

**LUTHERANS AND PENTECOSTALS IN MISSION AMONGST THE
VHAVENDA - A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN MISSIONARY METHODS**

by

NDWAMBI LAWRENCE KHOROMMBI

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of**

Doctor of Theology

in the subject Missiology

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: PROF NICO SMITH

October 2001

DECLARATION

I declare that **Lutherans and Pentecostals in mission amongst the Vhavenda -- a comparative study in missionary methods** is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....
NL KHOROMBI

.....
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to

Dean Randitsheni and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Devhula-Leboa Circuit) for granting me access to their archives

Members of the Magidi and Thohoyandou congregations who answered the questionnaire for their co-operation and input

The Apostolic Faith Mission church in Venda for their assistance

The White Apostolic Faith Mission church in Louis Trichardt for access to their archives

The Charis Missionary Church for sponsoring my studies

The elders of the Charis Missionary Church for their understanding, support and encouragement

My wife, Sophy Ndivhuweni, for her love, patience and support

Professor Nico Smith, my promoter, for his keen interest and encouragement. I found in him a man for all seasons, an outstanding academic, who encouraged me to think, a friend who was always willing to help, and a father to me in my needs.

Mrs lauma Cooper for editing and critically reading the manuscript

Above all, the Lord for all His grace and without Whom neither I nor this thesis would have been conceived.

SYNOPSIS

The thesis of this study is that both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches can grow at a time when only the Pentecostal churches have grown. The stagnation that has occurred in many “mainline” churches need not be allowed to increase or continue. In Venda (Northern Province) both the Lutherans and the Pentecostals have enjoyed visible growth.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, the choice of the study area, the objectives of the study, and the typology, methodology and relevance of the study. Chapter 2 looks at the history and socio-economic background of the Vhavenda. Chapter 3 describes traditional Vhavenda beliefs and rituals. The Vhavenda world-view is different from that of the West but closer to that of the East and the Bible. Chapter 4 concentrates on missionary Christianity in Venda and briefly discusses the missionary methods adopted by the Berlin Missionary Society. Chapter 5 discusses the coming of Pentecostalism to South Africa and Venda. Chapter 6 examines how the Lutherans and the Apostolic Faith Mission church conducted their mission during the “maturation of Apartheid” in Venda. Major events in the collision between apartheid and the Vhavenda are highlighted. Chapter 7 discusses the unfinished work of the church in Venda. Chapter 8 examines the challenge for Christian mission in the twenty-first century.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

- Vhavenda** Refers to the people living in Venda in the Northern Province of South Africa, usually referred to as the Muvenda, which is the singular of Vhavenda. The language spoken is Luvenda.
- Nwali** God of the earth in Venda Traditional Religion. He is responsible for all life (every living thing) on earth.
- Vhuloi** What Westerners describe as witchcraft. In Venda it refers to invisible, mystical forces and powers in the universe. Certain people have the knowledge and ability to control and use these forces or powers.
- Missionary
Christianity** Refers to Christianity as brought to Africa by missionaries from the northern world.
- Kairos Document** A document produced by a group of pastors and theologians from Soweto, supported by other Christian leaders, both Black and White.
- Evangelical
Witness** A critique of evangelical theology by evangelicals.
- Relevant Pentecostal
Witness** A document initiated by Pentecostal leaders, taking a stand against Apartheid.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AIC	African Independent Church
ATC	African Traditional Religion
BMS	Berlin Missionary Society
BPC	Bantu Presbyterian Church
CCACZ	Christian Catholic Church in Zion
CCC	Calvary Christian Church
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church. The biggest Afrikaans-speaking church in South Africa. The three main Afrikaans-speaking churches are “Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk”, the “Gereformeerde Kerk” and The “Hervormde Kerk”. These names are all translated as Reformed in English.
ECO	Evangelical Christian Outreach
ELCSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
IFCC	International Fellowship of Christian Churches
NCLF	New Covenant Life Fellowship
LCWE	Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization
LMS	London Missionary Society
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
UDF	United Democratic Front
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Synopsis	iv
Glossary of terms used in the study	v
List of abbreviations used in the study	vi

CHAPTER 1	Page
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN MISSION	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 Creation	2
1.1.2 Liberation of Israel	2
1.1.3 Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word	3
1.1.4 The Church	5
1.1.5 The Holy Spirit	5
1.2 Choice of the study area	8
1.3 Objectives of the study	9
1.4 Typology	9
1.4.1 Evangelical churches	9
1.4.2 A Pentecostal typology	13
1.5 Methodology	23
1.5.1 Interviews	23
1.5.2 Literature review	24
1.6 Reliability of the data	24
1.6.1 Personal experience	24
1.7 Relevance of the study	27
1.8. Summary	28

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

2.1	Early history	29
2.2	Crossing the Limpopo	31
2.3	The Vhavenda kingdom	33
2.4	Early collision with the Trekkers	35
2.5	Political development in Venda, 1930s and 1940s	38
2.6	Population and tribal distribution in Zoutpansberg	40
2.7	Socio-political organisation	42
2.8	Kinship organisation	44
2.9	Economic factors	47
2.9.1	Land	48
2.9.2	Livestock and agricultural products	50
2.9.3	Migratory labour	52

CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND RITUALS

3.1	Introduction	54
3.2	The High God: Nwali	54
3.3	The spirit world	59
3.3.1	Types of spirits	60
3.3.2	What spirits do to people	66
3.4	Witches (<i>vhaloi</i>) and witchcraft (<i>vhuloi</i>)	68
3.5	Summary	71

CHAPTER 4

MISSIONARY CHRISTIANITY IN VENDA

4.1	Missionary Christianity	72
4.1.1	Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment	72
4.1.2	Crusade against idolatry	74
4.1.3	The perishing heathens	75
4.1.4	Providence and responsibility	78
4.1.5	Commerce and Christianity	77
4.1.6	The Gospel and culture	78
4.1.7	Mission and the future	79
4.1.8	Christianity and the Vhavenda culture	80
4.1.9	The gospel of civilization	80
4.1.10	Missionaries and race	82
4.2	The Lutheran mission in Venda	85
4.2.1	Colonialism and mission	85
4.2.2	The beginning of the Berlin Missionary Society	90
4.2.3	Establishment of mission stations	91
4.3	Salient features of the Lutheran mission in Venda	105
4.3.1	The Lutheran creed	105
4.3.2	Racism	107
4.3.3	<i>Volkschristianisierung</i> ideas about nation, language and history	107
4.3.4	The importance of the <i>Volk's</i> language	109
4.3.5	Elementary education	111
4.3.6	Missionary attitude towards Blacks	112
4.3.7	Authoritarianism and paternalism	113
4.4	The contribution of the Lutheran Church in Venda	114
4.4.1	Education	114
4.4.2	Religion: Christianisation	115

4.4.3	Mission stations	116
4.4.4	Racism	116
4.4.5	Black history	117
4.4.6	Cultural contribution	117
4.4.7	The value of the vernacular in African Christianity	117
4.4.8	The message	118
4.4.9	Health services	122

CHAPTER 5

THE COMING OF PENTECOSTALISM TO SOUTH AFRICA

5.1	Origin of Pentecostalism	125
5.2	The beginning of Zionism and the Pentecostal faith in South Africa	128
5.2.1	The forerunners of the Pentecostal faith in South Africa	128
5.2.2	The arrival of Pentecostal missionaries	129
5.2.3	The significance of the Black origin of Pentecostalism	131
5.2.4	Seymour and Parham	132
5.3	Introduction of Pentecostalism in Venda	133
5.3.1	Missionary policy of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)	139
5.3.2	Condition of African work	142
5.3.3	The introduction of the AFM in Venda	150
5.4	Understanding the Pentecostal view of mission strategy	154
5.4.1	Pentecostal theology and mission strategy	154
5.4.2	The type of ministry adopted by AFM in Venda	160
5.5	Pentecostals and the Evangelical theology of the <i>status quo</i>	181
5.6	The Anti-Pentecostal Debate	183

CHAPTER 6

THE MATURATION OF APARTHEID AND VENDA

6.1	Venda in the 1970s and 1980s	188
-----	------------------------------	-----

6.1.1	Political development	188
6.1.2	Education and youth culture	190
6.1.3	Further political developments	194
6.1.4	Youth and student organizations	195
6.1.5	Comrades and witches	202
6.2	ELCSA's mission in the 1980s and 1990s	206
6.2.1	Devhula-Leboa Circuit Evangelisation	208
6.2.2	Power evangelism	209
6.2.3	Diaconal work	210
6.3	AFM ministry	210
6.3.1	Power evangelism	212
6.3.2	Indigenous church principles	212
6.4	Trend of beliefs in both Pentecostal and Non-Pentecostal church members	213

CHAPTER 7

THE UNFINISHED WORK: THE CHURCH'S PUBLIC ROLE

7.1	Introduction	217
7.1.1	Extraversion	218
7.1.2	African Christianity	223
7.2	Africa's new Christianity?	226
7.3	Civil society	227
7.4	The Christian faith and the African world-view	231

CHAPTER 8

THE CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION

8.1	Introduction	236
8.2	Church growth	239
8.3	Understanding mission fields of the twenty-first century	240

8.4	Missionary approach of the church in Africa in the twenty-first century	241
8.5	Contexts of mission	242
8.6	Process of mission	242
8.7	Language and culture of mission	243
8.8	Mission practice	243
8.9	Solidarity in mission	244
8.10	Conclusion	245
	 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 247-256

CHAPTER 1

Towards an understanding of Christian mission

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Christian Mission in Venda was pioneered by Western missionary societies. Christian missionary societies came into Africa in the eighteenth century. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was the earliest church to start a mission station in Venda, but the Berlin Missionary Society succeeded in penetrating different communities in Venda from the 1870s.

German nationalism, with its strong concept of *volk* or nation, was a feature of German colonization and missionary efforts. German colonialism became a reality in 1885. It exploded onto the scene over a few years and disappeared thereafter (Bosch 1993:308). During that time the slogan was “only German missionaries for German colonies” (Bosch 1993:308). That this policy was not always adhered to is demonstrated by the presence of German missionaries in Venda, which was not a German colony.

The missionary endeavours of other groups have left an indelible mark in Venda. For example, the Donald Fraser Hospital testifies to the Presbyterian mission; Siloam Hospital to the Reformed Church mission, and Tshilidzini Hospital to the Dutch Reformed Church mission. Missionaries likewise started different schools in Venda. The foreign or so-called Christian names that Vhavenda have are also a legacy of Western missionary Christianity.

What then is “mission”? To answer this question, we shall look at salient features of “mission” in the Bible. Before embarking on a study of the Christian mission in Venda, it is necessary to first substantiate the convictions about the Christian mission in Scripture underlying this research. It is not really possible to undertake a project of this nature without indicating the assumptions on mission operating when surveying and evaluating the course of mission by Lutherans and Pentecostals in Venda.

1.1.1 Creation

The creation of heaven and earth is the work of God's love. God's creation may truly be regarded as the beginning of the *missio Dei*, the mission of God (Nazir-Ali 1991:9). The order in the universe reflects the divine word; the power and the glory of God so evident in creation may be attributed to the work of the Spirit. The church has understood Genesis 1, Psalm 33, Proverbs 8 and other passages as referring to the relation of the different Persons of the Trinity to creation. New Testament passages such as John 1, Romans and Hebrews relate the Persons of the Trinity to creation and to renewal; human freedom becomes an integral part of God's purpose for His creation. However, this freedom is hardly exercised in accordance with God's will. Individuals have become corrupt and, in turn, have corrupted even the structures established in the beginning to bring salvation and prosperity to family, government and business. This leaves such institutions needing the same redemption and restoration as individuals. This human predicament has equally embraced the natural environment. *Missio Dei*, therefore, should not only be seen as God bringing His love to His Creation, but as a way of bringing redemption, restoration, and the development of human beings and of the world at large (Nazir-Ali 1991:10).

God is portrayed as a great communicator who continues to make His will known in the Bible. Through inspiration, God conveys His divine word to people. The Word, like the Spirit, is associated with creation (Ps 33.6). The God who calls is also the God who saves. This is shown by the calling and election of Israel. "An oppressed, exploited and alienated ethnic minority is called out by God as a beacon of liberation" (Nazir-Ali 1991:11).

1.1.2 Liberation of Israel

Not only Israel was liberated during the exodus. A mixed crowd, possibly of other exploited and enslaved peoples, joined them (Ex 12:38; Num 11:4). The exodus proved to be liberating not only for the people of Israel, but also for all those who joined them. According to Nazir-Ali (1991:12), "It is entirely understandable that groups of people, such as dissenting Christians in Post-Reformation Europe, enslaved Black people in the United States and now the poor in Latin America should seek to understand their situation and to

organise their struggle for freedom in categories drawn from the biblical account of the exodus of Israel. The exodus trajectory will continue to illuminate and to be illuminated by the experience of subjugated peoples as they reflect on their reading of the Bible.”

The arrival and settlement of Israel in Canaan brought about a socio-political transformation that brought socio-political equality under a theocracy. The manna stopped and God expected them to eat from the produce of the land (Josh 5:12).

In the Bible Yahweh is also seen as working in the histories of the peoples and nations around Israel and Judah. For example, Cyrus is perceived as God’s anointed (Is 45:1); God’s compassion over Nineveh (Jon 4:11); God’s dealing with Job in possibly Arabia (the land of Uz) (Job 1:1); the declaration that God’s name is great among the nations (Mal 1:11), and “Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal 2:10).

1.1.3 Jesus Christ: the Incarnate Word

The divine work assumed humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Scripture and Christian tradition are full of evidence that it is God Himself who addresses us in Jesus (Heb 1:1-2).

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, upheld that belief in the Incarnation is the touchstone of orthodoxy: “There is one God who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word, coming forth from silence, who in all things did the good pleasure of Him that sent Him” (Nazir-Ali 1991:17). Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria who championed Christian orthodoxy against Arianism, stated:

For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, he was not far from it before, for no part of Creation had ever been without Him who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now he entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in his love and self revealing to us (Nazir-Ali 1991:17).

Both Ignatius and Athanasius associate the Incarnate Word with the Reason, Mind or Wisdom of God and thus imply and confirm the eternity of the Word. Both also refer to Jesus as God (Nazir-Ali 1991:17). The Incarnation, according to Nazir-Ali (1991:17) is unquestionably the climax of the *missio Dei*. God has Himself come to rescue human beings from the corruption of their own making. Nazir-Ali (1991:17) takes this as “divine risk-taking, exposure and vulnerability in its most breath-taking, yet entirely typical, manifestation of God”.

God has revealed Himself as our mighty redeemer in circumstances of extreme weakness and helplessness. The sufferings of Jesus Christ take centre stage, both with Ignatius and Athanasius. In trying to show clearly the humanity of Jesus, Ignatius is at pains to emphasize the full humanity of Christ, “who is of the race of David, the child of Mary, who was truly born, and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, before the eyes of those on earth, and those under the earth” (Nazir-Ali 1991:18).

Nazir-Ali quotes Ignatius and Athanasius extensively to show that their writings are a clear recognition that Christ “died for us” to put an end to death, to deal with sin and to inaugurate a new humanity through his resurrection from the dead. The two doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement are closely related. The one does not make sense without the other. God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ to deal with human sin and so to make peace with all human beings. Every aspect of Christ’s mission – His healing, His teaching, His ministry of reconciliation – has significance. Through the cross Jesus succeeds in undoing what Adam brought into the world.

In Christ, God not only reveals Himself but also makes provision for a new beginning of a new humanity to take place. God takes upon Himself the fidelity abandoned by Adam and his race. In doing so, He brings upon Himself the hatred and rejection of a sinful humanity and yet at the same time sets forth for humanity a new way of obedience and righteousness. God’s atonement has a clear-cut objective: a new or renewed creation. Jesus has brought about this new humanity through the suffering on the cross. There is a subjective element as well. God calls humanity to follow Jesus, to be His disciples (Matt 16:25). In following Him who is the way, we become identified with and incorporated into a new humanity, which He

has perfected and approved by raising Him from the dead (Rom 6:3-11). God has chosen Christ from eternity to be the only mediator between God and human beings (1 Tim 2:5).

By our personal or corporate decision, we turn away from our solidarity with Satan and the old sinful humanity to being disciples of Christ and being incorporated into Him (Eph 1:4-10).

1.1.4 The Church

As disciples of Christ, we constitute Christ's church. Jesus came to build the church as he says to Peter, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). The church should never be seen as a by-product of the delayed Parousia, but as the eschatological community, brought into being by Jesus Himself as the herald and embodiment of the new age with all its imperfections. This new community had a staggering beginning especially in the traumatic events of Good Friday. The coming of the Holy Spirit mysteriously empowered the apostles and led to a dramatic zeal of evangelism, which saw the church grow from strength to strength.

1.1.5 The Holy Spirit

The coming of the Holy Spirit is associated with the birth of the church and the beginning of a worldwide mission (Acts 1:8). In John's gospel, Jesus refers to the ascension when he speaks to Mary Magdalene in the garden after his resurrection, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (Jn 20:17). The disciples, gathered together in a house on the evening of the first day of the week, received the Holy Spirit when Jesus appeared to them, breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit..." (Jn 20:19-23). According to Luke (Acts 1:3-12), after his suffering [and resurrection] Jesus showed himself alive to the apostles, appearing to them for forty days and speaking about the kingdom, before being lifted up (ascending) on Mount Olivet while they were watching. They returned to Jerusalem and on the day of Pentecost, when they were all

together, they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Receiving the Holy Spirit empowered them for mission. Nazir-Ali (1991:20) describes John's account as a more private event and Luke's as more public.

Both John and Luke agree that the gift of the Spirit is reconstitutive of the new community and that the new community is missionary in nature. According to the Pentecostal missiologist, Hodges (Hedlund 1992:7), "Every local church has the commission to share in the work of the Great Commission. The missionary mandate is central to the purposes of God for His people". Hedlund (1992:8) maintains that the Pentecostal movement understood this dynamic and has been actively missionary from its inception. As Hodges (1977:30) puts it, "The church is a partaker of the fulfilling of God's purposes upon the earth through the heralding of the good news of the Gospel and the establishing of Christ's church among the nations."

According to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit would give power to the disciples and as a result they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The work of the apostles became the works of the Holy Spirit. Their healing ministry, their instruction to the churches, and their defence and justification of Christianity (apologetics) were the result of the Spirit's indwelling. The Holy Spirit became the common medium of all their activities and fellowship.

According to Hedlund (1992:8), it is in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a missionary spirit that a line is drawn between the Pentecostals and other groupings of the Christian faith. Pentecostal theology is derived from the Book of the Acts. Pomerville (1985:99) states that Pentecostalism announces that the essence of Christianity is not merely intellectual commitment to a written revelation, but a practical experience of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It concerns a dynamic encounter with God, the Holy Spirit in connection with the written revelation. Pentecostal mission strategy is theological as well as practical; its basis is not only charismatic activity but Trinitarian theology. The Pentecostal perspective recognizes both the kingdom motif, which focuses on social issues (eg, the poor), and the role of the church in the continuing charismatic activity of the Holy Spirit. Pomerville (1985:99) asserts that "the church is not only enabled for its mission by the Spirit, but is the

medium through which the triune God has chosen to manifest His power in redemptive mission” and is “the incarnational measures for bringing the reign of God to individuals and to societies”.

The church embraces the people whom God redeems. Several aspects of church growth have a bearing here. The believers are to mature in Christ. This is a spiritual or qualitative growth. Congregations must develop structures suited to their environments and needs. The type of growth here is organic. These congregations should increase through the induction of new believers. This brings about expansion or quantitative growth. New cells of the redeemed are to be formed to bring about extension growth; church planting must cross footings, enter new cultures and societies, and penetrate alien ideologies. Near-neighbour evangelism as well as cross-cultural outreach are necessary missionary aspects of the church.

The Holy Spirit who drove Jesus into the wilderness (Mk 1:12) now drives the church into wider and wider spheres of presence and mission (Acts 10:19-20, 44-48; 16: 6-10). It is clear from the New Testament that the church grows by breaking down the barriers of race, religion, gender and class (Eph 2:11-22; Col 3:11; Gal 3:28).

Mission should be defined against this background. God, being the creator of the universe and all that is, visible and invisible, does not abandon His creation even when that creation chooses to live without Him. Because of His loving kindness, He brought a means for reconciliation between the estranged creation and Himself. Through the cross the dividing wall is broken. The church is charged with this message of restoring humanity to its wholeness. In doing this, the church is conceived as doing mission. Mission is therefore participating in God’s liberating activity in the world. It will always be contextual and therefore leads to a new understanding of the good news of Jesus of Nazareth. Mission should be seen as movement from God to the world and the church as an instrument of that mission.

There is church because there is mission, not vice versa (Bosch 1993:390). Mugambi (1996:235) contends that the church, by definition, is a missionary institution and if it does

not engage in mission, this omission is because of theological, managerial, pastoral or other weakness.

1.2 CHOICE OF THE STUDY AREA

The Vhavenda, found mainly in Venda, are one of the minority African tribes of South Africa. The first missionaries to arrive where the Vhavenda were living called the area Vendaland (Nemudzivhadi 1984:2). This is incorrect, because the word "Venda" denotes a place, so it is like saying "England-land". Before Whites came to the area, Venda was bigger than it finally became, especially after the Mphephu War of 1899. Most of its fertile area was taken by White farmers. When Pretoria decided to give it independence on 13 September 1979, the total area was 6 500 km² (2 500 square miles) (Benso 1979:13). It was then totally surrounded by the Republic of South Africa.

The Zoutpansberg mountain range runs through the central and southern part of Venda in an east-westerly direction, dividing the country into three distinct geographical regions: the Limpopo valley, Zoutpansberg and the Pietersburg highland (Benso 1979:14). After the 1994 democratic election, Venda was again incorporated into South Africa.

This study examines how mission work was done by the Lutherans and the Pentecostals in Venda before and after it was declared independent, as well as how mission is being carried out in the new Venda, which forms part of the Northern Province. New local churches have mushroomed throughout the area.

According to the 1996 census, the total population of South Africa was 40,6 million, with 12,1% living in the Northern Province, where Venda is situated. The Venda-speaking people constitute 15,5% of the Northern Province, and 2,2% of the whole of South Africa (RSA Census 1996:11).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate various aspects of mission in the context of mission by the Lutherans and the Pentecostals. Accordingly, the study aimed to

- investigate strategies of church growth
- contribute to a Post-Western missionary critique that will help to discard the biases present at the height of the missionary period, including a denominational sense of superiority, negative attitude towards African culture and a condescending attitude towards Pentecostalism
- show the dynamic influence that Western missionary Christianity had on the Venda culture
- contextualise “missionary” Christianity in Venda
- show how the apartheid policy affected mission work
- discover the public role that the evangelicals can play in a new South Africa
- examine ways of achieving a multidimensional transforming *missio Dei*, as reflected in the mission by Lutherans and Pentecostals
 - to meet the new mission challenges facing the South African church after the dismantling of apartheid
 - to overcome the spirit of apathy resulting from the harm done by missionary Christianity

1.4 TYPOLOGY

1.4.1 Evangelical churches

It is necessary to understand what is meant by “evangelical Christianity”. Keeley (1982:467) defines an evangelical as one in whose Christian faith great importance is given to the teaching of the Bible as the basis for belief and to personal conversion as a necessity for true Christianity. Evangelicalism is in continuity with the Reformation, but more directly related to the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many evangelicals are in independent congregations and many are in mainline denominations. Allan (1989:2) concurs with Keeley, pointing out that “evangelical” means a return to basics, a desire to be faithful to the spirit of the New Testament. The evangelicals today would claim that their ideas are

no exotic, esoteric development of Christian theology, but simply represent the original, orthodox faith of the church, which, according to them, is as valid today as it has ever been. It is important to note that not all would agree on how personal conversion comes about and also that there is only one source for belief.

The evangelical churches include all the mainline Protestant churches like the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Dutch Reformed, the Reformed, the Methodists and the Anglicans, but equally include the Pentecostal groups. For the purpose of this study, the Lutheran and Pentecostal groups are treated separately.

A brief consideration of non-Pentecostal evangelicals serves as a starting point. In Venda, the Lutheran, the Dutch Reformed and the Reformed Churches are among the biggest evangelical churches.

Much of this study examined the growth of the Lutheran Church in Venda. German missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society came to Venda in 1872 and founded a mission station at Maungani. Their work grew so much that today the Lutheran Church is still one of the biggest churches in Venda.

1.4.1.1 The Reformed Church

The Reformed Church started in Rustenburg in 1859 with the arrival of Dirk Postma in South Africa (Pillay & Hofmeyr 1991:263).

At the end of 1860, the church spread to the two Boer Republics - the Transvaal and the Orange Free State - and the British colony, Natal. At first its evangelical zeal was not very fervent. In 1910 missionaries were sent to work among the Black people in Pretoria and Pietersburg. The Reverend P Bos was sent to Pietersburg (Lipahadzi 1999:1) and was helped by Jojakim Matlakala, who was at Uniondale in Pietersburg. Bos died from malaria in 1923.

He was followed by Hugo du Plessis, who moved to Louis Trichardt and started the Siloam Hospital in Venda in 1940. Matlakala was his assistant and became the first ordained Black

pastor in 1947 (Liphadzi 1999:2). By 1936 several mission schools had been founded. The first congregation in Venda was established at Siloam in 1942 under the leadership of Rev JF Erasmus, with 163 members.

In 1944 another mission station was started at De Hoop by Erasmus (Liphadzi 1999:2). An important development in 1961 was the agreement entered into by the Reformed White South African churches with some of the Reformed churches in Holland to do mission work jointly in Venda. Nine churches resulted from this combined venture. Because of the political doctrine of apartheid, with these churches' support and understanding of the doctrine, these churches were arranged on social segregational levels. The Zoutpansberg and the Midlands Synods were started solely for Black churches (Liphadzi 1999:2). The Coloured people had their own Suidland Synod. Another important development in the Reformed Church in Venda was the beginning of the school of theology in 1993. In accordance with apartheid, it was separated from the two schools of the same church at Hammanskraal and at Potchefstroom. The school was closed in 1995 after an agreement was reached that there was to be one school of theology of the Reformed Church at Potchefstroom in South Africa (Liphadzi 1999:2).

1.4.1.2 The Dutch Reformed Church

On Sunday, 24 May 1863, the Reverend Alexander Mackidd, pioneer missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the Zoutpansberg, preached for the first time to about three hundred Blacks at the kraal of Michael Buys (Crafford 1992:73). The Zoutpansberg referred to, has always been part of Venda. Buys was given land to live on by Mpefu, the Venda King (Khorommbi 1996:20). The three hundred Blacks mentioned by Crafford were Vhavenda and possibly a few Vhapedi.

In January 1864, Mackidd moved to the farm of Goedgedacht and started to build up the mission station. A school was established, attended mainly by the children and friends of Buys. In 1865, Stephanus Hofmeyr arrived to assist the Reverend Mackidd. Mackidd died in 1866 (Crafford 1992:73) and Hofmeyr assumed responsibility for the missionary work. The wars of Makhado, the Vhavenda king, forced Hofmeyr to abandon Goedgedacht and

continue his work at Bethesda with renewed vigour. The Dutch Reformed Church did tremendous work in 1956 when one of their missionaries, Dr Nico Smith, founded Tshilidzini Mission, which has grown into a big hospital and an effective church next to the hospital.

1.4.1.3 The Reformed Presbyterian Church and the coming of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in Venda

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland merged and formed the Free Church of Scotland (Ravhudzulo 1992:10). Its declared missionary policy was to establish self-governing and self-supporting churches. This understanding of the church's structure led to the establishment of the Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC) in 1923 in South Africa (Ravhudzulo 1992:10).

Ravhudzulo (1992:11) maintains that the church was a secessionist church because of its name and was the natural development of the hundred years of South African missionary work of the two Scottish churches, which merged to form the United Free Church of Scotland.

In 1929 the remaining mission stations of the United Free Church of Scotland were handed over to the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Educational and medical institutions were also handed over to the Bantu Presbyterian Church under the supervision of the Foreign Mission Council.

Ravhudzulo (1992:12-13) is of the opinion that from the beginning the Bantu Presbyterian Church was a Black church dominated by White missionaries. This situation brought socio-political discontentment among the Black members of the church, which finally led it to change its name to the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Reformed Presbyterian Church continued with the same missionary policy of establishing self-governing and self-supporting mission stations, churches, and educational and medical institutions.

Ravhudzulo (1992:15) states that in 1896 the Synod of Kaffraria in the Cape Colony recommended that the Church move forward and commence new work somewhere in the north. This led to the founding of the Donhill mission station in 1896 in the Mamabolo area and the Gouldville mission station in 1905 in Venda. Reverend DA McDonald was charged with the responsibility of starting the mission station.

Within a short period Gouldville became the springboard from which missionaries, evangelists, teachers and others spread the gospel to far-reaching areas such as Muhuyu, Makonde, Vondwe, Mufulwi, Murangoni, Thengwe, Ngwenani, Gundani, Ngulumbi, Mukumbani, Piet Booi, Phiphidi and Madzivhañombe.

The church also contributed much to the educational development of the area by starting schools and the Donald Fraser Hospital in 1933. Schools were started in areas such as Gundani, Mufulwi, Shakadza, Mafukani, Matangari and Tshaulu (Ravhudzulo 1992:103). The Donald Fraser Hospital became the springboard for the mission clinics and hospitals and by 1938, there were five clinics in Venda (Ravhudzulo 1992:107).

1.4.2 A Pentecostal typology

1.4.2.1 Terms used in this study

In this study, the term “Pentecostal” is taken from the Pentecost experience (Acts 2:4), where the believers in Jerusalem were all “filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability”. This experience of being “filled” with the Spirit or “baptized” with the Holy Spirit distinguishes Pentecostal church members from other church members. Burger (Anderson 1992:15) states that “Pentecostal theology cannot be separated from the Pentecostal experience” and adds that the “uniqueness, dynamics and power of the Pentecostal movement above all is centered in the Pentecostal experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit ... The Pentecostal movement believes that glossolalia (the gift of tongues) is the initial sign of filling with the Spirit.”

De Wet (1989:11) also notes that "Pentecostalism teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a specific experience after regeneration, which is accompanied by the speaking in supernatural tongues". This "tongue doctrine" excludes what Anderson (1992:15) calls "African Pentecostal-type churches". Anderson (1992:16) nevertheless contends that African Churches which emphasize the centrality of the Holy Spirit in faith and (especially) in practice should be termed Pentecostal.

In this study, the term "Pentecostal" includes Zion-type churches and all other churches that emphasize the practical work of the Holy Spirit in the day-to-day activities of the church. But in order to do justice to the many groupings in the Pentecostal family, the study adopted Anderson's terminology of those other Pentecostals that do not fit the classical Pentecostal definition. Pentecostals not considered part of classical Pentecostalism are defined as "Pentecostal-type churches". This reference does not mean that there are no marked differences between them and classical Pentecostals. They have a distinct character in liturgy, healing practices and particularly in their different approach to the African traditional religion.

Churches who originated at the beginning of the twentieth century and generally subscribe to the initial theory that "speaking in tongues" is evidence of the "baptism in the Spirit" are often referred to as "classical Pentecostals". These churches include the Assemblies of God, which is the biggest classical Pentecostal church among Blacks in South Africa (Anderson 1992:17), the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church. In South Africa, these churches (with the exception of the Assemblies of God) have "mission churches" or "daughter churches" modeled after them. The emphasis of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence that one has been baptized with the Holy Spirit is losing ground in many of the classical Pentecostal Churches.

The "daughter" churches are usually Black churches while the "mother" churches are White. This arises from the perception in South Africa that "mission" is directed from the Whites to the Blacks. It also reflects financial strengths: Black churches are financially weak whereas their White counterparts are strong. They are sometimes called Pentecostal mission churches (Anderson 1992:17). Generally, these churches have White involvement in their

administration. The word “mission” has a stigma of paternalism about it in this context, which is still an unsolved problem in these churches. Most of the Pentecostal “mission churches” are still further away from integration than other “mission churches”. The term “mission church” was chosen for want of a better term rather than “mainline churches” because it would suggest that other churches are “sideline” churches.

The Pentecostal stream includes “neo-Pentecostals”, which refers to churches and movements that have their origins in the charismatic movement of the 1970s, including the so-called “non-denominational” churches. Some of the biggest of these churches in South Africa are found in the International Fellowship of Christian Churches (IFCC) and in the Northern and Mpumalanga Provinces, the New Covenant Life Fellowship (NCLF). These churches also emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit in the church with supernatural manifestations including “speaking in tongues” although they are sometimes less dogmatic on the “initial evidence” theory. In South Africa there are several large predominantly White churches in this category together with a number of growing Black churches, which Anderson (1992:17) prefers to call “independent Pentecostal churches”. In this, Anderson is following Hollenweger, who uses the term “independent African Pentecostal churches” to refer to those indigenous churches in South Africa which Sundkler (1961:48ff) calls Zion-type churches.

Having been involved in these three categories of Pentecostalism in South Africa, the researcher maintains that although they could be traced to a common origin, there are serious differences that should prevent their being viewed just as Pentecostal churches. Actually, a common genesis of these different categories of Pentecostalism in South Africa need not lead or encourage grouping these churches together, any more than the common genesis of Islam, Christianity and Judaism should encourage a grouping of these faiths under the same umbrella. In other words, since all Christian faith deals with the Bible there will obviously be similarities; but in a scientific study, these superficial similarities need not be seen as a basis for grouping them together. In fact, classical Pentecostals do not identify with indigenous Pentecostal-type churches at all. Even the Pentecostal-type churches do not identify themselves with the classical Pentecostals.

Members of Pentecostal mission churches and African neo-Pentecostal churches do not usually consider members of the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches to be born again, although they use this expression to describe themselves. Besides the fact that the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches do not use “born again” terminology in many ways, they are not clear about the hour God has planned to save humanity through faith in Jesus, although this is changing in some of the Pentecostal-type churches. When members of the Pentecostal-type churches join the classical Pentecostal churches, they explain that they “got saved or born again” or joined because their former churches do not “preach salvation”. They generally do not refer to themselves as *bazalwane* (the saved ones) and usually know who are to be referred to by this term. According to Anderson (1992:19), *bazalwane* was originally a Zulu word which identified a group of people who felt some identification with each other because of a common goal or task: people doing something together. It is a strong word that describes the strong sense of community that exists among African people. Today the word is used to refer to brothers and sisters in Christ with whom they feel a particular family relationship. In Venda the common expression is *who tshidzwaho* (“the saved ones”).

In this study the term “African Pentecostal” is used rather widely to include the Pentecostal mission churches (eg, the Apostolic Faith Mission), the newly Independent African Pentecostal churches (eg, the Charis Missionary Church, Calvary Christian Church, Kingdom Life Centre) and the “indigenous Pentecostal-type churches” (including the Zionist, Zionist-type or Apostolic churches). The use of the words “independent” and “indigenous” does cause some difficulty for it is not always clear what characteristics determine whether a given church is truly “independent” or “indigenous”.

To a certain extent, all the Pentecostal churches could be called “indigenous” as they demonstrate a distinctively African expression of Christianity. The word “indigenous” is used here to refer to churches that could conceivably be placed firmly on the “African” side of an imaginary African/Western cultural axis. The other two categories of African Pentecostalism would generally be nearer to the Western side of the axis or somewhere in the middle. What have been referred to as “the Independent African Pentecostal churches”

are churches that have accepted a rather international standard of Pentecostal charismatic worship. Table 1.1 illustrates Non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal evangelical churches.

Table 1.1 Non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal evangelical churches

EVANGELICAL CHURCHES	
NON-PENTECOSTAL	PENTECOSTAL
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa	↓ Classical Pentecostal Mission churches e.g. Apostolic Faith Mission Assemblies of God Full Gospel
Reformed Presbyterian Church	↓ Indigenous Pentecostal-type churches e.g. Zion Christian Church Revelation Church
Anglican Church	↓ Independent Pentecostal churches (charismatic churches) e.g. Charis Missionary Church Calvary Christian Church

Others may be termed “Western” in that their liturgy, beliefs and structure are Western oriented. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which all three types of African Pentecostal churches have adopted noticeably African styles of worship that have met the holistic needs of Africans more substantially than the so-called mission churches. They are here called “African” churches because of the leadership and membership constituency.

1.4.2.2 Charismatic churches

“Charismatic churches” are of more recent origin. Most of these churches arose in the 1980s. Some of them in Venda are in fellowship with some of the burgeoning new Pentecostal or charismatic church organizations, such as the International Fellowship of Christian Churches and the Christian Ministries Network formed in 1990. In Venda there is another cooperating body known as the New Covenant Life Fellowship (NCLF).

These churches may be regarded as Pentecostal as they too emphasize the supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit in the church. They are mostly small independent churches although some are rapidly growing. Since these churches hold crusades and encourage their members to witness for Christ, a growing number of people join them. There is a strong Western influence in these churches both in liturgy and leadership. Some leading American popular evangelists and “prosperity message” figures, such as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn, are promoted in books and audio and video cassettes. Some of the leaders have been trained by Ray McCauley of the Rhema Bible Church.

Some, including the Charis Missionary Church under N L Khorommbi, Kingdom Life Center Church under T S Muligwe, Calvary Christian Church under A M Masakona, Deliverance Christian Center Church under F Netshisaulu, Living Gospel World Outreach Church under P Ragimana, a former leader of the Apostolic Faith Mission, and Christian Worship Center Church under Pastor Madzinge, have become sizeable churches. These churches are growing fast. Indications are that a significant number of their members come from missionary and classical Pentecostal churches. In teaching and preaching, these churches are similar to the Pentecostal mission churches with slight differences in stress on issues such as prosperity, health and healing. Perhaps the major difference is in church government, which is entirely Black, and has a more local, autonomous nature than the Pentecostal mission churches.

Several of these churches are inclined to reject what is perceived as denominationalism, although there is a possibility of some of them adopting another form of central organisation since most of the founders are “mission oriented”. The congregations are generally led by charismatic younger men who are respected for their preaching and their leadership abilities, and relatively well educated. Most of the leaders once led interdenominational ministries.

For example, NL Khorommbi, the researcher, led Evangelical Christian Outreach, Pastor AM Masakona led Interdenominational Christian Crusaders and TS Muligwe led Divine Life Ministry. All three these leaders were once high school teachers. The members of these churches are mainly younger, more prosperous and better-educated families than in Pentecostal mission churches. Like the Pentecostal mission churches, the members speak of their “salvation experience”, practise baptism by immersion, allow speaking in tongues and have regular prayer for divine healing. They feel more at home being called Bible-believing Christians than being called Pentecostal Christians.

These churches are opposed to several traditional African religious practices, such as the use of alcohol and tobacco, polygamy, the use of symbolic objects, and ancestral worship. It is yet to be seen whether the negative attitude towards these practices is a colonial hangover or an authentic scriptural understanding.

Although these churches only started recently, some of them have put up big and attractive church buildings like the Kingdom Life Center Church and Calvary Christian Church. At the time of writing, Charis Missionary Church was in the process of completing a three-thousand seater auditorium.

1.4.2.3 African Initiated Churches

Paradoxically, African Initiated Churches (AIC) were initiated by a few white people from the USA. The founders were devotees of “Zion City”, Illinois, founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896 (Ngubane 1984:79). The church was called “The Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion”. Daniel Bryant, an “overseer” of this church, baptised the first group of twenty-seven African Zionists on May 8, 1904 in Johannesburg by triune immersions (Sundkler 1961:48). According to Ngubane (1984:80), Edgar Mahon, a member of the Salvation Army, and Petrus Louis le Roux, a DRC minister of Wakkerstroom, were instrumental in founding the Zionist movement among Africans in Natal, the Orange Free State and Lesotho in the 1900s. Ngubane (1984:80) goes on to state that Mahon introduced the use of drums in the South African Zionist liturgies. The movement finally passed into the hands of Africans themselves with rapid proliferation.

Some important African leaders of the Zionist movement included Daniel Nkonyana, Paul Mabilitsa, Elias Mahlangu, Titus Msibi and Ignatius Lekganyane. When these people left Johannesburg for their homes they took their faith with them and founded churches. Although the beginnings of the African Zionist movement have some links with Dowie's movement and White members, the actual African Zionist groups of churches have always been founded by Africans themselves since then. They are led by charismatic "prophet-leaders" who receive revelation in "voices", visions and dreams (Ngubane 1985:80). Their overall vision includes things pertaining to Sunday church attendance as well as education and development.

Into this type fall what Sundkler (1961:48-49) calls Zionist-type churches. These are African churches that are not connected with European churches administratively. They are connected with the Classical Pentecostal movement, however, although over the years they have moved further away from this movement in several respects and may not be regarded as "Pentecostal" without further qualification. They too emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Most members of these churches do not understand the Holy Spirit in a scriptural sense. Anderson (1992:31) believes that these churches have probably adapted themselves to and focused on the traditional African world-view more substantially than any other church groupings. According to Anderson (1992:31), they have contributed uniquely to the formation of a credible African Christianity.

This is by far the biggest grouping of African churches in southern Africa. Their biggest church is the Zion Christian Church, led by Lekganyane, which has a sizeable number of congregations in Venda. The Zion Apostolic Church of Archbishop Miriri is highly influential in the Nzhelele area and has many branches in Zimbabwe. In the Ha-Tshivhase area, the Zion City of the late Bishop Marole has its headquarters at Ngwenani. Apart from these Zionist churches, there are many other Zion churches throughout Venda.

One of the greatest contributions of the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches to theology and Christianity is the process of original and genuine contextualisation (inculturation) of their faith and theology. This comes out more strongly in the context of dialogue and confrontation which they create between the Christian message and traditional religions. It is reflected in sermons and rituals. Traditional rituals are given different meanings. These same churches are authentically Africanized.

According to Ngubane (1984:81), "Africanization implies taking into consideration the culture of the people of Africa, their thought patterns, their beliefs and their entire world-view when creating structures and forms of the church." Africanization involves dynamic originality and tireless creativity on the part of the leaders, especially the founders.

Zionist churches began with and, as a whole, still have leaders of this calibre, such as Isaiah Shembe, Ignatius Lekganyane and George Khambule. At present there appear to be serious syncretistic weaknesses in some of these churches that need to be dealt with.

The use of the word "African" in this study also has its own problems, for in South Africa there are White people who consider themselves Africans. Therefore, the word "Black" is sometimes used to avoid confusion.

1.4.2.4 The difference between Apostolic and Zionist

The name "Zion" originated in the USA. Dowie's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion later dropped the word "Apostolic" from its name, possibly to distance itself from the Apostolic churches in the new Pentecostal movement. According to Anderson (1992:22), it was the common name used at that time to designate the Pentecostal churches.

In South Africa, the difference between "Zionist" and "Apostolic" is still blurred. The word "Apostolic" does not exclusively mean "Pentecostal" for it is sometimes used by churches that are not Pentecostal at all.

The Apostolic churches are found mainly in townships and the Zionists mainly in rural areas. The Zionists are considered to be more conservative in their beliefs than more liberal Apostolics. This study did not take these differences into consideration.

1.4.2.5 The growth of indigenous churches in Venda

Since Sundkler wrote *Bantu prophets* in 1961, the African Independent Church (AIC) movement has mushroomed in South Africa, particularly the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches. Table 1.2 depicts the growth of the AIC movement graphically.

Table 1.2 The growth of the AIC movement

Year	Number of churches
1913	30
1939	600
1955	1286
1960	2200
1970	3000

Source: West (1975:2)

West (1975:2) states that “according to census reports in 1960, 21,2% of the Black population belonged to these churches”. According to Anderson (1992:23), by 1990 this figure had reached an estimated 6 000 and the 1991 official census report indicated that at least 46% of all Black South Africans were members of indigenous churches. Anderson (1992:24) points out that about 41% of the total Black population belong to African Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches – which represents at least ten million Black people.

It also seems that the growth of African Pentecostalism and the AIC movement has been at the expense of the mission churches, some of which have declined drastically in

membership. According to Anderson (1992:24), in 1960 the proportion of people belonging to mission churches was estimated at around 70%. In 1970 this had dropped to 60% and by 1991 to 33%. This study found that the situation in Venda is different.

This study wished to find the reasons for the growth of some mission churches amidst the growth of Pentecostal churches.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The study used the concrete research method, consisting of interviewing and a literature review of legislature (of central and homeland government) and magazines. The researcher interviewed church leaders, members and groups and studied legislature and magazines. Information was collected through open-ended, informal interviews. This method proved appropriate as it allowed for meaningful communication and encouraged interviewees to speak openly on issues. Because of this approach, different respondents gave different answers to the same questions. A questionnaire was compiled in English and then translated into Venda. A broad spectrum of members was interviewed in order to make the survey representative.

1.5.1 Interviews

(1) Church members

Two hundred members of both the Lutheran Church and the Apostolic Faith Mission Church were interviewed.

(2) Church leaders

Church leaders interviewed included the Dean of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, circuit council members of the same church, the district Pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission and committee members. Most of these leaders are decision makers in the church. The interviews were formal, less standardized and more interactive.

(3) Groups

Children, youth, mothers and fathers were interviewed. These interviews helped the researcher to draw conclusions.

1.5.2 Literature review

(1) Central and homeland government legislature

The greater part of this study revolved around the role of state legislature in creating apartheid. The study used these racial segregation laws to show how the apartheid policy led to tension even amongst members of the same church denomination.

(2) Journals and archival material

The researcher studied journals, magazines and archival material for information.

1.6 RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

The information used in this study is considered reliable because it came from primary sources, official documents and literature used to supplement and validate each other. Few respondents contradicted themselves in answering the questions. Information from church leaders was taken as highly reliable. The interviews were conducted between January and May 2000.

1.6.1 Personal experience

The researcher's parents practised African traditional religion (ATR). The researcher was a high school teacher in Venda for seven years, and a Christian leader in an interdenominational organisation for sixteen years. He was also a pastor of the Assemblies of God for six years and has been a Senior Pastor of the Charis Missionary Church for over ten years. The study also wished to show what the researcher has been involved with in his pastoral ministry.

During the researcher's early childhood, his mother would sometimes perform the *malombo* rituals in his presence. At that early stage, this meant very little to him. She sometimes went to *u tshina malombo* (to perform *malombo* rituals) where new inmates were initiated. At such times, his mother would not speak to him in Tshivenda, but in a language he did not understand.

At an early age the researcher started visiting a nearby Apostolic church in Zion, inquiring what steps he should follow to become a Christian. This led to his conversion and subsequent baptism in 1967. He started to witness for Christ at home and at school where he joined the Student Christian Movement.

When he went to Pietersburg, he became a member of the True Church of God, founded by Pastor Ramalebana, a man of great spiritual gifts whose ministry changed thousands of people. There the researcher witnessed demons being cast out of people. After completing his studies to become a teacher, he went to stay with his brother in Louis Trichardt, where the True Church of God did not have a branch. He then decided to join the Assemblies of God Church in 1972 and at the same time joined an interdenominational Christian ministry, known as the Bold Evangelical Christian Organization, which finally became known as Evangelical Christian Outreach (ECO).

Through this ministry he was deeply involved in crusade work from 1973. The crusades were organized in and outside of South Africa. His wife, Sophy Khorommbi, was the first woman pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) for ten years from 1981. The researcher was ordained a part-time pastor of the Assemblies of God in 1984. Their family had these two churches in one place. His understanding of the ELCSA came through experience and reading, which gave him deep roots both in the so-called "mainline" and Pentecostal churches. His roots also account for the presuppositions evident in this study.

For over twenty years he has been involved in interdenominational itinerant ministry. He has seen thousands of people turning to God and starting their journey as Christians, and also

witnessed some who committed their lives to God going back to a life of darkness. He did not know why people committed themselves to God and decided to go back. He has been intrigued with the churches in their area that tended to grow.

Life in the mission of God has not been easy for the researcher. He was twice detained without trial for a period of ninety days. At times his faith was at its lowest ebb, when he grappled with the problems of the oppression of the Black people in South Africa. Sometimes he felt that if the Black people could not get their justice on earth, he should do his utmost to make them "reach" heaven.

He has equally been left speechless when witnessing certain churches failing to keep the momentum of growth. This could perhaps be traced to a shocking reality of the marginalization of mission in their thinking and theological training.

As Scherer (1996:72) puts it,

It has always struck me that the teaching of Missions had no clearly defined or adequate place in the theological curriculum of mainline seminaries. Whatever place it once had seems to have further diminished in recent years. This lack of status contrasts sharply with the central place of mission in the New Testament and in the church.

It seems to me that the dominant Western model of theological education is one derived in the late period of Christian community and geared towards the maintenance of existing congregations and received traditions. Issues such as evangelism, conversion, church growth, witness to people of other faiths and mission in unity seem largely foreign to it.

Churches that train their members in evangelistic work, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal, tend to grow as is revealed in this study.

In 1989 the researcher felt led to start the Charis Missionary Church after resigning from the Assemblies of God. The church falls within the group that Anderson (1992:2) calls Independent African Pentecostal Churches. This is an unfortunate description, but

Anderson's term is used for lack of a better one. The researcher prefers to call such churches New Testament-type local churches in that they try to copy the New Testament Church Structure.

1.7 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

With the demise of apartheid, new problems have surfaced. Almost all churches are faced with the issue of unity and reconciliation as they begin a long journey to be the church that the Christian faith intended in the beginning. In view of this, workable strategies of evangelizing emerge for adoption. The Pentecostal versus non-Pentecostal gulf seems to be bridged by the charismatic movement.

As more Pentecostal preachers are involved in academic study, they begin to show strong signs of accommodating those who do not practice the Christian faith the way they do.

This study looked at the ways followed by various churches - both mainstream and Pentecostal - in order to finish the work of mission in areas like Venda. A study like this is also important because after the dismantling of apartheid, the church in South Africa finds herself at a crossroads. There is an increasing spirit of apathy in mission because of what traditional mission did. This spirit seems to affect some of the so-called established churches whereas the Pentecostal church seems to be growing in leaps and bounds.

New religious questions are being asked even from quarters that were formerly silent, such as:

Why is Christianity anti (against) African culture?

What do we do with African religious thought that was never accommodated in Christianity though it can enrich Western Christianity?

Are African rituals the only evil rituals in the world?

In an attempt to answer these inculturational questions, a new missionary approach must be forged, which is what this study hopes to do. In the final analysis it is that the gulf between the Western mission church and Pentecostal church will be bridged. Similarly, the bridge between classical Pentecostals and indigenous Pentecostals would benefit from the same cooperation and understanding.

There is a dire need for dialogue between these branches of Christianity. This study hopes to lay the foundation for that. It is further hoped that through this study, it will become easier for Christians to engage in dialogue with members of other faiths to create interfaith coexistence.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed Christian mission in Venda, salient features of mission in the Bible, the choice of the study area and objectives of the study. A Pentecostal typology, the methodology used, the researcher's personal experience, and the relevance of the study were also covered.

Chapter 2 covers the history and socio-economic background of Venda. Chapter 3 deals with traditional Vhavenda beliefs and rituals. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss salient features of missionary Christianity in Venda and Pentecostalism in South Africa and its mission in Venda, respectively. Major events in the collision between apartheid and the Vhavenda are highlighted in chapter 6 while chapter 7 discusses the challenges of the unfinished mission work in Venda. Chapter 8 presents conclusions and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER 2

History and socio-economic background

2.1 EARLY HISTORY

Up to the 1960s White South African historians and people had a distorted view of the Venda region's early history and believed that Black, Bantu-speaking, iron-working farmers were fairly recent immigrants into southern Africa. Blacks were said to have come into the region from the North in successive, conquering waves of migration. It was further claimed that these Bantu migrations first crossed the Limpopo River between 1500 and 1600 AD, and arrived not earlier than 1000 AD (Shillington 1987:7). According to Shillington (1987:8), the notion that Blacks had no ancient roots in the country suited South Africa's Whites, who used it to justify their own position of economic and political domination.

Shillington (1987:8) points out that since the 1970s, however, "archaeological research and the use of carbon-dating have totally overturned this distorted and biased version of South African history. It is now known that Southern Africa has a far more ancient and more complex Iron Age history, stretching back to the first few centuries of the Christian era." He also mentions that two pottery heads recovered at Lydenburg date back to about 500 AD.

Nemudzivhadi (1984:2) traces the history of the Vhavenda to Ethiopia where, in the first century of the Christian era, Mambiri became king and instituted the monarchy. Mambiri should not be confused with Nembire, the Shona king who, according to Daneel (1971:17), is supposed to have migrated from the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika early in the fourteenth century. According to Stayt (1960:9), the Vhavenda are a composite people who have gradually been welded together into a compact whole in the locality which they now occupy. Stayt (1960:9) goes on to say that the tribe is composed of sibs and groups of unrelated peoples who, in varying circumstances and localities, have come into contact with a small homogenous nucleus and become identified with it. The ethnological origin of this nucleus is uncertain. In spite of some cultural differences among the various sibs, the Vhavenda tribe

today considers itself a single unit with Luvenda as their language. Stayt (1960:9) concurs with Lestrade that the Luvenda language is important in tracing the origin of the Vhavenda:

The phonetics and phonology of Tshivenda finds its nearest equivalent in the Karanga group, and it is quite sharply distinguished from the Sotho and Thonga groups in this regard, though from the former far more than the latter. This is of interest, since the ethnic influence of the Thonga upon the Venda tribe seems to be the least of all the influences brought to bear on them, except in very recent times. With regard to grammatical structure, Tshivenda is sharply marked off from the Sotho and Thonga groups, and as sharply reminiscent of the Karanga group and of the groups to the North-East of the latter, namely the whole of the East African group of Bantu languages, of which Swahili in its grammatical structure at least, and in such of its vocabulary as is not arabicised, may be cited as an example.

This seems to indicate that the Vhavenda came into the region where they are today from the northern part.

After the death of Mambiri, his son and successor Tovera (Thovhela) journeyed down to Kenya in 800 AD, that is 266 years before William the Conqueror crossed the North Sea to England where he laid the foundations of the English monarchy. Both Mudau (Van Warmelo 1940:10) and Mutenda (Makhado 1980:8) support the idea of the northern origin of the Vhavenda.

Mutenda (Makhado 1980:8) states dogmatically that the Vhavenda originated from Vhukalanga (Mashonaland) at a place called Ha-Mambo. *Mambo* in Karanga means "king" (Daneel 1971:19). From the North the Vhavenda and the Vhalembe moved southward and at times left some of their people along the way like the Vhalembe ethnic group and some Vhavenda who are presently still found in Zimbabwe.

According to Marole (Makhado 1980:10), the Vhavenda trekked from Congo, "the region of the great lakes, dense forest and larger rivers".

Linguistic similarities, then, strongly support the idea that the Vhavenda emigrated from the North (Makhado 1980:11). Luvenda shows striking similarities with languages spoken in central Africa like Shona, Chichewa, Chinsenga, Luganda, Swahili, Tshiluba and Bemba (Makhado 1980:12-13).

According to Khorommbi (1996:17),

Although there is no consensus on the exact place of their settlement before moving towards the south, Nemudzivhadi's account seems to be more reliable than the others. The Lembas, who are part of the Vhavenda, have Semitic characteristics which presuppose a strong contact between them and the Jewish people. Such a contact could only have happened in the North Eastern African countries like Ethiopia and Egypt.

Bullock (1936:399) is of the opinion that the typical Muvenda has a type of feature that is by no means Negroid; many remind one of the East and some of the Semite.

2.2 CROSSING THE LIMPOPO

The Vhavenda may have crossed the Limpopo River during the Late Iron Age (1000-1800 AD). The settlements of Bambandyanalo and Mapungubwe had already started early in the Iron Age. These were trading communities who traded with ivory and gold. According to Shillington (1987:14), their main imports were glass and shell beads from all along the coast, brightly coloured cotton cloth from India and fine pottery from Persia and China. As the rulers of Bambandyanalo and Mapungubwe were also to establish control over gold mining, ivory hunting and long-distance trade, they were able to extend their authority over a wide area. But who were these inhabitants? Shillington (1987:17) believes that the Vhavenda may also have had links with the later stages of the Mapungubwe settlement. They, too, were smelters and exporters of copper and ivory. The Mapungubwe community reached the peak of its prosperity between about 1100 and 1300 AD. Thereafter its importance as a trading centre declined in favour of Great Zimbabwe. During this period the

Vhavenda crossed the Limpopo River. Stayt (1960:12) maintains that at that time they were under the leadership of Dambanyika:

It is probable that the Makwinde sib, often called Vha-ila-mbudzi (those who taboo the goat) were led across the Limpopo under a certain Vele Lambeu or Dimbanyika. G. Wessmann, of the Native Affairs Department of Sibasa, found some evidence that this man was descended from Mambo, who was reputed to be the ruler of both the Bakaranga and Bavenda in Southern Rhodesia at this time, before the migration.

Dambanyika's father, Ntindime, ruled when they were at Dananombe. After his death his son refused to be installed as king and was consequently referred to as Dambanyika (Nemudzivhadi 1984:2). The death of Ntindime spelled disaster to the Mbire Rozwi Empire as the empire disintegrated after his death.

Dambanyika crossed into Lwandali south of the Limpopo River (Nemudzivhadi 1984:2). Canerly (1994:27) supports this, stating that "Venda legends and recent archaeological findings tell us that in the late 1600's or early 1700's the Vhasenzi, under the leadership of their king, Velelambeu (Dambanyika) crossed the Limpopo River and settled in the village of Tshiendeulu".

The land into which Dambanyika moved was inhabited by Vhangona, Vhambedzi, Vhanyai, Vhanzhelele, Vhatavhatsindi and Vhalea. This became known as Venda (Nemudzivhadi 1984:2). Stayt (1960:11) points out that very little is known of the Vhangona. They appear to have been concentrated in the eastern portion of the country. However, many places that were associated with the Vhangona in the past are feared and avoided by the Vhavenda. There is a strong belief that building where the Vhangona once built could be disastrous as the Vhangona ancestral spirits may still have a sinister influence over their old territories. Consequently, the Vhangona served as Vhavenda mediums or priests. Finally, the Vhangona adopted Vhavenda sib names in place of their own and their women married the Vhavenda so that, except in connection with their religious rites, they completely lost their identity and their ethnic consciousness and became absorbed into the body of the Vhavenda tribe (Stayt

1960:11).

Canerly (1994:27) states that Dambanyika managed to unite various Vhavenda clans and groups living in the Zoutpansberg. They became part of a state similar in structure to that of the Great Zimbabwe and Khami Empire of Zimbabwe.

The death of Dambanyika is a disputed topic. Some say that Phophi, his eldest son was responsible for his death and that after killing him, he declared himself Thovhele, boasting that although the elephant was dead, he, the head, still remained and called himself Thohoyandou (head of the Elephant) (Stayt 1960:12). Others hold that while hunting, Dambanyika found himself trapped deep inside a cave as he was following some rabbits. A rock fell and blocked the mouth of the cave, and could not be removed. Subsequently, his son removed the headquarters and went to Dzata to built another capital. Dzata is regarded as the ancestral home of the Vhavenda in the Zoutpansberg. Since Dambanyika's ordeal happened at Tshiendeulu from that day it was taboo for any chief of the Makwinda sib to look on the face of the descendants of Netshiendeulu. In addition, *tshiendeulu* became the traditional name for the ancestral graveyards.

2.3 THE VHAVENDA KINGDOM

Thohoyandou is the great legendary hero of the Vhavenda. Many stories are told about him. Canerly (1994:27-28) is of the opinion that Thohoyandou was Dambanyika's nephew and under him the political boundaries were extended further south to Pietersburg with the Olifants River in the south-east and the Sand River in the west between 1761 and 1790. He extended and improved Dzata. According to Stayt (1960:15), "the golden age of the Bavenda was probably during the reign of Thohoyandou, but at his death jealousy and family feuds disintegrated through internecine warfare, which continued intermittently until the country was brought under European domination". Nemudzivhadi (1985:19) maintains that Thohoyandou's influence extended as far as the Zambezi River in the north.

Canerly (1994:28) states that Thohoyandou was not Velelambeu's son but a nephew and a favourite of Velelambeu. Dambanyika's son and successor was Masindi and he ruled only

for a short time after the death of his father. Tshisevhe, his younger brother, followed him but ruled for an equally short period because he also met a sudden death. His son, Ragavheli could not assume the throne because he was still too young. He was put under the guardianship of his uncle Phophi, who became regent until the young prince could assume leadership. The young chief was murdered before ascending to the throne, however, and it began to be rumoured that Phophi was responsible for the death of all the rulers after Dambanyika.

According to Canerly (1994:29), Phophi changed his name to Thohoyandou at this time. Fearing for his life, Thohoyandou fled in the middle of the night with his people and the sacred drum. They were never seen again (Khorommbi 1996:19). Stayt (1960:13) disagrees, however, and maintains that Thohoyandou's great power provoked the jealousy of his brothers. He set out one day with a small following, possibly on a hunting trip, but probably on an expedition to solicit support against his hostile brothers. He crossed the Nzhelele River and was never seen again. After his departure it was rumoured that he would return and restore the Vhavenda to their former greatness. The kingdom was divided into three ruling houses: Mpofo Ramabulana, Ragavheli and Mphaphuli (Khorommbi 1996:19).

It is not clear who assumed the throne after Thohoyandou's mysterious departure. Shortly after the birth of his son, Munzhedzi, in 1790, Thohoyandou's nephew, Mpofo, assumed leadership of the group which moved to Tshirululuni under the Songozwi Mountain (Canerly 1994:29). Thohoyandou's other nephews, Raluswielo (Tshivhase) and Ravhura, the younger brother of Ragavheli, established themselves at Depeni (Dopeni) and Makonde, respectively (Canerly 1994:29). Mphaphuli settled at Tshitomboni.

Up to that time the Vhavenda had only met other African nations, but this was to change when they met the White Afrikaners (Voortrekkers). These White Afrikaners had a different world-view, a different culture and economy, and an attitude of mind that belittled any way of life different from their own.

2.4 EARLY COLLISION WITH THE TREKKERS

During Mpofo's reign the sons of a hunter and trekker, Coenraad du Buys of the Cape Province, were the first non-Africans to settle in Zoutpansberg. They appeared before Mpofo in 1820 and Mpofo gave them land to live on and "many girls from the chief's kraal" (Canerly 1994:30). As to how the girls were "divided" among these sons, nothing is recorded. Their father, Coenraad, travelled to parts unknown. Some believed he moved to Mozambique where he settled and remarried (Canerly 1994:30). His sons settled at Tshikhovhokhovho at a place that King Mpofo allotted to them.

Mpofo died in 1829 and was buried at Tshirululuni above LouisTrichardt. His sons were Muzhedzi Rasithu Velelambeu, Ramabulana, Ramavhoya and Madzhie (Canerly 1994:30). When Muzhedzi succeeded to the throne peacefully in 1830, his mother was in favour of Ramavhoya's succession. Ramavhoya found himself at loggerheads with his own brother, Muzhedzi, because of his mother (Canerly 1994:31).

Eventually civil strife broke out and they fought against one another with spears and arrows and axes, until the older brother was beaten and driven out by his younger brother. Muzhedzi went away and stayed with the Vhatlokwa at Rida. While there, he was nicknamed "Ramabulana" (the rain bringer). It was during a drought and the Vhatlokwas asked him, "Where is the rain?" to which he replied, "The rain will come." Within a few days heavy rain came, so he was nicknamed the "rain bringer" (Canerly 1994:31).

Zoutpansberg itself was the scene of international trade. It was the meeting place of ancient trade routes; the Inhambane routes from the southeast to Beja and from Lorenzo Marques (Maputo). Canerly (1994:31) indicates that "although life in this frontier society was far removed from European settlement, the trading of metals and hunting of wildlife for the portage of ivory and animal skins to the Indian Ocean or the Cape Colony and on to international markets, constituted a portion of the wealth accumulated by the Thovhele of the Venda before the arrival of the first settlers". Because of this, Chief Mmamugudubi, a Vhatlokwa chief, led a team of hunters into the Zoutpansberg area in 1835 at a time of

suspicion and uncertainty. Ramavhoya slew the chief. The scattered members of the hunting team fled to Ramabulana and urged him to fight for the throne in revenge for what Ramavhoya did to their chief (Canerly 1994:32).

In the same period, Trichardt, Van Rensburg and Potgieter, Voortrekker leaders, appeared looking for a way to the great ocean in the east. They were accompanied by Bushmen whom they had captured and made slaves (Dicke 1941:82). “That some of these wild Bush people who were taken along against their will ran away, is not surprising, that some stayed on, is (Dicke 1941:83). Those who followed the Voortrekkers over the Vaal River found themselves among strange tribes of Africans and deserting became both difficult and dangerous. They had few means of securing food or defending themselves against wild animals or the Africans. The Voortrekker leaders took their weapons away from them. So even the deserters had to keep following their masters or remain near their camps to pick up scraps of meat and entrails left behind by hunters. Some got eaten by lions. The slaves were equally ill-treated by both Trichardt and Pretorius (Dicke 1941:83).

It was this group of people whom Ramabulana finally asked for help against his younger brother, Ramavhoya. Consequently Ramavhoya was strangled when Ramabulana went out to meet the Voortrekkers. As compensation, Ramabulana decided to grant a portion of his land to Trichardt and Van Rensburg, “knowing nothing of the differences between White and African concepts of land ownership and tenure” (Canerly 1994:33). This was to cause untold misery, which led to the outbreak of war between the Boers and the Vhavenda.

The trading centre was formally renamed Schoemansdal in 1848. For some twenty years Zoutpansberg–Schoemansdal dominated trade in ivory, the one great export item of the Transvaal prior to the discovery of gold (Canerly 1994:34). The Boers came with their own laws, their guns and horses, their strange religion, their women and children. Ramabulana saw that his own land was being taken away from him, when he considered “the annual division of homesteads – (worked by) hundreds of Africans ... in a system of tribute labour” (Canerly 1994:35). His title of *thovhele* was taken away and he was dubbed a “chief”. According to Möller-Malan (Canerly 1994:35), “indeed, the Soutpansberg Colony itself was experienced by Africans as a raiding state, exercising hegemony over them through annual

tribute levies and meeting obduracy with destructive forays, funded out of the attendant plunder ... which engaged itself in the plunder of nature herself as of man.

The coming of Joao Albasini in 1849 with Boers from Lydenburg, accompanied by four hundred warriors, mainly Shangaans, compounded these problems (Canerly 1994:36). The Shangaans came to the Transvaal as a result of the wars of succession "between the sons of Soshangane, Msila and Mawewe and gathered themselves around Joao Albasini who promoted himself to be their chief" (Harries 1989:84). "Knopnose location" was delineated in recognition of services rendered to the state by Albasini's government auxiliaries (Harries 1989:92).

News from the southern areas of the Zoutpansberg was disturbing, for the Buys brothers were raiding kraals and taking booty (Canerly 1994:37). During this time Ramabulana's eldest son, Davhana, was arrested and accused of cattle theft by the Boers. Ramabulana, fearing what might happen, managed to escape at night and finally removed himself and several of his Ndumi to Nengwekhulu, where they hid. When he died in 1850, the throne was taken by Davhana, who did not reign for long because of Makhado, the younger brother who forced him out, blaming him for murdering his father, Ramabulana (Canerly 1994:47). With the help of Chief Mphaphuli, Davhana was taken by Albasini to Luonde. This resulted in a battle between Albasini and Makhado. From that time Makhado had a negative attitude towards Albasini and the Boers. The Boers, on the other hand, had managed to entrench themselves in Schoemansdal and were hoping to take control of the whole area formally under the jurisdiction of the Vhavenda leaders. The Vhavenda, under Makhado defeated an invading Boer commando and most of the settlers who had recently moved into the area left (Pampallis 1991:12). The Boers who remained paid tribute to African chiefs rather than the Transvaal government (Pampallis 1991:12; Davenport 1977: 146-147).

Later, more Boers started to settle on the borders of Venda and the Transvaal "threatening Venda independence once more" (Pampallis 1991:12). Vhavenda resistance was weakened by disputes between Makhado and two other chiefs, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli. After Makhado's death in 1895, his son Mphephu tried to settle these conflicts to create an alliance of all the Vhavenda but failed. Pampallis (1991:12) states that due partly to the influence of a

German missionary named Beuster of the Berlin Missionary Society, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli refused to cooperate with Mphephu.

When the Boers invaded Venda once more in 1898, Mphephu's forces had to face them alone. Pampallis (1991:13) also states that despite heroic resistance, the Vhavenda were overwhelmed by the superior weapons of the invaders who captured Mphephu's capital. Benso (1979:22) mentions that the ZAR dispatched a force of 3 500 men under General Piet Joubert to force Mphephu to surrender. Joubert was assisted by the Amaswazi, the Vhatsonga and the followers of Tshivhase, Mphaphuli, Sinthumule and Davhana (Davenport 1977:147). This led to Mphephu's defeat, and he then fled across the Limpopo River into the British colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) with a number of his followers. Four years later, at the end of the Anglo-Boer War, Venda was put under the British control (Pampallis 1991:13).

The area was divided into areas falling under the jurisdiction of chiefs or independent headmen. In 1902 and 1903 locations were beacons off by the Location Commission. A police camp was established in Venda at Tshanowa in 1902 and in 1908 it was moved to Miluwani (Sibasa). Venda was divided into three native commissioner areas, Louis Trichardt, Spelonken and Sibasa.

2.5 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN VENDA, 1930s AND 1940s

Rural mobilisation was neglected in South African politics for some time. The South African Communist Party started to seriously look into rural mobilisation in the 1930s and 1940s (Delius 1996:96). In this regard, Alpheus Malivha, a migrant worker from Venda, became prominent in Communist Party circles and the whole country. Malivha was born in 1901 in Nzhelele in Venda and in the early 1930s, while working in a factory in Johannesburg, he enrolled in a Communist Party night school. He joined the party in 1936 and from 1936 to 1950 served on its district committee (Delius 1996:96).

In 1939, along with a number of fellow migrant workers from the Zoutpansberg, Malivha founded the Zoutpansberg Cultural Association (Delius 1996:96). The Communist Party

provided organisational back-up mainly in the form of transport, duplicating leaflets, legal assistance and occasional discussions of tactical issues. The Zoutpansberg Cultural Association was given considerable prominence in the Venda section of the Party newspaper, *Inkululeko*. The Association was considered “Malivha’s baby” and because of logistics the Party allowed Malivha to run it himself (Delius 1996:96).

The Zoutpansberg Cultural Association campaigned against forced conscription and made representations to the State to stop imposing penalties on late tax payers (Delius 1996:96). In response to mounting struggles in the Zoutpansberg, the Association increasingly focused on challenging the controls enforced on communities living on “Trust Land”. In 1941 there was a protest in defiance of land regulations and according to Delius (1996:96), “confronted by mass resistance, Communist Party- linked lawyers and a wartime context, local officials beat a retreat”. These successes helped build a groundswell of support for Malivha and the Association, which in 1943 was renamed the Zoutpansberg Belemi Association.

After their initial successes Malivha and the Zoutpansberg Belemi Association attracted mounting hostility from local police, officials and Whites. The State began to use the courts more effectively. The Zoutpansberg Belemi Association began to experience defeats. Officials intensified their efforts to exploit divisions in communities and to persuade chiefs that the Zoutpansberg Belemi Association was intent on usurping their positions.

The Association gradually began to lose support, which finally led to its inactiveness. According to Delius (1996:97), the Communist Party did not wish to be drawn deeper into a spiralling conflict in North Africa during the Second World War, especially after the Soviet Union became involved in the war. Consequently, by the late 1940s the Zoutpansberg Belemi Association had become a shadow of its former self. Malivha was banned from operating in Venda (Zoutpansberg) and his activities were restricted mainly to Johannesburg. He nonetheless continued to play an influential role, although underground. The activities of the Zoutpansberg Belemi Association politically conscientised many Vhavenda.

The 1930s and 1940s were equally very eventful in Venda’s religious development and a number of Venda publications appeared, including the complete Venda Bible in 1937 by PE

2.6 POPULATION AND TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION IN ZOUTPANSBERG

The name "Zoutpansberg" refers to a range of majestic mountains, the highest of which is 1753 metres. The mountains are so named because of the salt lakes found in the western point (Bulpin 1992:701). The range extends about 130 kilometres from East to West (Maree 1962:38).

The Vhavenda crossed the Limpopo River to come and stay in the present area. For their own protection they built their homes areas not easily accessible to potential attackers. Because of tribal wars the Vhavenda finally divided themselves into three groups. The major group was led by Ramabulana, who, after his death in 1864, was followed by Makhado.

The Vhatsonga or Shangaans, who were concentrated in the east, were the second group. They fled from Chaka and came to stay in the northern part of South Africa. The Boers called them "Knopneuse" because they tattooed their noses (Wesmann 1908:54). One of their leaders was Soshangaan hence the name Shangaans (Shillington 1987:41). According to Maree (1962:38), they called themselves the "Magwamba *en hulle taal* Chigwamba" (... and their language Chigwamba).

The third ethnic group found in the Zoutpansberg area were the Sothos, who also migrated from North Africa. They were found on the western side of the mountains (Maree 1962:38).

The Voortrekkers arrived at this place under the leadership of Trichardt and Van Rensburg (Maree 1962:39). They did not stay long but soon moved further eastwards. Another group arrived under the leadership of Potgieter. They first established the town Andries Ohrigstad in the eastern Transvaal (Maree 1962:39). Because of fighting, Potgieter left this area to go North. His Zoutpansberg "republic" was little more than a hunting settlement (Shillington 1987:66). Local Vhavenda huntsmen were employed to hunt ivory. African porters carried the ivory to Delagoa Bay or travelling traders transported it by wagon to Natal or the Cape Colony.

One of the most controversial characters during this period was Joao Albasini, whose Italian father left him in Delagoa Bay in 1832 (Maree 1962:40). With the coming of the Trekkers he was made or made himself a Magwamba leader (Maree 1962:40). He built a fort east of Schoemansdal. Because of the influence he appeared to be exerting, he was made a district commissioner in 1858. In times of tribal skirmishes people would go to him for protection. He ended up having an army of about 2000 people. Wars between Makhado and other tribes stained his hands with blood. He proved a failure as a governor and was replaced by Van Nispen (Maree 1962:41).

According to Maree (1962:42-44), another controversial figure connected to events in the Zoutpansberg was Coenraad de Buys who was the first White person to settle in the Transvaal after being banned from the Cape Colony. He married black wives, one of whom was Gaika's widow. He organised raids in the Cape. After the death of his wife, Elizabeth, the sister of Mzilikazi, in Venda in 1829, he was never seen again. His daughter, Doris, remained with Rasithuu, one of the Vhavenda chiefs. The De Buys family invited Mackidd and Gonin from the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony as missionaries to the Zoutpansberg.

The Vhavenda and Vhalemba fall outside the greater Nguni and Sotho families. The Vhalemba display distinct cultural and physical characteristics that set them apart. According to Hammond and Sama Yende (1999:5), the Vhalemba of Venda are the lost tribe of Israel, based on genetic testing which, they maintain, proves that members of a tribe in a remote corner of Venda are Jews and could be direct descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Like the Jews, the Vhalemba do not eat pork or pig-like animals, observe Saturday as the Sabbath and do not allow their women to marry into other tribes.

The Vhalemba also claim to have introduced circumcision, a Jewish religious rite, to southern Africa when they arrived here about one thousand years ago after being led out of Judea by a man called Buba. Although no Buba is recorded in Jewish history, some Vhalemba men have been found to have a set of genes distinctive to Jewish priests believed to be descendants of Aaron (Hammond & Yende 1999:5).

Tudov Parfih, Director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, has studied Vhalemba history for ten years. He traces their origin from Leuna in Yemen. The Lembas try to keep the purity of their Judaic practices through the Lemba cultural centre based in Elim (Hammond & Yende 1999:5). The Vhavenda, on the other hand, have strong historical links with the Shona of Zimbabwe and elements of the Sotho language and culture.

The Vhavenda chose the fertile Zoutpansberg Mountains as their place of residence and rarely ventured far south of this region (Maylam 1987:52). For a long time it was commonly believed that the true Vhalemba were Shona immigrants who established themselves over the original non-Venda inhabitants, the Mbedzi and the Ngoni. Archaeological and linguistic studies have altered this view. According to Beach (Maylam 1987:52), "We now know that the basic Venda-speaking people have been present in the Zoutpansberg from very early times, and that they have absorbed a number of groups of Shona immigrants."

Maylam (1987:52) contends that the Ngoni and Mbedzi were descendants of Early Iron Age inhabitants and may have occupied Venda territory for centuries. Maylam also states that the Venda state known as Tovelu existed around the early eighteenth century and before, produced minerals and ivory, and traded with the Shona to the North. Shillington (1987:14, 17) disagrees with Maylam and says the mining carried on in this area was done by the Vhavenda and Vhalemba.

2.7 SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATION

In the tribal areas the local organisation is based on a hierarchy of three interrelated units. The smallest unit of administrative importance is the village (*muvhundu*), which falls under the direct jurisdiction of a *mukoma*. Several villages form a *Kusi*, which falls under an *Nduna*, while the widest grouping, incorporating a number of *zwisi*, is called *shango* (literally, country) under a *Khosi* (king). The chief's territory is divided into different districts (Benso 1979:24).

A *muvhundu* consists of more than ten homesteads and seldom exceeds thirty households.

Familial groupings at the different homestead are composed of elementary families (i.e., a man, his wife and unmarried children) or of complex extended families. The head of the homestead's mother, brother, sister or grandchildren occasionally reside with him. Each *muvhundu* is administered by a *vhamusanda* (headman). Each *muvhundu* is further divided into subdistricts (*zwisi*) under the control of a *mukoma wa nduna*, who is responsible for *mukoma*.

Several villages form *mudi*. This word equally means one family but in this context means a "bigger family". Here the village head, *mukoma wa mudi* is the leader.

The chieftainship is very important in traditional Vhavenda political life. The chief is considered the head of his area, the father of his family and the living representative of the forefathers (Benso 1979:25). Because of this, community life revolves around him and he possesses the highest legislative, executive and judicial power. In olden days the whole religious life of his people also revolved around him. Only the chief may impose taxes on his subordinates or require them to do voluntary work for him. The headmen enjoyed their privileges only through his grace. No subject of his may live in his territory without his consent. This does not mean that the chief has absolute power. Side by side with him are the *makhadzis* (father's sisters) and the *khotsimunenes* (father's brothers). One of his sisters is appointed *khadzi* and one of his brothers, *ndumi*. These two have a say in how he governs the area.

2.8 KINSHIP ORGANISATION

The Vhavenda consist of multiple tribal units, each with its own culture and traditions. The Vhavenda lineage within the tribal political structure is very significant. Chief, ward headman and kraal head, each attains his politically important position through his seniority in the dominant lineage of the tribe, ward or village concerned. Social relations are defined in terms of kinship within the ranks of a single lineage. The Vhavenda are highly communalistic in their day-to-day activities.

Daneel (1971:45) points out that the Vhavenda kinship meets two important requirements:

- (1) It provides a definite pattern of social order in which any two persons closely or remotely related are placed in a position of relative superiority or subordination.
- (2) It regulates the reproduction of unilineal and exogamous kin groups.

It is important to note this structure since certain Pentecostal groupings also follow it. In Vhavenda society there are several distinct but overlapping groupings. The widest grouping is that of the patriarchal clan (*lushaka*) whose members are scattered over a vast territory, surpassing chieftain boundaries. This clan rarely functions as a corporate unit. What binds these people is that they have a common *mutupo* (clan name) and one or more *madzina* (clan names), which enable all members to claim a common patrilineal descent, even if the ancestral links have been forgotten. Agnatic kinship is therefore presupposed between all people with the same *mutupo* and *muano*, with the exogamous marriage laws automatically pertaining to the group as a whole, whatever their territorial distribution. Children and grandchildren of the patriarchal ancestry form a strong unit. A certain amount of local unity is maintained by the male members of this group.

The females are generally scattered through marriage. *Makhadzi* (father's sister) holds an authoritative position in relation to her brother's children, on the assumption that her marriage cattle enabled her brother to marry. This custom is equally observed by the Shonas (Daneel 1971:47). This position manifests itself perhaps even more clearly in her relation to her brother's wife. As *makhadzi wa vhana* (children's aunt), she is the recognized head of her brother's wife. She is the arbitrator in family feuds, offers the leading rituals, and officiates in the religious life of the family. On the death of her brother, she is the one charged with the responsibility of supervising the distribution of property and estate of the deceased. Her mystical power is thought to be very strong, consequently nobody will make her angry. She is even called *muhalivho*, denoting the power invested to her. Her brother's wife is called *muvhuye – o vhuياهو nga kholomo dzo malaho makhadzi* (the one who came because of the cattle that married makhadzi). The *nndu* (house) is an organic unit founded on a common male or female ancestor. Apart from *nndu* (house), another distinction is made at the village level to denote a group of kindred. This group is called *muta/mashaka* (family

or kindred) and includes any combination of relatives, such as a man, his wife or wives, and children, together with maternal, uterine and affinal kin who live in the same or neighbouring village. This is essentially a non-political unit, fused on grounds of near kinship and residence, a group that shares common things together.

The Vhavenda are highly communalistic. Within the patrilineage each member's status is determined by two factors: sex and seniority. The reciprocal term between brother and sister is *khaladzi* (sister); *mukomana* means either a man's elder brother or a woman's elder sister. Male members of the first and second ascending generations are fathers (*khotsimuhulu*) addressed like one's own father, and referred to as *khotsimuhulu* or *khotsimunene* if they are respectively older or younger than one's father. Grandfathers and grandmothers are all *makhulu*. The first descending generation is called *nwana* (plural: *vhana*) but a descriptive distinction is made between *mutukana* (boy) and *musidzana* (girl). The second descending generation are all grandchildren, *vhaduhulu* (singular: *muduhulu*) regardless of sex. There is therefore no quality in rank.

Emotionally, the relation between grandchild and grandfather or grandmother is one of the closest and most intimate in the Vhavenda family, while that of father to child is sometimes too authoritarian. Children are spiritually and economically dependent on the family head. During his father's lifetime, a son never attains full independence, unless he breaks away from his family. A married son gradually attains greater freedom of action as time goes by, but in all matters of importance he remains his father's child and is treated accordingly. For this reason, there is a greater "social difference" between father and son than between grandfather and grandson. It is feared that if a father dies at loggerheads with his son, his vengeful spirit will become a menace to the well-being of his son's family. This is normally ended by special propitiatory rites before appeasement is achieved (Daneel 1971:47).

The relation between *vhana* (children) and *mme* (mother) is intimate. She is not expected to be very domineering, however, since she is considered an outsider, even by her own children. Children experience their organic unity with their mother much more vividly than with their father. Therefore children of the same mother (*who mamaho damu lithihi* – breastfed from the same breast) are much closer to each other than children of the same father but from different mothers.

The mukomana's (elder brother's) position is more superior in relation to his younger brothers or sisters. After the death of his father, the eldest son receives the father's responsibilities. This varies. In some families it is the deceased younger brother who takes over all the responsibilities.

Marriage brings about a new relationship between the husband's and the wife's lineage. Being exogamous, a lineage group must seek its wives in another group. Once a marriage is officially recognized, all the affinal male relatives of the wife-receiving lineage become *vhakwasha* (sons-in-law) to the relatives of the wife-providing lineage called *vhomakhulu* (father/mother-in-law). The *mukwasha* lineage is placed in a position of relative subordination to that of *vhomakhulu* because all the *vhomakhulu* males as a unit, regardless of their age and generation level, are placed at the level of fathers and mothers. The *mukwasha*, as a 'child' of *makhulu*, must respect his *makhulu*, help him in the fields, with building a house, with food in times of scarcity and with the animals that must be sacrificed. At the same time, *vhomakhulu* have certain obligations to their *mukwasha*. They must feed him well during visits and allow him a reasonable amount of freedom with his potential wife, the younger sister or daughter of his *vhomakhulu*.

The children address all their maternal kin as mothers. A stronger relationship is that of the mother's brother. He has a very important role because if his sister dies and the children have serious problems, he is the one to take the responsibility of looking after his sister's children (*vhaduhulu*).

These relationships are of paramount importance when issues of church discipline and church growth are being discussed. Normally the church tends to grow as these relationships begin to be revitalized. However, when a member of the lineage has a problem, it affects all the other members of the said lineage.

The death of a married partner need not terminate the marriage relationship completely, because the tie concerns many other people than just the two people involved. If a woman dies without having borne any children, either a divorce is affected or one of the *vhalamu*

(other sisters) takes her place. The wife-providing lineage is exempted from any other obligations if the deceased woman has already produced a satisfactory number of children. If the husband dies, his wife is inherited by a younger brother or another male relative in the same lineage. Should the husband die before his wife has produced a male name-bearing child, the younger brother may act as genitor to raise a name-bearer for his elder brother. In the light of these patterns Vhavenda marriages are potentially polygamous. "Kinship obligations, together with the inherently African vision of the child as the consummation of marriage, often provide the motivation for taking a second wife if the first one is barren, or for the inheritance of a deceased brother's wife, quite apart from another traditionally important factor, namely the association of wives and children with wealth and prestige" (Daneel 1971:51).

The Vhavenda kinship structure has indeed been influenced by Western culture, Christianity and the process of urbanization. In towns, the unity of the larger kin group is breaking down and the emphasis is increasingly on the elementary family of parents and children. It should be stressed however that the institution of polygamy seems to persist more stubbornly than many others. This is especially so when Blacks begin to compare their polygamous marriages with non-polygamous ones which seem to be infected with divorce, family violence and lack of solutions to problems that arise when a young woman becomes a widow. African Christianity needs to revisit the whole concept of marriage. When the church supports widows and orphans, that which bound the African kinship begins to crumble. If the church remains cold and uninvolved in the lives of its members, these institutions are revived with unwelcome results at times. When young Christian widows are not given church support, they invariably end up doing things contrary to the teachings of the scriptures.

2.9 ECONOMIC FACTORS

Archeological evidence indicates that mining was carried on extensively in the Limpopo Valley and Zoutpansberg areas centuries ago. The Vhavenda were heavily involved in these mining operations (Maylam 1987:53). The copper mines at Messina on the Limpopo River were worked by the Vhavenda, who also mined iron ore south of the Zoutpansberg. Much of

the business of working and trading these metals was carried on by the Vhavenda. According to Maylam (1987:53), the Vhalemba were “skilled craftsmen who were masters at smelting and working iron, copper and gold; and Lemba women were renowned as potters”. The Vhalemba often travelled far to trade their products, which they might have exchanged for grain or livestock.

In 1936 Iscor held an empire exhibition and the editor of the *Iscor News* wrote as follows (Bullock 1936:399):

As the South African Iron and Steel Industry pavilion displays Union products, it was felt desirable, if possible, to show Union natives at their work, and this has been found possible by going to the Zoutpansberg district to the country known as Venda, occupied by the people Vhavenda. Among this people one can even now find a few old men who in their younger days took part in smelting operations and who, with tactful handling, are willing to recall and reproduce this almost dead art. ... Smithing is still regularly carried on in Venda as a recognised calling.... Genuine old iron is, however, regarded as necessary for the production of certain articles, as for example amulets representing one's ancestors, and is thus highly prized.

2.9.1 Land

Daneel (1971:51) contends that in South Africa the resentment of Africans against the distribution of land has a direct bearing on the rise of the Independent Church Movement. Sundkler (Daneel 1971:51) states that the increase of the numbers of Bantu Independent Churches could be shown on a diagram as a parallel to the tightening squeeze of the natives through land legislation. Some of the African land-buying syndicates before 1913 were composed of Ethiopian leaders, and today one of the highest ambitions of a successful church leader is still to find land for the founding of a church colony of his own. Whether this will always be so remains a moot point. What is significant is to see how land has been proportionally appropriated to the different races of South Africa.

In South Africa it is in a struggle with the soil in a harsh and dry climate that men and

women have for thousands of years learnt to survive, changing from hunter and gatherer to herder and cultivator in the process. Wilson and Ramphele (1989:34) state that conflict over land, particularly between Black and White, has run like a seismic fault through the body of South Africa, dividing people along a line that even today threatens to engulf the country in the flames of civil war.

The Vhavenda moved from the northern regions to inhabit what became known as Venda. White conquest saw their land taken away from them (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:190). Wars failed to retain the land in the hands of the Africans. The might of Industrial Europe was greater than that of Pastoral Africa. The land was finally conquered, although not without the invaders suffering defeats such as that inflicted on the Boers at Schoemansdal in 1867.

The long process of conquest may finally be said to have culminated in the notorious Land Act of 1913 whereby the conquerors sought to ensure that the land won by conquest should not be lost through the market in the new industrial society that was emerging (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:191). In terms of the Act no African was allowed to purchase land outside the reserves, those "scheduled" and "released" areas which eventually added up to a little less than 14 per cent of the whole country. Between 1960 and 1980 the population of the reserves increased from approximately 4.5 million to 11 million (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:39). This was partly the result of redrawing boundaries to include some urban areas, notably Kwamashu and Umlazi outside Durban, in a homeland. In Venda a new location, Vleifontein, was started after people were removed from Tshikota Location.

According to Wilson and Ramphele (1989:40), in Venda approximately 36 per cent of the existing rural households had no land rights in 1989:

In calculating what proportion of the existing rural population could make a full-time living as farmers, Moody and Golino found that if they assumed optimal cash crops and modern farming methods and a relatively low-farm income (in 1979) of R200 per month, then in all of Venda there was room to support nearly 14 000 farmers, approximately 60 000 people. But if this were to happen then the existing 45 000

rural families without land rights plus another 10 000 families with land rights, a total of approximately 300 000 people, would have to move from the land to live permanently in town.

Instead of people moving to town from the rural areas, rural population increased dramatically from the 1980s and the little land left was underutilized. Arable land in Venda and elsewhere was not utilized for many reasons. According to Wilson and Ramphele (1989:41), “the most important of these seem to be insufficient labour, insufficient capital, and the high risk of much toil yielding little fruit as a result of drought, theft or damage to crops by both wild and domestic animals”.

The risk of crop loss is indeed very real. In many places, in the process of gathering scattered homesteads into villages, the government policy of betterment created a situation where fields were far from home and householders could no longer keep a watchful eye for straying cattle, wild pigs or thieves. In many instances, too, people were too poor to farm, could not afford protective fencing or even seed and fertiliser. Tractors were too expensive to hire and oxen and donkeys too weak to plough.

The shortage of labour arose not from a lack of people overcrowded in the rural reserves but from the peculiar household structure in these areas as a result of the migratory labour system. The majority of people in these areas are women and children. The productive young men and middle-aged men are in the cities.

2.9.2 Livestock and agricultural products

Over the centuries the Vhavenda have been sustained by their livestock and agricultural farming. This subsistence economy always proved disastrous in times of drought, such as in 1881 when there was a great famine called *Ndala ya Tshipindula* (Benso 1979:21). Many people starved. When there was another famine called *Ndala ya Matshona* in 1896, shop owners like Palmary, Roxby, Gill Grieve and others could offer food and thus alleviate the situation (Benso 1979:22).

The Vhavenda prize cattle. The customary practice of judging a man's wealth in terms of the cattle he owns still features strongly in this society although it is declining. Consequently farmers value even a small herd of cattle. However, quantity is more important than quality. According to Benso (1979:121), cattle farming had no great potential in Venda.

The major problem in animal production is overstocking. In 1979 it was suggested that culling alone would justify an abattoir and that more economic production in future would make such a venture viable. Intensive or semi-intensive livestock production is possible in the areas adjacent to the irrigation schemes. Planted pastures would increase the carrying capacity of the land. In holistic African community churches can teach people the virtue of stewardship, working hard and planning.

Agriculture plays a major role in the Venda economy and society. According to Benso (1979:118), during the unfortunate years of Venda Independence, agriculture provided more than one-fifth of GDP "and provides employment to some 80 to 90 percent of the economically active population within Venda although a large proportion of the agricultural labour force is economically underemployed".

According to Benso (1979:120), due to the Land Act of 1913 and subsequent legislation, "of the total land area of Venda, it was found that 80 percent was suitable only for extensive livestock production, 12 percent is wasteland or water catchment area, three percent could be afforested and the remaining five percent is suitable for growing cash crops, subtropical fruit, tea and vegetables". Although Venda has a fairly high agricultural potential, it is not so high that an adequate living can be provided for the majority of the population, which implies that alternative sources of income and employment should be developed as a priority.

Human development seems to be the key to sustained agricultural development. This study found that in the Vhavenda world-view the concept of God is "holistic". *Nwali* was the God of the earth, land, cattle, goats and so on. Whatever was produced in the field could be shared with Him. This presents a great challenge to the churches in the area. God must be seen to have an interest in what happens to the people in their daily lives. Farming societies

must be encouraged. However, the agricultural co-operatives introduced in Venda are not working well.

2.9.3 Migrant labour

As elsewhere in South Africa, in Venda migrant labour remained a well-established practice even after Pretoria declared Venda an independent state in 1979. The migrant labour system started in South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. Many Vhavenda left their areas of abode to avail themselves of the jobs offered by the mines, industries and farms. As they became part of this new economic system, some of them took their families to live permanently in those areas. Later South Africa passed legislation that prevented Black workers from freely moving their residence from their places of origin to their place of work in South Africa. Workers had to sign contracts to work in South Africa for fixed short periods of time (Benso 1979:82). In 1956 Verwoerd declared that the "native who comes to the White area does so because he is there to serve, thus no loafing may be permitted... The labour bureau system ... has been developed for this purpose" (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:208). After 1994 the Vhavenda were once again citizens of South Africa. The increased number of people participating in the wage labour economy, together with new schemes of home ownership in towns and townships, may in time create a stable urban community. For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to show how the migratory labour system affects the churches as well. Because cities are centres of power and privilege, many people flock to them from the rural areas. Many urban dwellers consequently live in desperate conditions (Gilbert & Gugler 1992:64). Many Vhavenda flocked to cities looking for work. Those who ended up in the mines finally had to accept being housed in single-sex barracks. In 1989 it was estimated that over two million of the five million Black workers in the South African economy were migrants, the other three million lived with their families in urban townships or on the White-owned farms of the country (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:199). The conditions of these migratory labourers were dehumanising. Fathers told of the pain of seeing their children growing up as strangers. Sons described their shock upon going to town: "We find our fathers with concubines yet our mothers are starving. Besides, the sweethearts are as young as the father's children. We get fed up and cannot communicate with our fathers" (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:199). The wives pointed out: "For our

husbands we are just their old-age home or their hospitals. They really come to us when they are too old to work or when they are sick” and the men themselves complained: “We stay a full year without our wives. That makes us go beyond the bounds of the law and become adulterous” (Wilson & Ramphele 1989:199).

It should be mentioned that the rural areas like Venda were also affected by this pattern of oscillating migration. Although the migrants themselves could be said to have benefited in the long run, Wilson and Ramphele (1989:200) show that as workers were drawn to an area by the jobs offered, money was spent there by the workers, by management and by the various authorities. Gradually as demands for goods and services increased, whether for clothes, wheelbarrows or lawyers, capital was invested, factories built, people trained, and organisations put together. Above the hidden minerals, cities with the capacity to generate large numbers of jobs developed. All this was made possible by the work of those who laboured together.

As these cities grew, the rural areas became impoverished, the miners were not allowed to enjoy the wealth they had helped to create. The law did not allow people to move to the urban areas to balance what the two areas were producing.

Although, given the rural-urban gap, wholesale emigration from the disadvantaged rural areas might be expected, the cities are less than hospitable to new immigrants, and only the highly trained, well-connected and hardy venture there (Gilbert & Gugler 1992:74). As a result, in spite of rural-urban migration, the rural population continues to grow in nearly all Third World countries. Venda is currently experiencing this phenomenon. Young adults dominate among migrants in search of employment, followed by members of the privileged minority groups who are highly skilled and have no problem securing a job in the urban areas.

CHAPTER 3

Traditional beliefs and rituals

3.1 INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this study, Daneel's (1971:79) model for his research among the Shona was used to classify Vhavenda beliefs and religious practices into four distinct but interrelated categories. The Shona's beliefs are more or less similar to those of the Vhavenda. The categories comprise (1) the High God, (2) the spirit world, (3) the diviner-herbalist, and (4) the wizard (sorcerer or witch). The first category recognizes the general belief in a Supreme Being; the second covers the world of the spirits, both ancestral or alien; the third is the field of the *nyanga* (healer), and the fourth, although it deals with magical practices, is predominantly destructive or negative. For the Christian faith to survive in Africa, it must have access to the African understanding of sorcery and witchcraft.

3.2 THE HIGH GOD: *NWALI*

The Vhavenda concept of God has never been polytheistic. The Vhavenda have a strong central belief in a Supreme Creator, who is known by many names. According to Mbiti (1975:47),

Every African people has a word for God and often other names which describe him. Many of the names have meanings showing us what people think about him. The personal names for God are very ancient, and in many cases their meanings are no longer known or easily traceable through language analysis.

The many names designating the Supreme Being reveal a variety of functions and the association of the divine with different phenomena of nature. For centuries the Vhavenda have believed in *Nwali* as the final authority above and behind their ancestors. Daneel (1971:80) states that they share this view with the Shonas of Zimbabwe. Van Rooy (1971:5)

disagrees, maintaining that among non-Christian Vhavenda little more is thought and said about God than that He is the highest in the hierarchy of forces. He goes on to say that God is considered so high above human beings that He is unapproachable except by special persons and in special circumstances.

Khorommbi (1996:25) counters this, saying

In a culture that respects its leaders and elderly, it cannot be ruled out that this could be so. But this is not to say that Vhavenda religion is solely the sphere of the ancestors or spirits and not of God the Creator, as Van Rooy states (1971:5).

Ndou (1993:31), a Muvenda, strongly contests Van Rooy's view, pointing out that the Vhavenda have a strong concept of God: "For them thunder and striking of lightning are connected with God." According to him, the idea and concept of God is fundamental amongst the Vhavenda.

The Vhavenda concept of God influences their world-view. Kraft (1981:53) defines *world-view* as "the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent and from which stems their value system". The world-view lies at the heart of culture, interacting with and strongly influencing other aspects. Although old views about God are no longer discussed seriously, they still exist (Khorommbi 1996:26).

The Vhavenda know God as *Raluvhimba*, *Nwali* or *Khuzwane*. According to Stayt (1960:230), *Raluvhimba* is the mysterious, monotheistic deity of the Vhavenda, who is connected with the beginning of the world, is supposed to live somewhere in the heavens and is connected with all astronomical and physical phenomena: "a shooting star is Raluvhimba's travelling, His voice is heard in the thunder, comets, lightning, meteors, earthquakes, prolonged drought, floods, pests and epidemics – in fact, all the natural phenomena which affect the people as a whole".

According to Stayt (1960:230-231), in thunderstorms, he appears as a great fire near the chief's dwelling place, whence he booms his desires to the chief in a voice of thunder. He

can be talked to, especially by the chief, who addresses him as *Makhulu* (Grandmother or Grandfather). When he passes there is a clap of thunder. If he becomes angry with the chief, he punishes the people by sending a drought or a flood or by opening an enormous cage in the heavens, and letting a swarm of locusts loose on the land.

Stayt and Van Rooy state that the word *Raluvhimba* comes from *Luvhimba*, which means a bird. Stayt (1960:230) believes that the bird is an eagle while Van Rooy (1971:6) believes it is a lanner – a large falcon.

Mbiti (1975:20-30) points out that since African religion does not have sacred scriptures, the religion is found rather in the people's art, symbols, rituals, ceremonies and festivals, in the names of people and places, and in shrines, sacred places and religious objects. In Venda it is said that there are different spots where *Raluvhimba* occasionally manifested Himself. One is at Luvhimbi, which was a religious stronghold of Vhatavhatsindi under Chief Muthivhi, who was subdued by Ravhura, one of Thohoyandou's sons. There is thus a close relationship between the chief, representing the people, and Raluvhimba (Khorommbi 1996:27). Raluvhimba calls the chief *muduhulu* (grandchild). In the Venda religion, it is the chief's duty to perform the rain rites.

The most commonly used name for God in Venda is *Nwali* (*Nwari* in Shona). Stayt (1960:232) accepts that *Nwari* is another name for *Raluvhimba*. Bullock (Stayt 1960:233) says that *Nwari* (*Nwali*) means the begetter or bearer, in our terminology the creator:

This God is not the deified spirit of some remote ancestor, although he is subject to many human weaknesses, but he is of a more abstract nature ... He is not domiciled in any particular spot, although his priests and consecrated women live in the matombo He also manifests himself through the divine fire on Mt. Rungai and in the shooting stars.

Like the Ndebu of Zambia, the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe, the Shoko and the Rozwi, the Vhavenda regard *Nwali* as their God and developed the Nwali cult around their culture as they deemed fit and necessary. Beach (1980:22, 24) contends that the Nwali cult is of Venda

origin. Daneel (1995:217), however, maintains that the Nwali cult was introduced by Mbire cult officials, who had migrated from the lake region of Tanzania.

The Vhavenda regard *Nwari* first and foremost as the giver of rain. The names *Musiki* (from *usika*: to create), *Musikavhathu* (creator of humankind) and *Ngwaniwapo* (the one found there), all indicate the Supreme Being as a creator. Mbiti (1969:29) says, "God is no stranger to the African peoples" to show that the Vhavenda have always believed in a supreme Creator and for them "thunder and striking of lightning are connected with God".

The concept of a God who is both immanent and transcendent emerges from these names (Daneel 1971:82). *Nwali* is believed to be ever present in His creation and stands in direct relation to the life-giving water. In the Venda tradition, *Nwali* became a personal being beyond and above the ancestral hierarchies and therefore could only be approached indirectly through the mediation of the ancestors or through messengers. He had final authority even over the *vhadzimu* (ancestral spirits). Since the ancestral spirits take a keen interest in a family, private petitions are therefore addressed to *midzimu ya muta* (family spirits), who either transmit the pleas through the senior lineage ancestors to *Nwali* or act on them directly. His name is never heard during traditional rituals in the family circle, however. It is only in the annual rain ritual that reference is made to *Nwali wa Matongoni*.

In Venda, the missionaries were confronted with a syncretized traditional concept of God. The inception of *Mudzimu* (originally meaning an ancestral spirit) and its use in the first Tshivenda Bible did a disservice to the earlier name of *Nwali*. *Mudzimu* is now a commonly accepted name for the Christian God. The traditional African initiated churches prefer to use *Nwali* in their prayers. According to Ndou (1993:34), the pioneer missionaries in Zimbabwe used the name *Mudzimu* for God, which was unacceptable to the Mashona until they resorted to *Nwali* as a reference to the Supreme Being. The Vhavenda and Mashona share much in their cultures because the Vhavenda lived with the Mashona for a long time on their way from the Great Lake region. Remnants of Vhavenda are still found in Southern Zimbabwe.

Van Rooy (1976:6) maintains that the name *Nwali* used in legends is by origin a deified chief. Stayt (1960:233) disagrees, stating that "the Chishona name, *Nwari*, means "begetter"

or “bearer”, in our terminology, the creator”. This God is not the deified spirit of some remote ancestor. Khorommbi (1996:28) points out that in their prayers to Him, the Vhavenda say:

Inwi Vho-Makhulu washu
Na iwe Gole musika vhathu
(You our ancestor ...
Even you, the Creator of humankind).

When the Lutheran and Pentecostal missionaries came to Venda, the Vhavenda did know about God, though in a vague way. Their concept of God was strongly influenced by their link with the Lembas, their association with the Rozwi empire and their links with the Shonas. This study does not go into the traditional cultural notions in Vhavendabelief in detail. Suffice it to say that the use of the term *Mudzimu* for God made it difficult for the Vhavenda to relate their concept of the traditional deity to the missionaries’ teaching about the same God.

Regular ceremonies were conducted every year at Matongoni. At first these ceremonies were conducted jointly with the Shonas. Even after the movement to the south, delegates were sent to Matongoni for these ceremonies (Daneel 1971:87): “Others come from districts north of Bulawayo, from the West as far as Plumtree, from Gwanda and further South from the Venda– inhabited territories, on both sides of the Limpopo river.”

The cult messengers were responsible for the collection of gifts for *Nwali* throughout the entire district under their care. Under normal circumstances the messengers undertook two visits to Matongoni per year just like their Shona counterparts: before the commencement of the rainy season and after the harvest time (Daneel 1971:88).

According to Stayt (1960:232),

Every year a special messenger, whose office was hereditary, used to be sent with a black ox and a black piece of cloth to visit *Raluvhimba* or *Nwari* at his place of revelation at Mbvumela in the Matopo Hills....

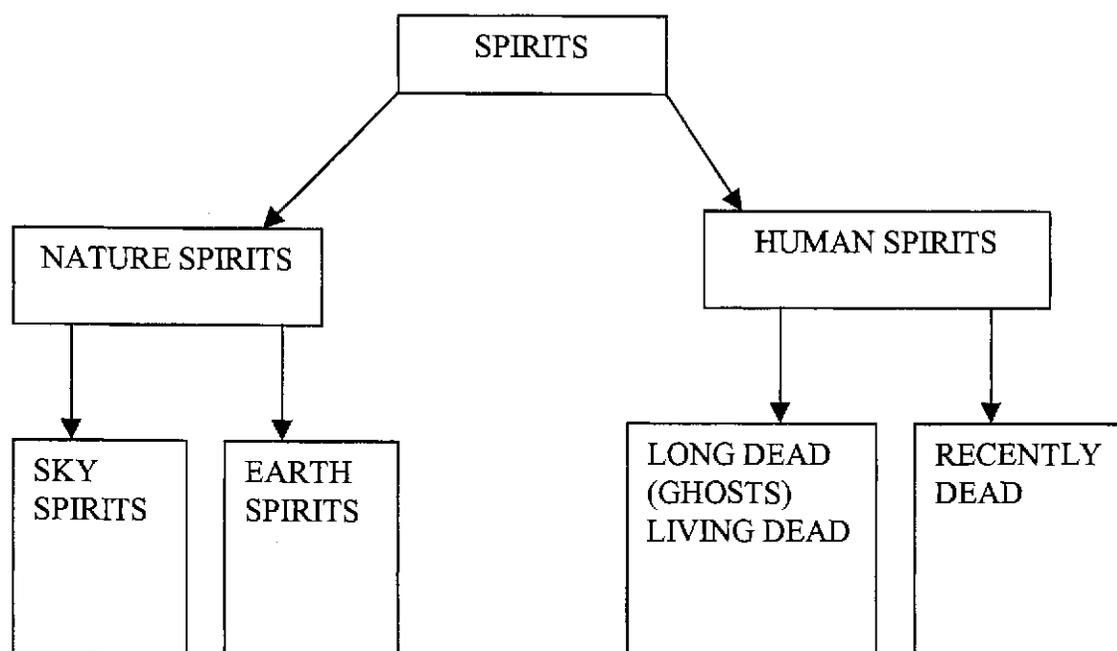
Today owing to the East Coast fever restrictions, no cattle may be taken across the border, but messengers are still sent to visit the god, taking money payments and other gifts. No Mulemba ever dares to approach the sacred precincts; if he does he will be seized and tied hand and foot. Old Mphephu, the present chief's father, decided one year that he would consult a new oracle and so consulted Modjadji, the famous rain-maker. That year the drought was very bad indeed, so Mphephu decided to return to his old god.

This tradition was kept alive to the beginning of the twentieth century. In many ways the September-October visit by the messenger to Matongoni coincided with the big annual rain ceremony. When the messenger arrived at Matongoni, he would stay in the priest's colony until the end of the ceremonies.

3.3 THE SPIRIT WORLD

According to the Vhavenda and all Africans, the universe is composed of visible and invisible parts. It is commonly believed that, besides God and human beings, there are other beings who populate the earth, namely spirits. There are many types of spirits. According to Mbiti (1991:70), God is their Creator just as he is the Creator of all things. These spirits have a status somewhere between God and human beings, but are not identical with either. People often speak about them in human terms and even give them human attributes such as thinking, speaking, intelligence and power that they can use at will. Mbiti (1991:70) believes that because the spirits are created by God, they are subordinate to Him and dependent on Him, and God may use some of them to do certain things. Figure 3.1 illustrates this classification of the spirits.

Figure 3.1 A classification of the spirits



Source: Mbiti (1991:75)

It should always be borne in mind that these are all spirits and, as such, have certain common characteristics.

3.3.1 Types of spirits

3.3.1.1 Nature spirits

According to Mbiti (1991:71), these spirits are specifically associated with natural objects and forces. Some are thought to have been created by God initially as spirits; others to have been human beings of the distant past. The spirits propagate among themselves and increase their number. Mbiti (1991:71) also maintains that nature spirits are largely the personifications of natural objects and forces. This means that people give “personal” characteristics to these objects and regard them as living, intelligent beings of the invisible world.

(1) Nature spirits of the sky

Some of the nature spirits are associated with the forces and objects of the sky, including the sun, the moon, stars, falling stars, rainbows, rain, storms, wind, thunder and lightning. Some African people believe that such objects and forces are themselves the spirits or that spirits occupy and control them. Others believe that there are major spirits in charge of the sky sometimes described as divinities or deities. They are somehow thought to be associated with the weather, storms, the sun, and similar natural phenomena. The Vhavenda associate lightning with a spirit *tshinoni* (bird). When lightning strikes the first time it is said that *tshinoni* has laid her eggs. The next bolt of lightning is supposed to be a signal that the bird has come to hatch the eggs. These spirits are not subjects for prayer, offerings and sacrifices. Nature spirits are looked on more as subjects for stories, myths and legends.

This belief in the spirit of the sky apparently helps the Vhavenda to explain the mysteries of the forces of nature connected with the sky for which there is no other explanation. The Vhavenda explain such phenomena in religious instead of scientific terms. Mbiti (1991:72) believes that as scientific knowledge increases the people's understanding of the universe, they will gradually give up the idea of nature spirits.

It should be borne in mind that religion came long before science, and it will be a long time before communities have a different understanding of the two.

(2) Nature spirits of the earth

These spirits are associated with the events and forces of the earth, which are closest to human life. According to African belief, there are many such spirits connected with the earth, hills, mountains, forests, trees, caves, rocks, boulders, metals, water in various forms (rivers, lakes, ponds, waterfalls and rapids, lagoons, the sea), river banks, animals and insects.

Throughout Venda certain places are reputed to be inhabited by spirits, whose sinister presence is greatly feared, and who can influence people's lives. According to Stayt (1960:236), every chief has, or in olden days had, a forest or mountain in which the spirits of his ancestors are supposed to abide. Many of these forests are the actual burial places of the chiefs.

Burial places vary in different localities. In olden days a chief used to be buried in the cattle kraal, which thereafter became a particular sacred place. If the capital was changed, the burial place would be forgotten but the place would retain its tradition as a sacred grove, although the reason for its sacred character would no be longer known.

Many spirits also have their abode in rivers and lakes. Lake Fundudzi is essentially connected with the ancestral spirit of Netshiavha, the guardian of the lake. Stayt (1960:237) states that the lake is also supposed to be inhabited by the spirits of other Vhatavhatsindi people. Spirits are also said to inhabit the Phiphidi Falls and Guvhukuvhu, the large pool into which the Falls drop. The Vhavenda believe that the spirits of the Vhangona people, the first inhabitants of Venda, live there and can be heard dancing in the Falls at night. Some claim to hear babies crying and women stamping their feet. Stayt (1960:238) reports that in the old war days, when a battle was in progress, the water in the river turned to blood. It is also believed that a particular sound coming from Phiphidi is a sure prophecy of rain. According to Stayt (1960:238), to propitiate these Vhangona spirits, everybody who crosses the river must throw down an offering.

Many other localities are associated with some particular lineage or sib, with similar stories of spirits. Resting places scattered throughout the country are places where a burial party placed its burden while it rested on its journey.

Many rivers and mountain are supposed to be inhabited by spirits not directly connected with any particular lineage. Stayt (1960:238) calls these dissociated spirits. They are also called *zwidudwane*, mountain spirits, who are mostly of foreign origin. Though credited with human reasoning, *zwidudwane* do not appear in human form. One spirit is believed to be a leg, another an arm, another a body without a head, another an eye, and so on. These

dismembered monstrosities are believed to be so dangerous that if a traveller were merely to catch a glimpse of one of them, he would die. In addition to *zwidudwane*, small warlike spirits with human forms, who are always armed with bows and arrows, are believed to live in streams and pools (Stayt 1960:239). These spirits are also feared because, like *zwidodwane*, they can bring death to anyone who has the misfortune to encounter them. Such beliefs make it difficult for most Vhavenda to embrace a Christianity that fails to acknowledge and deal with supernatural occurrences. These beliefs could equally create a Christianity that is only supernaturalistic and impractical.

Certain chiefs are believed to return to earth after death in the form of animals. A chief's spirit can return in the form of a lion, a leopard or any other wild animal. Stayt (1960:240) cites the case of Nephindula, who believed that his ancestors' spirits turned into snakes. Because of this, before green vegetables were eaten, a small portion had to be cooked and offered to the snakes. In times of trouble a little porridge could be put outside the door of the hut to appease the snake ancestors.

Through these nature spirits, African peoples have a direct link with both inanimate creatures and forces of nature as well as living beings. The spirits would seem to be at the mercy of people: when people no longer see the necessity of believing in a particular spirit, they reject it. People also ignore these spirits and look beyond to God, both for help and to explain the mysteries of the universe. It is therefore erroneous to believe that the Vhavenda worship these spirits.

3.3.1.2 Human spirits

According to Mbiti (1991:75), human spirits were once ordinary men, women and children.

Belief in the existence of these spirits is widespread throughout Africa and the natural consequence of the strong belief in African religion that human life does not terminate at a person's death but continues beyond death. These spirits are believed to be involved with family bread-and-butter issues and as a result are important. They are directly involved in a person's well-being (*muwendu*) and include a person's deceased father, mother and paternal

grandparents. These four ancestors are directly concerned with the welfare of all the members of one's household. The spirit of a woman's mother or of her maternal grandmother is believed to have a direct influence on her procreative powers; her paternal aunt, again, can intrude into the child-bearing capacity of her brother's daughters. Above these a home ancestor, usually a male, fulfils the role of a guardian in the broader sense of the word. This male ancestor guards (watches over) the members of a number of houses (Daneel 1971:92).

Two kinds of human spirits are considered here: those who died long ago, and those who died recently.

(1) Spirits of those who died long ago

These are the most numerous and no one remembers who most of them were. People still believe that such spirits must exist in the invisible world. Myths and legends recall some of them as tribal, national or clan founders. People have no clear idea of these spirits of people who died long ago.

Some folk stories present these spirits in exaggerated human forms and others present them as animals or plants or inanimate things (Mbiti 1991:76). They may be shown in both human and superhuman form, or may appear stupid and naïve. The spirits of leaders, heroes, warriors, clan founders and other outstanding men and women sometimes continue to be respected, honoured and brought into the life of the clan, community or nation through legends about them.

On the whole, people fear and dislike the spirits of those who died long ago mainly because they are unknown spirits and therefore strangers to the living. Stayt (1960:240) states that ancestral spirits *midzimu* (singular *mudzimu*) have many idiosyncrasies, and if they think that they have been slighted by their descendants, they take revenge by bringing misfortune to them. Consequently they are more feared than loved. The Vhavenda have a fundamental conception of the inherent good of most worldly things. All trouble is associated with the evils of witchcraft or the jealousy and spitefulness of their ancestors.

(2) Spirits of people who died recently

People who died recently are remembered up to four or five generations. Mbiti (1991:77) calls their spirits “the living dead, to distinguish them from the ghosts of those who died long before that”. Belief in the existence of the living dead is widespread in Africa, although it is held more strongly in some societies than in others. In most African religions therefore it is the practice to remember the departed.

The living dead are believed to be the spirits that matter most in the family level because they are still considered part of their families. Mbiti (1991:77) notes that they are believed to live close to the homes in which they lived when they were alive. They are still believed to show interest in their surviving families, and in return their families remember them by pouring some of their drinks and leaving some food for them from time to time. The living dead may also visit their surviving relatives in dreams or visions, or even openly, and make their wishes known (see also Bediako 1995:218ff).

People face sickness and misfortune in the family in many ways. It may be attributed to the living dead, unless magic or sorcery and witchcraft are held responsible. When the spirits are believed to be responsible for the misfortune in the family, they have to be pacified or appeased by performing rituals, following their requests or correcting “any breaches of the proper conduct towards them” (Mbiti 1991:79). The diviner or medicine man is usually consulted to find out exactly what the spirit might wish. On the whole, the living spirits of the dead are believed to be benevolent towards their families as long as they are remembered and treated properly. This belief is prevalent among the Vhavenda. Even when previously considered a bad person, the deceased is always treated reverently. Contact with Christianity has affected the Vhavenda idea of life and death, making it difficult at times to recapture their original conceptions.

In certain parts of Venda, people observe the *lufumbukavha* ceremony. This ceremony is observed for a young boy who dies before he is given a wife. It is believed that if he is not pacified, he may become a source of endless trouble to his lineage. Stayt (1960:242) describes the ceremony as follows:

He is given an old used hoe handle, “gulelwa”, with a cotton string tied near the hole, to symbolize a wife, the string being her waist band and the hole the female genitalia. A girl, never the deceased man’s sister, fixes this symbol at a fork in the path in a well-cleared open space where the young man’s spirit can clearly see it, with the handle pointing towards him as he approaches his old village. The handle is fixed with four pegs ... two are knocked in the ground to make him forget.

When the handle is properly fixed, a woman, of the dead man’s lineage, generally the makhadzi, pours beer into the hole of the hoe saying:

“Today we have found you a wife; the wife is here. Do not worry us any more. If you are annoyed with us, come here.”

This ends the ceremony and the spirit of the young man is said to be satisfied forever. A similar rite is conducted for a girl who dies unmarried, having reached puberty. Such a girl is called *luphofu* (the blind one) as she has died without any knowledge of sexual life. A peg is driven through the hole in the hoe handle that is provided for the comfort of her spirit to symbolize the male organ. The two rites are identical.

3.3.2 What spirits do to people

According to Mbiti (1991:79), most of the spirits cannot be classified as either good or bad. Whether they are considered good or bad depends on how people experience the forces of nature and how they act towards human beings. “The spirits can do both good and evil to people just as people do both good and evil to their fellow human beings” (Mbiti 1991:79).

Spirits are believed not to have concrete shapes and features since, by definition, they have no physical form. But it is strongly believed that when they appear to people, they may look like human beings, insects or animals. Many Pentecostal Christians also hold this belief. According to Gifford (1998:97), Pentecostals believe that:

Demons are former angels, disembodied beings, who when they come to earth find themselves rivers, mountains, rocks, trees, humans, etc. to dwell in. We are most conscious of what is happening in this spirit world when we are asleep, in dreams. Activities of demons prevent humans from enjoying the abundant life that Jesus came to give. Some effects of their activities are phobias, complexes, allergies, chronic diseases, repeated hospitalization, repeated miscarriages, emotional excesses and striking odd behaviour. Demons enter human beings through 'doorways' or openings such as ancestral gods, traumatic childhood experiences (such as sexual abuse or an accident), curses (agreements 'made on behalf of a family or clan members with shrines or gods or stools which are binding on all members whether they actively take part or not, involvement in 'wrong churches' (which include any using candles, incense and so on), Eastern cults, sex, etc. (Satan has agents around seeking to deposit demons in people).

These beliefs led most Pentecostal churches to develop deliverance ministries in their churches. The world-view behind this clearly underlies much traditional thinking. According to Gifford (1998:97), the basic idea of deliverance is that a Christian's progress and advance can be blocked by demons who maintain some power over him/her, despite his or her coming to Christ. This demonic activity is believed to take place with or without the Christian's knowledge. Only when he/she receives the deliverance ministry is he/she free indeed. This understanding of how the spirits or demons work could create the impression that people should not be held responsible for any evil that occurs in their lives since the spirits are responsible.

African religion believes that God is above the spirits (Mbiti 1991:80) and that if any spirit becomes bothersome to people, the people should try to chase it away, get rid of it, keep it at a distance, or appeal to God for help. This shows that in the long run people have the means of overcoming any evil or mean spirits (Mbiti 1991:80).

Some spirits are believed to help diviners, mediums, oracles and medicine people in their work (Mbiti 1991:80). These are consulted as the need arises. They are more or less the tools of their users. At the same time, witches, sorcerers or bad magicians are believed to

control the spirits that cause misfortunes, sickness and even death. This sounds as if the spirits have no programme of their own but are used by bad people to do harm to their fellow human beings. This is the opposite of the view held by some Pentecostals.

3.4 WITCHES (*VHALOI*) AND WITCHCRAFT (*VHULOI*)

Witchcraft has been blamed for much hurt and many unsolved mysteries. African belief in witchcraft is still strong. Witchcraft (*vhuloi*) takes many forms. Davidson (1969:121) cites the following example:

Fifteen Africans – twelve men and three women – have been jailed after being found guilty at Fort Victoria of having eaten the body of an African baby after opening up his grave... In statements said to have been made to the police the accused said: “We are witches and this is the food of witches.”

Many Westerners regarded belief in *vhuloi* as a pre-scientific belief that would be dispelled by a proper understanding of the scientific world. The resurgence of Satanism in Europe and elsewhere in developed countries points to *vhuloi* seemingly being part and parcel of humanity. Three centuries ago European tribunals condemned hundreds of people accused of witchcraft. According to Junod (1905:239), there is a crucial difference between White and African belief in witchcraft, namely that White witches were supposed to be followers of Lucifer, whereas in the African understanding the idea of Satan is completely absent. African religion does not have a developed idea of Satan and evil forces were never associated with God. Witchcraft was never accepted as a good practice. Its power was never associated with God.

Next follows a brief consideration of witchcraft to indicate the impact of Western Christianity on African Christians' understanding of supernatural issues.

The Vhavenda, like many other people, believe that when something goes wrong there should be a cause. In most cases someone is suspected of having used evil magic, sorcery or witchcraft against the victim or his household. People believe that there are invisible,

mystical forces and powers in the universe, and also that certain people have the knowledge and ability to tap, control and use these forces. According to Mbiti (1975:166), some have greater knowledge and skill than others; some possess the ability without knowing it, and later find that, through word and ritual, they can release these forces for a particular purpose; "magic is said to be these forces in the hands of certain individuals".

Witchcraft is a manifestation of these mystical forces, which may be 'inborn', inherited, or acquired in various ways. It is said that for some people it functions without their being aware of or controlling it. The Vhavenda believe that a witch uses incantations, words, rituals and magic objects to inflict harm on the victim. To do this, the witch may use a victim's nails or hair, or clothes or some possession of the victim, which he/she burns, pricks or wishes evil to. Another common belief is that powerful magic can make a person change into an animal or bird, which then goes to attack the victim.

Sorcery generally takes the form of spells, poisoning or other physical injury done secretly by someone to someone else or his crops and animals. Witches, evil magicians and sorcerers are the most hated (and often feared) persons in their communities. People fear to disagree with them or even to associate with them, to eat at their home or to displease them for fear of being bewitched by them.

Vhuloi (witchcraft) differs from *vhungome* (divining). The word *vhuloi* comes from the verb *u lowa* - to bewitch. The *vhaloi* differs from the *vhunanga* (medicine healer). A *nanga* (medicine healer) does not need *thangu* (divination bones) to heal.

People who practise *u lowa* (bewitching) are called *vhaloi* (witches). *Vhaloi* are believed to have inherited the power of evil. The power is believed to be transmitted by a person's mother and not the father, because the power is sucked from the mother's breast by babies. The mother decides which of her sons should not be *muloi* (a witch) to confuse people who take her to be *muloi* as all her children are then expected to be *vhaloi*.

All the *vhaloi* of an area know each other and are believed to form a secret society and meet at night to eat human flesh. In this assembly, they are said to discuss how they will harm

property or destroy human life. At times they fight and whoever is defeated is fined. The fine is the body of a person killed by witchcraft. The witches might bring their own children to the banquet.

Vhaloi are so feared that when a young man wishes to get married, the main consideration in choosing a wife is that she does not belong to a family of witches.

Vhaloi are accused of being worse than thieves because they are murderers who kill out of jealousy, hatred or spite or for revenge. Witches who are offended take revenge by putting the offender to death. They kill through *u vuma* (to send), *u milisa* (to make somebody swallow), *u shelela* (to give poisoned food), *u tatshilela* (to be inspired to do evil) and *u pfula* (to prick). *Vhaloi* are said to be able to turn a person into a zombie through *u pfula*.

As protection against witchcraft and witches, every village is surrounded by a fence made of charms that medicine healers put round their houses to prevent *vhaloi* from entering. The inhabitants of the village or house have to swallow protective medicine and be inoculated.

If the protective charms fail to protect the inhabitants from evil then a *mungome* (the one who sniffs out the *muloi*) is sought to help "smell out" who is troubling the village or the family. Through his *thangu* (divining bones) the *mungome* (magician) will show who is responsible. Formerly there was only one punishment for *vhaloi*: hanging. The last *vhaloi* among the Nkuna to be hanged was Mudebana, who was hanged in 1892 or 1893 in Thabina by order of Mankhulu, the regent of the young Chief Mohlaba (Junod 1905:239). The Boers, having heard about it, condemned Mankhulu to death.

To be able to help African people in this belief, the church must be able to explain the origin of *vhuloi*. According to Junod (1905:239), Bantu witchcraft is a direct outcome of animism and there "is very little or no notion of natural laws in the Bantu" so to the "Bantu", spiritual causes alone can explain the facts, especially those that hurt people and destroy their happiness in life. Missionary Christianity approached Africans as savages, barbarians and heathens. Missionary Christianity approached the Vhavenda as animists, an approach that

did not work in Africa. The reason the Pentecostal churches tend to grow amongst the Vhavenda is partly that they replace the fear of witchcraft with faith in a miraculous God.

Belief in witchcraft led to many atrocities in Venda. For example, old people were threatened; people were burned as witches; families were uprooted from their former places of abode. Children of witches suffered terribly. Some were forced to discontinue their education where they lived; others were forced to disassociate themselves from helpful relatives because of the stigma.

Missionary Christianity and government have given little direction on this issue. In the 1980s the government resorted to heavy punishment for people found guilty of pointing certain people out as *vhaloi*. Strong beliefs do not simply die because of persecution, however.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the traditional beliefs and rituals of the Vhavenda people. It was noted that their world-view is different to that of the West, but closer to that of the East or the Bible. Later it will be shown that a belief in God and malignant spirits can be destructive to a community. At the same time, trying to change people's world-view without fully understanding it can be very difficult. This is what Western missionary Christianity attempted to do. In many ways, then, people became Christians without renouncing some of the beliefs that were considered contrary to the Bible as taught by missionaries.

The Vhavenda still believe strongly in witchcraft. Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on the Holy Spirit, has had a strong impact on this belief. Witchcraft is beginning to be understood as the work of the devil and unnecessary.

CHAPTER 4

Missionary Christianity in Venda

4.1 MISSIONARY CHRISTIANITY

To understand the attitude of missionaries from the late 1870s to the 1930s, it is necessary to examine the thinking of Evangelical Christianity at the time. The Europe that gave birth to the missionary movement, is important to understand the missionary dream. Stanley (1990:61) maintains that British overseas interests merely shaped British missionary priorities: they cannot account for the birth of the missionary movement itself. For the purposes of this study, the beliefs of European missionaries at the time are examined.

4.1.1 Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment

Bosch (1992:291) states that the Enlightenment, together with the scientific and technological advances that followed it, gave the West an unparalleled advantage over the rest of the world. A limited number of nations had vastly superior “tools” and know-how at their disposal. Thus it became easy for the West to establish itself as the master in virtually every field. This feeling of superiority also rubbed off on the “religion of Western Christianity”. In most cases there was no distinction between religious and cultural superiority, just as Western culture was to dominate others. The German philosopher, Hegel argued that world history moved from East to West, from “childhood” in China to “adulthood” in western Europe. Hegel (Bosch 1992:292) regarded Africa as characterized by concentrated sensuality, immediacy of the will, absolute inflexibility, and an inability to develop.

Stanley (1990:61) argues that, in its origins, the Protestant missionary movement was an exclusively evangelical phenomenon. He points out that High Churchmen did not jump onto the missionary bandwagon until the 1830s when the Society for the Propagation of the

Gospel (SPG) underwent a remarkable transformation from a colonial church society financed by Parliamentary grants and royal letters to a missionary society prepared to press its claims on the voluntary support of the Anglican public. When the Oxford University Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), a Christian volunteer student movement, was born in 1859, it was a voluntary movement nurtured by the Oxford Movement. Stanley (1990:61) asserts that both the SPG and the University Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) remained strangled children of the evangelical movement whose tenets of evangelical beliefs were not completely embraced by these two organizations. Stanley (1990:61) is of the opinion that nineteenth-century evangelical thinking is the key to evaluating the main features of the missionary movement ideology. Baur (1994:282) concurs with Stanley. Although Stanley is right in this assertion, Pietism was the force behind the Missionary movement especially in Germany. Pietism was originally a German Lutheran religious movement of the 17th and 18th Centuries which emphasized heartfelt religious devotion, ethical purity, charitable activity and pastoral theology rather than sacramental or dogmatic precision. Evangelicalism is a form of Pietism which came later. According to Stanley (1990:62), evangelicalism was distinguished from other forms of Protestantism in the early nineteenth century supremely by its total absorption with the message of the cross of Christ. Although evangelicals preached other doctrines besides the atoning death of Christ, the cross was the heart and essence of their message. Most Missionaries preached the substitutionary doctrine of atonement. Missionaries went out to the field convinced that the preaching of the cross was both what the "heathens" needed to hear and the only agent capable of effecting regeneration in individuals and society. The evangelicals abhorred abstraction, whether as the moralism of eighteenth-century rational religion or as arguments about the finer points of systematic theology or denominational polity. The message of the cross was taken to be more than an arid theological truth. It was a living truth of power and experience and a religion of enthusiasm, experience and activism.

In this way, evangelicalism reacted strongly against the Enlightenment. Stanley (1990:61) points out, however, that although it reacted against the Enlightenment, it also borrowed a great deal from it. Although the evangelicals denied the all-sufficiency of reason, they nevertheless valued it. They believed that people had been created as essentially rational beings, therefore there was no incompatibility between reason and Biblical faith. They also

believed that the universe was self-consistent and harmonious and operated according to the natural laws God had imposed on it.

Stanley (1990:63) states that evangelical missionary thinking was an amalgam of distinctively Biblical preoccupations and other assumptions that owed more to Enlightenment philosophy than to Christian theology. For example, because of Protestant Biblicism and respect for rational knowledge, teaching “heathens to read and write was to be given priority in missionary strategy”.

4.1.2 Crusade against idolatry

According to Stanley (1990:63), evangelicals understood the objective of the missionary enterprise to be the restoration of humankind to a right relationship with the Creator, a restoration that would be achieved through the realization of the Lordship of Christ over the kingdoms of this world. Through Christian missions, the messianic promise “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Ps 2:8) would be brought to fulfilment in the vision “The kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ” (Rev 11:15). All other religions were believed to be idolatrous: they worshipped other gods and thus transgressed the first Commandment (Stanley 1990:64). Although evangelicalism believed in the common ancestry of all humankind, it stressed that as different human groups migrated away from Babel, their religion became increasingly corrupt, degenerating into idolatry. According to Stanley (1990:64), the various religions were believed to represent different stages and directions of degeneration from the original Biblical state of pure revealed religion.

This corpus of belief explains the extreme negativism which characterized the missionary approach to other religions for most of the nineteenth century. Reverend Peter McOwan (Stanley 1990:64) said idolatry was “the master sin of heathenism. Other sins transgress God’s law, but idolatry strikes at His existence. It substitutes another in His stead.” According to Stanley (1990:64), this was the supreme motive for the missionary enterprise as claimed by the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* in 1858:

The most serious controversy that ever rose between God and man is represented in the system of idolatry. In every idol we see God's rival. In every idolater we see a man who takes against God, and supports a system which involves the rankest injustice towards God.

Clearly then, all alien religious systems were thus an affront to the sovereignty and glory of God. It therefore follows that Christians were expected to oppose them as they opposed sin. Missionaries considered themselves engaged in a spiritual battle with the satanic forces of heathendom, and missionary literature made frequent use of strident military imagery. The military language of war finally translated itself into reality. According to Stanley (1990:65), this belief contributed subtly to the growth of racism amongst missionaries:

In the late Victorian period especially, excessive emphasis on the darkness and degradation of idolatrous people could lead some missionaries to statements which teetered on the brink of racialism. Most widespread and most significant of all was the assumption that the baleful influence of idolatry extended to all aspects of a people's culture and society.

Accordingly, the Vhavenda culture was rejected in favour of Western culture.

4.1.3 The perishing heathens

Throughout the nineteenth century, the moral gravity of idolatry allowed Protestant missionaries just one conclusion with regard to the eternal destiny of the "heathen": unless they believed in Jesus Christ they must be presumed lost for all eternity. According to Stanley (1990:65), many Christians were haunted by an acute vision of the vast numbers of those who were lost. Almost all missionaries influenced by Pietism during this period believed this.

According to Venn (Stanley 1990:60),

All enlightened writers upon the question believe that the heathen dying without the offer of the gospel will not be punished with the same punishment as those who hear and reject it. Now the scripture sufficiently informs us of what that punishment will be, but it does not enable me to pronounce upon degrees, or differences of kind in eternal torment.

This understanding was at the root of most of the missionary societies of the time. Taylor started the China Inland Mission strongly challenged by this understanding, which was equally predominant among American conservative evangelical missionaries of that time. This understanding diminished around the early 1900s (Stanley 1990:66):

By the First World War it was fairly widely held in the older denominational societies that the relationship between Christianity and other religions ought to be seen as one of fulfilment rather than one of judgement and discontinuity.

As the fervency of this understanding declined, those who wished to ground the missionary obligation in something other than soteriological necessity tended to find their alternative rationale in the dissemination of the benefits of Western civilization. Such a missionary theology was more open to the dangers of uncritical cultural imperialism.

4.1.4 Providence and responsibility

Evangelical understanding of the doctrine of divine providence most strikingly illustrates the confluence of Biblical and Enlightenment influences in fashioning the nineteenth-century evangelical world-view. The starting point was the Biblical revelation of God as the sovereign Lord of history which was married to the Newtonian concept of God as the supreme governor of the universe. This was not the starting point for Lutheran missiological understanding which started from the point of view of grace. Human history and the universe were thought to move according to fixed rules of operation. In human history the forwarding of God's plan of salvation was primary because human history was the story of the Divine preoccupation with the furtherance of the gospel. In this way, Divine purpose was inscribed on the face of history. Pillay (Stanley 1990:68) maintains that Europe and England

in particular had a divine purpose. Europe considered herself to have been specially commissioned by God to bring the gospel to the entire world because of the blessings of true evangelical religion and the civil liberties which she was believed to have been bestowed withcoupled with the further privilege of world power.

This belief in divine providence led most missionaries and their supporters to accept imperialism as a general historical process (Stanley 1990:70). Their belief in providence also compelled them to insist unrelentingly on moral and spiritual responsibility. This insistence again and again led missionaries to challenge and criticize the reality of imperial policy on the field.

4.1.5 Commerce and Christianity

The doctrine of divine providence in nineteenth-century evangelism might provide the key to understanding the relationship between mission and imperialism. In this regard Stanley (1990:70) cites Livingstone's address delivered in the Senate House of the University of Cambridge on 4 December 1857:

.... I beg to direct your attention to Africa; I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun? I leave it with you.

Here Livingstone coupled the propagation of the gospel with the pursuit of British commercial expansion. His address ensured that the slogan "Commerce and Christianity" was closely associated with him. Livingstone was to civilize Central Africa through a partnership of missionary work and legitimate trade. In 1789 already, Wilberforce had advocated legitimate commerce as the best way to cut off the slave trade at its source in Africa. The evangelicals supported the regenerative role of lawful commerce within the providential order. Theoretical confidence in commerce as an instrument of God's providential rule of human affairs was a major determinant of missionary attitudes to European expansion in the nineteenth century. Not all commerce was regarded as legitimate,

however. European missionaries shunned exploitative commercial activities. It was agreed that the correct order to be followed was to introduce Christianity first: “the gospel would of itself begin to civilize the natives, and advancing civilization would then promote healthy commercial activity of mutual benefit to the native population and to (Europe) Britain” (Stanley 1990:72).

Even Livingstone (Stanley 1990:72) conceded that commerce on its own was of limited value:

Commerce has the effect of speedily letting the tribes see their mutual dependence. It breaks up the sullen isolation of heathenism. But Christianity alone reaches the very centre of the wants of Africa and of the world. The Arabs or Moors are great in commerce, but few will say that they are as amiable as the uncivilized Negroes in consequence. You will see that I appreciated the effects of commerce much, but those of Christianity much more.

As evangelism moved into the twentieth century, it increasingly conceived the world not as a harmonious system operating in missionary interests of the church but as a dark arena of Satanic domination in which the evangelical lamp burned in lonely isolation. Christians’ belief in providence lost much of its former emphasis and fervour.

4.1.6 The Gospel and culture

Missionary Christianity did not consider it wrong to impose its culture on others. According to Warneck, a nineteenth-century German missiologist (Bosch 1992:293), “It is certainly not by accident that it is the Christian nations which have become the bearers of culture and the leaders of world history.”

Warneck maintained that the gospel made the Western nations strong and great and would do the same to other nations. Missionaries took it upon themselves to uplift peoples deprived of the privileges they themselves enjoyed. It was felt that culturally impoverished peoples would be elevated to a higher level (Bosch 1992:293). According to Abeel (Bosch

1992:293), the effect of the gospel on a nation was to “soften their manners, purify their social intercourse, and rapidly lead them into the habits of civilized life.

Non-Western nations were regarded as deprived and needed the abundant life in Christ, which was interpreted as the abundance of the good things that modern education, healing, and agriculture would provide. Warneck, (Bosch 1992:293) listed the elements of unreliability, fear, selfishness, immorality, and this worldliness in “animistic heathenism”. The American Presbyterian, Dennis (Bosch 1992:293), portrayed the cultural defects of the peoples of Asia and Africa in three volumes on Christian Missions and social progress in which he showed the social evils of the non-Christian world. His findings were in responses to a circular that he sent out to missionaries whom he identified as people with a true and unimpeachable testimony (Bosch 1992:293).

The problem was that the advocates of mission were blind to their own ethnocentrism and confused their middle class ideals and values with the tenets of Christianity. They were, therefore, predisposed not to appreciate the cultures of the peoples to whom they went (Bosch 1992:294). Western theology was transmitted to Christian churches in other parts of the world with certain concessions. Western Christianity preferred to speak of “indigenization”, to be carried out by missionaries and not by the members of the younger churches themselves. According to Bosch (1992:295), in theory, the Protestant missions aimed at the establishment of “independent” younger churches although the pervasive attitude of benevolent paternalism often militated against this declared goal.

4.1.7 Mission and future

Eschatology played a prominent role in the advance of missionary Christianity. Missionary Christianity emphasised that the church stood at the threshold of the last days of history. The work of foreign missions was expected to initiate a large-scale turning of the heathen to Christ so that this world would become in actuality the Kingdom of Christ. This would usher in the one thousand years of the rule of Christ and his saints over the earth. Most missionaries shared this post-millenium eschatology. Others did not share in this dispensationalistic theological understanding.

Gradually liberalism crept in and post-millennialism began to wane. Evangelicalism started to look forward to the coming age of universal human brotherhood, truth and sweetness, peace and light (Stanley 1990:76). Towards the middle of the nineteenth century evangelicalism began to detach itself from the Enlightenment. On the mission field in the twentieth century such a stance implied an emphasis on the service ministries of medicine and education, and acceptance of the concept of Christian civilization and a greater openness, in theory, to understand imperialism.

4.1.8 Christianity and the Venda culture

The relationship between German missions and political or economic imperialism is still debated. There is consensus on the contribution of the missionary movement as a whole to cultural imperialism and that missionaries imposed their own cultural values on their converts (Stanley 1990:157). The Vhavenda were no exception. Missionaries were accused of upsetting the stability of the indigenous social system and leaving the younger churches of the Third World with a thoroughly “foreign” Christianity (Stanley 1990:157). Few Christian leaders in the Third World would disagree that one of their pressing priorities is to unwrap the gospel from its alien cultural packaging.

4.1.9 The gospel of civilization

Missionaries considered themselves to have been called to propagate the imagined benefits of Western civilization alongside the Christian message. The “heathens” were considered to be in a state of cultural deprivation that only the gospel could remedy (Stanley 1990:157). The cultural differences were to be eliminated. “Heathen” societies were regarded as morally degraded. In many countries missionaries reported that cannibalism, infanticide, human sacrifice and homosexual practices were endemic (Stanley 1990:158). Satanic domination was believed responsible for the people’s moral and cultural decline so the task of the missionaries was to reverse the process. There was a need for moral elevation and the inculcation of virtues such as industry, sobriety and decency, by force when necessary. Mission stations were built according to European style. According to Mokgatle (Pakendorf

1997:262), this change affected not only newly-built mission stations but existing settlements as well:

Mr Penzhorn, the first Lutheran Priest in our tribe, not only taught my people how to read the Bible, but transformed their lives entirely. He brought European architecture into their lives and new ideas. Houses built with bricks began to appear. Though many thatched roofs remained, they pushed rondavels out of the way and houses with European-type doors and windows spread all over the village. Old habits of building houses anywhere anyhow died out.

Orsmond of the London Missionary Society recorded the following (Stanley 1990:158):

Today, agreeably to a law the church established at the last church meeting I have with a book and pencil been to every house ... and have noted down under the name of each member what has been done. The condition of the house and its furniture and it is resolved that if they do not from this time forth begin to hurl paganism in all its abominable shapes from our city, such person shall not be a member of the church. The house must (be) plastered in and out, have doors and windows, bedrooms with doors and shutters, and a garden encircling the house.

In many cases the weather proved the wisdom of the “heathens” and the missionaries learned that the customary dwellings had their advantages, at least for the local or indigenous inhabitants.

Missionaries regarded Western clothing as a mark of civilization and were shocked at what they considered the inhabitants’ immodesty of dress. Western dressing ultimately became a symbol of prestige and social advancement.

Four missionary assumptions (Stanley 1990:160-162) should be noted here:

- (1) The cultures that missionaries were penetrating were not regarded as neutral but as evil. Heathen societies were regarded as the domain of Satan in religion, economics, politics, public morals, the arts and all that is embraced by the term “culture”.

- (2) Missionaries assumed that their countries constituted a model of Christian culture and society. They maintained that before the coming of Christianity, which had changed them, their countries had been equally primitive, barbaric and idolatrous.
- (3) The missionaries also believed in human progress as the legacy of the Enlightenment to Christian thought. Heathen societies, it was believed, which remained frozen in an ice age of primitivism, would be thawed through the preaching of the Gospel.
- (4) It was assumed that because “civilizing heathens” had worked in Sierra Leone, it would (automatically) happen elsewhere and in different situations. However, Sierra Leone’s situation was different to other situations. For example, Sierra Leone’s population comprised “uprooted” people, some of who had been former British slaves.

4.1.10 Missionaries and race

Certain practices might at least have justified the missionaries’ thinking of the Vhavenda and other “heathen” nations as “savages”. Societies thought to be marked by such features as domestic slavery, cannibalism, trial for witchcraft, and the forcible burial of wives or servants in the graves of deceased chiefs, were inevitably considered depraved and cruel (Stanley 1990:163). Faced with conspicuous failures in the quality of African Christian leadership, missionaries adopted a racialistic and condescending attitude that was skeptical of the Negro’s intrinsic capacity to rule “They continued to believe that African darkness was the result of the reign of the prince of darkness; ultimately it would be dispelled by the work of the missionary lightbearer” (Stanley 1990:163).

In 1901 a paper on missionary strategy conceded that the intellectual attainments of the Black people were markedly inferior to those of the White race, but attributed the differential to the contrasting impact of centuries of oppression as compared with centuries of civilization. Furthermore, there seemed no insuperable obstacle to the Black people reaching

the same standard attained by the Whites and evangelical Christianity was the only force that had proved itself capable of the regeneration required (Grenfell in Stanley 1990:163).

The German missionaries who came to work among the Vhavenda perceived them as lacking real “philosophy” like that of the Europeans. According to a German missionary, Wessmann (1908:97),

With these people, who still live entirely in primitive nature, the first law is naturally that of self-preservation. Their views of duty and right result from extraordinary personal powers of observation and an inborn instinct which they possess in common with the animal world surrounding them.

Wessmann (1908:99) states further that one must never look for strength of character in a Muvenda if he should be used by one White man to find out things about another European:

They make also very unsatisfactory witnesses in a court of law, and Europeans should avoid having anything to do with them in this direction ... altogether, the Bavenda remain a great psychological puzzle, only to be explained by his temper. His natural disposition is the same as that of the country he dwells in - a land which is cruel, and educates her children to cruelty.

According to Wessmann, therefore, the Vhavenda are not like Western people. While for Paul, the Apostle, it is “all [who] have sinned and come short of the glory of God and are in complete darkness” (Rom 3:23), for Wessmann, it is the uncivilized Vhavenda.

Wessmann (1908:100) stated that the “Bavenda have entered an epoch of civilization by the arrival of culture”, which presupposes that before the coming of the missionary, the Black people had no culture. Such beliefs, more than any Biblical teachings, were responsible for the negative attitude that the majority of the Vhavenda developed towards Western Christianity. Wessmann (1908:101) also held that the Whites need the Blacks to “develop Africa”. In other words, he saw the Blacks, with their physical strength, staying power and hardiness, as a means to an end. What Black people liked or disliked was apparently not important. What was important was that Black people could be used as tools.

According to Wessmann (1908:102),

Every native is lazy by nature, and from his early youth has had every inducement to laziness. Even proverbs justify his laziness to a certain degree. Thus: "Work which is done for the capital only kills the stupid." He has acquired his laziness with his mother's milk, and it has become his second nature.

After the Anglo-Boer War, he (1908:103) stated

Now that the old Boer spirit has been restored to influence, the danger of indolence which after the war made itself felt amongst the natives, will be repressed and the sound Boer system will succeed in keeping the blacks in proper bounds, so that they do not play a wrong part, neither by land-purchases nor by being granted the franchise to them, unintelligible parliamentary votes, as has been the case at the Cape, to the detriment of the colony.

Wessmann strongly believed that Black people should be governed by the Whites. Citing examples of what he considered Chief Tshivhase's cruel judgements, Wessmann (1908:103) stated that "these examples may be sufficient for the readers to form an idea of the said condition of a country where Blacks are left to themselves and govern themselves, when they are not governed by a European power". Later, he added (1908:127),

Many Europeans do not know even at present, which place or position to accord to the Blacks. Although they are the original conquerors of this country, they are everywhere under authority, in name at any rate. On the other hand, if they had no authority over them, they would, as surely as the sun shines, exterminate one another by continuous inter-tribal fights.

One of the common beliefs during the missionary era was that the "curse of Ham" (although it was Canaan who was cursed) was responsible for the backwardness of Blacks. In this regard, Wessmann (1908:127) said the following:

Once when I had a religious conversation with a Boer, and a native who had listened expressed his consent, the Boer told him to be quiet, for the reason that he and his kin had been cursed by their father, Ham: "The lot of the sons of Ham shall be in "servitude" was the patriarchal ipse dixit by Noah, when he was reviewing the reorganisation of the different nations.

4.2 THE LUTHERAN MISSION IN VENDA

4.2.1 Colonialism and mission

Bosch (1991:226) points out that during the Middle Ages, Europe was a self-contained island, cut off from the rest of the world by Islam. In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Muslims and a restlessness had meanwhile made itself felt in Europe. This restlessness culminated in the Age of Discovery. Vasco Da Gama opened a sea route to India, thus outflanking the Muslims and Columbus "discovered" the Americas. These events in the late fifteenth century inaugurated a completely new period in world history: Europe's colonization of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Kahl (1978:66) says it can be argued that the roots of "the entire phenomenon of the European colonization of the rest of the world lay in the medieval teachings on just war".

Bosch (1991:227) points out that colonization "of non-Christian peoples by Christian nations predated modern colonialism by many centuries, but those exploits were launched by Europeans to Europeans, and in each case the vanquished peoples soon embraced Christianity and were assimilated into the dominant culture". Thus European Christians met people who were physically, culturally and linguistically very different from them. A consequence of this was to impose slavery on non-Western peoples. Although in the ancient Roman Empire and medieval Europe slavery had little to do with race, following the "discovery" of the non-Western world, slaves could only be people of colour. The fact that non-Westerners were different, made it possible for the victorious Westerners to regard them as inferior. "Spain and Portugal introduced slavery and were soon emulated by other emerging colonial powers. By the eighteenth century Britain had the lion's share of the slave

market. In the ten years between 1783 and 1793 a total of 880 slave ships left Liverpool, carrying over three hundred thousand slaves to the Americas. It has been estimated that the number of slaves sold to European colonies amounted between twenty and forty million” (Bosch 1991:227).

The colonial period also precipitated an unparalleled era of mission. Christians discovered that, fifteen centuries after the Christian church was founded, there were still millions of people who had not heard the gospel and were headed for eternal punishment because they were still not baptized (Bosch 1991:227). Spain and Portugal, the first two colonial powers were champions of the Catholic faith and could be trusted to do their best to bring the message of eternal redemption to all, even to the slaves. In a papal bull, the Pope at that time, Alexander VI, divided the world outside of Europe between Portugal and Spain. Like its predecessors, this bull was based on the medieval assumption that the pope had full authority over the entire globe, including the pagan world. Colonialism and mission were interdependent: the right to have colonies carried with it the duty to Christianize the colonized. Colonies were brought under the control of the Pope and the church. Ecclesiastical agents were sent into distant colonies and their assignment became known as “mission” and they were called “missionaries”. The word “mission” is historically linked indissolubly with the colonial era and the idea of a magisterial commissioning. The term presupposes an established church in Europe, which dispatched delegates to convert overseas peoples (Bosch 1991:228).

During the fifteenth to the seventeenth century Roman Catholics and Protestants were still dedicated to the theocratic ideal of the unity church and state. This gradually changed and in the seventeenth century already a shift could be detected. According to Blanke (1966:109 quoted by Bosch 1991:303), in the early stages Dutch, British, and Danish trading companies usually refused to allow missionaries in the territories under their jurisdiction because they considered them a threat to their commercial interests. The colonial expansion of the Western Protestant nations, then, was largely thoroughly secular. In the nineteenth century colonial expansion again acquired religious overtones and was closely linked with mission (Bosch 1991:303). Authorities welcomed missionaries into their territories, regarding them as ideal allies. The missionaries lived among the local people, knew their languages and

understood their customs. They were thus considered better equipped to persuade unwilling “natives” unwilling to submit to the colonial master. Missionaries were also considered reliable educators, health officers and agricultural instructors, provided the government granted adequate subsidies. Since British missionaries only worked in British colonies and German missionaries in German colonies, missionaries came to be regarded as both vanguard and rearguard for the colonial powers (Glazik 1979:150 quoted in Bosch 1991:304). Colonial powers were well aware of the contribution that missionaries could make in their overseas territories. Bosch (1991:304) give the example of German Chancellor Von Caprivi, who stated in 1890, “We should begin by establishing a few stations in the interior, from which both the merchant and the missionary can operate; gun and Bible should go hand in hand” (translated by Bosch from Bade 1982:xiii).

During the imperial era (1880-1920), examples abounded of government spokespersons praising the work of missions or missionaries. Even after this period such statements were made. For example, South Africa, which was not a colonial power in the classical sense of the word, used similar language in its policy of “separate development” and regarded missionaries as government allies in carrying out its political blueprint. In 1958, for instance, the Minister of Bantu Development, MDC de Wet Nel, could say that “one of the reasons why so many people are still indifferent to mission” was their inability to grasp “the political significance of mission work. ... Only if and when we succeed in incorporating Blacks into the Protestant churches will the white nation and all other population groups in South Africa have a hope for the future... If this does not happen, our policy, our program of legislation, and all our plans will be doomed to failure ... Therefore, every boy and girl who loves South Africa, should commit him- and herself to active mission work, because *mission work is not only God’s work, it is also work for the sake of the nation!* ... it is the most wonderful opportunity for serving God, but also the most glorious opportunity for serving the fatherland” (Bosch’s translation – 1991:304).

That politicians could recognize the value of mission for their colonies is easy to understand, but not for missionaries to express similar views.

The role of colonialism came to be known as the “three C’s”: Christianity, commerce, and civilization (or the “three M’s” in French: *militaries blancs, mercenaries blancs, missionaries blancs*) (Bosch 1991:305). In supporting the colonial enterprise, few would support the view of the Rhenish missionary, CH Hann: “Even when the Whites subjugate and enslave other peoples, they still offer them so incomparably much that even the harshest fate the enslaved have to endure may often be called a fortuitous turn of events” (Bosch 1991:305). Most would probably have agreed with Carl Mirbt who wrote in 1910 that “mission and colonialism belong together” and that there “is reason to hope that something positive will develop for our colonies from this alliance” (Bosch 1991:306). Bosch (1991:306) quotes the response of the Catholic missiologist, J. Schmidlin in 1913 to the German Colonial Secretary, Dr WH Solf’s statement that “to colonize is to missionize”:

It is the mission that subdues our colonies spiritually and assimilates them inwardly - -- The state may indeed incorporate the protectorates outwardly; it is, however, the mission which must assist in securing the deeper aim of colonial policy, the inner colonization. The state can enforce physical obedience with the aid of punishment and laws; but it is the mission which secures the inward servility and devotion of the native. We may therefore turn Dr Solf’s recent statement that “to colonize is to missionize” into “to missionize is to colonize”.

Bosch (1991:307) refers to Blanke (1966:126) who quotes Ernst Langhans as referring to the involvement of the mission agencies with the colonial enterprise as their “indirect guilt” and further to a “direct guilt”, namely that they witnessed the atrocities committed by the colonial authorities but remained silent about them. Few mission advocates fundamentally challenged the attitude prevalent among Western Christians of the period, namely that where their power went was also the place to send their missionaries - mainly because colonies would offer protection to the missionaries.

It may be helpful, at this point, to consider the differences and similarities between mission and colonialism in German colonies.

British nationalism strongly emphasized the individual and the human community as transcending all national divisions. German nationalism, on the other hand, had Herder's *Volk* concept as one of its main foundations. German nationalism, especially as it began to reveal itself after the German Empire was created in 1871, left much less room for the independent individual than was the case in British nationalism. According to Bosch (1991:308), this factor also influenced the relationship between German colonialism and mission.

German colonialism became a reality in 1885 and lasted merely three decades. Rather than something that started on a small scale and gradually matured, it exploded onto the scene within the short spell of a few years and then disappeared as suddenly as it had started.

The birth of German Missions was in the spirit of Pietism. According to Pakendorf (1997:260), the German Protestant mission movement emerged at the historic juncture when the Pietist revival of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries fed into secular thought against the backdrop of the unfulfilled struggle of the middle classes in a politically fragmented and economically backward constellation of principalities. The beginnings of the German mission movement are intimately associated with Pietism. One of the most influential figures in the history of Pietism is Count Von Zinzendorf, the founder of the Church of the Renewed Moravian Brethren at his estate, Herrnhut in Saxony in 1727.

Pakendorf does not take Pietism to be a sect in the normal sense of the word. It is characterised by a more heartfelt, inward, emotional and enthusiastic form of Christianity, which places great emphasis on practical piety, prayer, philanthropic and missionary activities in general. Its appeal appeared to be in its participatory approach as opposed to the formality and distance characteristic of the Orthodox Protestantism. Conversion is of fundamental importance in Pietist experience. Everyone is expected to go through the experience of forgiveness, which comes after the release of guilt. "This central experience was incorporated in and fostered by daily devotions, including a relatively simple reading of the Bible, but also by a belief that everything which happened in the personal life was given by God and had its intended role in the schooling of the individual" (Pakendorf 1997:260).

It is in this context that the wish to do missionary work arose, as the desire to help others achieve salvation and forgiveness which one experiences oneself. This spiritual impulse should not be underestimated as a powerful driving force for missionary work. How missionaries view the “heathens” is also very important. In quoting the constitution of the Berlin Mission Society, Pakendorf (1997:261) states that the members of the society wish to spread the gospel because they are “filled with compassion of the wretched spiritual state and the resulting physical decay and degeneration of millions of heathens who live with us on earth and with whom, in spite of the distortion of the divine image, we feel closely related”.

4.2.2 The beginning of the Berlin Mission Society

On 29 February 1824, Johannes Janicke and nine other men in Germany came together with the aim of forming a new society that would help in mission work. Janicke started a theological school to train evangelists to go out and spread the gospel. At this school eighty evangelists were trained, some of whom were sent to South Africa (Mathivha 1985:35). Mission was taken as the “decisive centre of true Christianity”, based on the parable of ten talents (pounds) and the “nobleman who went into a far country to receive kingly power and then return” (Luke 19:12) (Eitken 1988:86). Those sent to South Africa were Kraut, Lange, Gregorowski, Schmidt and Gebel (Zollner & Hesse 1984:5).

Janicke’s successor, Prof August Neander, and his colleagues continued with the work and asked for donations from people. They set up the Berlin Missionary Society whose chief aim was to help missionaries by giving them gifts and praying for them. The mission inspectors soon noticed that the society was making progress and consequently considered sending missionaries to the “heathens”. A seminary was opened on January 5, 1829 where many missionaries were trained and later sent to South Africa, East Germany and China (Mathivha 1985:35).

Work in the then Transvaal started late in the nineteenth century. The Revs A Merensky and A Grützner were sent to start a task in Swaziland. This was the first attempt to evangelize the Swazis. In 1847 James Allision of the Wesleyan Mission received a warm welcome from the

Swazis. After a short successful period of mission, a sudden and violent quarrel broke over the unsuspecting missionary, putting an end to his missionary operations. The converts who came and joined the mission stations were adherents of one of the chief's brothers, who was their rival. The king looked on them as rebels and, without warning, suddenly attacked them and had many of them killed (Mathiva1985:37). Allision was forced to withdraw to Natal after this massacre. He was followed by Merensky and Grützner, who approached Swaziland with the hope that they would succeed. The king was distrustful of their intentions. This led to the failure of their mission as well. Merensky withdrew to the Transvaal where he also met difficult situations. In spite of these hardships he managed to start Botshabelo, which became a great success.

4.2.3 Establishment of mission stations

Du Plessis (1912:349) recounts that before 1872 the missionaries occupying the most northerly stations in the Transvaal, Blaauwberg and Mphome used to undertake evangelistic tours from time to time into the regions bordering on the Limpopo River.

The discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa changed the whole face of Southern Africa. When the rush to seek employment in the gold and diamond diggings was on, adventurous Vhavenda who had left home to go and work there, were attracted by the teachings and preachings of missionaries. Some were converted and became disciples of the new faith. Others took the opportunity of attending what was generally known as "night schools" for the purpose of learning the three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). Mathivha (1985:41) asserts that those who were fortunate enough to receive both baptism and an elementary knowledge of the three Rs exercised considerable influence on their return, particularly on their various chiefs.

Because of this, as early as 1870 Chief Tshivhase started to seek missionaries to preach and teach among his subjects. Other Vhavenda chiefs followed and eventually five major mission stations were established, which later proliferated into numerous smaller stations.

(1) Beuster Mission (Ha-Tshivhase), 1872

Reverend Carl Beuster (1872-1901) must be considered a pioneer missionary in Venda because of what he did educationally and spiritually. He was born in Liebenwalde, Brandenburg in Prussia on 7 July 1844. After completing missionary training, he was sent to the then Transvaal Republic on 14 June 1870. He first worked as an assistant missionary at Modille and Ha-Matlala in the Pietersburg area (Mathiva 1985:42).

In 1872 he was instructed together with Reverend Stech, to establish a mission station among the Vhavenda under Chief Tshivhase, who had earlier requested missionaries. Beuster set off from Matlala to Venda on 30 October 1872, accompanied by Revs Stech, Beyer and Grützner. They were given Maungani to help establish a mission station there. Grützner and Beyer went back to Matlala, leaving Beuster and Stech to start work among the Vhavenda. From the start, it was not easy for them to get converts. They started by looking for people who had been converted and baptized while working in urban areas. This was not easy since most of these people had reverted to their traditional ways of worship. Finally, Johannes Mutshaeni of Fondwe came forward to help Beuster. Mutshaeni was baptized, while in Natal, by James Allision of the Wesleyan Mission. Mutshaeni proved very helpful to Beuster who, after meeting with him, started to collect words for his vocabulary book. He also helped him to draw up a liturgy (Mathiva 1985:43).

Beuster was the first person to compile a Venda Reader. He depended on the assistance of Mutshaeni. The two are therefore pioneers in the written form of the Venda language. Extracts from the Bible were translated. They compiled children's songs, which are still sung today (Mathiva 1985:43).

Beuster had to wait five years before he could administer baptism. According to Mathivha (1985:43), people who came to church at that time, came out of curiosity. The missionaries were highly suspect. According to Grundler (quoted by Mathivha 1985:43), the Vhavenda seemed to delight in spoiling and even destroying what Beuster had achieved, for instance in his garden. Beuster was resisted as an alien and his teaching was not accepted. One reason

might be that his message was not contextualized. There was no connection between his God and the Vhavenda's *Nwali*.

Another convert, David Denge, settled at the mission station. He was later joined by Paulus Luvhengo from Modimolle. Later a school for children was begun with Beuster's stepdaughter, a child of Johannes and a child of Luvhengo as the first enrolled pupils (Mathiva 1985:44).

Converts were not easy to come by but in 1876, at Pentecost, Beuster's kitchen worker was baptized. The people who witnessed this ceremony were moved although the helper was not a Muvenda girl. After this, three people approached him for baptismal classes. However, they could not continue with the classes owing to the outbreak of a smallpox epidemic at the station and the subsequent death of David Denge and Johannes Mutshaeni (Mathiva 1985:44). Mutshaeni's death deeply affected his wife, who at that time was not a believer. A year after her husband's death, Mrs Mutshaeni was baptized and became the first Muvenda to be baptized by the missionaries. According to Mathivha (1985:44), in 1879 five people were baptized and two years later twenty children were already attending school.

The missionary work started to expand and several outstations were subsequently established. In 1881 an outstation was established at Tshififi or HaTshikalange. This outstation did not grow as expected. The one founded at Mbilwi in 1886 grew to be a leading Lutheran congregation in the 1970s and 1980s, even surpassing the one at Beuster where the mission station had started. In 1887, an outstation was founded at Lukau in Thengwe and in 1894 another one was founded at Mandala. Judging by these outstations, the area of operation of the Tshivhase mission station spread rapidly to the south, east, west and north. Gradually it was becoming clear to the headmen and chiefs that the missionaries were not usurping their hold and power in the way they had earlier suspected.

In 1887, the church building had to be enlarged and a new school was built (Mathivha 1985:44). The two institutions led to new roads being built and a great change in Venda.

While Beuster was at Maungani he started to plan missionary journeys that would take him to areas outside Venda. In 1892, accompanied by J Wedepohl and Meister, Beuster went to the then Mashonaland, where they founded the first mission station at Gutu (Mathiva 1985:45).

In 1893 smallpox broke out again and many died. This was followed by a plague of locusts, and in 1896 by a great famine. It was difficult to bring food into the country from outside because *rinderpest* had broken out among the cattle, and no beasts of burden were to be found anywhere (Mathiva 1985:45).

These natural disasters did not leave Beuster unaffected. Between 1872 and 1901 Beuster lost three wives through malaria. Beuster himself died at the mission station on 5 November 1901. The mission station was named after him and is still known as Beuster Mission Station.

Johannes Mutshaeni, who worked closely with Beuster, contributed greatly to the establishment of the mission station. Mutshaeni (also known as Malindi Neluheni) was born at Tshiheni, an area close to Lake Fundudzi, and was brought up there (Mathiva 1985:45). At that time many youth flocked to Kimberly (*Khimbini*) in search of wealth. Mutshaeni also heard of Kimberly and wandered south towards the diamond fields. On arrival, he availed himself of opportunities to develop that were not to be found in Venda. He enrolled at night school to learn to read and write. On Sundays, he attended missionary church services (1985:46). From Kimberly he moved to Natal, where he was baptised by Rev James Allison of the Wesleyan Mission (1985:46). He did not stay long in Natal. When he returned to Venda, people were shocked to hear him speak of a "strange" religion. He started to worship God in a cave at Tsharotha near Tshiheni until the arrival of the Berlin missionaries. The missionaries heard that he was preaching what they were preaching. Mutshaeni also heard that there were White missionaries at Maungani who were preaching what he was preaching.

On Christmas Day, 1872 Mutshaeni travelled to Beuster to find Rev Beuster and his colleague, Rev Stech celebrating the day (1985:46). The missionaries were pleasantly surprised to hear that he was a Christian who had been baptised while away from home.

Mutshaeni realised that God had sent these missionaries to help him in the work he had already started doing. After meeting the missionaries, Mutshaeni attended church services every Sunday at Beuster Mission Station and returned home the following day.

Later he decided to leave home and his people and settled at Maungani thereby becoming the first Christian in Venda to leave his people because of Christ. While at Maungani, he undertook the task of teaching Rev Beuster to speak and write proper Tshivenda for at that time Beuster only knew Pedi. Mutshaeni thus played a prominent role in making Tshivenda a written language as well.

When he arrived at Maungani, he was zealous to spread the gospel to other areas. By this time the Tshakhuma Mission Station had not been established. Mutshaeni's involvement influenced Chief Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma to request a missionary to work among his people. The ensuing negotiations led to the arrival of Rev E. Schwelnus in 1874 to start his work at Tshakhuma. Beuster realized that Mutshaeni would do greater work if he was trained so he was finally sent to Pietermaritzburg to attend a Bible continuation class. After completing these classes Mutshaeni returned as an ordained evangelist. Mathivha (1985:47) points out that as an ordained evangelist, Johannes went over hill and dale, preaching the word of God untiringly. Through him the outposts of Mukumbani, Tshamanyatsha, Khalavha, Mandala, Mbilwi, Tshififi and Thengwe were established, with churches and schools (1985:47). Smallpox broke out in 1876 and as a result Mutshaeni died in November of the same year, leaving Rev Beuster and the congregation in a difficult situation.

Mutshaeni's wife continued his work until her death in 1894. Their marriage produced three sons, namely Joseph, Daniel and Johannes, the last one named after his father. The eldest son, Joseph, was sent by the Lutheran Church to Mphome where he completed his training in 1888. He later worked as an evangelist and started a new mission station named Emmaus. In 1919 he was ordained a minister of the Lutheran Bapedi Church, a breakaway church from the Berlin Mission.

(2) Tshakhuma Mission Station, 1874

Chief Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma wanted missionaries to work in his area. Mutshaeni was a relative of the chief. The chief sent him to ask Rev Beuster to consider starting a station at Tshakhuma. Beuster and the chief agreed that a missionary be found to start a mission station.

Merensky, the then Superintendent of the Berlin Missionary Society in the Transvaal, was informed of this. He and the committee in Germany quickly responded and sent Erdmann Schwellnus from Lutkomandscheit in Litane (Germany), who arrived at Tshakhuma on 14 May 1874 (Mathiva 1985:49).

Having invited Schwellnus, the chief felt bound to help him erect his buildings by providing workmen. Schwellnus set about learning Tshivenda and the Vhavenda customs. Mathivha (1985:49) states that very soon he established a friendly relationship with Chief Maphuphe of Lwamondo. This proved to be a wise step for when he started his school in 1875, four of Maphuphe's sons enrolled and attended catechetical classes.

Inter-tribal fighting at Tshakhuma in 1876 delayed mission work. This was to be followed by the smallpox epidemic. In the same year David Fungani, a Muvenda, returned from Natal, where he was baptised and settled at Tshakhuma. Mathivha (1985:49) states that Fungani became the first Christian to stay at Tshakhuma Mission Station.

The first baptismal ceremony took place in the third year after the arrival of Rev Schwellnus. The two candidates for this ceremony were Johannes Madima and Simeon Madilonga. At this time another mission station had already been started at Mavhola, where a missionary, Klaas Kuhn, was stationed. Madima was sent to help Kuhn (1985:49). The work began to progress faster. At the end of the year fourteen more people were baptized, including Jacob Munzhedzi, a brother of Chief Mphaphuli. In the same year three marriages were solemnized according to Christian rites (1985:50).

The new year brought challenges to the work at Ha-Tshivhase and at Tshakhuma. The attitude of the local inhabitants around Tshakhuma became hostile to the missionary work although Chief Mphaphuli remained friendly and protective. Chief Makhado, on the other hand took up a menacing attitude towards Christians because of the way some of the missionaries behaved. Grant points out that when he paid a visit to Makhado in 1894 he discovered that he had a strong influence among other tribes. He was regarded as a paramount chief. Almost all missionaries supported the Boers against the Black people. Perhaps because of this, Makhado did not have a positive attitude towards missionaries. Most people later adopted this attitude (especially after the battle of the Vhavenda against the Boers where the Boers lost). They believed that the missionaries had come as a tool of the Boers to take their land and give it to the Boers. According to Van der Merwe (1994:106), “hulle het beweer dat die sendelinge deur middel van vrome woorde van broederliefde en van die Vader vir almal hul land wou verower” (they alleged that the missionaries wanted to take their land through kind words about brotherly love and of the Father for everyone [translation])

Towards the end of 1878, the chief of Tsianda at Lwamondo died. Maphuphe claimed the right to appoint his successor, and so did Makhado. This led to an unhealthy situation that affected the mission station. According to Mathivha (1985:50), only nine people were baptized in that year. The following year happened to be a circumcision school year. This also created an unhealthy situation for the mission station. Only three people were baptized in that year. In the meantime the British annexed the South African Republic. The new government put an end to the hostilities between Makhado and Maphuphe (1985:50). The peace that ensued contributed to the baptism of twelve people in 1879. The work continued to grow. Mission outposts were established at Chief Mugivhi's and Chief Masia's places. Two evangelists were sent to these outposts: Johannes Madima to HaMutsha and Jacob Munzhedzi to Masia's place.

In 1879 Schweltnus reported that the British government had defeated Sekhukhuni, and captured and taken him to Pretoria. This news prevented Makhado rising up against the British (Van der Merwe 1985:123).

Makhado declared 1880 a year of circumcision. According to him, all Vhavenda, even those at the mission stations, were to be circumcised. This command was in direct contradiction to the one given by Chief Madzivhandila, who had earlier excused the Christians from this ceremony. The Christians were left with no choice but to arm themselves in order to defend themselves and their property.

In 1882 an outstation was established at Mugeru. This proved to be encouraging but an attempt to open one at Mauluma in the Makhado area failed because Chief Makhado did not welcome the missionary idea. The year that followed proved to be very difficult for the missionary work in the Tshakhuma area. Chief Tshivhase had started collaborating with the missionaries even at the expense of his fellow compatriot, Chief Makhado. The ensuing struggle between the two chiefs halted mission work. The outpost at Tshifhire, established in 1886, had to be abandoned because Makhado warriors had plundered the area.

In 1890 the missionary, Meister, was sent to Tshakhuma to assist Schwellnus. Chief Madzivhandila died in the same year. He was followed by Chief Mbodi, who, like his father, encouraged mission work amongst his people.

Important missionary development started to take place from Tshakhuma. The Tshakhuma Christians had started trade relations with the Vhakalanga (Shona) from across the Limpopo River. These Vhakalanga expressed a desire to have a missionary working amongst them. As a result, Missionary Superintendent, Knothe and Schwellnus undertook a missionary journey to Zimbabwe to find out what the position was. Mathivha (1985:51) states that Madima was stationed there. Another outpost was established at Muraleni (west of Louis Trichardt), where Luvhengo was stationed as an evangelist. The outpost did not survive long time. It is not clear what problems there were, but Chief Funyufunyu finally invited Luvhengo to settle near him, which Luvhengo did (Mathiva 1985:52).

In the years that followed, Wessmann from Georgeonholtz was transferred to Tshakhuma since Schwellnus and his family had been recalled to Germany to recuperate. Wessmann was followed by Rev Sonntag in 1905. He continued the work begun by Schwellnus until he died in 1919, and was succeeded by Rev L Giesekke. Giesekke brought about significant

improvements in the church and school and introduced compulsory education. The Chief, Mulaudzi and Robothata supported him. Mathivha (1985:52) points out that he literally saw to it that every child was at school by moving from village to village on horseback.

His son, DW Giesekke, was called upon to help with the school. He proved to be very able and the school grew tremendously. Later a teacher's training college was established and became known as the Vendaleland College for Higher Education.

Johannes Madima, a Mavenda and relative of Mutshaeni at the mission station at Maungani, was the first Black person to do mission work at Tshakhuma. Mutshaeni encouraged Madima to attend the missionary school at Tshakhuma. Madima went to Tshakhuma in 1875 with three of Chief Maphuphe's sons.

At Tshakhuma Madima continued Bible classes under Rev Schweltnus after he was baptised in 1877. He finally qualified as a church elder and was later ordained an evangelist. He was also involved at Mavhola in 1877 in laying the foundation of a new mission station together with Klaas Kuhn.

At Tshakhuma Madima proved very industrious. According to Mathivha (1985:53), Madima made it possible for the missionary work to spread to Mauluma, Luonde, Hamasia, Hamugivhi and Hamagoro.

Chief Mugivhi of HaMutsha realized that the missionary work in other areas was helping the communities and asked for a resident preacher in his country. Madima, being a tribesman of the place, was charged with the task of founding a mission station and school at Hamutsha (Mathiva 1985:53). The school and the church expanded. Church services were well attended and there was great school progress. Progress at Hamutsha also meant progress at Tshakhuma because after primary classes, Hamutsha pupils had to go to Tshakhuma to further their education.

Madima was also involved in the establishment of a mission station in Zimbabwe.

(3) Vhumbedzi and Vhutavhatsindi

The northeastern part of Venda, from the Ngwedi River up to the Luvuvhu River in the south-eastern part, is known as Vhumbedzi. The area borders on the Mutale River in the north.

Vhumbedzi was then ruled by Lukhevhedzhana Ravhura, Tshirumbula Luvhimbi and Makwarela Ranndogwana Mphaphuli (Nemudzivhadi 1977:1). The Vhavenda of this area, known as Vhumbedzi, were believed to be great rainmakers. It was also believed that *Raluvhimba* (God) used to visit this area. At that time there were no roads or bridges. At the same time one of the Vhumbedzi chiefs, Chief Ranndogwana of Tshifudi went on a gun expedition until he arrived at Kimberely (Nemudzivhadi 1977:2). Here he met some missionaries who spoke the word of God to him and the people he was travelling with. Chief Ramudingana invited these missionaries to his country. Klaas Koen, who was accompanied by Schwellnus from Tshakuma, was sent as a missionary to the area. Klaas Koen was born on 22 May 1852 in the Cape at the mission station called Anhalt-Schmidts. His parents died while he was still very young. Koen was an intelligent child. When Pastor F Priestch, a missionary at Anhalt-Schmidt, realised that Koen's future could be bleak without responsible parenting, he decided to take Koen and educate him. Koen was subsequently adopted by a friend of Priestch's sister in Germany who had lost a son and decided to raise an African child. So Koen was taken to Germany to be trained as a missionary. He left for Germany in 1868.

After completion of his training he came back with Otto Kahl and was ready to start a mission station in Venda (Van der Merwe 1984:56). The Berlin Mission Society (BMS) had earlier obtained a donation from a German businessman, Holtz and his son, George, to start a third mission station. The mission station was to be known as (George and Holtz) Georgholtz. So Koen came with this gift and started a mission station on 26 July 1877. This mission meant that the B.M.S. could expand towards northern and eastern Venda.

This was the beginning of Georgenholtz Mission Station. Ranndogwane informed his father Ranwedzi at Mbilwi who, although he welcomed the idea, suggested that the missionary should not come to Mbilwi (Nemudzivhadi 1977:2). After building the parsonage, they started with schooling in 1878. The first school in Venda was at Tshifudi in 1878. Headman Ranndogwana, August Tshimange, Joseph Radima, Paulus Ligonuba and Nathaniel Lalumbe were the first pupils to enrol at the school (Nemudzivhadi 1977:33). After completing their "syllabus" they were then ready to be baptized. Chief Ranwedzi refused to allow his child Ranndogwana, to be baptized. The following year Nathaniel Lalumbe became an assistant pastor. A few people started to be baptized from this time onwards. Koen worked very hard. Within a short period of time he managed to baptize thirty people (Nemudzivhadi 1977:4).

Realising that the work was growing, the missionary sent Lalumbe to Ha Luvhimbi to start an outpost in 1881. That same year there was a famine. The Vhavenda called it *tshipindula* (famine). People survived by eating the bark of the *Muthobi* tree. During the year Chief Tshirumbula and Chief Phophi Rambuda died. Koen managed to complete the new mission house in 1882. There was an outbreak of malaria and Koen became ill. His health deteriorated further and he asked the committee in Germany to release him from mission work in 1882. The committee sent Dietrich Baumhöfner as an assistant (Van der Merwe 1984:57). Koen died on 10 February 1883. Six weeks later, Baumhöfner also died of malaria. After that Beuster was responsible for Georgenholtz, which then had a congregation of six members. Koen left behind two children, Makwarela and Matsheketsheke (Nemudzivhadi 1977:4).

After Baumhöfner's death, Frans Maluleke was appointed an assistant. Since he could not baptize, missionaries from other mission stations would come to conduct the baptism ceremonies. In 1887 Wessmann was stationed at Mavhola. He moved the station to a mountainous place, possibly where mosquitoes were not very troublesome.

The coming of Wessmann to Vhumbedzi proved advantageous. Wessmann visited Chief Makahane, of Vhanyai, whose cruelty was widely known. As Wessmann reasoned with him through the Word of God, his heart softened and he received the Word of God. He asked for a missionary in his country. Presently Lalumbe was sent from Haluvhimbi. Chief Makahane

helped them build a mission house. Chief Makahane enrolled as a student at the school and proved to be very intelligent. He was baptized in 1890 at the age of 78. Simon was sent to look after this outpost (Mathivha 1977:58). He later fled to Georgenholtz as a result of the behaviour of the people and famine. The outstation was closed.

The work of God continued to prosper in the hands of Wessmann, who baptized about 31 people between 1887 and 1894 (Nemudzivhadi 1977:6). In 1894 Wessmann was transferred to Tshakhuma and Rev Gernecke came in his place. The work proved to be tough at Haluvhimbi. In 1898 Gernecke left Georgenholtz for Germany. Gottsling arrived as his successor. The following year he was transferred to Gertrudsburg, where he was to establish a new station. In 1900 Lalumbe was transferred from Hamutele to Makuya outstation. The station at Ha-Mutele could not continue (1985:58).

Before Schwellnus left for Germany, he chose a new site for the erection of the Mavhola mission station. On 18 May 1906 Revs Schwellnus and Giessekke arrived at the new site with building materials. Giessekke himself did the building. After the completion of the house, he lived in the house with his wife in 1907. Georgenholtz then had a married missionary after ten years (Mathivha 1985:59).

When Giesekke arrived there were several Christians who had received the Word in the other cities. These included Samuel Nembilwi, Marcus Phunge, Daniel Phophi, Jeremiah Sidimela, Felix Guweli Netshabumu and Rabel Malade (Mathivha 1985:59).

Giesekke married the daughter of Rev.Schwellnus. Mathivha (1985:59) points out that both Rev Giesekke and his wife were well liked. Mrs Giesekke worked as a midwife among the people and was nicknamed *Vho-Makhadzi* (the great sister). She and her husband helped the people a great deal during the outbreak of German measles.

Giesekke enjoyed great progress in both church and school. In August 1919 Giesekke was informed by Superintendent J. Wedepohl from Germany that he had been transferred to Tshakhuma congregation. The work at Georgenholtz was taken over by C. Westphal of Khalavha.

Lalumbe was the son of a headman at Tshifudi. During the rule of Makwarela, Tshishonga Lalumbe, together with Liguduba and Tshimange, became great friends of the chief. These friends got permission from Chief Ranwedzi Mphaphuli to have a missionary at Tshifudi. As noted, Rev Koen was sent to Tshifudi. When Koen started his work, one of his first pupils in the school and catechetical classes was Tshishonga Lalumbe. He was baptized in June 1879 and given the name Nathaniel. Thereafter he continued with Bible lessons until he became an ordained evangelist who helped Koen and his successors.

He committed his life to God, and he was also on good terms with Chief Luvhimbi. He was sent to Haluvhimbi to start a mission station there. He established outstations at Makahane, Mutele (near the confluence of the Limpopo and Mutale Rivers) Musunda (at Makuya) and Tshamadandila. He again went to Tshaulu and established another mission station called Tshamahale (Mathivha 1985:60).

At this time, his son Nathaniel, who was named after him, was sent to Middleburg for Biblical studies and then came back to help his father who was already old. This mission station was later moved to Ha-Begwa. When Lalumbe retired, his son continued in his footsteps. From Ha-Begwa young Nathaniel went to Makuya. While there he studied through correspondence courses until he was ordained a minister. Mathivha (1985:61) points out that the station at Makuya had already been started by Martinus Ramudzuli together with Ramudzuli Nemukongwe in 1926.

When Giesekke arrived a Vhumbedzi in 1907, there were only two mission stations at Hamakuya. He began to plan to expand to other areas. At Thengwe, Masiagwala had already started a new work. The work could not progress well because of malaria. Just after Masiagwala left, Mathews came to replace him, but died of malaria. Headman Lalumbe allowed the missionary team to choose a suitable spot for the erection of a mission station. The team chose Lukau, where Mushe Tsanwani was sent to teach in 1913 (Nemudzivhadi 1977:10).

After this missionary station, Thenzheni outpost was established. At this outpost there were Christians who received the new faith while in the cities. They included Lazarus Luvhengo, James Ratshitanga and Stephanus Ntsieni. Another outpost was established at Hamadala. Chief Rambuda became envious of this and called for missionaries to work in his area. Andries Raphalalani was sent in 1913. Other outposts were established at Mandala Tshilonwe and Mavunde. The Word of God continued to spread to many other areas of Vhumbedzi.

In 1931 Rev I Dau, who was assisting Westphal, was received at the Church of England Mukula mission station, by an agreement between headman Joel Takalani and the Lutheran Christians.

(4) Gertrudsborg, 1899

After the establishment of Georgholtz, twenty-five years elapsed before the establishment of another mission station at Louis Trichardt (Mathivha 1985:61). The mission station was started by Rev Gottsling who had just arrived from Georgholtz. Chief Makhado had died and Chief Ramakhadwana gave Gottsling permission to start a mission in his area.

The tent that Gottsling erected served both as a church and as a school. The work started was very small because the people showed a negative attitude towards the Word of God. It was commonly believed that the Bible was the law of the White people. This was probably the influence left by Chief Makhado, who insisted on maintaining his own traditional religion. Elias Mashau, a leprosy sufferer, was the first man to listen to the Word of God and accept the new religion. Later some workers were converted.

On 6 January 1901, the first group from the village, including Isaac Ramovha, were baptized (Mathivha 1985:62). The school started by Gottsling started was attended by both girls and boys. Mubva Simeon Ramabulana, one of Chief Makhado's sons, was one of the pupils at the school. The Word of God had, indeed, started to have an impact.

4.3 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE LUTHERAN MISSION IN VENDA

4.3.1 The Lutheran Creed

Pakendorf (1997:257) maintains that although German Protestant missions were non-conformist by origin, they were mostly committed to the Lutheran Creed of the two kingdoms based on Luther's interpretation of Romans 13. This is reflected in the *platzordnung* or station regulations for the Berlin Mission station, Botshabelo in the Transvaal, which state that "We reside in the country of the Boers. Therefore we have to obey the laws of their state and pay taxes to them" (Merensky quoted by Pakendorf 1997:258). This gave rise to conflict at the station, which caused a group of the inhabitants at the station to lose the absolute trust they had in the missionaries. According to Merensky, the missionary in charge of the BMS in the Transvaal (Pakendorf 1997:258),

They found the loyalty we had pledged to the Boers from the start difficult to comprehend. We saw in the Boers a "power that be" (Rom 13:1) to whom we owed obedience for the reason alone that we had pledged it and because we had been permitted into the country under the condition of such obedience; but those of our people who had been moved by the spirit of national reaction regarded the power and the authority of their traditional leaders as far more legitimate than the White invaders.

Another missionary who similarly demonstrated his obedience to this creed was Christopher Sonntag. He is believed to have developed a close and friendly relationship with Malebogo of the Bahananoa people in the Northern Transvaal. When he first met the chief, he declared that "if you would get to know me and realise that I desired nothing else in his country but to teach his people God's Word, to help the sick as much as I could, also with medicine, and to assist everybody as a teacher to the best of my ability" (Pakendorf 1997:258). When conflict arose in the 1980s between Malebogo and the Boers, the missionary support was with the Boers. Sonntag insisted that the Africans must pay taxes to the ZAR government. Delius (Pankendorf (1997:258) explains the reason behind this support as follows:

The experience of these missionaries of the Berlin Mission Society in the Transvaal also led them to perceive the political independence of African communities as a fundamental barrier to evangelization and 'civilization'. They increasingly insisted that all converts should recognize the authority and observe the laws of the ZAR.

The Lutheran creed of the two kingdoms was apparently responsible for this state of affairs. However, where the government was Black, the missionaries became "spies" of the White government that wanted to subjugate the natives. The Berlin Missionaries, like Wessmann, became a spy of the ZAR when President Paul Kruger was planning to subjugate Makhado and Mphephu.

Merensky's (Pakendorf 1997:258) assertion that "the political independence of African communities" was regarded as a fundamental barrier to evangelization by the missionaries serves to explain these double standards. The Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) demonstrated reluctance in political issues. According to Jooste (Pankendorf 1997:259), this reluctance to get involved in politics was a fundamental factor in their largely uncritical acceptance of the stringent conditions for missionary activity laid down by the authorities of the ZAR. It should be stated, however, that the interpretation of the Lutheran creed was not free of racial bias, which manifested itself more openly as the nineteenth century progressed. Because of this, the Berlin Missionary Society acknowledged only the Boer authority in the Transvaal (Pakendorf 1997:259), even where they had no control as in Venda or Sekhukhuniland, where they never had any authority.

This policy led to increasing acceptance of and co-operation with Boer authorities on the part of the missionaries, on the one hand, and their growing alienation from the needs and aspirations of the indigenous converts, on the other (Pakendorf 1997:259). Where there was armed conflict, the Berlin missionaries invariably sided with the Boers and frequently exhorted their followers to abstain from any militant activity against the White rulers.

4.3.2 Racism

The BMS was guided by the pragmatic understanding that it was certain that in a country where God's judgment had broken a people politically, the seed of evangelism was mostly conveniently sowed; that was where the missionaries enjoyed the legal protection of the colonial government (Pakendorf 1996: 259). German missionaries always opposed whatever independent African movements there were, from the earliest separatist churches and nationalist organisations to the ANC and trade unions. When, in the apartheid era, human rights violations, mass forced removals and political repression were affecting not only the general population but also the very adherents of the mission churches and protest against these policies came from various quarters, the German missions were, to a large extent, silent (Pakendorf 1997:260).

4.3.3 *Volkschristianisierung* ideas about nation, language and history

Mission stations in South Africa, based on a model derived from the settlement at Hermhut, had a central place in the missionary strategy of the Berlin Missionary Society. The stations had to have their temporal and spatial organization, which finally reshaped the African landscape, in introducing regular hours, controlled working time, straight walls, right-angled roads on the ground plan, houses built in the European style, planned and in "orderly conditions" (Pakendorf 1997:260). The mission stations had an influence on the surrounding settlements. According to Nabath Mokgatle (Pakendorf 1997:263),

Mr. Penzhorn, the first Lutheran Priest in our tribe, not only taught my people how to read the Bible, but transformed their lives entirely. He brought European architecture into their lives and new ideas. Houses built of bricks began to appear. Though many thatched roofs remained, they pushed rondavels out of the way and houses with European-type doors and windows spread all over the village. Old habits of building houses anywhere, anyhow, died out. Anyone in the tribe who wanted to build a house, particularly newly-married couples, had to go to the chief's court to ask for a site. From the chief's court they were sent out with three or four men to a place to cut

a site for them and to see that it would be in a straight line with other houses built before theirs.... As a result of these new methods which were due to the church and Mr. Penzhorn's influence, well surveyed streets developed and houses facing each other, in a manner that was absent before the church came. Phokeng became a Europeanized tribal village.

The researcher concurs with Pakendorf that the mission station is the site of a paradox underlying the mission. On the one hand, it represents the projection of a remote yearning for a lost harmony where a simple and self-sufficient life under God was thought to be possible beyond the world and its corrupting influences; at the same time, the presence of the mission stations amounted to a cultural, religious and political onslaught of the entire communities to be protected. The German missionaries did not set out to change people's traditional culture or their own being. Only what they considered "pagan custom" and therefore incompatible with Christianity was to be rooted out. As Merensky (Pakendorf (1997:263) puts it,

All the remaining national customs (*Volkssitten*), indeed the whole life peculiar to the people (*Volk*) in the home, courtyard and garden were left untouched, to the extent that it had nothing specifically pagan about it. We said to the people that they should remain Basotho and not attempt to imitate the Whites.

Pakendorf believes that this concern for the customs of a nation is the result of another formative element in the consciousness and practice of German missionaries: romantic thought as expressed in a particular notion of language, history and anthropology. This spirit of Romanticism dominated German intellectual life in the first half of the nineteenth century. Pakendorf (1997:263) states that this determined the views of missionaries who saw themselves as mediators between two cultures and at the same time as interpreters of African life. German Romanticism was based on Herder's anthropology and philosophy of history (Pakendorf 1997:263). These thoughts finally became part of the political programme of rising European nationalism. Humanity was thought to be organized in large groups whose members might share certain similarities with others but nevertheless formed discreet and organic entities. This was treated as axiomatic by the missionaries. Language was taken as the means through which a *Volk* or nation would express itself and distinguish itself from

other similar groups. The language of a nation was considered the spirit of that nation. Out of this understanding grew the writings of Gustav Warneck (1834-1919), who developed the notion of *Volkschristianisierung*, or the conversion of peoples (Pakendorf 1997:264). A *volk* was therefore seen as a living organism with a “national spirit” that manifests itself chiefly in the mother tongue as well as in all other aspects of culture, custom, law and literature. It is this concept, according to Pakendorf (1997:264), that lies at the heart of the peculiar paradox of German mission: the attempt to change the indigenous people completely through conversion, and at the same time immersing oneself in their language and culture in order to preserve these.

For this reason German missionaries placed so much emphasis on the study of African languages and ethnography. Pakendorf (1997:269) believes that German missionaries held a central place for the field of African linguistics in the nineteenth century: “Their contributions to the study of numerous African languages, in the form of grammars, dictionaries, translations and theoretical speculation skill, stand today as a monument to their achievement”.

Carl Meinhof, the founder of Comparative Bantu Studies, regarded himself as a pupil of the Berlin missionary, Karl Endemann, who was active in the then Northern Transvaal. Most of the Berlin missionaries in Venda became fluent in Tshivenda.

4.3.4 The importance of the *Volk's* language

Against the background that the mother tongue was regarded as the spirit of a *volk*, Beuster, the first Berlin missionary, translated and published the Gospel according to John, titled, *Evangelii nga Yohannes na dziepistola dza Yohannes na dzipsalme na dzimoe dzo khehoaho nga Tšivenda*. His work was continued by Schweltnus, whose two sons of Vhavenda birth, although German by descent, did a great job in the writing of Tšivenda. They learnt Tshivenda from early childhood and gave Meinhof good material for the phonetic and phonological analysis of Tshivenda (Mathivha 1972:16). Many other publications were done in Tshivenda, including *Worterverzeichnis der Venda – Sprache, mafhungo a bugu ya*

Mudzimu, Evangeli na Mishumo ya Vhaapostola, Testamende Ntswa, Nyimbo dza Vhatendi, midzimu ya malombo.

In 1930 PE Schwellnus published his *Mudededzi* (Mathivha 1972:34). Through his hard work, Schwellnus finally published "the greatest publication in the history of Tshivenda literature "viz. the complete Tshivenda Bible. According to Mathivha (1972:34) this is Schwellnus' best form of the Tshivenda idiom and reveals him as a gifted translator. The Tshivenda used in this Bible exerted a great influence on the development of Tshivenda literature. It became the book of every Muvenda family. Its words and expressions are used often in most Muvenda families. Mathivha (1972:37) maintains that the translation of the Bible into Tshivenda awakened in the Vhavenda people a love for discussing religious topics and eventually for Christianity as a form of philosophy.

It is clear that the philosophy of the Vhavenda was challenged by the philosophy of the Bible. The Vhavenda started to have models in the Bible that could be followed. The Tshivenda language was mightily enriched. The social aspect of Hebrew life somehow affected the social aspect of Tshivenda. This feature of the German missionaries was highly welcomed and praised by educators like Mathivha (1972:43), who states:

The missionaries set the Venda language on the road to the unique position of being an instrument of great influence in the hand of a developing nation... The missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Venda soul and the Venda language. They have built an everlasting monument which will guide the Vendas from generation to generation. The language monument will always outlast the material monument, because in the language lie those deep rooted spiritual values of a nation which no human force can subdue no matter how sternly applied. This language has preserved the Venda and distinguished them from the rest of the Bantu peoples of South Africa... The language made the Vendas what they were, makes them what they are and what they will be. The most treasured aspects of Venda culture are enveloped in the Venda language. Therefore the translation of the Holy Bible into Venda and all the work that has been done in connection with the

Christian literature that laid the basis for the translation of the Bible made the Venda language to stand on all its pillars.

Mathivha's unreserved appreciation of the Berlin missionaries could be regarded as representative of the Vhavenda people's feelings. At the same time it should be noted that the translation itself presented problems, especially as regards the name of God in Tshivenda. Schweltnus' translation estranged Vhavenda people from God by calling Him *Mudzimu* rather than *Nwali* (see Khorommbi 1996:28).

4.3.5 Elementary education

The German mission did not produce any national leader with the exception of Sol Plaatjie. It was a different matter in the English language institutions. Many leaders emerged from these institutions. Pakendorf (1997:265) contends that this was so because the German Protestant mission movement saw its task as a spiritual one with the result that all other activities, including education, were subservient to this. In support of his argument, Pakendorf (1997:262) cites Wangemann, the director of BMS as follows:

In all school education it should be remembered that the institution of young to become Christians is the single main purpose and that everything else is subsidiary, and teachers have to guard with great diligence that subsidiary matters do not become primary ones nor that dispensable things are drawn into the area of teaching subjects.

Pakendorf goes on to show that teaching people skills that were useful outside church service or a narrowly defined ethnic community was seen as a mistake. As a consequence the BMS, as comprehensive as its undertaking was in building schools and providing education, concentrated on primary schools; whatever further education was offered was mostly intended for training the mission's own evangelists and teachers.

When Black parents realized the role of English in the world and South Africa, they felt their children had to be taught English as well. This caused problems (Pakendorf 1997:266). In the then Western Transvaal many members of the Lutheran congregation sent their children

to English schools to learn English. The missionary then tried in vain to discourage them (Pakendorf 1997:266). The missionaries began to influence the government to adopt the concept of mother-tongue institutions as a fundamental principle of African education.

Pakendorf (1997:266) shows that from the 1920s on the government made increasing use of missionary experience and expertise in African education, linguistics and anthropology. Several descendants of German missionaries, most notably GH Franz and WWM Eiselen, became outstanding figures in “native” education and administration. This led to the merging of the missionaries’ *volkschristianisierung* and a policy of racial segregation that finally led to separate development and the Bantu Education of the 1950s. All vocal opposition to these policies from the black community was totally ignored.

4.3.6 Missionary attitude towards Blacks

As mentioned already, some BMS missionaries’ description of Blacks was influenced by prejudices and stereotypes. For example, according to Posselt (Pakendorf 1997:267):

Sloth and indolence are inborn features of a native’s make up, which he will carry throughout life into his grave. As little as it is possible for him to change the colour of his skin, as little does it seem possible for him to spend his time on useful exploits. His time never runs out. He cannot get into his head, that time is precious and must be spent purposefully. Even Christianity has not succeeded in advancing him beyond his ingrained concepts, when left to themselves they will loaf in a nation of loafers. They laugh at us that we make our lives so difficult on account of our many requirements, which have turned us into our own taskmasters. And if a white person could get on without head cover, shirt, coat, socks and shoes, sleep on the ground, live in a straw hut and feed himself on mealies and milk alone, and if he lived in a land of eternal summer which feeds people almost by itself, then he would also choose an easier life and become a follower of his black brother in loafing.

Posselt’s observations above say more about the missionary himself as a product of tightly controlled and rigidly disciplined way of life than about the blacks he purports to describe.

4.3.7 Authoritarianism and paternalism

The world from which the German missionaries came determined their attitudes and views, their thoughts and behaviour. It was a world of strict controls with clearly defined bounds. The Director of the Society was regarded and addressed as the father. The missionaries called each other “brothers”. The Society made great demands on individual missionaries: they had to be men of impeccable moral behaviour and had to pass a strict training course, lasting four and a half years, in the seminary.

The mission stations became schools where each hour was planned. “Laws” that governed each missionary station gave clear evidence of the hierarchical and patriarchal order of the station. Authority was given in descending order. This was in keeping with the Lutheran doctrine of Orders of Creation. The station was placed under God whose Word was to reign; then came the overseers, who were to be regarded as masters of the property; last came the missionaries, who were their representatives and pastors of the congregation (Pakendorf 1997:270). No one was allowed to build, till the land or cut wood without their permission. The inhabitants were to be supervised by the fourth instance of authority, the elders, who also were responsible for dispensing justice. Transgressions singled out for severe punishment included theft, fornication and resistance against the elders (Pakendorf 1997:270).

These patriarchal and patronising attitudes of German missionaries were not always met with a positive Black response. Many Blacks condemned the strict discipline that existed on mission stations. They felt that they were being enslaved. Many people preferred to live with their people outside the mission stations because of the harsh conditions.

4.4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN VENDA

4.4.1 Education

Up to 1902 all education for Blacks in the Transvaal was a missionary undertaking, carried on without any financial aid from the state. Venda became one of the last, if not the latest, parts of South Africa to receive educational attention. In Venda it was only in the late nineteenth century (1872) that German missionaries succeeded in making permanent settlements. There were several reasons for this, one being that the missionaries themselves were latecomers to the area. Another reason is that Chief Makhado, who regarded himself as the king of all Vhavenda, did not trust the missionaries' motives and consequently was hostile to the whole idea of mission work done among his people. He believed that the missionaries had come to rob him and his people of their land. The biggest objection to missionary work came from religion and culture. The attitude of most of the missionaries towards the Vhavenda culture aggravated the situation. Change was regarded with suspicion and even animosity as it could endanger the continued identity of the community.

For their part, the missionaries believed that the Tshivenda culture had to be uprooted and destroyed. There was very little attempt at inculturation. No wonder, then, that the early missionary records tell of indifference and callousness encountered, which in some cases had to be borne patiently for a long time before any serious impression could be made (Hofmeyr 1890:123).

The beginning of Western education in Venda is strongly connected with Christian missionary effort. What proved very difficult was to connect the two types of education – the Western form and the African form. Missionary Christianity easily believed that since the Vhavenda could not read and write, they were uneducated. The truth is that education is not something the Black man received for the first time from the White man. Many African people who have not come into contact with European influence reveal so much refinement that to call them uneducated would be to misunderstand the meaning of the word. Moreover, the fundamentals in the content of Tshivenda and any other indigenous education did and do

not differ radically from those of our modern system. According to Mathivha (1985:68), a survey of this education reveals that:

- (1) The Muvenda child had to know something about the world of things. He had to study and know the world around him.
- (2) The child was taught to make tools which had been evolved through experience.
- (3) The child had to learn to live in a group; his family, his age group and tribe. He had to learn to take his rightful place and make his contribution in each section and in the community as a whole.
- (3) He had to learn of his ancestors and their great deeds. This would include their religion. This knowledge was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Modern schools follow the curricula stated above. What difference there is, is one of degree only.

4.4.2 Religion: Christianisation

The coming of the missionaries can be viewed differently, depending on who is doing the viewing. Christians cannot fail to see their coming as a direct act of God to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Vhavenda. Through their coming, the Vhavenda's understanding of *Nwali* was strongly enriched. They also will form part of the "great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands", and crying out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Rev 7: 9,10) which John saw in his vision. The missionaries were products of their own era. They did not study the African Traditional Religions to deepen the people's understanding of God. Because of their ignorance and negative attitude, they believed that the Vhavenda did not have a word for God. Instead of using *Nwali* for God's name, they took *mudzimu*, which in Tshivenda means the spirit of a dead person.

4.4.3 Mission stations

The Berlin Missionary Society initially wanted to undertake mission work among the Amaswazi, but as Revs Merensky and Grützner were refused permission by the Amaswazi to establish a mission station, the Society with the approval of the South African Republic, established a mission station at Gerlachskop among the Bakopa tribe in July 1860. The work later included the Bapedi people. The three mission stations that were established during this period were later abandoned when Sekhukhune, the Bapedi chief could not see eye to eye with the German missionaries. Because of this failure the missionaries penetrated Venda by establishing mission stations. These mission stations finally became centres of learning and development. The Vhavenda were not only taught to read and write but also how to build with burnt bricks. These centres like the one at Tshakhuma became a hive of educational activity. Most of the earlier leaders of Venda were educated at this institution. The mission stations estranged the Christians from their own people, however, and that ultimately minimized their influence amongst their own relatives. Mission stations were not meant to break down the wholeness of people's relationship to themselves, to their community, and to their gods or God.

4.4.4 Racism

As indicated earlier, the Berlin missionaries failed to show the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) government that racism was evil. Although they were working among the Vhavenda people they did not respect the Vhavenda's sovereignty: They became informers of the ZAR government, thereby betraying the trust given them by the Vhavenda chiefs. It is difficult to find any reason other than their racial attitude for their opting to support the ZAR and not the Vhavenda chiefs. Van der Merwe (1984:165) maintains that, with the exception of Rev Merensky, the Berlin missionaries never became involved in the political affairs of the South African Republic yet he also admits that "indirectly the Berlin missionaries assisted the South African Republic in establishing its authority over recalcitrant Bantu tribes" (1984:166). It is difficult to understand how that was not political involvement.

4.4.5 Black history

Their missionary work enabled the Berlin missionaries to acquire an intimate knowledge of the Black people, and they have made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of early Black history. At the same time, however, it should be noted that that history has been written and presented subjectively.

4.4.6 Cultural contribution

Through studying Black languages the missionaries enriched the cultural and national life of Black people. The translation of the Bible into Tshivenda, raised Tshivenda to the level of any other language.

4.4.7 The value of the vernacular heritage in African Christianity

Bediako (1995:60) believes that the ability to hear and to express the message received in a person's own language must lie at the heart of all authentic religious encounter with the divine realm. According to him, God speaks to men and women always in the vernacular and the Christian faith is culturally infinitely translatable. In his view, the Reformation succeeded simply because Europe had discovered and repossessed the Gospel through the medium of European vernacular languages (Bediako 1995:61).

In Africa, missionaries helped that African Christianity attain this vernacular status more quickly. Even with this, it has been very difficult for an indigenous Christian to emerge because in Africa the African languages are not promoted. Apart from reading the Bible in the vernacular, there is hardly any other Christian literature written in the vernacular. This makes it difficult for the hearers of the word to make their response on their own terms. The African Initiated Churches are among the churches that have pioneered this indigenous response.

The vernacular serves as a bridge to the traditional world-view. What most of the African Initiated churches did was to bring the traditional world-view that underpinned the old religion into their allegiance to the Christian faith. Without making use of the vernacular, the African world-view gets completely eroded. The African Initiated Churches are able to help their people better because they think in the same language. The historical churches, by presenting “Christian” solutions that have not been thought through from the perspective of the persisting traditional world-view of their members, prove less helpful in the end. Many members of the historical churches live in two worlds, one half-traditional and the other half-Christian.

The missionaries have laid a foundation that theology should make use of. It is doubtful whether African Christian theology can make much headway in the African context without taking the vernacular languages more seriously than it has so far. It is sometimes argued that writing in a *lingua franca* like English, French or German secures a much bigger readership than writing in the vernacular. That argument fails to realize that languages have to do with more than communication, they are the means of “assuming the weight of culture” (Bediako 1995:72). It also fails to realize that communication is more than the use of a language. African Christian theology will have to make a deliberate effort to relate theological reflection and construction to the actual vernacular articulation of faith in African Christian experience. When the vernacular is taken seriously, both culture and theology benefit. Only through the vernacular is a genuine and lasting theological dialogue with culture possible.

4.4.8 The message

The Africans regarded the missionary project as a foreign one. Even when the missionaries were Black, they were usually strangers to the local language, customs and culture. Oduyoye (1986:31) asserts that missionaries were difficult people to accommodate. The Africans regarded them as strangers with a strange message to proclaim. The only qualification that the missionaries had was that they were “men who had experienced the grace of God in their own hearts and lives” (Oduyoye 1986:32).

One of the five missionary principles laid down by John Venn, a founding member of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, was that “a missionary should have heaven in

his heart and tread the world under his foot" (1986:32). Oduyoye (1986:32) goes on to show that even men not fit for English ordination might yet prove good missionaries to savages rude and illiterate. This resulted in a situation where "people of dubious intelligence and integrity were launched on the unsuspecting 'savages' of Africa".

They were the first teachers of Christian dogmatics to the Africans. Their major task was to communicate a life. Much has been written about the sacrifice, dedication and heroism of White missionaries in Africa, but the Africans who collaborated with them, helped them and interpreted for them are rarely mentioned. What comes through to the African reader of missionary history is its ethnocentricity. Oduyoye (1986:33) is voicing what many Africans think and feel when she says that in many ways mission was "an exercise in cultural occupation". Missionary accounts often speak of "occupying" or "reoccupying" towns. The missionaries went further and gave Black people names that only Whites could pronounce correctly because they found African names too difficult to say, or too "heathen". The missionaries lived in isolation and were not prepared to be in partnership with the Africans. This contributed to the dullness of their message. The lack of a contextual approach in the missionary enterprise was responsible for the Vhavendas' lack of receptiveness. Moller-Malan (1957:171) illustrates this point in the following conversation between King Makhado and Michael Buys:

*"Wat wil hy hê?" het hy aan Michael
gevra... "Hy wil vir jou bid," was Buys
se antwoord. "Vir my bid? Weet hy dan
nie dat ek self as godheid intree vir my
Volk by Mwari (God) nie?"*

("What does he want? "he asked Michael... "He wants to pray for you," was Buys' answer. "Pray for me? Doesn't he know that I myself mediate for my people before Mwari (God)?" – translation)

If the missionaries had studied the African religion, it would have been easier for them to help the king, but they continued referring to him as a "heathen". The missionary message

was not contextualised. Most of the missionaries were the products of an evangelical revival and were preachers of the evangelical truth:

- People were dead through sin and guilty before God.
- Christ died to save people from the penalty of sin.
- Christ lives to save them from the power of sin.
- Only faith in Christ can give people Christian salvation.
- All need absolute conversion of heart and life.
- The Holy Spirit convicts and sanctifies human beings.

Some of these points are covered in the hymns that Schwellnus (1976:30) wrote; for example, hymn no. 38:

Shango la Venda Midzimu ya kale ndi swiswi
Ro phuphudzika ri tshi nga dzinngu dzi sa liswi
Hee Vhavenda!
Ri pfi: Vhafela nda
Ngeno Mutshidzi e hone?

(Land of the Vhavenda, your ancient gods are darkness
We group in darkness like sheep without a Shepherd
You Vhavenda
We will be called dying without the Saviour
Even though the Saviour is around)

This hymn demonstrates the missionary's ignorance as well as the missionary's attitude towards Vhavenda tradition. By *Midzimu ya kale* (ancient gods) he probably means ancestors. To call people's ancestors "darkness" is to insult their history. The problem here was that the missionary thought that the Vhavenda worshipped their dead ancestors. At last it is becoming clear that they were simply paying homage to them. Ela (1988:16) points out that many African cultures never say that a person has died, but rather that he/she has departed, has left us, is no longer, has passed on. To an African, death is not the annihilation of a person. This has serious consequences. The dead are treated like they are alive. Beer and food are often shared with the dead. To the Africans, they are not performing a cult,

they are reliving a kinship relation with them, actualising such a relationship once again in the living present (Ela 1988:19). Western Christianity should have understood this first before it passed its verdict on these issues.

Another hymn that shows the same misunderstanding and ignorance is hymn 36 from “Nyimbo dza Vhatendi” (Schwellnus 1976:29):

*Ndi vha no tevhela zwi vha xedzaho
Midzimu isi tshithu i vha xedzaho
Vha isa thevhula kha vho dzamaho
Naa vha do tshidza hani nga vhathu vho faho?
Mingome na nanga dzo vha neani?
Zwitungulo na thangu zwo vha farisani?
Ndi hone u xela hu lilisaho
Vha fulufhela zwithu zwi sa phulusiho.*

(Foreign gods, useless and misleading
They bring libations to the dead.
How can they be saved by the dead?
Sangomas and healers what did they give them?
Amulets and divine bones didn't help them.
This is utter lostness that makes one cry
They put their faith in things that do not save.)

Here, too, the ancestors are referred to as *Midzimu i si tshithu* (gods that are nothing). To the missionaries “these gods” are misleading. To the Vhavenda what was misleading was the missionary’s god who was so ignorant that he couldn’t be entrusted with people’s lives. Such a god was seen to be helpless in the presence of evil forces. The Vhavenda’s concept of evil did not leave out evil supernaturalism personified in witches. The missionaries regarded such a world-view as superstition. Because of this misunderstandings some of the early converts to Missionary Christianity were branded witches who fled to the missionary stations to practice their craft without any interference. Missionary Christianity treated the Vhavenda

as if God was completely absent in Venda before their coming. Mission stations were governed by commands and imperatives formulated by Merensky. These commands prohibited the worshipping of false gods, rain-making feasts, witchcraft, adultery, drunkenness, gambling, marriage by cattle (*dzekiso* or *lobola*), polygamy and circumcision in the mission station. Having stipulated this, he also commanded them to live as Africans in accordance with the customs and traditions of their fore-bears (Mminele 1984:38). There was thus a contradiction in the missionaries' view of the religious and political nature of conversion. The Vhavenda had to denounce "tradition", but they could not aspire to equal status with Whites in cultural or political terms.

The missionaries and their followers in mission stations placed greater emphasis on adhering to laws and doing good works than on grace. Church attendance was compulsory. Mission stations became a danger not only to the Vhavenda communal life but also to the Lutheran teaching of justification by faith alone. Christians in the mission stations were robbed of their responsibility towards their fellow human beings and the privilege of sharing forgiveness and love with them. They further were taught to adapt through passive acceptance of the colonial power structure. As Mminele (1983:275) says, "One of the principles of the Berlin mission has always been total submission to the authority of the government." This acceptance of power structures is the reason that many Lutherans were silent during the period of apartheid.

4.4.9 Health services

The missionary project introduced Africans Western medicine. In many ways this became a natural development because as soon as missionaries arrived in Africa, they were struck by the widespread poverty and disease which claimed the lives of so many people, particularly children (Saayman 1997:92). At the beginning, Allwood reveals that there was no clearly worked out "theology" of medical mission (1997:92). Instead it was a fairly ad hoc response to a situation of great human need that immediately struck a chord of compassion in the missionaries' hearts. The strategies to provide medical missionary service were conceived and developed more or less completely in the mission field itself. In Venda the Berlin

Missionary Society did not start any medical project that lasted for a long time. The clinic started at Georgholtz did not flourish at all.

The provision of medical care brought Christian missionaries into direct conflict with African Traditional religion. The Vhavenda herbalists, *nangas* (healers) and diviners were regarded as “heathens” and their medicines rejected outright. To the Africans, the problem of sickness and well-being is firmly rooted in the religious domain whereas to the missionaries, healing was a biological issue. This does not mean that there was no discernible difference between a Christian medical health worker and a thoroughly secularized professional health worker.

The denial of witchcraft contributed to a rapid increase in the suspicion of witchcraft and fear of its effects. Saayman (1997:92) quotes G. Jansen who states that the denial of witchcraft both led to a loss of personal identity and tribal identity. Mission stations were seen as refugee camps for witches who did not want to renounce their wizardry. Medical mission suffered from a number of serious contradictions as (Saayman 1997:94):

1. Medical missionaries claimed to heal in the name of God, yet their practice failed to integrate their belief in God with their medical practice in a way compatible with African culture.
2. Medical missionaries claimed special expertise in diagnosing illness, yet failed to ground their diagnosis in an understanding of the sick person in his/her cultural presuppositions about the causes of diseases.
3. The clash of the secularized, technocratic Western medical system with the thoroughly religious traditional African views on healing created an intolerable contradiction for the medical missionaries. They now faced “the temptation either to reduce scientific medicine to a gimmick for the saving of souls, or to reduce their personal religious faith to simple humanitarianism”.

The three main hospitals, Siloam, Donald Fraser and Tshilidzin have served and continue to serve the Vhavenda people along the lines of health in a tremendous way. Many lives were

saved because of these hospitals. Because of a lack of better approach, many Africans did not feel safe to go to these institutions. The anti-African medicine campaign also had its casualties. Many "good Christians" continued their double living standards. To them, there were certain ailments that only the traditional approach would heal. Hence, although their faith would have them "curse" African customs and traditions, they would still be seen to be practical believers of the practices.

CHAPTER 5

The coming of Pentecostalism to South Africa

5.1 ORIGIN OF PENTECOSTALISM

Anderson (1992:59) is of the opinion that one of the main reasons for the growth of the Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches in Africa has been the remarkable ability of Pentecostalism to transplant itself. Many Pentecostals understand their historical background from the mould of the Pietist historian, Gottfried Arnold (Clark & Lederle 1989:7). A search of the “underside” of church history reveals that Pentecostalism is not a new wave in Christianity but a revival of the charismatic first-century church, which lost its pneumatic fervour through institutionalisation and neglect. Wimber (1984 :62) believes that signs and wonders did not cease with the close of the first century or with the completion of the canon. They have continued to occur in each of the three major historical periods (patristic, medieval, reformation – modern). Wimber (1984:62) continues to show that when the ones in authority endorsed the gifts, they occurred openly and widely within the church. When those in the authority no longer endorsed the gifts, there appears to have been a decline in their usage and their occurrence. When anything happened outside the norm that tended to threaten the structure or status quo, Wimber (1984:62) believes that the institution (power base) would try to put a stop to it.

On the other hand there is a strong anti-pentecostal stand that has produced anti-pentecostal literature. The early charges were that pentecostals were demon possessed whereas the present-day charges try to show that pentecostalism has serious exegetical and theological problems. Deere (1994:253) attempts at answering one of the modern-day anti-pentecostal writer, John MacArthur, by showing that God’s supernatural power has never been confined to a specific period of history (see also Kydd (1984:); Robeck (1985:11-25); Donald Bridge (1985:174 ff); Kelsey (1973:129-199). However, at times there have been flickers of that charismatic experience. There is no consensus on when the present-day Pentecostal movement got underway. Some believe that it started in North Carolina in 1896; others

believe it started in Topeka, Kansas in 1901, and still others believe it started in Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 (Clark & Lederle 1989:7). Nevertheless, all Pentecostals agree “that the Pentecostal experience is not a religious innovation, and that in one form or another it has manifested itself throughout the history of the Christian church” (Nichol 1966:19). Hart (Clark & Lederle 1989:8) points out that establishing the historical antecedents of Pentecost is not a straightforward historical task.

There are at least three different approaches to this task: (1) tracing the “Charismatic” revivals throughout the history of the church; (2) tracing its development in the USA since Pentecostalism *per se* is an American phenomenon with roots in Methodism revivalism, the holiness movement, and conservative Protestantism; and (3) tracing its “doctrinal” history from Roman Catholicism (sacrament of Confirmation) through Methodism and the Holiness movement (sanctification) to Pentecostalism (Spirit baptism).

McNamee (Clark & Lederle 1989:8) chose to identify “enthusiasm” throughout church history and relate the twentieth-century Pentecostals to that phenomenon. According to Bruner (1970:35),

The ancestral line of the Pentecostal movement could appear to stretch from the enthusiastic Corinthians (1 Cor.12-14) or even the Old Testament anointed and ecstatic (e.g. Num. 11, 1 Sam.10) through the gnostics of all varieties, the *montanases*, the medieval and the pre-Reformation spiritualists, the so-called radical, left-wing, or Post-Reformation Quakers, and, when given fresh new parentage through the pietist, Wesleyan and revivalist movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany, England, and the United States, continuing in the first half of the nineteenth century briefly but very interestingly through Edward Irving in England, and lengthily and very influentially through Charles Finney in America, issuing in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the higher-life and holiness movement which gave birth to their twentieth century child, the Pentecostal movement.

Bruner seems to have covered most of the options available in the course of church history with the exception of the Gnostics, who appear to be misplaced. The Gnostics stressed that

people could be saved through a secret knowledge which must be viewed as heretical perversions of Christianity. Anderson (1992:40) maintains that many of the early manifestations of Pentecostalism were found in the religious expressions of the slaves and were themselves a reflection of the African religious culture from which they had been abducted. Lovett (Anderson 1992:41) states,

It may be categorically stated that black Pentecostalism emerged out of the content of the brokenness of black existence. Their holistic view of religion had its roots in African religion. One cannot meaningfully discuss the origins of contemporary Pentecostalism unless the role of blacks is clearly defined and acknowledged.

McRobert (Anderson 1992:41) supports this view, saying that Black Pentecostalism cannot be fully understood without some consideration of their African origins and the conditions of slavery under which a Black understanding of Christianity was formed. According to McRobert, the influence of African religious ecstaticism and spirit possession is evident not only among Black Pentecostals but also in an attenuated form among the White Pentecostals. However, it may be argued that ecstatic spiritual behaviour is not the monopoly of African religions only, Eastern religions share the same manifestations.

The Black American preacher, Seymour, is regarded as the father of Azusa Street Pentecostalism. Horn (Anderson 1992:41) points out that

Seymour and his Black followers carried their ideals and the liturgy of Black Christianity with their emphasis on freedom, equality and community and a liturgy of short story, dance and motoring into the Pentecostal movement.

Anderson points out that this does not imply that early Pentecostals had a syncretised understanding of the Holy Spirit, but merely shows that the Pentecostalism imported to Southern Africa in 1908 certainly had an African influence which made it easier to flourish on African soil.

5.2 THE BEGINNING OF ZIONISM AND THE PENTECOSTAL FAITH IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.2.1 The forerunners of the Pentecostal faith in South Africa

Anderson (1992:48) suggests that the immediate origins of Pentecostalism were in the nineteenth-century American holiness movement, particularly in the Keswick wing of the movement, which propagated a “baptism in the Spirit” as an inducement of power. But as far as South African Pentecostalism is concerned, the holiness movement only contributed indirectly through the preaching and writings of the Dutch Reformed leader in South Africa, Andrew Murray Jr. According to Anderson (1992:48), most Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches in South Africa have their roots in events that took place at Wakkerstroom in the southeastern Transvaal. These happenings were directly influenced by happenings in Zion City and later by those in the Pentecostal revival of Azusa Street, Los Angeles, California.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, John Alexander Dowie founded a new movement called the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (CCACZ) in Zion City, later known as the Christian Catholic Church in Zion. According to Oosthuizen (1987:7), Dowie referred to himself as “Elijah the Restorer” with his followers preaching “restoration truth”. To them, restoration truth meant that the church must be organized on apostolic principles (Liardon 1999:35). This church originated in the holiness movement and emphasised divine healing and trine baptism of adult believers by immersion. Pieter le Roux, a former DRC missionary working in Wakkerstroom, joined this movement in 1902, together with about 400 fellow African workers and converts. This group, called Zionists, had reached 5 000 by 1905 (Oosthuizen 1987:30).

In 1904 Dowie’s overseer appointee, Daniel Bryant, arrived in South Africa to oversee the work of CCACZ. Oosthuizen (1987:18) states that there were already a few thousand African converts to the CCACZ in Zion when Bryant’s group (colleagues) arrived. He himself baptized one hundred and forty-one converts to Zion at Wakkerstroom, including the former Dutch Reformed Minister, Le Roux, and his family. Sundkler (1961:48) points out

that this event laid the foundation for the emergence of the whole series of Zionist churches. Wakkerstroom was to the South African Pentecostal-type churches what Azusa Street, Los Angeles was to be to the global Pentecostal movement. The majority of Pentecostal-type churches still have the designation "Zion" added to their names. It is significant that the Zionist movement and the Pentecostal movement in South Africa had the same origin. According to Sundkler (1976:51), "We emphasize the continuity between Zion and Pentecost." This is confirmed by Oosthuizen (1987:21), who sees Le Roux, the first South African leader of a Pentecostal mission church, as 'the man who contributed most to the work of this church (the CC ACZ) among the Black Christians. At the beginning stages it was not easy to isolate African Pentecostalism from the Zionist movement.

5.2.2 The arrival of Pentecostal missionaries

In 1908 a significant chapter opened in the South African Church history with the arrival of the American Pentecostal missionaries led by Thomas Hezmalhalch and John G Lake, who was a former elder in Dowie's church (Sundkler 1961:48). To Le Roux's amazement, he discovered that there was a theological difference between what Zion taught and what Pentecost was teaching. Zion taught immersion and divine healing; Pentecost did not (Sundkler 1961:48). The American Pentecostal team soon took over the "Zion Tabernacle" in Johannesburg for services (Sundkler 1976:52). Later in the year, a number of other Pentecostal missionaries arrived from America and Britain, apparently independently of each other. Among these missionaries were Charles Chawner, Henry and Anna Turney, and Hannah James, who were significant in the formation of both the Pentecostal Mission (later the Full Gospel Church of God) and the Assemblies of God (Watt 1992:20-21). Sundkler (1976:53) points out that Archibald Cooper, later prominent in the formation of the Full Gospel Church, also joined the new Pentecostal movement. Le Roux also joined John J Lake's Apostolic Faith Mission and soon became one of their key leaders in South Africa. Le Roux's African fellow-workers, to all intents and purposes, remained Zionists, although they embraced the teachings on the Holy Spirit emphasized by the Pentecostals (Anderson 1992:49). They did not consider themselves separate from the Pentecostals at this stage, with Le Roux still regarded as one of their leaders. De Wet (1989:64) concurs, pointing out that a meeting between (apparently White) representatives of the "Zion Church" and the AFM

Executive in 1909 agreed that Le Roux was in charge of the Zion mission work in the then Transvaal (now Northern Province) and that these two organizations would naturally acknowledge each other's certificates.

Why the Black Zionists preferred to remain in the "Zion movement" and did not join the Pentecostals as Le Roux did cannot be established with certainty. Oosthuizen (1987:26) states that "few Blacks followed Le Roux into the Apostolic Faith Mission ... because they did not want to discard the name 'Zion'". This indicates that there was a plurality of leadership even at this stage that oversaw the whole Zionist work, and that when one leader decided to follow another movement or name, those who did not see eye to eye with him, remained. However, Anderson (1992:49) maintains that at this stage it did not seem that there was any perceived schism between Le Roux (AFM) and the African Zionists. According to De Wet (1989:34), in 1910 the AFM Executive resolved that "whereas the natives deem the name of Zion so essential that this portion of our mission be known henceforth as the Zion Branch of the Apostolic Mission". Instead of the AFM being regarded as the branch of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, the Catholic Christian Apostolic Church in Zion was now reduced to a branch.

De Wet (1989:37) points out:

We must not underestimate the preparatory role that Zionism played in the genesis of the AFM. Not only was a key leader like Le Roux a former missionary of Zion, but Lake was also a former elder of Zion in the USA. It seems logical then, that some doctrinal beliefs should have been carried over into the AFM.

Some of the beliefs that he mentions are triune baptism by immersion, an emphasis on divine healing accompanied by a rejection of medicine and doctors, and taboos against alcohol and tobacco. Oosthuizen (1987:35) also states that Le Roux himself spoke out strongly against medicine. Today most Pentecostal-type churches still baptize by triune immersion like the AFM and unlike most other Pentecostal churches, which practise single immersion. The Zion Church in Breë Street, Johannesburg, became the AFM's first headquarters and,

according to De Wet (1989:38), many of the AFM's first White members were formerly members of Zion.

5.2.3 The significance of the Black origin of Pentecostalism

As indicated, the origins of the Pentecostal movement in the USA had a transforming effect on South African Pentecostalism. The driving force which generated the world-wide Pentecostal movement originated in a Black church in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, where the emphasis on "baptism in the Holy Spirit" with the "initial evidence" of speaking in tongues was propagated by William Seymour, a preacher.

Lovett (Anderson 1992:50) points out that although in its early years Azusa Street was indeed a model of interracial harmony, it was a Black church to which Whites came; and this church was led by the unpretentious Seymour, the son of slave parents. Anderson (1992:51) states that Seymour had himself patiently endured the dishonour of sitting outside the door of White Pentecostal leader, Charles Parham's Bible School in Houston, Texas, where he received the teaching (but not the experience) of "baptism in the Spirit". The racial laws of the Southern United States at that time did not allow a Black person to sit in the same classroom with White students. Seymour then received a call to pastor a Black Holiness Church in Los Angeles. His teaching on baptism in the Spirit infuriated the leadership and the church was consequently locked up against him. According to Anderson (1992:51), Seymour moved to a private home where the Holy Spirit was poured out on him and those who had followed him to his home meeting. Many people flocked to this house and soon it became too small for them; so an old stable (formerly an African Methodist Episcopal Church building) was rented in Azusa Street to continue the revival for three years without interruption.

This is then the church that became the centre of the Pentecostal blessing where missionaries, after receiving the Spirit, went throughout the world, preaching the Pentecostal message. They reached fifty nations within two years (MacRobert 1988:56,8). All this took place during America's worst racist period, but at Azusa "the color line was washed away in the blood" (Lovett 1975:131). At Seymour's church, people of all races and social

backgrounds “achieved a new sense of dignity and community in fully integrated Pentecostal services” (Anderson 1979:122). Lovett (1975:138) points out that Azusa Street became “an international gateway for the Pentecostal movement”. Synan (1971:114) points out that “directly or indirectly, practically all of the Pentecostal groups in existence can trace their lineage to Azusa Mission”.

This historical connection between Azusa Street Pentecostalism and South African Pentecostalism is of fundamental importance. Apart from the fact that Pentecostalism itself came into the world through the Black culture, Lake and other American Pentecostal missionaries to South Africa may have received the teaching of “Spirit baptism” at Azusa Street. Lake visited Azusa Street on several occasions and according to him (1981:19), “Seymour had more of God in his life than any man I had ever met up to that time.” Anderson (1992:51) records that a photograph taken at Azusa Street in 1907 shows Lake and Hezmalhalch together with Seymour and other early Pentecostal leaders. Anderson (1992:51) believes that “Daddy” Seymour was the leader of the events that transpired in Azusa Street and was a spiritual father to multitudes of early Pentecostals, including Lake. Lake (1981:32) revisited Seymour on at least one occasion to report on what was happening in South Africa.

5.2.4 Seymour and Parham

It is generally accepted that the teaching that speaking in tongues is the “initial evidence” of baptism in the Spirit originated or was rediscovered by Parham, a Holiness preacher whose students in Topeka, Kansas, first “discovered” speaking in tongues in 1901. Anderson (1992:52) maintains that it was Seymour, and not Parham, who was the driving force behind the early Pentecostal movement. According to him, if anyone can be regarded as the founder of Pentecostalism, it should surely be Seymour. Mapes Anderson (1979:61) supports this view, stating that “what had begun under Parham as a relatively small, localized movement, was to assume international proportion through the Los Angeles ministry of the obscure, chunky Black man”. Lovett (1975:131) remarks that “the blatant omission of Seymour by some classical Pentecostal historians is so obvious and becomes a form of judgement on our ethnic and racial pride”. Tinney (1978:131) states that the “silent treatment” of Pentecostal

origins by “the White leaders of the movement ... amounts to a veritable conspiracy on their part to keep the facts below the surface”.

Hollenweger (1972:22) points out that, among other dubious activities and beliefs, Parham propagated Anglo-Israelism and at least sympathised with the Ku Klux Klan, calling them “those splendid men” with “high ideals for the betterment of mankind”. This line of thought has been followed by right-wing organizations in South Africa who also identify to some extent with a sort of Afrikaner-Israelism (Anderson 1992:52). Pentecostalism subsequently put great emphasis on personal piety at the expense of national sins and institutional sins of racial segregation or apartheid.

According to McRobert (Anderson 1992:56), when Parham visited Seymour’s church in 1906, he rejected what he considered to be “unintelligent, crude negroisms and animalisms” being practised there. Parham reported that “Whites were engaging in the same motor behaviour as Blacks: shaking, jerking, dancing, falling down and speaking in tongues ‘under the power’ of the Holy Spirit”. This was Parham’s last visit to this church. Despite Parham’s failure to see God in all that was happening, Seymour continued to attract many Christians throughout the world.

5.3 THE INTRODUCTION OF PENTECOSTALISM IN VENDA

5.3.1 Missionary policy of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)

From its beginning in South Africa the AFM showed great interest in mission work. De Wet (1989:93) quotes the minutes of an executive council meeting in 1909:

It shall be made known to the congregation on the Lord’s day Evening, March 7, 1909 that there is a very urgent need of money for the support and maintenance and sending out of new missionaries into the field.

These minutes demonstrate church's missionary vision. At that time the church held annual conferences. However, the conferences were held on racial lines. A number of aims were accomplished at these conferences, such as the following (De Wet 1989:94):

1. It was an ideal opportunity for some sound teaching and further training because most of the workers were totally untrained.
2. It was a good opportunity to put heresies, or what could become doctrinal heresies, right, because most of the workers would be present.
3. With all workers present, it was an ideal opportunity to discuss matters of importance.
4. Initially, they also used the time of the conference for their annual business meeting. Later on, the conference (held in the evening) was combined with the annual business meeting, also called the "workers council" (held during the day).
5. It reinforced and demonstrated the unity of the church.

At such conferences the delegates/participants enjoyed worshipping since the Pentecostal worship is best enjoyed in big crowds. The conferences also boosted the morale of the church members since most of the congregations were small and at the time it was not uncommon for mainline churches to "persecute" and humiliate them. Being together as a big crowd left them with a positive attitude towards themselves and their church.

The 1910 conference arrived at important resolutions, which formed the basis on which all future missionary policies would be built. The minutes included the following (De Wet 1989:95):

These resolutions are accepted by the council as amended and subject to such revision as may be from time to time deemed necessary. Copy thereof is as follows:

1. That the work amongst the natives for the time being be conducted by a "Native Council" consisting of three European members (Dr J.G. Lake, P.L. le Roux, T. Schwede) assisted by three native overseers (the Brs. Mowane, Letwaba and A Oliphant).

2. Any person desiring to enter into the fellowship of the Apostolic Faith Mission as a worker will apply to the Native Council, which body shall refer its decision to the Executive Council for final ratification.
3. The Work shall be carried on by means of
 - a) Local preachers, who have the power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick and bury the dead.
 - b) Deacons, who have the power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick, bury the dead and consecrate little children.
 - c) Elders, who have the power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick, bury the dead, consecrate little children, administer the Lord's Supper and baptize believers.
 - d) Overseers, who in addition to all the foregoing, have the power to perform marriages, exercise discipline and to ordain ministers subject to the approval of the executive council. Elders and overseers are considered ministers.
4. Local preachers shall receive ordination by laying on of hands which may be performed by the Elder by consent of the Executive Council. Woman Workers shall be admitted as local preachers and receive a similar ordination.
5. Every church member in good standing, and especially those who have received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, shall be encouraged to take a share in the work by witnessing of what God has done to their souls.
6. In support of our Ministers, we follow the lines laid down in the Word of God. Funds shall be raised by means of tithes and offerings. Our native church is not expected to keep the European Ministers who labour in our midst, but the native workers are supported wholly from this source.
7. The decisions of the Native Council are subject to revision by the Executive Council of Johannesburg.

These minutes indicate clearly that at that time the relationship between Black Christians and their White Christians was not on a par. The work among the Natives was to be conducted by European people who were to be assisted by three Blacks (whose initials, with the exception of one who could have been a Coloured, were not even recorded). De Wet's

(1989:96) understanding that the Native Council consisted of 50% Whites to assist the 50% Blacks is misleading because the minutes clearly state that the natives are the ones assisting the Whites. Our own understanding is that these three Whites took the work as primarily theirs to be assisted by the three “natives”. The paternalistic attitude is very clear, given that the Native Council had to wait for the White Executive Council for the confirmation of their decisions. The Whites took it upon themselves to be guardians over the Blacks without asking why they themselves had no guardians. If the Blacks needed to go through certain development before maturity, such development was equally crucial to the White churches.

The missionary policy on the workers contains the following important considerations:

- 1) The Missionary Policy shows the different classes of workers with different job description. This clarified the jobs of different offices with the result that confusion was avoided which could lead to divisions.
- 2) The word “Pastor” does not appear anywhere in the document. It appears as if elders and overseers took over the responsibilities of the Pastor.
- 3) Although the document is silent on women becoming elders or overseers, the document shows that women were allowed as local preachers and were even ordained as such.
- 4) Since these minutes are a report on a meeting on native work, the absence of the office of the Missionary is very significant. Does that mean that at that time there was no thought at all that the “Natives” could also be missionaries?
- 5) The issue of full-time workers as paid professionals of the church is not there. (According to De Wet (1989:98), Lake encouraged his workers wherever possible to find employment and maintain themselves and their families.)
- 6) It is complimentary that from the beginning Black churches were encouraged to take full responsibility for their Black workers.

Resolution No. 5 is of paramount importance: “Every member of the church in good standing and filled with the Holy Spirit was from the outset encouraged to take a share in the work by witnessing to what God had done to their souls.” This served as a practical motivation for all church members to take soul winning seriously. Missionary Christianity,

however, started churches whose members found it very difficult to share in the work of their church. In the AFM church, the laity continue to play a significant role.

De Wet (1989:99) points out that in the first three decades of the AFM's existence, lay leadership played a very significant role in the growth and organizational structure and development. From the late 1930s, however, a sharp increase in the full-time pastorate was experienced and this subsequently led to a gradual decline in the participation and functioning of the laity. According to De Wet (1989:99), it was only in 1946 that the whole system of certification was altered and a change was made to the constitution regarding the AFM's ministry. Then the distinction became clear between "professional clergy" and the laity. During the early period, the laity fulfilled the following important role (De Wet 1989:99):

An analysis of the minutes for the period September 17, 1908 to February 28, 1936 shows that only 67 fulltime pastors were appointed, but that 332 laity, both men and women, were certified for the ministry.

After the constitutional changes in 1946, the distinction between the clergy and the laity was clear and the full-time pastors were well on the road to full recognition. This was the situation in the White AFM. However, the gap between the full-time clergy and the laity among the Africans has never been as big as in the White AFM.

The 1910 resolutions concerning workers resulted in problems that were addressed in the 1915 amendments (De Wet 1989:100):

- a) That in future no elder or evangelist shall be ordained or expelled by Native overseers except in open conference, and in the presence and with the approval of the European superintendent or his duly appointed representatives.
- b) That no Deacon or Local Preacher shall be ordained by Overseers or Elders without first obtaining the consent of the European superintendent.

The following resolutions moved by Bro. Dugmore, seconded by Bro. Moffat, are also adopted.

- 1) That no minister or worker shall be received by an Overseer or Elder except with the consent of the Overseer or Elder under whom he has been working, and always subject to the approval of a European superintendent.
- 2) Whereas it is reported to the council that certain certificates have been issued by Native Overseers, such practice is declared to be illegal and highly reprehensible.

These 1915 resolutions clearly indicate that the powers of the Native overseers were seen to be too much and therefore curtailed. Nevertheless, the Natives themselves were in no way involved in running the affairs of their church.

At this time, the whole work was divided into the following districts
(De Wet 1989:102):

- District 1. Zuidoost Transvaal, Natal, Zululand and Swaziland (Overziener Bro. P.L. Le Roux)
- District 2. Witwatersrand en Omstreken. (Overziener, Bro. W.F. Dugmore)
- District 3. Waterberg en Pietersburg. (Overziener, Bro. E.M. Letwaba)
- District 4. Noordelik Zoutpansberg. (Overziener, Bro G.T. Booysen)
- District 5. Pilgrimsrust. (Overziener, Bro. D.H. Booysen)

It is noteworthy that one of the overseers at this stage was a Black pastor, E.M Letwaba. As reflected in the minutes, he was responsible for overseeing Waterberg and Pietersburg.

In that same year the AFM published what was called the "Handbook for the Native Section". It dealt comprehensively with three sections, namely The Doctrines, Scriptural Discipline and Policy. This comprehensive policy, although amended in regard to small details in later years, was used until its revision in the 1960s. This is reproduced in full below:

POLICY

1. That the appointments in the Native Work shall be as follows:

The European Superintendent and his assistant or assistants who shall exercise the general supervision of the work. Overseers, who shall be appointed to the oversight of certain districts and shall be responsible to the General Superintendent or his Assistants. Ministers, Evangelists, Deacons, Local Preachers and Class Leaders who shall carry on the work in the various assemblies and be responsible to the overseers, or if their Assemblies are not yet within the boundaries of an Overseer's District, to the General Superintendent or his Assistants. The Missionary Committee and General Superintendent, who have been elected by the General European Conference, the supreme Covering body of the Mission, shall control the work and jointly be responsible to the Executive Council for the proper carrying on of the work.

2. That an Annual Conference be held of all Native Ministers and certificated workers, who shall meet in conference with the General Superintendent, his Assistants, Overseers and members of the Missionary Committee.

3. The Missionary Committee shall keep in view a policy of the subdivision of the country into Districts, each under an Overseer. The boundaries of such districts shall be determined when such districts have been fully evangelized and overlapping begins.

4. That when necessity arises, the Missionary Committee shall appoint overseers to certain Districts or change Overseers from one district to another, the following General Conference to be advised of such appointments.

5. The Overseers shall do all in their power to extend and establish the work in their Districts and such adjoining areas as may be unevangelized, and that they can utilize the assistance of European lay preachers recommended by their respective European Assembly Boards, to extend the work locally. Such lay preachers to work under the supervision of the District Overseer and under the discipline of his European Local Board.

6. That a God-fearing policy be followed in respect of all appointments and ordinations to the ministry. That it shall be the rule only to ordain to the office of a Minister such as are manifestly called of the Holy Ghost and are baptized in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4, and have served truly and faithfully as Evangelists, Deacons and local preachers. He must be the husband of only one wife and be legally married (1 Tim. 3:12).

7. That all ordinations of Ministers and Evangelists in the Union shall be performed by the General Superintendent, his Assistants and Overseers, annually, during the Native General Conference.

8. The work of a Minister shall be:

- a) To take charge of any Assembly or District allotted to him by the overseer.
- b) A Minister shall have power to administer all the Sacraments and authorize an Evangelist to administer such sacraments as the occasion arises.
- c) Evangelists:

The Evangelist shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on his certificate and shall work under the direction of his Overseer and Minister as the case may be.

d) Deacons and Local Preacher:

The Deacons and Local Preacher shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on their certificates and shall work under the direction of their Overseer and Minister or Evangelist as the case may be.

e) Class Leaders:

The Class Leader shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on her certificate and shall work under the direction of her Overseer and Minister or Evangelist as the case may be.

9. That no ordination shall be performed of any man within the district of an Overseer, except upon the recommendation of such Overseer, who shall have consulted the local Assembly to which such a man is intended to be appointed.

That the names of such candidates to be ordained as a Minister or Evangelist being approved by the General Superintendent and the District Overseer, shall be placed before the Native Conference for acceptance.

10. That between Conferences provisional appointments to the Ministry may be made by the General Superintendent upon the recommendation of the Overseer, such appointments to be placed before the next succeeding General Conference for ratification and the candidates for ordination, if they be approved.

11. That the foregoing procedure regarding the appointment and ordination of Ministers shall be followed in respect of Local preachers, except that they shall be appointed by the District Overseer and shall be brought before their respective District Conferences for

approval and if the General Superintendent or his Assistants are absent the District Overseer shall be competent to act in his place.

12. a) That it shall be the duty of the Overseer to hold a district Conference annually, the dates for same to be affixed in consultation with the General Superintendent. b) That where practical a District Quarterly Meeting of certificated workers be organized, out of which an Executive Committee shall be elected annually, to work in co-operation with the Overseer.

13. That annual District Conference of Ministers, Evangelists, Deacons, Preachers and Class Leaders shall be competent to recommend transfer of Ministers and Preachers from one Assembly to another within their district and that the General Superintendent and Overseers shall follow such policy of transfer and exchange as may be considered advisable and in the best interest of the work.

14. That the Annual Native General Conference and District Conferences shall have the right to lodge complaints of a serious nature with the Missionary Committee.

15. That property purchased by the Native people in the name of the Apostolic Faith Mission for the Native work shall continue to be used only for the Native work and not for European work. And that all church property be deeded in the name of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

16. That it be essential that the members of each Assembly shall be taught to pay their tithes. All funds of Assemblies and Districts shall be dealt with in such a manner as shall be laid down by regulation from time to time.

17. That it shall be the policy of the Overseers to raise up within their Districts a striking force of active Evangelists and local Preachers who shall be zealous for the extension of the work.

18. That in connection with the foregoing clause it be the aim of each Overseer to conduct a Bible Course where such Preachers shall receive instruction in the Word to which they can return for fresh inspiration.

19. That it be the policy of the Mission to establish a Central Training School for Ministers, Workers and Teachers.

20. While we teach that candidates for baptism be taught to pay their tithes and offerings towards the work of the Lord before baptism we discountenance the practice of making a charge at the time of baptism or when children are consecrated; but we encourage people to make an offering at the Lord's table.

21. That the habit or dress of all Native Ministers shall be as plain as possible. The wearing of surplices, cords, sashes, carrying of crosses and other unscriptural practice be discountenanced.
22. That it be essential that all certificated Workers and Committee members be tithe payers and support the system of tithing in order to set the right example to the people to whom they minister.
23. That the district Overseers in consultation with the ministers of the Circuit be competent to discipline or provisionally suspend any worker, such action be ratified by the next succeeding District Conference. A Minister with his local Committee shall be competent to discipline a member of his Assembly. Any such member shall have the right of appeal to the District Conference.
24. That Conference sub-committees be appointed if necessary, whose duties shall terminate at the close of the Conference.
25. That we only recognize marriages contracted according to civil and religious rites. That no appointment shall be made to any Ministry of anyone not legally married.
26. That a certificated worker, whether man or woman, desiring to work or exercise any of his or her rights in a new field, must first obtain a removal note from his or her Overseer, and also a permit from the Overseer whose field he or she wishes to enter.
27. That the appointment of workers be recommended by the Assembly Committee through the Minister.
28. That certificates and notices be sent to the Minister in charge.
29. That every Assembly shall have a Committee who shall manage the affairs of the local church. In a small Assembly such Committee shall consist of seven members of which two shall be nominated by the Minister and five to be elected by the congregation.

In a large Assembly there shall be nine members, three to be nominated by the Minister and six to be elected by the congregation. The election shall take place annually and they shall only take office after their names have been submitted and approved of by the Overseer.

5.3.2 Condition of African work

It is recorded that in 1910 Le Roux reported to the White Executive Council that apart from the name "Zion" the African preacher's teaching of a clean life, no drinking and the practice of healing was attractive to the Africans (De Wet 1989:120). So Africans belonging to "Zion" took exception to the AFM African worker, Maroane, who was an overseer but used tobacco and Western medicine and permitted the use of "kaffir beer". According to Le Roux, Maroane was even considered an "Ethiopian" minister by the outsiders (De Wet 1989:121). Because of the differences between Maroane and the other Overseers, Maroane finally resigned from the AFM.

From the start, even Lake did not favour the "independence" of the African work. According to De Wet (1989:121), Lake reported as follows in the 1911 July/August edition of *The Comforter*:

A fact not duly appreciated, is that the vast majority of native work is being conducted by the natives themselves, without White assistance, except in the general direction and superintendence through the executive council in Johannesburg.

Lake clearly had strong reservations about the ability of the Africans to run the work on their own. It is not clear, however, whether the reservations were based on the lack of training on the part of the Blacks or simply a racist attitude. Lake could have responded more favourably towards this because of his knowledge of Seymour in the USA who, although Black, was doing a successful job.

In the same edition, Lake (De Wet 1989:121) observed that the "native" work in Johannesburg was growing progressively:

The leader reports that from 600 to 1000 natives attend the Sunday afternoon open air meetings on the market square, and that many get saved there. A baptismal service is conducted once a month and each month there is a good number to be baptized. This demonstrates that the natives are quite capable to get their own people saved; their preaching is clear and strong in the power of God.

In this report Lake shows confidence in the message delivered by the “natives”. It is not known how he evaluated their preaching since very few Whites understood African languages. However, his understanding was that even if such preaching were good, it was to demonstrate that the natives were quite capable of getting their own people saved. Lake evidently had no expectation that such preaching would be good for the Whites.

After this, Lake reported that, in 1913 the Executive Council decided to call a conference of the leading native workers to “consider what steps should be taken to place the native work on a sound basis” (De Wet 1989:122). It is not clear what the problems were, however, except for one about Ezra Mbanambi, a worker who was arrested for having trespassed at Melmoth, Zululand. Another problem to surface later was about a worker who “sold his daughter”. The details of this case emerged from the minutes of the

Executive Council, /4/1918 (De Wet 1989:123):

Bro. M.A. de Vries asked what should be done to native worker, Stephanus Mooki, who had sold his child of tender years to an elderly man. She was eventually to be his wife. Bro. Dugmore explained the stand he had taken in such matters.

It is clear that this was lobola. Africans were not known to have been selling their children. Because of cultural misunderstanding, many Whites misconstrued the lobola system as a wife-bartering system.

Besides these problems, there were dogmatic and liturgical problems in the African Church from time to time. Some of these were the use of tobacco and African beer, polygamy, washing of feet as part of Holy Communion, wearing of special frocks by the class leaders (prayer women), ancestor worship, and the selling of holy water (De Wet 1989:123). Most of these problems clearly arose through a lack of the spirit of inculturation by the White missionaries. The Africans were expected to behave culturally like the Whites.

De Wet (1989:123) points out some of the main factors which were perceived as contributing to this “distressful state of affairs”:

1. lack of good, sound training and teaching;
2. lack of qualified oversight;
3. vast distances and lack of finances, which made meaningful oversight impossible;
4. workers from other churches being accepted before they or their backgrounds had been thoroughly investigated;
5. workers being ordained too easily before they had gone through a probationary period.

It is understandable that these problems arose. There was absolutely no training for the Black workers in those pioneering years. Even the teaching they received from White workers was not sufficient because the Whites themselves lacked theological training. Coupled with this was the fact that the area was vast with no good transport system and, given the rapidity with which the work grew, good supervision was almost impossible (De Wet 1989:124). Financial support was not forthcoming either.

According to De Wet (1989:125),

For the greater part, the Blacks who were totally untrained workers were on their own, to preach what they thought was right and to do what they thought was best. By 1937 only 7 Overseers were expected to supervise over 40 000 Black Church members. A mission report mentioned a black pastor who had not seen a missionary for 15 years.

This problem was compounded because workers from other churches who joined the AFM were not well scrutinized and were not even given any training in the AFM's doctrines, which must have added to the already existing doctrinal problems and differences. At the same time, the relationship between the Black workers and their White "mother church" was not always sound. De Wet (1989:126) cites the example of Bro. Oliphant, who was accused in 1915 of having said "he has nothing to do with the White people except Bro. Lake". When such misunderstandings occurred, the church responded by sending a White overseer.

According to De Wet (1989:127), in 1937 the White AFM sold the Mooi Street Tabernacle without the consent of the African section of the church, which resulted in a number of grievances.

Such misunderstandings reached boiling point in 1948 when three of their “native preachers left the mission to found a Bantu AFM” (De Wet 1989:127). The names of the three “rebellious” workers were not mentioned, nor the circumstances that provoked them to this action. In the same year minutes reveal that a Black worker once summoned the AFM (De Wet 1989:127):

A native summonsed us thinking that he could take one of our church buildings. We were compelled to defend our case and we won it, with costs.

These problems were symptoms of deeper ones that probably resulted from the whole mission policy of the AFM. As mentioned, the work had spread so quickly over vast distances, which made close supervision almost impossible. De Wet (1989:128) is of the opinion that it was likely that less than half the problems between workers and their “mother church” were known, even less documented.

In time it became mandatory for all new missionaries to attend language classes (De Wet 1989:128). The policy seems to have been an attempt to solve the problems of misunderstanding between Blacks and Whites. Another important development was the setting aside of one Sunday in each month as a Mission Sunday (De Wet 1989:128). This was to impress the missionary need upon the people and give offerings for that work. De Wet (1989:129) points out that for the first time the March 1919 edition of *The Comforter* was devoted to missions. The inauguration of the new headquarters for the Black AFM on 19 May 1918 was also mentioned. For the first time it was also mentioned that the country was divided into districts with an overseer taking responsibility for each district. At that stage the Black section comprised 200 ministers and evangelists and 600 local preachers.

Another major development in the Black section of the AFM was the beginning of a Bible School for Black workers. Le Roux is said to have emphasized the necessity of theological

training for Black workers as early as 1920, but nothing had come of this. It was overseer Elias Letwaba who realized the urgency of this and started the Patmost Bible School in 1930 near Potgietersrus (De Wet 1989:130). What made this effort so extraordinary is the fact that he started and built the school, not only on his own initiative, but also without any financial assistance from the White "mother church". It was only twelve years later that the Executive Council decided to start an "official" Bible School for Blacks. The school was located and relocated at various places until it was finally located at Mabopane just outside Pretoria. In 1976 the AFM started the Pan-African Bible College, an extramural correspondence institution which would, in time, train thousands of Black pastors from all over Africa (De Wet 1989:132).

De Wet (1989:132) conducted a survey on the Black pastors' view of their theological training and the following opinions were gathered:

- 1) 96% were strongly in favour of theological training.
- 2) 57% felt that their training was insufficient.
- 3) The majority (92%) had a vital need for further training.
- 4) If they had to start their training all over again, 76% would prefer to do it through something like an in-service programme, or by correspondence or Theological Education by Extension (TEE).

This survey is significant for this study, especially item 2. In the 1980s there were strong feelings in Venda about the inadequacy of the AFM training for Black pastors. At that time a group of young men (Ravele, Khomola, Thivhavhoni) went for training in Pretoria. On arriving there, when they discovered that the training given to Blacks was not the same as that given to Whites, they decided to leave the school for the Rhema Bible School, where the training was the same for both Blacks and Whites. However, after training, the AFM could not absorb these pastors.

▪ **Relations with Ethiopian churches**

In the beginning the Black Apostolic Faith Mission had some contact and problems with the Ethiopian Independent Churches. The first Ethiopian Independent Church was established in Pretoria in 1892 by Mangena Makone (De Wet 1989:133). The name originated from texts such as Psalm 68 ("Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God"), which were interpreted as a promise of the evangelization of Africa. The movement spread beyond Pretoria, incorporating many more secessionists from the White-controlled churches. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Ethiopian movement had gained thousands of adherents and spread throughout South Africa. Odendaal (De Wet 1989:134) describes the movement as follows:

Implicitly political in nature, it indirectly complemented the formal activities of the political elite by politicizing Africans, articulating dissatisfaction with the inequalities of the White rule and propagating African assertiveness.

The White AFM did not like the Ethiopian Church and perhaps conveyed this attitude to the Black AFM. According to De Wet (1989:133), mission reports indicate that the Black AFM had problems with the Ethiopian Independent Churches.

▪ **Ethical issues**

The after-effect of conversion amongst Black AFM is interesting. Women and young ladies took their rings and threw them away (De Wet 1989:134). It is not known whether this was taught to them as a necessary step before conversion. Piety and rigorous ethics were trademarks of the Pentecostal movement. Certain taboos are still maintained (eg, no smoking, no drinking of alcohol, no swearing). De Wet (1989:135) observes that Black AFM members are expected to consciously walk the narrow road. It is not clear why this is recorded since, in principle, there should be no difference between the discipline in the Black and White section of the AFM.

According to the Executive Council minutes (De Wet 1989:135), on December 18, 1925, the Council decided that if no White overseer was available for a Black district, the White chairman of the White district Council would automatically be overseer for the Black work.

- **Salaries**

In 1932, a well-known Pentecostal leader, David J du Plessis, stated that it cost 100 pounds per month to effectively support a missionary. De Wet (1989:136) states that at that time, their actual salary was 10 pounds per month. At the same time it is documented that Black workers only received 1 pound per month in the Zoutpansberg area.

- **Polygamy/Marriage**

At a conference in 1939, the Blacks voted unanimously that polygamy was to be strictly forbidden amongst the workers (De Wet 1989:136). Clearly, polygamy was threatening the “one pastor, one wife” teaching of the mainly White church. Since polygamy is still a practice among some Black Christians (even in the twenty-first century), the meeting here should be viewed as having touched the cultural cornerstone of the Blacks. In many ways, missionary Christianity did not understand the culture of the Blacks. In other cases, they viewed it as heathenistic and only fit to be uprooted. The researcher knows a pastor who was told to choose between his two wives; to keep the one he loved more and divorce the other one. Pastor Mukwevho did as he was told. At the same time he was expected to look after the divorced wife and her children. In doing this, he failed the test of looking after her just like his sister.

At the 1939 conference, nothing was said about polygamy as it affected ordinary church members. Perhaps the same would have been expected of them.

- **Indigenous Church principle**

De Wet (1989:137) mentions the World Pentecostal Conference, which was attended by Pastor Gerrie Wessels in 1950 in London. In his report Wessels (workers Council minutes 1953) mentions the “Indigenous Church” principle that had been highlighted there (De Wet 1989:138):

Die sendende kerk was slegs die steierboute rondom die Nasionale kerk, en behoort verwyder te word, sodat die werk van die Nasionale kerk nie vertraag word nie. (The missionary church was only the scaffolding around the National church and should be removed so that the work of the national is not delayed.)

This principle was not taken seriously by the White AFM, however. This study of the way the AFM work proceeded in Venda found that this principle was probably ignored completely.

5.3.3 The introduction of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Venda

Pentecostalism was introduced into South Africa by Thomas Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake in 1908 (Sundkler 1961:48). From Johannesburg, Pentecostalism spread to other areas of South Africa (including Venda).

As Lake was conducting his ministry in Bree Street, Johannesburg in 1908, one of the people who listened to him and was converted was Brother Duggan, who carried the Pentecostal message to the Zoutpansberg area (Van der Wall 1911:3).

During this time Van der Wall (1911:3) estimated the population of what he called Zoutpansberg at 350,000, of whom only 20 000 had in some way come in touch with Christianity. It is not clear whether his Zoutpansberg included the whole of Venda. Van der Wall (1911:3) pointed out that the people of the area (the Vhavenda and perhaps some Pedi-speaking people) were "still very ignorant and bound by their native customs and superstitions ... polygamy, the bartering of wives, worship of the spirits of ancestors, propitiatory sacrifices to evil spirits, the belief in witchcraft and the custom of smelling out the party reputed to have caused disease and calamity".

Van der Wall (1911:3) viewed the Vhavenda situation during the advent of Pentecostalism as follows:

The other 330 000 are still absolute heathens, waiting for the light of the Gospel. The paramount chief of the Mavenda tribe, M'pefu, who has hitherto refused the

missionaries to settle and labour amongst his people, has given an open door to the Apostolic Faith Mission. He has no doubt observed that our teaching embodies more than usual, that the Word of truth is sustained by signs and wonders, that we preach the Christ who saves the soul, but also heals the body, as He ever did and still does. His tribe outnumbers the others by many thousands, and some have already accepted Christ and experienced his healing power. What an opportunity. "What an open door".

At this time Brother Duggan went to Johannesburg and was converted. He decided to go to Louis Trichardt (which is in Venda) and began to witness about Jesus Christ. Duggan prayed for a heart patient, Mr Bekker, who received healing. This had far-reaching consequences. Booyesen, whose mother was seriously ill and whose sister walked on crutches, was sent by his father after these testimonies to go and get Duggan. After he had prayed for Booyesen's sister, she put the crutches down and walked without them, until she died at the age of 87 (Booyesen 1975:1). His mother was similarly healed.

Booyesen's father was an elder of the Dutch Reformed Church. On the first Sunday after the miraculous healings, they went to the DRC hoping that the spread of the miraculous news had already caused a positive stir in the church. He was thinking that the congregation would rejoice with them as they saw his sister walking without crutches, "Maar by die kerkdeur het 'n ouderling gestaan en ons toegang geweier en gesê dat ons as lede van die kerk geskors is" (But an elder stood at the church door and refused to allow them to enter, and told them that they had been expelled as members.) (Booyesen 1975:1). The Booyesens were consequently left without a church. In the meantime Brother Duggan continued to hold services that witnessed mighty acts of God. All who attended these services regularly met the same fate as the Booyesens. After intense Bible study, it was found that the Booyesens' were not baptized in a "scriptural way". They set out on foot to Pietersburg to take a train to Johannesburg, a distance of about 80 miles (Van der Wall 1911:3). They were longing for more blessings and wanted to obey God in Baptism. They were accompanied by Bro. L Watson, who had also received the full blessing and been inspired by Bro. Duggan's faith and fire.

Many Africans had apparently already received the blessings. Van der Wall (1911:3) indicates that on their way they visited many “native” villages and some mission stations. He attributes this to the fact that Jesus was proving Himself the Healer of the body and that news had gone forth in advance. Van der Wall (1911:3) records how these early pioneers of the Pentecostal faith went about their ministry:

They were asked to lay hands on and to pray for both Whites and Natives in hundreds. The suffering were brought to them in conveyances or borne by others. There were times when there was no opportunity for meet and rest. They could not pray for all individually; sometimes the natives would take hold of their hands and the deceased exclaiming, “Jehova Mosimo”! with what result. The simple faith of the unprejudiced native was not put to shame. The eyes of the blind were opened, the deaf received hearing, the halt and lame leaped, the sick were healed.

Many other miracles were recorded, including a son of a native chief whose damaged eye was restored. They appear to have held racially mixed services. In this regard Van der Wall (1911:3) states:

We were welcomed by the Saints at New Gate. Bro. D Oho was there with his large family of baptized children, great and small, besides Bro. L. Watson and others. There were times of refreshment in which the natives shared, both at Bro. Booysen’s home and in their own villages. The power of the Holy Spirit was very manifest; many spoke in tongues and glorified God. The spirit of prayer and intercession specially shared on the nine-year-old native boy Ramana (Ramaano). I never heard such pleading in his own language and tongues, the burden of the work in general seemed to weigh on his soul. Another little native boy, whilst praying in the spirit, was taken with cramp in one leg. You ought to have heard him rebuking Satan, whilst he held on to his leg till the cramp left him, and he then proceeded with his pleadings and praise. Several of the natives have already been baptized in the Holy Ghost, especially women and children.

Van der Wall (1911:3) also mentions a visit they conducted where the youngest wife of King Makhado was staying. She was then an old woman but “intelligent and superior in appearance and manner to the other women”. They tried to witness to her, but in vain. Van der Wall (1911:3) concludes thus:

The door to these Natives is open to us and already the work has begun, and what are we going to do with these thousands? We feel, with the few brethren in that district, that our mission is called by God to make a mighty effort to bring every soul there in touch with Jesus.

This is how the Pentecostal Faith reached Venda. Next to Louis Trichardt was a Black residential area known as Tshikota Location and nicknamed *Masagani*. Different congregations were started. Some of the White brothers were to help preach at Tshikota assembly. When the work took a more formal shape, some of the pastors there were Pastor Isaac Mulovhedzi and Pastor Sinthumule. Other assemblies started at this time include the following:

New Gate. This was a farm assembly. Brother G.J. Booysen reports the following about this church in *The Comforter* (April/May 1923:16):

We can never thank the Lord enough for the Native conference which we had here not so very long ago. A church building was consecrated to the Lord's work and there was a great gathering present. On Sunday morning the 10th ... we had a glorious meeting. With the afternoon meeting some of the Natives brought certain things to be burnt as they looked upon these things as evil and they intended to live out and out for the Lord. On this occasion there were many Europeans too to see what the Lord had wrought in the hearts of these Natives. We also baptised three in water. That evening we partook of the Lord's supper. After we had asked God to bless us the Spirit of the Lord descended and many were baptised in the Holy Ghost. It was like a storm on the sea which nobody could still. When the clock struck 12 p.m. we left the meeting but they continued in praising and in glorifying the Lord.

From this report, it appears the “native” church had three services on Sunday, one in the morning, another in the afternoon and the last in the evening. Secondly, as early as 1923, the New Gate Assembly had a church building to be consecrated to the Lord. However, in this report nothing is said about the elder or Pastor of the Assembly. Lastly, it is challenging to realise that the commitment of the converts, young as they were, appeared to be firm. They were at the church the whole day until the morning of Monday.

Piet Booï Lokasie Assembly. Very little is known about the origin of this assembly. Brother L.J. Erasmus (1928:8) reports as follows in *The Comforter* (April 1928):

Through God’s help everything went on very well. There is a church built of stones with forty-five children at the school. We had a wonderful service and baptized nine people. The chief was equally present. He asked to register the school with the government and promised to motivate people to send their children to the school. The attendance was so great that others could not get into the building.

Brother Erasmus does not say much about how the church was started. It seems he was the elder of the congregation for he made a special request for prayer (1928:8):

Hy vra voorbidding dat die Heer hom ’n plek mag gee om in te woon. Daar is mooi plekke vir ’n sendingstasie maar die plase is net vir kleurlinge, daarom, laat ons bid dat die Here die weg open.

(He asks for prayers that God may give him a place to stay. There are good places for a mission station, but the farms are only for Coloureds, therefore, let us pray that the Lord will open the way.)

5.4 UNDERSTANDING THE PENTECOSTAL VIEW OF MISSION STRATEGY

5.4.1 Pentecostal theology and mission strategy

Although the Pentecostal movement has been around for almost a whole century, there is as yet no standard Pentecostal handbook anywhere in the world. The increasing interest shown

by Pentecostals in academic work and the burgeoning neo-Pentecostal movement has diminished rather than increased the possibility of such a standard theology.

According to Clark and Lederle (1989:3), "Whereas previously the Pentecostal attitude to the contemporary theological establishment had been one of ignorance or distrust, a generation of Pentecostals, more critical of their own roots, arose, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s." The outward Pentecostal liturgical forms (dance, hand clapping, "Alleluias" and "Amen's") have crystallized in a stronger sense. Clarke and Lederle (1989:4) maintain that what has hindered a "matured" development of a Pentecostal theology is its sense of "inferiority" which is aroused when Pentecostal academics compare their Pentecostal doctrines and developing traditions with the scholarly and apparently objective and scientific theological systems of the Protestant Reformation traditions. Because of this, the AFM scholar and leader, FP Möller, has relied heavily on the theological and cultural thinking of South African Reformed theology with minor Pentecostal "emendations". This may be because of Möller's background and close association with the Reformed Church. However, Pentecostalism should not be seen as a unique brand of theology but as a development of all theologies that have gone before it. Pentecostals themselves do not regard themselves as a new plant in theological ground but as a new branch of a mature tree.

Its massive spread through the *Two-Third World*, coupled with its penetration into the ranks of the historical denominations, has encouraged Pentecostal academics to longer feel inferior. They are no longer prepared to submit their teaching and practice to criticism formulated within theological parameters that are alien to Pentecost itself. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:4), the mirror is actually being reversed. An attempt is being made to define parameters within which Pentecost operates and to test Western Reformation traditions by those parameters as well.

According to Hodges and Melvil (1997:83), Pentecostals have their roots embedded in The Book. They strive constantly to follow the Bible especially the New Testament in every aspect of faith and practice. This means that Pentecostal Missiology should be based on Biblical doctrine, experience and methodology. The experience and methodology that are not in line with Biblical doctrine are not acceptable.

▪ **The Holy Spirit and mission strategy**

Pentecostals are so called because they believe that the Holy Spirit will come to believers today as He came to the disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is recognized as the divine agent of the Godhead on earth, without whom God's work of redemption through Jesus Christ cannot be realized (Hodges & Melvil 1997:83). There can be no effectiveness in mission if the Holy Spirit is bypassed. His leadership must always be sought and His empowering presence must be seen in signs and wonders.

According to Pastor Netshifhefhe of the AFM (Interview on 2000:03:20), the AFM grew in Venda because it was known as the *madembeni* (miracles) church. The Holy Spirit is believed to come and baptize the believers, empowering them in their role as witnesses (Acts 1:5,8). The body of believers becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and, joined with other believers, the believer forms part of the church, which is the temple of God for the habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph 2:21, 22). This marvellous privilege is not reserved for the spiritual elite but is the heritage of every believer, regardless of age, sex or social status. Even the servants (slaves) shall prophesy (Acts 2:17, 18). The Holy Spirit is poured out on the common person, and he/she finds an important place in the Body of Christ "according as the Holy Spirit grants His gifts and enablements" (1 Cor 12:4-13).

According to these Pentecostal concepts, the spiritual life of the believer and the activities of the church are to be realized on a supernatural plane. The church is to be directed by the Holy Spirit (Rev 3:22); believers are to be led by the Spirit. The supernatural presence should be manifested in healings, miracles and answers to prayer (Hodges & Melvil 1997:84). Is Jesus not the same even today (Heb 13:8)? Inspirational utterance will be given by the Spirit for the edification of the believers. Divine direction will be received through a Spirit-guided administration. The Holy Spirit is taken as the chief strategist of the church in evangelism and mission (Hodges & Melvil 1997:84). Pentecostals believe that human planning is valid only as it reflects the divine mind. The Holy Spirit has a strategy for each age and place. It is the church's responsibility to discern this and to put the strategy into effect. The Apostle Peter had no intention of evangelizing the Gentiles, but in prayer, the

Holy Spirit showed him the next move and commanded him to go. His obedience led to the conversion of Cornelius together with his household. This Gentile group also received the gift of the Spirit (Acts 10:19, 44-48). The Church of Antioch would doubtless have wished to retain Paul and Barnabas as their Chief Ministers, but the Holy Spirit said: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

The prominence given to the Holy Spirit could create the impression and belief that the human role is one of complete passivity. This would completely be false. There is a need to engage all our mental, physical, material and spiritual powers in the planning and execution of God's work. Once the will of God is determined, Pentecostals set forth, as did the Apostles, in an active effort to fulfil the divine commission. The Holy Spirit is allowed to correct details in their planning as they go along (Acts 16:6-10).

- **The role of the church in mission strategy**

Since the scriptures teach that the church is the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals see the missionary task as that of winning non-Christian men and women so that they can experience regeneration and become vital members in the living Body of Christ (Hodges & Melvil 1997:84). Each local church becomes a living congregation (cell) of the body of Christ and God's agent for bringing the message of reconciliation to its community. Because of this understanding, church planting and church growth (all multiplication) are of supreme importance in the Christian Mission. According to Hodges and Melvil (1997:84), whatever other good things the church may do, its success in promoting the Kingdom of God must be measured by the number of people it can bring into vital relationship with Christ and the number of local units of the Body of Christ that it can produce.

- **Strategy for evangelism and church growth**

Pentecostal methodology for church growth emphasizes the importance of the individual believer's response to the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is called to be a witness and, upon receiving the gift of the Spirit, is empowered for this service (Acts 1:8). New converts are

not urged to witness, but overflow with zeal to share their experience with others. They need to be taught and guided, however, for their witness to be effective. Believers understand intuitively that as the “good seed of the kingdom” they should multiply themselves by bringing others to knowledge of Christ. This witness assumes many forms:

- a) Local churches take it upon themselves to start new churches.
In general, local churches develop a systematic effort to reach their community with the gospel. Lay workers are sent to open outstations with the expectation that they will develop into churches. When this happens, the new church, in turn, sends out its own local workers to open still other outstations. So the church grows by cell multiplication.
- b) Laymen develop into pastors and evangelists. Most pastors begin their ministry as lay preachers who are commissioned to open new outstations. Thus they receive practical on-the-job or in-service training under the supervision of the pastor and the local church board. As the outstation becomes a church, the lay preacher may become its full-time pastor. Many such pastors attend a Bible school for a period of basic training in Christian doctrine and church administration, but would doubtless still be considered laymen by those who insist on a highly trained clergy as the only qualified church leaders (Hodges & Melvil 1997:85). Nevertheless, many of these men and women have been outstandingly endowed by the Spirit with a gift for ministry. They have the advantage of being close to their people and identified with the local culture. They are undoubtedly as qualified as were many of the “elders” of the early church (Hodges & Melvil 1997:85).
- c) The work of developing outstations is supplemented by the forming of branch Sunday schools in the outstations (Hodges & Melvil 1997:85). Also there is often organized house-to-house visitation by the members, both for the purpose of personal witness and for the distribution of appropriate literature. The object is to win men and women to Christ and bring them into the local church.
- d) Street meetings, where permitted, are a common and fruitful practice and attract new people to the churches.
- e) Emphasis on indigenous principles of self-propagation, self-government and self-support. In cases where the church has made notable advances in South Africa, as in

Venda, it will be noted that without exception the church has assumed the responsibility for its own decisions and has found within itself the resources necessary to maintain its operation and advance without depending on “hand-outs”. There is a keen sense of responsibility among the national Christians for evangelizing their own people. There is an absence of “foreigners” in the atmosphere, the church being rooted in the nation itself and prospering in its climate.

- f) Mass evangelism. Pentecostals are interested in reaching the masses. Great crusades have been held in large cities. Pastor Ragimana of AFM invited the German-born evangelist, Reinhart Bonke, in 1976. Thousands attended the crusade.
- g) Literature, radio and television. Literature has become an increasingly important instrument of evangelism. The use of radio is widespread and television is gaining recognition as an effective medium. Pentecostals believe that the Gospel is for the masses and that it is God’s will today, as in New Testament times, that multitudes should believe in the Lord, that the Word of God should spread and the number of disciples increase (Acts 6:7).
- h) Flexibility of strategy. Pentecostals keep the strategy for missions flexible. There are non-negotiable principles: the message that is preached, the spiritual new birth of individuals, the control of the Holy Spirit in the believers’ life and in the activities of the church, and the responsibility of believers to form themselves into a church and to multiply (Hodges & Melvil 1997:86). However, the approach must vary with the widely differing opportunities.

▪ **Pentecostal strategy results in church growth**

Hodges and Melvil (1997:86) maintain that the Pentecostal movement has made rapid strides in its worldwide outreach since its humble beginnings at the turn of the nineteenth century. Although Pentecostals have been labelled the third force in modern Christianity, they see themselves not as a “third force” or a “fringe movement” but as New Testament Christians returning to the simplicity, central truths, and vitality of the Apostolic era. Pentecostals form a vital part of evangelical Christianity around the world. The Pentecostals indisputably stand at the forefront of the Evangelical advance in both South Africa and Africa. Venda is an outstanding example of this.

5.4.2 The type of ministry adopted by the AFM in Venda

In recent years there has been a keen interest in the Pentecostal movement. The sustained growth of Pentecostalism, with its indigenous forms of worship, has caught the attention of Christian groups throughout the world (Saracco 1977:64). This study examined some of the characteristics of the ministry developed by the Pentecostal churches to bring out the merits, shortcomings and limitations of this type of ministry. The vast diversity in the Pentecostal movement in South Africa and, indeed, in the world made an exhaustive examination beyond the scope of this study.

The researcher concentrated on one of the Pentecostal churches, the Apostolic Faith Mission, and on three aspects of their ministry: the ministry of evangelism, the ministry to the church, and the ministry to the world.

5.4.2.1 *The ministry of evangelism*

In Venda the reason there is so much talk today about the Pentecostal movement is not its emphasis on charismatic manifestations, nor divine healing, but its amazing growth in the seventy-five years of its existence. In that growth the work of evangelism occupies a central place in the unfolding ministry of the Pentecostal churches. The other ministries revolve around it.

Most of the believers in these churches have become members because someone has either "recruited" them or led them to a belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives. The new believers in the Pentecostal churches are incorporated into a community which takes part in the ministry as a group, each member feeling a responsibility for the mission of the church, and acknowledging him/herself indebted to God, the world, and his/her own particular group. Each believer is called to be a missionary and this calling is the nerve and stimulus of his/her journey as a Christian. The Apostolic Faith Mission Church organizes its work in such a way and with such conviction that everyone becomes involved in some aspect of it.

Evangelism is conducted through various strategies, such as person-to-person, mass crusades, church services and burial services, birthday parties, graduation parties, engagement parties, and children's parties.

One of the first things a Pentecostal learns is to share with others what God has done in his life. Whether it be freedom from habit, God providing him with a job, or the healing of sickness, or a miraculous provision of finances, he must testify about this to the rest of the congregation and to those who have not yet accepted Christ (Saracco 1977:64). He will talk on what he has seen and heard, of what he has touched with his own hands. In this way, as Saracco (1977:64) puts it, the experience will be used as the text of proclamation, and the scriptures as the divine seal of what has happened. Saracco (1977:65) believes that this kind of preaching is self-authenticating, since in the preacher there is tangible proof of the power of God. The heart of the Pentecostal message is witness to what Jesus is doing today, and the whole strength of this proclamation is used to fulfil the Great Commission.

Pastor Netshifhefhe (2000.03.20 - interview) stresses the point that Pastor Ragimana trained the congregation to do house-to-house evangelism. He adds that although Pastor Ragimana was a pastor, he also did the work of an evangelist. Because of this, he gave a very good example to the church of how a Christian should live in terms of doing person-to-person witnessing.

5.4.2.2 The ministry of the church

Saracco (1977:65) believes that the ministry developed by a Pentecostal pastor in his congregation has, because of his social and cultural identification with the other believers, some interesting characteristics; they are the result of the way he has come into the pastorate.

For the Pentecostals, the road to the ministry is open to any member of a Pentecostal church from the moment of conversion. Because of the inner dynamics of Pentecostal churches and the fact that social condition, educational level or lack of formal theological training are not hindrances to ordination, any member has the opportunity to become a pastor. With Pastor Ragimana (2000:09:11 - interview) almost all of the pastors that he worked with while still a

leader of AFM in Venda were his own spiritual children. Usually the step to the pastoral ministry is taken slowly as the believer increasingly feels the call, and as he begins to leave his secular activities until he is finally able to dedicate all of his time to the church (Hodges & Melvil 1997:66).

In these circumstances the “call” plays a critical role. Usually this takes a very decisive experience, like a prophecy or a dream that comes into the life of a believer with overwhelming force.

Even though there are no academic requirements for the ministry, the way to ordination is difficult, and the candidate has to go through a long period of practical training.

In 1977 Pastor Ragimana invited Reinhard Bonke for a crusade at Sibasa Stadium. The German-born evangelist experienced a mighty breakthrough as about 30 000 people thronged the stadium (Steele 1984:105). This opened the door for Pastor Ragimana to establish many branches as he followed up the new converts. According to Maanzwane, an AFM pastor, Pastor Ragimana himself also continued to conduct crusades. As a result of this, many were evangelized.

A new pastor would be sent to a “new field.” The pastor therefore becomes the instrument of God in the salvation of the members of his parish. One by one he “wins them for Christ”, causing each member to see in his/her leader the image of the Biblical pastor who, filled with love, sought him/her out when he/she was lost (Saracco1977:66). It comes at no surprise, then, that among Pentecostals, it is common to speak of the “church of Brother X or Z” as if X or Z were the proprietors of the church.

This situation has direct implications for the type of government Pentecostal churches have. The pastor is an undisputed central leader. In many ways the personality of the pastor is strong and dominant, and by means of the psychological pressure that he/she exercises with his/her sense of “calling” and the allegiance he/she gains from the most influential people in the church, he/she becomes a true leader (Saracco1977:66). Pastor Maanzwana and Pastor Netshifhefhe of the Apostolic Faith Mission church speak of Pastor Ragimana as “the father

of the work". Pastor Maanzwane proudly says that pastors who are presently doing the work in the AFM are Pastor Ragimana's children (Maanzwane 11.09.2000 - interview). Pastor Maanzwane further reports that Pastor Ragimana "had authority to do as the Lord would lead him".

What type of interchurch ministry is developed by a Pentecostal congregation having as a central figure the pastor with a strong conviction of his calling, whose formation has come through experience, and who rules over the congregation? To answer this question, it is important to realise that the Pentecostal pastor is a natural expression of his/her group. "He is not a prefabricated model imposed on the church because of his intellectual qualifications or his privileged social position" (Hodges & Melvil 1997:66). He/she has been allowed to develop a ministry which identifies socially and culturally with the congregation, and affords him the opportunity to live out in his/her own experience the toils, desires, hopes and anticipations of the group he/her leads:

Then there is also the pedagogical relationship established between the pastor and the congregation. The pastor equips the church for missions and the congregation contributes actively to the minister's formation. Actually, the local church is the school in which the Pentecostal pastor is formed. In the non-Pentecostal churches the responsibility for pastor formation rests exclusively upon institutions for theological education. "When an enthusiastic young man comes up with some learning towards the ministry, he is sent to a seminary ... in the hope that at the end of three years he will return, transformed into a pastor, as if these institutions had a special formula for manufacturing ministers" (Saracco 1977:67). In the AFM in Venda, Pastor Ragimana did not discourage academic learning. Realising that pastors needed good theological training, he started a Bible Training Centre. It was run like an in-service training centre in the sense that as pastors continued working in their respective congregations they were at the same time going through the Bible training. The combination of these two methods produces a very seasoned pastor.

It is equally important to note that since the Pentecostal ministry is established on a deep conviction of a "calling", the economic factors involved are relegated to second place. The Pentecostal ministry is not a profession but a deep unavoidable commitment to God. In many

ways the Pentecostal pastor defends his power by referring to his “calling”, declaring that he must obey God rather than a person, including his/her own church. When this is not well handled it causes splits. This may be one reason why there are so many splits in the Pentecostal churches. This can easily create a spirit of insubordination among the pastors.

In their ministry Pentecostals put special emphasis on the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit on the individual. This can also create an unwelcome situation. This awareness of the work of the Spirit on the individual has been overemphasized at the expense of the work of the Spirit on the community as a whole. This results in individualism in the name of the Holy Spirit. The “personal experience”, understood as a believer’s internal sentiments, which he/she ascribes to the work of the Holy Spirit, has brought not a few divisions into the Pentecostal churches. “I do not feel moved”, “God told me”, “the Spirit led me” are common expressions which have led to the formation of countless small congregations by pastors who “felt” led in a different direction from that in which the church was going.

In time when the structure of society has limited the possibility for interpersonal contact and relations, Pentecostalism emphasizes the individual. Human life is taken seriously. Church life is structured in such a way that the new member becomes part of what the church is all about. A new member is encouraged to witness for Christ, to give a testimony of what the Lord has done in his/her life. Sometimes the new believer becomes so absorbed with the church that he/she becomes a real stranger to the people around him. Most of the AFM members were not actively involved in political issues since politics was considered evil. Asked about the attitude of the church towards the Venda government, Pastor Netshifhefhe replied that the AFM in South Africa was AFM in Venda (20:03:2000 - interview). To him, there was no difference of opinion between the two AFMs.

The believer understands the social to belong to a world destined to disappear under the consuming fire of God. In the beginning it was felt that there was nothing the Christian could or should do to better something which was, after all, reserved for everlasting fire. In this way the believer was kept from contributing to any change in society. The mission was to rescue the largest number of people possible from condemnation. Saracco (1977:6) maintains that “No energy is used against the sinful structures which keep man oppressed;

instead a parallel society is offered in which life can be full, and conversion is the only requirement for entry.”

Indeed the Pentecostal churches have done the best job of reaching the Vhavenda in their concrete situation through the form of ministry they have developed. They still have to apply their human resources to the work of socio-political liberation. After the appearance of the *Concerned Evangelicals* in 1985 and the subsequent *Relevant Pentecostal Witness* in 1989, the Pentecostal churches were seriously challenged to be prophetic and relevant in their ministries.

5.4.2.3 *The Ministry to the world*

The ministry developed by the Pentecostal churches is basically ecclesiocentric. Even though there is a heavy pneumatic emphasis, His ministry is perceived as that of equipping the saints to build the church. The church is the centre of attention in the Pentecostal ministry and everything outside is of interest only as an object of evangelism. Saracco (1977:69) believes that to the Pentecostal, there is no ministry “to the world” even though Pentecostals are in a better position than the traditional churches for this type of ministry. It is difficult to understand and accept what Saracco means here. Pentecostals do conceive the “world” in a detached manner, but this is what they think the Bible teaches when it says “Do not love the world nor the things of the world ...” (1 Jn 2:15). To say that Pentecostals belong to Niebuhr’s (1968:) type of “Christ against culture” is to miss the point. Though Pentecostals appear to disapprove of a number of cultural norms, they have tried hard to promote a clean, holy lifestyle that finally leads to harmonious societal ethics that build any community.

Because of what is perceived to be the teaching of the Bible about the world, separation from all that has to do with the world is the basis for Pentecostal ethics.

▪ **Pentecostalism and socio-political concerns**

It is sometimes assumed that the church as such should not involve itself in political matters. In the First World this has often taken the form of conformity to the *status quo* and indifference to those groups and ideologies that act against states and social structures. In the Third World, although there are some who share this point of view, there are notable exceptions, especially in Latin America. In Africa and Asia, the so-called “Spirit-type” churches stand largely apart from more politically motivated groups. Naturally, individual members and pastors may take their own individual stand, and when the political impact of Pentecostalism is being evaluated, it is often this individual relationship with society that must be taken into consideration for lack of any official stand.

Many reasons are given for this silence. The simplistic charge, “If you are not actively resisting certain unjust social structures, you must be in favour of them”, so often levelled against church groups who would rather not go public on socio-political issues, according to Clark and Lederle (1989:85), often owes more to the ideologies of the activists than to the reality of the situation. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:85), the Pentecostals have a well-developed sense of mission, and are usually pretty clear about what they hope to achieve, hence they can scarcely be charged with “leaving the world as it is”.

This section outlines

- the many approaches to society and politics adopted by Pentecostals worldwide against what the AFM adopted in Venda
- the effect and influence of Pentecostalism in various socio-political situations
- how Pentecostals have experienced political systems and some elements of Pentecostal thought and practice which have implications for their political stance.

▪ **Some political stances adopted by the AFM in Venda**

Worldwide, the Pentecostals have not actively involved themselves in socio-political issues. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:86), it is the Latin American and Scandinavian Pentecostal churches who have consciously involved themselves in socio-political concerns. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:86), the closest link between Pentecostals and liberation-type theologies can be found in these regions. Elsewhere the relationship between Pentecostals and government appears to be rather pragmatic. They cite Hollenweger, who mentions the Italian Pentecostals who apparently tend to vote for the Communists because their experience of Catholic and Fascist governments has been one of oppression. They also cite the case of the church in Romania, Eastern Europe, which refuses to criticise the state, since it has enjoyed a greater measure of freedom under the current Marxist Socialist regime than it did previously. In South Africa, the general move of the Apostolic Faith Mission in the 1960s was towards support of the ruling Nationalist Party. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:86), this was in search of a previously denied recognition and social respectability and it resulted in the church being offered the right to broadcast and televise Pentecostal services on state-controlled media.

The stance that the South African AFM took was the stance the Venda AFM took. To them, what was of crucial importance, then, was to have the chance to fulfil their commission in the world.

It should not be forgotten that for Pentecostals, to live out the good news is to be immersed in evangelism. The task of evangelism is incomplete if its sole interest is the spiritual life of those who receive the gospel. According to Vaccaro de Petrella (Clark & Lederle 1989:87):

Pentecostal communities do not want to be branded in advance as pietistic or spiritualistic movements, because while being guided and inspired by the fire of the Holy Spirit they are set in the midst of the world with all its needs and suffering and it is there that people can receive the Christian message. The Pentecostal experience

does not cause men and women to withdraw from the world in which they live. Rather they are instruments of God's intervention in that world.

The variety of socio-political conditions in the world requires a variety of responses. For this reason, Pentecostals cannot offer a blanket legitimization of revolution or socialism as though these were absolutes. Pentecostals are very much aware that they are God's people, and as far as they are able they wish to fulfil God's commission. The dualism of body and spirit is not found in Pentecostalism. Their gospel has always placed a high value on physical reality, including the human body and its needs.

▪ **The effect of Pentecostalism in society**

The Pentecostal movement started mainly in the lower strata of society. In Venda this was no exception. In many ways the church was known as *Kereke ya vhaswa* (the church of youth). Perhaps because of this attitude, not many elderly people who belonged to the upper strata of society ever thought of joining it. As time went on, a number of influential people joined the church especially because of the "salvation message" preached in the crusades or at funeral services. The Pentecostal faith has a very important social relevance. According to Wedenoja (1980:41),

Pentecostalism is a subtle revolution that induces a great number of social, cultural and psychological changes ... Its this-worldly theology rejects the *status quo* and preaches that a millennial revolution will elevate Pentecostals above the "ungodly"- the large land-owners, businessmen and politicians.

In a section entitled "The Pentecostal revolution", Wedenoja (1980:42-43) adds,

Pentecostalism is a subtle but profound revolution because it is low-key, religious and not obviously political ... Pentecostalism is a revolutionary faith because it effects changes in self and the relations between self and others, which incidentally

also affects the established churches, and generates an ideological force promoting corresponding changes in society, economy and polity.

It should be noted that naturally there are those who see the impact of Pentecostalism in socio-political terms in a negative light. For example, according to La Ruffa (1980:60),

Since Puerto Rico's political and economic conditions have been determined primarily by its relationship to the United States, an accommodating movement such as Pentecostalism tends to reinforce an Americanisation process, which in the past three decades, has turned Puerto Rico into an ideological, economic, and political satellite of the United States.

La Ruffa reinforces the point that Pentecostalism does have a socio-political impact, whether in strengthening conservative forces in promoting a revolution or in facilitating modernisation.

The Pentecostals have been unfairly condemned by some who most strongly identify themselves as the enemies of colonialism, notably the new national elites and the newly radicalised clergy of the "mainstream" churches. Manning (1980:182), objects strongly to this form of character assassination:

To the new national bourgeoisie, Pentecostalism is a threat. It is the religion of the masses, and more than that, a source and symbol of their self-dignity and sense of human equality. The new elite view Pentecostalism... as a challenge to authority ... the elite's reaction to it is to stigmatise Pentecostalism by associating it with the United States or other allegedly imperialistic countries.

Clark and Lederle (1989:89) believe that Manning's argument makes sense in a number of historical and contemporary situations. They give the example of the early church, which, according to them, was certainly Pentecostal. The early church found itself in trouble not for being overtly politically active, or even conscious, but for challenging authority by refusing emperor worship. Clark and Lederle cite a case in South Africa where the Afrikaans

Pentecostals had been stigmatised by their compatriots for decades simply because they were converted to Pentecostalism and removed themselves from the Reformed theology, considered the backbone of Afrikaner nationalism. Although there was this “betrayal”, both the Pentecostals and the DRC held the same views as regards racial segregation.

▪ **Pentecostal experience of political systems**

In countries where freedom of religion is a valued element of the constitution, Pentecostalism has not been opposed by statute or officialdom, although enough red-tape has often been generated by its opponents in ecclesiastical or educational circles. In Catholic countries like Spain, Portugal and Italy, Pentecostalism has at times found itself partially or completely outlawed. With the advent of Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue and Vatican Council II, the situation has eased.

In Marxist countries (eg, Romania and the Soviet Union), the experience has been varied. According to Clark and Lederle (1989:90), it would appear that Pentecostals are often prime targets during revolutionary wars, as in the formation of Zimbabwe.

In Venda the situation was different. Although a Pentecostal pastor, Pastor Mboneni Nevhutalu, was almost beaten to death by the South African security forces, this appears to have been an isolated case. On the whole, the Pentecostals were viewed as “innocent” by the then Venda government.

Although the impact of Pentecost has socio-political dimensions, its maintenance of the distinction between church and world leads it to take a largely passive role as far as politics is concerned. Clark and Lederle maintain that it is where secular powers perceive themselves to be engaged in a battle for the hearts and minds of (the) people that they see the challenge of Pentecostalism as a threat and that Pentecostalism suffers or experiences oppression in society.

▪ **Elements of Pentecostal thought which have implications for socio-political involvement**

The Pentecostal world-view includes the three salient features of an apocalyptic movement, namely the notion of “break” or “radical reversal”, the reality of hope that makes sense of secular history and faith, and a sense that all of humanity and nature are mutually involved in progress towards the apocalyptical end. When these three features are studied and analysed, it becomes clear that Pentecostalism is truly an apocalyptic movement in its self-understanding and ideology. This has serious implications for its relationship to societal issues. Conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ entails a break from the world and its values. The church is different from the world. For Pentecostals, “hope for the world” is at the Cross of Jesus, where free salvation is given and the redeemed are covered by the blood of Jesus against any destruction that might come upon the face of the earth. The major emphasis in the call of the redeemed is to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God. The importance of the temporary and the present is often hidden in the emphasis of the eternal and the hereafter. It should not be thought that to Pentecostals the present world has no meaning. In fact, Pentecostals take the world very seriously ... as seriously as they are not of the world, just as seriously do they take being in the world. As Clark and Lederle (1989:90) put it, that “many Pentecostals have taken refuge from the world in a legalistic and ascetic sub-culture is a denial of the dynamic of Pentecost, which is given for mission in the world. Since Pentecostal conversion is a radical break from the value systems of the world, and Pentecostal apocalyptic holds out no hope that the world and its structures have any lasting future, the Pentecostal perception of the Kingdom of God is that it is found in the world but only among the consciously redeemed. It is revealed (even in approximate or anticipatory form) in the secular structures of human society until they are subject to the personal rule of Christ as King after his direct and unmistakable intervention in cosmic affairs.” Involvement in politics for the sake of being relevant can easily be taken as an exercise in futility. Legitimate activity is to do the work of Jesus, converting sinners and warning the unrepentant of the coming judgement.

This relativisation of the world’s structures could be mistaken for their absolutisation, especially when a simplistic exegesis of Romans 13 is entertained. In fact, there are Pentecostal pastors who have absolutised world structures in view of this text. However, in reality, it is not that the *status quo* structure is highly valued and that a revolutionary

movement's attempt to break them down and replace them with others is seen as sacrilege against some divinely ordered entity. Pentecostals' view of structures comes under apocalyptic evaluation. Their relevance and value is seen against this background. Structures that are thought to have no meaningful end-time value are not taken highly serious. Such structures like governments are taken to be temporary that changing them will be a waste of time. This understanding is changing drastically. Some structures may hinder or promote their mission more than others. This is just about the only criterion that impresses them. That this view cannot be taken to characterize all Pentecostals is also true.

The relativisation of all structures has another important consequence. Pentecostals tend to seek opportunities to "do the work" more than to be seen trying to change the structures. Clark and Lederle (1989:91) make a valuable point when they say, "The strong emphasis on the mission of Jesus, of personal involvement in that mission, and of personal relationship with Jesus makes personal obedience to the Master (and not to an ethical system, social or otherwise) the criterion of in what field and in what way the disciple is to become involved. Since the Master who directs the disciple is also the Lord who will bring about the apocalyptic "break" in the cosmos, ending this *aeon* and introducing the next, it is possible for Pentecostals to leave the strategy to Him, while fulfilling their own commission as they engage in the tactical warfare to which they have been called."

The general contribution of the Pentecostals in the liberation struggle that ended the apartheid regime in South Africa should be assessed against this understanding.

The basis for the Pentecostal apocalypticism is redemption. The Pentecostal believer is radically free. The redemption in the blood of Jesus brings an end to one phase of existence and inaugurates another in which the believer becomes a co-worker with God, partaking in the freedom that characterised Jesus Christ Himself. This freedom transcends every label or expectation bestowed on the believer by the world, or society or even theology (Clark & Lederle 1989:92). It is delimited by life in the Spirit and by agape. In this way, Pentecostal belief is free even from secular expectation and pressure to conform. This freedom is the freedom in the Spirit that opens the door for the Pentecostal to participate in anything. For example, world-renowned Pentecostals, David du Plessis and David Wilkerson, who because of the impulse of the Holy Spirit took directions very different from their earlier

concepts of mission. Clark and Lederle (1989:93) point out that "Pentecostal social analysis is based on redemption (New Testament) rather than on Creation (Old Testament). (Clark and Lederle need not be taken as representing all Pentacostals in this narrow view of creation and redemption for both creation and redemption cannot be restricted only in the O.T and N.T respectively). Hence the existence in their circles of a well developed community ethic and the absence of all but the most tentative framework of a social ethic."

The Pentecostal understanding of oppression differs radically from that of social analysts. The Pentecostal does not fail to see oppression's economic, political or judicial nature, but sees it mainly in terms of the consequences of people's alienation from their Creator rendering them a target of demonization. In the so-called Third World mission fields, where the hold of demon spirits is well attested and often encountered, and in the First World where a post-Christian culture is becoming more and more open to occultic influence, the Pentecostal understanding of demonic oppression, human oppression, structural oppression and so on as strategies of Satanic slavery, is becoming increasingly relevant. To the Pentecostal, the primary division of humanity is redeemed and unredeemed: redemption is essential from this type of oppression. The thrust of the Pentecostal ministry is directed towards the individual and not the group, to the component and not the structure (Clark & Lederle 1989:93). This is seen as following in the steps of Jesus, whose earthly ministry also focused on individual people and not on societies or structures although He had very definite views on the leaders of the day, but His activism is not seen beyond these.

Even though the structures are not essentially challenged, the individual who is converted will, through his new life, change his relationships. It is true that there are instances where this does not work at all, like in the issue of racism. The Pentecostals were as racist as the "unredeemed". Here one cannot blame God's redemption but failure on the part of the teaching ministry of the church which must carry the burden of renewing new Christians' minds through the word of God (Romans 12:2).

Individual freedom is taken very seriously. To those not free, the love of Christ constrains us to preach "the liberty of God" (Clark & Lederle 1989:94). As the individual becomes (or is

To become involved in one Party's power struggle with another, or to legitimate the one over against the other is merely to perpetuate the absurdities and futilities of history, where temporal power has been won and lost by factions and parties and secret societies and monarch and priests, and almost every possible variety of power change has been experienced, which God's Kingdom itself is both "already" and "not yet", and qualified on a totally different plane to these struggles.

Although Clark and Lederle state that this is not a Pentecostal way to avoid responsibility, showing that every Spirit-filled believer is involved with real power in a very real and grim struggle, the fact remains that in the South African context, the Whites, who were in power, did not treat their privileges as if they were of no value. An examination of Pentecostalism and apartheid reveals that Pentecostals were very much at home with apartheid.

The Holy Spirit is also known as the Spirit of Truth. To most Pentecostals, truth is a person — Jesus of Nazareth. In a world where truth is often distorted, it becomes increasingly difficult to know what is the truth. Perhaps this difficulty reduced Pentecostal searching for answers in day-to-day activities. Pentecostals finally arrived at the redemption alternative without analysing the issues at hand. Consequently, even those who were redeemed in the process did not seem to have changed in this other aspect of their life. God's message of reconciliation did not seem to help them become reconciled to their Black brothers and sisters. The message was not wrong, it was wrongly applied.

▪ Pentecostals and Apartheid

- The DRC Report

According to Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989:1), the apartheid system was not a unique set of ideas and practices that sprang full-blown from the heads of Afrikaner nationalists: "It built upon the segregation order which had developed along with the accelerated industrialization of South Africa following the discovery of diamonds (1869) and gold (1886). Race and class relations in the industrial period grew up around the forms of

domination and privilege which resulted from the time of White settlement in the Cape in 1652.”

In pre-industrial South Africa, three main features characterised social relations. First, slavery and frontier conquests placed an unskilled and rightless Black labour force under White control. Secondly, there were always enough Whites to man all the strategic positions in the political, economic and administrative systems of the country. Thirdly, growing racial discrimination characterized colonial society from the late eighteenth century onwards. All these developments were endorsed by the church, especially the DRC.

De Wet (1989:188) shows that at the 1857 DRC Synod it was decided to institute and support church apartheid on the grounds that such separation would further a more effective spreading of the Gospel among the “Coloureds”. Gerdener (De Wet 1989:189) is of the opinion that the DRC officially decided at the Synod of 1857 to make its policy one of segregated churches. The planting of churches was believed to follow Henry Venn’s principles, who tended to see the “independence” of the indigenous church as the end product of a process of development.

It should be kept in mind, however painful, that the White DRC believed that their superior knowledge and positions, based on their race, qualified them for a position of “guardian” over the Black “mission churches”. According to De Wet (1989:190), the Whites were to maintain this position for a long period of “development” until such time as the Blacks had finally attained “full maturity” and thereby reached the point at which they might be considered to be viable as independent churches.

According to De Wet (1989:190) the DRC policy was in line with nineteenth-century European Protestant missionary strategy, which argued that racial separation was regarded as a way to facilitate mission work. The DRC adhered to influential German missiologists, such as Gustav Warneck, who taught that the Gospel should not be proclaimed to humankind in general, but to each nation and group in ways appropriate to their culture (De Wet 1989:190). Missionaries must erect bridges that reach the cultural and religious heritage of the people to whom they go (Verkuyl 1978:28).

In 1935, according to De Wet (1989:190), the DRC adopted its first fully articulated missionary policy which speaks of Natives and Coloureds as objects of DRC missionary activity and argues explicitly that there is and can be no social, economic and ecclesiastical equality between Blacks and Whites. Although such beliefs are hard to understand, the White DRC believed that it was divinely ordained that Natives and Coloureds must develop socially and economically in separation from Whites.

De Wet (1989:191) points out that this DRC mission policy of separation of races, or apartheid, is the same racial policy that was adopted by the White Afrikaners a few years later at their *volk* congresses in 1944 and 1947 as the general, overall official policy of the Nationalist Party. In this way, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa was the architect of apartheid. Afrikaner theologians like EP Groenewald provided a Biblical foundation for the policy of apartheid. This so-called Biblical foundation for racial apartheid was approved, adopted and reconfirmed by the DRC at its synods of 1948 and 1949 (De Wet 1989:191). The church's apartheid policy was accepted just before the 1948 elections, which brought the Nationalist Party to power under the leadership of a former NGK "*dominee*", Dr DF Malan. De Wet (1989:191) points out that at the 1950 church congress, the policy of the separation of the races was ratified yet again, and a programme for its practical implementation was introduced. Some DRC theologians, such as BB Keet and BJ Marais, rejected the Biblical grounds on which the church tried to justify apartheid. This brought them into direct conflict with the official representatives of the DRC. In 1947 a study commission of the DRC Federal Mission Board ("*Federale Sendingraad*") further developed DRC thinking on apartheid. According to Anderson (1989:47),

DRC policy amounts to the recognition of the existence of races and nations as separate units foreordained by God.

This is not the work of human beings. Accordingly, the DRC considers it imperative that these creations be recognized for the sake of their natural development through which they could fulfil themselves in their own language, culture and community. Although God created all nations out of

one blood, He gave each nation a feeling of nationhood
and a national soul which had to be recognized by everyone.

This same study commission argued that the best way in which Whites and non-Whites could co-exist was by a system of apartheid in which each group developed separately and in its own sphere (Anderson 1989:47). Although through its delegates to the consultative conference convened by the WCC after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, the DRC supported a concluding conference statement that rejected all unjust discrimination and recognized all racial groups as part of "our total population", the Cape and Transvaal synods fell into line when the Prime Minister, Dr HF Verwoerd strongly attacked the statement. This forced Beyers Naude, Moderator of the Transvaal Synod, to found the Christian Institute. Shortly after this, he was stripped of his ministerial status by the church. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the DRC further developed its support for a policy of "differentiation of peoples". By 1974, however, the church had come to reject racial discrimination and injustice in principle. However, the statement issued by the 1974 Synod left the cornerstone of apartheid largely unchallenged.

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Record

Anderson (1989:59) is of the opinion that from the beginning, the Pentecostal movement has favoured segregation in South Africa. This was particularly true of the AFM, which provides an illuminating example of the Pentecostal trend. This is perhaps not surprising because the South African founder of the AFM was initially a member of the DRC. At first, the Pentecostal meetings were integrated. According to Anderson (1992:57), only four months after the founding of the AFM, the executive council on 17 September 1908 minuted that Lake had spoken at the meeting of getting adequate accommodation for the holding of services in Doornfontein, especially for the Coloured people. De Wet (1989:160) records that less than two months later they decided that the baptism of natives should in future take place after the baptism of the White people. At the executive meeting in February 1909, it was decided that the superintendent in charge of the "native work had to be White" (De Wet 1989:161). Sundkler (1976:54) quotes the minutes of July 1909 in part: "In future, the baptism of Whites, Coloured and Natives shall be separate."

By 1910 separate annual national conferences were, indeed, being held for White and Black people (De Wet 1989:93). In the same year, a “native council” was formed, consisting of three White members and three Black. The native council included Whites who had the same representation as Blacks. Any decisions of this council could be revised by an all-White Executive Council (De Wet 1989:95-96). Anderson (1992:58) reports that by 1915, this racist attitude had become even more pronounced, when the Executive Council declared that no ordination or any form of leadership appointment could be made by a Black Church official except with the consent of the White superintendent. One wonders whether the split that took place from this time onward was not also influenced by this lack of trust of Black leadership by the White leadership. On 7 July 1917, the following resolution was adopted by the Executive Council, which openly shows the prevailing racial prejudices of the White AFM.

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 feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him. We therefore preach the Gospel equally to all people, making no distinctions. We wish it to be generally known that our White, Coloured and Native peoples have their separate places of worship, where the Sacraments are administered to them.

Matters went still further. In 1925 the Executive Council decided that all Black districts should be under the control of a White Overseer, failing which they had to fall under the White chairman, in the White district. On several occasions during this period, decisions were made for the Blacks by the Whites; and they simply had to obey or leave the church (De Wet 1989:163).

As the DRC established the Federal Mission Board (“Federale Sendingraad”) in 1942, which became the driving force behind the South African Bureau for Race Relations (“Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Rasseaangeleethede”), the AFM held a General (White) Conference in April 1944, which clearly shows that it was following in the

footsteps of the DRC. In 1943 (Anderson 1989:46), the DRC council sent a delegation to government to request not only a strict ban on mixed marriages and extramarital racial mixing, but also the implementation of segregated residential areas. The AFM supported these “emerging apartheid structures” by resolving the following (De Wet 1989:165):

- 1) Race Relations: The Mission stands for segregation. The fact that the Native, Indian and Coloured is saved does not render him European.
- 2) Native Education: The mission stands for a lower education but is definitely against a higher education.

This resolution was reaffirmed in the AFM Workers' Council in April 1948 (Anderson 1992:59).

Soon after coming to power, the Nationalists commissioned MW Eiselen, whose commission report of 1951 argued that cultural differences created the need for separate education (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:53):

Educational practice must recognize that it has to deal with a Bantu child, i.e. a child trained and conditioned in Bantu culture. The school must also give due regard to the fact that out of school hours the young Bantu child develops and lives in a Bantu Community and when he reaches maturity he will be concerned with sharing and developing the life and culture of that community.

This trend of thought was consummated by Hendrik Verwoerd, Minister of Bantu Education, who in 1954 spelt out the intentions of Bantu Education (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:52):

There was no place for him (the African) above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive training which has, as its aim, absorption in the European

community while he cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up to now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and practically misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to pasture there.

There was hardly any difference between Verwoerd and what both the DRC and AFM believed in. Another revealing article on “The church and racism”, written by JT du Plessis, appeared in the AFM’s magazine, *The Comforter* in September 1955. In this article, Du Plessis affirmed his belief in the mental, emotional and spiritual superiority of the White race, all based on the scriptures (De Wet 1989:179-180). In the same year a White AFM Pastor, Gerrie Wessels, became a Nationalist Party senator while retaining his ministerial credentials, thus demonstrating active support for the emerging apartheid policies. According to De Wet, this was the racial *status quo* that the AFM maintained until late in the seventies.

5.5 PENTECOSTALS AND THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY OF THE *STATUS QUO*

In September 1985, a group of “concerned evangelicals” met to discuss the crisis in South Africa. After their meeting, a booklet, *Evangelical witness in South Africa*, was produced. It made the phrase “theology of the *status quo*” popular. This theology of the *status quo* would include conservatism in theological understanding, dualism (an understanding that the church shouldn’t get involved in politics) and an abuse and misuse of Romans 13. “Whenever victims of oppression try to raise their voices or resist the oppression, Romans 13 is thrown into their faces by beneficiaries of these oppressive systems” (*Evangelical witness in South Africa* 1986:15).

Like many other Evangelicals, Pentecostals in South Africa have been charged with supporting the *status quo* as far as socio-political issues are concerned. The researcher was personally a member of a Pentecostal mission church for sixteen years (the Assemblies of God Church from 1973 to 1989). For six years, he was one of its pastors. He attended conferences where the whole church met together, African, Coloured and a few White speakers but it was also affected by apartheid. Hollenweger (1972:122) describes the

Assemblies of God as “a non-segregated missionary church with an emphasis on the African element”. This non-segregated church finally developed into separate Black and White sections of God’s work because of the *status quo* religion. Hollenweger (1972:122) maintains that this was the result of “the growth of White participation in this church and the political polarisation in South Africa. Even though there was an integrated executive, the fellowship was kept simply on a spiritual level; separate dining rooms and quarters were provided for the different races (Anderson 1989:59).

The African leaders in the Pentecostal Mission churches were equally influenced by their situation. One of the AFM Black pioneers, Elias Letwaba, like many Blacks of his time, seemed to accept the indignities placed on him because of the colour of his skin (Anderson 1989:59). He appeared to have adopted a neutral stance on issues of politics. Anderson (1989:60) confirms this:

On one occasion he was reported to have been preaching on a farm where he was told to sleep in the fowl-house. In the middle of the night he was wakened by the White farmer and asked to pray for his sick wife. This he did, and the farmer thereupon apologised for having put him in the fowl-house. To this Letwaba replied: “It is all right, Sir, to put me there, my master slept in a stable, and I am only a Black worm.”

This could have been taken as a sign of humility before God or as if pioneer Letwaba had lost his sense of dignity and self-esteem. Towards the end of his life, Letwabae wrote the following in *The Comforter*, the AFM magazine (Anderson 1989:60):

I pray for our benefactors, the White people, who have brought the Eternal Light to us. My nation must learn to love our benefactors ... and be obedient to them, because there would be no heaven for us poor Blacks if it were not for the White man.

This is an example of how missionary Christianity psychologically oppressed Black people in South Africa and made them subservient to the Whites. Racism in South Africa produced a type of subservient attitude among Blacks that was very close to that of a slave. Letwaba did not question that even though he was a leader, he was not allowed to share real

leadership with White “masters” in the church. According to Anderson (1989:60), Letwaba’s humble acceptance of the *status quo* was one of the main reasons that made him remain in the AFM for so long, unlike his contemporaries, Edward Motaung and Engenas Lekganyane and many other indigenous Pentecostal-type leaders. Because of Letwaba’s “patience”, he was one of only two Black district overseers to be appointed in the AFM’s first fifty years and was even allowed to speak at White conferences.

One of the most effective Black church leaders was Nicholas Bhengu. His work was the main reason for the growth of the Assemblies of God as an indigenous African Church. According to Watt (1992:178), “it was also believed that Black people would be brought to liberation from political and economic oppression through the gospel. He believed that by coming back to God, Blacks would be prepared for nationhood and political power.”

He was ahead of many of his Black Christian contemporaries in understanding socio-political issues, but did not often make socio-political pronouncements. Bhengu’s stance on the Black-White issue in South Africa was one of self-confidence and a sense of equality. He resisted the prevailing social context to shape the church and at times preached Black consciousness, challenging Africans to accept who they were and believe in God and in themselves. He taught Blacks by word and example not to be ashamed of their race. According to Anderson (1989:60), “Bhengu was not a politician, he did not challenge the *status quo*; in fact, he was described by African nationalists as a ‘sell-out’ and received several threats to his life” (See also Hollenweger (1972:136). Dubb (1976:120) asserts that Bhengu believed that political activity was futile and consequently forbade his members any political affiliation. However, Mangope, one of the Bantustan leaders, was already at that time an active member of the Assemblies of God Church.

5.6 THE ANTI-PENTECOSTAL DEBATE

The Pentecostal movement has faced opposition from the times it got started in the beginning of the twentieth century. Vinsan Synan (1975:101) shows that the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement paid a great price for their experience. He shows that in

Oklahoma, early Pentecostals were pelted with stones and eggs while the straw beneath them was seasoned with red pepper for their discomfort in worship (1975:101). According to Synan (1975:102) the initial wave of opposition resulted from the opinion that Pentecostals were the tools of Satan and were engaging in religious excesses at the behest of demon spirits.

One of the strongest anti-Pentecostal voice during this times, Alexander Mackie(1921:vii), has this to say about the Pentecostals:

It ought to be a matter of common knowledge that historically such religious experiences are practically always associated with anti-moral conduct and more particularly with transgressions of accepted moral standards in the Vita Sexualis.

Mackie (1921:25) equally rejected the notion that glossolalia in the Acts of the Apostles was actually a work of God. To him it was a proof that the Church “Still must wage the struggle against pagan ideas and pagan practices within its own doors” (1921:25).

Mackie’s voice was followed by a number of other voices. Louis S. Brauman (1984:1) whose anti-Pentecostal stance was not hidden wrote:

Probably the most widely spread of all satanic phenomena today is the demonic imitation of the apostolic gift of tongues.

Brauman reported numerous narratives concerning moral breakdowns, broken homes, indecency, free love, and other lurid conduct which was attributed to the tongues movement.

Other voices were that of H.J Stoke (1963:112-) and Harry A.Ironside, who, according to Synan (1975:105), associated Pentecostalism with the holiness movement to the credit of neither. Synan (1975:106) shows that Ironside (1955:38-39) believes that the tongues movement was proof that “Superstition and fanaticism and the grossest character find a hotbed among holiness advocates.

All these remarks are in sharp contrast to the worship which is truly characteristic of the Pentecostal revival. They are however relevant even to our day in that they serve to warn

Pentecostals against the imitation of spiritual gifts and against any human means which might be used to stimulate spiritual gifts.

The Second wave of opposition was characterized by a rational polemic based on doctrine rather than on rabid emotionalism. The most thorough opposition based on doctrinal differences is found among committed dispensationalists. According to Synan (1975:109) John Walvoord effectively expounded this view (1954:139). According to Walvoord (1954:139), tongues ceased at the end of the apostolic age. Walvoord (1954:174) writes:

With the completion of the New Testament and its almost universal acceptance by those true to God, the need for further unusual display of miraculous works ceased.

Walvoord was followed by Gromacki (1967:141) who stated that the modern tongues movement reflects a confusion and ignorance of Biblical doctrine. His contention is that signs were important only to the Jews (1967:140) and that biblical tongues were always known languages.

Apart from these voices, a new phase developed in the anti-Pentecostal argument. This phase includes such writers like Frederick Dale Bruner (1970), Anthony A. Hockema (1966) and Donald Burdick (1969:39). Most of these writers treat the Pentecostal experience as a human phenomenon, stripping it of its supernatural character. This is a dangerous attack at a vital point, for if the experience is totally human or psychic, it is not of God.

In concluding our attempt at looking at the anti-Pentecostal argument, it is of vital importance to reflect on the Faith Movement and its relation to the Classical Pentecostal Church. The faith movement has its historical roots in classical Pentecostalism (Horn: 1989:85). According to Horn (1989:85) the theology proper of the Faith Movement differs from that of the classical Pentecostals. Horn (1989:90) is of the opinion that the Faith Movement has developed a distinctive theological system that cannot be adequately interpreted as a slight variation from Pentecostal thinking. He (1989:85) tries to show that in the four main doctrines, the doctrine of God, Christology, Anthropology and the doctrine of revelation, the Faith Movement parts company with classical pentecostalism. Horn (1989:86) however shows that it is in the application of their faith that faith teachers show a

difference between their theoretical confessions and their concept of God and other doctrines. The teaching of the Faith Movement includes Financial Prosperity, Positive Confession, Healing, Signs and Wonders, etc.

Hunt and McMahon (1985:97) are of the opinion that the Faith Movement teaches that everything can be explained by natural process governed by scientifically explained law. By doing so, Hunt and McMahon (1985:97) believe that the Faith Movement reduces God into an impersonal force. They further show that the cosmology of metaphysical cults like New Age is the source of prosperity teaching (1985:16ff). To link prosperity teachings to the occult and sorcery is to go too far. We believe that the mere fact that the prosperity teachers rely on many of the principles of Napoleon Hill who might have indulged in occult does not make every prosperity teacher a sorcerer. (Hill is believed to have taught people to make contacts with demons) (Horn 1989:93).

The leaders of the Faith Movement, especially Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland are regarded in high esteem in the Faith Movement. Horn (1989:109) shows that prominent leaders in the Faith Movement like Capps, Price and Osteen are Kenneth Hagins' students and that many questions in the Faith Movement are settled merely by stating what Kenneth Copeland says.

The Pentecostal Movement and more specifically, the Healing and Deliverance Movement have an example of William Marion Branham who was regarded as the angel of Revelation (Horn:109). We cannot conclude that the Faith Movement is a cult or will eventually become a cult around Hagin, Copeland or other Faith leaders. Most of the Faith Movement leaders, especially Hagin subscribes to the authority of the Bible. Followers of this movement however must be encouraged to study the Bible on their own.

The anti-Pentecostal debate still consists mainly of the following points: (1) the evidential purposes of glossolalia in the Book of Acts are no longer valid; (2) glossolalia was a temporary gift; (3) glossolalia was an inferior gift; (4) glossolalia can be explained as a psychological and human phenomenon.

Although the language and violence of the early argument has been subdued, the skepticism remains. Theological objections are unchanged. On the other hand the viability of Pentecostalism is demonstrated by its continuing growth. According to Synan (1975:119) this attests to its evangelistic mission and to its capacity for meeting real human needs. Believing that its theology, its mission, its power and its fruitfulness are in harmony with Scripture, Pentecostalism is rightfully demanding an honest examination of its proposition that it is a modern expression of the New Testament experience.

CHAPTER 6

The maturation of apartheid and Venda

6.1 VENDA IN THE 1970s AND 1980s

6.1.1 Political development

The National Party (NP) government followed a policy of African denationalization. In terms of the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970, all Africans were regarded as citizens of the different homelands. This Act was followed by the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1978, which decreed that children of citizens of independent homelands born after independence would not acquire section 10 exemptions even if they had been born or had resided in an urban area in "White South Africa" (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:99).

To make apartheid sound human, the NP government decreed that apartheid must not only take away but must give and give generously (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:99). The apartheid order failed to make good on its promise to provide adequate alternative structures. Although in the Coloured section, the NP government established dummy bodies to act as intermediaries between itself and the community, among the Africans the gap between promise and delivery was even larger. Since the establishment of these homelands was supposed to be a compensation for failure to have a representative in a White parliament, one would have expected the rapid development of these areas as an alternative to political integration. In a discussion with Verwoerd in 1961, the UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, described the requirements to be met if the government wanted the homeland to be considered a "competitive alternative":

- There had to be sufficient and coherent territory for the homeland;
- There had to be rapid economic growth and industrial development;
- Africans working outside the homelands should return only on a voluntary basis and had to have their human rights recognized, and

- The government needed to let the homelands proceed fairly rapidly to full independence (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:101).

In the two decades that followed, the government made it too clear that it was not interested in the first three requirements. There was no attempt to increase the land allocated to the homelands over and above the 13 per cent that had been laid down in 1936. Furthermore, the NP government embarked on a policy of “repatriation” of surplus Africans from urban areas.

Before 1971, when the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act was passed, the economic and political development in the homelands was largely neglected. Verwoerd prohibited investment by White entrepreneurs in the homelands during his term of office. This was a severe blow to economic growth in the homelands. The government’s resettlement policy and strict curbs on African urbanization seriously impeded the prospects for growth, apart from the rapid natural population increase. Between 1960 and 1980 the homelands had to accommodate one million Africans removed from the farms, 600,000 from “Black spots” and three-quarters of a million removed from White cities under a policy of township relocation (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1989:10). These effects were devastating for the homelands. Vhavenda from Tshikota were forcefully removed to Vleifontein. Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989:101) state that “between 1970 and 1980 the overall population of the homelands rose by another 57 per cent. The result of the massive inflow of people was a dramatic decline in agricultural production. The homelands became overwhelmingly dependent on the earnings from migrant labour.”

As the NP policy of full apartheid developed, between 1970 and 1976 the South African budget allocation for the homelands rose from 6.3 to 8.1 per cent of the total national income. Nevertheless, the homeland governments remained almost totally dependent on Pretoria. Pretoria risked very little in giving self-government or even nominal independence to these political entities. It was well understood among homeland leaders that any show of opposition could lead to devastating financial punitive measures. Moreover, the Bantu Authorities Act of 1953 had greatly strengthened the position of the chiefs at local and

The proliferation of tribal authorities also encouraged the spread of schools. Newly-appointed chiefs or headmen felt that their newly given authority would be better expressed through their self-controlled schools in their areas. The provision of school buildings in rural areas was a responsibility that fell to local communities. In theory, the state contributed on a Rand-for-Rand basis once classrooms had been completed, but in practice it found a wide variety of ways to minimize its obligations (Delius 1996:156). Villagers and migrants carried the burden of fundraising and construction and achieved great results. By the end of 1960, most big villages in Venda boasted a primary school, and the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed the proliferation of secondary schools.

Parents were disappointed, though, because their hope of securing a future for their children through erecting schools, brought disappointing results. The reason for this was that while buildings blossomed in the veld, the quality of education provided at these schools withered. The training of teachers was dominated by missionary-run colleges. To varying degrees, institutions like Botshabelo, Pax, Kilnerton, Grace Dieu, Bethesda, and Vendaland Training College had been under-resourced, authoritarian in their methods and milieu, and racist in their treatment of Black staff and students (Delius 1996:156). Nevertheless, these colleges produced relatively well-trained and qualified educators who were committed in their chosen fields and displayed considerable dedication to their profession.

Verwoerd's campaigns were aimed at entrenching Bantu education at these training colleges. In order to mould the hearts and minds of the next generation of "Bantu" children, Verwoerd believed that the best would be to get a firm grip on the training of their teachers. Verwoerd also declared his intention to keep institutions for advanced education away from urban environments. Delius (1996:156) reports that of the thirty-eight colleges in the country as a whole in 1948, twenty-six were closed down in the ten years following 1956 with the first effect being felt in the Transvaal. In the institutions that survived, Afrikaans-speaking principals were appointed, debate was discouraged, fundamental pedagogy entrenched and White English-speaking staff phased out (Delius 1996:156). The Afrikaner principals were authoritarian and the Black lecturers copied this approach. These changes had a serious effect on the education that was finally offered at the schools.

As schools started to multiply, there was a growing need for other colleges to train teachers especially for high schools. It soon outran the capacity of the colleges to provide them. Teachers with primary teaching certificates and diplomas were entrusted with secondary school classes. Increasingly private teachers who had no formal training but had junior or senior certificates were compelled to teach at all levels. Soon there was an abundant supply of teachers of Tshivenda and Biblical Studies but a desperate shortage of competent Mathematics and Science teachers. Levels of proficiency declined. Delius (1996:157) quotes an old teacher who observed: "When the missionaries left, I do not know whether they left with their English or what. But English broke down just there."

It is safe to say that, despite the Herculean efforts of the communities, the growth in numbers of pupils in the 1970s and 1980s outstripped the capacity of the schools. The result was congestion in classrooms, which sometimes lacked doors, blackboards, desks and windows which froze in winter and baked in summer (Delius 1996:158). Some classes were conducted under trees. Teachers, often young, poorly trained and under-qualified, faced very big classes with pathetic resources. It should be mentioned that there were teachers who were naturally gifted and committed but they were very few. Corporal punishment was taken to new heights. Boys and girls alike were indiscriminately slapped, beaten with canes and lashed with *sjamboks* for offences which included not having full school uniforms, being unable to pay school fees on time, arriving late, asking difficult questions or failing tests (Delius 1996:158).

The mushrooming of schools bridged the sex ratios in the schools. The previous patterns, where the cattle post, agricultural and domestic labour and initiation were the central experiences in the lives of most youths, while a minority of mainly Christian children attended schools, was steadily eroded. While initiation remained an important institution in most of the communities, the proportion of young absconders grew. This did not end the battle between the initiated and the non-initiated. The divisions could not withstand the onslaught of such Western sports as football, which provided additional common ground.

School was also a forum in which children of immigrants were integrated into the wider society. The growth of the Pentecostal churches and other independent churches broadened

popular participation in Christianity and contributed to the “blurring of divisions” (Delius 1996:159). Elements of Christian ritual prayers to open and close public meetings, for example, became a common feature of community life.

The 1976 student-led revolt, which seared its way through township after township, found its counterpart in Sibasa. Pupils at Tshivhase High School took to the streets; they hijacked a bus that took them to Mphaphuli High School. The students of Mphaphuli joined forces. Examination papers were burnt. The government responded with arrests and by heightening police activity. Mbeu Bookshop was burnt, as was the Dutch Reformed Church at Tshilidzini. This was the beginning of tough times. The government responded by closing all hostels in Venda as it was thought that these were the breeding ground of dissatisfaction. In many schools, the activities of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) were curtailed. In other schools, the movement was completely banned. It was felt that the SCM was “being used” to force Christian students to revolt against the authorities. Most of the conferences of the Bold Evangelical Christian Organisation (which later became known as ECO) were banned or made to take place under very harsh conditions like sending a several government intelligence agents to attend the meeting. The presence of the latter scared a number of conference participants. A number of churches no longer felt safe to receive the ministry of this interdenominational organization. Special Branch members of the Department of Security spread lies about the work of ECO.

These uprisings led to a considerable drop-out rate particularly in secondary schools. Externally, employment opportunities were dwindling. These school-leavers – even those who passed matric, faced a mounting struggle to secure employment. This resulted in a growing number of unemployed youth in the villages. Unable to find work, marry or establish households, many young people were trapped in social limbo. As Delius (1996:160) points out, young men who lacked the resources to pay *lobola*, fathered children they could not support and the families of the young women concerned, were forced to shoulder additional burdens. These misplaced youths ended up stealing, pick-pocketing, hanging around bar lounges and opting for a life of crime. Others left the country to join either the ANC or the PAC.

At that time *Flash Light*, a community magazine intended to conscientise the readers on the evils of Apartheid, appeared. During a government clampdown most of the journalists were taken to prison including Neswiswa, the editor. The South African government was in no way persuaded to change its policies by the 1976 uprising.

6.1.3 Further political developments

A process had been started already in 1969 when wider executive powers were granted to the territorial authorities by proclamation R.168 of June 1969. The territorial authority was now empowered to control its own affairs to a far greater extent than had previously been the case (Benso 1979:42). The Venda Territorial Authority was modelled on a federal basis and each tribal or community authority was represented on the territorial authority by its chief, or chairman and one other member designated by the tribal or community authority from among its councillors. The executive powers were vested in the Executive Council. This was pushed forward by a further step taken towards self-determination. A Legislative Assembly was established in 1971 in terms of Chapter 1 of the Black States Constitution Act (Benso 1979:43). The Constitution of the Legislative Assembly was based on the Territorial Authority, and the Executive Council continued to hold office. This step led to the declaration of a self-governing territory, called Venda, in terms of Chapter II of the Black States Constitution Act of 1971.

It should be noted, however, that the name Venda was not created by Pretoria: from the beginning the place that the Vhavenda, after crossing the Limpopo, chose to stay was called Venda.

Pampalis (1991:246) is of the opinion that the mid-1970s brought to an end the golden age of apartheid (1964-1972), when the liberation movements had been on the defensive with the economy booming as never before. During this time the whole capitalist world went into recession. The Portuguese Empire collapsed, bringing independence to Mozambique and Angola, and removing the "buffer zone" of colonial states that had shielded South Africa from independent Africa. Inside South Africa, there was a revival of mass resistance, particularly among workers and students.

Strikes started in Durban in 1973. The relative success of these strikes served to encourage workers at other factories and further strikes broke out. Pampalis (1991:247) shows that in the first three months of 1973, a total of 61,000 workers were involved in 160 strikes. Because of the large numbers involved in the strikes, the police could not respond in their usual way by arresting all strikers and replacing them with other workers. Teargas was used to break up meetings.

These strikes led to the formation of new, independent, unregistered trade unions for Black workers. According to Pampalis (1991:247), by 1977 there were 27 such unions. The ANC was given considerable moral, material and diplomatic support by both Angola and Mozambique. Mozambique's border with the RSA enabled the ANC's external mission to establish closer links with internal structures.

6.1.4 Youth and student organizations

Many of the organizations formed by students in the early 1970s continued to grow in membership. The South African Students Organisation (SASO), founded in 1969, became very prominent among Black students. It developed an ideology, which became known as Black Consciousness. Exponents of this ideology stressed the need for psychological liberation. SASO discovered that years of subjugation had caused Black people to lose confidence in themselves and develop feelings of inferiority. There was a need for Blacks to be on their own and instil their God-given pride and confidence in themselves. SASO popularized the name "Black" and rejected the term "non-White", which had long been used in South Africa. SASO also stressed the importance of unity for all "Black" people – Africans, Coloured, and Indians. In line with this stress on the need for unity, SASO rejected the Bantustan system with its aim of dividing the Black people, which was critical for Bantustan leaders. As a movement, SASO was given recognition at the African universities, teacher training colleges and seminaries.

In order to spread their ideas into the Black communities at large, in 1972 SASO called together various educational, cultural and religious organizations to form the Black Peoples

Convention (BPC). The BPC was the political wing of the Black Consciousness Movement (Pampalis 1991:242). One of the national presidents of BPC was Reverend Tshenuwani Simon Farisani of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who was based in Venda.

Another political development during this period was the creation of several organizations by secondary school students and working or unemployed youth. Although these groups tended to be small and did not have a strong political impact, they conscientized students to understand political issues. The Guyo Book Club was such an organization. Milubi (1988:207) indicates that it was composed of Nthambeleni Phalandwa, Gundo Lidovho, Irene Mutsila and other poets. Their protest poetry was published in *Staffrider* in both English and Tshivenda and revealed the plight of the Vhavenda. According to Milubi (1988:207), the group did not survive long because the Venda authorities regarded it as a threat to their future. Nthambeleni Phalandwa and Tshilidzi Ramovha had gone to the extent of going to secondary schools and training colleges to give poetry recitals. These poetry recitals produced a certain sense of awareness in pupils and students.

One of the most important groups to emerge at this time was the Bold Evangelical Christian Organization (which later became known as ECO), formed in 1972 by students at Mphaphuli Secondary School, under the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa. Although not a political organization, it preached a contextualized gospel that left the state challenged by its messages. Its leaders were among the people arrested just before Venda gained its independence. The Venda government tried in vain to outlaw it. The Vhavenda were being conscientized to understand political issues.

In the first elections that were held, only 68 301 voters turned out, representing an estimated 37% poll (Benso 1979:44). Then the Venda government introduced the draconian legislature of Pretoria whereby a person could be detained without trial. Many popular Venda citizens were arrested as a result. Most of the people arrested had very little to do with Venda politics. Among these were members of the Bold Evangelical Christian Organization, including its president NL Khorommbi, a high school teacher. Other members included AM Makhari, Pastor Mboneni Nevhutalu, MT Ramutumbu, TD Madima and N Tshikovhi. It

was feared that they could use their influence to stop Pretoria granting self-independence to the Vhavenda, thereby robbing them of their South African citizenship.

After the elections, the road was clear for the last step in this Verwoerdian journey: total independence. This was granted on 13 September 1979. Dean TS Farisani of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was invited to preach at the Venda Independent Stadium. His message was very prophetic and embarrassing to the dignitaries who had invited him.

After the so-called independence, the situation in Venda deteriorated badly. The same draconian laws that held South Africa in political bondage were adopted by the new government of Venda. Even more frustrating was that the government of President Mphahlele appeared to have no moral conscience. In 1982, Isaac Tshifhiwa Muofhe, a member of the ECO Executive Committee, was brutally killed by the agents of the state of Venda. During the court proceedings that followed his death, the Venda security police, in whose hands he died, were acquitted of murder. Following the death of Tshifhiwa Muofhe, Dean TS Farisani was detained together with Pastor NP Phaswana, Pastor AM Mahamba and Pastor MP Phosiwa. Some of these pastors, together with the dean, were severely tortured.

In the meantime the South African government was trying to reform apartheid. The 1970s saw the gradual disappearance of the most offensive features of apartheid, namely segregated entrances, lifts, waiting rooms, toilets and benches in parks, and in 1988 the government formally approved the principle of free settlement areas (Pampalis 1991:123). Despite these measures, the government had retained the cornerstone of communal apartheid, namely race classification, group areas and segregated education in state schools. In 1985 it abolished the racial sex laws (articles 23 of the Immorality Amendment Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act) but ostracized Whites who had married across the colour line by forcing them to live either in one of the Black residential areas or in one of the open residential areas it had sanctioned (Pampalis 1991:124). After this development, the Population Registration Act remained the foundation of apartheid.

In the area of labour, major changes were also taking place. These were brought about by various factors, among which were pressure from the outside world, the dynamics of economic growth, the emergence of a White middle class and the Black militant group.

For the purpose of this study, the most important development at this time was the publication of the *Kairos Document*, *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, *Relevant Pentecostal Witness*, and the *Road to Damascus*. These publications brought changes that did not occur overnight. A series of events led to the publication of these “revolutionary” church publications. The most important of these are highlighted below.

In 1968 the World Council of Churches (WCC) instituted the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR). The first grants to organizations fighting racism were made in 1970 (Saayman 1991:84). South African liberation movements (eg, the ANC and PAC) received grants from the WCC special fund. There was a huge outcry by the White media, which was later joined by the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster. The South African churches were forced to temporarily withdraw their financial support or contributions to the WCC. This event put the political stance of the churches on the agenda. Decisions about political matters, especially the liberation struggle in South Africa, were no longer mere theoretical questions; they were very immediate practical matters - matters of Rands and cents, of flesh and blood - as many of the Black South African Christians had relatives in the liberation movements. Saayman (1991:85) points out that the whole question of the socio-political dimension of the mission of the church presented itself with great urgency.

The formation of the South African Students Organization (SASO) under the leadership of Steve Biko in 1969 prepared students to understand the conditions of the Blacks in South Africa. Together with the Student Christian Movement (the university section), SASO was responsible for the development of Black consciousness which was destined to play a leading role in Black resistance to White power during the 1970s. Allan Boesak, one of South Africa's leading Black theologians, defines “Black consciousness” as follows (Saayman 1991:85):

Black consciousness may be described as the awareness of Black people that their humanity is contributed by their Blackness. It means that Black people are no longer ashamed that they are Black, that they have a Black history and a Black culture, distinct from the history and culture of White people. It means that Blacks are

determined to be judged no longer by, and to adhere no longer to, White values. It is an attitude, a way of life. Viewed thus, Black consciousness is an integral part of Black Power. But Black Power is also a clear critique of, and a force for, fundamental change in systems and patterns in society which oppress or which give rise to the oppression of Black people. Black theology is the reflection of Black Christians on the situation in which they live and on their struggle for liberation.

From this quotation it is clear that the mission of the church is here strongly perceived in terms of political involvement as well. The ideology of Black consciousness is married to Black theology. Black consciousness served as a powerful impulse for the rise of a new Black self-assurance and personal self-esteem, which inspired countless thousands of students to resist White oppression. The government detained many of the SASO student leaders, including Steve Biko, who later died at the hands of security police. For his funeral, a bus full of students and other activists was organized from Sibasa to Pietermaritzburg.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in the 1980s to counteract the government's reform programme which led to a tricameral parliament in 1984. Black resistance erupted, and this led to a partial state of emergency in 1985. At this time, the *Kairos Document* was produced formally by a group of pastors and theologians in Soweto who were later joined by other Christian leaders, both Black and White, from different areas.

The *Kairos Document* elicited overwhelming reaction both inside and outside South Africa, as a timely word of prophecy in the contemporary situation. The government and other conservative Christians condemned it, labelling it "Marxist". The second edition was produced in 1986. The fundamental message of the *Kairos Document* was that the church must distance itself from state theology that worships a god who is an idol. The Document identifies the state as tyrannical. The church theology was equally found wanting. It lacked social analysis and an adequate understanding of politics and political strategy. The type of faith and spirituality was highlighted as a reason for an inadequate church theology to tackle the South African problems (*Kairos Document* 1986:14). In its challenge to action, the Document stresses the fact that the church must side with the oppressed, and participate in the struggle. Church activities were to be transformed; a special campaign was to be

launched. Since the government was perceived to have no moral legitimacy, civil disobedience was encouraged. The church was called upon to give moral guidance (*Kairos Document* 1986:24).

At the same time (around September 1985) a group of “concerned evangelicals” met to discuss the crisis in South Africa and how it affected their lives. They ended up producing an *Evangelical Witness* in South Africa. This was a critique of evangelical theology by the evangelicals themselves. The document addresses issues like evangelistic groups and mission theology, radicalism and evangelicalism. The motive for preaching the gospel was questioned; and capitalistic and materialistic preachings of Kenneth Hagin and Ray McCauley were brought to the surface. White supremacy, even in evangelistic campaigns, was debated. The Church’s support of apartheid was strongly disputed (*Concerned Evangelicals* 1986:33):

We are distressed when we notice that these groups are ready supporters of apartheid and its apartheid officials. Some Christian (born again) soldiers get involved in South African Defence Force shooting in our townships, and later give testimonies of Christ inspired victory over “communists” during church services. We regret their claim to the same faith as us, their prey

In its last chapter the document (*Concerned Evangelicals* 1986:38) strongly set the radical course for the Church in her mission:

We as evangelicals need to repent from this selective radicalism and biased morality. We need to go back to the Great Commission that calls us to preach the gospel to the whole world: to the Gentiles and Jews alike, to Whites and Blacks alike, bearing in mind all the time that our God is not an impartial God. We must begin to preach vociferously against structural and institutionalized sins, like the sin of apartheid, etc. It is strange that we do preach against tribal attitudes (between Tswanas and Zulus...) but we seldom preach about the attitudes between Whites and Blacks, between White missionaries and Black pastors.

Even amidst turbulent periods of harassment and oppression, these evangelical Christians still thought the preaching of the gospel was important. The gospel itself had to prove to be the gospel to the poor and rejected. They decided to break away from policies and procedures that would leave structural and institutionalized sins unattended to.

A third important document for the purpose of this study is *Relevant Pentecostal Witness*, which appeared in 1989. This document was initiated by some Pentecostal leaders. The preamble (Rossouw 1994:129) states categorically that “as God called Moses to deliver His people from the yoke of slavery, in the same way He calls the church to proclaim prophetically the deliverance of his people from the yoke of apartheid. We praise God for the churches which are obedient to this call, and which are working as his instruments to end apartheid.”

These Pentecostal leaders felt that to end apartheid was obedience to God. It was no longer meddling in politics. Apartheid was now seen as a “yoke” that needed to be taken away by the church. The preamble carries a sense of confessing sins of indifference to the plight of the people. The document also shows the relationship between Pentecostalism in South Africa and that in the southern states of the USA, which prohibited racially mixed meetings (Rossouw 1994:130). The document is a critique of Pentecostal theology with its individualistic emphasis on repentance, and its spiritualism, which is preoccupied with heaven, etc. It ends by suggesting a course to be followed by Pentecostals: that of becoming a relevant Pentecostal witness (Rossouw 1994:130):

As concerned Pentecostals we repent of our apathy to human suffering, which has been the order of the day for so long in our country. We stand committed to work against apartheid in all its forms. Wherever possible we will seek to work with our brothers and sisters outside the Pentecostal tradition who are committed to bringing about a just society in South Africa.

Their suggested plan of action included taking the message of “a relevant witness” to others, linking up and uniting with other Pentecostals involved in “a relevant witness”, working with the clergy and laity through workshops, preaching “a relevant witness” from pulpits,

seeking fellowship with each other, irrespective of denominational ties, and making “relevant witness” practical by being involved in community projects in conjunction with progressive community organizations (Rossouw 1994:141). Although it did not show how this could end apartheid, the fact that Pentecostalism had started to deal with institutional evil was significant.

6.1.5 Comrades and witches

A disturbing occurrence in Venda in the mid-1980s was the emergence of “comrades” who were bent on destroying witches. In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched. Although it did not endorse armed struggle, the UDF draped itself in the colours of the ANC. The first campaigns of the UDF were against elections to new ethnic parliaments and local councils. Delius (1996:180) observes that by the mid-1980s, a pattern of insurrection and repression based around schools, universities and townships had risen to a peak. The struggles, travelling by a wide variety of routes, also breached some of the barriers between town and countryside. Venda was not excluded.

Youths in a number of villages were stirred up. News of events in the urban areas filtered down through the media. Migrant workers, urban youths who attended local schools and boys who visited family and friends in the townships or who found temporary employment in the cities told of their experiences as observers of, or participants in, township revolt. Students from a range of tertiary institutions also came back home with accounts of campus action and politics.

The Government of Venda, on the other hand, was being severely tested. Although President Mphahlele was ruling with an iron fist, the Vhavenda seemed determined to take their destiny into their own hands. Youth groupings decided that the time was ripe to reform the schooling system. A cross-section of youths was involved, ranging from seasoned activists to individuals who had not previously shown any interest in politics. Very little political education was given to such a groups of youths. They became known as comrades. Most of these youths were students and unemployed secondary school-leavers ranging in age from early teens to mid-twenties. They were the beneficiaries of the rapid expansion of senior

schools in Venda since the mid-1970s. They targeted witches and the police (witches are people thought to be responsible for the misfortunes of others). Schools were reorganized. SRCs elected by the pupils assumed effective control. Unpopular principals and teachers were at times driven away.

The comrades alarmed elderly people by their pattern of behaviour. Groups of singing, chanting, "toy-toying" youths paraded around the villages day by day, while at night meetings were held in the bush. Attendance of these meetings was compulsory. People who disappeared mysteriously were followed. Sometimes divorced parents were forced to stay together.

As the power of the comrades grew, patterns of youth revolt and male assertion intertwined. Groups led by young men enforced their power in relation to their parents and grandparents and their dominance over girls. Businessmen in the villages were particularly aggrieved and threatened by the actions of the youth. They were subjected to regular demands for food and money and their persons and property were threatened if they refused. Buses, cars, and taxis were hijacked so that youths could attend rallies and funerals. Criminal elements also joined in the free-for-all. The issue of witchcraft was raised amongst comrades.

Traditionally, ritual sacrifice played an important role among the Vhavenda. According to Mathagu (1990:3), ritual sacrifice was an attempt by the community to communicate with the supernatural, establishing personal contact and fellowship with these forces. The community participated in ritual murder for ritual sacrifice in the belief that it would be beneficial to them. In the beginning, the chief had the sole right to control ritual murders for offerings. Annual rituals were related to agriculture and involved the treatment of seed and the celebration of the harvest. This practice was seen to be very important in the community. It was believed that ritual murder would strengthen royal members against witchcraft, misfortune and illness. During ploughing seasons, a diviner would mix seeds with special medicine made out of human offerings. The motive behind the treatment of seeds was a request to the ancestors for a good harvest, stability and prosperity. Some other rituals were observed during the ceremonies of "rites of passage" which marked the different stages of a person's life, for example birth and adulthood (Mathagu 1990:5).

Mathagu (1990:10) also points out that before the war, the commander of the warriors would use a spear smeared with *muti* to pick up pieces of flesh mixed with the beef. This would then be eaten raw. It was believed that this ritual would provide the warriors with vigour and strength. Moreover, when the chief died, his messenger (*Tshileli*) was killed for ritual purposes. He was buried together with the chief.

The type of world-view shaped by these practices made people doubt whether any progress could be achieved without ritual sacrifices. Independence was followed by many ritual murder trials involving high-ranking officials. These officials had become business people who wanted profit through the dubious practice of ritual murder. Some of the cases that were tried included those involving the Director-General for Venda Intelligence, T Mutshaeni, the Deputy Minister, Chief Ramovha, J Netshifhefhe, a businessman and many others (Mathagu 1990:19-25).

Mathagu (1990:20-24) also recalls that from 1979 most cases of ritual murder reported were found to be prompted by the quest for money. Other cases were cases of pure superstition. The case of the Minister of Local Affairs and Land Tenure, MM Mphaphuli, seems to fall in this category.

Between 1987 and 1989 about twenty cases of ritual murder were reported to the police. The Venda head of state was headman FN Ravele, who was sworn in as the second president of Venda after the death of President PR Mphephu. During his term of office, gruesome ritual murder cases were reported to the police, including the murder of Sharon Mashige, Gundo Nemakhavhani, Livison Tshigume and Mukosi Mavhina.

The situation became so bad that in 1988 Venda experienced an effective stay-away that lasted four days. During the stay-away, students, priests and pastors were arrested and some received threats. A group of pastors, mainly from the Lutheran Church, as well as from the Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church, handed a petition to the Office of the President. The petition condemned ritual murder and called for the arrest of all those involved in the practice. The government responded negatively, accusing the group of

misleading the youth. The situation did not improve. Christian leaders visited the authorities for discussion. The pastors indicated the plea from the community pertaining to ritual murder. In his response, President Ravele condemned the pastors, accusing them of misleading the community with unfounded allegations of ritual murder and of preaching inflammatory sermons (Mathagu 1990:41).

The President's stance did not help resolve the problem. On 6 February 1990, history was made in Venda when President Ravele held a meeting with priests and pastors. It was the first time the Venda government had invited the clergy to a meeting. By this time Venda was experiencing witch-hunts by the comrades. Mathagu (1990:42) gives the following account:

Among those who attended the meeting were Pastor Khorombi, Pastor Magoma, Reverend Nevhotalu and Reverend Phosiwa. During the discussion, Pastor Khorombi mentioned that ritual murder was the source of the unrest situation. He suggested that ritual murder cases be investigated properly without interference by high ranking officials. This would defuse the situation. Pastor Phosiwa also highlighted the disruptive effects of ritual murder. He mentioned that priests and pastors were facing police harassment.

In his response, President Ravele was more conciliatory, stressing that it was the duty of priests and pastors to teach youth the spirit of goodwill. He then promised that all ritual murderers would be brought to book and stated further that he had included Religious Affairs in the curriculum of the Department of Education, so as to enable pastors to guide the youth properly. The pastors responded with a letter to the President questioning the reasons behind the government's Religious Affairs proposal, the situation of violence and the reincorporation of Venda in the new South Africa.

These developments did not stop the activities of the comrades, who took the law in their own hands. Between January and March 1990, about 25 people were killed and 50 houses were burnt down as a result of witch-hunt unrest (Mathagu 1990:51).

These events show that the belief in witchcraft is far from dying out among the Vhavenda. This poses a very delicate problem for African Christianity.

6.2 ELCSA'S MISSION IN THE 1980s AND 1990s

The Lutheran Church was faced with the mammoth task of leading the way as the apartheid darkness deepened. The Lord seemed to have answered the cry of the Vhavenda by providing them with the leadership of Tshenuwani Farisani, who was the Dean of Devhula-Leboa Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Tshenuwani Farisani has deep political roots. He was deeply involved with SASO and was once a national president of Black People's Convention (BPC).

For the Lutheran Church in Venda, this was perhaps the most turbulent period they had ever been through. One of their members, Isaac Tshifhiwa Muofhe, was brutally murdered by the Venda police. Tshifhiwa was the General Secretary of the Bold Evangelical Christian Organisation (BECO), which later became ECO (Evangelical Christian Outreach). The church stood up to confront the Venda government because of this issue. Through the court proceedings that followed, it was revealed that Tshifhiwa lost pints of blood and was injured in the kidneys; there were extensive lacerations all over his body. In their defence, the police said all this happened because of a scuffle they had in the police truck. The judgement that was handed down concluded that nobody could be blamed for his death.

Farisani (1988:73) expressed his thoughts in a poem, "IKE":

Isaac my friend. Tshifhiwa my brother. Charming IKE
doctors know he was hurt,
by whom unknown
The bench knows it's not suicide "this time"
but nobody is to blame
the dead is dumb
he is guilty
the guilty speak

they are free

Farisani himself was imprisoned four times and tortured to the point of death for his outspoken criticism of apartheid. He was subjected to the most brutal indignities. He wrestled with God, but kept his hope in God. He served for more than sixteen years as a pastor, and the director of Diaconate and Human Rights. In his community involvement and anti-apartheid activities, he worked closely with Steve Biko in the Southern African Students Association and also as the President of the Black People's Convention of South Africa before it was banned in 1977.

During Farisani's deanship, the Lutheran Church experienced a period of growth. Table 6.1 below illustrates the growth.

Table 6.1 Growth in Tshakhuma and Ha-Tshivhase, 1974-1990

TSHAKHUMA 1975			HA - TSHIVHASE 1974		
MEMBERSHIP					
Male	Female	Children	Male	Female	Children
236	405	670	41	77	202

TSHAKHUMA 1985			HA-TSHIVHASE 1983		
Male	Female	Children	Male	Female	Children
631	937	771	199	899	616

TSHAKHUMA 1990			HA-TSHIVHASE 1984		
MEMBERSHIP					
Male	Female	Children	Male	Female	Children
416	610	471	246	1206	796

The Tshakhuma parish was divided into two parishes in 1986. This is why the 1975 and

1985 grand totals do not reflect any marked difference. The same trend occurred in Ha-Tshivhase parish, which was divided into two parishes as well.

Apart from the political turmoil, the Lutheran Church did experience some form of growth. The church embarked on a church growth campaign conducted through crusades under the leadership of a crusade team, known as Devhula-Leboa Evangelisation Team.

6.2.1 Devhula-Leboa Circuit Evangelization

This ministry was started in 1979. At the beginning a team led by the very Rev Dean Dr TS Farisani visited Niani in 1983. After a seminar, a committee was elected.

According to the Devhula-Leboa Circuit Evangelisation Report (Report 1983-1986), there were still people who had not accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour who needed the Word brought to them and the chief aim of the ministry was to bring the Word. A seminar on evangelism was conducted three times a year.

Devhula-Leboa Circuit was made up of nine parishes. Each one was visited by the crusade once a year. The crusade teams were composed of church workers and interested lay people.

In 1986, Pastor TP Makongoza was appointed as a full-time worker for evangelisation on circuit level. Their programme included house-to-house visitation, counselling, starting new preaching places, holding Bible study sessions, teaching sessions, repentance services, and praying for the sick.

These crusades proved to be very effective. The Muraleni Crusade of June 16-23, 1985 reported that they visited 148 families (Crusade Report by Joseph Nemalegeni). The report also cites problems that the team encountered, including witchcraft, lack of faithful leaders, rumours of ritual murder, circumcision schools and families with hunger.

The format that the team followed did not differ very much from that of Pentecostal churches. People were invited to a designated crusade spot. Messages were preached

designed to make the listeners make up their minds on the issue of becoming “born again” Christians. The sick were prayed for. They were also encouraged to believe in God for a healing miracle. In this way the Lutheran Church in Venda began to witness growth in its churches just like any other church.

The crusade approach also led to a common doctrinal understanding between the Lutherans and the Pentecostal churches. This is shown in the respondents’ answers to a questionnaire for this study:

1. Evangelical Lutheran Church in S.A. (Northern Diocese).

Questionnaire: What does it mean to be saved? Of the 100 Lutheran members who answered the questionnaire, 57 used the Pentecostal jargon, for example,

“I am a child of God”

“I am born again”

“I am a new person in Christ”

In Venda this way of speaking is associated with the Pentacostals than with any other group of Christians. To the question, “How do you know that you have received the Holy Spirit?”, two respondents said “because I speak with tongues”. This clearly shows that the cherished gap that separates the Pentecostals from other streams of Christianity is narrowing down.

6.2.2 Power evangelism

An increasing number of evangelical churches, mission agencies and educational institutions have become open to the manifestation of supernatural power in healing the sick and casting out demons. The Devhula-Leboa evangelisation team did not leave out the practice of praying for the sick. The evangelisation seminars that were arranged treated topics such as “the importance of crusade teams in evangelisation”, “the importance of prayer in evangelisation”, and “the work of the Holy Spirit”. This was consummated by a power evangelism conference that held from 2 to 4 December 1988, which included the topic “Signs and wonders in evangelism today”.

6.2.3 Diaconal work

Evangelisation was not carried out without its diaconal work. Clothes were distributed to the poor and naked. Bags of mealie meal were given to poor hungry families. Families whose members were detained were visited and encouraged to stand firm against oppression. The Lutheran Church was ahead of its Pentecostal fellow believers in this diaconal dimension of the church's ministry.

Through these crusades, the Lutheran Church put itself on the path of church growth. Through the implementation of some of the indigenous church principles like the participation of lay people in the ministry, the church was laying down a structure of perpetual growth.

6.3 AFM MINISTRY

As mentioned, the AFM grew tremendously during the 1970s and 1980s. One of the pioneers of the Pentecostal brand of Christianity in Venda is Pastor Ragimana.

Pastor Ragimana received the Lord as his Saviour and Lord as a direct result of a witness of his father's younger brother. He was baptised by Pastor Tapson Tshimange, who prophesied during Ragimana's baptism that God had informed him that he had baptised a pastor. Within three years the young Ragimana began to experience a heavy burden upon him for soul winning. He began to preach the gospel although he was not a pastor.

He began his official ministry in 1971 at Makwarela, but the work stretched to the whole of Venda and included Lebowa and Gazankulu.

Ragimana started his work in a four-roomed house with only six people. They began by fasting and praying. This was followed by house visitation. They began to pray for the sick and continued counselling people. People were invited to come to house No.572. According to Pastor Ragimana, God performed tremendous miracles. People were saved, others were

healed and were baptised with the Holy Spirit. People started to invite many others to come. The four-roomed house proved too small. They immediately obtained permission to make use of a school.

In 1977 Pastor Ragimana invited the evangelist Reinhart Bonke. This clearly brought a growth revolution in the church. On the seventh night of the crusade period, 30 000 people filled the stadium (Steele 1984:105); because of this he was able to found thirty-three congregations with trained pastors in eleven branches.

After the successful Bonke crusade, an in-depth follow-up was embarked on. Areas from which new converts came were visited. Another crusade was organised which led to the establishment of a new congregation. Because of this strategy, many new congregations saw the light of the day.

This strategy caused him many problems, including criticism from other churches from which members decided to join his church. Some of the officials made it difficult for them when they wanted permission to hold a crusade. Authorities were reluctant to give sites for church buildings because they were mainly members of the so-called established churches.

As the “father” of this work, Pastor Ragimana took it upon himself to appoint leaders who were given the responsibility of leading the young congregations under his fatherly supervision. These leaders were given two months’ training by Pastor Ragimana himself. He thereafter divided the church into many branches and put the trained leaders in charge of these branches. He then conducted in-service training on soul winning, counselling, management and other topics (Information obtained in an interview On 28.09.2000).

Pastor Ragimana believes that several factors contributed to the growth of the AFM under his leadership. The pastor had to be given due respect as the father and leader of the congregation. The church also had to support the pastor’s vision. Pastor Ragimana believes that his congregation looked after him well as a pastor and a leader of the work.

His follow-up work stimulated people’s movements. The description of a people’s

movement to Christ is a multi-individual, mutually interdependent conversion (Wagner 1987:186). This means that many persons simultaneously decided to follow Christ. In Africa this phenomenon is experienced when the head of the family makes a decision to be a Christian.

6.3.1 Power evangelism

Pentecostal and Charismatics have been familiar with “power evangelism” for some time. This is why worldwide they show the most rapid church growth. Wagner (1987:188) defines “power evangelism” as proclaiming the gospel with accompanying supernatural signs and wonders. The apostle Paul testified that he had fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum “in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the spirit of God” (Rom 15:19). This is what the AFM in Venda also stressed and believed, and was nicknamed *madembeni* (where miracles are performed).

6.3.2 Indigenous church principles

The growth of the AFM in Venda should be seen as a direct result of the application of the indigenous church principles, including the following:

- (a) letting each convert abide in the calling wherein he was called;
- (b) trusting unpaid lay leaders;
- (c) letting the church meet in the homes of the members or letting the members build;
- (d) letting the churches be supervised by the paid evangelist or helper and by a missionary;
- (e) giving extensive training;
- (f) motivating existing churches to plant new churches (McGavran 1983:376).

Pastor Ragimana was passionate about advancing the gospel and multiplying churches. He was pre-eminently a church planter. He also encouraged unpaid church leaders to do the work of the Lord. Non-Christians see unpaid leaders of indigenous churches as people like

themselves. This, in turn, encouraged non-Christians to listen and respect these types of Christians, with whom they identified. It is equally important to realise that leaders of local churches were trained through participation. As they taught others, they learnt doubly well themselves. In other areas, it cost the “mother church” very little to raise a “daughter church”. Each local church grew according to a pattern that others could follow. The best person in the local church became the teacher-leader or elder who served without pay.

Natural witness by the whole membership became more possible. According to McGavran (1983:380), unconscious witness is perhaps the most potent element in growing churches. As congregations grew in size and increased in number, full-time pastors were called. These were to be paid by the congregations themselves and not by the founding churches. Even the discipline was left to the local churches.

6.4 TREND OF BELIEFS IN BOTH PENTECOSTAL AND NON-PENTECOSTAL CHURCH MEMBERS

Although the ecumenical spirit has been strongly encouraged by such interdenominational organisations as the Evangelical Christian Outreach, Interdenominational Christians Crusades, and Divine Life Ministries, the questionnaire to establish the trend of beliefs in both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal church members revealed the following:

QUESTION 7

Why do you like being in this church?

The majority of AFM members responded that they were influenced by the way the pastor preached. The majority of Lutherans cited music (“I like music”) as their reason.

QUESTION 10

What are the main teachings or important rules in your church?

The majority of the AFM members responded, “We believe in the Holy Spirit”.

The response of the majority of the Lutheran Church members was that they teach about the Ten Commandments.

QUESTION 2.2

What does it mean to be saved?

AFM response:

- Passing from death to life.
- I receive Jesus as my personal saviour.
- I am no longer a child of Satan but God's child.
- To be a new person in Christ.
- To see your life differently.
- To believe that God is alive.
- To live a sinless life.
- To have more power to cast out the demons.
- To be set free from any type of sin.
- Living a holy life.
- I live according to the word of God.
- It means that my conscience is clean before the Lord.
- To be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Lutheran response:

- To be a child of God.
- To be kept well in the hands of Jesus.
- To be washed.
- To be born again.
- To understand God.
- To be baptised.
- To have the Holy Spirit.
- To forsake sin and live for Christ.

Clearly, these responses do not differ substantially.

Both the Lutherans and the AFM members believe in the personal devil. On the issue of the ancestors, a question asked: Do you think your ancestors have power to harm or to bless? Of the 111 Lutheran members who responded, only 3 believed that the ancestors had power to

bless or to harm. To solve this problem they all stated that the ancestors must be worshipped. Of the 87 AFM members, only 3 responded that the ancestors have power to bless or to harm. They also suggested that ancestors must be worshipped.

On the question of material prosperity, the majority of respondents cited laziness and unemployment as the chief reasons for poverty in South Africa. Four blamed politics for the poverty prevailing in South Africa today. The reasoning of both the Lutherans and the AFM members was the same on this issue.

The questionnaire contained two questions on political attitude.

4.5 Should the church or its members involve itself in political matters?

LUTHERANS		AFM	
YES		YES	
89		63	
NO		NO	
22		24	

4.7 What political party do you think should win the local election?

(The first row of figures represents the Lutheran response and the second row, the AFM response.)

ANC	ACDP	PAC	NNP	UDM	AZAPO	NONE
63	16	1	32	6	2	21
32	35	1	—	4		15

As far as their political ideologies are concerned, the two denominations share almost the same understanding. The ACDP appears to enjoy support among the AFM

members as opposed to the ANC that enjoys strong support among the Lutheran Christians.

CHAPTER 7

The unfinished work: the church's public role

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed, life in Venda has been influenced by both colonialism and Protestant missions. This has affected its Christian ethos up to the present day. After the Anglo-Boer War, the Vhavenda lost most of their country to White farmers. They were driven from their fertile Zoutpansberg Mountains to an arid Nzhelele valley with an unpredictable climate. The introduction of apartheid meant that the Vhavenda could only hope to boost their economy through migratory labour. This had harsh sociological consequences. Although the system of migratory labour should not be blamed for the growth of polygamy in Venda, it is fairly safe to say that apartheid gave polygamy a new lease on life. Most of the workers could not help having two families, one in the working place and the other at home. Although women did not go to an extent of having two husbands, cases of unfaithfulness on their part were not few.

The apartheid dogma meant that Venda should stand on its own. Its boundaries rendered this economically not viable. The rich soil of the Zoutpansberg area, including the Luvuvhu basin, was left in the hands of the White farmers.

At that time, the Pentecostal churches experienced a phenomenal growth. Most of the African Independent Churches (AIC), with the exception of the ZCC, suffered some form of decline. Not only did the Pentecostal explosion draw members from the mainline churches, it "Pentecostalised" these churches themselves. The new churches that sprang up stand for a "Faith Gospel" focused on "this-worldly" blessings, and increasingly on a healing-deliverance theology, which, though built on African traditional concepts, is expressed strongly in terms of modern Western Christian thinking. Some of the most educated and articulate new church leaders display considerable creativity and relate this Pentecostal Christianity to Venda's peculiar circumstances.

The different denominations have experienced healthy growth in Venda. These churches, although dissimilar in issues of doctrine, have certain significant similarities.

7.1.1 Extraversion

Extraversion is Bayart's concept according to Gifford (1998:308). For all the talk within African church circles of localization, inculturation, Africanisation and indiginisation, external links have become more important than ever. Gifford (1998:308) believes that through these links the church has become a major, if not the greatest single, source of development assistance, money, employment and opportunity in Africa. These links – bringing ideas, status, power, structures and resources – operate for different churches in different ways at different levels.

This study did not include a study of the Roman Catholic Church in Venda. The Roman Catholic Church has a strongly embrasive strand in its theology, and the local church is never in isolation. So, the links are by definition constitutive (Gifford 1999:308). External links preserve the church from becoming locked too narrowly or too exclusively into the local dynamic. International structures ensure that leaders follow standardized procedures. Although the top leadership is African, the level of middle management is often dominated by missionaries (Gifford 1998:309). International links also provide Catholic bishops with relative immunity from outraged presidents. Such links bring resources, and the Catholic Church has enormous resources available to it so that it is apparently always presumed that money will come from external sources. According to Gifford (1998:311), "It is rare in Africa to hear Catholic appeals for money." These links play a part in promoting the church's modernizing aims.

The mainline Protestant churches are, to some extent, also international organizations, though Protestant connections function less than the Catholic ones. Structurally, many Protestants focus on the local congregation; they are not geared to coordinate themselves to speak or act as a unit, or as a cohesive denomination. In the Lutheran Church, after the formation of ELCSA, the situation improved in Southern Africa. The link maintained with

the outside Lutherans is through “partnerships” (Gifford 1998:313). The founding churches in Europe or America are ever conscious of charges of racism or paternalism or colonialism, and because of these, are generally reluctant to interfere with their daughter churches.

Today the mainline Protestants have relatively few missionaries compared to the Roman Catholic Church. Africa’s mainline Protestants called for a moratorium on missionaries in the 1970s, but even by then their flow of missionaries had been reduced (Gifford 1998:313).

In finances, too, they are hard pressed. As national economies have collapsed or deteriorated, the churches have been seriously affected. One need only to go to the former blossoming centres of Protestantism in Venda to experience this. The Iyani Bible School for the Reformed Church and the Devhula Leboa Church Centre serve as examples. These churches, which used to find external funds, have sometimes found genuine relief from local pressures.

The Protestant churches have their supra-denominational and supra-national association, too. The South African Council of Churches is an example, although it does include the Roman Catholic Church as a member. The Council helps to get the churches together. Africa’s Protestants also have the All-Africa Conference of Churches, which has departments for development, refugees, women and external affairs, and has conducted seminars and workshops for its member churches on democratization, peace and reconciliation (Gifford 1998:314). In the early 1990s, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was its president, and Gifford (1998:314) notes that “indeed its leadership represents his kind of liberal, socially-involved, structurally-aware Christianity”.

Externality should not be regarded as a feature only of the mainline churches. Some Pentecostal churches have similar constitutional links as the mainline churches. The major Pentecostal churches in Venda, for example, are both daughter churches of overseas missions. In fact, in Africa’s current situation, all churches see the range of benefits that come from “networking”. Several African Pentecostals have even switched allegiance in trying to find sponsors. For example, when the American AOG could no longer support the Ugandan Assemblies of God, the church turned to the Calvary Charismatic Center for

support (Gifford 1998:314). So far Venda has not experienced this situation. The AFM does not depend on these links, yet it has grown by leaps and bounds. Even the new churches that are emerging, like Pastor Khorommbi's Charis Missionary Church, Pastor Masakona's Calvary Christian Church, Pastor Muligwe's Kingdom Life Centre, Pastor Netshisahulu's Deliverance Centre and many others are succeeding without any financial link with overseas Christians. If these churches have some form of link overseas, it is among equals. At the opening of his new modernized church, Pastor TS Muligwe of the Kingdom Life Centre boasted of not having leaned on outside donors for a building worth over R1 million. (The researcher attended the opening and heard this statement.) At the time of conducting this study, Charis Missionary Church was constructing an auditorium estimated at more than R4 million without the involvement of outside donors. Gifford (1998:314) maintains that this is an exceptional case because most pastors seek some form of link. In this regard, he quotes an NGO observer (Gifford 1998:315):

Many African NGOs, like the modern African Christian Churches ... exist only to the extent that there is a donor somewhere prepared to fund their activities.

This is a crucial element of Africa's contemporary NGO and church scene and to neglect it would be to give an incomplete picture of contemporary African Christianity. Apart from the Pentecostal explosion taking place in Africa, the mission-related churches are equally growing and this growth "arises from the assistance missions provide" (Gifford 1998:315). Most of the links are with American churches. As expected, with the increasing number of American missionaries in Africa, American Christianity is marketed through the length and breadth of Africa more than any other brand of Christianity. Such mission is driven by the church growth mentality (Gifford 1998:315).

It needs to be stressed again that Christian missions are very important for Africa. Missions are perhaps the biggest single "industry" in Africa, just as they are also an enormous industry in the United States. Gifford (1998:315) states that "Colleges and seminaries offer courses in missions, special ministries translate scriptures and provide resources back-up, expertise and literature." Gifford is only partially correct about the situation in the United States. Most protestant seminars do not have a course in Mission. Even though most transnational

ministries may not be planting churches, they help to establish the local Christian agenda and define what Christian commitment means. Even small American churches have their own mission outreach to plant or adopt daughter churches. Gifford (1998:315) suggests a possible reason for this:

For them, ... part of the involvement is not specifically about Africa at all; it is the commitment to Africa that drives and focuses church activity back home. Here, too, the churches display the dynamic observable in the international aid community; the aid industry 'needs' Africa, as does the mission industry.

Gifford gives the example of the organization "AD 2000 and Beyond" that has been very active in Africa, dividing it into five regions. It does not set up new structures but works with the existing ones. Although local churches, groups and people do not lose their autonomy, they are nevertheless subjected to forces tending to homogenize them. Although it claims to be a network of partners, it is clear that the key players are all American and the entire ethos is also American. Its stress on qualification, sophisticated software, programmes, planning networks, reports, publicity, and assessment is unthinkable outside its origins in the United States. It brings with it a discourse, a set of images diffused through workshops, conferences and literature (Gifford 1998:316).

Although Christian evangelistic thrust is undertaken on purely religious grounds, its effects can be viewed in another light. Gifford (1998:316-317) quotes from an article by Samuel Huntington, entitled "The clash of civilization", in which he argues that after the Cold War, the fundamental source of conflict would be not ideological or economic but cultural: it would be the clash between the West and Islam. Huntington goes on to argue that to protect its interest the West must "support" other civilization groups sympathetic to Western values and interests. If this argument is followed to its conclusion, it is obvious that among the forces that lock Sub-Sahara Africa into Western networks, Western Christianity cannot be left unmentioned. Other forces will include aid, immigration, education systems and even national languages. This does not mean that American Christianity is "state-thrusted" but that the Americanization of the world is also accelerated through the church. It does seem like American form of Protestantism has been co-opted by American Civil Religion.

The fact that Africa is poor and “Third-world” makes it easier for it to be a battleground of super powers. In the post-Cold War world, the United States is the only super power.

According to Gifford (1998:317), the status of super power also signifies a cultural appeal:

Over much of Africa, the young listen to Michael Jackson tapes, watch Rambo videos, smoke Marlboro, drink Coca-Cola, and wear Levis, ‘NY’ Giants baseball caps and T-shirts made in China or Korea, they will be printed with ‘NY Giants’ or ‘Chicago Bulls’ logos because that is a large part of the appeal.

In his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention, President Bush (Gifford 1988:317) claimed: “We have whipped the world with our culture.”

Even in the churches, especially the Pentecostal churches, Americanism appears to be highly irresistible. The cultural appeal of the English language is linked to American appeal. Ambitious youth who master English can dream of Harvard University. In Mozambique, once a Portuguese colony, some youth pastors enrol for English classes to learn English. Pentecostalism, learning English and enhancing opportunity may not be distinct ideas in their minds. The cultural pressures on Vhavenda Christians in the northern part of South Africa should be understood against this background. American Christianity is preferred to any other form of Christianity. In local bookshops, authors that sell are mostly American Pentecostal authors like Kenneth Hagin, Oral and Richard Roberts, TL Osborn, and Kenneth Copeland.

Gifford (1983:318) points out that history shows that the growth of Christianity in Africa was never unrelated to its relations with the wider world; externality has always been a factor in African Christianity. However, the mushrooming of local churches in Venda seems to be a result of a revival that has not been sparked by American Christianity, but Vhavenda Christians use the tools available, which happen to be American. Local pastors visit America and establish ‘links’, if any, only after their churches have continued to grow without American assistance. Gifford quotes Adrian Hastings extensively to prove that nothing substantial happens in Africa without foreign intervention or tutelage.

Martin (Gifford 1998:320) looks at Pentecostalism from a socio-cultural point of view. He sees Pentecostalism as the triumph of the Anglo over the Hispanic. According to him, Pentecostalism is the third and latest wave in the successive socio-religious mobilizations that have affected the “Anglo” world, especially America. He sees Pentecostalism as the first wave to cross the border from the Anglo to the Hispanic worlds on a large scale (Gifford 1998:320):

The religious influence is only one aspect of a broader influence, economic, political, and cultural. The religious traffic moves alongside the economic traffic, sometimes with the religious slightly ahead of the economic and sometimes vice versa; sometimes in cooperation, occasionally in antagonism.

The process of globalization is evident here. On one level, religious networks function in the same way as the new global industries, such as banking, law, health, sport, technology and the science of higher education. Gifford (1998:321) sees African Christianity as a means of plugging into such global religious networks, all the more important since Africa tends to be bypassed by many of the others. The emerging global system corrodes both inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities while at the same time also encouraging the creation and revitalization of particular identities. However, Pentecostalism is more an African brand of Christianity than an American export. African people are also much more at home with Pentecostalism than with other brands of Christianity. Even though labelled “from America”, it is a genuine African product.

7.1.2 African Christianity

Considering the Lutheran and the Pentecostal brands of Christianity creates the impression that there are different Christianities that have been exported to Africa. These “brands” are closely associated with either the European or the African world-views. Hastings (Gifford 1998:325) notes the similarities in world-view in the fifteenth century of both the Portuguese missionaries and the Congo people: belief in local powers, protective objects, holy places, an expectation of miracles and prodigies, and the acceptance of spiritual casualty. Hastings

super-naturalistic theology. Their official theology, activity and public pronouncements tend to be of the Westernized kind, but most of their members have a very different understanding and widely divergent expectations. These two strands have coexisted side by side until recently. Gifford (1998:329) hints that church authorities had been discounting the popular or primal conceptions until the 1970s. Before that, there was faith in modernization or westernization and these mainline churches (Mission churches) were agents of modernization. After the 1970s the modernizing project was repudiated. According to Gifford, this was the time that Pentecostal Christianity took root. He (1998:329) admits that Pentecostal Christianity deals with and meets needs left unattended by "mainline" churches:

Pentecostal Christianity is answering needs left entirely unaddressed by mainline Christianity. For this reason, countless thousands are leaving the mainline to join new Pentecostal churches.

The Lutheran Church in Venda survived because of the evangelistic strategies it adopted to answer its constituencies (see ch 6). People give many reasons for leaving these churches and are seriously calling for our attention. Since this has been dealt with in detail, few observations can be made here. Mainline Christians are commonly alleged not to be scriptural because they do not seem to understand the involvement of both the divine and the demons in human affairs. The understanding that the Christian faith does not give a world-view that embraces both the divine and demonic is not African. A close study of church history shows that these beliefs were carried over from the beginning of the church right through the ages up to the present (see Deere 199:99-115; Gumbel 1995:209-227, and Wesley 1997:81-84). The position taken by missionary Christianity in rejecting the supernatural has left a great void that only Pentecostalism has come to fill. Pentecostal Christianity has salvaged Western liberal Christianity, which ran aground (See 4.4.3 Health Services). This does not mean that technological and scientific advancement cannot take place when the (African) biblical world-view is embraced. The Western world-view has its own limitation.

As indicated, the Pentecostal faith in Venda was shaped by mainline Christianity. The interdenominational conferences organized by such bodies as the Evangelical Christian

calls such beliefs “pre-Enlightenment”. Many European and American Christian leaders and theologians have started correcting this view. Western culture has been influenced by materialism and rationalism and consequently there has been a strong anti-miracle stance even when dealing with God (Wimber 1985:52). An extreme belief in animism is as dangerous as an extreme belief in rationalism. The Enlightenment freed people’s minds from bizarre beliefs and broke the link between misfortune and guilt. The hardships of life came to be attributed to impersonal social causes rather than to people’s personal failings or those of other people. Because of the Enlightenment, theologians were ready to accept the frequency of unmerited suffering. The animistic conception of the universe, which had constituted the basic rationale for magical thinking, fell away. This was replaced by a rational understanding in which the universe has laws whereby effect follows cause in a predictable manner. Accusations of witchcraft (Gifford 1998:326) were thus rejected, not because they had been closely scrutinized and found defective, but because they implied a conception of nature which now appeared inherently absurd.

This, in fact, changed the nature of religion in Europe but there was insufficient study to explain issues like witchcraft, which has surfaced prominently even in the world influenced by the Enlightenment. To a Pentecostal, who takes the ministry of Jesus Christ seriously, a belief in demonic spirits and sorcerers is not baseless. It is superficial to think that “in the West the world-view underpinning deliverance thinking has ceased to be culturally significant” (Gifford 1998:327). Charismatic and Pentecostal leaders document stories of how God delivered Europeans from the power of darkness. To say that “in Africa most Christians operate from a background little affected by the European enlightenment” (Gifford 1998:328) is true, but one should not reject the testimonies of both the Old and the New Testament that do not have a problem with spirits, demons, miracles, and the feats of magicians.

To call the African world-view “enchanted” (bewitched) (Gifford 1998:328) is to reject the spiritual dimension of reality. It is also to reject the authenticity of many testimonies in Europe, Africa and elsewhere that clearly show that demons and spirits do exist. Most African Christians are members of mainline mission churches that officially embrace a theology affected by the Enlightenment, yet their practices show a strong allegiance to the

Outreach brought speakers from divergent theological corners to address Christians on important topics (eg, John Allwood of World Vision was invited to speak on the plight of the poor in South Africa). It should be noted, however, that the Pentecostal faith has not fully grappled with issues of structural evil.

During the struggle (ie, the stand taken by people in and outside South Africa in calling the Apartheid regime to abandon its policies), it became clear that most of the Pentecostal leaders needed to be taught how to interpret the situation, which indicates that the leaders had not been prepared theologically.

7.2 AFRICA'S NEW CHRISTIANITY?

From the end of the 1980s, new Pentecostal churches have emerged. Although these new churches are not identical, they have certain common characteristics. They have a biblical conception through which they develop such ministry as deliverance and community development. They are critical of a number of aspects of Africa's traditional culture (eg, polygamy, practices like the "cleansing" of widows and veneration of ancestors). They strongly reject all rituals used by African indigenous churches. Sacred robes are nowhere in evidence. Here miracles are performed without instruments. All their songs are modern and sophisticated. With some their language tends to be English with a translation into one of the African languages. It is unfortunate that these churches have not realised the importance of mother tongue teaching which we have covered somewhere in this document. Their formal theology includes the Faith Gospel. (Faith Gospel stands for the belief that Christians must live by faith and that the realities of God's promises are evidenced in a Christian's life by faith). The Faith Gospel has spread itself by various means, including the wide diffusion of literature, and Bible schools, such as that of Rhema in Randburg.

Like many others, the new churches in Venda will need to incorporate many other important Christian doctrines in their preaching for them to help the "African mentality" on issues like skill training, investment and development. This emphasis is not completely ignored. Take, for example, the vision of Charis Missionary Church:

1. To establish integrated ministries of outreach, discipleship and community development services encompassing the Northern Province with an aim of spreading.
2. To be a model Spirit-empowered cell church that provides quality pastoral training and equipping resources for other churches in our province and throughout the world.
3. To plant 200 cells by the year AD 2000 and five other cell churches.

This church has also embarked on a project called "Develop Africa Focus". Through it, it has started a poultry farm project, an orchard project, a clinic, a school and an orphanage.

7.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

This study has attempted to show that Venda still needs to deepen its Christian roots. The church's public image and involvement have sometimes been disappointing. There is very little political theology in the Latin American sense.

The individualistic theology should be broadened to include aspects of national life. The question of direct political involvement of newer churches seems to be gaining momentum, although Gifford (1998:341) believes that Africa's new churches have a rather different agenda, one element of which is to walk the corridors of power. He believes that where new churches enter the political arena, they hardly have a conscious social agenda. He (1998:341) notes Trenton's observation that in Brazil, where the "born agains" have secured a sizeable representation in parliament, "Pentecostalism has assimilated the political culture at all levels" - far from purifying a corrupt political culture. Gifford (1998:341) argues that Brazil's Christian politicians seem to keep themselves close to power in order to receive benefits for the church.

In South Africa the situation is quite different. The many "born again" Christians in government seem to have their party political ideology at heart. For instance, the African Christian Democratic Party (ADCP) of Kenneth Meshoe, a Pentecostal preacher, seems to have a political blueprint of its own.

What seems to be lacking is the political agenda that the Pentecostal churches need. These

churches seem to have no blueprint for society in any explicitly political way. Their influence could be very stabilizing as well. Realizing that the South African government is sharpening its political teeth to uproot corruption, the South African churches must be seen to be vigilant and to uphold principles of transparency, clean administration and effective handling of those found guilty of violating these laws.

The newer churches should be flexible enough to accommodate transformative internal dynamics. Even the older missionary churches can still join the bandwagon since in Africa even the most hierarchical churches do allow certain sections of the ministry, like choir singing, to be run loosely.

There are three areas in which churches could contribute to strengthening civil society: the political, the economic and the cultural. Here the church must lead the way. The problem will be that the church will be run differently from the country depending on the understanding of a particular church.

Most of the classical Pentecostal churches are run "theocratically" and held together by the personal gifts of their leaders. (The appointment of leadership is thought to resemble the O.T. theocratic way of choosing leaders). In almost all these new churches, the leader plays a predominant role. He is a person of great authority, which could easily be mistaken for dictatorship. This should not be considered an African product since it is easily observable throughout the world wherever there is healthy and challenging church growth. The challenge facing the new African church in Venda and throughout South Africa is to modernize the understanding of, and attitude to, authority without risking its scriptural contextualised meaning. This should mean that authority should be made more transparent and accountable. Their appeal to the Holy Spirit and the Bible should not be allowed to become a guise for corruption and inefficiency.

This study indicated that there is a close link between Africa's economic plight and the life of the churches. It was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) that helped the government ideologically to protect poor Whites and brought about poverty-alleviating laws for them. The deterioration of circumstances elsewhere in Africa presents a great challenge to South

African politicians. The church of South Africa should tackle the problem of clinging to power in churches as much as in government.

Many capable and talented people are led to enter church leadership. This has implications for Africa's economic development. Churches in Venda and elsewhere in South Africa must follow the model of Korea's new Pentecostal churches. They inculcate economic skills in their members. Korean "members learn from the absolutely dazzling organizational genius that these churches demonstrate" (Gifford 1998:345). Gifford also observes that in their evangelistic campaigns and other activities, hundreds of thousands of people whose parental culture, if not their own, has been rural and traditional, learn the bottom-line skills of a modern market economy.

In the church people learn to communicate a simple message (Gifford 1998:346):

to organize promotional efforts, make lists, use telephones; to solve personality clashes in task-oriented groups; to co-ordinate efforts both horizontally and vertically; to set goals and reach them; and to come to meetings on time, run them efficiently, and then to implement the decisions made there.

Some training constitutes a concentrated crash course in what millions of others who fill the lower and middle echelons of modern corporations learn at business schools and sales institutes. Their result-oriented and pragmatic and spiritual life spills over to make their work life result-oriented and pragmatic too. It is alleged that the most successful profit-making enterprises are those that do not focus on making a profit but on something that Cox (1996:234-236) calls "corporate mission". Gifford believes that it is this sense of mission that Korean Pentecostals bring to everything they do, and which helps to explain Korea's economic success. This needs to have some application in South Africa as well.

Women can continue to play a significant role. Churches can embark on projects in which they can feel a sense of pride and achievement. A number of churches have started such projects in Venda (e.g, the Charis Missionary Church's poultry farm and orchard). These projects are operated by the church.

Churches can play a significant role in cultural matters. The African Indigenous Churches have played a very significant role in this regard. Nowadays there is a strong shift among Pentecostal churches to demonize African culture. Traditional thinking and spiritual realities are kept with very little research done on the “evils” of African culture.

Pentecostal emphasis could easily be blamed for creating a culture of individualism, which finally produced the middle class. Gifford blames Pentecostalism for breaking down the notion of the extended family system. His concern for preserving the African culture is understandable, but not his attempt to keep the African culture at the expense of the gospel. It is not wrong for Pentecostal churches to provide alternative structures to oversee courtship and arrange marriage, taking these tasks from traditional agents.

The message of the Church as a whole has liberated women. The Lutheran Church was among the leading churches in ordaining women. From the beginning the Pentecostal churches relied heavily on women even if they were not adequately recognized. With the new Pentecostal churches women’s positions have been clearly changed. They can assume leadership roles, determine policies as equals on committees, and meet new people in institutions totally unrelated to kinship roles.

Another important cultural shift is evident in the area of commerce and the accumulation of wealth. It has not been easy in Africa to accumulate wealth without the risk of being labelled a witch. Here the Faith Gospel serves to legitimize the accumulation of wealth as something willed by God. An unbalanced stress on prosperity will indeed bring in a distortion of the message of the Bible. In the new churches, deliverance restores to the community those who were the “castaways”. Pentecostalism can even open up or revitalize whole areas of cultural expression, especially through Gospel music. Traditional missionary churches tend to shun away from music that is not “theirs”. Although the situation has now changed, it has not always been easy for members of missionary churches to enjoy choruses with an African beat (rhythm).

The churches can play a vital role in breaking down ethnic barriers, since the intensity of conversion followed by intensive discipleship bestows a new identity that transcends other

identities. The “born again” identity creates a bond with people of other tribes and races. This is clearly evidenced in cities where different tribes are members of one church. In such settings the Christian virtues of tolerance, respect, cooperation, moderation and love are found. Although the “born again” label does carry with it an exclusivist notion that can force social divisions, the divisions are not evil *per se*, but how people take them can be dangerous. These divisions are there for the common good for all since the church lives for the world.

The present Pentecostal revival has a long way to go to play the role that Methodists played in England in the eighteenth century. The overall theology of the Pentecostal church will need to change. Although the African context differs from that of England, there are nevertheless some important lessons to be learned. The Methodist movement emphasized thrift, sobriety, discipline and education. These teachings helped England to avoid a violent revolution. Gifford believes that this is how Pentecostalism functioned in the USA for most of the twentieth century. In the decades following the Second World War, a situation was created which was very helpful for economic growth. According to

Gifford (1998:348), this context was crucial:

Churches that fostered ambition, sobriety, goals, application and education, and provided support group for personal striving saw their adherents advance themselves out of all recognition in the space of one or two generations.

This situation is not generally evident in Africa. In South Africa the mood is very positive for making the twenty-first century an African century. There is a dire need for political transformation in the entire continent. South Africa has one of the best Constitutions in this respect. Constitutions alone cannot bring the needed miracle. Changed lives can, and this brings us to the importance of evangelism that must run parallel to development.

7.4 THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW

The missionary approach to African traditional religion is under heavy attack. In *Christianity*

in Africa, Bediako (1995) looks at Christianity in Africa. Christianity's centre of gravity has, indeed, shifted in the modern world from the northern continents to the south, with Africa playing a significant role in the resurgence of the faith. Bediako examines this global transformation from a "catholic" African perspective. Before discussing its twentieth-century resurgence in the "Afrikania" movement of the ex-Roman Catholic priest, Osofo Okomfo Kwabena Damuah, Bediako examines the intellectual legacy of the nineteenth-century "Black spokesman", Edward Willmot Blyden, who questioned the suitability of Western Christianity to Africa. Bediako assesses the mother tongue roots of large portions of African Christianity. Bediako looks at the Christian religion and the African world-view to find whether the ancestors will survive or not, and invites a fresh look at ancestors in African traditional religions.

Bediako (1995:217) questions whether Africans "worship" or "venerate" their ancestors. He understands that when the ancestors are worshipped, then they are in the role of rivals of Christ. At the same time he also points out that there is an obvious Christological dimension to any confederation of the place of ancestors in the spiritual universe of Christian consciousness. Bediako quotes Mbiti, for whom Christ crowns the African traditional religiosity and concurs with Mbiti's affirmation of the ultimate and irreplaceable significance of Jesus Christ for African religious tradition. He sees Christ by virtue of his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension into the realm of spirit-power as a supreme ancestor.

Bediako (1995:218) maintains that since there is a clear distinction between God and the divinities, so also there is a qualitative distinction between Christ as an Ancestor and natural ancestors. According to Bediako, Africans do not worship ancestors since African ancestors do not become after death what they were not before death. They venerate them. In support, Bediako (1995:219) quotes Nana Addo Dankwa:

The Akans regard the ancestors still as heads and parts of the families or communities to which they belonged while they were living human beings.... Since Akans are not supposed to worship anybody within the living community, it follows that the ancestors, being part and parcel of the living community, also cannot be

worshipped.

According to Nana Dankwa, even the pouring of libation was originally never intended to be a completely religious act; libation consists of three separate acts, the first two being purely cultural, and the last one, religious. The first, in Nana Dankwa's view, is an invitation to the ancestor; secondly the ancestor who is presumed to be present is then addressed, and lastly the ancestor, together with the living, jointly offer their prayers. The prayers are addressed to "the deities, 'obosom' (or divinity), 'suman' (or non-personal spiritual force), or the supreme God" (Bediako 1995:221).

Although not everyone will agree with Nana Addo Dankwa's explanation, his main contribution to the debate is that ancestors are never worshipped.

How then does Bediako think Christianity should relate to ancestral practices? Bediako (1995:224) calls upon Fashole-Luke, who feels that the incorporation "into Christian faith and practice" of ideas derived from African ancestral cults was needed in African Christianity. Fashole-Luke (Bediako 1995:224), explains that ancestral cults are "expressions of family and tribal solidarity and continuity" and that what was needed was a theology of communion of saints that will satisfy the passionate desire of Africans, Christians and non-Christians alike, to be linked with their dead ancestors.

Here, Bediako argues that the real task of a theology of ancestors is about the interpretation of the past in a way that shows that the present experience and knowledge of the grace of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ have been truly anticipated and prefigured in the quests and the responses to the Transcendent in former times. A theology of ancestors becomes a by-product of the continuity of God in African experience. Bediako's main argument is that if the God of African pre-Christian tradition has turned out to be the God of the Christians, it is to be expected that He has not left Himself without testimony in the past.

When all this is understood, Western missionary work will be taken as a catalyst in a process that preceded it while it also needed the local context to validate it. In this sense, "cross-cultural transmission did not bring Christ into the local African situations, but Christ, already

present in the situation, called in His messengers so that by proclamation and incarnation, He might be made manifest” (Bediako 1995:226). Local ancestors who prepared the way for the coming of the Gospel emerge as fellow witnesses in “the multitude that no one could count” (Rev 7:9-10). “A doctrine of the communion of saints, in this sense of ‘the cloud of witnesses’, therefore becomes the outcome of a theology of ancestors” (Bediako 1995:226). In local theology, ancestors are called upon to affirm the Old Testament since, through faith-union with Christ in the Gospel, we become the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. According to Bediako (1995:227) “in Christ, then, we receive an adoptive past through our Abrahamic link, thus connecting our past with the entire past of the people of God”.

An African therefore appropriates the scriptures as an individual person, for if the scripture is racially received or culturally confined, it will cease to be scripture for all humankind. A theology of ancestors connects therefore with an ancestor Christology, in which Christ features as Lord among the ancestors, too.

Bediako’s argument for a theology of ancestors paves the way for further debate. To the brand of Christianity where certain saints are venerated, it is indeed a logical way to follow even in Africa. To the other brand of Christianity where saints have no part in the liturgy, then, this ancestral theology raises many questions, including whether Scripture warrants including ancestors in our approach to God. Veneration of those who are living or dead that becomes a religious act is not far from idolatry. African Christians can possibly be helped in this regard through a deeper teaching on the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, Teacher and Guide. Our ancestors can best be served through looking after their graves and their belongings, rather than reinforcing an understanding that, although dead, they are very much part of our activities

According to Setiloane (in Fashole-Luke 1978:408), that Africans are very much attached to their ancestors is as true as saying Jews are very much attached to Moses. The coming of Jesus to the Africans must be allowed to make Africans rearrange their religious life just as it did with the Jews. Many Africans will stumble over this just as the Jews stumbled over Jesus’ teaching, which by interpretation, rendered their sacrificial laws, including their seal

of the covenant with God, unnecessary. Paul even goes so far as to call circumcision mutilation of the flesh (Phil3:2).

The role the ancestors “play” in the life of Africans can best be played by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, who teach the day-to-day ministry of the Holy Spirit in the individual, tend to produce Christians who, although respecting their culture and tradition, do not see the relevance of the ancestral veneration cult. Western Christianity has branded the African world-view of spirit as superstitious. African fears and spiritual experiences could not be answered hence the reinforcement of some beliefs that African theologians from such churches want to revive. A Christianity whose Christ heals the sick, in whose name demons are cast out (Acts 8) and who protects His followers when the worst happens to them (Acts 28) cannot fail to induce members of other religions to redefine their attitude towards Him (see Lartey 1986:75-81). But a Christianity whose Christ is silent and powerless in the face of demonization, sickness, poverty and injustice forces even the adherents of such a faith to seek answers elsewhere.

CHAPTER 8

The challenge for Christian mission

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study raises important questions about the relevance of the faith and life of the mission churches in South Africa as well as the direction of the faith and life of the Pentecostal churches. If the preaching and teaching of the mission churches are perceived as powerless by those who left these churches, and if the preaching and some of the teachings of the Pentecostal churches are perceived to be lacking theological balance by those leading mission churches, then how can mission be redefined to be both effective and relevant?

The researcher agrees with Anderson (1993:142) that the mission churches are challenged with the need to seriously rethink and reconceive their mission strategy in Africa: “We may pontificate about the need to engage in ecumenical comity arrangements and to desist from ‘sheep-stealing’; but if the sheep are not receiving satisfying food, they will seek greener pastures.”

Mission churches should tackle these shortcomings quickly to return to the cutting edge of mission in Africa. The power of the Gospel must be seen to be extracting people from the power of drunkenness, drugs and so on. Mission churches that have not adopted the evangelistic strategies employed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) as outlined in chapter 6, continue to lose members to Pentecostal churches although the majority of Pentecostal-type church members today are second or third generation Christians.

Daneel (Anderson 1993:142-143) maintains that the challenge for mission churches is that “the historical churches can form a vivid picture of the value, mistakes and limitations of their own missionary policy in the past” and points out that the indigenous churches demonstrate “the foreignness to the African context of the sober, rationalistic, often

dualistically spiritualized approach of Western Christianity”.

In the Black Pentecostal Churches, the dichotomy often found in Western forms of Christianity between evangelism and social concern does not exist except with political issues. African spirituality concerns the whole person, hence the healing of the person's sickness and the prosperity of his/her family and affairs are not necessarily separated from his/her spiritual life. This African holism, which in its true expression is a concern for the whole of life and not just the spiritual part of it, is to a great extent similar to the biblical holism and a dimension that the mission churches need to rediscover in their mission to the world. As Anderson (1993:143) puts it,

If there is indeed good news in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, if we believe that there is no other name, by which humanity can be saved, and if we believe in the ability of God through His Spirit to liberate people from every conceivable kind of human problem, whether physical, emotional, mental, social, personal, or any other, then our mission is to proclaim and practice this good news.

This clearly indicates that the church's message should include both the proclamation and demonstration. This is how Jesus (Acts 10:38) and the disciples who followed him practised their mission. The message must show God's all-inclusive salvation from evil in all its forms as encountered by the people. The power of this gospel is demonstrated when African or any other people perceive the message actually working in bringing deliverance to the whole of life as they experience it. The message must include a strong pneumatology that will enable the Lord Jesus through His Spirit to demonstrate His abiding presence through His various gifts. The Pentecostal church challenges the whole church in South Africa to seriously consider its effectiveness. The African continent has yet to be truly evangelized. The Vhavenda are yet to experience the dynamic power of liberation as brought by the Gospel. Their clinging to ancestral worship and a tendency to respect traditional religions above Christianity poses a serious question about how the propagators of the Christian faith understand it.

There is a dire need for the “Word to become flesh” in most of the mission churches. Christ

emptied Himself and became like those to whom he had been sent. His incarnation must not only challenge us but must equally afford us a more practical way of doing mission. Barret (Anderson 1993:144) says that missions in Africa stopped short of the kind of Christ-like love which he describes as close contact with others involving listening, sharing, sympathizing and sensitive understanding as between equals.

Although this was mentioned in the context of the failure of historical missions to Africa, this is still a fundamental need for anyone wishing to be involved in the mission of Christ to the world. This love is as badly needed in Pentecostal fellowships as in mission churches. This is the type of love that could have made it impossible for the church to practise apartheid.

Holistic, ecstatic, and experimental religious practices are still found in Pentecostal liturgy throughout the world as they were borrowed from the nineteenth-century African American Holiness movement which, in turn, has its roots in Traditional African Religion. Early Pentecostals emphasized the freedom, the quality, the community and the dignity of each person in the sight of God. According to Anderson (1993:144), this included an acceptance of Black power and Black leadership.

Anderson (1993:144) believes further that 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 society in which there is justice for all, and hope for a despairing people. It does not seem possible that this could ever happen in a religious situation that hardly focuses on issues of racial justice, politics and power. The power of most of the Pentecostal people is domesticated. It is the power of healing the body and defeating spiritual demons in a sense that does not refer much to political issues or economic matters. The Pentecostal churches need a theology to help them get out of this self-imprisonment. They should not feel guilty or fearful when they deal with issues that pertain to economics, politics and development. Their understanding of holism must be an effective bridge in their understanding of including politics in their church agendas. Their use of the Old Testament should be allowed to at least help them to see how God can deliver a nation, protect it in hard times and prosper it for His own glory.

Even the new Pentecostal churches with the “faith” message need more practical teachings geared to fighting against the “demon of poverty” through practical means.

Manna is miraculous and interventional. No people should be taught to live on manna. Even Jesus had a down to earth strategy in funding His ministry. There were times of great power encounter but equally great times when He depended on what His women followers would give (Luke 8).

Many mission-related practical issues face both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches, including Aids, cholera, joblessness, women and child abuse, poverty, illiteracy, leadership development and other social and economic problems.

8.2 CHURCH GROWTH

Both the missionary initiated churches and the Pentecostal churches need to reflect critically on institutional factors that influence church growth. Here we are not talking about church growth as propounded by the late Donald McGavran. Such factors should not exclude structural patterns, understanding the dynamics of congregational growth, leadership and inclusive lay ministry and a comprehensive strategy for growing churches. At the same time, the heart of the Christian mission, which is reclaiming God’s creation back for the Creator, should always be kept in mind.

In all the planning, strategising and struggling with contextual givens, it must be remembered that Christian mission is ultimately and primarily a spiritual phenomenon. It needs to be stressed that, while study of sociological, economic and political influences on Christian mission can make us more efficient and intelligent workers, the battle is in the spiritual realm. The inner life of Christians, especially Christian workers, and the moving of the Holy Spirit are the ultimate keys of effective mission work. Knowledge alone will not result in effective mission work. According to Hinton (1985:208),

No amount of research into the life and problems of today’s communities is going to

bring the lost out of darkness into life. Without the exhausting and enlightened labours of sacrificial service and believing prayer, the dying will not be saved. Without the empowering of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual health of the witnesses, there will be no true harvest.

It is important to realise that the church is called to a divine partnering in building the Kingdom (see also Williams 1986:11). The Holy Spirit has been moving in Venda, preparing the Vhavenda in the Northern Province for a harvest. The Lord has sent in an assortment of missionary, evangelistic and parachurch organizations just as the harvest began to ripen, ready for the reapers. Today the sheer numbers of first-generation believers, by their zeal and evangelistic fervour, have created a momentum and wave of conversions that cannot easily be stopped. Venda is turning to Christ. This is evident when visiting churches in Venda. These conversions must become communities where there is a sense of caring and sharing, where fellowship members have a new dignity and a sense of belonging (Hedlund 1972:130). In and for such communities, life takes on a new excitement.

8.3 UNDERSTANDING MISSION FIELDS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The close connection between economic prosperity and the affordability of missionary ventures introduces a new phenomenon in Christian missionary enterprise in Africa. Because of Asia's economic boom, Asian missionaries are flocking to Africa (Mugambi 1996:238). Some missionary initiatives are directed at the establishment of new Christian denominations in the midst of populations that are already Christian. Such initiatives do not add to the overall growth in the numbers of Christians, but contribute to the internal fragmentation of the already African Christian denominations. Mugambi (1996:239) points out that there is a growing proliferation of new missionaries who locate themselves in areas where Christianity is already established. According to Mugambi, this brings further internal fragmentation of Christianity in Africa.

The twenty-first century African Christianity should regard the world as a mission field again. Every church will have to become both a "sending" and a "receiving" Christian

community. Each local church will have to become a missionary community, which is what most of the newly-established churches in Venda are doing.

Western Christianity has also been responsible for establishing “ethnic_churches” (eg, the Tsonga Presbyterian Church and the Bapedi Bapedi Lutheran Church). This has led to tribalism in African Christianity, which has undermined the ecumenical movement. Mugambi (1996:239) believes that when denominationalism becomes blended with tribalism, the political and economic poison resulting from it is impossible to neutralise. The conflict in Rwanda and Burundi should be understood to be more than political and ethnic strife. According to Mugambi, it is also closely related to the jostling for power between leaders of different denominations. Each European mother church supports its daughter church in Africa.

Therefore, if support of mission is to come to Africa, it must be for the promotion of an economically open church, not for parochial, tribal, sectarian cultic communities in the name of Jesus Christ. A new understanding of both the church and mission must be found.

8.4 MISSIONARY APPROACH OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Concepts of mission must be clarified before the church in Africa embarks on its missionary call. If all churches are challenged by the Gospel to be always missionary, it follows that every church must be a sending and a receiving agent in the community at the same time. The church must be a receiving Christian community in the sense that missionaries or Christian workers from outside that community must be welcomed to work. The goal in both sending and receiving will be to build unity and understanding and also to share resources in the kingdom of God. There must be a mutual sharing of the missionary task. This aspect of sharing will mean different things in a world where human and financial resources are unevenly distributed.

8.5 CONTEXTS OF MISSION

Throughout most of the twentieth century, Africa was considered a “pre-Christian” continent. The twenty-first century opens with tropical Africa under considerable Christian influence. Europe and North America, from where the majority of Christian missionaries originate, are no longer a purely Christian context. They have become post-Christian. In missiological understanding, therefore, both Africa and the North Atlantic region are mission fields. The approaches in a post-Christian context will differ from approaches in “pre-Christian” context. Africa is a culturally and religiously pluralistic context. Mission in Africa will have to be more attentive to the cultural and religious diversity of Africa.

8.6 PROCESS OF MISSION

In the past, mission was popularly confused with “civilisation” and conversion confused with “acculturation”. Sometimes evangelisation has become confused with “proselytisation”. Livingstone thought of mission in terms of introducing “legitimate commerce” and “Christianity” (Mugambi 1996:241). By “legitimate commerce” he meant economic activity that would be beneficial to Britain. Therefore he introduced a colonial agricultural system that was just as unjust to Africans as the slave trade because it alienated Africans from their motherland. The advent of the World Trade Organisation with its unjust laws could be linked to the legacy of Livingstone. Mugambi (1996:241) sees conversion for many missionaries in Africa as turning Africans not into converts but into consumers. Thus tropical Africa has become not only the most evangelised region but also the region where the majority of people consume what they do not produce, while they produce what they do not consume in all aspects of cultural and religious activity. Thus the process of conversion to Christianity has come to mean a process of acculturation into the north Atlantic way of life. At the same time, the danger of proselytisation must be avoided for it weakens the church by fragmenting it. This study noted that even some of the newly formed churches are highly Americanized.

8.7 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF MISSION

The importance of African languages in the process of evangelisation cannot be overemphasised. The availability of the Bible and liturgical texts in African languages has facilitated the growth of churches in those parts of Africa where translations have been done. At times the translations have, indeed, distorted the African world-views but at the same time they have made the biblical message accessible. Mugambi (1996:242) believes that no other religion is as accessible to all cultures and languages of the world as Christianity.

Ministerial formation continues to be conducted in foreign languages, however, thereby making it difficult for pastors to use the Bible effectively and efficiently in local languages. This problem is compounded by the dubious national language policies of African countries in which foreign languages are registered as the official channels of communication in educational institutions and administrative departments. The twenty-first century will have to look again at the question of language and culture. A people's language carries their cultural expressions. South Africa has all its eleven languages declared official languages. What needs to be seen is how the eleven official languages can command equal respect from the people of South Africa through their institutions of culture and learning. A survey conducted by *The Citizen* (27.02.2000:12) found that there is resistance to Black languages in suburban schools where preference is given to English and Afrikaans. The situation in Parliament is no different (see Phaswana 2000:219-225). The new churches will have to take mother tongue teaching very seriously to reach all people with the gospel.

8.8 MISSION PRACTICE

Throughout the twentieth century, the missionary guilds restricted the qualification of a missionary to individuals who left their countries for the purpose of spreading the Gospel in other countries. However, an Englishman working in France would not be considered a missionary, yet if posted to an African country, he would immediately become a missionary (Mugambi 1996:242). Although Africans have contributed tremendously to the spreading of Christianity outside their own localities: even learning new languages and immersing

themselves in new cultures for missionary work (eg, Pastor Ragimana of the AFM worked in Vatsonga, Bapedi and Vhavenda speaking areas), their work has not been acknowledged.

Recently, pastoral exchanges have taken place between Africa and Europe, but this has not been taken as a mission activity. For Africans to be missionaries in Europe, entry visas, travel costs, European immigration control and other obstacles need to be overcome. As unemployment increases in Europe and the number of missionaries considering the prospect of working in Africa increases, it may not be easy for Europe to accept African missionaries. The goals and impact of mission will have to change in the twenty-first century. In the twentieth century, the goals of the missionary enterprise ranged from acculturation of converts into the culture of the metropolis from which the missionaries originated, to conversion of African individuals into ideological allies, especially during the Cold War (Mugambi 1996:243). The impact of the missionary enterprise in the context of this wide range of goals depends on the particular analysis. For example, missionaries' writings give the reader an idea of the impact as understood by the missionaries. The African response could be read from the different documentation available in this regard. The mushrooming of thousands of African-initiated churches is another language of protest to Western missionary Christianity. Western missionary Christianity has alienated Africans from their cultural expression of religious life. Their communal life was replaced by rigid Western individualism. The conversion of Africans within their culture in such a way that the Christian faith enriches rather than impoverishes them thereby making them develop meaningful cultural structures in running the affairs of their church, would constitute meaningful mission work.

8.9 SOLIDARITY IN MISSION

Lastly, mission should be executed in an ecumenical way. The ecumenical movement, it must be remembered, is a product of the modern missionary enterprise. Its domination must be allowed to yield itself out to the principle of solidarity. The participation of African Christians and churches in the ecumenical movement and in the missionary vocation of Christianity is essential for the identity and integrity of the universal church. At present, the participation of Africans is not without unnecessary stumbling blocks which the ecumenical

movement could easily remove by facilitating more effective ministerial formation, higher professional training, and greater exposure.

The ecumenical movement can be renewed and invigorated through the Holy Spirit, whose work has continually been emphasized by the African church. However, it has to build a great deal of self-confidence among its members. This could happen if the World Council of Churches and the associated regional councils and confessional organisations would facilitate the transition even as it undergoes the inevitable metamorphosis.

International conferences help members of different churches to practise their faith in a way that is uplifting to the whole Body of Christ. During the 1970s and 1980s, both the Pentecostal and the non-Pentecostal churches began to hold crusades run more or less in the Pentecostal way. Certain doctrines (eg, tithing, salvation, the Lord's Supper, and speaking in tongues) were no longer understood to be church dividing. Church members began to share a similar understanding on these issues. This did not always bring a harmonious atmosphere, but helped open the closed doors of denominational understanding of truth. It also brought numerical growth to non-Pentecostal churches like the Evangelical Christian Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA).

8.10 CONCLUSION

Looking back at the Lutherans and Pentecostals in mission amongst the Vhavenda and their missionary methods, it can be concluded that in the Lutheran mission, as in most Protestant missions, the focus was mainly on the church and what happens inside the church. The church's calling in the world was principally to draw some out of the world into the church. And the church is a place where the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered correctly. The church is first of all a place where people are taught – thus something is done to the people. The church is not a living organism doing something for the people. The church's motive for getting involved with the world was first of all to get people into the church and not to assist them in living outside the church. It seemed, however, that when the Lutherans got involved in “worldly matters”, in the lives of people outside the church, a “revival” took place inside the church in the sense that people became concerned

not about doctrinal matters but a spiritual life inside as well as outside the church.

In their mission, the Pentecostals put the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. A continuous experience of the Holy Spirit and the occurrence of miraculous events in the church are the real elements of the validity of Pentecost. The church in the power of the Holy Spirit is itself part of the message it proclaims. In this sense, the church becomes first of all a fellowship that actualizes the presence of the Holy Spirit in the everyday lives of the members. In this way God's love is made present and operative amongst the people outside the church. The danger also threatens the Pentecostals, however, that just as the Lutherans kept the Bible and doctrine hostage inside the church, the Pentecostals may, in a sense, keep the Spirit hostage in the church. The Spirit is considered to be the "property" of those who experience the work of the Spirit in their lives. Those Pentecostal churches who consider the church a community in which the renewal of the human community only begins and focus on serving and transforming the community outside the church seem to be much more relevant and "successful" in their existence as churches.

Comparing the missionary methods by both Lutherans and Pentecostals amongst the Vhavenda, it seems that missionary methods do determine the extent to which churches are able to become relevant to the lives of individuals and the communities in which they exist. But in this regard it should be remembered that it is not the church that "undertakes" mission and exercises certain methods of mission that it decides to apply. The Christian mission was, is and always will be the *missio Dei*. The calling of both Lutherans and Pentecostals is to be faithful to this *missio Dei* by allowing the Holy Spirit to continuously renew and revitalize their missionary methods. In this way both Lutherans and Pentecostals will be participating in the liberating mission of God, becoming God's good news to the world by becoming God's incarnated love for the sake of the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLAN, JD. 1989: *The Evangelicals: an illustrated history*. Grand Rapids: BakerHouse.
- ANDERSON, AH. 1992: *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- ANDERSON, RM. 1979: *Vision of the disinherited: the making of American Pentecostalism*. New York: Oxford.
- ATHANISIUS. 1953: *On the Incarnation*. Mowbray.
- BAUR, J. 1994: *2000 years of Christianity in Africa*. Nairobi: Publications Africa.
- BARRET, DAVID B. 1982: *World Christian Encyclopedia. Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world*. University of New York: Oxford University Press.
- BAUMAN, LS. 1941: *The Modern Tongues Movement Examined and Judged in the Light of Its Fruits*. Long Beach. Carlifonia.
- BEDIAKO, K. 1995: *Christianity in Africa: the renewal of non-Western religion*. Edinburgh: University Press.
- BENSO, S.1971: *The Independent Venda*. Pretoria: Hortors.
- BOESAK, A. 1984: *Black and Reformed*. Cape Town: Skotaville.
- BOOYSEN, JP. 1975: *An unpublished testimony*.
- BOSCH, DJ. 1991: *Transforming mission*. New York: Orbis.
- BOSCH, DJ. 1980: *Witness to the world: the Christian mission in theological perspective*. Atlanta: John Knox.
- BRIDGE, D. 1985 : *Signs and Wonders Today*. Leicester : Intervarsity Press.
- BRUNER, FD. 1970: *A theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- BULLOCK, B. 1936: *Iscor News. The journal of South African Iron Steel Industrial Corporation. Vol. 9*. Pretoria:
- BULPIN, TV. 1992: *Discovering Southern Africa*. Muizenberg: Discovering Southern Africa Publications.

- BURDICK, DW. 1969: *Tongues : To Speak or Not to Speak*. Chicago : Moody Press.
- CANERLY, CJ. 1994: *The chronicles of the historical claim to the lands of Thovhele Davhana Ramabulana*. Thohoyandou: University of Venda.
- CLARK, MS & LEDERLE, HL. 1989: *What is distinctive about Pentecostal theology?* Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- COX, H. 1996: *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the twenty-first century*, London: Cassel.
- DANEEL, ML. 1971: *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches vol 1*. Paris: Mouton.
- DAVENPORT, TRH. 1977: *South Africa: a modern history*. Hong Kong: Macmillan.
- DAVIDSON, B. 1969: *The African Genius*. Torontos: Little Browns.
- DEERE, J. 1993: *Surprised by the power of the Spirit*. Estbourne: Kingsway Publications.
- DELIUS, P. 1996: *A lion amongst the cattle: reconstruction and resistance in the Northern Transvaal*. Johannesburg: Ravan.
- DENNIS, JAMES S. 1899, 1906: *Christian Missions and Social Progress: A sociological study of foreign Missions (three volumes)*. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrior.
- DE PETRELLA, LSV. 1986: *The tension between Evangelism and social action in the Pentecostal movement in International Review of Mission*, vol 75:34-38.
- DE WET, C. 1989: *The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa: a case study in church growth in a segregated society*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- DICKE, BR. 1941: *The Northern Transvaal Voortrekkers*. Cape Town: Cape Times.
- DUBB, AA. 1976: *Community of the saved: An African revivalist church in the East Cape* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- DU PLESSIS, J. 1911: *A history of Christian mission in South Africa*. London: Longmans, Green.
- DU PLESSIS, D. 1977: *A man called Mr. Pentecost*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Logos International.
- ELA, JM. 1988: *My faith as an African*. New York: Maryknoll.
- EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN S.A. NORTHERN DIOCESE. *Census 1970*

-1990.

EVANGELICAL WITNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA. 1985: Evangelicals critique their own theology and practice. Dobsonville: Order of Preachers.

FASHOLE, LUKE(ed). 1978: Christianity in Independent Africa. London: Rex Collings.

FLYGARE, J. 1899: De Zoutpansbergen en de Bavenda Natie. Pretoria: Die Volkstem Drukker.

GENSINCHEN, HN. 1988: Mission and ideology in South Africa. *Missionalia*, vol 16 no 2. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

GERDENER, GBA. 1951: Reguit koers gehou: Die wording, wese en werking van die N. G. Kerk se sendingbeleid: Kaapstad.

GIFFORD, P. 1980: African Christianity. London: Hurts.

GILBERT, A & GUGLER, J. 1992: Cities, Poverty and Development. New York: Oxford University Press.

GILIOMEE, H & SCHLEMMER, L. 1989: From Apartheid to nation- building. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

GINA, B & RICHARD, H. 1997: Colonials and Christian: the influence of the Zoutpansberg joint council and members of the Swiss and Berlin Missions: the evolution of ethnicity in the Northern Transvaal. Port Elizabeth: University of Port Elizabeth.

GROMACKI, RG. 1967: The Modern Tongue Movement. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.

GUMBEL, N. 1995: Questions of life. Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications.

HAMMOND, S & YONDE SS. 1999: 'Lemba of Venda are the lost tribe'. Sunday World, June 13.

HARRIES, P. 1989: Exclusion, classification and internal colonialism: the emergence of ethnicity among the Tsonga speakers of South Africa, in The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa edited by L. Vail. London: Currey.

HASSELHORN, F. 1987: Mission, land ownership and settlers' ideology. Johannesburg: SACC.

HASTINGS, A. 1994: The church in Africa, 1450-1950. Oxford University Press.

HEDLUND, RE. 1992: Evangelization and Church Growth: issues from the

- HINTON, K. 1985: *Growing churches Singapore Style: ministry in an urban context.* Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship.
- HODGES, & MELVIL, LA. 1997: *Theology of the Church and its mission: A Pentecostal perspective.* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House.
- HOEKEMA, AA. 1966: *What About Tongue – Speaking?* Grand Rapids. Eerdmans.
- HOFMEYR, S. 1890: *Twintig jaren in Zoutpansberg.* Kaapstad.
- HOLLENWEGER, W. 1972: *The Pentecostals.* London: SCM.
- HOLLENWEGER, W. 1997: *Pentecostalism: Origin a development.* Peaboy, Mass: Henddrickson Publishers.
- HORN, JN. 1989: *From Rags to Riches. An analysis of the Faith Movement and its relation to the Classical Pentecostal Movement.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- HORN, JN. 1990: *The experience of the Spirit in apartheid South Africa in Azusa 1 (1): 19-14*
- HUNT, D. and McMAHON, TA. 1985: *The Seduction of Christianity Spiritual Discernment in The Last Days.* Eugene: Harvest House Publishers.
- IRONSIDE, HA. 1955: *Holiness: The False and the True.* New York: Loizeaux.
- JOHNSTONE, P. 1998: *The Church is bigger than you think.* Ross Shire: Christian Focus Publications.
- JUNOD, HA. 1905: *The theory of witchcraft amongst South African natives. South African Journal of Science, 3:230-241.*
- KAHL, HANS DIETRICH. 1978: *Die ersten jahrhundeste des missionengeschichlichen mittelalters in Schaferdiek, pp 11-76.*
- THE KAIROS DOCUMENT 1986: *Challenge to the church: a theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa. Revised second edition.* Johannesburg: Skotaville.
- KAROTEMPREL, S (ed). 1995: *Following Christ in mission.* Nairobi: Publications Africa.
- KEELEY, R. 1982: *Handbook of Christian Belief.* Heritz: Lion.
- KHOROMBI, NL. 1996: *Echoes from beyond a pass between two mountains.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

- KELSEY, MT. 1973: *Healing and Christianity*. New York: Harper and Row.
- KRAFT, CH. 1979: *Christianity in culture*. London: SPCK.
- KRITZINGER, JJ. 1982: *Die onvoltooide sendingtaak in Noord en Oos Transvaal*. Pretoria: Iswen.
- KRUGER, DW. 1959: *Baanbrekers van die Noorde*. Johannesburg: Gray.
- KYDD, R. 1984: *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
- LAKE, JG. 1981: *Adventures in God*. Tulsa: Harrison House.
- LARTEY, EY. 1986: *Healing: Tradition and Pentecostalism in Africa today*. *International Review of Missions*, vol. 75.
- LA RUFFA, A. 1980: *Pentecostalism in Puertorican Society* in *Glazier* 1980, 49-65.
- LIARDON, R. 1996: *God's Generals*. Tulsa: Albury.
- LIPHAZI, AE. 1999: *Pfunzo dzo dzudzanyelwaho vhana vha minwaha ya 15-16*. Unpublished notes.
- LOVETT, L. 1975: *Black origins of the Pentecostal movement* in *Aspects of Pentecostal: Charismatic origins* edited by V Synan. Plainfield: Logos.
- MACKIE, A. 1921: *The Gift of Tongues: A Study in Pathological Aspects of Christianity*. New York: George H. Doran.
- MACROBERT, I. 1988: *The Black roots and White racism of early Pentecostalism in the U.S.A.* Basingtok: Macmillan.
- MAKHADO, JT. 1980: *Some literary themes in Venda prose and poetry*. Pietersburg: University of the North.
- MALULEKE, TS. 1993: *Mission, ethnicity and homeland: the case of the EPCSA*. *Missionalia*, 21:3. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- MANNING, FE. 1980: *Pentecostalism: Christianity and reputation* in *Glazier* 1980, 177-187.
- MAREE, WL. 1962: *Lig in die Soutpansberg*. Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel.
- MARTINE, D. 1990: *Tongues of fire: the explosion of protestantism in Latin America*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- MATHAGU, 1990: *The origin, causes and consequences of ritual murder in Venda with particular reference to the period between 1979 and 1990*.

Thohoyandou: University of Venda.

- MATHIVHA, MER. 1972: A survey of literary achievement in Venda.
Pietersburg: University of the North.
- MATHIVHA, RN. 1985: The Berlin missionary venture in education at
Tshakhuma, Venda (1872-1954). Master's dissertation.
Pietersburg: University of the North.
- MBITI, J. 1991: Introduction to African religion. London: Heinemann International.
- MBITI, JS. 1969: African Religions and Philosophy. New York: Praeger.
- McCLUNG, LG. 1986: Azusa Street and beyond: Pentecostal mission and church growth in
the twentieth century. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Bridge.
- McGAVRAN, DA. 1983: Understanding church growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- MILUBI, NA. 1988: Aspects of Venda poetry: a reflection on the development of poetry
from oral tradition to the modern forms. Doctoral thesis. Pietersburg:
University of the North.
- MMINELE, SPP. 1984: The Berlin Lutheran Missionary enterprise at Botshabelo, 1865
-1955: an historical-educational study. Pietersburg: University of the
North.
- MOLLER-MALAN, D. 1957: Die donker Soutpansberg. Pretoria: *Historia* No. 2 Vol No 2.
- MUGAMBI, JNK. 1996: Vision of the African Church in mission. *Missionalia* vol 24:2.
Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- NAZIR-ALI, M. 1991: From everywhere to everywhere. Toronto: Collins Flame.
- NDOU, RM. 1993: The Vhavenda concept of life hereafter: a comparison
between the traditional Venda religion and the Christian tradition
Thohoyandou: University of Venda.
- NEMUDZIVHADI, MH. 1977: Dana la minwaha la Fhungo la Mudzimu Vhumbbedzi na
Vhutavhatsindi 1877-1977. Unpublished document.
- NEMUDZIVHADI, MH. 1984: Venda monarchy. Unpublished document.
- NEMUDZIVHADI, MH. 1985: When and what? Thohoyandou: Government Printer.
- NIEBUHR, RICHARD. 1968: Cristo y la cultura (Christ and Culture) Tr. J.L. Lana.
Barcelona: Peninsula.
- NGUBANE, JB. 1984: Theology roots of the African Independent Churches and their
challenge to Black Theology. Black Theology and the Black Struggle

(conference report). Braamfontein: Institute for Contextual Theology.

- NICHOL, JT. 1966: Pentecostalism. New York: Harper and Row.
- ODUYOYE, MA. 1986: Hearing and knowing: theological reflections on Christianity in Africa. New York: Orbis.
- OOSTHUIZEN, GC. 1987: The birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa. Kwadlangezwa: University of Zululand.
- ORKIN, FM. 1998: The people of South Africa Population Census, 1996. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- PAKENDORF, E. 1997: For there is no power but of God. 25. Missionalia, vol.25. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- PAMPALLIS, J. 1991: Foundations of the New South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- PHASWANA, NE. 2000: Language of use by the South African National Government. Dissertation for the Degree of PhD. Michigan: Michigan State University.
- PILLAY, GJ & HOFMEYR, SW. 1991: Perspective on church history: an introduction for South African readers. Pretoria: DeJager Haum.
- POMERVILLE, PAULA. 1985: The third force in Missions. A Pentecostal contribution to contemporary Mission Theology. Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers.
- RAVHUDZULO, MA. 1999: The educational endeavours of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa in historical perspective. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- RAVHUDZULO, MA. 1992: The educational enterprise of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Venda, 1905-1953. Pietersburg: University of the North.
- ROBECK, CM. 1985 : Origin's Treatment of the Charismatic in I Corinthians 12:8-10 in Charismatic Experiences in History, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
- ROSSOUW, D. 1994: Christian, Communist and Socialist in the New South Africa. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- SAAYMAN, W. 1991: Christian Mission in South Africa Pretoria: University of South Africa.

- SAAYMAN, W. 1997: Christianity, mission, public Life, and reconstruction in South Africa. *Missionalia*, 25(1). Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- SARACCO, JN. 1977: Types of Ministry adopted by the Pentecostal churches in Latin American in *International review of missions* 66, 64-70
- SCHERER, JAMESA. 1996: My pilgrimage in Mission. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1996. New Haven: Overseas Mission Study.
- SCHWELLNUS, PE. 1976: Nyimbo dza Vhatendi. Pietersburg: ELCT Book Depot.
- SHILLINGTON, K. 1987: History of Southern Africa. London: Longman.
- STANLEY, B. 1990: The Bible and the Flag. Protestant missions and British imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Leicester: University Press.
- STAYT, HA. 1960: The Bavenda. London: Oxford University Press.
- STEELE, R. 1984: Plundering Hell. Johannesburg: Sceptre.
- STOLEE, HL. 1963: Speaking in tongues. Minneapolis : Augsburg.
- SUNDKLER, BJM. 1961: Bantu prophets in South Africa. London: Oxford.
- SUNDKLER, BJM. 1976: Zulu Zion. London: Oxford University Press.
- SYNAN, V. 1971: The Holiness-Pentecostal movement in the United States. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. The Citizen. Tuesday 27 February 2001. Johannesburg: SAPA.
- TINNEY, JS. 1978: William J. Seymour: Father of modern-day Pentecostalism in Black apostles: Afro-American clergy confront the twentieth century, edited by RK Burkeh and R Newman. Boston: Hall.
- VAN DER MERWE, DN. 1994: Berlynse Sendelinggenootskap in die Transvaal, 1860 --1900. Pretoria: Staatsdrukker.
- VAN DER WALL, RH. 1911: The Mission in Zoutpansberg. *The Comforter*, Aug-Sept.
- VAN ROOY, JA. 1976: The traditional worldview of Black people in Southern Africa. Potchefstroom: Hammanskraal Theological College.
- VERKUYL, J. 1978: Contemporary Missiology: an introduction. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- VINSON SYNAN(ed.). 1975: Aspects of Pentecostal – Charismatic Origins. Plainfield:

- WAGNER, PC. 1987: *Strategies for Church Growth*. Ventura: Regal Books.
- WALVOORD, JF. 1954: *The Holy Spirit*. Wheaton: Van Kampen Press.
- WATT, CP. 1992: *From Africa's soil: the story of the Assemblies of God in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Struik.
- WEDENOJA, W. 1980: *Modernisation and the Pentecostal movement in Jamaica*, in *Glazier* 1980, 27-48.
- WESLEY, J. 1977: *The Holy Spirit and power*. Plainfield: Logos International.
- WESSMANN, R. 1908: *The Bavenda of Spelonken*. London: The African World.
- WEST, MARTIN D. 1975: *Bishop and prophets in a black city*. Cape Town: David Phillip.
- WILLIAMS, T. 1986: *The Local Church and Mission*. Singapore: IEM Outreach.
- WILSON, F & RAMPHELE, M. 1989: *Uprooting poverty: the South African challenge*. Cape Town: Philip.
- WIMBER, J. 1984: *Power Evangelism. Signs and Wonders and Church growth part 1*. Pasadena: Vineyard Ministries.
- WIMBER, J. 1985: *Power evangelism*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- ZOLLNER, L & HESSE, JA. 1984: *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendants*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Archival Material (AFM archive, Louis Trichardt).

General Archival material (ELCSA Archive, Devhula-Leboa Circuit Office).

Comforter/Trooster

ELCSA ALMANAC

Lutheran World Federation

Interviews

- Manyame, S.A. Retired elder of AFM, 09.03.2000
- Manyame, B.S. An elder of AFM, 20.04.2000
- Pastor Leremi of Sinthumule AFM, 5.7.2000
- Pastor Maanzwane District Chairperson of AFM, 11.09.2000
- Pastor Netshifhehe Makwarela, AFM, 20.03.2000
- Pastor Masihela, African Methodist Episcopal, 07.03.2000
- Dean Randitsheni of Devhula Leboa Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, 11.05.2000
- Pastor Ragimana. A former District Chairperson of AFM, 11.09.2000

instead a parallel society is offered in which life can be full, and conversion is the only requirement for entry.”

Indeed the Pentecostal churches have done the best job of reaching the Vhavenda in their concrete situation through the form of ministry they have developed. They still have to apply their human resources to the work of socio-political liberation. After the appearance of the *Concerned Evangelicals* in 1985 and the subsequent *Relevant Pentecostal Witness* in 1989, the Pentecostal churches were seriously challenged to be prophetic and relevant in their ministries.

5.4.2.3 *The Ministry to the world*

The ministry developed by the Pentecostal churches is basically ecclesiocentric. Even though there is a heavy pneumatic emphasis, His ministry is perceived as that of equipping the saints to build the church. The church is the centre of attention in the Pentecostal ministry and everything outside is of interest only as an object of evangelism. Saracco (1977:69) believes that to the Pentecostal, there is no ministry “to the world” even though Pentecostals are in a better position than the traditional churches for this type of ministry. It is difficult to understand and accept what Saracco means here. Pentecostals do conceive the “world” in a detached manner, but this is what they think the Bible teaches when it says “Do not love the world nor the things of the world ...” (1 Jn 2:15). To say that Pentecostals belong to Niebuhr’s (1968:) type of “Christ against culture” is to miss the point. Though Pentecostals appear to disapprove of a number of cultural norms, they have tried hard to promote a clean, holy lifestyle that finally leads to harmonious societal ethics that build any community.

Because of what is perceived to be the teaching of the Bible about the world, separation from all that has to do with the world is the basis for Pentecostal ethics.