided with a separate Bible College called the Chaldo Bible Institute, situated in Wynberg. Providing a separate College for each ethnic group poses many problems. Students are never given the opportunity to mix with people of different races, and hence when they graduate and start their ministries it is difficult for them to break out of this oppressive mould and work in solidarity with other race groups. The Executive Council did not examine the implications that separated race colleges would eventually have on the health of the church as a whole.

Indeed, like her predecessors, the Coloured community was also segregated by the Executive Council in 1986. Rev. J.J. Vos became the Moderator of this Coloured section and their head office was located in Wynberg, Cape Town.

4.4.3 The Indian Community.

There are many publications concerning Pentecostal work among the Indians*. Hence I am able to draw on resources both from interviews and also a score of publications. However, my main source will be the publication by Prof. Gerald Pillay** entitled, 'Religion at the Limits', published in 1994 by the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Like the Coloured and the Black community, the Indian community also felt the brant of the apartheid regime. From as early as 1925 when Dr. D.F. Malan introduced the Area Reservation Bill Indians were forced to live in confined reservations, while their movements in the country were also severely restricted.

*Oosthuizen, G.C 1975 *Moving to the waters Bethesda*, Publications: Durban.

Oosthuizen, G.C 1975 *Pentecostal penetration into the Indian Community in Metropolitan Durban*, Human Science Research Council: Durban.

Brain, J.B 1983 *Christian Indians in Natal 1860-1911*, Oxford University Press: Cape Town.

**Prof. Gerald Pillay was the first Pentecostal historian in the F.G.C and also the first among the Indian community.

The Group Areas Act of 1930 and 1940, the 1930 Transvaal Land Tenure Bill, and the Trading and Occupation Land Restriction Act of 1946 were all adopted by government to oppress and suppress the Indian community (Pillay 1994:9).

In 1940 anti-Asiatic agitation increased when Indians purchased properties on the Lower Berea when Whites moved out between 1927 and 1940. Finally the Group Areas Act of 1950 forced Indians into separated developments. By 1974, 41 782 families (in total 276 000 individuals) were disqualified from living around Durban. They were forcefully removed from their homes and relocated to Phoenix and Chatsworth, on the outskirts of the city. Pillay (1994:11) calls this the first “Indian great trek”.

The Pentecostal churches followed the same pattern during this resettlement. They established branches or ‘house-churches’ in all these Indian ‘reservations’. The affairs of the Indian Church at this time revolved mainly around the White Pastor, J.F. Rowlands. Although, J.F. Rowlands gave leadership and direction, actual evangelism and expansion were mainly in the hands of Indian Pastors and lay-people.

4.4.3.1 The Voice of J.F. Rowlands

The F.G.C like the other South African Pentecostal churches, has tended to be indifferent to socio-political concerns. This has been, in the main, the result of its fundamentalist commitment first and foremost to the ‘salvation of souls’ and the necessity of gaining ‘eternal life’. Hence any attempts to raise questions relating to the responsibility of the church in socio-political matters in South Africa were dismissed by the White leadership as unspiritual. Interviewees repeatedly commented on J.F. Rowlands’ advice: “Don’t bring politics into the church”. Until the 1980s superintendents were always White men, and so their stance on politics was entrenched in the Indian church.

However, according to Gerald Pillay (1994:147):

“Of all the White Pastors of established churches among the Indians, only Pastor J.F.

Rowlands appears to have ventured to criticize the availing political ideology. In the late 50s he condemned the Group Areas Act and its effects, saying:

‘the Group Areas Act is destined to bring unhappiness to tens of thousands of persons in South Africa, the hardest hit will be the Indians ... unrighteous legislation must be removed from the Statute Book. The voteless non-Europeans of South Africa are at the mercy of the White voter.’”

In the 1964 August edition of the ‘Moving Water’ magazine*, Rowlands openly rejected the South African policy of racial discrimination. He wrote:

“As a Christian leader, I should be failing in my duty if I hid the truth ... I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, discriminative laws are now only destined for a short life.”

In 1941, Rowlands had expressed to the F.G.C on behalf of Bethesda**, strong disapproval of the expression “Europeans Only” which until recently was appended as a footnote in religious services advertised by White assemblies in the F.G.C. He pointed out that there will be no “Europeans Only” sign in heaven! He wrote:

* The official magazine of the Indian department of the F.G.C.

** The official name adopted by the Indian department of the F.G.C.

“It is our firm conviction that the policy of the present South African Government is trying to introduce ‘apartheid’ into the country and it has no sanction whatsoever in the teachings of the New Testament ... we rejoice because our citizenship is in Heaven and there is no apartheid there.” (‘Moving Waters’, July 1958:102)

4.4.3.2 The Voice of the People

Later an internal crisis emerged in the Indian Community concerning the succession of J.F. Rowlands. Rowlands’ recommendation that ‘the reins’ be handed over to the White Pastor A. Thompson ignited the fire in the Indian community to now stand up against both paternalism and apartheid in the church.

Pillay (1994:247-248) writes about how the publicity that was given to the ‘succession problem’, for the first time enabled a focus to be planned on the racial policy of the F.G.C. After 14 weeks of consistent reporting the issue in the newspapers, a shift from the ‘succession problem’ to the problem of the ‘apartheid policy’ of the F.G.C and its acceptance of the State’s apartheid ideology took place. One of these articles raised the question of whether the racial structure of the church had prohibited it from assisting in the fight for social justice. From this time members of the church began seriously to question the policies of the F.G.C. Some even attempted to leave the denomination because of racial prejudice. Pillay (1994:248) records one member of the church lamenting in the news paper, saying:

“If the church does not function as God intended it to, free of systems and ideologies of men, then we are going to view a society of God-less people who will find comfort in the discomfort of this world. For too long we have been the victims of a system that divides and rules”

4.4.3.3 Challenging the Church's Constitution

On 21 April 1980 five laymen were elected by a few pastors to investigate the issue of racial prejudice in the constitution of the church. The committee unearthed various points of racial prejudice in the constitution that confirmed that the systematically suppressed people were non-Whites. This was the constitution that was passed on 16 April 1979. Here are some of the relevant clauses.

- i. The constitution accepted the policies and laws of the South African government:
“... it is *incumbent on us* as a church, to be subject to the higher powers, which have been ordained of God (Rom. 13:1) and to the existing governmental policies of the Republic of South Africa, and to the laws relating thereto.” (Italics mine)

Preamble paragraph 3

- “... it is *incumbent on us* to comply with governmental policies which are in force.”
(Italics mine)

Preamble paragraph 4

- ii. White pastors were the highest legislative body in the church; this committee was called the ‘General Council’.

“Whilst the highest legislative authority of the church is the General Conference...”

Article 7,60 & Article 8,74

- iii. The Indians, Blacks and Coloureds had White representatives on this council they could not represent themselves.

“the Executive Council shall consist of:

The Moderator

The Deputy Moderator

The Secretary General

The representative of the Coloured Community

The representative of the Indian Community

The representative of the Black Community”

Article 7, Section 1

iv. Examples of gross unfairness were also discovered.

“At the last meeting of the regional or district council before the General Conference in the election year, the regional or district councils shall vote to nominate pastors for the position of Superintendent. The nominations shall be submitted to the Executive Council for consideration at the time of appointing Superintendents. The *Executive Council shall not be bound to appoint either of the two nominees submitted.*” (Italics mine)

Article 6.5.1.1 (Page 49)

Many other forms of suppression are to be found in the constitution, however, the point has been sufficiently emphasized.

The Indian community submitted their findings to the Executive Council and called for the amendment of the constitution. However, by the beginning of 1983, these proposals had not yet been accepted. Constitutional amendments required the approval of the White Conference of the F.G.C which meets each year at Easter. In August 1982, at a meeting in Durban, the moderator of the F.G.C openly rejected apartheid but at a meeting of the ministers of Bethesda in February 1983, which he chaired, only a compromise amendment to the constitution was sent to the White conference. Even this watered down amendment, which proposed a federal system of church government, was rejected by the

White conference which met in April 1983. In 1983 the superintendents and other leaders of the Black, Coloured and Indian communities, and a handful of White liberated pastors broke away from the F.G.C Executive controlled council and formed their own constituted United Assemblies Full Gospel Church. The remaining White congregations that supported the status quo of the government and enjoyed its privileges remained separate, calling themselves the Full Gospel Church Irene Association.

However, the United Assemblies continued to offer a hand of reconciliation to the pastors of the Irene Association, calling for a date for unity between the two churches. In February 1990 the United Assemblies agreed that on 18-19 May 1990 one integrated and united church would be formed. In the opinion of one Black leader, the Whites kept violating their agreements and shifting the goalposts, as they could not obtain the required consent of their General Conference. From that date whatever dialogue took place between the two Associations was always characterized by tension, apprehension and also vehement exchanges of words.

Eventually the two Associations reached an agreement to join as one united church. This happened only in 1997, a few years after democracy in South Africa. Unity was sparked by two reasons, and neither, sadly, centred on authentic forgiveness and Godly unity. These are the two flimsy reasons that led to the unification:

- i) The F.G.C feared that the White church might lose the connection with the Church of God (in Cleveland, U.S.A) because of its conservative stance on the question of unity. Losing their connection with the Church of God in America

would also mean losing their monthly financial subsidy, which they have been enjoying for over 50 years. Hence the impending need to unite.

- ii) The rapidly changing political situation forced the White members of the church to rethink their position. The political climate forced an otherwise reluctant people into a unity that did not come from their hearts! Had a Black government not won the elections unification would have been enormously difficult to achieve.

4.5 THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

The history of the A.O.G is somewhat different from that of the other two Pentecostal churches. It has some unique features, though it follows closely behind the other two.

While the other two churches started their work mainly among the Afrikaans speaking whites, Watt (1992:23) argues that the A.O.G missionaries worked almost exclusively amongst the Blacks. He adds that:

“Even though the A.O.G was controlled by expatriate missionaries, the movement was a Black church before any White congregations were formed – it did not develop as a ‘daughter’ church of a White church.”

One can therefore talk about the ‘Black roots’ of the A.O.G, which is not the case of the previous churches discussed. The A.O.G continued until 1930, working exclusively with the Black community, only after 1930 did this church venture into the White community. In 1935 a decision was taken to admit missionaries and congregations working among Whites to the fellowship of the A.O.G. The first to join, in early 1936, were Fred Mullan and Louis Potgieter. By this time Black evangelist and lay people were rapidly bringing souls into the A.O.G, contributing to the extensive growth of the church. What was particularly unusual about the growth of the A.O.G in comparison to the other South

African churches was that the development of the Black churches preceded that of the White churches. This was a vital factor in determining later inter-racial relationships within the movement. (Watt 1992:29)

Unlike the previous churches, the A.O.G, in its early days, did not speak about a 'Black' and a 'White' church. However, one will see later how both the political climate of the day and influence by the other Pentecostal churches shaped the A.O.G into forming different 'associations' along racial lines. Anderson (1993:74) writes about the development of these structures, noting that:

“One of the features of the A.O.G structure ... has been the division of the Organization into different 'associations or groups', each one autonomous. These groups were the results of the work of particular gifted leaders and missionaries, who functioned with their own followers. Bhengu, for example, was the founder and head of the largest group, the 'Back to God crusade'. These groups are mostly constituted along racially divided lines, although some of the leaders contest this statement.”

A feature of the three Pentecostal churches is their particular obsession with the idea of autonomy. In all three churches, each group, community or association had to be autonomous. This was not for missiological or even practical reasons, it was simply because of financial reasons. The highest income group during the era of apartheid was the White community. They enjoyed many privileges, including secure employment. The other communities basically lived on the breadline. The main reason, I believe, for the call for "autonomous churches" was simply because the White community was not willing to share their finances with any other community. All one has to do is to scrutinize the size, structures, and elaborate designs of the White church buildings. This

is sufficiently clear evidence. The most important element in the adoption of the “Three-self model” of Venn-Henry, in these churches, was the element of “self support”. If the Black, Indian and Coloured communities could support themselves, then the White church was satisfied. This statement, however, was disputed by many of the White Pastors whom I interviewed.

4.5.1 The Rise of Black Leadership

Nicholas Bhengu.

The A.O.G is known for the charismatic leadership of Nicholas Bhengu. He stands as one of the stalwarts in the A.O.G. According to Watt (1994:34), Bhengu began his work in conjunction with the F.G.C in 1931, but later left this church since it doubted his Pentecostal experience and his sincerity to do God’s work. Within the A.O.G Bhengu initiated his crusades which became known as the “Back to God Campaign”. This name was later adopted by his followers, and still remains in the A.O.G as a great reminder of the work that was done by Bhengu. Many Black leaders believe that Bhengu profoundly influenced the development and ethos of the A.O.G. By 1945 Bhengu’s work grew dramatically; his congregation had over a thousand members, the largest group in the A.O.G at that time (and still the largest group today).

However, the greatest contribution that Bhengu made in the A.O.G was to stress the need for representation of Black leaders on the Executive Council of the A.O.G. This contribution is the envy of other Pentecostal churches. Watt discusses the process that led to a multi-racial leadership:

“During the period 1936-1944 the executive became multi-racial. Until that time the Executive had consisted of expatriate Whites. In about 1940 Black leaders in the

A.O.G felt that their leadership was not properly recognized because the Whites always made important decisions in private. Black leaders felt that their own meetings were therefore meaningless. A group of Black leaders – Bhengu, Alfred Gumede and Mjaji, approached the executive and insisted on an executive role. The executive immediately accepted the idea and from that time, it has always been multiracial.”

(Watt 1994:40)

By 1950 the 12-member executive council had four Black leaders. Between 1989 and 1991 the 23 member executive council had sixteen Black leaders; over 50% of the members of the council was Black. This represented the demographic makeup of the A.O.G. One needs to applaud the A.O.G for their early recognition of and need for a multi racial executive council that represented the demographics of the country. This is the only church of the three churches that opted for this type of leadership even before democratization of South Africa.

There is however a serious problem with the structure of the A.O.G. Its division into the Black community commonly called the “Back to God Movement”, the White community called the “Group” and the Coloured and Indian community collectively called the “Association”, has sparked some controversy concerning the issue of racism. According to Anderson (1993:74) a problem exists with this type of structure:

“... in a racially divided society it may be construed as lending support to such divisions, and this in fact has been the main criticism of the A.O.G by its young Black leaders.”

While the other two churches have moved towards unification of all its races, the A.O.G should reconsider its stance, and by-laws and seriously consider unification. But let the church not be forced into a unification that is just “window-dressing”; let it think hard and be moved by authentic love.

4.6 Does Racism Still Exist in Pentecostal Churches?

The pressure exerted by the socio-political climate in South Africa (of reconciliation, reconstruction and anti-racism) today led to all three of the Pentecostal churches “wiping out” any traces of racism and apartheid from their constitution and by-laws. So, if one poses the question, “Does racism and apartheid reflect in the constitutions of these churches?” the answer would be in the negative.

However, if one is to ask, “Does the spirit (or attitude) of racism and apartheid’ still exist in these churches?” then one would get two answers from two different groups. Firstly the leaders of these church would answer, no. While the local Pastors in these churches would respond with a definite yes!

The leaders of these churches would reply positively simply because they would like to reflect that under their leadership the sting of racism was eliminated. They would be reported positively in the history of the church and the next generation would applaud them.

However, a truer reflection would come from the local pastors, those at the ‘grass-roots’ level, that dialogue with each other and who work within the hierarchical structures of the church.

4.6.1 What type of racism does exist?

The Reformed Ecumenical Council published an article entitled, 'Debate on racism'*. In this article they describe the 'types of racism' that exist. I will describe two types of racism, as discussed by them.

The first may be termed Institutional Racism. When racist policies are systematically inserted into an organization's constitution and by-laws. This is a well-planned, systematic programme that subordinates, suppresses and alienates a person or a group because of colour.

The second is called Individual Racism. This type of racism constitutes a set of internal attitudes that people acquire in a situation of racist oppression. These attitudes cover a range of assumptions. Assumptions like:

Whites are better than Blacks. Whites are more educated and intelligent than Blacks.

Blacks are lazy, and don't deserve anything better, etc. These assumptions lead to either inward hatred or outward expressions of prejudice. These expressions, while aimed at people of different colours, are not institutionalized; hence they occur very subtly.

Individual racial prejudice can run very deep, and to think that a change in government policies can change this attitude is naïve. Old habits are hard to root out.

Yes, racism is still well and alive in all three of these Pentecostal churches. However, this is not "institutional racism" as described above; it is the more subtle type of racism, the one we call "individual racism". This type of racism can be seen in the attitudes of

* REC Focus 1:1 (March 2001) 9-20.

pastors, and can be discerned in the tone of their voices, the jokes they make and sometimes the company that they keep. Living in a racist context for 10, 20 or 30 years and having to adopt the status quo can not suddenly disappear by the signing of a unification document.

There is still no reciprocity in the pulpits, pulpits are not exchanged. United congregational meetings do not take place spontaneously, and in conferences each race group still sits with “their own people”. Pastors smile at each other at conferences, but they have never been to each other’s homes for a meal, and sometimes they do not even know each other’s names. Black leadership is still undermined, apart from the A.O.G, the F.G.C and the A.F.M still enjoy a White majority on the executive councils. Welfare departments, mission departments, and the like are still in the hands of White leaders. Theological colleges still lack Black lectures, rectors and administrators, while Black colleges are still seen to be sub-standard.

The talk of racism at conferences is seen as being unspiritual, since “we are past the apartheid period, and we need to talk about reconciliation.” The letters sent to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee by the A.F.M and the F.G.C, have not been circulated to the pastors who were the objects of racism, in fact, it is almost impossible to get a copies of these letters from the executive council of these churches.

There are also some loopholes in the constitutions of these churches that can be used by pastors who are not willing to accept change. One classic example is found in the constitution of the F.G.C. A description of the zoning of local churches contains the following:

“Zoning of local churches

Any local church coming into existence and falling within the area of a particular region shall come under the jurisdiction of that particular Regional Council, *unless granted special permission by the Executive Council to be placed in another region.*”

(Italics mine)

Article 6; Section 3.4 (Pg. 58)

The F.G.C is divided into districts and regions. These districts and regions are divided along language lines. We have English districts and Afrikaans districts. The above article gives any pastor the right to change his district or region to any other that he prefers. Hence, pastors in the so-called English district can move to the Afrikaans districts, claiming that they cannot understand meetings that are conducted in English.

They are given permission by the Executive Council to move. So the old apartheid structure remains. The White Afrikaners move to their preferred districts or regions and the English-speaking Indians, Blacks, Coloureds and a few Whites are marginalized as they were during the Apartheid era. This is merely Apartheid reinvented, this time along language lines.

4.7 Can There be Authentic Reconciliation in the Future?

Presenting a way forward, from racism to reconciliation.

I do believe that there is still much hope of Pentecostal churches, moving from racism to reconstruction. The church is “led by the Spirit” and it has the people, the resources, and the power to turn the Pentecostal church into a model church of authentic reconciliation. I may have been harsh in my criticism of the church, but my intention has been to focus

attention on the plight of the Black, Coloured and Indian people who have been a loyal part of the Pentecostal body for so long.

I would like to propose a model for reconciliation and construction, one that I recommend all members of the Pentecostal church should evaluate, discuss and consider. However, I do not wish to propose something new, but rather use the requirements and provisions of two South African theologians – Bennie van der Walt* and Michael Cassidy**. The latter wrote his recommendation before democracy in South Africa, while the former offered his formulations after the inauguration of the democratic government.

“A vision of the future should include the active involvement of the church to assist in discovering the truth, to support whole-heartedly the process of reconciliation built on justice, and our concerted effort to determine what the nature and the extent of restitution should be. If there are thousands of South Africans, including many Christians, who still live with bitterness, despair and fear in their hearts as a result of political violations of justice in the past, how can we expect to build a country of peace, tolerance and justice? And how then do we proclaim the Gospel meaningfully in such a context of bitterness and fear.”

(Byers Naude 1996:36)

*The director of the Institute for Reformational Studies (University of Potchefstroom)

**The director of Africa Enterprise (Kempton Park)

"A love of reconciliation is not weakness or cowardice. It demands courage, nobility, generosity, sometimes heroism, an overcoming of oneself rather than of one's adversary"

(Pope Paul VI)

As already noted, the three Pentecostal churches under investigation, changed their constitutions after the democratization of South Africa. However, a constitution is just only insofar as it creates a theoretical framework within which the real work of fashioning good relationships still has to happen. Hence I propose the option of the nine steps as outlined by Michael Cassidy in his book entitled, 'The passing Summer: A South African pilgrimage in the politics of love'.

i. Reconciliation starts with making the vertical primary.

There is no way around the primacy of the vertical (our relationship with God) over the horizontal (our relationship with others). We, as Pentecostals, must start here, with each of us being personally reconciled to God, born again of His Spirit and filled with His life and Calvary's love. Reconciliation with God leads to reconciliation with God's children.

ii. Reconciliation means testing where I am with God by where I am with my brothers and sisters.

The work of Christ on the cross was not only to bring humankind back into fellowship with God, but also into fellowship with each other. The author of "Calvary Road", Roy Hession, states: 'As the spokes get nearer to the center of the wheel, they get nearer to one another. But if we have not been brought into vital fellowship with our brothers, it is a proof that to that extent we have not been brought into vital fellowship with God.'

iii. Reconciliation involves a pilgrimage to Calvary.

This is described as walking the road of humility, and 'eating your slice of the humble pie' as Cassidy explains. On this road the proud, stiff-necked "I" has to bow down his/her head and 'die', for as long as we lay all blame at the other person's door we are all done for – whether individually or nationally.

iv. Reconciliation involves the prerequisite of contact.

First hand contact and personal exposure to the different and distant children of God are crucial to the relational and reconciliation process. Sometimes we do not like each other, simply because we have not 'met' each other even whilst at conference in the same hall. Exposure to each other will open up new avenues of reconciliation. The myth that Blacks are dangerous, Whites are fussy and Indians are 'lone rangers' must be dispelled. To know each other leads to accepting and loving each other.

v. Reconciliation means embracing the whole body of Christ and the unity already there.

Reconciliation is frustrated and alienation escalates when Christians have difficulty in accepting one another as fellow members of the body of Christ. Pentecostals need to realize that they cannot work in isolation, nor can they continue to criticize other churches. They need to foster a spirit of oneness with other Christian churches, or they will not be able to be an authentic witness in a divided society.

vi. Reconciliation requires hearing each other.

Now that the Pentecostal churches have led their people out of their 'compartments', 'associations' and 'sections', the time has come for White leadership to listen to what the

Blacks, Indians and Coloureds have to say. What needs to be said about the church that belongs to everybody, about past hurts, and present bitterness. Let them work out a system of reconciliation, since it was they that have been the subjects of oppression.

vii. Reconciliation involves forgiveness.

White Pentecostals are challenged firstly to confess their sin of Apartheid, and then they need to ask for forgiveness from those that they have oppressed. The Black, Indian and Coloured communities need to humble themselves and accept forgiveness. There is ample instruction on this subject in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Desmond Tutu is well known for his statement during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings: "Without forgiveness there is no future." Forgiveness (both given and received) is a step closer to reconciliation.

viii. Reconciliation imperatives must drive us to our knees.

The gospel's demand for forgiveness drives those concerned for reconciliation to their knees. Only here will the Pentecostals ever win through. To hear Jesus say, 'Love your enemies and pray for those that persecute you' (Mat. 5:44) is to hear one of the toughest demands our lives can face - but it is also God's secret for interpersonal and inter-group reconciliation and healing.

xi. Reconciliation is generally impossible without cost and confrontation.

Bennie van der Walt (1996:1) asks the question, 'Have we not perhaps buried the past too quickly?' Pentecostals are asked the same question. They have wiped away the past so quickly, without sufficient opportunity to engage in 'open forums, debates or public confession' concerning the past. Healthy confrontation will lead to explanations and

subsequent reconciliation. I challenge Pentecostal churches to 'open up the can of worms' again, and deal with it constructively. Otherwise the next generation will have to deal with this ongoing issue and hold us guilty of escapism.

A Further five requirements for a church that is serious about reconciliation.

Bennie van der Walt presents the next five steps in his publication entitled, *Five of God's requirements for a new South Africa* (1996).

i. Acceptance of responsibility

Before one confesses to wrongdoing, it is essential, of course, to realize that one has been responsible for the evil done to another person.

ii. Repentance and conversion

Repentance presupposes the acknowledgement that what one has done was wrong, from admitting the wrong one is able to move more freely towards conversion. Conversion of attitudes and beliefs is necessary.

iii. Confession of guilt

The relevant issue here is confession of sins committed against one's fellow citizens. It is the confession of guilt of a whole group of people, an organisation, or a nation.

iv. Receiving forgiveness.

Do not 'walk away' before one has received forgiveness. Receiving forgiveness is a most humbling experience, and a step towards authentic reconciliation.

v. Restitution or setting right the injustice

If repentance, conversion and confession are not accompanied by what should follow (restitution and the setting right of injustice), then repentance and confession are nothing

less than hypocrisy. It should, if done sincerely, culminate in an improvement of one's behavior and the circumstances of those in whose unjust treatment you played a part.

Conclusion

The past cannot be swept away, but must be dealt with. Once this has occurred reconciliation and reconstruction must take place. This task is not impossible. May I conclude with a challenge that Bishop Desmond Tutu wrote in his *Open Letter to the churches in South Africa*.

“The churches were at the forefront of the struggle for freedom and justice and goodness. They helped to get us here and now continue their good work through being agents of unity and reconciliation, assisting to rehabilitate the moral quality of our society and promoting *ubuntu* (unity), persuading their members to be willing to say ‘sorry’, and the victims to be ready to forgive, and persuading the beneficiaries of apartheid to be ready to give reparation and assist in the process of transformation for their own sakes, for the sake of their children and for the sake of the future of this Rainbow Nation.”

(Tutu 1998:6)

Chapter 5

The Pentecostal church and issues of Social Justice: Mission as the quest for social justice.

Defining Social Justice

A dictionary will offer basic, stipulative definitions, which give a starting point for understanding. However, it is when words are put together, interpreted and incarnated that significance takes place. *Social* denotes “of relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group, or the welfare of human beings as members of a society.” *Justice* is defined as “the maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustments of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.” It is also the quality of being just, impartial or fair. By bringing the two words together one can say that *social justice* is “the promoting and administering of what is just, right and fair in relating to human society and also the interaction of individuals as members of society.”

Since the term social justice has attracted so many definitions within the South African context, allow me to use the above definition of the term social justice, as I evaluate the Pentecostal church’s stance on social justice.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the Pentecostal church, their involvement in social justice has always been “reactive” rather than “proactive.” The previous chapter on the legacy of racism proved this to some extent. However, the Pentecostal churches have been very

careful of what they “react” to. For instance, there was no reaction against apartheid, the group areas act, the nation-wide forced removals, economic exploitation, or even exploitation of mine and factory workers during the reign of apartheid. However, they do react, vehemently, against the opening of liquor stores, pornographic stores, and prostitution houses, casinos and even to television adverts that have some kind of sexual connotation. Soup kitchens, handouts of bread and groceries, literacy classes, ministry to street kids, and counselling centres dealing with marriage problems are given high priority on the agendas of these churches.

Aids counselling, crisis counselling, orphanages, legal help to the poor and oppressed, creation of employment, providing housing, letters to the government and peaceful protests are either extremely low on the Pentecostal agenda or in many cases these items do not even feature.

However, it is interesting to see that from its inception, during those early years, the Pentecostal church was a church “among the poor”, moreover, it was known as the church for the poor. Today, it has evolved into a church for the upper middle class and the rich. In some cases, the poor have been neglected. In other cases the ministers of these churches have evolved from “preachers to the poor and downtrodden” to “super-star” performers, with all the frills, the lights and the enchantment.

Now, I will expand on the remarks that I have made concerning social justice and the Pentecostal churches. Let me begin with a concise history of the Pentecostal church and its early commitment to the poor and downtrodden of society.

5.1 Azusa’s Humble Beginning: The Church among the Poor.

As Pentecostals, “We trace our history back to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, in 1906. While slavery had already been abolished, black people still carried the scars of this horrible system. They were still politically oppressed and discriminated against. The white mainline churches felt that they held monopoly over God’s grace and revelation. If anything was to be done, it would be by them, and not by the children of slaves. But God ‘lifted the meek and gave grace to the humble’ (Ps147:6), for it was a little black church with a black humble minister, where this revival took place. It was an astonishing fact that white ministers from the South (prior to the Civil War this was a place where slavery was religiously protected) went up to Los Angeles to receive the gift and blessings of the Spirit through the intercessions and prayers of their fellow black believers. It was a time that the colour line got washed away by the blood.” (A relevant Pentecostal witness 1989:3)

The Azusa Street Revival offers the legitimacy to continue our witness as Pentecostals. It was here that God called to Himself a prophetic movement in an oppressive society that belied the dignity of the downtrodden people. In agreement with this Leonard Lovett (1975:138) states, “It may be categorically stated that black Pentecostalism emerged out of the context of brokenness of black existence.”

U.S Pentecostalism started as a movement for the disinherited and deprived people, poor Blacks, and Chinese, urbanized Whites and uprooted immigrants. The Negro spirituals of Black slaves gave hope to these people, and the joint prayers of big crowds gave them the security of belonging to a family and to a God who cares and blesses. In the early Pentecostal revival God was in a real way the God of the poor and destitute. In Him the early Pentecostals found a refuge against the enmity in the world. When members of the

Church of God (Cleveland)* met together in Birmingham, Alabama, for their 41st Annual Assembly, the general overseer said of the men who started the Pentecostal Movement:

“The greater percent of these men were poor and from the humble walks of life.

Many were common laborers and farmers, with very limited education, and there were few of them who ever thought of receiving a salary. Small local churches were established, usually on poor streets, vacant shops, or even in back yards, since it was hard to rent anything else.” (Bloch-Hoell 1964:172)

Writing about the poverty-stricken conditions, under which some of these Pentecostal churches held their services, in those early days, Robeck (1991:97) writes:

“The most beautiful thing about the Pentecostals was their ability to pour themselves into the power of the Holy Spirit. They could blend like nobody’s business.”

In similar vein to Robeck’s observation, Bloch-Hoell (1964:172) adds that “ an increasing number of other nationalities joined the African-Americans at Azusa, and the colour line was washed away by His blood. It was a miracle how they could shut out the hot and cold, running cockroaches and king-size rats and all the added horrors of decaying rotten tenement houses and garbage-littered streets.”

* The International headquarters of the South African, Full Gospel Church.

Two outstanding deductions can be drawn from the above quotations. Firstly, the Pentecostal church started with and maintained a relationship with the poor and the destitute. Secondly, this church had no racial divisions, and even if there was such a division it surely did not feature much in these services.

5.2 The South African Scenario: A Church among the Poor.

While there are many similarities between the two scenarios, there is one distinct difference. While the American Pentecostal church was started by a Black leader, and built up by his Black supporters, the South African Pentecostal church was started by White missionaries. The missionaries in the A.O.G worked primarily among the Blacks, while the other two churches concentrated on the White community and later incorporated the Blacks into their mission.

The similarities, however, are manifold. In comparing the beginning of the Azusa revival to the birth of Pentecostalism in South Africa, Nico Horn states:

“Pentecostalism started as a black movement for the disinherited and deprived people, poor blacks, urbanized whites and uprooted immigrants... In the early Pentecostal revival God was in a real way the God of the poor and destitute. In Him the Pentecostals found a refuge against the enmity of the world. While many churches in South Africa are trying to find structures and means to become ‘a church for the poor’ few if any have a bigger potential to reach this goal than the Pentecostal movement.”

(1990:37/38)

As stated in Chapter One of this dissertation, the Pentecostal churches attracted the poor and the destitute. Their churches grew strongly in communities stricken by poverty and

destitution. What the Pentecostal churches did at the beginning of the 1900s far exceeds the work that many of the other historical churches achieved among the poor of South Africa. The impact that the Pentecostal church had on poverty, education, social acceptance, and worship has already been discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation. Let me elaborate on the work of Pentecostalism among the poor, by using the Indian branch of the Full Gospel Church as a case study.

5.2.1 A Case Study: Bethesda Land.

Bethesda was the name given to the Indian section of the Full Gospel Church. Pastor J.F Rowlands worked among the poor Indian community around 1920. In his written history of this section of the Full Gospel Church, G.C Oosthuizen (1975:173) observes:

“Although not much attention is given officially to the poor, those who are in dire need are cared for. These Pentecostal churches provided for them when people, who genuinely need help, come for such help. No orphanages or old age homes are under their jurisdiction. Bethesda has a special ‘Poor Fund’ to which ideally one tenth of the Church’s income goes. Each congregation gives attention to the needy, but only to those who show interest in the church. In some churches a table is put near the pulpit on which members leave groceries, soap, etc. for distribution to the poor.”

Oosthuizen (1975: 175) concludes that these acts of mercy towards the poor led to the conversion of many Hindus to Christianity. This also led to a greater commitment of poor Christians to the church and to God, since they could see the compassion of God working through the ministries of the church.

This was as far as the early Pentecostal church went in realizing their ministry of ‘social justice’. Standing up against political or economical injustice did fit not into their

understanding of social justice. It is recorded by Oosthuizen (1975:326), that these Pentecostal churches “ avoided anything that created conflict with the authorities.” Hence a reductionist understanding of social justice was adopted by these churches at the very beginning. Involvement in politics and economics was deemed ‘unspiritual’ and spiritual piety was adopted as a replacement.

5.3 Conservative Theology: What is ‘Spiritual’ and what is not.

In the preface to the 1989 edition of ‘A Relevant Pentecostal Witness’ the editor accuses the Pentecostal church of presenting a ‘Pentecostal message that is highly spiritual.’ He argues that this obsession with ‘spirituality’ has blinded the leaders of these churches to the basic human needs of society. He writes:

“Reacting against nominalism in the mainline churches Pentecostals moved to the other extreme, in attaining a ‘high spirituality’. Soon, in most matters the ‘concrete’ was replaced by the ‘spiritual’, giving birth to an ‘other-worldly’ theology. A person was seen as having a body, a soul and a spirit, and the greatest appeal was made to the soul. The social, political and economic conditions did not matter; what mattered was that the soul be saved.”

This type of thinking was repeated in another Pentecostal obsession, which is their preoccupation with heaven. With respect to the influence of this focus, and its effect on social justice, the same writer observes:

“ Heaven is seen as the goal for which all Christians should strive. Every aspect of life is seen from this viewpoint. In order to accommodate this one-sided view we tend to interpret everything spiritually. Thus, one is saved to enter heaven. Salvation becomes solely a spiritual possession. Heaven is a focal point, even in counselling

of the sick, the depressed and the oppressed.”

High spirituality and a preoccupation with heaven is still a focal teaching point in Pentecostal churches. It has resulted in Pentecostals viewing everything spiritually, and consequently grossly neglecting the basic need of humans to live in dignity-in a society, where there is no oppression of people because of their colour, their income or their ethnic backgrounds.

What made Pentecostal theology so conservative? I believe that it came from abroad, notably the U.S.A. When the early Pentecostal missionaries came to evangelize, they did not find it necessary to analyze the South African context. (This is still the practice today of Pentecostal pastors, evangelists and missionaries who come to South Africa to preach and to evangelize.) They found it expedient not to jeopardize their position with the government of the day. Therefore, they did not get involved in any matters that seemed political. As a result, their message was conservative and upheld the status quo. I find this practice in conflict with the tradition of the early church. The early Christians did not appease the ruling government in order to make life easy for them. When unchristian demands were placed upon them, they defied these demands at the cost of their freedom and even at the cost of their lives. This is evidenced by the fact that much of the Holy Bible was written from prison. Moss Ntlha (1990:9) confirms these statements in his observation of the socio-political practices in the Pentecostal churches. He states: “Pentecostal harmony is based on de-emphasizing serious socio-political differences and focusing on extreme pietism and revivalism”.

5.3.1 From Conservatism to Materialism and Hedonism

During the apartheid era, the Pentecostal church was accused of adopting a conservative theology, one that de-emphasized socio-political involvement and focused on extreme pietism and revivalism. We now live in a democratic era, an era when there is less emphasis on conservative theology and more emphasis is placed on materialism and hedonism now 'proudly enters through the front door' of the church. Like conservative theology, materialism and hedonism also de-emphasize socio-economic involvement and in this case focus on keeping the rich and the middle class happy and entertained.

Entertainment in the Pentecostal churches has caused the church to turn a blind eye to the needs of the suffering, the poor and the oppressed.

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, a third world theologian and one who has made an expert study of the Pentecostal and Charismatic church, writes about materialism and hedonism in these churches. He emphatically argues:

"As His 2000th birthday approaches, Christ is as repellently traduced and abused as ever. Some of the fastest growing Christian churches are so polluted by materialism and hedonism that they are barely recognizable as religion. A lot of new churches are more like businesses or branches of the entertainment industry. Some live a gospel of worldly success, others of bodily health, others of sexual antinomianism. Even the 'nicest' churches seem irremediably corrupt. The church is busy 'marketing the message', the beauty of holiness is swept away in favor of the bricolage of a middle-class lifestyle: casual-chic cloths, synthesized muzak, electronic gadgetry, a cappuccino-party in the narthex, and a workshop on divorce dynamics. Instead of summoning the worshipers to conversion, this kind of Christianity prolongs their

existing, trivial lives. This is Christianity as the devil might have devised it, a triumph of the prince of this world.”

Evntes Digest 33:4 (Dec. 2000: 260)

I am not accusing the Pentecostal churches of all that Felipe Fernandez-Armesto has outlined. Nevertheless it is my opinion that his article should be a sober reminder to Pentecostal leaders, of their call by God. Our motives for doing good are sometimes impure, and our efforts generally inefficient. Like all the great religions, Christianity is inseparable from the world, yet inactive in coping with worldly problems. Its priorities are fixed not on this world but the next, which, frankly, is easier to theorize about.

The Pastor, as the shepherd of the flock who lays down his life for his flock, is an early perception of the pastoral role. He was viewed as the pastor who would deny himself for the sake of the people. This has changed today. Once again American influence has influenced modern South African Pentecostalism. The typical American Pentecostal preacher, is seen as a ‘super-star’ in the church rather than a servant of the flock. Glitter, gold and glory, all makes up the portfolio of the modern American preacher. South African preachers have easily adopted this ‘super-star’ mentality. The South African Pentecostal ‘super-star’ preacher that drives in his latest B.M.W or his fancy 4X4 Land Rover, might be perceived as blind to the needs of the thousands of South African living below the breadline. This trend in the Pentecostal church is called the ‘prosperity gospel’.

5.3.2 Materialism, Hedonism and the Rise of the Prosperity Gospel.

Not only the Charismatic movement, but also the Pentecostal church jumped onto the American ‘prosperity gospel’ train. The last decade has seen an increase in the preaching

of the prosperity theme within the Pentecostal churches. In the eighties South African Pentecostal churches swallowed the teachings of the then 'founder and father of the prosperity movement', Jim (James Orsen) Bakker. Introducing one of his first books on this subject, entitled "*Eight keys to success*" (1980), Bakker claims, "God wants His people to go *first Class*" (Burgess 1988:39). This surely sends a strong message to the two thirds of the world population that lives *below third class*.

Jim Bakker was well known for his gold plated driveway, and he was reported to have said that he was practising to walk on the streets of gold in heaven. He was also known for his doghouse that was the size of our typical 'zozo' hut, that is found in the squatter camps, however, this 'zozo' had an air conditioner.

According to the "Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements" (1988:38-41), by 1987 Bakker had developed a \$172 million religious empire, and his salary and bonuses for 1986-1987 totaled \$1.6 million. However, at the same time his ministry had piled up a \$70 million debt. After investigation by the U.S Internal Revenue Services, Bakker was convicted of fraud and tax evasion and sent to prison for several years.

Following rigorously behind Bakker in his teaching, is Kenneth Copland, who currently promotes the 'prosperity gospel'. Copland's video cassettes, audio cassettes and books can be found on almost all Pentecostal church's book shelves, and in their shops. One also hears his messages frequently preached from the pulpits of Pentecostal churches.

It is said that if one just has enough faith, then one can get out of the cycle of poverty. Lack of faith leads to poverty. It seems that one's spirituality can be gauged by the size of one's wallet or bank account. The more spiritual you are the more money you will have.

Hence the poor are merely those that are not spiritual enough to attract the attention of God. So poverty is a spiritual problem, and really has nothing to do with unjust socio-economic structures. Poverty is a 'spiritual problem'. This type of theology is not only preached in the 'ivory towers' but also taught to young black pastors attending Bible Colleges, who take this message to 'squatter camps' and the rural areas of Southern Africa. Poverty is associated with un-spirituality, the lack of tithing and in some cases even with laziness.

This version of theology implies that the gospel has no place for the poor. However, it is a gospel that neglects the true Biblical exegesis of scriptures. The birth of Jesus in a stable, the two turtledoves that were offered at His birth (instead of a lamb, which only the rich could afford,) are all overlooked. Poverty in the Luken gospel is never investigated. Over recent years the church has been busy 'developing' this theology of prosperity, whereas I have never seen or read any academic material devoted to the problems of poverty in South Africa, save for a few articles written by the welfare departments of these churches to inform its people about poverty. The Pentecostal church has never challenged the macro-structures of government and its policies concerning the poor. They have never designed national strategies to deal with poverty, or presented any practical solutions to local or national government to curb the increasing scourge of poverty.

Has the prosperity gospel, materialism and hedonism in church, made its members blind to the reality of poverty within the country and also within the church? The former

Secretary General of the Full Gospel Church, Pastor Van der Vent, briefly *exposes* the structures in the F.G.C. that contribute to the poverty of its pastors. In an 'Open letter' to all the churches in the F.G.C. (dated 11 September 2000) this senior pastor discloses the following information:

"Currently many church practices militate against the poor and disadvantaged groups within the church:

- a) The property clause places the onus of security of mortgage bonds on the local assembly. This results in many poor churches being unable to raise institutional funding.
- b) A tithing system which requires an assembly to tithe to various church structures, in many instances at the well being of the pastor whom they are unable to pay a living wage. Although expected to contribute to the national church structures, very little support, both financial and spiritual, is provided in lieu thereof.
- c) A central salary structure has been mooted by pastors and rejected by the leadership. This has increased the ever-increasing divide between wealthy assemblies and disadvantaged groups. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that local assemblies must provide the travelling costs of its pastor, resulting in most pastors from poor assemblies not being present at General Conference.
Hence the poor masses of the churches are denied a voice and a vote at legislative level. (emphasis mine)
- d) Very little funds are employed to deal with the socio-economic ills of our society. Despite these dire needs, thousands of Rands have been misspent on telephone systems, unnecessary translation systems, duplication of services, etc. No

development, educational or community programs have been devised or implemented by the church and local assemblies, many in the poorest areas, have needed to depend on their own abilities and limited resources, to serve the needs of the communities.”

In response to the above letter the Moderator of the F.G.C, Pastor Gerald. A. Honey, sent out a circular to all the churches, in an attempt to offers some clarification on the issue*.

The letter, dated January 2001, was filled with scriptural verses concerning unity in the body of Christ, but never addressed the accusations of the denomination’s apathy towards socio-economic development or involvement. It was more like a written sermon, than a defense of the church’s indifference to prevalent socio-economic problems.

One is able to conclude that the Pentecostal Church in South Africa has not paid serious attention (or maybe no attention at all) to developing a theology that would embrace the poor, or deal with the problem of poverty in the nation, whether on macro or local levels.

The Pentecostal church, as one of the fastest growing churches in the world, needs to be challenged to develop a theology that will embrace the plight of the poor, within their own ranks and also nationally. What follows is a proposal that can be used as a starting point in developing such a theology.

*In mid 2000 a court case was opened against Pastor Van der Vent and his companions; where to date the F.G.C. has spent R150 000.00 on legal fees. (In a letter by the Moderator, dated 12 June 2000).

5.4 What does Poverty mean in South Africa?

Poverty is an extremely complex problem. It is not one-dimensional but has many facets. Poverty means different things to different people. Consider, for example, the statement by Mrs. Witbooi of Philipstown in the Karoo (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:14):

“Poverty is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from, and always wondering when the council is going to put your furniture out and always praying that your husband must not loss his job. To me that is poverty.”

Instead of looking for a formal definition of poverty, let me rather list the manifestations of poverty in South Africa. By so doing I hope to show effects of poverty, and I also hope to open up the minds of Pentecostal leaders to this dire plight in South Africa.

It must also be understood at the outset that poverty in South Africa is unique, at least in three ways. Firstly the gulf between the rich and the poor shows a huge degree of inequality in South Africa. Secondly, to a large extent poverty exists also because of the consequences of deliberate economic policies. And finally, poverty is tightly interlocked with the escalating crime rate and the out-of-control HIV/Aids pandemic.

5.4.1 The Manifestations of Poverty.

The church will only be able to deal with the problem of poverty when it understands how poverty manifest itself in the lives of ordinary South Africans, some of whom belong to the Pentecostal movement (including some pastors who live in less than satisfactory conditions). Listed below are the ways in which poverty manifest itself.

i. Land

Land and land ownership pose a major problem in South Africa. Poverty removes land from the poor. Ownership of land is also affirmation of dignity. Loss of land entails

loss of dignity, and a life of constant journeying. When the poor 'squat' on an open piece of land, the natural resources of the land are damaged and the land then becomes barren. Forced removals from 'private' land is another problem that plagues the poor.

ii. Fire and electricity

People have always needed some form of fire, power or energy for cooking their food. To most of us it is an alien thought that millions of people have tremendous problems obtaining this basic need. Collecting firewood is not only exhausting, time consuming and dangerous; it clearly has direct ecological consequences. It is not surprising that 200 of the 250 forests in KwaZulu-Natal have disappeared over the last 50 years (Wilson & Ramphela 1989:34). Accidents involving candles, gas stove, primer stoves and car batteries with discarded casing have led to hundreds of shacks being set on fire with an attendant loss of life.

iii. Water

When it comes to the threat that the lack of water poses for the poor the data is truly terrifying. In fact, it is impossible to even expose the tip of the ice-burg in this chapter. However, try to consider this critical issue by reflecting on the following crucial questions that millions ask in South Africa: Does water have to be fetched, and by whom? Is the water clean, and free from cholera and bilharzia? How can a community depend only on one tap in the vicinity? What is the cost of water, and can it be afforded?

iv. Hunger and sickness

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that normally exports large amounts of food. On the other hand, it is a country where "famine and malnutrition are

rife and where malnutrition-related diseases contribute a good deal to the mortality rate, especially among children.” (Wilson and Ramphela 1989:100). Wilson and Ramphela also report that hunger and malnutrition in rural areas are rife, though statistics from government are not very precise. In support of Wilson and Ramphela, John Hansen, one of the country’s leading pediatricians, found:

“ Approximately a third of African, Coloured and Asian children below the age of 14 years are underweight and stunted for their age.”

v. Housing

It is increasingly clear that a lack of housing is a major political and social problem in South Africa. According to Wilson and Ramphela (1989:125), on the Witwatersrand there was an estimated housing shortage of 90 000 houses per year, and this rate was increasing annually. In Soweto alone the estimated shortage was 35 000 houses and growing at a rate of 4000 per year.”

Senior health officers estimate the population of Soweto at 2 million. However, considering the number of houses available in Soweto (excluding the squatter camps), Wilson and Ramphela, calculate that nearly 20 people inhabit each house. This is alarming. Furthermore these figures all exclude overcrowding in hostels, flats, in the cities and the squatter camps.

vi. Literacy and education

While space does not permit me to discuss this problem at length, I must acknowledge that this problem is too big to ignore. For a country whose industrial revolution has been under way for a full century and where more than half the population is urbanised, the degree of illiteracy in South Africa is staggering. According to Wilson

and Ramphele (1989:152) 33% of Africans over the age of 15 judge themselves as illiterate, while 30% of those older than 20 had not achieved an educational level as high as Standard 4 (grade 6).

vii. Powerless and Vulnerable

Those that fall under the above six categories can collectively be labeled the powerless and vulnerable. However there is a section of this population which is subject to more abuse than others. These are the women, the children and the elderly. South Africa has the highest rape rate in the world. It is not uncommon to hear about children as young as 9 months being gang raped. The following quotations attest to this phenomenon.

“South African women are living in one of the most violent countries in the world...”

(Human Rights Watch, 1995:44)

“South Africa has the highest rape statistics for a country that is not at war. It is estimated that 1 in 2 women will be raped in her lifetime in South Africa.”

(Cape Times, Oct. 24, 1991)

“Child abuse is increasingly reported – from 350 cases to over 5000 per month are reported to Childline over the past five years. 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 8 boys are sexually abused before the age of 16.”

(The Children’s Rights Center – Durban)

Innumerable South Africans live constantly in an environment of crime, fear, insecurity and intimidation. They are not only the victims of the rich and powerful, but also become the prey of gangsters, criminals, alcoholics, and even corrupt law enforcement officials.

This is the type of life lived by a majority of South Africans. This is a daily routine for millions of people. Can they help themselves, or do they need help from the church? Is the church able to help them, that is if the church can firstly 'see' them in their plight. Is the church commissioned to bring hope to the multitudes that are destitute? J. Theron, makes an interesting comment concerning this question: "It is not so much the case of the poor needing the church, but rather of the church needing the poor – if it wishes to stay close to its poor Lord." Let us consider the role of the Pentecostal church in such a situation.

5.5 Reconstructing the Role of the Pentecostal Church towards the Poor

Certain changes need to take place within the structures of these churches if they ever wish to become the "church of the poor". The church needs to see the problem of poverty through the eyes of the poor. It will need to identify with and learn from the poor, those around them and also from those within their denominations. It is called to be a reconciling community *of* and *with* the poor. I will proceed to examine each of the above statements.

5.5.1 The Church of the Poor.

The Pentecostal church cannot respond adequately to society's poor unless it understands the causes of poverty in today's world. As in Biblical times, much of the world's poverty is caused by economic and socio-political oppression. The major source of poverty today is human self-seeking multiplied and extended by economic systems and structures.

Personal sin is compounded by social institutions. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer, not because the rich are smarter (and certainly not because they are more virtuous), but because society is structured to reward the rich and 'punish' the poor. It is

said that it takes money to make money – hence so-called ‘free enterprise’ system advantages the rich.

What is the church’s responsibility to the poor? A middle class Pentecostal church typically goes about helping the poor in ‘middle class’ ways. With vested interests in the political and economic status quo, it generally fails to see the root causes of poverty and instinctively resists measures that really would relieve oppression. In the name of aid it may actually lend support to the very economic realities that grind the face of the poor. Hence the church needs to be in touch with the poor. The church can provide freedom that allows the oppressed to be human, to decide for themselves, but only if it is in touch with the poor. But the affluent Pentecostal churches, by and large are not. The churches, which are in touch with the poor, are walled off from more affluent churches by denominational and socioeconomic barriers. Only when Pentecostals begin to minister among the urban and rural poor, actually sharing their lives with them in Christian love, then only will they come to see social reality from the underside. Poverty looks different when it is viewed from the ‘gutters’. And from this perspective or position the Pentecostal church can buttress its evangelism and social relief work with efforts to change unjust structures and to help the poor break the cycle of poverty, and redeem their self-worth.

5.5.2 The Pentecostal church must identify with and learn from the poor.

Firstly, the church must deal with its prejudice against the poor just as surely as it must deal with racial prejudice. Stereotypes of the poor as lazy, shiftless, immoral and greedy must be replaced by more balanced views. When Pentecostals share such a prejudice

view with their non-Christian neighbors, are they not worldly rather than biblical? Books, magazines and videos about the poor will never give us as much insight about their plight as when we sit down with them, share in their poverty and open ourselves to learn from them.

Many practical avenues are open for affluent Christians to identify with and learn from the poor. These include supporting and listening to Christians who work among society's poorest. The Pentecostal church could excel in this type of relation, since it includes both the affluent and the poor church within the confines of its denominational boundaries.

While other churches will need to form 'sister relationships' with poor churches, the Pentecostal church already has this type of relationship. However, much work is needed to foster healthy communication between these churches.

National, provincial, and regional leaders within the Pentecostal churches are so out of touch with the needs and realities of the poor struggling congregations within their own jurisdiction. Besides meeting the pastors of these poor churches at regional, provincial and national meetings, no other type of caring relationship is developed. The practical avenues for working with the poor within the Pentecostal churches are many; leaders within these churches must identify these avenues.

5.5.3 The Pentecostal church must defend the cause of the poor.

Scriptural support for the defense of the poor abound (e.g. Is 1:17; 58:6-7; Amos 5:14-15, 24). The debate revolves not so much about whether we should defend the rights of the poor or not, but rather how we can defend their rights more effectively and more permanently. Defending the cause of the poor involves more than setting up soup kitchens: it encompasses working to provide relief and opportunities for the poor to

improve their own lives. For some Pentecostals it could mean helping the poor gain greater control over their own lives. For other Pentecostals it may mean political action – working to modify or replace laws and structures which oppress the poor, or working to elect candidates with these priorities. It may even mean finding creative economic alternatives based on small-scale, appropriate technology in order to help, rather than undermine, the poor. It may even go as far as meaning examining our own lifestyles, and also giving direct support to boycotting products of companies whose policies oppress the poor. This is not something new for the Pentecostals, since they have in the past boycotted companies whose policies sponsor sex and violence on T.V. for example. So why not do the same to champion the cause of the poor?

However Pentecostals define ‘defending the cause of the poor’, is really their prerogative, but some kind of concrete action must follow they’re written policies on this phenomenon. Concrete action is the key to eradicating poverty from the South African society at large. Sermons preached on Sundays will only contribute to the actions taken, but sermons on their own are not sufficient to eradicate poverty.

5.5.4 The Pentecostal church must offer Christ to the poor.

The cause of evangelism among the poor has not been discredited, even though it has been complicated and distorted by First World missionaries and evangelist’s cultural baggage. After all legitimate criticisms have been levied; it still remains true that the poor need the gospel.

I have placed this priority fourth, however, because offering Christ to the poor can be done with integrity only by those Pentecostal churches that take the side of the poor and learn from them. In offering Christ to the poor, the Pentecostal church must realize that

Jesus already is among the poor; He simply needs to be proclaimed and made known as Saviour, Lord and Liberator.

Offering Christ to the poor does not mean transmitting “verbal summaries of the gospel”, it means proclaiming and demonstrating the good news of the Kingdom. It entails, not only speaking the gospel but also living it, not just “God-talk but also God-walk.” The demonstration of the gospel of the Kingdom comes especially through a visible community of believers, a community that lives by the standard of Kingdom justice.

5.5.5 The church must be a reconciled and reconciling community *of* and *with* the poor.

In offering Christ to the poor, standing on the side of the poor against principalities and powers, learning from the poor, and building Christian communities *among* and *with* the poor, the Pentecostal church is then able to lay the basis for the Christian revolution. As in the first century, it becomes God’s Kingdom people among the poor.

Offering a new social reality to the poor, the Pentecostal church needs to build social, economic and political, as well as spiritual relationships among people. In other words, it should build a human community, and especially erect those microstructures and intermediate structures, which are the glue of a culture and the strength of its stability and justice. The Pentecostal church can no longer shy away from social, political and economic issues if it desires to become a church of the poor.

As a reconciled community, the church ought not to operate as the church of the poor against the rich or the middle class. Rather it should be the church of all people that stands on the side of the oppressed. Like God’s intent for Old Testament Israel, the church must be a healthy, prospering community, living in harmony with the physical environment. The extremes of wealth and poverty must have been eliminated. The church

described in Acts 4:34 “There were no needy persons among them” is the ideal because the rich shared with the poor.

To some Pentecostals these recommendations may sound too idealistic to be workable, too vague to be practical. But the point here is to sharpen the goal and to evoke a vision within Pentecostalism. I have indicated some of the specific steps towards such a goal and vision. Much of the rest is a matter of faith and obedience. God can and will reveal His Kingdom through the Pentecostal church, if it will but see and serve His plan.

5.6 Towards some Practical Steps in Eliminating the Problem of Poverty.

Below I list at least seven practical steps for any church to adopt if it sees its vision as becoming a “church of the poor”. Some of these steps may already have been implemented in some Pentecostal churches. Some of these steps may seem irrelevant to other churches. But I recommend that each church reflects deeply on these suggestions, as it fulfils its mission towards the poor in their community.

i. Catch the reality.

Catch the reality of those thousands that are living in poverty. Open your eyes as you walk or drive around your towns, suburbs and cities. Open your eyes to the plight of the poor. Without full grasp of the reality, practical steps cannot be taken.

ii. Examine statistics

Search for and study the statistics available from government, concerning the state of poverty within one’s own region or within the country as a whole. These statistics can be used as a prayer guide, but more importantly should challenge the church to defend the cause of the poor.

iii. Study literature concerning this problem.

Francis Wilson and Mamphela Ramphele's book entitled, "Uprooting poverty: The South African challenge" (1989 London: Norton), for example, is an excellent study guide on poverty in this country. There are many more writings, and also Christian and secular magazines that deal with the problem of poverty in South Africa. These books should feature in every personal library and every church library. A lack of knowledge will lead to thousands of souls perishing.

iv. Examine the role of the poor in the Bible.

Examine and trace the communities of poor people in the Bible. Ask the following questions: What led to this problem of poverty? Was it because of an unjust social, political or economic structure? Are the poor to be blamed for their poverty? What instructions did God give to Israel concerning its attitude and actions towards the poor?

v. Examine the role of Jesus, and His ministry towards the poor.

Ask the following questions: What was the cause of poverty in the New Testament? How did Jesus relate to the poor? What instructions did Jesus give to the church concerning its obligations towards the poor? Jesus' parables and His encounters with the poor should also be studied.

vi. Visit at grass roots level.

Politicians are accused of making and passing laws without knowing the needs of the people, since they do not visit the people in their context. The church can similarly be accused. Church leaders need to spend time with the poor, among them, in their homes, and experience poverty at firsthand. Then only should they be allowed to make decisions concerning the poor. Programmes for the poor cannot be written from an ivory tower.

they must be written in the streets of the local community, and should also be written by the victims of poverty themselves.

vii. Action at macro level.

Changing structures at macro level will ultimately lead to involvement in the political and economic sectors of society. But since “Pentecostals don’t get involved in politics”, it will be impossible to change governmental and institutionalised policies that have marginalised the poor and the oppressed. Hence the Pentecostal church needs to change its policy concerning involvement in politics. The church is called not just to affect the spiritual lives of people, but also to influence the realm of politics and economics, wherein these poor live.

The church can no longer remain “apolitical” or “silent” as it used to. Speaking out on behalf of the poor masses, Robert M. Brown states:

“It is necessary to take sides, since the present divisions perpetuate injustice. To be ‘for the oppressed’ (which sounds right and proper) also means to be ‘against the oppressors’ (which sounds divisive and threatening). The attempt not to take sides is in fact a decision to side with those in power, which means siding with the oppressors and thereby helping them keep control over the oppressed. There is no neutrality.” (1978:69)

Let us now consider the views of the Pentecostal church concerning political involvement of its members and its association with political action. Politics, economics and religion all form a kaleidoscope that we call ‘society’. Therefore one cannot dichotomize these important components of society. Spiritual beings live in a society that is controlled by political and economic decisions.

5.7 Pentecostals and Political Action and Involvement.

Leaders of the Pentecostal churches are known for their 'apolitical' stance. "We don't get involved in politics" is their argument. In the same breath, then, when the government passes laws that promotes immorality and so forth, then the church should remain silent, since, it does not want to get involved in the formulation of social, economic and political policies.

The Church is silence during this crucial time of nation building is wrong. All churches, including the Pentecostal churches, have something to offer to the government, and their participation in politics and economics is vitally important. Jonathan Leach, one of the writers for the Relevant Pentecostal Witness, urges the Pentecostal churches to:

" become the salt in the political arena. We are certainly not neutral. We are sent as Christians into every socio-political arena to witness to Jesus."

In his 1970 William Carey Lectures Dr M.M. Thomas has criticized the historic Christian position as one which relegates the whole of human history, apart from the work of preaching the gospel and expanding the church, to being lost or, at best irrelevant. He comments that:

"...this approach has contributed to the Christian indifference to secular politics which led to the rise of Hitler and Stalin in the West."

(Griffiths 1980:110)

The same sentiments were expressed by Tokyo Sexwale (a MK Commander during the struggle and is now ex-Premier of the Gauteng Province). This well-known South African politician urged the church to be a part of South African political decisions. He writes:

“We must provide people with health care, proper education – our children are looking towards us now. The challenge to the church is to stay with us; we are fallible, we are ordinary people entrusted with enormous power. These fragile hands, these feeble hands have been given the power of State. Nine million people have to be administered with these fragile hands. Your challenge is to make sure that these hands learn the holiness of life. Make sure that these hands do not sin because if they do, the next Hitler could be standing before you. The church must keep as close to us as saliva is to the tongue. If you forsake us, if you abandon us – we will sin; we are human.... When we reach the gates of heaven and have to account for our actions, how will you plead when you are asked to explain why you did not stop Tokyo from being a bad leader. He killed his own people, he misruled, why did you not stop him? Why did you abandon him?”

(Being Church in a new land, 1995:11-12)

The Church is commissioned to stand as a prophetic voice amid the politicians. The church cannot be neutral, and silent, while politicians make decisions about the lives of millions of people; the church needs to direct and challenge government at all levels. But how can we do that if we Pentecostals isolate ourselves from political, social and economic issues. Our voice needs to be heard in the South African Parliament.

5.7.1 No hidden agendas

Getting involved in the political arena should aim at championing the cause of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, and raising a prophetic voice amid the politicians.

Selfish gain, hidden agendas and the like should be eradicated, before they contaminate godly direction.

I offer a specific reason for bringing up this subject. The Pentecostal church, while saying it is 'apolitical and does not take sides', has been accused openly of support for White right-wing activities.

One such accusation is recorded in the magazine: Azusa: Relevant Pentecostal Witness. In this magazine, Moss Ntlha (National Co-ordinator of Concerned Evangelicals) writes about Rev. M.L. Badenhorst (Moderator of the Full Gospel Church 1977-1980) while holding the office of Moderator.

"He is president of the moderation of the Full Gospel Church of God, and claims to represent 500 000 South African Pentecostals. He represents the South African chapter to the World Pentecostal Fellowship. His right wing political activities include:

1. Organising an anti-consumer boycott committee to counter the peaceful consumer protest staged by progressive organisations in Port Elizabeth in 1985/86. He did this as pastor of the Port Elizabeth Full Gospel Church. This anti-consumer boycott activity was linked to police action, which frustrated the Black businessmen and shopowners to break the boycott.
2. Starting an organisation called "Action of Peace and Prosperity" to frustrate the efforts of progressive initiatives in the Port Elizabeth area, notably "Concerned Citizens - CC" aimed to mobilize the White community to face up to legitimate Black demands. After sustained victimisation and intimidation involving the police, CC finally died.

3. Recently Badenhorst has been involved in the launch of a right wing church coalition against sanctions. This brings together churches like Rhema, ZCC, Rica (Reformed Independent Churches Association), fellowship of Pentecostal churches and others. Government officials like foreign minister Pik Botha feature prominently in Badenhorst's anti – sanctions campaigns, addressing church meetings organised by the latter.”

(Azusa 1990:8-9)

If the Pentecostal church seeks to get its voices heard in Parliament, and wishes to influence policies that otherwise would lead to oppression and marginalization, then it needs to formulate a system or model that is void of corruption, hidden agendas and selfish motives.

5.7.2 Presenting a Workable Relationship between Religion and Politics.

I want to move beyond the timeless question of: 'Should the church be involved in politics?' At this crucial time of nation building in South Africa, the question should rather be: 'How can the church be more effective in the political arena, so that the voice of the voiceless can be heard?' I will not discuss why the Pentecostal church should become politically active, but rather how it can influence national policy by becoming politically active.

I will proceed with this discussion by outlining what the Bible says about government.

5.7.3 What does the Bible say about Government?

In spite of the different interpretations of the Bible, let me enumerate a few basic Biblical political principles that I believe are generally accepted by most South African

Christians. The information below was collected at the conference on “Christianity and Democracy in South Africa”; the speaker was B.J. Van der Walt (Potchefstroom University 1996).

About government the Bible has the following to say:

- God ordained that in the state, office-bearers, (the government) should be elected to serve the citizens according to His will and, apart from being accountable to the citizens, they are also accountable to Him.
- The government (as a shield) has the task of ordering public life and helping the citizens to fulfill their political calling as well as to oppose what is wrong and standing in the way of this fulfillment.
- The norm according to which this task should be executed is that of justice towards all.
- The government may not unnecessarily interfere in the spheres of other societal relationships (marriage, family, school, business, etc) or suppress the basic human rights of its citizens and in this way assume for itself totalitarian authority.
- For the exercise of its authority the government has received a special power from God – the *might of the sword* – which should, however, be used in such a way that it promotes and does not destroy public justice.
- Should a government neglect its calling, or forget about it, its citizens or other societal relationships, *such as the church*, should remind it first in a peaceful way, if this does not succeed, nothing else remains but civil disobedience (which in no way implies violence or terrorism). Pentecostals are part of the citizenry of the country; hence their involvement in direction, advice and assistance to the government is vital.

5.7.4 Relationship between Religion and Politics.

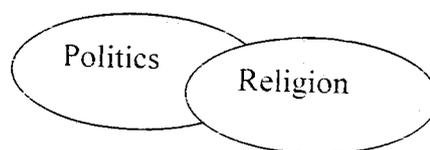
The ideas and diagrams in this section are mainly borrowed from B.J. Van der Walt, both from his speeches at the conference on “Christianity and Democracy in South Africa” (Potchefstroom University 1996), and from his book, “Christianity and Democracy in South Africa: A vision for the future”.

Three basic models about the relationship between religion and politics are listed.

i) Identification model ii) Separation model and iii) Distinction without identification model. The third model is the one that I desire to present to the Pentecostal church, since I believe that this model is more correct.

i. Identification or a too close relationship.

The consequence of this relation is that the state will be expected to propagate one specific religion. This attitude was one of the important reasons for the religious wars of the past, and also for present wars, especially in the East. If politics and religion is mixed, then it is easy to reach the stage where support for Christianity means support for the political establishment. Or support for the political status quo implies support for Christianity. A further implication is that if you don't support the politics of the day, then you are betraying the Christian faith; or if you are not a Christian you do not have a future in politics. This type of relationship between government and religion was the norm in South Africa not so long ago. The National Party had a very close relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church. (e.g. the Dutch Reformed Church was known as the 'National Party in prayer'). This led to the Biblical support of apartheid. It led to misery, oppression and the violent deaths of thousand of South Africans.



This osmosis relationship must be avoided.

ii. Total separation or even opposition.

In this model the power of religion is underestimated, because it ignores the fact that every human activity depends on and is influenced by one's religious commitment. The result in this case is a *secular state*. No religious influence is permitted in the governing of the state and Christians regard politics *as bad and evil*. The simple fact, however, that secularism is also a religion, illustrates the fact that religion and politics cannot be *totally* separated. Separation of religion from state can lead to the rise of leaders like Stalin or Hitler, or the rise of ideologies like communism or Marxism.



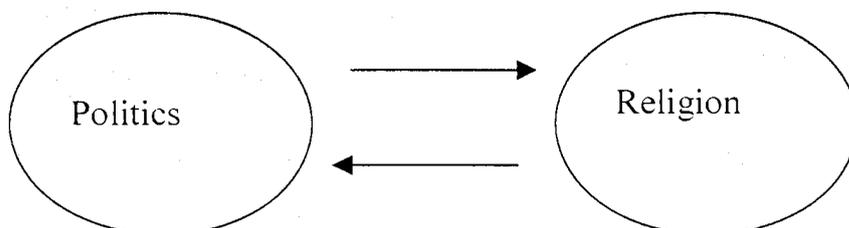
This model of hostility, like the model of total identification should be avoided. They both are representatives of extremity. These types of models led many Christians to become hopeless and passive in politics, especially people belonging to the Pentecostal church. One does not have to *throw out the baby with the bath water*; there is a way out.

even for Pentecostals to become active in the political arena, without *losing their spirituality*.

iii. Distinction without identification or separation.

This model I believe, offers a more realistic approach that will suit the Pentecostal church. We should distinguish the two (politics and religion) without dividing or identifying them. The question, however, remains *exactly how*? To say that politics has to do only with *outward, external* matters while religion has to do with *inner matters of the heart* does not really solve the problem. It may still imply that the state is secular, has nothing to do with the Christian religion while Christians should *pietistically* confine themselves to personal spiritual matters and have nothing to say to politicians.

Christians should not adapt themselves to the state, either actively (by identifying themselves with the goals of the state) or passively (by abstaining from any statement on activities of the state). They should not distance themselves from the state, since they are a part of the citizenry. However, they should engage in a critical – constructive way (so-called “critical solidarity”, by B.J. Van der Walt) with the state, evaluating its decisions, programs, etc in the light of the gospel. This attitude sometimes even necessitates resisting and opposing the state – not with a destructive intention, but to save the state which, obviously includes both government and its citizens. We owe it to our nation.



This model I believe offers the Christian alternative. In this type of a relationship the Church is able to carry out its *prophetic ministry* to the state.

Within this kind of framework Byers Naude sets the role of the church as a prophetic voice in government.

5.7.5 The prophetic role of the church in the new South Africa.

Naude offers insight into the prophetic role of the church:

“...the prophetic role of the church in the new South Africa is the role to be the watch dog of the state, namely to support the state where it implements policies and programs which are in agreement with the deepest values of truth, justice, peace and human dignity as we understand these values in the light of our Christian faith. But equally it is our task and duty to speak out in loving concern whenever we feel that these values are violated by the state.”

(Naude 1996:34)

In a democratic South Africa the church has a duty, as never before, to fulfil its prophetic role in obedience to its task as a church but also for the sake of the state itself. The government, through the State President, has on more than one occasion indicated that its door stands open for churches and for people of all faiths to approach it on any issue of serious concern. But if the churches are divided among themselves, how then are they able to present their mutual Christian concerns to the state? The church cannot register

complaints about self-enrichment, corruption, bribery and the 'gravy train syndrome' but needs to get involved and present government with a plan of action that would eradicate such misconduct. It will then be true to its calling.

5.8 Conclusion

formulating these proposals and presenting them to the Pentecostal church is insufficient. Action must follow. There is no true theology without engagement; theology must both issue from engagement and lead to renewed engagement. This concept is called praxis which might constitute a new practice in Pentecostalism. Praxis means is different from the familiar sounding "practice". Praxis describes the two-way traffic, or more explicitly stated, the circular traffic that occurs between action and theory.

Action forces one to look again at theory. Theory forces one to look again at action. This is an on going process.

My aim is to challenge the Pentecostal church to seriously engage in the discipline of praxis. The Pentecostal church should review its theology in the light of events in South Africa. In the church's engagement with South African society, it might well have to reconstruct its theology, so that it become a contextual church that is able to contribute to nation building.

The Christian's task is not just "ortho-doxy", right thinking, but is more "ortho-praxis", the right combination of thinking and doing. In this way the church will challenge society, politics and economics, ushering them according to justice as recorded in the Bible, a justice that is for all people. I would like to think that for us Christians; praxis is the means by which we attempt to work with God in building "the new heaven and the

new earth.” It should not be any kind of action in tension with theory, but *transforming action*.

Chapter 6

The Status of Women in the Pentecostal church: Mission as a quest for gender equality.

Let me exclude the long theological debate about what the Bible says concerning women, since this is a missiological paper and not a paper on theological ethics or systematic theology. In the first part of this chapter I will concentrate on the role of women in the history of the Pentecostal movement. In the second part I will focus on the abuse of women in South African society; wife battering and rape are rampant in the South African community. Finally, I would like to lay down some challenges before the leaders of these Pentecostal churches concerning women in the church, in society and in the family.

As with the other subjects discussed in this paper, allow me also to begin with the role of women, firstly in the American Pentecostal churches, since patterns in America lay the foundation for the treatment of women in South African Pentecostalism.

6.1 Women in early American Pentecostalism.

Women have had extremely important leadership roles in the Pentecostal movement, as has been the case in most awakenings and movements of spiritual vitality throughout Christian history. Were they given all the recognition that they deserved is another story on its own. Since I have argued that William J. Seymour was the founding father of the Pentecostal movement (others would argue that Charles F. Parham was the founder), let me now discuss some of the women who were associated with Seymour.

A woman who featured at the very early stages of Seymour's ministry and the Azusa Street Revival was a black lady by the name of Lucy Farrow. Concerning her ministry Burgess (1988:894) writes:

"Within a few days of her arrival 'the power fell' on April 9. According to Frank Ewart (1975:75-76), Seymour had laid his hands on Edward Lee, who fell under the power of God but did not speak in tongues. After Lucy arrived in Lee's home, Lee asked her to lay hands on him that he might receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. She did ...Lee dropped to the floor and began speaking in tongues."

Farrow later established a mission in Portsmouth, Virginia, and went on to Africa as a missionary, where she spent the rest of her life. Of importance also to the early Pentecostal movement was another black woman, Jennie Evans Moore, who eventually married W.J. Seymour. She was one of the seven who first received the gift of tongues at the Asberry home on April 9.

Of the twelve elders at the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street who were selected to examine candidates for licences as missionaries and evangelists, at least six were women. These were Jennie Evans Moore, 'Sister' Prince, Mrs. G.W. Evans, Clara Lum, Phoebe Sargent, and Florence Crawford (Coram, 1981: 7).

There were many other women associated with the work and ministry at Azusa.

However, the privileges that these women enjoyed did not last for long. As the church became more 'organized' it also became more patriarchal in character. Burgess (1988:898) records how, during this time, the church "began to worry that changes in the traditional role of women might bring about the collapse of the home and the destruction

of society.” After the initial phase of the Pentecostal movement, bureaucratization and institutionalization resulted in a growing professionalism of the ministry and fewer opportunities of leadership for women in a society that confined the place of women to be in the home. The same pattern can be seen in South Africa. Let us examine the role of women in the South African Pentecostal churches.

6.2 The South African scenario

6.2.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission

Since the A.F.M Church is the oldest Pentecostal church in South Africa, let me begin with the role and contributions of women in this church.

According to De Wet (1989:85), women workers formed an important part of the A.F.M’S task force during the early years. A large part of the dynamic growth of the Pentecostal Movement is due to its ability since its inception to mobilize and effectively deploy women in missionary service.

De Wet records the names of women like Sister Turney, who supervised the Black work in the Transvaal region during 1921, and her co-worker, a Miss James. Concerning the ministry of Black women, De Wet records the names of a Sister Dugmore and Sister Williams who were appointed by the church in 1947 to minister to the black women in South Africa.

Not many more names of women in this Pentecostal church are recorded.

Hollenweger (1977:486) explains that within Pentecostal circles it is possible to distinguish three types of women. They are: the “prophetess” type, the pastor’s wife, and women with theatrical talents. I have no doubt that these women did contribute to much

of the growth, teaching and ethos of the church, however, it seems that their contributions were hardly mentioned, nor their names recorded.

Nevertheless, there was one outstanding woman at that time whose history is recorded by Marius Nel (in Landman, 1996:243 and 255) an A.F.M minister from the central Krugersdorp congregation. About this woman, Eva Stuart (whom he calls a pioneer in the Pentecostal movement) Nel writes:

“Eva Stuart was perhaps the most outstanding woman minister in the first thirty-five years of the A.F.M. of South Africa’s existence. She lived and worked in an era when the culture was male-dominated. Although the early A.F.M created opportunities for women with a proven ministry, not many women were ordained. Of these Eva Stuart was known for her excellent teaching and effective healing ministry.

She was invited as conference speaker for many years, and in particular for the evening services when attendance was at its best proof that she played a prominent role in the early years of the church. What is remarkable is her teaching on the subject of divine healing, in the tradition of Andrew Murray and John G Lake. She shared their commitment to the Bible as the Word of God, and to the applicability of the promise of the Word to our daily situations. She was honest when the practices of the church did not conform with the realities painted in the Bible of the situation of the primitive church, and called on the A.F.M to give account of this predicament.”

6.2.2 The Full Gospel Church

The official historical document of the Full Gospel Church, *The Pentecostal Panorama* (1984 unpublished English version) does not allocate any space or chapters to the role

and the contributions of women in this church. The names of women are always, if ever recorded, listed beside the names of their husbands who were pastors in the church.

As in the written history of the A.F.M, one would also find statements like, "Women workers formed an important part of the churches task force..." (De Wet, 1989:85).

However, it is astonishing that the stories and the names of these "important worker" are not recorded in the church's annals.

6.2.3 The Assemblies of God Church

Even within the A.O.G Church, the names and stories of women are not well documented. In similar vein to the above two churches, its historians record:

"As in every denomination in South Africa, *women played an important role* in the Assemblies of God." (Italics mine)

(Watt, 1992:111)

Watt gives a brief description of the work of black women. He discusses their ministry to young black girls and also their ability to raise funds for evangelistic crusades and other church planting endeavours. No particular women are singled out in contradistinction to De Wet, in his historical survey of the Pentecostal church. There is an important statement that Watt (1992:111) makes concerning the structure of the A.O.G Church:

"The church is characterized very strongly by its patriarchal structure."

This leads me to the discussion of the rights of women to minister in these denominations.

6.3 Women in the hierarchical structure of the church

In terms of the right of women to preach, their right to become ordained pastors and to hold leadership positions within the Executives councils is made quite clear in the A.O.G Church:

“The church is characterized very strongly by its patriarchal structure.”

Watt (1992:111)

Watt’s statement sums up the A.O.G Church’s stance on women in the ministry. This Pentecostal church does not allow women to preach in any church, neither does it allow women to be ordained as ministers, nor does it accept women holding any leadership position on the executive or other councils of the church. Women are only allowed to hold the position of ‘ladies leader’ within the local assembly; in most instances these leaders are found to be the wife of Pastors.

The church is transparent on this issue in contrast to the A.F.M and the F.G.C churches, which, while being more ‘supportive’ of women’s ministry in documentation really hinder and hamper their ministries in practice!

While the A.O.G rejects women as ministers or leaders within the ranks of the church, the A.F.M and the F.G.C recognize their ministry. These two churches are similar in their approach to the ministry of women; thus I wish to use the F.G.C church as a case study concerning the rights of women in theory and in practice.

6.3.1 A Case Study: The Full Gospel Church

In its constitutions the A.F.M, like F.G.C, have made provisions for women in their constitution. In the 1997 *Draft Constitution of the Full Gospel Church of God in*

Southern Africa the following by-laws concerning the ministries of women were put into place:

Article 9, Section 4

9.4.19 Ranks of ministry for ladies:

In recognition of the call of God in their lives and allowing scope for the exercising of their ministry, the church makes provision for the following ranks of ministry for ladies in the church.

9.4.19.1 Licenced Minister (Female)

Those who qualify must have completed the full Ministerial Course of any Theological College of the Church, or any other acceptable equivalent approved by the examining board. In addition to this, evidence must be found of the call of God and the ability to exercise that call.

9.4.19.2 Christian Worker

This is a further rank of the ministry for women and is reserved for those wives of ministers who do not, or do not desire to qualify as Licenced ministers or lay preachers. To retain certification after the death of her husband, a Christian worker's status will be reviewed by the Executive Council or Moderature.

9.4.19.3 Lay Preacher

A lady may, in terms of the By-Laws, also apply to become a lay preacher.

9.4.19.3 Local Preacher

A lady may, in terms of the By-Laws, also apply to become a local preacher.

While all this might sound supportive of female ministry, I do have one reservation concerning the conditions governing the active ministry of these ladies. While the A.F.M and the F.G.C considers women for ministry, both these churches do not have women in any leadership positions on their District, Regional or Provincial management committees. All District, Regional and Provincial chairmen, vice-chairmen, treasurers and secretaries are males. Women are therefore continuously forced to work under male domination or supervision, as stated in the following clause concerning their probationary period:

9.4.19.2 Under Pastoral or Regional Jurisdiction

She shall serve and minister under the direct supervision of an ordained pastor, or Regional Overseer.

The above clause is packed with "patriarchal authority". This regulation gives the male-dominated committees the power to reject, suspend or even prolong the probationary periods of female ministers and workers. Women are thus forced to report continuously to a male dominated committee, which will decide on the future of their ministry.

Many of the female Pastors whom I interviewed were very unhappy about the treatment they receive at the hands of male leadership. Many are given longer periods of probation than their male counterparts, while others are interviewed more rigorously than their male partners are. These are a few of the hardships that female Pentecostal pastors have to contend with. It is unsurprising that, while writing about the role of women in Pentecostalism, Hollenweger (1977:486) remarks:

" The Pentecostal theory about women and the actual roles which women play in the

Pentecostal movement are not so easy to reconcile.”

The following information concerning the number of female ministers and workers in the F.G.C Church was gathered from the minutes of the October 2001 General conference:

- 14 Female pastors on probation
- 5 Probationary Licenced ministers
- 24 Female Christian workers
- 4 Licenced Female ministers
- 0 Ordained Female ministers

Of the 47 female workers and ministers in the church, none is yet ordained. Females do not feature in positions like that of District and Regional overseers, since these positions can only be held by *ordained* ministers. Is this pattern a mere coincidence, or a deliberate plot to curtail the ministry of women?

In the May/June 2000 edition of the F.G.C church magazine, *Dunamis*, the Moderator assures his members that the church is striving for equality of ministry for women. He states:

“ The place of the Christian Women is equal to the place of the Christian Man in the church. She is not intended to be a mere spectator, but joint participator as a believer in the total life of the church. Culture with its unfair bias has often opposed the position of the Christian Women in the church. ... The statement ‘Let your women keep silent...’, (1 Cor. 14:34), is found in the context of correcting confusion and maintaining peace, decency and order. Evidently there were disorderly women in the assembly who needed to be corrected. It must also be said that in some

instances men are equally out of order and need correction as experience has shown.”

Dunamis (May/June 2000) 4

In support of the Moderator, the Secretary General also confirms:

“I personally do not believe that a patriarchal order is Scriptural, even though it may have been cultural in biblical times. If one takes the cue from the first Scriptural mention of the women in the human story, it is quite evident that the woman was created ‘for the man’ and the term used is translated as ‘helpmeet’. There is no hint in this terminology of male domination, but a clear indication of a team relationship based upon trust, support and co-operation.”

Dunamis (May/June 2000) 10

Reading the sentiments of the above two leaders in the light of the statistics of the October 2001 General Conference (no women having been ordained within the last four years), one tends to agree with Hollenweger’s (1977:486) remark:

“The Pentecostal theory about women and the actual roles which women play in the Pentecostal movement are not so easy to reconcile.”

6.4 Challenging the Patriarchal structures of the church.

The Pentecostal church has made progress in its policies concerning the role of women in the church. However, as the church is conservative in nature progress has moved at a snails pace. Given that the church is almost one hundred years old, more ought to have been done for the emancipation of women in the church. For instance, in almost a hundred years, no woman has ever featured on the Executive councils, regional councils and district councils of these churches. Women have neither served as Chair-Ladies or

even vice-chairs of any of the auxiliary boards like that of Sunday school, missions, evangelism or welfare. The only national position that a woman has ever held is being the Chairlady of the 'Ladies Fellowship'. The church needs to move beyond these stereotype. The Pentecostal church, which claims to be the body of Christ, tends to resemble more closely a Jewish cultural institution than the body of those who live according to Christ's example of healing the sick, liberating the oppressed, giving sight to the blind, restoring dignity to the humiliated, and so on. From the beginning of Christianity, and from the beginning of the modern day Pentecostal movement, women have been denied the right to *own* and even to *transform* !

For a long time women in some of our churches were denied the opportunity of taking leadership positions. Many of the modern oppositional arguments have been based on those used by the early church Fathers and their successors. I am convinced that even in those churches where women are allowed leadership positions there is a feeling among the majority of men that these women should be seen and not heard. There is limited space for them to operate, or even to achieve their goals. One of the women whom I interviewed argued:

“What is frustrating is that we women are expected to exercise our ministry in exactly the same way that men exercise theirs; any woman who does not do so is regarded as a failure.”

Type of frustration within the church structures that leads women like, Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile to advise women in strong terms:

“It is the task of South African women in the ministry to find their own voice and revolutionalise the patriarchal, hierarchical and Western theological training that they

receive mainly from the hands of men in order to empower other women.”

(in Hulley et.al 1996:178)

In the same breath Rev. Roxanne Jordan argues that women, “... form 60% of the church membership, but are labeled as the weaker, subordinate, non-thinking people. Women can raise the funds but are not allowed in the church to decide how the funds are to be spent” (1989:53).

There is a great need for women within the Pentecostal ministry ranks to stand up, speak out and mobilize other women towards an authentic partnership in ministry. Women are urged to write articles concerning the role of women in the church, articles that are academic and also articles that flow from the feminine heart. Some women have already contributed in writing towards the liberation of women in ministry; some women are confused about this subject while others are scared to voice their opinion. For those that are confused or scared, Roxanne Jordan (in Maimela 1089:58) encourages them:

“Slowly but surely a theology challenging the inferior position of women has emerged. Women are on their way to discover their tremendous power. Obviously there are still many who have not blossomed from their germinating period. But the ground has been tilled and now we shall work until the rains of justice shall fall from the heavens and breathe life into its once dormant receptors, heralding in a new way of awareness from the shackles of our oppressed bodies.”

6.4.1 Some implications for today

Though it is unpleasant to admit, it must in all honesty be said that there still exists today among Christians an attitude towards women, which is for the most part, a put down. It is

an attitude expressed directly in statements (e.g. within the A.O.G), indirectly through tonal inflections, and by a variety of practices (like within the A.F.M and F.G.C).

It is particularly evident in the roles assigned to women in the church and to women in society. But I genuinely believe that this stereotype will not last for long within the Pentecostal church. I have drawn up a list of questions that I believe, if taken seriously by leaders in the Pentecostal church, will lead to some positive changes in terms of the policies regarding women in the church. These questions are a kind of a self-test and I hope that they will further stimulate our thinking and strategizing.

The questions are grouped under four separate headings.

i) Attitudes and treatment of women.

- a) Are stereotypes of women prevalent in our midst and how do they influence behaviour towards women and women's own self-perception?
- b) In our churches, are women treated as persons, or as sex objects and consequently feared for their sexual attractiveness to men?
- c) Is abuse of women tolerated under the guise of a theology of subordination?
- d) Are there 'safe' places for women to talk about and report abuse and receive help?
- e) Is there only a male Pastor to counsel women, or does the church provide female counselors to deal with women whom have 'women problems'?

ii) The roles of women in the church.

- a) What role do women play in our churches?

- b) Do they take up only traditional female roles like 'ladies leaders' and Sunday school teachers?
- c) Are females also allowed to be students of theology, teachers at Bible Colleges, Spirit-filled speakers of the word of God at District, Regional and General conferences?
- d) Is the way made hard for these women to pursue callings not traditionally open to women, or are their willingness and determination met with authentic appreciation and encouragement?
- e) Are there attempts to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of women's full participation in the ministries of the church, such as lack of theological education, or do we stand by and let these obstacles continue to serve as justifications for the exclusion of women from leadership?

iii. Accommodation or transformation of culture

- a) Do attitudes and treatment of women in our churches simply mimic the general culture?
- b) Is pseudo-theological legitimation given to sub-Christian ideas and practices?
- c) Do our churches lag behind the general culture in willingness to recognize gender discrimination and efforts to oppose it?
- d) Do we withstand the pressure of culture and tradition and being transformed by the renewing of our minds, following the example of Jesus and in the power of His Spirit?

- e) Are Christians showing others the road to a new, humane and redeemed way of living as women and men?
- f) How can we be sensitive to the culture without compromising the heart of the gospel when it comes to gender distinctions?

iv. Not quenching the Spirit.

- a) Is there a place in our understanding of gender roles for the freedom of the Holy Spirit?
- b) Do we recognize the gifts that the Holy Spirit give to women, or deny them out of prior 'theological convictions'?
- c) Do we welcome the new creation or do we suppress its power by appealing to faithfulness to the 'created order'?
- d) Can we be persuaded that God is at work in ways that we formerly thought impossible?

v. Models for women.

- a) Do our churches teach about Priscilla, Junia, Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche and other women leaders in the history of the early church, or have these women been forgotten?
- b) Is scripture read as a source of liberation and healing for women, or used as an instrument to keep them in place?

- c) How can the examples of women's contributions in the history of the church and Christian missions be taught so as to inspire and strengthen women to pursue their callings today?

6.5 Saluting the women of 'the struggle'.

Pastors (male or female) of the Pentecostal movement were not allowed to enter the political arena. They were strictly prohibited in this area and strong disciplinary action was carried out if any member was found guilty of such an offense. This can be seen, for example, in the F.G.C constitution and by-laws. Article 9 section 3.4 emphatically states:

"Party Political Involvement

Any Pastor or recognized Certificate Worker who, in the opinion of the Executive Council, makes himself/herself available for election and/or accepts nomination to any public office or position as a candidate for or under the auspices of a political party, shall immediately resign the ministry of the church, failing which he/she will immediately forfeit his/her status in the ministry of the church."

(Oct. 1997:106)

While Pastors were restricted in political involvement, many women belonging to Pentecostal churches (joining with other Christian organizations and churches) took to the streets to protest against the government policies of apartheid. Guns, soldiers or church constitutions were not going to stop these desperate mothers whose children and husbands were becoming prey to the security forces and the National Defense Force. Nothing could stop them from their fight against oppression, injustice and racial discrimination. While the new democratic government has saluted the efforts and

accomplishments of these women, the Pentecostal churches still need to acknowledge these

“Deborahs of South Africa”.*

6.5.1 A brief history of African women’s struggles since 1913

The only time that the Pentecostal movement will really, salute the efforts of these women, will occur be when the churches realize how difficult a road these women walked for the sake of justice and freedom. It is with this thought in mind that I write this section, in order to commemorate these mothers, daughters and sisters of the struggle.

The facts, dates and consultations mentioned in this section, are all taken from the Amanda Gouws and Rhoda Kadalie’s article, “Women in the struggle” (in Liebenberg, 1994:213-226).

As Jeff Guy (Walker, 1990:27) so aptly put it, “The history of African women in Southern Africa, is the history of their oppression”. The participation of African women in the resistance movement can only be understood in relation to the political and ideological controls to which they have been subjected. African women were particularly vulnerable because of the exclusion of Africans from political power.

* The Biblical female figure that led the male soldiers of Israel to battle.

For years, Black women fought relentlessly to secure basic human rights as citizens in the country of their birth. Legislation restricting their mobility was one of the cornerstones in keeping Black women in a position of subordination.

Despite the harsh controls directed at African women, they have never given in to these measures as passive victims of the state. The history of women's struggles attests to the fact that women were often more militant in fighting influx control, the system pass increases in rent, bus fares and food prices, than were men, who often seemed to be more acquiescent. The growing militancy among African women was due to the disruptive effects of colonialism and capitalist penetration on social and economic relations in rural reserves. For example, the process of industrialization affected African men and women differently.

- The migration of males from rural areas into a wage labour left the women solely responsible for the maintenance of the household and the operational subsistence cultivation in the rural areas.
- As the rural areas became increasingly impoverished due to a shortage of capital, land and labour, and with the growing requirements of industry, women began to migrate to the cities more and more in search of work.
- Initially only a small percentage of these women were required in industry, so the others moved into domestic and agricultural labour, and the informal sector.

- Traditional patriarchal households experienced a disruption in the gender division of labour, so that the role of women in the rural areas became completely transformed.
- This disruption caused marital instability, the emergence of households headed by females, and the break-up of the household as the traditional economic unit in which children were jointly cared for by both men and women.

However, amidst all these difficulties and challenges, the African woman was able to persevere and eventually triumph. She was able to keep her children together, care for her parents, put food on the table and also protest in the street against women's oppression.

There are countless stories about demonstrations led by women in the Transvaal and the Cape against the control of food supplies, against the setting up of beer halls, and for the right to equal education. From the 1940s women formed food committees to protest against the short supply of food sold in the townships, and against the withdrawal of food vans from the townships. The Cape Town Women's Food Committee had links with both the trade unions and the South African Communist Party (SACP). These organizations played a vital role in mobilizing women as they were beginning to enter the clothing and industrial sectors in the 1930s. Up to the 1950s African women were more or less exempt from many of the provisions of influx control. But by the 1950s it was clear that the extension of the pass laws to women was once again imminent. In 1952 the first major anti-pass campaign was organized very successfully by the SACP, the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) and the trade unions. Women fought tooth and nail against the pass laws, so much so that the introduction of reference books for women in 1952 turned out to be such a failure that the offending clauses in the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act were dropped. The women were so inspired by the success

of this campaign that they felt it was important to draw all the women who had been actively engaged in political issues into an umbrella organisation. This organisation was to co-ordinate all the activities taking place in the different regions across the country. In 1954 the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) was launched to bring all the key organizations together which had played major roles in organizing women. A Women's Charter was drawn up to spell out their political goals and to extend the goals of the ANCWL. Their affiliates were the trade unions, the ANCWL, the Congress of Democrats, the Indian Congresses and the South African Coloured People's Organisation.

During 1955 – 1956 FSAW mounted a major anti-pass campaign in which 2000 women from all over the country converged on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to hand a petition against passes. Despite police interference, FSAW went ahead in 1956 to organize one of the biggest defiance campaigns of the time. They managed to mobilize about 20 000 people, mostly women, and presented a written petition to the government buildings and burnt their passes in protest (Walker, 1982). Concerning this event, Roxanne Jordan (in Maimela 1989:54) writes:

“A very interesting thing happen in South Africa in 1956 when thousands of women marches to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the passbooks. Most of them were Christian women from the pews in our churches.”

The leaders of FSAW, ANCWL, SACP and the trade unions were subjected to extreme forms of intimidation. At one stage the ANC hurriedly bailed out vast numbers of women against their will, who had been imprisoned for militantly defying the state. Despite the

severe forms of repression. FSAW women persevered and even managed to organize another illegal protest of 1000 women in Natal in November 1959.

Throughout these campaigns the men stood by almost passively while the women struggled relentlessly. But in 1961 these campaigns were brought to an end by the banning of the ANC and FSAW. Throughout this period key resistance political organizations suffered severe forms of repression and had to cope with a lack of resources such as transport, skills and finances, receiving only minimal support from their male allies in the ANC. In 1913 the lack of support from the male comrades had already been commented on in a left-wing newspaper:

“We the men, who supposed to be made of sterner stuff than the weaker sex, might well hide our faces in shame, and ponder in some secluded spot over the heroic stand made by Africa’s daughters on the 6th June 1913. Our manhood has almost been extinguished. We docilely accept almost every abject position, and submit to every brutality of the White man, with little more than a murmur. Not so with our women. They have accepted the White man’s challenge, and have openly defied him to do his worst.”

(Wells, 1991:30)

Added to all of this, Roxanne Jordan (Maimela 1989:53) explains how black women not only had to fight White male supremacy, but in their own communities they were constantly under oppression by their Black male counterparts. She writes:

“Women form 60% of the church members, but are labeled as the weaker, subordinate, non-thinking people by there oppressed and exploited Black men. Women can raise the

funds are they are not allowed in the church to decide how the funds are to be spent.

With the raise of political violence in South Africa, more women have been raped by White troops in the Townships and alongside the roads. There are times when women fight side by side with their men in the street wars against the army, yet they have no say in the decision making body of the liberation struggle. Black women have to leave suckling babies behind and all their nurturing instincts would be wrenched from their bodies. Still they must go out to find work in a big city, very often only to become prostitutes.”

6.5.2 Lessons from history

South Africa has moved a long way from where it was some one hundred years ago (at the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement), to its current position. Therefore, given the nature of South African history, it is the responsibility of all its citizens to make sure that this country becomes honest, friendly and caring to all.

It is an undisputed fact that women, especially Black women, were disadvantaged in the old South Africa because of their gender and the colour of their skin. They were ‘twice oppressed’ than their male counterparts. They were denied the right to be full citizens of the country in which they were born and denied the right to make decisions for themselves or their families. This explains why the majority of women are at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder and live in extreme poverty.

It is always important for us to live in the present and not to be imprisoned by the past, although I am not trying to suggest that women should forget their past for the sake of the present. My proposal is that the past should not limit one’s plans for the future. I suggest

therefore that our history should be clearly written in our memories in order to be consulted when there is a need to do so. This history will help to stop the recurrence of past policies of oppression, and will stand as a watchdog in a democratic South Africa. Women should now ask themselves what they should do for themselves and for the whole community to correct the wrongs of the past.

This type of community building can be possible says Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley 1996:171-172), if women just change their mind-sets. She writes:

“Women should move from always being told what to do to a position of also being able to tell others what to do, in conjunction with the rest of society or community. Women should move from the dependence syndrome to having an independent mind. They should challenge the culture of silence in which they have been socialized. Women in general are not expected to have opinions of their own, let alone to disagree with men. From birth to death a girl child is meant to be seen and not heard. This silencing is used as a mechanism of social control and that women carry with them a general feeling of hopelessness, guilt and anxiety over social disapproval.”

6.6 New Challenges Facing the Pentecostal Church

There are new challenges that face women in South Africa today. In the past the vital problems concerned racial oppression and other oppressive issues. In the past the Pentecostal church did not support the stance taken by the women who marched the streets of South Africa, defying the oppressive structures of society. But, as I said above, today women are experiencing new problems. I believe that this is the time for the

Pentecostal church to stand up with the women of the nation and help them fight against the problems that now beset them. In this way the Pentecostal churches will at least have a chance to redeem themselves, from their former silence.

Economic injustice and sexual abuse are now more rampant in South Africa than ever before. I will discuss these two problems and also present a way forward for Pentecostal churches to engage in a spirit of solidarity with the problems that women in South Africa face.

6.6.1 Economic injustice against South African women.

“Black women are the lowest paid work force in South Africa. In boom times they are hired at low wages and fired during recession periods. They form 70% of the unemployed community. They have to cook, wash, clean in their own homes after a very hard days work.”

(in Maimela, 1989:53)

The above quotation sketches the plight of Black women in South Africa in the past, but today economic injustice has a wide-ranging effect on all South African women.

In agreement with Roxanne, Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley, 1996:174), comments:

“Economic justice is a concern for all women, Black women in particular. One of the problems that Black women face in the workplace is that they work very hard for long hours earning low wages that cannot sustain their families. Their wages do not usually compare with the type of work that they do and what they produce. These jobs have no job security or certainty.”

There are two ways in which women can be helped to overcome economic injustice. I will briefly discuss these two ways, and present them to Pentecostal leaders for further deliberation, evaluation, or refinement. The first is to search for/or construct a new economic model that will be fair and just. The second is to promote tertiary studies, even to the extent of giving loans or bursaries.

There is a need to search for an economic model that will take humanity seriously, especially women. The one-sided model of the Western world does not seem to take Black people seriously. The patriarchal model of many countries does not respect women. The church as a whole (including the Pentecostal church in particular) needs to look for an economic model that will treat all people equally.

By equality I mean that society should acknowledge that although people are different in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age and education, they nevertheless all have basic human needs and they are all valuable human beings. For women, equality in economic terms will mean the removal of cultural, racial and gender biases that have encroached upon economic practices. I also advocate that women who are not employed out their homes should be recognized and acknowledged by the economic structures as workers.

According to Jodi Jacobson (in Jacobson 1992:16-17):

“The low evaluation of women’s work begins with the fact that, in developing countries, most of the women’s activity takes place in the non-wage economy for the purpose of household consumption – producing food crops, collecting firewood, gathering fodder, and so on. ‘Income generation’ of this type is critically important; indeed, the poorer the family, the more vital the contribution of women and girls in the essential goods those families are unable to buy with cash. But in the increasingly

market orientated economies of the Third World. work that does not produce cash directly is heavily discounted.”

The above quotation reiterates the words of Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley 1996:180) who remarks on the need to value women’s unpaid work. She adds:

“It is not true that women who are housewives do no work or are non-workers. For me the term ‘non-workers’ as referring to women is derogatory and it falsely classifies women. Women are always working and their work is never finished.”

(in Hulley, 1996:175)

These are concerns that are raised by women. The Pentecostal church is made up of at least 60% to 70% females. These concerns should be high on the agenda at Pentecostal conferences.

6.6.2 In the field of education

Besides finding new economic models that enhance the life of women, the church should also look into the education of women for business. Education was one of the fields to which women, especially Black women, were denied access mainly because of their economic status and cultural bias. But education has now been made accessible to the majority. Women need to grab this opportunity for themselves and their daughters. There is a need for women to gain knowledge for themselves and to build a better future. Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley, 1996:180) states that:

“It is only when a person has equipped themselves with an education that she /he is able to analyze the society in which she /he lives and be able to challenge effectively what needs to be changed. Effective education is the type of education that goes beyond

theory to the practical action that promotes justice.”

The church needs to approach the field of education in a twofold manner. Firstly the church should encourage and motivate women to embark upon studies. Special motivational programmes need to be put in place that will make universities, colleges and technikons more accessible to students who wish to study. Career guidance and counseling must be made available for females living in both rural areas and those living in low-income urban areas. The myth of “the women’s place is behind the stove” needs to be broken, and the truth that women are able to impact successfully upon politics, economics, technology and medicine should be nurtured.

Secondly, and much more practically, the church should to some extent grant sponsors and bursaries to students who wish to study. Pentecostal churches are not short of finances, (at least the three mainline churches that we are discussing), their budgets run into the millions. At least one small part of that money could be used for educating potential students, for secular employment.

Another challenge also lies in the field of education. This time, in the field of theological education. While almost all Pentecostal colleges admit female students, not many have female lecturers on their full time staff. One needs to salute those Pentecostal colleges that have female lecturing staff. However those colleges that do not have female staff need to be challenged to employ women. These female lecturers should not merely be given the opportunity to lecture, but they also need to be involved in both the administration of the college (including the administration of funds) and also in the writing of theological material.

Using the analogy of a basketball player, Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley, 1996:180) encourages South African women by saying:

“The ball is in your hands. It is women’s choice either to keep it or throw it to each other until it has been reached by all. It is the duty of those who have achieved something to make sure that others achieve as well. South African women’s motto should be, ‘a good life for myself and a good life for others.’”

6.6.3 Confronting the issues of sexual abuse

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

(1 Cor. 12:26-27)

“The problem of abuse against women have been around for centuries. The church has not wanted to believe that this existed in the Christian home. Church leaders, ministers and preachers have not addressed this issue from their platforms nor practically, in offering help to abused women through special counseling courses or safe places for these women.”

Mrs Esme Bowers made the above statement in the national magazine of the Full Gospel Church, the ‘Dunamis’ (May/Jun. 2000). Mrs. Bowers, the national leader of the Ladies Fellowship in this church, represents the tens of thousands of women who belong to the F.G.C. She pleads with Pentecostal churches to take seriously the plight of women in South Africa. This statement dispels the myth that all Christian homes are free from sexual abuse, a myth that has been sheltered in the church for too long. In a prophetic

voice she summons the Pentecostal church to accountability, in a summons that church leaders need to take seriously, she states:

“As Pentecostals who hold the Word of God in reverence, we believe the family is a sacred institution ordained by God. We regard that God planned for men and women to choose lifelong partners and share life’s journey, for better or worst.”

In calling the church to face the challenge of sexual abuse she states emphatically:

“Many secular organizations, government and the media are responding, *but is the church ready?*” (Italics mine)

Why can one discern such an urgency in the voice of a Pentecostal woman? Possibly the following statistics concerning the problem of sexual abuse will also jolt male Pentecostal leaders into the same type of response.

“...South African women, living in one of the most violent countries in the world, are disproportionately likely to be victims of that violence.”

(Human Rights Watch, 1995:44)

“South Africa has the highest rape statistics for a country that is not at war. It is estimated that 1 in 2 women will be raped in her lifetime in South Africa.”

(Cape Times, Oct. 24, 1991)

“Less than 1 in 20 of these will be reported to the police, and that most of these women will know their attacker.”

(Human Science Research Council, 1994:57)

“Domestic violence statistics are not kept by police, but it is conservatively estimated

that between 1 in 6 and 1 in 4 women are regularly abused by their husbands or their boyfriends within the confines of the relationship.”

(FAMSA; Advice Desk for Abused Women;POWA)

“Most young girls first sexual experience is forced. Child abuse is increasingly reported – from 350 cases to over 5000 per month reported to Childline over the past five years. 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the ages of 16 years. In 80% of the cases, the molester is known to the family or to the child.”

(The Children’s Right Centre – Durban)

In the past women would fear rape and the consequent possibility of impregnation. Today, rape is moreover associated with the spread and infection of HIV/Aids, hence being raped and contracting the HIV Aids virus is *simply torture before the passing on of a death sentence!* Women in South Africa stand a greater chance of contracting HIV/Aids by rape, *than women in any other country in the world!* The New York Times (28 Dec. 1998) reports:

“South Africa has the world’s fastest-growing AIDS epidemic, according to the latest *UNAIDS* report, and KwaZulu-Natal is the worst hit province. Up to 30% of adults there are infected.”

Mrs Bowers and many other women in the Pentecostal movement have much to lament. But will the patriarchal leadership of the Pentecostal churches hear and respond to the cry of a majority of their members?

- i. Recognize the abuse and help stop it.

By its own members (female) the Pentecostal church is called upon to recognize that sexual abuse is rife within the Christian and also in society as a whole. This problem must firstly be openly acknowledged before the church can deal with it accordingly. Women are calling upon the church to, "At least admit that sexual abuse is a problem in South Africa." From hereon the problem can be dealt with.

Concrete, visible steps must be taken by the church to assist women in overcoming sexual abuse, council and comfort must be offered to those that have been victims of human brutality.

The church needs to deal with the unrestrained exercise of male power and authority within the family that leads to women and children being abused. Men who abuse their wives and daughter physically, emotionally and sexually do not regard these members of their families as equal and as having the same rights as themselves. Writing both about Christian and non-Christian women, Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley, 1996:174) adds:

"Unfortunately, women who are battered tend to blame themselves for the behavior of their husbands. They think that they have 'asked for it' in one way or another. They think they are battered because they have angered their husbands. The end result of battering is the lowering of women's self-esteem and the killing of their confidence."

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite (in Russell, 1985:99) believes that Christian women in particular, who are battered find it very difficult to accept the fact that this abuse is evil and wrong. She writes:

"They believe this because they have been taught that resistance to this injustice is unbiblical and unchristian. Christian women are supposed to be meek, and

claiming rights for oneself is committing the sin of pride.”

For many unfortunate women battering has led to their being killed by their spouses after a long period of sexual and violent abuse. Some women have committed suicide when they realized that no one was going to help them. Pentecostal pastors should be aware of how many women and young girls have committed suicide. They need to ask the question, why? Why do these women and girls commit suicide, what has devastated their lives to such an extent that they commit suicide?

This is a challenge, firstly to the Pentecostal church, to reach out and help the powerless and vulnerable women and young girls. Secondly, it is a challenge to women to help one other to overcome the problem of abuse. No women should boast and rejoice in being free and happy when many other women are enduring pain at the hands of their husbands, or any other man for that matter. Abused women should speak up, and the church should allow them this opportunity. They should break the culture of silence in order to get help for themselves and others, and the church should become that refuge for them.

Libuseng Lebaka-Ketshabile (in Hulley, 1996:180) writes about how the teachings and interpretation of scripture by patriarchal leadership within the church has endorsed the practices of the African patriarchal culture, hence endorsing the abuse of women. She argues:

“Among some church people in African communities it is sometimes believed that women who speak about women’s issues and women’s oppression are women who are oppressed by their husband, or a divorcee, or a man-hater, or a woman who wants to be like a man. This type of thinking prevents many women from standing

for their own emancipation. In this same society women are encouraged to keep all that happens to them a secret. This according to African culture is the sign of a mature woman.”

Women who speak up run the risk of bringing shame to both their husbands and to the church. “You are a Christian, what would the non-Christians say?” this is the type of immature question that results in women resorting to silence and suffering. They suffer like this not only to protect the name of their husbands and perpetrators of sexual offences, but more importantly to protect the ‘good image of their denomination.’ This is an erroneous teaching, and the Bible has been grossly abused to teach such garbage. Again this is a challenge to the Pentecostal church to seriously search the scriptures and equip women to fight against sexual abuse and battering.

ii. Developing a contextual hermeneutic.

The Pentecostal church is challenged to develop a contextual hermeneutic, one that will support women’s rights, instead of being silent. Scholarly material written on this subject from women like Caroline Tuckey should be taken seriously by both Pentecostal leaders and women of the denomination. It gives fresh insight into Bible truths, from the perspective of a woman. For instance, she writes (in Hulley, 1996:160):

“ The Bible is read regularly in church, without acknowledging that it was written largely by men and for men, and so tends to be sexist despite flashes of inspiration which speak to women’s experience and rise above the patriarchal culture. The Bible can be used either to promote the full humanity of women or hinder it. It can

help to recover the liberating experiences and visions of the people of God, or it can be used in an authoritarian manner to silence all revivals and opposition to the status quo.”

I am not imposing any books by female scholars on Pentecostal leaders, however I am challenging them to be open minded, and to read books on feminist hermeneutics.

The attitudes of society affect the way the Bible is interpreted. The church’s theology and the interpretation of scripture seem to be influenced by the patriarchal nature of South African society. Often, those things which are accepted in society are also accepted by the church, while those things that are rejected by society are also rejected by the church. For example, male leadership, which is seen as the norm in society, is inherent in the theology of the church, while slavery, which is nowadays rejected by most societies, is also not accepted by the church. The church condemns slavery as oppressive and unchristian, despite the fact that Paul gives instruction to slaves and slave masters. Patriarchy, on the one hand, which is accepted by society, is not condemned by the church. It would be consistent for the church to reject sexism, as well as class and racial oppression. Instead the church tends to cling to sexist practices that deny the thrust of the Bible towards personal and social wholeness.

The practices of the church flows out of it hermeneutics. From a ‘hermeneutics for the vulnerable’ will flow a practice that will fight for both the dignity and the protection of the vulnerable, the women and young girls of South Africa. It should be a hermeneutic that will dispel the myth that women should be ashamed of themselves if they are the victims of sexual abuse or battering. This hermeneutic both emancipate them and

empower them to stand up and to speak up, without the fear of being intimidated or undermined.

It should be a hermeneutic that takes serious account of Bible stories like that of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-22; 1 Chron. 3:9). As a young woman, Tamar was summoned to help care for her sick half-brother. In fact, Amnon was not sick at all, but he was in love (it was more like uncontrollable lust) with his half-sister, a beautiful young virgin. Amnon took advantage of Tamar's kindness and vulnerability, and *he raped her*. He then added insult to his sin by refusing to take her as his wife. King David, the father of Tamar, was furious (1 Sam. 13:21) but did not take action to discipline Amnon. Let the church note the attitude of King David in this instance. Let it not merely be 'furious' about the increase of rape in South Africa. Let the church and its leaders (most if not all are males) stand up and 'take action', lest more women suffer Tamar. Like Tamar, women in South Africa are looking up to the leadership of our churches for help, can we help them?

I have yet to hear the story of Tamar preached from a Pentecostal pulpit.

iii. Implementation of practical steps.

Missiology is a subject that balances theory and practice. The above pages are laced with theory and some history; hence it will now be appropriate to suggest some practical steps that the Pentecostal movement can implement.

Mrs Bowers (Dunamis 2000:12) gives the first suggestion; she challenges the church to:

“... produce a Biblical thesis on the dignity and value of all humankind – that addresses the issue of relationships, using Biblical references, which speaks to the Church's responsibility on the abuse of women issues.”

The church should, in the form of publications, restore the dignity of women. More articles concerning women should appear in the national magazines of these Pentecostal churches. Women and men, clergy, laity and Bible student needs to be challenged to write about and promote the dignity of women.

Secondly, Pastors need to be sent on 'refresher courses', where they are thought on subjects concerning violence against women. Most Colleges do not tackle this issue; hence many Pastors are inadequately trained in this area. Pastors must be brought together and trained in this area. From conferences and seminars like that, the church can then produce relevant material that can be used in theological Colleges, so that young pastor who have completed their studies will be knowledgeable about abuse against women.

Thirdly, when a woman has been sexually (or even verbally) abused and she reports to a Police station, it is now constitutional that such a woman be attended by a Police *woman*, and not a *Policeman*. She has the right also, to be examined by a female District surgeon, and may refuse to be examined by a male surgeon. The same applies in the field of counselling. However, in the church setup, most of the leaders, who are the Pastors are male. So the abused Christian woman has two choices. She could either forced herself (or be forced by family members) to seek counselling from a *male* Pastor, or the alternative is that she just remain silent and suffers. If the Police, Counselling and Medical services employ *women* to work with abused *women*, then it is imperative that the Pentecostal churches train women and offer them leadership positions, so that there will be women in the Church who will be available for abused Christian women.

Fourthly, with the finances of the Pentecostal churches, some should be channeled to the erection of 'safe houses', for victims of sexual, violent, verbal and mental abuse. It is not enough, for example, to counsel a woman who has been beaten up by her husband, then send her back home. There needs to be a proper place where she could stay until the problem is resolved. Also, what happens to a woman that is beaten up by an abusive or drunk husband in the middle of the night, and she is put out of the house at that hour? Where can she run with her children? Is the church only good enough for Sunday worship services and mid-week prayer meetings?

These are the questions that the Pentecostal church needs seriously to consider. They will have to supply concrete answers. The church will need to implement practical steps to deal with the abuse of women, and the steps suggested above can serve as a guide.

Conclusion.

Women have always formed an important part of society. They were always involved in the areas of medicine, education, religion, politics, and in the arts and culture spheres. Their achievements are inestimable, and their names are engraved in the annals of human history. However, in the midst of their achievements and contributions to humankind, there is a blood-red cord of abuse against them that stands out. They have been abused at the hands of a patriarchal society, blamed for the entrance of sin into the world and treated as sub-humans, weaker vessels and non-thinkers. The church throughout history has had a share in these abuses, and today the church must be called to account.

We have entered a new millennium, we are living in a modern era, and the abuse of women in society and especially in the church must stop. In the past the church has had much influence on society and social behaviour. Today the church must wield that influence. The church must begin to restore the dignity of women, allow them leadership positions, and pay them honour when it is due; if the church stands up and condemns wife battering, sexual abuse and other types of violence against women, then I am convinced that society's behaviour towards women will also change for the better.

Chapter 7

The Pentecostal claims of Christ and Religious Pluralism:

Mission as Inter-Religious encounter.

Introduction

According to Pentecostal theology the New Testament clearly asserts the universal mediation of Jesus Christ in the salvific order. This is evidenced by more than a few formal texts (such as 1 Tim. 2:5-6, Acts 4:12), or by texts that make the assertion only equivalently, but no less clearly (such as Jn. 3:17; Acts 5:31, 10:44-48, 17:24-31), or again, by the Christological hymns in which Christ appears at the centre of the divine plan (as Eph. 1:3-13; Col. 1:15-20). The mediation of Christ is the message of the New Testament in its entirety, without which the New Testament would have no substance.

The case is the same with the divine filiation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. It is undoubtedly unveiled there at varying depths, from the first apostolic kerygma (Acts 13:32-33) to the Pauline reflections (Rom 1; 1-4; Heb. 1:1-5), and through the synoptic presentation (Mark 1; 1, 15:39; Luke 1:32) down to the Johannine theology (John 5:18, 8:18-19, 10:30, etc.). Similarly we view the New Testament to be shaped in the silhouette of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

None of this is generally challenged within Pentecostal circles. The New Testament's massive assertion of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ the Saviour is readily acknowledged. In this chapter, however, the question is asked whether this assertion still can and ought to be held today in the current context of religious pluralism. Firstly I will give a definite

answer to this question. Secondly, I will describe where Pentecostals differ from, other liberals and those in the ecumenical movement. Thirdly, by using Paul F. Knitter's book, *No other name?* (1985, Orbis Books: Maryknoll) I will establish what is the most acceptable 'theology of religion' model within the Pentecostal church. Finally, by using the 'four ideologies of encounters with other religions', formulated by David Lochhead, in his book, *The dialogical imperative* (1988, Orbis Books: Maryknoll) I will place the Pentecostal ideology of encounters with other religions in the most appropriate bracket.

7.1 The Pentecostal perspective

Christianity, so C.S. Lewis once said, has no message for those who do not realize that they are sinners. According to the Bible the root problem of humankind is sin. In the panoramic view of the human predicament set forth in his epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul declares: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans: 3:23); and "the wages of sin is death"(Romans 6: 23). Yet God did not choose to leave people in their lost-ness. Notwithstanding the divine judgement upon all persons because of their wickedness, God loves every human being (Romans 5:8). By means of the gospel He offers to all a way of forgiveness and reconciliation that does not do violence to His holiness and justice (Romans 3:26). In the Old Testament God promised salvation through a redeemer to come (Genesis 3:15). In the New Testament that promised remedy for humankind's lost-ness is to be found in Jesus, the Messiah. In Him sinful humanity can find reconciliation with the Holy God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting

life”(John 3:16). The good news of what Jesus Christ has done for sinners and offers them freely on the sole condition of repentance and faith must be carried to every creature (Mark 16:15. Corinthians 9:16). The gospel is God’s remedy for the human predicament – the only hope of humankind. “And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life and that hath not the Son of God hath not life”(1 John 5:11-12). For two millennia the lost-ness of humankind without Christ has been the greatest impetus for the worldwide mission programme of the Pentecostal church, and for that matter the whole Christian Church. The Apostle Paul summarizes this missionary imperative in the tenth chapter of Romans:

“For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent...? So faith comes by hearing, and hearing the word of Christ.” Romans 10:13,17

While the Pentecostal church has no official documents on its stance on religious dialogue, the above argument asserting Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world and as the Son of God, is an accepted dogma of the church. The above argument and the like are found in Pentecostal systematic theology, missiology, evangelism, and teachings on spiritual warfare and intercession. Pentecostals emphatically argue for the deity of Christ, and Christ as Saviour of the world. Despite the continual discussions about religious pluralism, Pentecostal churches still affirm the Supremacy of Jesus as the Only Saviour and the Son of God.

7.2 The Liberal Reconstruction of the Missionary Task: Where Pentecostals Differ.

Yet, the terrible thought of the lost-ness of mankind without Jesus Christ has led all but those who take the biblical record seriously to move to a more moderate position. Traditional liberalism, for example, not only denied the full deity of Jesus Christ but also tended to follow the leadership of Friederich Schleiermacher who argued for the universal salvation of all humans. For most liberals Christianity is not the unique, divinely approved remedy for the human predicament. It is only the highest and best revelation of the character and will of God. Other religions are by no means bereft of divine revelation; and they, too, can nurture mankind in redemptive ways. Classic expression was given to the liberal position by William Ernest Hocking in the volume *Rethinking Mission: A Layman's Inquiry after One Hundred Years*. Incidentally, the one hundred years represented almost to the day the century immediately following the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of modern liberalism, that flourished in the early part of the nineteenth century. The essential thrust of Hocking's not-so-new liberal approach to missions represented a 180-degree turn in mission strategy from the previous history of the church in both its Catholic and Evangelical branches. Generally representing the liberal position, Hocking argued that the task of missions should not be to convert the heathen from their various ethnic religions. Rather, the goal of missions should be to help a Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist to be a better representative of his/her own religion. Each religious tradition can learn from the other. While Christianity may be the best of all religions, it shares the good with other religions and needs to learn from as well as share with them. More recently, Arnold Toynbee, the world-renowned Anglican philosopher of history, represented the same point of view. He states:

Since self-centeredness is innate in human nature, we are all inclined, to some extent, to assume that our own religion is the only true right religion; ... while the rest of the human race are Gentiles sitting in darkness. Such pride and prejudice are symptoms of original sin.

He goes on to argue that the five higher religions- Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, but especially the last three should seek to join forces in order to strengthen the cause of those who stand for religious values in the modern world. It is imperative, therefore he concludes, that "One ought ... to try to purge our Christianity of the traditional western belief that Christianity is unique".

Bishop L.A.T Robinson became, perhaps, the most vocal, if not the most respected, of modern voices trumpeting a similar view from his position as a responsible leader of the church. He argued that all human beings of good will are, in fact, implicit believers. The church, therefore, should carry on its work as a co-operative effort even with atheist and agnostics, who are, albeit unconsciously, Christian in spite of themselves. Liberal theologian John Hick, an English Presbyterian, likewise insists that all great religions bring people equally into a valid encounter with God. He agrees, as Hocking had before him, that to seek to convert from one religion to another is the height of provincialism. Rather than uproot the followers of other religions from their cultural moorings, we should join hands with them in seeking for the good. He adds, "If I had been born in India, I probably would be Hindu; if in Egypt, probably a Muslim; if in Ceylon, probably a Buddhist; but I was born in England, and am predictably, a Christian".

The Pentecostal church wholeheartedly rejects this liberal theological stance. It reduces the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross to a mere religious ritual. This single thought delivers the most destructive blow to the Pentecostal missionary zeal. It turns the message of the New Testament into a mere religious text, the redemptive history of God to a mere story. This liberal stance is rejected by Pentecostals.

7.3 Growing Religious Pluralism in the World Council: Rejection by Pentecostals

In spite of its most recent emphasis upon biblical piety, illustrated at the World Council meeting in Vancouver of 1983, the leadership and official publications of the World Council of Churches have increasingly moved in support of the liberal position. They have failed to diagnose the fundamental predicament of mankind as human sin that separates man from a holy God and rightly calls for divine judgement. Consequently, all too often they see no need of the biblical gospel as the remedy for humankind's dire plight. In the World Council of Churches' study volume prepared for the Vancouver Assembly, John Paulton lists as one unlikely option that "Only those calling upon Jesus as their personal Saviour can be saved, the rest of humanity being assigned to eternal perdition". Religious pluralism that places all religions on the same level is the theological corollary of this view. The Vancouver theme, "Jesus Christ the Hope of the World" could be interpreted as a rejection of syncretism; but it has not been interpreted in this fashion by the World Council in its official pre-assembly study guide.

"In the end the great communities of faith will not have disappeared. None will have "won" over the others. Jews will still be Jews; Muslims still Muslims; and those of the great Eastern faiths, still Buddhist or Hindus or Taoists. Africa will

still witness to its traditional life view; China to its inheritance. People will still come from the East and the West, the North and the South, and sit down in the kingdom of God, without having first become Christians like us.”

(W.C.C. Vancouver 1983)

All religions apparently lead to God; Jesus Christ is merely *our* way. At Vancouver this growing syncretism gained further support from the Indian mythology employed in worship, from the role given to the leaders of other religions, and from the stern warning presented by the World Council official D.C Mulder *against* evangelizing because it imposed an obstacle to dialogue with other religions. Not surprisingly, the liberal denial of uniqueness of the Christian message and its necessity for personal salvation has had devastating effects upon the mission staffs of the world.

“Perhaps the best way to show how dramatic the missionary retreat has been is to look at the percentage decline in the number of overseas missionaries among some of the major denominations between 1962 and 1979: Episcopal Church, 79 percent decline; Lutheran Church 70 percent; United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A 72 percent; United Church of Christ 68 percent; Christian Church Disciples 66 percent; United Methodist Church 46 percent; American Lutheran Church 44 percent.”

Though many factors have contributed to this decline, it is legitimate to infer that these figures are a rough index of the depth or otherwise conviction about basic Christian doctrine- the nature of the gospel, the lost-ness of mankind apart from Christ, and the necessity of obeying biblical mandates calling for sacrifice and discipline for the sake of advancing the kingdom of Christ. Suchlike views are held by the liberals and the World

Council of Churches has driven the Pentecostal churches to hold on to the exclusivity of Christ as Saviour of the world. To an extent, most Pentecostals openly reject other religions, even calling them demonic, while also calling those in the liberal school, 'compromizers' of the gospel. The more the liberals seek avenues of dialogue with other faiths, the more Pentecostals aggressively affirm their belief in Christ the only Saviour of the world.

This attitude is not exclusive to the Pentecostal church. It is also adopted by Conservative Evangelicals. They too, affirm the Supremacy of Christ, the only Saviour of the world. Paul F. Knitter, in his book, *No other name?* (1985, Orbis Books: Maryknoll) describes the attitude of Evangelical towards other religions. It will be good to dwell on his description of these Evangelicals, since they mirror the attitude of the Pentecostal church.

7.4 Threefold Pentecostal Attitude Toward Religious Pluralism

Paul F. Knitter, in his book, *No other name?* (1985, Orbis Books: Maryknoll) describes the attitude of both Conservative Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants towards other religions. These attitudes are also adopted by Pentecostals. Within the Pentecostal movement, one is able to see two schools of thought concerning attitudes toward religious pluralism. One school follows the Conservative Evangelical thought (an overwhelming majority), while the other follows the Mainline Protestant thought. I have taken the liberty of renaming the Conservative Evangelical approach the "Elijah Model". The Mainline Protestant thought, I will also rename and as the "Cornelius Model". I will explain later why these terms are more applicable within Pentecostal circles.

Another attitude that is finding some ground within the Pentecostal movement is not a very popular school of thought and has been adopted by a very few Pentecostals;

however it is important to discuss, since it is growing slowly. This school of thought I will call the "Athens Model". David Bosch (1993: 479) calls this school of thought the "theology of fulfillment".

7.4.1 The Elijah Model (Conservative Evangelical)

This is the most popular model among the Pentecostals. According to Knitter (1985:77), the adherents of the Conservative Evangelicals are those who:

“ still carry on the founding spirit of *The Fundamentals* and insist on the seven fundamental doctrines of authentic Christianity: inerrant verbal inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, miracles of Christ, physical resurrection, total depravity of the human being, substitutionary atonement, premillennial Second Coming.”

Knitter also explains that these Evangelicals hold to the primary authority of the Bible as the one absolute source of knowledge about God and the human condition. They boldly proclaim the universal Lordship of Jesus as the only Saviour of the world and the necessity of personal experience of His saving power. They therefore stress the necessity of mission and world evangelization.

All these tenets are also practised, preached and affirmed in the Pentecostal church. This firm stance on the total depravity of humans, substitutionary atonement and the universal lordship of Jesus, shaped both the Evangelical and the Pentecostal attitude towards other religions and religious pluralism. Knitter (1985:78) describes this Evangelical stance as a 'sword':

“This sword is a definite force in influencing Christian attitudes and approaches to other religions ... especially in the affirmation of Jesus' unique lordship and the

necessity of evangelization.”

Since the Pentecostal church’s attitude is so close to that of the Conservative Evangelicals, it would be proper for Pentecostals to read and study the Evangelical stance on religious pluralism, as it is so clearly and forcefully expressed in the “Frankfurt Declaration.”

Formulated by the Tübingen Evangelical theologian Peter Beyerhaus, it was approved by a theological convention of Evangelicals in Frankfurt on March 4, 1970. Commenting on the declaration’s stance on religious pluralism, Knitter (1985:78-79) writes:

“The position of the Frankfurt Declaration was spelled out with steel-hard clarity. Methodologically, it stated that the ‘primary frame of reference’ for understanding Christianity and evaluating other religions is and can only be the Bible. The verdict of the Bible on other religions is then put forth. Inasmuch as ‘salvation is due to the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which occurred once and for all and for all mankind,’ and inasmuch as this salvation can be gained “only through participation in faith ... we therefore reject the false teaching that the non-Christian religions and worldviews are also ways of salvation similar to belief in Christ.” This means that there is “an essential difference in nature” between the Christian church and other religions. To substitute a “give-and-take dialogue” with other religions “for a proclamation of the gospel that aims at conversion” is absolutely rejected as a ‘prostitution of the gospel’. The bottom line of the declaration is an urgent appeal to all Christians to take up their missionary obligation to all non-Christians.”

Four years later, the Evangelicals met again in Lausanne Switzerland (July 16-25, 1974) where they reaffirmed their views on religious pluralism. Like the Frankfurt statement, it

strongly reaffirmed the absolute authority of the Bible, the uniqueness of Christ, and therefore the pressing need for evangelism. Because Jesus is 'the only man-God', and He is the 'only mediator between God and man,' the congress rejected 'any kind of syncretism and dialogue that implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies.' Again this Evangelical conference expressly affirmed that there is no possibility of salvation through any other religions.

To a large extent the Pentecostal church has adopted the teaching of the Conservative Evangelical school, concerning religious pluralism. In fact J.N.J Kritzinger categorizes the Pentecostal and Charismatic church under the banner of the Conservative Evangelical school.

"There is a view that all other religions are demonic 'of the devil' ... it is a wide-spread and growing conviction. It is especially in the Pentecostal and Charismatic branches of evangelical theology." (1991:139-140)

This is the reason that I have termed this model of religious pluralism, the *Elijah model*. Pentecostals 'operate in terms of a rigid dualism' (Kritzinger 1991:140) between light and darkness, God and Satan. Either a religion or a worldview is from God or from the devil. Since, according to Pentecostal conviction, the Bible is the inerrant word of God, the religion of the Bible (Christianity) is a religion from God; hence any other religion is simply from the devil. These adherents of other religions are on their way to hell; they need to repent, turn away from their false religion, and turn to Christ if they want to be saved.

As in the Elijah event (1 Kings 18:16-40) there is a contest between the True God and the 400 prophets who serve a false god, Baal. Elijah challenges these 400 prophets with these

words: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). Then in verse 37 he calls on the God of Israel, Jehovah, saying: "Answer me, O Lord, so that these people may know that you are God!"

The story goes on to recount that God hear Elijah and send down fire to consume the offering. The crux of the story is that there is only one True God, and other religions are false. This is a story that is strongly emphasized in the Pentecostal church, affirming the Supremacy of the God of the Bible. It is a story that adds weight to the strong rigid dualism that is adopted within Pentecostalism; either it is from God or it is not. If it is of God it is Godly, if it is not from God then it is from the devil and hence it is false and demonic inspired.

I thus term it the Elijah Model, since the story of Elijah forms the basis of this belief. This model is accepted by both Conservative Evangelicals and also by the three mainline Pentecostals churches in South Africa.

7.4.2 The Cornelius Model (Mainline Protestant)

While I call this the 'Cornelius Model,' Knitter (1985:97) terms this model the Mainline Protestant Model. There is a distinct difference between this model and the previous model. While the previous model is very extremist, and the tone is very harsh towards other religions, this model is a little more comprehensive.

The Conservative Evangelicals hold the following strong uncompromising positions towards other religions:

- a) There is no salvation without Jesus Christ

b) Non-Christians *do not receive any revelations from God* whatsoever. God does not reveal Himself to adherents of other religions.

The Mainline Protestant model on the other hand holds the following strong convictions:

a) There is no salvation without Jesus Christ

b) Non-Christians *do receive revelations from God*; God does reveal Himself to adherents of other religions.

According to Knitter (1985:97) the central difference between the mainline Protestant and the conservative Evangelical church can be stated succinctly: the mainline Protestant seek a more positive, a more dialogical, Christian approach to other faiths.

Arguments for General Revelation – Revelation Yes!

Mainline Protestants invite the previous groups to study exegetically some traditional New Testament passages that point to a revelation of God among the Gentiles (Rom. 1:18ff, 2:12-16; Acts 14:15ff. 17:27ff. John 1).

This school argues that if Christians are going to announce, as they must, that Jesus Christ brings a full and final revelation, this revelation cannot drop “perpendicularly from above” on barren terrain. The soil, they argue, must be made ready; there must be something to plug into (Knitter 1985:99). A connection between general revelation and the revelation brought by Jesus Christ must exist. They insist that faith in Christ is possible only if it is the response to and fulfillment of a person’s previous knowledge of God in general revelation. To encounter the God of Jesus Christ is not to meet a stranger. This is exactly what happen in the New Testament story of Cornelius (Acts 10).

The Cornelius event (Acts 10).

Most of the theologians who use the mainline Protestant model recognize that general revelation not only makes known the existence of an ultimate reality but that it can also reveal that reality is somehow personal and benevolent. The knowledge born of this revelation is simply the product of theoretical reasoning; it is not only a "demonstration" proving a "first mover" (since in Christianity God is always the 'first mover' in the whole process of salvation). It also provides a "call" that can elicit in a person (like Cornelius) a "confession," a response. God can be experienced in other religions as a "thou" even though there may not be full clarity about divine person-hood.

In this instance Cornelius was not a Jew, but a Gentile, yet in God's divine and sovereign purpose He saw it fit to reveal Himself to Cornelius and eventually to his whole Gentile household. In verses 3 to 7 God sends an Angel to Cornelius, the Gentile, telling him that God has heard his prayer. By the time God sent the Apostle Peter, Cornelius already has had some kind of authentic revelation from God. Hence it was easier for him to accept the gospel concerning Christ Jesus.

The more radical Pentecostals (though there are very few), hold to the belief that God can reveal Himself to adherents of other faiths, for the sole reason of bringing them to a place of decision. This view is held especially by Indian Pentecostals, since they have converted from a variety of Indian religions to Christianity. There are hundreds of testimonies of Hindus, Tamils, Malays and Muslims who has experienced this type of revelation while they were still in their former religions. It is specifically because of these revelations of God that they responded to the Christian messages so readily. They testify of God's revelation in dreams, visions and other mediums, which made them 'hungry' to

find out more about the True and Living God, as preached in Christianity. If Pentecostal leaders respect the conversion experiences of their followers, they may also come to the conclusion that God is sovereign and can reveal Himself to whomever He desires.

Revelation – Yes but Salvation – No!

“When the question of salvation through other religions is broached, the Protestant model swings in a direction quite different from the one it followed regarding revelation” (Knitter 1985:101). Mainline Protestants argue that while God does reveal Himself to adherents of other faiths, He does not promise salvation outside ‘the way’ (Jesus Christ) that He has provided. This school of thought warns that the knowledge/revelation that one gets from God should not be used to construct idols or religions, but rather should be used to draw a person (a sinner) to the God revealed in the Bible.

According to Knitter, mainline Protestants talk about the ontological necessity of Christ for salvation. Kritzing (1991:159) explains what Knitter means by this term:

“When Knitter says that mainline Protestants affirm the ‘ontological necessity of Christ’ for salvation, he means that they believe the actual (ontic) life, death and Resurrection of Christ was necessary to bring about salvation. There would have been no salvation if Christ had not actually accomplished it at the level of reality. The Christ event is constitutive of whatever salvation is available to humankind.”

In order to save time and space, I will not explain again what is meant by ‘no salvation in Christ’ since on this issue the mainline Protestant agrees with the conservative Evangelical. The Protestant stance would be a repetition of the Evangelical view as spelled out in both the Frankfurt Declaration and the Lausanne Convention.

While many Pentecostals hold on to the conservative Evangelical model, a few have evolved from that view, to accepting the mainline Protestant view. Stories and other scriptures like that of the event of Cornelius have led these Pentecostals to review their 'conservative Evangelical' stance. Now, holding on the belief that God is able to reveal Himself to whosoever He desires, this group can also affirm its traditional stance of the Lordship and Mediator-ship of Jesus Christ.

Moreover another school of belief that is brewing in the Pentecostal pot. This small but growing group affirming "no salvation outside of Christ," and also believes that there is *some* truth in other religions, but Christianity holds *all* truth, hence it is only in Christ that salvation is *completed*. This group follows the 'Fulfillment Model'.

7.4.3 The Athens Model (Fulfillment Model)

The model that I call the 'Athens Model' is what David Bosch calls the 'fulfillment model'. This 'fulfillment model' as described in David Bosch's *Transforming mission* (1993:479-481) has its beginning in the Jerusalem Conference of the IMC (1928) and the same emphasis was repeated at the Layman's Foreign Mission Inquiry (1932) in North America.

This model firstly affirms that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Only Mediator of salvation. On this vital point this view is in line with the two previous models discussed above, concerning the supremacy of Christ.

This view also affirms (like the mainline Protestant) that God is able to reveal Himself to adherents of other religions. However, what makes this model peculiar is that it affirms that other religions, to some degree, has truth in them. This is unlike the Conservative

Evangelical model that is dualist (light and darkness) and believes that if anything is not “Christian” it is demonic, and the so-called ‘truth’ in other religions is only a disguise of the devil. The ‘fulfillment’ model wholeheartedly agrees that all religions have some authentic truth in them.

However, the truth that is found in other religions is not sufficient to provide access to heaven, thus the truth that they have is insufficient for salvation. The little bit of truth that has been revealed to them (by God) is only there to lead them to search for the rest of the truth.

Hence, Christianity is the fulfillment of all religions; it has the answers that baffle adherents of other religions. We are therefore called to add to the little knowledge that these persons have, so that they might know that in Christ is the fulfillment of salvation.

This model is seen in Acts 17:16-34 where Paul speaks to the religious people of Athens. He does not call their religion ‘demonic’; in fact he commends them for their spiritual hunger (v22).

Paul utters these words (v23), which require much attention:

“... now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.”

Paul used the little knowledge that the people of Athens had, and from there he was able to ‘add’ the rest of the revelation that God has given him, to this insufficient knowledge that they had, resulting in the acceptance of Christ as the Saviour of the world.

Other religions are full of ‘shadows and images’ of an unknown god, by using these images and shadows as a point of contact, Christians are able to lead them to the fulfillment of salvation that is found in Jesus Christ.

To the South African Pentecostal, who believes that everything that is not Christian is demonic, this model will pose a challenge to their theology of religion. I challenge Pentecostal leaders to formulate their own 'theology of religions' one that is able to draw adherents of other faith in curiosity to Christianity. Then we can explain to them the way of salvation that is found in Christ Jesus only.

Indeed, the Pentecostal church will have to stop being hostile towards, or isolate themselves from other religious people; rather they need to reflect the love and compassion that Christ has to those who are seeking to find 'the Way'.

In his book *The Dialogical Imperative* David Lockhead (1988) writes extensively about the attitude of Christians towards other religions; thus let me discuss his position, if this may lead to a more holistic approach to adherents of other faiths.

7.5 Pentecostal Ideology of Encounters with other Religions.

Pentecostals need to realize that they have to practice their faith in a world marked by religious diversity. How they respond or treat adherents of other faiths is important, since their attitudes can either lead to dialogue and a positive acceptance of Christ, or it can lead to hostility, which leads to doors of dialogue being closed, hence the rejection of Christ.

Lockhead elaborates on four types of ideologies that are currently practiced around the world: 1) Isolation; 2) Hostility; 3) Competition; 4) Partnership. I aim to review each of these ideologies to see whether they are compatible with the Pentecostal movement. I will also use these ideologies to trace the development of the 'theology of religion' within the Pentecostal movement.

7.5.1 The ideology of Isolation (Light and Darkness).

“For centuries, Christians have known of the Eastern traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Throughout most of that history, however, our knowledge of other traditions has been the product of isolation. We have known that other traditions existed, but have had little actual contact with those traditions. Part of the reason for the isolation of religions has been the hard reality of geographic isolation.”

(Lockhead 1988:5)

Lockhead’s ideology of isolation is very significant in terms of the shaping of South African Pentecostal Church’s theology of religion. He argues that the paramount reason for the existence of this ideology was because of geographic isolation. For almost a century, South Africa has been divided geographically; however these geographic lines were also colour lines. The 1913 Land Act and the 1936 Group Areas Act divided the South African nation, both geographically and on colour grounds.

During the implementation of Apartheid and the ‘Group Areas Act’, people of different colours (those of different faiths) were separated and isolated from each other. Colour and religion almost go hand in hand. In South Africa the Indian people made up the Hindu and Tamil religious group, the Malays most of the Muslim community, the Chinese of the Buddhist community and the African people made up most of the African Traditional religions. Hence by separating on ‘colour’ grounds the government also isolated the religion.

During this time 'White areas' were seen as 'Christian areas' and non-white areas were seen as 'pagan areas'. In spiritual terms we were all separated into two categories: that of light and darkness.

This period of South African church history was marked by the stern acceptance of this 'ideology of isolation'. Colors/religions were kept in isolation by constitutional laws. The existence of each religion was known but there was no significant contact among the adherents of the different faiths. During this time the Pentecostal church, like all the other South African churches, followed this 'ideology of isolation.'

The effects of the adoption of this type of ideology can still be seen today. At present, for an example, many white folks do not know the difference between Hindus and Muslims. Many of the White Pastors that I have spoken to, think "all Indians are Muslims". It is not unusual for white pastors to ask me, "Were you also Muslim before you became Christian?"

Pentecostals need to have more contact with people of other religions. If they want to share the gospel of salvation and preach "the good news to all nations" then for beginners they need to contact people of other faith. The Pentecostal church should reject the ideology of isolation; it needs to look for more authentic ways of sharing its faith.

7.5.2 The ideology of hostility (The others as Antichrist)

"The ideology of isolation is possible when a community feels little threat from the other. The community is isolated, either geographically or socially, to the degree that the construction of reality of the community is not significantly challenged by an

alternative view.

When, for one reason or another, a community is no longer isolated, the impact of another construction of reality is experienced as a threat. The closeness of the other and the difference of the worldview of the other calls into question the community's own understanding. The challenge of the other community is experienced as a challenge to God. It follows that the other community represents a force that is actively hostile to that which is most holy, most sacred."

(Lockhead 1988:12)

At present most of the Pentecostal population still holds on to this ideology. This ideology is especially held by Pentecostals that follow the Conservative Evangelical school of thought. To Pentecostals, the other community is described not in the relatively benign symbol of darkness (as seen in the previous ideology) but as the demonic, the enemy of God, the Antichrist. This is not a 'hidden' ideology, but is openly proclaimed on all Pentecostal pulpits, and accepted by laity. It is taught in Pentecostal Bible Schools, under both the subjects of World Religions, and Mission and Evangelism. This ideology is especially adopted by Pentecostals who follow the Conservative Evangelical school of thought.

Lockhead (1988:13) explains that the ideology of hostility is distinguished by at least three features. First, the other community must be seen as threatening. Secondly, the error of the other is not understood as a matter of simple ignorance. The other is a liar or a deceiver. Thirdly, the other community is thus perceived as engaged in deliberate warfare against the truth. These three features as outline by Lochhead, are very familiar features in the Pentecostal movement; in fact they are accepted as a doctrine.

The ideology of hostility, as accepted by many Pentecostals has deep roots in the premillennial teachings of the church. Premillennialism is an eschatological doctrine, held by Pentecostals, who believe that Christ will definitely return before the millenium (the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth). Before the millennial reign of Christ the Antichrist will preside over the nations, ushering in the period of tribulation. Associated with the tribulation, is an expectation of a great religious apostasy. The apostasy is prophesied by Daniel and by Jesus. The "Whore of Babylon, in Revelation 17, is one symbol of this religious apostasy.

In his exposition of Revelation 17, Pentecostal pioneer Jimmy Swaggart (1991:134) states, explains the concept of the "whore":

"As this chapter opens, we see the root of so many world problems. We will see the subtlety of satan and his efforts to draw man into a false salvation; we will see his infiltration of Christianity. Religion has been given the many names, but God calls all of it "the great whore" ... Any way of salvation that adds to or takes away from the atoning, vicarious offering of the Lord Jesus Christ can be labeled "the great whore".

A strong tradition among premillennialists sees the operation of the religious apostasy in the coming together of all religions. Lockhead is right when he points out that one of the favorite candidates for the agent of this apostasy is the World Council of Churches.

In my own church (Full Gospel Church) this doctrine is accepted by all of us, as well as by the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Assemblies of God. The influence of this teaching even reaches the other independent Pentecostal church and also the Charismatic movement.

However, there is a group of Pentecostals who, instead of being threatened by other religions, rather see this as a challenge to witness about their own faith. To them, they live constantly, having “competition” with other faiths. This group falls under Lockhead’s “competition” formulation.

7.5.3 The ideology of Competition (The fullness of truth)

“A competitive relationship has two main characteristics. In the first place, competing communities implicitly acknowledge that they have some similarities. They are, so to speak, in the same business. Secondly, competitive communities place considerable stress on their differences. They stress that the ways in which “we” differ from other communities make “us” superior.”

(Lockhead 1988:18)

Those within the Pentecostal movement that follow this ideology are influenced much by the mainline Protestant school of thought. It is also an ideology that is propagated by those that follow the ‘Theology of Fulfillment’, a more radical group of Pentecostals.

Adherents of this ideology live in a constant state of competition. The way they build their buildings, write their books, appear on television, advertise on the Internet, and conduct evangelistic crusades, is aimed at having competition with other religions. Believing that their revelation is the ‘full truth’ makes them feel superior, and thus gives them the impetus for witnessing more rigorously.

Unlike the previous group (adherents of the ideology of hostility), this group is not overly hostile towards their ‘opponents’. They accept the challenges of other religions. It gives them the opportunity to “show off” their teachings, in the hope of convincing the other to

accept their beliefs. Hostility is the result of fear, fear of a 'take over', or even fear of competition. But those who adopt the ideology of 'competition' are those who are not fearful, or threatened by other religions. They know for 'sure' that they are 'correct', hence they welcome challenges and competitions. Their impetus for evangelism is not driven by fear, but rather by their acceptance of the revelation of God as being superior.

A typical book written from this perspective entitled *Is Christianity the only way?* (1969) is a good example. It is written in a competitive style and shows the supremacy of Christ and the uniqueness of the Christian faith. The author writes:

"Christianity is unique, since it has:

a) A Unique Message

Christ's pulpit was the seashores, the mountainsides, or the sand dunes of the desert. To the huge crowds that gathered He unfolded in simplicity God's messages of love revealed by the waving trees, the happy springing grass, and the fragrant flowers. He gave instructions to those that guide the plough, sow the seed, and harvest the grain. His words are so alluring that the hardest soldiers sent to arrest Him returned heart-filled yet empty-handed, saying "Never man spake like this man"(John 7:46). The Lord's contacts with individuals and even His casual contacts brought new vision and life to many:

1. Nicodemus recognized Him as "a teacher come from God" (John 3:1-21).
2. A suffering woman brushed against Him and her faith brought healing (Matthew 9: 19-22).
3. A blind beggar called to Him and received his sight (Mark 10:46-52).

4. At a public well He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, and in the events that followed many were led to Christ (John 4:4-39).
5. At Jericho He called to an unpopular publican who had climbed a sycamore tree, and on that very day salvation came to Zacchaeus and his household (Luke 19:1-10).

b) A Unique Ministry

Christ came to this world as the servant of suffering humanity. His compassion knew no limits. He recognized no distinction of nationality, class, or creed. He passed by no human being as worthless. In all His travels there was left behind a trail of health, happiness, and thanksgiving. No malady, not even death itself, baffled the Physician of Galilee, and each miracle of healing became a living example of His kingdom.

c) A Unique Future

In the New Testament Christ became the mediator of a new covenant extended to all people of all nations who would accept Him as the fulfillment of all the promises given to Israel. Christ became our Redeemer and executed the offices of prophet, priest and king. As a prophet He revealed to us the Word, The Spirit and the will of God. As a priest He offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God by making continual intercession for us. As a king He rules, descends restraints, conquers, and promises to return and assume Lordship over all eternity. Thus the confirmation of the work of Christ is found in the New Jerusalem when God himself shall wipe away tears

and abolish death, pain, and sorrow (Revelation 21). But the essential question is: how do we, as Christians, fit into God's fantastic future?

1. There will be a Rapture and a Tribulation.

The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 that there will be a Rapture or "catching away of the church." In reality the Church constitutes the new Israel, and all Jewish and Gentile people who embrace Christ are part of this spiritual, new Israel. When Christ raptures His Church, it will be to receive His saints unto Himself, to resurrect the dead in Christ, to take the saints to heaven, to change Christian bodies to immortal bodies, to present the saints before His Father, and to cause the saints to escape Tribulation (Luke 2:34,35; 1Thessalonians 5:9; 2Thessalonians 2:7,8 Revelation 4:1). To be qualified for the rapture one must be in Christ who is the "way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-6; Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18-29 must also be consulted) After the Rapture of the Church, there will be a Tribulation period with the nation of Israel as the central focus. The Tribulation is pictured in Scripture as the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27. It is to be a period of seven years during which the nation of Israel will make a covenant with the Antichrist, who will protect Israel and bring prosperity. The first-three-and-a-half years may feature some peace and economic advancement. However, during the last three-and-a-half years a break will take place between the Anti-Christ and Israel, followed by severe persecution of Israel and others who profess faith in God. This persecution will be more intense than any that has ever been experienced before (Matthew 24:15-26). This Tribulation period is designed to prepare the faithful for the coming of Christ and to judge the nations for their

godlessness. It is significant to note that today the stage appears to be set. The economic uncertainty, the energy crisis, international immorality, the lack of world leadership, the aligning of nations one with another in order to survive, the strategic economic importance of the Middle East, the swift movement toward a worldwide monetary system, the activity of the Soviet Union which has poured more than a million dollars into Egypt and Syria - these all stand as preliminary steps for the coming of a world leader who may well fit the biblical description of the Antichrist who usher in the Tribulation period.

2. There will be a Second Coming and Armageddon.

When the Tribulation developments have concluded, Christ will return with His saints from heaven (Rev. 19) to fight the battle of Armageddon and assume His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords. In all probability Israel will find itself under invasion by an army probably numbering in the millions. Quite possibly this final armada will include the army of 200 million from the sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:16) and those who will cross the River Euphrates (Revelation 9:14, 16:12). Thus, the two opposing forces - Antichrist with his army and the invading armies from Asia across the Euphrates will unite to engage in this final cataclysmic battle of ultimate destiny (Revelation 19:17, 18). This battle will be fought in the hill country of Megiddo on the south side of the Valley of Esdraelon or Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-16). It is at this point that the nation of Israel will join the New Israel for a part of the fantastic future with God. At Armageddon the returning Christ and His saints (Revelation 19; Jude 1:24) will not only deliver those Jews and Gentiles who will have turned to God during the Tribulation but also punish the

nations for their godlessness and their maltreatment of Israel. Christ's kingdom on earth, will rid the earth of all evil rebellion, and usher in the Millennial reign.

3. There will be a Millennium and Judgement.

At the beginning of the Millennium Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand- year period. Satan will no longer deceive the nations (Isaiah 27:1; Revelation 20:1-3). After the Millennium Satan will be loosed for a short season and will once again seek to gain power by deceiving the nations and organizing Gog and Magog to besiege the camp of the saints in Jerusalem. Fire will come down out of heaven and destroy them before the campaign is successfully launched (Revelation 20:7-9). During this Millennium reign Christ and His saints will find their triumphant hour. Satan will be bound; there will be universal peace and prosperity; there will be justice for everyone; life will be prolonged; right will be prevalent everywhere; all elements of pain and threat will be eliminated; the land will be restored to its natural, bountiful beauty; and love and righteousness will prevail. At the end of the thousand years there will be a White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11-15). All of the wicked from Adam through the Millennium will have a day of reckoning. The basis for Judgement will be as follows:

- a) Law of conscience (Romans 1:20; 2:11-15)
- b) Law of memory (Luke 15:25)
- c) Law of Moses (Romans 2:17-29)
- d) Law of character (Hebrews 3:8-19; Ephesians 4:19)

- e) The gospel (Romans 2:12-16)
- f) Records of personal acts (Matthew 12:36; Luke 12:2-9; John 3:18; Revelation 20:12)
- g) The Book of Life (Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 22:18; 19).

Then a new heaven and a new earth will be established as the old heaven and the old earth will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:11; 21). Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God, become subject to His Father, and put all things under Him that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28).

4. There will be a New Heaven and a New Earth.

After Satan and the unsaved have been judged and removed from the earth, God will purify the atmosphere and earth from all taint of sin. John "saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away"(Revelation 21:1). The earth will be purified by fire, Peter tells us that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt away with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up ...Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2Peter 3:10, 13). Many bible scholars believe that Peter is saying that the atmosphere and earth will not be completely destroyed but made new and pure. The world will never end. It will only be changed into a new and better world. God says, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5), and He does this by fire. The Apostle Peter reminds us that we are "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being

on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Peter 3:12). God will fill the new heaven and the new earth with His presence. He says, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool" (Acts 7:49). We will be busy worshipping God since the Word tells us that His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:3). "God shall wipe away all tears" from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). There will be no grief or heartache, since nothing will exist to sadden us. There will be no more death (Revelation 21:4) because God "will swallow up death in victory" (Isaiah 25:8) and will destroy the last enemy - death (1 Corinthians 15:26). There will be no more pain (Revelation 21:4). In Christ, the only door, we are given enabling power to overcome all things. And God promises: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7). Jesus said, "I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have, so that no one may rob you of your crown" (Revelation 3:11).

7.5.4 What does all this mean to those who adhere to the 'ideology of Competition?

The above outline informs us that Christ is the only door to both our earthly life and our eternal life. Christ said in John 15:5, " Without me ye can do nothing." In other words, Christ is absolutely indispensable.

1. Christ is the only intercessor

"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him"(Isaiah59: 16).

2. Christ is the only redeemer

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up”(John 3:14)

3. Christ is the only nourishment

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

4. Christ is the only source of truth

“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67’ 68).

5. Christ is the only Saviour

“ Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

6. Christ is the only foundation

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

The ideology of ‘competition’ which is held by Pentecostals who follow both the Conservative Evangelical and the Mainline Protestant model is prevalent. The above arguments are internalised by Pentecostals throughout South Africa. To be religious, this school argues, is to be committed to something one believes to be ultimate. To be Christian is to be totally committed to Jesus Christ. To regard God’s activity in Jesus Christ as simply equivalent to other ways God may have chosen to act in other religions

seems to destroy the point of commitment. If Jesus Christ is truly “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6), then it is not surprising that all Pentecostals feel obligated to assert the superiority of Christianity over all other traditions. The question then arises: can this theology lead to any form of partnership between Pentecostals and adherents of other faiths? To answer this question, I will investigate Lockhead’s next ideology: the ideology of partnership (1988:23-26).

7.5.5 The ideology of Partnership

While one is able to detect the ‘face of Pentecostalism’ in the above three ideologies, one is not able to link Pentecostalism and the ideology of partnership. Radical Pentecostals will concede the ideology of competition while the conservatives will adhere to the ideologies of isolation and hostility. None, even from the most radical group, will even accept the ideology of partnership.

There are really two streams of thought in this ideology. While Lockhead only discusses one such stream, I will go a bit further by discussing another stream of thought. I have divided the two streams into the following: i) Religious partnership (as discussed by Lochhead) and, ii) Social Partnership.

i. Religious Partnership

There are those in this school that want to speak of the essential unity of all religions; these people claim that despite their differences, particular religions are merely different paths to the same goal. One such prominent contemporary proponent is John Hick.

“Hick observes that, in common with Christianity, many non-Christian communities engage in the worship of a deity conceived as ‘the personal creator and lord of the universe.’ He argues that this fact must be interpreted in one of three ways: (1) There are many gods, different gods being worshipped by different religions. (2) There is one God who is worshipped by one of the traditions. The other traditions worship idols. (3) There is one God who, though conceived differently in different traditions, is worshipped by every tradition.” (Lockhead, 1988:25)

While Pentecostals will argue for the second alternative, Hick argues for the third alternative. Hick’s position typifies a theology of partnership, a theology that accepts that all religions stands for the same basic principle: they assert the sovereignty of God over human life. They worship God. They reveal God. They mediate God’s salvation to humanity. They have in common the same message, the same goal.

This argument and position of Hick is totally and sharply rejected by Pentecostals. Pentecostals are only committed to salvation in Jesus Christ. What Hick and company call ‘narrow mindedness’, Pentecostals call ‘commitment’. Religious partnership is foreign to Pentecostalism, it is a compromise of the gospel, it is a denial of Christ’s vicarious death, and is not accepted in Pentecostalism.

ii. Social Partnership

Social partnership, on the other hand, realizes that each religion is different; hence there is no call for religious unity. However, proponents of this school do call on all religions to come together to fight one enemy, of which HIV aids, crime, and unemployment are

manifestations. Each religion retains its own uniqueness, but unites to form one 'religious force' that will fight a common enemy.

As argued earlier, I showed how Pentecostals (especially the conservative group) hold a dualist (light and darkness) approach to religion. Either a religion is from God or from the devil and there is, no in-between position. Any non-Christian religion is not from God, it is from the Devil, demonic, and an act of rebellion. This is the reason why Pentecostals will not join hands with other religions even in fighting against a common enemy like HIV/Aids. Pentecostals would rather join hands with any other Christian group/s (Catholic, Orthodox, mainline Protestants, etc) but not with non-Christians.

Pentecostals argue that there is not pattern in the Bible (Old and New Testament) where God calls His people to solicit the help of 'heathen' nations. God is able to fight for His people, and also with them, against any enemy, and He does not need the help of those who rejects His plan of salvation through His Son Jesus (Ex. 14:14).

The ideology of partnership is not even considered by Pentecostals.

Conclusion

Among the three Pentecostal churches in South Africa there is no official document concerning religious pluralism. It is typical of Pentecostals to reject any non-Christian religions as devilish and demonic. The church has not produced any scholarly material concerning religious pluralism, except for a few articles that degrade all other religions.

By using the two models of Knitter (*No other name?* 1985, Orbis Books: Maryknoll)

and the four ideologies of Lockhead, (*The dialogical imperative* 1988, Orbis Books: Maryknoll) I have placed the Pentecostal attitude towards other religions in a 'model' that will be able to help other Pentecostal in their research for 'attitudes of Pentecostals towards other religions. This model should provide a framework for Pentecostal scholars to work from. It should be used as a launching pad for further discussions and deliberations on religious pluralism.

As South Africa is a 'rainbow nation' we are called to live in peace and harmony with our fellow countrymen (albeit Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, African Traditional Religions, etc). While the Pentecostal church is called upon to foster such harmony in South Africa, the Pentecostal church also has a duty towards its followers, and that duty is to provide a solid official document concerning:

- a) The Pentecostal stance towards other religions.
- b) How to live peacefully with members of other religions.
- c) How to witness about the Christ event effectively, without causing hostility.

CONCLUSION: Mission as Contextualisation

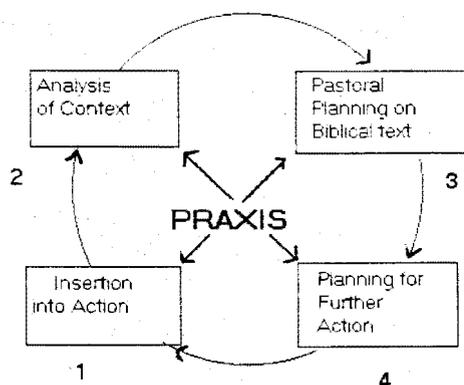
The objectives of this study were to find out whether Pentecostal churches in South Africa are silent or verbal about contextual missiological themes: motivation for mission; race relationships; social justice; gender equality and religious pluralism.

I have traced the history of the Pentecostal churches from their inception in North America in the early 1900s until their eventual emergence in South Africa in 1906. The history of the South African Pentecostal church is marked by challenges such as the ones mentioned above. In theory, the three mainline Pentecostal churches under investigation have to some extent attempted to deal with these issues, albeit in a very conservative fashion.

However, it is extremely hard to reconcile the theory and the actual practices of the Pentecostal church concerning the above issues. The same is also true of the many interviews that I have conducted. While Pentecostal leaders argue that they are 'pro' reconciliation, social justice, equality and dialogue, there are no concrete actions that can substantiate their words (theologies).

Hence, I wish to propose a missiological model of praxis, one that will help the Pentecostal church reconcile its theory with its practice. I have borrowed this model from Holland and Heriot (1983). It is known in missiological circles as the 'Pastoral Cycle' or the 'Cycle of Missionary Praxis'. I prefer the latter term. By implementing the cycle of missionary praxis, Pentecostal theologians will begin to be engaged in a 'contextual

Pentecostal theology', thus making the Pentecostal movement a contextual one. By consciously integrating contextual analysis into theology, the Pentecostal movement will be engaging in the cycle of missionary praxis.



In the above diagram one observes a circular relationship between the four dimensions of *insertion, analysis, reflection and planning*. The diagram is representative of engagement in a contextual theology. In a contextual approach, text and context have to be integrated and studied together. There should be a constant 'to and fro' (dialectical) movement between these two poles. This approach also emphasizes the constant interaction between action and constant reflection, since theological insights should arise from and culminate in deeds. Important to this approach is the term "praxis", which is not merely a synonym for the term 'practice', but rather refers to the totality of action and reflection, which are seen as having a dialectical (mutually dependent) relationship to each other.

Maluleke (2002) explains this approach more systematically:

“According to a contextual approach to theology, the first step in doing theology is that of *insertion*. In other words, practical involvement in Christian praxis for the sake of the kingdom of God. The second step is that of *analysis*, which involves the conscious use of analytical tools to unlock the real dynamics that are at work in a particular situation or context. The third step is that of *theological reflection* on the situation (which includes the church) in the light of the Bible and the Christian tradition. This dimension of theological reflection is often regarded as all there is to theology, but a contextual approach argues that it is only one dimension of a fourfold process of theologising, which can easily become distorted if it is not studied in relation to the other three dimensions of this circular process. The fourth step is that of *planning for further action*, which completes the circle since it leads back to insertion. This final element underlines the view of contextual theology that theology should never be reduced to abstract theories which are of no earthly use to the people of God, as they worship and struggle to be faithful to the gospel in daily life.”

This cycle of missionary praxis can help reconcile Pentecostal theory with its practices. It will enable the Pentecostal church to study its mission and activities in a more critical way.

By way of example, allow me to use the subject of race relationships and racism (as discussed in chapter four). Let me briefly use the cycle of missionary praxis, as I undertake a study of race relationship and racism in a given community.

Insertion

Pentecostal theologians need to begin with the community, where racism is not merely an academically studied discipline, but rather a reality of everyday life. They need to identify what is happening in the local community concerning race relationships (this should be done without a cultural bias). They ought to observe the tension, violence, intimidation and exploitation that racism causes; make a genuine effort to learn from all the communities involved, and view the problems from their perspective; understand how people of different colors and cultures perceive the problem of racism.

Social Analysis

There is a distinct difference in perception and reality. An effort needs to be made to find out if these perceptions of the problem of racism are real or not. After finding out what these communities perceive, it is now time to use all analytical tools available to unlock the *real* dynamics that are at work in a particular situation or context. This can be done by exploring the historical dimensions of each society as well as its social, economic and political structures, and its cultural make-up. This analysis should be aimed at discovering both the visible and invisible factors of racism that is shaping society as they manifest themselves in the local context. This step should be done from the perspective of people's experience of identification. From this act of social analysis, reliable information should be gathered to help in the next step of the cycle.

Theological Reflection

Theological reflection must occur on the situation of racism in the light of the Bible and the Christian tradition. All the information collected concerning racism and its effect must be explained. In this stage biblical faith is brought to bear on all the concrete realities of life. The Bible and the Christian tradition must be used to find out the cause of racism, the effects of racism and the Biblical solution for the problem. Each local Christian community must see its situation from a biblical perspective. A thorough investigation of terms like repentance, forgiveness, confession, reconciliation and restitution must be undertaken in the context of each community that is effected by racism. A formulation of theological responses, carried out by both the local community and Pentecostal theologians within the context of each community/situation, is needed.

Pastoral Planning

This step should complete the circle since it leads back to insertion. Based on social analysis and biblical passages, this step leads to a deeper quality of identification and action. Concrete models of reconciliation should now be put in place. Concrete action like that of seminars on reconciliation, forgiveness and repentance should lead communities forward, towards forgiveness and acceptance of people of other colors and cultures. United prayer/worship celebrations, reciprocal relationships and restoration of dignity and respect should be the aim of this type of planning.

A word of caution should be added concerning this cycle. While the cycle might be perceived as moving in a clockwise direction, this does not imply a chronological relationship between these elements. It is not compulsory to move from insertion to

analysis to reflection to planning, in a mechanical way. Maluleke (2002) explains that there is constant interaction between all four elements, as indicated by the straight arrows on the diagram. The four dimensions are not only four 'stages of a process' but also 'four aspects of a system'.

My challenge to the Pentecostal church is to be engaged in a contextual Pentecostal theology. The cycle of mission praxis offers an excellent tool for this exercise. By using this tool, the Pentecostal church will not fall again into the trap of producing a theology that is reduced to abstract theories, but rather it will produce a contextual theology that finds relevance within the South African community/context.

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INTERVIEWS.

Owing to the sensitivity of the nature of the questions and subjects discussed, leaders who were interviewed did not wish to have their names recorded.

Subjects like that of *Racism, Political involvement* and *The status of women in church and society* are still very sensitive issues in the Pentecostal church, and Pastors do not yet feel free to talk about these subjects.

It is only for this reason that no names are mentioned and no viewpoints are ceded to any particular person/s.

ADDENDUM 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS

- a) Name of Pastor: _____
- b) Position held in the church: _____
- c) Name of denomination: _____

1. What factors and convictions motivate Pentecostals for missions?
List in order of importance.
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in mission?
3. To what extent did the Pentecostal church embrace the policy of apartheid?
Give any examples to justify your answer
4. To what extent did the Pentecostal church fight against the policies of apartheid?
Give examples to justify your answers.
5. Is apartheid still practiced in the Pentecostal church, and if so, to what extent is it practiced?
How does this affect the image of the Pentecostal church?
6. How far is the Pentecostal church on the road to repentance, reconstruction and reconciliation?
Can you suggest some steps that the church needs to take?
7. What role does politics play within the Pentecostal church?
8. Can a Pentecostal pastor hold a political office, if not why?
9. What is the role of women in the Pentecostal church?
10. Can women be ordained; if yes, how long does this process take, and is the process different for males?
11. What is the Pentecostal church's attitude towards other religions? Choose one of the following:
a) Isolation b) Hostility c) Competition d) Partnership.
12. Can the attitude chosen be justified?
13. Will Pentecostals ever work towards 'partnership', if not why not?