

**An analysis of the role of Christian leaders in the schisms in the African
Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa, from 1899 to 1908**

by

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The declaration

I declare that, *An analysis of the role of Christian leaders in the schisms in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa, from 1899 to 1908* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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November 2020

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.....
Albert E. Biwa
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Abstract

This research analyses the role of Christian leaders in the schisms that occurred in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa, from 1899 to 1908. The study assesses whether their character and conduct were in keeping with the requirements of the law of the Church and the model of ethical leadership developed in this dissertation.

The study assesses the different reasons for the schisms, as well as the impact of these schisms on the community, taking into consideration the socio-cultural contexts of the time. The dissertation discusses how Christian leaders ought to act and evaluates the consequences of the decisions made by the relevant leaders.

Finally, the study explores pathways towards the restoration of separated churches. The study argues that the spiritual and moral formation of Christian leaders is essential for both the restoration of the AME Church and the prevention of schisms in the future.

Key terms

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Schism, Christian leadership, Christian ethics, Culture, Decision-making, Character, Power, Spiritual formation, Moral formation, Ethical leadership, Discipleship, Christian perfection, Love.

Opsomming

Hierdie navorsing ontleed die rol van Christelike leiers in die breuke wat van 1899 tot 1908 in die Afrika-Metodiste- Episkopale Kerk in Suidelike Afrika voorgekom het. Die studie assesser of hul karakter en optrede ooreengestem het met die vereistes van die wet van die Kerk en die model van etiese leierskap wat in hierdie dissertasie ontwikkel is.

In die studie is die verskillende redes vir die breuke geassesseer, sowel as die impak van hierdie skeurings op die gemeenskap, met inagneming van die sosio-kulturele kontekste van die tyd. Die dissertasie bespreek hoe Christelike leiers veronderstel is om op te tree en evalueer die gevolge van die tersaaklike leiers se besluite.

Laastens bied die dissertasie 'n blik op moontlike maniere om kerke wat geskei geraak het, te herstel. Die studie voer aan dat die spirituele en morele formasie van Christelike leiers noodsaaklik is vir sowel die herstel van die AME-kerk as die voorkoming van skeurings in die toekoms.

Isishwankathelo

Olu phando luphengulula indima yeenkokheli zobuKrestu kuqhekeko olwenzeka kwinkonzo yamaWesile eyaziwa ngokuba yiAfrican Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa, kwiminyaka ephakathi kowe-1899 nowe-1908. Esi sifundo sivavanya indlela ezi nkokheli zaziphatha ngayo, nokuba ingaba zayilandela njani imigaqo nemithetho yeCawa. Isifundo esi sikwaqwalasela, zizame ukuphuhlisa indlela emsulwa yobunkokheli.

Esi sifundo siqwalasela izizathu ezahlukeneyo zoqhekeko, nefuthe lolu qhekeko eluntwini, phakathi kweemeko zentlalo nenkcubeko yelo xesha. Uphando olu luxoxa ngokuba iinkokheli zobuKrestu zifanele ukuziphatha njani kwaye lukwavavanya iziphumo zezigqibo ezathathwa ziinkokheli ezazithatha inxaxheba ngelo xesha.

Ekugqibeleni, olu phando luqwalasela iindlela zokubuyelana kweecawe ezaqhekekayo. Isifundo esi sibeka elokuba ubume bomoya nesimilo seenkokheli zobuKrestu bungundoqo kwaye bubalulekile ekubuyiseleni iCawe iAME nokunqanda ukuba kungaze kuphinde kubekho uqhekeko.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Schisms in churches have become a regular occurrence. The reality is that churches are splitting, and new churches are being formed. These splits could be ascribed to different reasons and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is no exception. Several schisms took place in the AME Church, where a group of people left the Church and formed a new church or joined other churches.

In this study it was found that the reasons for schisms are mainly accorded to theological, ecclesiastical or doctrinal differences as evident in the First Great Schism (Foster 1998:281) or the Protestant Schism (Rhodes 2005:110), and rarely to leadership deficiencies. It is against this background that this study sought to examine schisms in churches from a Christian leadership perspective, to determine whether the character and conduct of particular Christian leaders led to the schisms within the Southern African District of the AME Church.

The study is rooted in the field of Christian leadership and draws on Theological Ethics as well as Church History. The study analyses the moral character and conduct of Christian leaders in order to establish whether or not their actions were ethical. In other words, were they faithful or not? Did their attitudes, decisions and conduct or actions glorify God? Was it pleasing in the sight of the Lord (Barna 2010:18–19)? Thus the study assesses the character and conduct of these Christian leaders of the AME Church, as it pertains to their faithfulness, lack of love, justice, humility, integrity and respect.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, when our Lord was asked:

Which is the greatest commandment in the law? He replied, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments (Matthew 22:37–40)¹.

This commandment forms the basis of the expected character and conduct of a Christian leader and will be the point of departure for the discussion in chapter 2, where Christian leadership and ethical leadership are examined.

¹ All scriptural references throughout this study are from the New International Version, unless otherwise indicated.

Space does not permit a detailed exegesis of the many biblical passages referred to in this discussion or their textual and social location. However, because this dissertation is located in the field of Christian leadership and primarily discusses the AME Church schisms, several biblical passages as used by scholars, Christian leaders and AME documents are cited in the text of the discussion.

1.1 The aim of the dissertation

The study sought to investigate the major reasons for schisms in the AME Church and to determine the role played by Christian leaders in the three schisms from 1899 to 1908 within the Southern African District of the AME Church. Furthermore, the study aimed to provide pathways for the restoration of the AME Church and guidance as to how schisms can be avoided in the future.

1.2 The value of this research

The value of this research is threefold. It sought to add value to the academic understanding of the causes of schisms, provide knowledge to churches and explain, at a personal level, the impact of schisms on individuals.

The academic value of this dissertation pertains to the contribution that it makes to the creation of knowledge in the disciplines of Christian Leadership, Theological Ethics and Church History. The research sought to investigate the consequences of the lack of ethical Christian leadership that led to schisms within the AME Church. Since the study focused on schisms in the AME Church, a further contribution could be made to Church History. In addition, since the study includes Christian leaders from both Southern Africa and an African-American background and culture, new knowledge could be produced, and insights obtained on Christian leadership within these cultural contexts.

The second value of this dissertation will be at an organisational level. This study can assist church leaders to avoid future schisms, as it is hoped that it provides guidance to Christian leaders to be cautious with regards to the use of power. Further, it encourages church leaders to place emphasis on the promotion of faithfulness, love, justice, humility, integrity and respect for others.

Finally, the study will also help church leaders to understand more fully the personal trauma people experience during schisms. During a recent schism in 2006, as a member of the AME Church, the researcher experienced severance from family and friendship ties, a loss of cohesion and trust in the church and her leadership and felt pain and helplessness. It is an experience that no church member should be subjected to and should be avoided by all means.

1.3 The definition of key terms

The title of this dissertation warrants an explanation of some of the key terms that were used in the study. These include church, schism, and Christian leader. There is a need to introduce these terms at this early stage as they form the basis on which the discussion is built in the ensuing chapters.

1.3.1 The church

The establishment of the Church can be ascribed to the events prior to the Pentecost where the disciples were together in one accord and “suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2). This Godly act saw the beginning of the first Church where the gathered “120 people became the God-ordained, Jesus-trained, Holy Spirit-empowered charter members of the church” (Foster 1998:276). It was on that eventful day that the Church was established, and three thousand people joined the Church, “and the Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Since then, the church has grown worldwide to approximately 2.5 billion members in 2019, consisting of different traditions and denominations (Learn Religions 2020).

1.3.2 Schism

Anthony J. Blasi (1989:311) defines schism as:

a division wherein a religious organisation splits into two or more parts ... a division which destroys a unity upon which the members of the religious organisation in question place some value ... a division which is counter normative and which is likely to be regretted or at best accepted reluctantly ... *a schism can occur without any doctrine, rite or other significant religious question being at issue* [my emphasis].

As noted earlier, some church historians limit the reasons for schisms to doctrinal differences. However, for the purposes of this study, emphasis will be placed on schisms caused by leaders where doctrinal differences were of little or no importance, as pointed out here by Blasi.

1.3.3 Christian leadership

Christian leadership refers to “... leaders in a specific Christian context like a church, congregation or a Christian non-governmental organisation NGO” (Kessler 2010:530). Alternatively, it could “refer to leaders who work in a secular environment like the business world or the government, but who want to lead their staff/followers according to their Christian

worldviews and ethical standards, whether or not these followers share the Christian worldview of the leaders” (Kessler 2010:530).

In this dissertation, Christian leadership was understood to mean leadership that has a Jesus-like character, upholds Christian ethical norms and whose daily conduct is morally inclined, as more fully explained in chapter 2.

1.4 The research questions

The main research question is: *What role did the character and conduct of the Christian leaders of the Southern African District of the AME Church play in the three schisms that occurred from 1899 to 1908, and what role can the spiritual and moral formation of Christian leaders play in healing and avoiding schisms in the future?*

This main research question is discussed under the following sub questions:

- What is the relationship between Christian leadership and ethical leadership and what can be expected of Christian leaders in terms of their character and conduct? (Chapter 2)
- What gave rise to the general schisms in Church history and how did these schisms contribute to the establishment of the AME Church in the United States of America and Southern Africa? (Chapter 3)
- What were the causes of the three Schisms in the Southern African District of the AME Church from 1899 to 1908? (Chapter 4)
- Did the AME Church leadership conform to the ethical norms and practices of Christian leadership during the schisms that occurred in the AME Church? (Chapter 4)
- What role can the spiritual and moral formation of Christian leaders play towards the restoration/ healing of churches and the avoidance of schisms in the future? (Chapter 5)

The hypothesis adopted by the researcher is that the schisms that took place in the Southern African District of the AME Church from 1899 till 1908 were as a result of the absence of morality in Christian leadership, especially as it pertains to faithfulness, the lack of love, justice, humility, integrity and respect.

1.5 Theoretical research methodology

The study follows a theoretical approach using literature on Christian leadership, ethical leadership and Church History, in particular the AME Church history, with specific emphasis

on the role of Christian leaders in the schisms within the AME Church. No empirical research will be conducted; and additional validation through interviews or questionnaires will not be necessary because the literature consulted contains sufficient information to substantiate the claim made in my hypothesis.

The literature used included primary literature (such as Church documents including minutes, letters, Church journals, programs and historical statements) and secondary literature (such as relevant books and articles). The methods employed to substantiate the claims was comprised of harnessing information, making comparisons, critical assessments and an in-depth analysis of the written material, with reference to the research questions.

1.5.1 Fields of study

This study is rooted in the field of Christian leadership, since it analyses the character and actions of Christian leaders of the AME Church during the relevant schisms from 1899 to 1908. A Christian leader, according to Barentsen, Kessler and Meier (2016:6) is a person who follows Christ and whom other persons follow. Thus “to follow in Christ’s footsteps is to be fully moral and fully human” (Kretzschmar 2009:22).

This dissertation also drew ideas and concepts from Theological Ethics. According to Nürnberger, ‘ethics’ could be defined as “a reflection on what ought to be and how we can be liberated and motivated to bring it about” (in Kretzschmar 2001:282). The words Theological Ethics or Christian Ethics suggest that “in some way we are locating our talk of right and wrong, good and bad, obligation and value, in a context of Christian faith, practice and theology” (Messer 2006:2). Connors and McCormick (1998:175) state that Christian ethics is ethics done in the light of Christian faith. In addition, as culture is also linked to Theological Ethics, this study discusses cultural influences on Christian leadership as cultural issues are one of the factors that led to the misinterpretation of leaders’ actions and the subsequent schisms in the AME Church.

Church history was an additional discipline from which this dissertation drew its inspiration and ideas, as the study analyses schisms in churches in general and in the AME Church in particular. Church History – as the name implies, investigates historical events that took place in churches that have a bearing on doctrine, actions, traditions and institutional developments

and the subsequent interaction with different societies and cultures over time (Kretzschmar 2009:23).

1.5.2 Literature review

The different aspects of the relevant literature will be categorised as follows:

- Christian leadership
- Christian ethics and ethical leadership
- The moral formation of leaders;
- General church schisms;
- AME Church history and schisms

1.5.2.1 Christian leadership

Since this study investigates the role of Christian leaders in the different schisms, the discussion features a definition and explanation of what Christian leadership entails. In this extant literature such as that of M. Munroe (2014) who discusses how good character is essential for Christian leadership, G. Barna (2010) who defines what makes someone a leader, approaching it from both secular and religious angles and J.C. Maxwell (1993), who defines leadership and discusses its various aspects and styles, are used.

In addition, Barentsen et al. (2016) reflect on Christian leadership and define a Christian leader as “a person who follows Christ and whom other persons follow”. Youseff (2013) shows how the adoption of Jesus’ leadership style leads to transformation and effectiveness, and the need to have Christ-like qualities. Although many Christian values exist, for the purpose of this dissertation, only the Christian values that are especially relevant for this study are discussed.

Furthermore, two other areas that are essential to this study are the abuse of power and cultural insensitivity. Kessler (2010) discusses the nature and use of power, while Whitehead & Whitehead (1986) was used to explain the faces of personal power. Mbiti (1982) defines culture, while Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2012) explains cultural diversity in the workplace and this is useful in explaining the cultural diversity experienced in the AME Church. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) explore the relationships that determine how we perform as a group and examine concepts such as cultural shock and ethnocentrism, which the researcher believes were among the major contributors to the leadership impasse experienced in the AME Church.

1.5.2.2 Christian ethics and ethical leadership

The study discusses Christian ethics as an important element of Christian leadership. Connors and McCormick (1998), define ethics and explain how an individual's values and actions impact the formation of morality in a community. They further argue that morality is essential in Christian leadership and that it extends beyond commandments; this information was used to evaluate the moral actions of the AME leadership.

In addition, Birch and Rasmussen (1989) underscore the importance of the church as a shaper of moral identity and a bearer of moral tradition; it resonates with the mission of the AME Church and the particular policies, as prescribed for Christian leaders of the AME Church.

Kretschmar et al. (2009:101–177), stresses the difference between good and bad conduct, and how damaging wrong actions are. This is an essential point of departure for the discussion on ethics in Chapter 2, as well as a juxtaposition of the conduct of the AME Christian leaders with the AME Church norms and Christian standards, in Chapter 4.

Schubert (2008) presents a Christian-ethical dialogue between Western and Tanzanian Christians to determine how they would prioritize five ethical values expected of Christian leaders. This information was used as a basis to prioritize a set of ethical values that describes what constitutes an ethical leader for this study.

H. Thielicke (2007) presents the classical problems of Theological Ethics, with specific reference to Christian ethics, and how it relates to secularism and faith, as well as ethical principles in the light of the Christian doctrines, e.g. justice as discussed in chapter 2.

Messer (2006) discusses different approaches to Christian moral reasoning and practical ethical issues. He shows the different manner in which Christian leaders take decisions although they have a similar biblical background and theological training.

1.5.2.3 Moral formation of leaders

W. Bentley (2010:556), states that every person is a leader in their own right; “that God values every person and that every person has the ability to become an instrument of God's presence within their particular context”. This applies to the AME Church since this Church has a rich

Wesleyan heritage and her doctrines are based on Wesleyan Methodism. This is also relevant to the assertion that Africans are as able as African Americans to lead themselves.

Equally, Kretzschmar (2009) stresses “the nature and importance of moral agency for the transformation of persons and society”, especially when cultural values are at play. This is helpful when value systems of African Americans and the African AME’s are contrasted in the study.

D. Willard (2006) discusses the mistake that churches have made by not making disciples of people as the great commission provides, and that churches produce members instead. He further argues that discipleship requires spiritual formation.

1.5.2.4 General church schisms

R.J. Foster (1998) provides an overview of Church history, including the first great schism, as well as the Protestant schism. Equally the book by R. Rhodes (2005) contains critical information that was used in the discussion of other church schisms that also include the establishment of Methodism, and by extension the AME Church. J.A. Millard (1995) and A.C. Booyse (2010), both South African authors, provide information that is critical to the AME Church history in Southern Africa, as well as information that relates to the Methodist schisms in South Africa and the schisms that occurred in the AME Church between 1899 and 1908.

N.J. Stormon (1987) provides important primary literature with respect to the first great schism and the subsequent attempts that the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches made towards the healing of the schism. This and other texts are drawn on in Chapter 5.

1.5.2.5 AME Church history and schisms

The book by R. Allen (written in the 1700’s, first printed in 1916 and later reprinted in 1990), provides information in respect of the early beginnings of the AME Church, compiled from the notes of the founder himself.

In addition, several books that discuss the AME Church evolving over different time periods, were consulted. These include D.C. Dickerson (2009); and C.S. Smith (1922), while J.R. Coan (1979) provides information that is critical to the AME Church history in Southern Africa. J.R. Coan also provides information about the merger of the Ethiopian Church of South Africa, and

the AME Church. Bearden (1984) and White (1965) explain the governance structure of the Church and assist the reader to understand the AME Church and her leadership function.

1.6 Ethical research considerations

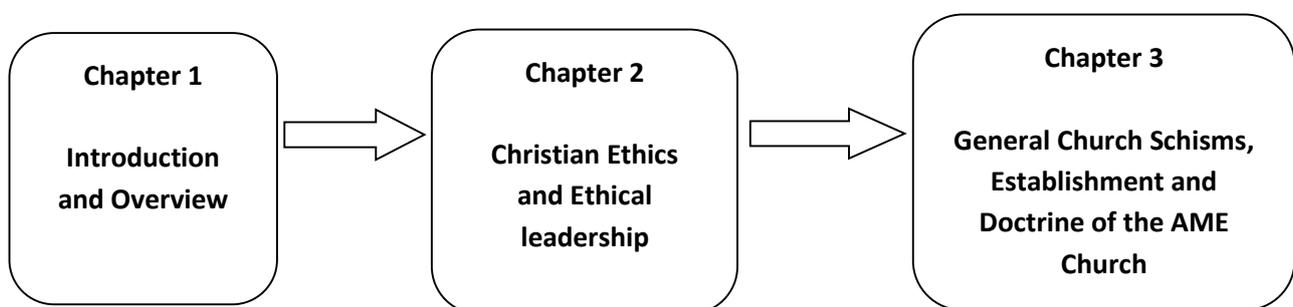
The study used a range of sources written by different authors. All possible attempts were made to present a fair and valid discussion of the topic. The relevant authors were quoted accurately, and their views presented fairly. Due consideration was given to the context in which the authors made their statements and the necessary caution and sensitivity was adopted when interpreting their writings. This was done in order to avoid, as much as humanly possible, conflicts of interest and any misrepresentation that could have material consequences or negatively affect any relatives of the parties mentioned in this study. No other sources that could prove the hypothesis wrong were discarded or ignored. If such sources exist, they are not known to the researcher.

1.7 Limitations of the research

This research study did not discuss all the historical church schisms in detail. This dissertation was limited to a study of the schisms that led to the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to the three schisms that took place within the AME Church in 1899, 1904, and 1908 in the Southern African District of this Church.

1.8 Outline of chapters

In the interest of clarity and the provision of a logical framework of the work, and subsequent arguments, the study is comprised of six chapters and the scope of the different chapters are presented by means of the following diagram.



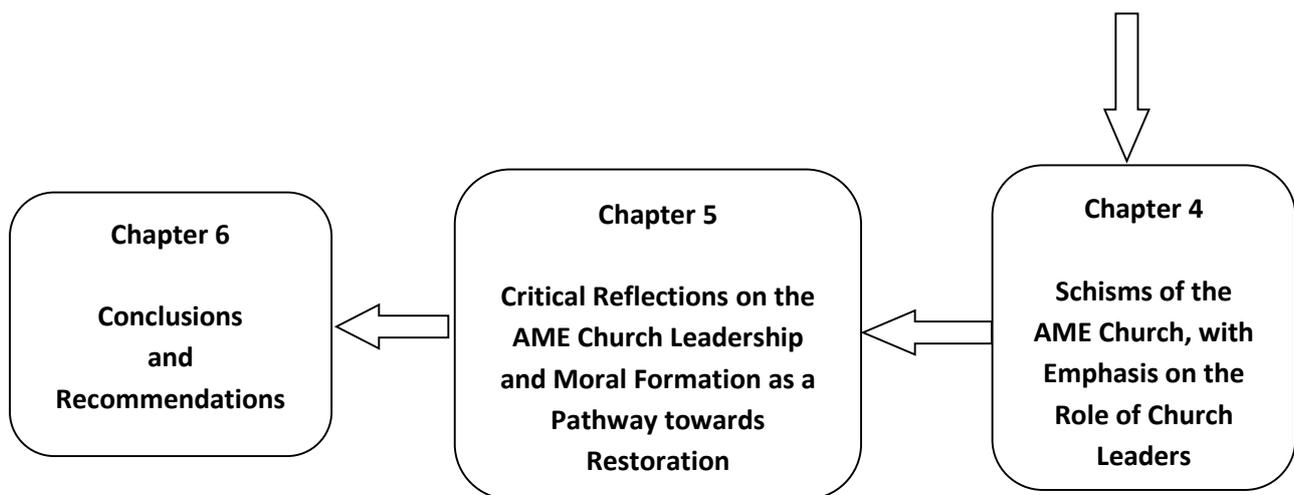


Figure 1: Outline and Logical Flow of Chapters

The first chapter introduces the research topic and highlights the aim of the study. It provides a brief scope of the dissertation, discusses the value of the research, and defines the key terms used. It further frames the research question and states the hypothesis. This chapter discusses the academic discipline in which the study is rooted, as well as the secondary disciplines it draws on. It outlines and describes the research design and methodological approaches that are employed in the theoretical research. The limitations of the study are indicated, as well as the importance of ethical research.

The second chapter deals with Christian ethics and ethical leadership. Since the study is rooted in the field of Christian leadership, it focusses on Christian leadership within the context of the AME Church schisms. However, since it analyses the role of AME Church leaders during these schisms, it draws on Theological Ethics and Church History as secondary disciplines.

Chapter three outlines the different Church schisms that led to the eventual establishment of the AME Church. It further discusses how the AME Church was established in the United States of America and in Southern Africa. In addition, the chapter discusses the doctrine and governance structure of the church as these were important factors in the AME conflicts.

Chapter four discusses the following AME Church schisms and their causes in some detail, since it is essential to identify why these schisms occurred.

- The First Schism 1899

- The Second Schism 1904
- The Third Schism 1908

In addition, this chapter examines the role of the Christian leaders in each of the schisms of the AME Church and assesses whether their character and conduct were in keeping with the composite model of an ethical leader as discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter five discusses the pathways towards restoration after schisms and also how the church as a whole – and the AME Church in particular – can avoid schisms in the future. With regards to healing after schisms, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church's restoration process as captured by N.J. Stormon (1987) was used as a case study, and based on the lessons learned, recommendations for the restorative processes were provided. The study argues that the spiritual and moral formation of Christian leaders is essential for both the restoration of the AME Church and to avoid schisms in the future.

The final chapter concludes the study by summarising the research findings, and indicates the conclusions reached. The chapter provides answers to the research questions and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Christian ethics and ethical leadership

This chapter discusses the concepts of leadership and Christian leadership, since this study seeks to assess the role of Christian leaders, as it pertains to the three different schisms that took place in the Southern African Districts of the AME Church. In addition, emphasis is placed on ethical leadership as a basis for moral conduct and ethical decision making within the context of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

This chapter is divided into seven parts. The first part discusses leadership as a whole and defines leadership using the views of different authors. The second part discusses Christian leadership, provides definitions of Christian leadership and explains in detail what Christian leadership entails. The third part features a discussion on ethics as an imperative to leadership. The fourth part discusses the different behavioural aspects that are expected of an ethical leader and for governance dynamics in an organisation. The fifth part discusses the character of leaders, and why ethically sound character is an essential element in Christian leadership. The sixth part discusses power and authority in leadership, and the impact that the abuse of power has on leadership and organisations. The last part of this chapter considers the notion of culture and the impact of cultural differences on leadership.

2.1 Leadership

Various scholars have differing definitions on leadership. The more catching and truthful two definitions are “leadership is influence” (Maxwell 1993:1) and “leadership is the ability to obtain followers” by James C. Georges (in Maxwell 1993:1). These two definitions disregard any references to ethics and morality from the equation, as there were many historical leaders that did not employ the necessary ethical codes, yet were regarded as leaders, since they were leading a group of people, e.g. Hitler. Therefore, leadership could be referred to as an action of influence whereby the leader attracts followers (Kouzes and Posner 2004:118). Hence “leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (Kouzes & Posner 2004:118).

Enegho (2011) remarks in Bass (1989 and 1990), that there are three basic ways to explain how people become leaders. These are;

- (1) That some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is known as the Trait Theory.

- (2) A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. This is known as the Great Events Theory.
- (3) People can choose to be leaders. This is when people learn leadership skills. This is known as the Transformational Leadership Theory and this seems to be the most widely accepted theory today (Enegho 2011:526).

Based on the above, one can conclude that leaders are not necessarily born. A person could become a good leader “through a continuous process of self-study, education, training and experience” (Enegho 2011:525). However, “what makes a person want to follow a leader is that people want to be guided by those they respect and who have a clear sense of direction” (Enegho 2011:526). This in essence is what leadership is all about.

John Ashcroft, a United States Senator, states that leadership is first “the identification of noble goals and objectives and second the pursuit of those noble goals and objectives with such intensity that others are drawn into the process” (in Barna 2010:12). Does this then simply imply that leadership exists only when noble goals and objectives are pursued? What happens if the goals are not noble, or there is no effort to pursue such goals? Does leadership still exist? George Barna (2010:13) defines leadership as “the ability to persuade others to accomplish things together”, while Joan V. Gallos (2008:3) states that “leadership is about the ongoing process of building and sustaining a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those willing to follow”.

Fusing these three definitions, five critical aspects about good leadership can be gleaned. Firstly, the need to have noble goals and objectives, where noble means that the goals and objectives are honourable and morally attuned. Secondly, the pursuit of these goals and objectives to attract others, who are then co-opted. Thirdly, leadership involves persuasion or influencing others and building relationships. Fourthly, leadership is an ongoing process that occurs between leaders and followers. Finally, there must be willing followers, people that are following out of their own volition and conviction. This then implies that “leadership is not just a role one plays, it is a life one leads” (Munroe 2003:35).

2.2 Christian leadership

The foregoing discussion on leadership informed us on what leadership is and what makes a leader. Kessler (2010:530) describes a leader as “a person whom other persons follow”. Thus, if “a leader is a person whom other people follow, and a Christian is a person who follows

Christ”, then a “Christian leader is a person who follows Christ and whom other persons follow” (Barentsen et al 2016:6). As noted earlier, Kessler (2010:530) states that Christian leadership refers to leaders in a specific Christian context like a church, or a person who works in a secular environment, but whose leadership qualities are rooted in Christian ethical standards – whether his followers share his Christian worldview or not.

Therefore, a Christian leader should have “leadership attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills” (Turner 1982:8). Thus one could say that a Christian leader is a person that has “obeyed the gospel of Christ, committed his life to the service for Jesus Christ and his/her church, and seeks to be like Jesus Christ in every action and attitude” (Turner 1982:8). It follows then that a Christian leader has to be a very dedicated person, both to his/her family, job, church activities and above all, the Lord Jesus Christ and His commands, as he/she cares for the Lord’s work (Turner 1982:8). He also “has to be concerned about not just his own reputation, but also the Lord’s” (Barna 2010:159). Subsequently, the researcher’s definition of a Christian leader is ‘a mature disciple of Jesus Christ who is able to lead those who are willing to follow’. Hence, their actions should show, kindness, justice and patience towards others.

2.3 Christian ethics and morality

Connors and McCormick (1998:175), define ethics as “the study of moral experience: more specifically, it is the systematic and communal reflection on and analysis of moral experience”. According to Thielicke (2007:456), “ethics does not teach us what we are obliged to do; strictly speaking it teaches us what we are permitted to do.” Moreover, Kretzschmar (2009:16) states that “ethics is the critical reflection on the moral norms, values and behaviour of individuals and societies in order to assess their validity.”

In essence, “Christian ethics is not first of all an ethics of principles, rules or values, but an ethic that demands and requires human beings to attend to the life of a particular individual – Jesus of Nazareth” (Hauerwas in Messer 2006:133). Hence to speak of ethics from a Christian perspective is to anticipate that there exists a commitment to God and His people. Connors and McCormick (1998:175), state that Christian ethics is ethics pursued in the light of the Christian faith, while Thielicke (2007:6) argues that Christian ethics is perceived “as a reservoir of religious powers enabling us to do what is already known to be ‘the good’, when the sphere of God’s commands on the one hand and the sphere of our human-historical reality on the other were accordingly thought to be attuned to one another in perfect harmony”. Christian ethics is

thus “more than a moral world view or paradigm, it is a way of thinking, being and acting that affects our entire being and our total lives” (Kretzschmar 2005:20).

In essence, “what the New Testament calls being in the world but not of the world, living in the flesh but not according to the flesh, thus becomes for us the most pressing problem of ethics” (Thielicke 2007:6). Thus “Christian ethics is both deductive (moral norms and convictions need to be understood and applied) and inductive (Christians need to learn from their own experiences and be challenged by the experiences and critiques of others, especially those from outside their own social circle)” (Kretzschmar 2010:569). Having discussed ethics and morality as essential ingredients in Christian leadership, in the next section we will now discuss ethical leadership.

2.4 Ethical leadership

According to Michael E. Brown et al, “ethical leadership is the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the promotion of such conduct to the followers through a two-way communication, reinforcement and decision making” (in Barentsen et al 2016:80). Subsequently, it is pivotal that followers are consulted regularly on issues of common concern and that their input is solicited and valued as these decisions ultimately have a positive or adverse effect on both followers and leaders. Human beings must make the notion of ‘we are in this together’ count, in the spirit of *ubuntu*.

Within a business context, Jung and Armbruster state that “while the leader is an ethical ‘role model’, the employees are not autonomous moral agents”, they equally have “to show normatively appropriate conduct across situations and in different interpersonal relationships” (in Barentsen et al 2016:80). This is equally applicable to Christian leaders and their followers. The character and conduct of Christian leaders and their followers should demonstrate the high moral norms they uphold. Therefore, the leader needs to be equipped with several personal attributes. Parence and Peachey list these attributes as follows:

Vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others and empowerment [...], altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom and organizational stewardship [...], empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction and stewardship. (in Barentsen et al 2016:81)

Hence there are specific and codified expectations from the church and society as it pertains to the moral character (being) and conduct (‘doing’ or actions) of ethical leaders. Each society

has different expectations, as a result of their historical and cultural context. It is on the basis of this cultural background that each society develops and practices their ethical values. In Table 1, Ralph I. Schubert (2008) presents a Christian-ethical dialogue between Western and Tanzanian Christians to determine how they would prioritize five ethical values that are important to both groups for Christian leaders. The groups identified the same values, but it is significant that they have prioritized them differently. Table 1 shows the order in which the two groups prioritized the values.

Table 1

Prioritized Values, (Schubert 2008:183)

Prioritized values of both groups	
WEST	TANZANIA
1. Justice	1. Love
2. Faithfulness	2. Mercy
3. Humility	3. Humility
4. Love	4. Faithfulness
5. Mercy	5. Justice

Table 1: Prioritized Values

As can be seen, love and mercy are ranked higher by the Tanzanian community while justice and faithfulness are valued highly by the western community. This disparity underscores what Munroe (2003:117) states; that “an individual’s values are derived from his beliefs and convictions.” Similarly, “a corporate entity’s value develop from the beliefs and convictions of the leader and the group members, which are based on their purpose”. These five ethical values as listed in Table 1, are values that relate to the inner character and virtues of an individual.

Since the African Methodist Episcopal Church is a Christian denomination, desirous to follow the statutes and commandments of God, this Church and her members are faithfully affirming the beliefs as confessed by way of reciting the Apostle’s Creed every Sunday. The AME Church advocates for social justice and holds that no member of the AME Church will ever be subjected to the inhuman treatment human beings endured during the period of slavery in the USA. The Church has, as her cornerstone, love and respect for one another, and calls on her leaders to be humble and act with integrity. Although there are many other Christian values,

based on the foregoing discussions of Christian values as identified by scholars and Christian practitioners and the biblical values on which the AME Church is founded, the researcher has selected the following, faithfulness, love, justice, humility, integrity and respect constitute the person of a Christian leader. In the following section each of these values will be discussed in detail.

2.4.1 Faithfulness

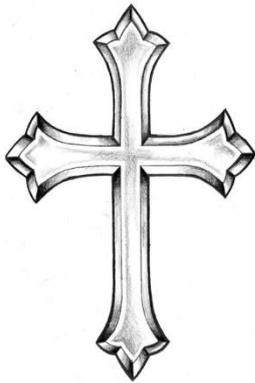
Faithfulness is derived from having faith in Christ. One cannot be a genuine Christian leader if one has no faith in Christ. Faithfulness requires one to lay down their life for God and His Son Jesus Christ. It involves the denial of the Self, the crucifixion of the Self and the renunciation of the Self (Deason 1993:19). It requires one to keep God's commandments and observe his teachings meticulously and become a doer of God's word and not just a hearer. Above all, to trust in Jesus Christ in all of one's endeavours since He is the Creator, Saviour and Judge of all, that holds all power in His hands.

Lovett H. Weems Jr. (1999:116) remarks that "No faithful Christian witness is possible apart from a lively and ongoing experience of God's presence in our lives". This statement provides that being faithful is not an event, it is a lifelong journey on which one walks with Christ and consistently practice loyalty and allegiance, regardless of the different circumstances, challenges and obstacles one may experience in their life. Therefore, Revelations 2:10 encourages Christians to "be faithful even unto death and I will give you the crown of life".

2.4.2 Love

Love is considered the central theme of the Church's ministry in the AME Church, and as depicted in Table 1, love is prioritized by both the Western and Tanzanian participants as an integral value of ethical leadership. The Decalogue summary of the AME Church (Mark 12:29–31) makes a twofold reference; one to God the creator and second to humankind and stresses it as the most important law. Subsequently, the cross symbolizes these vertical and horizontal dimensions.

Vertical arm represents: Love for God the Creator with heart, soul, mind and strength



Horizontal arm represents: love for your neighbour

Figure 2: Twofold Reference to the Law of Love (Author's diagram)

Figure 2 shows that God loves humanity even when humanity does not love Him good enough. This is clearly demonstrated by the unselfish sacrifice by Jesus on the cross. Deason (1993:80) charged that “we cannot pick up the cross of Christ if our hands are already full of selfish pursuits and priorities ... for there is no real love except that which is offered at the cross”, as “the way of love is the way of the cross” (Deason 1993:80).

Deason (1993:78) states that “love is not one of the virtues of Christianity. ‘Real’ love is ‘real’ Christianity and ‘real’ Christianity is love. We should not think of love as one of the most important things that Christians have to do, rather this one thing is the Christian’s ‘whole’ business”. Hence love requires of Christians to sacrifice their selfishness and become selfless.

2.4.3 Humility

According to Munroe (2003:207) “the word humble is derived from the Latin *humus* which means ‘earth’”. Thus “to be humble, means to be down to earth ... to express and manifest your true self in accordance with your unique inherent purpose” (Munroe 2003:207). Hence to be humble means denying oneself in order to follow Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:24).

Christian leaders are in essence servant leaders, as Jesus Christ expects from those that want to lead in His Kingdom. As the scripture says, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve”, (Mark 10:45) and “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave” (Matthew 20:25–27). Thus to be a servant leader one must first learn to serve others, and “acknowledge their dependence on God and are humble, meaning that they accept the truth about themselves, neither seeking to

inflate nor deflate themselves, but to surrender their will, lives and ministries to God” (Kretzschmar 2005:107).

Many a Christian leader only wants “the glory but not the cup of shame; the crown but not the cross; the role of master but not servant” (Sanders 2007:22). “The cup and baptism are not only symbols of suffering but of eschatological vindication” (Kgatle 2019:62). “When applied to servant leadership, the use of both cup and baptism in Mark 10:39 suggest that leaders should participate morally in Jesus’ passion. They should do so as an expression of sharing in his fate” (William 1984:379; Kgatle 2019:61). Hence servant leaders should not only be interested in positions of leadership, but they should also be prepared to take part in Jesus’ suffering, because, although the servant leader may go through persecution and trials there will also be a reward for serving others (Kgatle 2019:61). This revelation led to the discovery that “greatness comes through servanthood and leadership through becoming a slave of all” (Sanders 2007:23). Thus “a servant leader does not live to please others, but to please God” (Kgatle 2019:62). Therefore, Christian leaders are servants who live out their call daily, and whose faith and obedience in God is visible daily through their character and conduct ... “the greater the leader, the deeper the humility” (Williams 2012:179).

2.4.4 Justice

Helmut Thielicke (2007) explains the principle of justice against the concept of natural law, and states that one of the main axioms of natural law is the principle of “*suum cuique*”, which in essence means “to each his own”. He further states that this principle seems to be constant or universal, as it is found as a purely formal principle in all ages and places (Thielicke 2007:421).

However, the unfortunate situation is that this constant, the *suum cuique*, varies continually according to the person’s condition or situation, where he or she is seen as either a citizen or a slave, either a beast or prey, or human brother. This then implies that the *suum cuique* depends on the view of human beings, which in itself is inconstant (Thielicke 2007:422). Thus the view of human beings is influenced by certain conditions depending on which side one stands. This implies that many inequalities exist among people. Some of these inequalities are as a result of historical contingencies (Thielicke 2007:422), for example apartheid, the USA slave trade, and the issue of racism and division as experienced by the Methodist Church (Weems 1999:136-138). Others are as a result of natural inequalities, on the basis of sex, age, gifts, and physical

temperaments (Thielicke 2007:422). However, one should know that “all human beings are equal before God (*coram Deo*), for all are sinners together and all are righteous together, i.e. without differentiation, without respect to individual merits. Moreover, all are equal before the law, i.e. in the legal sphere. And in the most general and formal sense all are equal as regards their quality as moral beings” (Thielicke 2007:422).

Therefore, the practice of justice should be the way of life for a Christian leader. It is through these just actions that a culture of fairness could be instilled among the people, with the aim of forming a just society. Thus Reinhold Niebuhr states that “inherited dogmas and generalizations will not be acceptable, no matter how revered or vulnerable ... if they do not contribute to the establishment of justice in a given situation” (in Weems 1999:144). Subsequently, Rebecca Chopp “describes justice as constitutive of the church rather than something distributed by the church through charity. She contends that justice in a sense, defines the mission and nature of the *ekklesia*” (in Weems 1999:144–145).

Amos 5:24, states, “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” These words impress it upon all Christians to allow the next person to enjoy a free life as God has intended without any form of discrimination, obstacle or disadvantaging element. It further requires of Christians to be righteous in their daily lives without fear or favour as stated by the prophet Zechariah 7:9–10 “administer true justice: show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other”. Therefore, it is imperative that the Church and her Christian leaders speak up against evil actions in the Church, the government or the community; as stated in Proverbs 31:8-9, “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and the needy”.

2.4.5 Integrity

Integrity is a value that does not enjoy prominence in society. It is often spoken about, but seldom practiced. Integrity requires of one to distinguish between right and wrong and to always choose to do the right thing. Hence integrity could be defined as “the state of wholeness and completeness which the process of life of faith is always striving to bring into being” (Hunter 1990:397; Enegho 2011:523). Assessing the word integrity in the Christian context could mean wholeness in obedience to God (Enegho 2011:523). Therefore, according to Stephen L. Carter (1996:8) integrity requires three steps namely;

- (1) discerning what is right and what is wrong;
- (2) acting on what you have discerned even at a personal cost; and
- (3) saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong (Enegho 2011:524).

Thus “we need more people today who will do the right thing, say the right thing and send a message to our culture, even if it seems to make no practical difference” (Youssef 2013:58). Enegho (2011:523) remarks that “Christians ought to blaze the trail in displaying unparalleled integrity and invariably sow seeds of integrity in the lives of others by their living examples” since integrity is not exclusively a Christian virtue although it carries the essence of Christianity (Enegho 2011:524).

Integrity also means being incorruptible (Munroe 2003:209). This means that a Christian leader with integrity is someone that is unwavering and would not give in to the temptations of this world. In this day and age where political correctness is valued above Christian values, the Church needs Christian leaders that are robust, principled and incorruptible. Christian leaders that would not succumb to corruption, otherworldly evils or political pressures of the Church and world alike but would be righteous and advocate for moral standards to be upheld in the society. In other words, speaking truth to power! Integrity calls for Christian leaders to continuously seek the righteous path, and to discern what is evil. It obligates one to relinquish power when necessary and to be brave enough to ‘pass the baton’ to the next person without any fear.

2.4.6 Respect

Usually respect goes hand in hand with love, as those who love would not dishonour, but rather value that person as a person equally created in God’s image. Respect for others is an essential quality in which the question, whether Christian leaders nurture or dominate people, is put in perspective. What is meant by this, is whether Christian leaders regard their followers as equals in a team pursuing a common purpose? As Christian leaders there is a need to respect others’ opinions, and to “be non-defensive, able to listen to, consider and respond positively to criticism, that is, without ignoring or attacking the person who is speaking the truth in love” (Kretzschmar 2005:109). Respect for others in the context of peace, tranquillity and harmony requires the avoidance of potential conflicts that threaten harmony and finding polite ways to communicate (Schubert and Kretzschmar 2009: 334).

Since we are equal in the sight of the Lord, Christian leaders need to treat their followers with respect. Disregarding people and disrespecting people will eventually pose difficulties in one's leadership. Mutual respect shows a sense of understanding of each other's background, values and beliefs. Hence when Christian leaders demonstrate respect to others, people usually warm up towards such a leader. Over time trust relations are formed and relationships grow to a more intimate level, such as friendship.

Having mentioned all these qualities which include faithfulness, love, humility, justice, integrity and respect, it should be noted that these values must translate into the moral behaviour of any leader of an organisation, who in turn will expect the same moral behaviour from their followers. This implies that ethical leaders cannot have two faces, i.e. their character and conduct in their personal or private life and their public life must be the same, always morally attuned. Munroe (2003:33) states that "true leadership has always been built on strong character" and true character is what a person demonstrates when he or she is tempted or is under pressure or has been tried and tested (Williams 2012:148). Pat Williams (2012:147) defines character as an "array of personality traits you have built into your life over time". However, according to Connors and McCormick (1998:18) character "refers to the moral identity of persons, an identity found in depths of their being, an identity which is both unique and self-chosen".

Thus character is important for a leader as "it is in the character of a person that moral goodness and badness are disclosed" and subsequently, those that are morally attuned can become moral agents that can construct moral or just communities (Connors and McCormick 1998:22–23). 'Moral agents' denotes a person, people or community who act morally, as it "describes human experience and especially human action from a moral point of view" (Birch & Rasmussen 1989:40). Thus moral agency "encompass both character and conduct, both our moral being and our moral doing" (Birch & Rasmussen 1989:40). Thus one could conclude that moral agency is a measure of the impact of the moral character of the Christian leader on their followers in the church and how the resultant change in behaviour impacts the community they serve.

Therefore, when ethical leaders have different moral codes in their private lives, compared to what they propagate in their public lives, this is referred to as 'double morality' (Thielicke 2007:364). Double morality implies that "as inner man, the Christian, acts within the kingdom

of God wholly intent upon fulfilling the morality of the divine goodness, but as secular man he follows in his office the autonomy of the world pursuing a morality of force and of power” (Thielicke 2007:365). Thus the moral status accorded to an organisation such as the church is directly proportional to the morality of the leaders and followers of that organisation. Subsequently, the whole body (organisation, leadership and followers) is collectively responsible for the moral demeanour of the institution (Barentsen, Kessler, and Meier 2016:79).

This concludes the discussion on what constitutes an ethical leader. Next we turn our attention to the discussion on the use and abuse of power by Christian leaders.

2.5 Leadership and power

In this part of this chapter, the work of V. Kessler (2010) on leadership and power, is used as a basis of this discussion.

2.5.1 What is power?

Max Weber (1864–1920) defines power as “every opportunity/possibility existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one’s own will, even against resistance, and regardless of the basis on which the opportunity rests” (Weber 1980:28 in Kessler 2010:530).

Therefore, “power (*dynamis*) means the ability to do something,” while “authority (*exousia*) refers to the permission, the legitimation to do something” (Kessler 2010:535). If authority refers to an obtained permission or a legitimate or lawful approval to do something, then one can conclude that at times one may have power, but not the authority to perform a certain task or implement a certain decision, and *vice versa*. Thus Christian leaders “need always to bear in mind that their authority or power is delegated not absolute ... they exercise it on God’s behalf and are accountable to exercise it in accordance with the character and will of God” (Kretzschmar 2002:7). Thus “if human power and the lordship which stems from it are rooted in man’s likeness to God, then power is not man’s [humanity] in his own right, autonomously, but only as a loan, a fief” (Guardini 1998:134 in Kessler 2010:534). Thus one can conclude that “Man is lord by the grace of God, and he must exercise his dominion responsibly for he is answerable for it to Him who is Lord by essence” (Guardini 1998:134 in Kessler 2010:534).

2.5.2 The faces or types of power

According to Youseff (2013:101–102), there are two kinds of power. These are positional power and personal power. However, Whitehead and Whitehead (1986:153) in their explanation of how destructive or constructive power could be, discuss the different faces of personal power as follows: These are power on, power over, power against, power for and power with. ‘Power on’ refers to the personal power one has that enables one to act with initiative and thereby influence one’s own life and that of the community in which they function. ‘Power over’ refers to power granted to an individual within an organisational context to coordinate and control the activities of the organisation in a positive and responsible manner. ‘Power against’ is essential in issues of conflict resolution or to confront evil and deceit. ‘Power for’ is necessary for nurturing, caring and serving the people through listening, counselling, healing and encouraging the people. Finally, ‘power with’ is necessary as it develops maturity and raises the level of co-operation, which leads to the interdependence between different groups with the assurance that each group can depend on the other group or person to fulfil their task (Whitehead and Whitehead 1986:153).

2.5.3 The abuse of power

As noted earlier, according to Kretzschmar (2002:52) there are two big dangers of exercising power wrongly. These are the abuse of power and the failure to use power at all (power vacuum) (Kessler 2010:535). The failure to use power stems from the fact that in most instances, Christians are not fully aware of the ambiguity of power; “to recognize that power is both destructive and creative, demonic and holy” (Kretzschmar 2002:48). Since Christians have not always grasped the nature of power, they “have tended either to exercise power indiscriminately, or to deny the importance of power because powerlessness was seen as a virtue” and this led to the abuse or avoidance of power (Kretzschmar 2002:48).

What then is the abuse of power? Nunez and Gonzalez, (2014:36) state that “any abusive behaviour that is expressed in non-verbal cues, words, behaviour, or attitudes which are systematically repeated, destroying the mental dignity of a person, and thus, jeopardizing employment or degrading the organizational climate”. This, in other words implies a hunger for power, which is a horrible thing, as “power is such a dangerous thing if it is not used properly ... the greatest danger of power is that it gets you to believe that you are not really mortal – and of course you are” (Barna 2010:167).

This concludes the discussion on the use and abuse of power. Another vital aspect is the role of culture in leadership, which is discussed next.

2.6 Leadership and culture

Every person is born into a specific culture and “culture is changing all the time whether slowly or rapidly” (Mbiti 1982:7). Adeney (1995:17) notes that “different cultures prioritize their values differently in relation to the patterns of meaning relevant to the story of their people” hence “different priorities may require the understanding of absolute values differently in different contexts” (Adeney 1995:17).

Hofstede (2005:4) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others”. This definition does not seem to capture the essence of culture but rather is a progressive description of culture over time. However, according to Adeney (1995:16), the Willowbank Report of the Lausanne Committee provides the following definition of culture which conflates culture with its derivative, social structure. Thus,

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God, or reality, or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (governments, law, courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which bind a society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity.

Therefore, culture can be broadly understood as “the way a people have organized themselves to express and preserve their identity and way of life” (Kretzschmar 2010:572). Culture is visible “in social organisations and political systems, in religion, ethics, morals and philosophy, in the customs and institutions of the people, in their values and laws, and in their economic life” (Mbiti 1982:7) and, in the researcher’s opinion, also in their views about leadership.

Mbiti (1982:2) states that “people adapt their style of living to the environment in which they find themselves and according to their needs for survival”. This statement resonates with the cultural dilemma in the AME Church that stems from the fact that those who originally established the church were Africans that were taken as slaves from Africa to the United States of America. While being in the west, these Africans have lost almost all of their African cultural identity due to the fact that they were wholly exposed to the white western culture and also

expected to assume the white cultural values (Adeney 1995:18-20). According to Mbiti (1982:3), “they mixed with their masters and other local people by bearing children and in cultural life”. Subsequently, “after the abolishment of slavery in the nineteenth century, most of the people from African descent remained there and became an integral part of these countries” (Mbiti 1982:3). Kretzschmar (2010:575) argues that such “exposure to cultures different to one’s own can significantly influence and alter one’s cultural value orientations”.

Within the context of Christian leadership, these differing dynamics of culture lead to misperceptions and misunderstandings or cultural shocks and ethnocentrism when the visiting group stays and functions in the host culture (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 323–326). These may occur with regard to ethical decisions or perceived moral behaviours, as the values and norms are not necessarily the same. This, according to Adeney (1995:14), boils down to incongruent values of one culture with respect to the other. Incongruent values refer to a situation where one culture may perceive a certain action immoral, while another culture may condone such an action (Adeney 1995:14–15). For example, polygamy in some African cultures is normally accepted, while it is perceived to be wrong in most western cultures.

Misperceptions and misunderstandings such as the ones cited earlier may lead to different forms of abuse, such as the abuse of power, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and corruption, as the perpetrator may not think or perceive his action wrong while it hurts, embarrasses or negatively affects the victim. It also develops into cultural collisions, which could only be resolved through flexibility and mutual respect (Kretzschmar 2010:576). In addition, it is incumbent on the Christian leader to resist and expose cultural value distortions. Cultural value distortion refers to the over-emphasising of cultural values such as individualism or communitarianism resulting in a moral imbalance, which may lead to an eventual moral breakdown (Kretzschmar 2010:585). Therefore, individual Christians and churches “can play a significant role in both exposing cultural distortions and promoting cultural values that are morally beneficial to the societies in which we live” (Kretzschmar 2010:586).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012:264) state that during the integration of two different cultures within an organisational context, “much attention and effort need to be given to managing the cultural differences between the new partners” as “relational aspects such as cultural differences and lack of trust have frequently been reported as being responsible for 70 percent of integration failures” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012:264).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed leadership and pointed out that leadership is an ongoing process between leaders and followers, and that a leader must have willing followers to lead. The chapter further discussed Christian leadership and argued that a Christian leader is a disciple of Jesus Christ, who is mature and able to lead others that are willing to follow. Furthermore, ethics in Christian leadership was discussed as a reflection on what is good or bad, and that it involves commitment of both the individual and church community to live out their deepest convictions in their personal, family and social lives.

Ethical leadership was discussed as a way of life and that an ethical leader should be guided by biblical principles and values. Six ethical values that relate to an ethical leader's inner character and outer behaviour were identified. These are faithfulness, love, justice, humility, integrity and respect. The point was made that ethical leaders must be faithful to their call and know that Christianity is love and as such Christians are obligated to love one another. Further, the Bible teaches that the one that wishes to become great must be a servant. In addition, the discussion called upon Christian leaders to practice fairness and have the willingness to execute justice in their daily conduct, thereby building a just church and society. Moreover, Christian leaders were challenged to be persons of integrity, conscious about right and wrong actions and who cultivate the culture of respect for others in the society since everyone is created equally in God's image.

It was also noted that power – if not handled with care – corrupts people, especially leaders. In many instances Christian leaders abuse power and thereby hurt both the institution and the people. Therefore, there is an express need for Christian leaders to find ways to handle power wisely. Furthermore, as culture covers many aspects with respect to belief systems and behaviour of people the need to take cultural differences into consideration was also emphasized.

Chapter 3: General church schisms leading to the establishment of the AME Church

In this chapter, a brief history of the different church schisms that led to the eventual founding of the AME Church is provided. However, a detailed examination of the general church schisms is not the aim of this dissertation. The study discusses the different dynamics and reasons that led to the establishment of the AME Church. These dynamics and reasons are important as they help to put the events and reasons for the AME Church schisms in perspective.

In addition, in this chapter we discuss the structure and doctrine of the AME Church. This is important for the study as it explains the critical doctrinal position of the AME Church, especially how the Church is governed, how the hierarchy functions and how the work of the different auxiliaries contribute to the overall mission of the AME Church. This information is useful for the analysis of the Christian leaders in Chapter 4.

3.1 Overview of general church schisms

The overview of the general church schisms will include a discussion on the first great schism, the Protestant schism, the Anglican – Methodist schism, and the Methodist – African Methodist schism as the study seeks to show how through the different schisms that took place over time, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was established.

3.1.1 The first great schism

During the early centuries of the church, five centres dominated the Christian life of the Church. These centres were Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome. After Jerusalem's fall to the Romans in A.D. 70, it lost much of its influence; and neither Antioch, nor Alexandria could compete with the political power of Rome and Constantinople (Foster 1998:280–281). Subsequently, “the rise of Islam in the seventh century further eroded the influence of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria” (Foster 1998:282).

Booyse (2010:11) states that the Western and Eastern Orthodox Churches experienced serious problems because of cultural and political differences as from the fourth century. Their languages, practices and political relationships differed (Foster 1998:286). Booyse (2010:11) further states that some practices in the Eastern Orthodox Church (situated in Constantinople)

were not acceptable in the Western Church (situated in Rome). These include, “the conciliar authority of bishops rather than a pope, the permissibility of marriage for clergy, the insistence on leavened bread for the Eucharist, and the rejection of *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed” (Foster 1998:287). Pillay (1991:102) states that the “Eastern Orthodox Church was concerned about the recognition of the *filioque* (a Latin term for ‘and the Son’, a dogmatic formula which expressed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that proceeds from both the Father and the Son), especially the interpretation of it by the Western Church” (in Booyse 2010:11). The reason being that the Eastern Orthodox Church placed emphasis on the tradition and the preservation of doctrine (Foster 1998:287).

Over the years a theological and ecclesiastical power struggle developed in the Church, to the extent that Rome began to dominate the life of the Church (Foster 1998:282). This led to a situation where some of the bishops acquired greater authority than others (Rhodes 2005:108). While the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople enjoyed equal status prior to 1054, “a consensus eventually developed in the Western Church that the entire Church should be ruled by a single ecclesiastical institution with a single head (the Roman Bishop)” (Rhodes 2005:109). The Bishop of the Eastern Church did not agree with this notion since as mentioned earlier, “Deep-seated dissimilarities existed between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity”. Their languages, practices and political relationships were different. “These differences produced first a rift and then a full break” (Foster 1998:286).

According to Foster (1998:286), “in 1054, Pope Leo IX sent Cardinal Humbert, a non-Greek-speaking, pro-celibate, anti-political alliance diplomat”, as an envoy of the Church of Rome to negotiate with Constantinople on the differences as discussed earlier. Foster (1998:286) states that the mission was doomed from the onset as Patriarch Michael Cerularius was suspicious and incommunicative. Unfortunately, as is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, the envoy was undiplomatic and intemperate. Foster (1998:287) further states that “as a worship service was about to begin in the Church of Holy Wisdom at Constantinople, Cardinal Humbert marched in and placed a papal bull of excommunication upon the altar” and left the Church. According to Stormon (1987:130), “the legates from Rome, Cardinal Humbert and his colleagues, anathematized Patriarch Michael Cerularius and his two auxiliaries, and Patriarch Michael Cerularius with his Synod similarly anathematized the document of the Rome legates”. Thus, it is clear that the two bishops excommunicated each other, and their churches were

separated (Rhodes 2005:109). In addition to the doctrinal differences this was a failure of Christian leadership.

3.1.2 The Protestant schism

The second great schism took place during the 16th Century and was precipitated by Martin Luther in 1517. Although Luther was not the first to point out abuses and call for reform, there were others like John Wycliff and John Hus (Foster 1998:292). Protestantism was born as a result of Martin Luther's attempt to reform the Catholic Church (Rhodes 2009:109). According to historical records, on 31 October 1517 "Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses (or propositions) to the door of castle church at Wittenberg and this action marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation" (Foster 1998:292). This Christian leader held that there "were significant differences between the teachings of the Bible and those of the Roman Catholic Church". "He therefore set out to motivate the Roman Catholic Church to reform its theology and practices so it would be more in line with the word of God" (Rhodes 2005:109).

A well-known historian, Bruce Shelley "notes that in these reform efforts Luther brought creative theological answers to four critical questions namely:

- "How can a person be saved?"
- Where does religious authority lie?
- What is the Church?
- What is the essence of Christian living?" (in Foster 1998:292).

Martin Luther was convinced that the salvation of one person does not lie in the hands of another and his response to the question of how a person can be saved was clear: "By grace through faith alone!" (Foster 1998:292). His stance was based upon his conviction that *sola fide* (faith alone) refers to the righteousness of God, "by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith" and *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) are the grounds of religious authority (Foster 1998:293). He further believed that the entire community of faith included priests before God and constituted the Church, hence Luther also condemned the perceived superiority of popes, bishops, priests and monks over the lay people as he insisted "that all Christians are consecrated priests by baptism and that the only difference among Christians is one of office" (Foster 1998:293–294).

During this time, the political power that was vested in the Pope led to the abuse of his ecclesiastical authority in the church. Pillay (1991:129) notes that "the power vested in the

Pope was so extreme that he could at all times call upon the bishops, archbishop and cardinals as his instruments to wield political power in Europe.” While executing his dominant power in Europe, the Pope was drawn into a series of wars that drained Europe and the church financially (Pillay 1991:130; Booyse 2010:12). As a means to overcome this financial strain, the Pope sold letters of indulgences (letters for the forgiveness of sin) to the people (Pillay 1991:130; Booyse 2010:12).

These and many other religious abuses moved Martin Luther to call on the Roman Catholic Church to reform as he believed that these practices were not scriptural. However, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Pope, rejected Luther’s views and, after Martin Luther’s defiance at the Diet of Worms in 1521 (Foster 1998:293), Pope Leo X, excommunicated Luther² (Rhodes 2005:110). Luther’s leadership, together with that of other Reformers such as Calvin and Zwingli, resulted in the formation of several Protestant churches. Later, while Protestantism brought “a revitalizing effect on church members who are free to directly interact with God and serve Him freely in the church,” this newfound independence also “led to numerous denominational splits throughout history” (Rhodes 2005:17–18).

3.1.3 The Anglican – Methodist schism

The beginning of what would be known later as the Methodist Church, started off as a revival within Anglicanism. The Christian leaders, John and Charles Wesley, were central in the process of the formation of the Methodist Church. John and Charles Wesley were raised in a parsonage, as their father was an ordained minister of the Anglican Church (Foster 1998:238).

Their mother, Susanna Wesley, was the teacher and tutor for John and his siblings where they were taught in a home school environment (Foster 1998:239). Susanna started Sunday evening services that grew to about two hundred souls as the assistant of Rev. Samuel Wesley (her husband) did a poor job in nurturing the congregation whenever he was away from church for extended periods. The two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, “then students at Oxford (1721) organised a group of students that conducted daily prayer sessions for the spiritual restoration of England” (Booyse 2010:14). Due to their inspiration and emphasis on method, punctuality and spirituality that engaged a strict regimen of prayer, fasting and bible study during their

² Although Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther and the emperor declared him an outlaw and a heretic, Luther was protected by powerful German Princes. The German Princes were the electors of the Holy Roman Empire.

devotions, the group of students that worshiped together with John and Charles earned their name ‘Methodists’ (Rhodes 2005:285).

After his ordination in the Anglican Church, as deacon (1728) and priest (1735), John and his brother Charles visited America as missionaries. While on a ship to Savannah (a port in the colony Georgia) John met some Moravian Christians “whose simple piety and morality greatly impressed him” (Rhodes 2005:285–286). His interaction with the Moravian Christians changed the course of his life and he “came to understand the revolutionary concept of justification by faith alone and became convinced that salvation was possible for every person who exercised faith in Jesus” (Rhodes 2005:286).

On 24 May 1738, John Wesley felt his heart “strangely warmed” during a service at the meeting house in Aldersgate Street, London. It was this moment of inner peace with God that marked “the end of a long and anguished obsession with his own soul’s health, a more absolute trust in Christ and a glorious release of joyful love for others” (Storey 2004:14). This newfound spiritual renewal compelled him to seek the revitalisation of Church life in England (Booyse 2010:14). According to Pillay, during the 18th Century, the Anglican, Church of England lost members to the “Roman Catholic Church and Dissenters (predominantly a middle-class group) due to its refusal to implement religious reforms” (Pillay 1991:206–207; Booyse 2010:14).

Attwell (1989:2) notes that the main reason for the people to secede from the Anglican Church was John and Charles Wesley’s religious influence on the Anglicans in England, the enormous growth of the Methodist Church in America, their simple evangelical approach and the refusal of the Anglican Church to restructure in order to accommodate the ordinary people (in Booyse 2010:15). Notwithstanding the above, Wesley’s converts were not organised in churches – they were known as societies that took care of each other and encouraged one another to remain truthful to the faith (Rhodes 2005:287). Moreover, John Wesley declared in 1739 that “the world is my parish” (Foster 1998:299) and in 1784 at the annual conference he ensured that “Methodist” became a corporate body. Subsequently, Wesley’s Methodist lay evangelists, Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke took the gospel worldwide (Foster 1998:299).

“In 1766, Minister Phillip Embury organised a ‘connection’ of Methodist societies in New York”. Rhodes (2005) states that this was the first organised Methodist group in America. “In 1773 the first annual Methodist conference was held in Philadelphia”. In the year 1784 John

Wesley formally organised the Methodist Episcopal Church “as a body separate from the English-Methodist structure” in Baltimore, Maryland (Rhodes 2005:287). He ordained Thomas Coke as the first Methodist Superintendent without the knowledge of the Anglican Church and later together with Ashbury as the first two bishops of the church (Booyse 2010:15). Under the able leadership of Asbury, and the ministry of the circuit riders, Methodism grew all over America. Under the leadership of the Wesley’s, and many others, the movement also spread to many parts of England. However, the Methodists there became a separate church from the Church of England only after the death of John Wesley.

3.1.4 The Methodist – African Methodist schism

The establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in the United States of America had its roots in the transatlantic slave trade during the 16th century. Like many other Africans in America during that time, Richard Allen was born a slave on February 14, 1760 in Philadelphia, while his family was enslaved to Benjamin Chew. He was then sold as a boy with his family at around 1768 to Stokeley Sturgis of Kent County, Delaware (Dickerson 2009:18–19).

It was while he was working as a slave that he was “awakened and brought to see himself, poor wretched and undone, surely lost without the mercy of God” (Dickerson 2009:19). Shortly thereafter he sought the Lord and one day as Richard Allen states; “my dungeon shook, my chains flew off, and glory to God, I cried ... my soul was filled” (Allen 1990:13). He joined the Methodist Society and attended class meetings with John Gray, who was his class leader (Allen 1990:13).

Allen bought himself and his brother free from slavery at the set price of £60 in gold or silver, or \$2,000 in Continental money (Allen 1990:15). Richard Allen raised the money by cutting wood, working in the brickyard and by driving a wagon, transporting salt from Rehoboth, Sussex County, in Delaware, during the time of the Continental war (Allen 1990:16–17). He later became a licensed preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Just like the Apostle Paul, Richard Allen visited one place after the other to spread Christ’s liberating gospel to his fellow brethren who were still enslaved and to find ways to free them from slavery. While most of his members were white people, as he was a licensed lay preacher under the St. Georges Methodist Church, his primary aim was to help free the African slaves from slavery (Allen 1990:14–20).

White (1965:5) states that “the movement to organize a church separate from the white people’s church was started in response to the ‘Africans’ need for opportunities for self-expression and fuller involvement in the service of the worship of God, and in society as a whole”. On a specific Sabbath in 1787, the black members (including Richard Allen) went to the St. Georges Methodist Church as usual, but to their surprise the sexton of the church moved them away from their regular seats and told them to go to the gallery. Without knowing what awaited them, they took the front seats and as they entered into prayer, a trustee ordered Absalom Jones and others to get up and not pray there (Allen 1990:23). Jones replied, “wait until prayer is over ... and I will get up and trouble you no more” (Allen 1990:23). When prayer was over Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and the other black people “went out of the church in a body and they were no more plagued with us in the church” (Allen 1990:15).

Hendrik Rudolf Tjibeba (2003:80) states that “the AME Church in the USA originated as a protest against inhumane treatment which the helpless people of African descent were forced to accept from the white people belonging to the St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia”. Thus “the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is unique in the sense that its origins could be ascribed to sociological, rather than theological or doctrinal differences with other denominations” (Booyse 2010:1).

The group hired a storeroom and started to worship their Lord in peace, however, they were pursued with threats of being disowned and read out of meeting publicly should they continue to worship in their new-found place. Richard Allen, as a proponent of Methodism, convinced some members of the group to follow and remain faithful to the Methodist tradition, while Absalom Jones and others chose to delink themselves from the Methodist tradition (Allen 1990:27–39).

In 1793, the group secured a lot on Sixth Street near Lombard Street in Philadelphia (Singleton 1952:xix) and dedicated the building with the aid of Bishop Asbury, a Methodist Bishop, who was a dear friend of Richard Allen. They called the new sanctuary Bethel, as it was truly a house of prayer. Having endured numerous threats and harassment of the leadership of the St. George’s Methodist Church, requesting them to hand over the property to the Methodist Connexion, Richard Allen and his group were left with no alternative but to seek relief from the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth, which was granted to them and Bethel Church was

officially incorporated as the African Methodist Episcopal Church on the 6th day of April 1791 (Allen 1990:27–39).

While Richard Allen and his co-workers were hard at work in expanding the church, “in time, other ‘African’ churches were started in Baltimore, Maryland; Salem, New Jersey; Attleboro, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, Delaware and other places in the United States” (White 1965:7). In April 1816, the first General Conference was called in Philadelphia where other African churches came together and formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Richard Allen was elected and consecrated to serve as the first bishop (White 1965:7).

The Church has its name “African” derived from the realization that the people that started the church wanted their kindred to remember their African roots. Secondly, “Methodist” refers to the simple manner in which the gospel was preached and the organised manner in which the business of the church was conducted. “Episcopal” refers to the governance structures where the Bishop is the supreme leader (Bearden 1984:226).

The aforementioned discussion concludes the brief examination of the general church schisms that led to the eventual establishment of the AME Church. In the next section we discuss the establishment of the Ethiopian Church as a prelude to the establishment of the AME Church in Southern Africa.

3.2 The establishment of the Ethiopian Church

Although this study aims to discuss the schisms in the AME Church from 1899 to 1908, the discussions in this regard will be remiss if the establishment of the Ethiopian Church in South Africa is excluded from the discussion.

Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone was an ordained preacher of the Methodist Church in South Africa and he was endowed with some spiritual powers. Having served the Methodist Church for several years as both Principal of the Kilnerton Institute and pastor at several churches, he noted with dismay the gross discriminatory practices against the blacks in the Methodist Church (Booyse 2010:7). According to Millard (1995:155), Mokone resigned on 24 October 1892. In his resignation, he informed the Methodist Church that he was leaving at the end of that month. (Booyse 2010:58) notes that Mokone submitted a list of fourteen complaints to his superiors. This letter later became known as the “*Founder’s Declaration of Independence*”.

According to Millard (1995:156–158), Mokone’s letter to Weavind, the Chairman of the District, was read to the District Meeting (Synod). It stated:

1. His resentment of separate District Meetings (“which had been separated from the English since 1886 without cause or reason”).
2. Mokone referred to the fact that all the African ministers were “on trial” or probationers and that there was only one “full minister” (himself). The minister had to act as interpreter. (Actually there were two full ministers, Mokone and Msimang, but Msimang was stationed in Swaziland and suffered from bad health so was often unable to attend).
3. Mokone accused the white ministers of a lack of understanding and not listening to the problems of black ministers like Hans Aapie and Samuel Mathabathe.
4. The ministers were treated like “boys in the office” and had to do what the white ministers told them to do – “all that white minister said is infallible and all natives found guilty”.
5. African ministers received no family allowances. Mokone suspected that the separate meetings might have something to do with the Missionary Society not paying allowances for wives and children.
6. He also said that there were different rules for black and white ministers, for example, white ministers were not allowed to marry before they were ordained, while this did not apply to African ministers.
7. Even when an African minister was ordained, the English probationers were given superior status. Mokone said that “there is no reason for that only colour”.
8. Poor wages (sixty pounds whether for a town or country station)
9. Refusal to allow African ministers to use mission property for their personal convenience. Mokone cited the cases of black ministers who were not allowed to borrow mission waggons to transport their families. This did not apply to white ministers.
10. Poor housing for black ministers. In Waterberg, Mokone had to build his own house of reeds and skins.
11. Overwork for black ministers and lack of care by white ministers for black church members. Black ministers were expected to preach three times on Sunday and to teach in school on the other days. They were also expected to run class meetings, prayer meetings and visit the sick.
12. Lack of friendship between black and white ministers. “There is no one that can say I ever visit a native brother or no native ever an English brother ...” The white ministers were not available to guide black ministers with spiritual problems and their attitude was “let black preach to black for he has given himself for them”.
13. African ministers did not receive the British “Minutes of Conference” or the “Annual Report” and “Missionary Notices”. Mokone had been in the ministry for 12 years and had never received these “privileges of a Methodist”.
14. No recognition for work well done. As a teacher Mokone had only heard second-hand from others that his work was good. He asked: “What is good of me being a teacher?”

As outlined above, it is clear that the actions of the Methodist Church showed a general disregard for black church leaders' needs. It is disheartening to see that the church that was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ was equally advocating double standards, while without shame it propagated the great commandment 'to love your neighbour as yourself'. Nonetheless Rev. Mokone and others employed efforts to redress the ungodly actions of the white brethren of the Methodist Church (Smith 1922:181). Eventually, these and other unethical issues prompted Rev. Mokone and fifty others to break away from the Methodist Church and start the Ethiopian Movement (Booyse 2010:58–59). According to Smith (1922:181), Rev. Mokone severed ties with the Wesleyan Methodist Church on November 1, 1892.

Despite the claims Mokone made with respect to his experiences during his time as a Methodist preacher, Weavind replied to his claims as follows at the end of 1892, when he took over the reins from Watkins who had retired:

- The District synod was held in two sections for the training of “native” ministers.
- All cases of discipline were heard in the “native” section and freedom of speech was allowed.
- The Synod tried to give the “native brethren” sufficient attention for their needs.
- Colour did not influence decisions.
- Houses were suitable and equal. The Mission House at Kilnerton had been enlarged for Mokone at a cost of sixty-six pounds.
- It was essential that the African ministers did the bulk of the pastoral work. Weavind denied that the white ministers had neglected visiting the sick.
- There had appeared to be a good spirit at the last Synod.
- Mangena (Mokone) would be consulted about matters to do with the Institution (Millard 1995:160–161).

Regrettably, the reply from Weavind came too late as Rev. Mokone had already left the institution. Although Rev. Mokone claimed as part of his concerns: racial discrimination; lack of understanding; a lack of pastoral care by white ministers and lack of responsibility, Weavind denied the existence of racial discrimination. Moreover, his reply “showed a lack of understanding of what had caused Mokone’s dissatisfaction with the Methodist Church” (Millard 1995:161). Equally, “the other African ministers, whether from conviction or expediency, refuted the charges of lack of pastoral care and the promise of more responsibility came too late to affect Mokone’s ministry at Kilnerton” (Millard 1995:161).

Smith (1922:181) states that the Ethiopian Church was organised by Rev. M.M. Mokone with about fifty members in Pretoria on Sunday, November 20, 1892 and the church was officially recognised by the Transvaal government in January 1893. The first preachers that were ordained in the Ethiopian Church by Rev. M.M. Mokone, together with Rev. J.M. Kanyane of the African Church, were Rev. J.G. Xaba, (September 24, 1894) and Rev. J.Z. Tantsi (January 5, 1895). Booyse (2010:75) notes that after her establishment the Ethiopian Church struggled to survive. They left the Methodist Church without anything, determined on self-reliance, but was subjected to the constant harassment meted out by the government of the day to black indigenous churches.

Even in dire circumstances such as these, Mokone stood tall and remained faithful to his calling. It is noted that Mokone advocated for social justice, by pointing out the disrespectful manner in which the Methodist Church treated their black pastors, as opposed to the white pastors. The unfortunate part in this was that Mokone left before Weavind replied to his concerns. Equally, one would argue and ask; why Weavind took so long before replying to Mokone's concerns especially when he knew that Mokone had only given one month's notice? Some commentators have concluded that the leadership of Weavind in this matter was heavy-handed and insensitive – he did not fully grasp the gravity of the concerns and severity of the issues. His response lacked humility and respect. Rather than a genuine attempt to correct the wrongs identified, his response was self-justifying.

Similarly, during the same time that Mokone severed ties with the Methodists, another pastor was contemplating to leave the Methodist Church. His name was Rev. James Mata Dwane. Booyse (2010:76–77) states that the Rev. James Dwane was a highly intellectual scholar who received his education at Methodist schools. He was eventually ordained a preacher in the Methodist Church on January 15, 1881 and received his first ordination in 1875 (Coan 1979:117). He served the church as pastor at several circuits and had a vision to improve the quality of life of his people. He was, however, convinced that this could only take place through formal education and hence he advocated the idea of an industrial and academic school. James Dwane was a man who strived for the education, evangelisation and social advancement of black people during his entire life (Booyse 2010:78).

Rev. Dwane undertook foreign missions in his quest to solicit funding to erect the educational buildings that were his dream and vision for so many years. In 1892 he visited the United

Kingdom where he raised more than three thousand pounds sterling. However, upon his return, the Methodist Church claimed the money under the pretext that the money was donated by white Methodist members and the leadership of the Methodist Church used the money for general church expenses (Coan 1979:117–118).

They further argued that Dwane had raised those funds at a time when black people in South Africa were not entrusted with the administration of finances. As a result of these and many other unethical incidences such as those raised earlier by Mokone (Millard 1995:156–158), Dwane could no longer associate himself with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He was convinced that the whites did not have the interests of black people at heart and that whites used Christianity as an instrument to oppress blacks (Booyse 2010:79).

Coan states that Dwane resigned from the Methodist ministry mainly for two reasons. Firstly, he resigned due to the funds that he raised that were taken by the Methodist Church as discussed above. Secondly, in his evidence before the Native Affairs Commission in 1904, “Dwane insisted that matters of doctrine and preference for the episcopal form of church government caused him to leave the Wesleyan Methodist Church” (Coan 1979:118). Dwane resigned from the Methodist Church in December 1895 (Coan 1979:117). This clearly showed that the basis on which Dwane left the Methodist Church was, an issue of injustice with respect to finances, the questionable integrity of the White Methodist leaders, mistrust among Christian leaders, the abuse of power, a lack of respect and, to some degree, a difference in doctrinal issues.

According to Coan (1979:118) Dwane joined the Ethiopian Church in 1896, on the occasion of its historic conference in March. Booyse (2010:80) notes that the charismatic leadership of Dwane drew large crowds into the Ethiopian Movement. His ability to keep his audiences spellbound when delivering speeches and his powerful personality challenged Mokone’s popularity among the members of the Ethiopian Movement. Evident thereto is the fact that although he was a new-comer to the Ethiopian Church he was appointed as one of the representatives of the church together with Rev. Jacobus Gilead Xaba, to negotiate the merger with the AME Church in the USA (Coan 1979:118). At the time when the Ethiopian Church merged with the AME Church, they had 2,800 members, seven ordained African elders, thirteen African deacons, fifty-nine local preachers, fourteen chapels and a number of other worshipping places (Coan 1979:110).

This brings us to the establishment of the AME Church in Southern Africa and the merger negotiations that took place in 1896 at Atlanta, Georgia.

3.3 The establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa

The establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa, more particularly Southern Africa, was a result of the resolution of the General Conference of 1836 under the church's missionary agenda. The earlier mission work of the AME Church since her establishment in 1816 had concentrated on the USA (Smith 1922) and only later did it expand to Haiti (Singleton 1952), West Africa and later Southern Africa (Smith 1922). However, when the Ethiopian Church in South Africa approached the AME Church in the USA for a merger in 1896, this action gave the impetus to the Africa missionary agenda of the AME Church. In the next section, the missionary agenda of the church will be discussed followed by an analysis of the establishment of the church within the context of the socio-political climate subsisting in Southern Africa at that time.

3.3.1 The missionary agenda of the AME Church

The first mission work for the AME Church outside the USA was in Haiti. Scipio Beans from the Baltimore Conference toiled in this field until his death, after which Richard Robinson, Charles W. Mossell, S.G. Dorce and John Hurst continued with the work (Singleton 1952:70).

Mission work by the AME Church to West Africa commenced in 1820 (Smith 1922:174–181). In 1820, the first Bishop-elect of the AME Church, Daniel Coker went to West Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone, under the auspices of the American Colonisation Society's repatriation program of slaves to Africa (Singleton 1952:70). He established churches under the banner of African Methodism in Sierra Leone, but the mission gained prominence with the visit of Reverends Boggs, William Paul Quinn, and John Charleston (1824), Rev. S.F. Flegler (1878) and Bishop Henry M. Turner in 1891, where more churches were started and organised (Smith 1922:174–180).

However, within the AME Church leadership circles, there was a general concern as to whether the AME Church was ready spiritually, economically and in terms of capacity for a large scale missionary work in Africa (Coan 1979:211–220 and 244). Although Singleton (1952:70) states that for the AME Church "Africa was set apart as a mission field by the General Conference of 1856", Smith records that emphasis was placed at the 1856 General Conference to pay

serious attention to the missionary work that was started in 1836 in Africa and Haiti (Smith 1922:39).

3.3.2 Socio-political context of the Southern African Districts of the AME Church

The AME Church in Southern Africa operated in a multifaceted environment; an understanding of which is important. Firstly, it should be noted that the area in which the AME Church operated in Southern Africa, was comprised of seven different and extensive geographical and political areas namely, the Cape Colony, Natal, Orange River Colony, and Transvaal Republic (these four regions later constituted South Africa) as well as Swaziland, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Rhodesia including Barotseland on the Upper Zambezi (Coan 1979:63). This also meant that vast distances had to be travelled by missionaries and many local churches were located far from the headquarters in the Cape.

Secondly, the AME Church operated within a complex political situation due to the different governments of each colony. Indigenous people resided in different areas and many were displaced and impoverished by war and dislocation. The political demarcation, as shown in Figure 3, came into being over a period of many years.

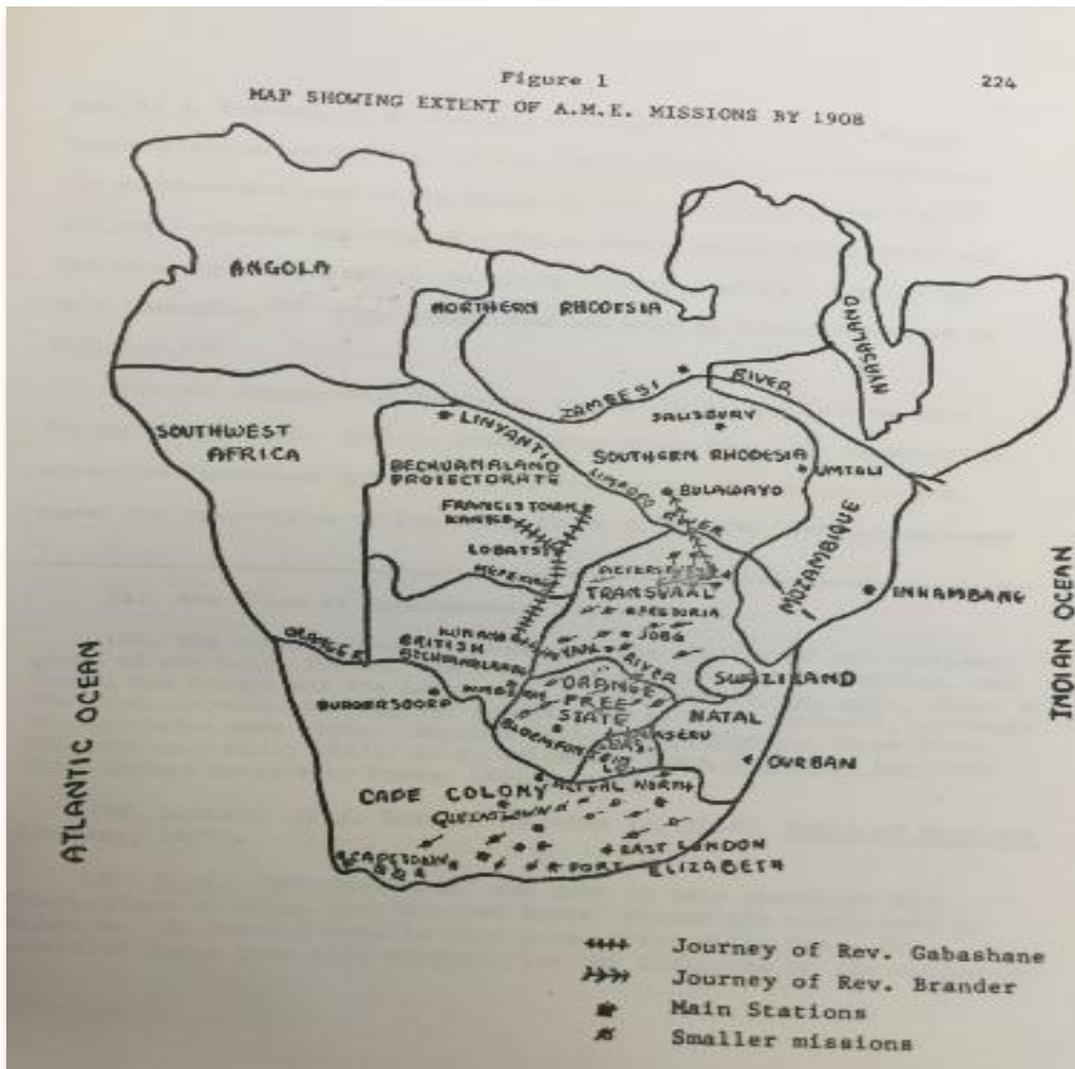


Figure 3: *Map of Extent of AME Missions by 1908 (Coan 1979)*

“In the 1600’s Europeans settled in South Africa for the first time and began to colonize and trade with the Khoikhoi at the Cape”. A trading company called the *Vereenigde Landsche Ge-Oktroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) better known as the “Dutch East India Company, received a Charter from the States General, which was the highest authority in the republic of the United Netherlands”. This entailed a “trading monopoly and the right to acquire and govern Dutch possessions in the Orient for a period of 21 years” (General South African History Timeline 1600s: 2019). This Charter was given to the VOC on 20 March 1602 which was extended in 1623 and 1647. In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck was sent by the VOC to set up a refreshment station at Table Bay, Cape Town. In 1659 the first Khoikhoi – Dutch war ensued over land ownership which ended only in 1660 (General South African History Timeline 1600s: 2019).

In 1795, the Cape came under British rule and the VOC was officially dissolved in 1798. In 1803, the Cape was retroceded to Dutch rule under the Batavian Administration, however, in 1806, the British occupied the Cape for a second time and all property belonging to the Batavian government was ceded to the British and the formal cession of the colony to Britain took place in 1814 (General South African History Timeline: 1800s: 2019).

The arrival of the British settlers in 1820 and the official emancipation of slaves posed several challenges for the Boer farmers in the Cape area. In 1834 a ‘Great Trek’ was organised by Louis Trichardt, Hans van Rensburg, Hendrik Potgieter and Gert Maritz. “The Voortrekker leader and spokesperson Piet Retief set out a ‘Manifesto’ in which the reasons for ‘the Great Trek’ (1835) were given” (General South African History Timeline: 1800s: 2019). The reasons advanced were the perceived lack of sympathy of the colonial government with the political and economic demands of the Boers and legislation that aimed to place Black and White on equal footing before the law. As a result, the movement called ‘the Great Trek’ commenced in 1835. Later, the *Voortrekkers*, or Boers, split into different groups; some settled in the Republic of Natal, others north of the Vaal River (the independent *Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek*, or Transvaal) and the Republic of Orange Free State to the south of the Vaal River (General South African History Timeline: 1800s: 2019).

The Cape and Natal enjoyed the status of self-governing colonies under Britain, while Basutoland and Bechuanaland were British Protectorates and Rhodesia was governed by a Royal Charter granted to the British South Africa Company by the Imperial Government (Coan 1979:63–64). The subsequent discovery of diamonds and gold in the north brought about conflict between the Boers and the British. Coan (1979:292–293) notes that the repeated friction between the British and the Boer elements led to the first Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) and the second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902).

The treaty of Vereeniging (1902) ended the Boer control of the Transvaal and the Orange River colony and made these areas self-governing colonies under Britain. Coan remarks that along with military and political unrest, the land was devastated by economic and social change. Between 1899 and 1900, the so-called “poor whites” migrated from the farms to the urban centres while, similarly, landless Africans moved in large numbers to towns which led to the

overcrowding of the labour market, as the whites and imported Chinese gained ascendancy over the Africans especially in the gold mines (Coan 1979:292–293).

This post-war aftermath required a new political order and an acceptable “native policy”. This led to the establishment of the Government’s Native Affairs Commission which conducted an investigation throughout the seven colonies and protectorates mentioned earlier between 1903 and 1905 (Coan 1979:64). The Commission examined every aspect of life in South Africa in its quest to formulate a comprehensive policy for Africans. “The commission travelled extensively and listened to evidence from both black and white witnesses” (Millard 1995:60).

“Among the people interviewed in Cape Town were Bishop L.J. Coppin and the Rev. A.H. Attaway of the African Methodist Episcopal Church” (Millard 1995:65). Millard (1995:64) states that the Commission “was established to investigate all areas of African culture in order to formulate a policy for dealing with the African population”. Millard (1995:64) further notes that the enquiry of the Commission covered issues about the Ethiopian Movement in the course of the discussions about land, labour and wages, marriage customs (especially ‘lobola’ and polygamy), education and mission work. The Ethiopian Movement refers to all Independent/Indigenous Churches that were established after their members left the white mission churches, especially the Ethiopian Church, which was considered as “anti-white” and was viewed with fear and suspicion by both the government officials and white leaders of churches (Millard 1995:1).

The recommendations of the Native Affairs Commission showed a prodigious lack of perception and understanding on the side of the government about the independent churches Millard (1995:93). The salient outcomes were, the fact that the Ethiopian movement, which was now represented by the AME Church and other schismatic fragments, desired self-support and self-control, away from the supervision of European missionaries. However, the quest by the missionary churches to have the Ethiopian movement under mission control again was emphasized as allowing them to function independently especially under the ‘leadership of ignorant and misguided men’ a thing that could lead to racial tensions, racial mistrust and disgruntlement. Although the Commission report did not propose any form of legislative control unless dictated by the future circumstances, the Commission was concerned about the calibre of the leadership of the independent churches and recommended that the “secessionist

churches should not receive recognition from the state and that no minister of religion should solemnise a marriage without being licensed as a marriage officer” (Millard 1995:91–92).

Having put the socio-political climate and the geo-political conditions that prevailed during the establishment of the AME Church into perspective as well as having painted the period over which the different schisms took place, we can safely move on to discuss the actual establishment of the AME Church in the next section.

3.3.3 The merger of the Ethiopian Church and the AME Church

The discussion at the beginning of section 3.2 exposed the hardships that were encountered by the people belonging to the Ethiopian Church following the establishment of their church in 1893. During that time a niece to Rev. Mokone, Charlotte Makomo Manye, married Maxeke, and joined a musical tour to the United Kingdom first in 1891 and then to the USA in 1894³ since she was a talented singer (Charlotte (née Manye) Maxeke 2019). It is disappointing to note that both tours failed due to organisational impediments and that Charlotte decided to remain in the USA to further her studies (Coan 1979:100). During her time in the USA, she met Rev. Reverdy Ransom, an ordained elder of the AME Church, who introduced her to the AME Church (Booyse 2010:59–60).

With the aid of the Missions Department of the AME Church, Charlotte registered with the Wilberforce University in Cleveland, Ohio (Booyse 2010:59–60). When Charlotte wrote back home to her sister, Ms. Kate Manye, who was residing in Johannesburg at the time, the content of her letter featured a progressive life of the black people in the USA and the educational and evangelistic strides that the AME Church had made (Coan 1979:101), which excited Ms. Manye. The letter was written on Bishop Turner’s letterhead, who was then the head of the Missionary Department and the Senior Bishop of the AME Church (Coan 1979:101). Ms Manye showed the letter to Rev. Mokone, who was pastoring in Pretoria, in the recently founded Ethiopian Church. Having been impressed by the strides made by the AME Church (Booyse 2010:59–60), on May 31, 1895, Rev. Mokone started to communicate with Bishop Henry McNeil Turner of the AME Church (Smith 1922:182).

³ Some sources state this date as 1896, however, because of the timelines and sequences of other events, such as, the letter written by Rev Mokone to Bishop Turner on 31 May 1895, it cannot be 1896 (Smith 1922:182).

Booyse (2010:80) notes that in 1896, Mokone became concerned about the future of the Ethiopian Movement. His reasons were, firstly the decline in social and economic status of the South African Bantu especially in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal. Secondly, the repressive policy of the Boers as set forth in the Constitution (*Grondwet*) of the Transvaal Republic, declaring inequality between black and white in Church and State, and thirdly, the ruthless dispossession of Africans from their land, (Coan 1979:95) which exacerbated the low economic condition of the Church.

Thus a special Conference was called in Pretoria on 17 March 1896 to take a decision on the way forward (Coan 1979:104). During this Conference, the Tembu Church of Nehemiah Tile under the leadership of Rev. Jonas Goduka, the successor to Nehemiah Tile, joined the Ethiopian Movement (Coan 1979:104). It was at this conference that “it was resolved to unite with the African Methodist Episcopal Church” (Smith 1922: 182).

The conference resolved:

That this Conference is strongly of the opinion that the union of the Ethiopian Church with the African Methodist Episcopal Church of America would not only be hailed by our people but would be the means of the evangelization of the numerous tribes of this vast continent. It is therefore,

Resolved: That immediate and necessary steps to accomplish this union be taken.

That the Revs. James Mata Dwane and Jacob G. Xaba be appointed a deputation to go to America for the purpose of effecting an organic union with the A.M.E. Church, with full power to act in our behalf.

That official letter, signed by the Secretary of this Conference be sent to the Senior Bishop, the Rt. Rev. H.M. Turner, informing him of the deputation (Coan 1979:105).

This resolution by the enlarged Ethiopian Movement to unite with the AME Church came at an opportune time, namely when the AME Church was gearing up to expand to Africa. Coan (1979:106) notes that the Ethiopian Church had recently spread from the Transvaal to the Free State and the Cape Colony. “The Ministry had increased to seven elders, thirteen deacons, and fifty-nine local preachers”. The membership was 2,800 and the church had fourteen chapels, and a number of other worshipping places. Following their decision, the Ethiopian Movement elected two delegates, Rev. James Dwane and Rev. Jacobus. Gilead Xaba (who was the secretary) to go to the United States of America to consummate the union. Rev. Dwane left for the USA alone (Smith 1922:183) as “Xaba could not raise the money for the trip” (Millard 1995:170).

Smith (1922:183) notes that Rev. Dwane arrived in the USA on June 10, 1896 just after the closure of the General Conference. However, he presented the documents of the proposed merger to the Senior Bishop, Bishop Turner who in turn presented it to the Council of Bishops and the Missionary Board of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This proposition by the Ethiopian Church to merge with the AME Church was wholly accepted by the Council of Bishops and the Missionary Board of the AME Church. In addition, “Rev. Dwane was appointed as General Superintendent and returned to South Africa on September 22, 1896” (Smith 1922:183). A General Superintendent is someone who deputizes the Bishop and acts on behalf of the Bishop in his absence to manage the administrative affairs of the church as directed by the Bishop but does not enjoy the full rights and privileges of a Bishop, such as consecration, salary and hierarchical status. He acts as an intermediary between the Bishop and the leadership of the Church.

According to Smith (1922:182–183) Rev. Dwane was re-obligated by the AME Church and “he was instructed to re-obligate the ministers of the Ethiopian Church as a prerequisite to their reception in the African Methodist Episcopal Church”. Re-obligation means that the AME Church accepts the ordination orders of any Methodist preacher in the body but requires them to make several affirmations inherent to the AME Church’s Doctrine. These affirmations pertain to adherence to the leadership, loyalty to God and the Church as well as the upholding of the scripture and doctrines of the Church (*The First Discipline of AME Church* 1985:110–113)⁴. Booyse (2010:62) states that Dwane was promised that he would become the next Bishop for the AME Church in South Africa and that the AME Church in the USA would secure enough money for the envisaged college. Upon his return, the appointment of Rev. Dwane as General Superintendent was received with mixed feelings by the members of the AME Church in South Africa, “who were already displeased by the way in which he treated his fellow delegate, the Rev. J.G. Xaba” (Smith 1922:183). Despite the above impasse, Rev. Mokone and the members of the newly established AME Church accepted the appointment and pledged their loyalty to Dwane (Booyse 2010:82). The major challenge for the AME Church (not to be confused with the Ethiopian movement, see sections 3.2 and 3.3) was their recognition by the government(s) of the day.

⁴ This book is the First Discipline containing the Doctrine of the AME Church and was printed in 1917. Re-published in 1994, and 1985. The 1985 print is the one used for this study. There were no changes made to the original text.

Rev. James M. Dwane informed the church through a letter to Bishop Turner, that he had visited the capitals of the governments, i.e. Cape, Orange River and Transvaal and apprised them of the changes as a result of the transition from the Ethiopian to AME Church, and that recognition was obtained from these governments (Coan 1979:128). Following Rev. James M. Dwane's actions, the first Annual Conference for the newly established AME Church in Southern Africa was held in the Lesseyton Public School Building, at Queenstown in the Cape Colony, from the 6th till the 11th April 1897 (Coan 1979:128). In order to further cement the relationship of the AME Church with the government of South Africa, in 1898, Bishop Henry M. Turner reached Cape Town, South Africa, and later "called upon Oom Paul Kruger and conferred with him on matters of interest to the African Methodist Episcopal Church" (Smith 1922:183).

Millard (1995:61) states that during the 1890s the AME Church ministers had applied for and had been supplied with official Marriage Registration forms (under the Marriage order in Council of 1838). She adds that the AME Church ministers were treated in the same way as white ministers in this respect. When Bishop Turner ordained sixty-five African ministers during his visit in 1898, the Prime Minister, W P Schreiner, ordered that no more marriage licences be issued to any AME Church ministers because of the low educational standard of the newly ordained men (Millard 1995:61). This issue was resolved in the year 1900 with the arrival of the first assigned Bishop to Southern Africa, (this will be discussed in the next chapter on schisms). The establishment of the AME Church in South Africa gave an impetus for missionary expansion to the neighbouring countries from the early 1900s onwards (Mkwanazi 1992:7). The Church expanded to Zambezi (now the border areas of Namibia and Zambia), Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe), Botswana and South West Africa (now Namibia). These were the early beginnings of the AME Church in the Southern African Districts.

However, it was not easy for the AME Church to prosper and grow in the aforementioned political climate. Once the Ethiopian Church and the AME Church merged, the new church saw the expansion of her mission work to the Cape Colony, but "rumblings about the mischievous purposes of the AME Church began within the ecclesiastical circles" (Jacobs 1982:177).

As discussed earlier, Millard (1995:64) notes that the Native Commission interviewed people from all walks of life. However, instead of securing information with respect to the issues of African culture as required, most of the time the interviews were mainly about the AME Church. This was mainly because “church leaders from mission churches were often drawn to the AME Church because it was controlled by Blacks and this posed a threat to the established mainline churches” (Millard 1995:64). Subsequently, the “fear that the Ethiopian movement would seek political power was wide-spread” (Millard 1995:71). Furthermore, “European missionaries were accused of pitting one African leader or ethnic group against the other”. In addition, “they were accused of living ‘in luxury off the sweat’ of blacks ‘betraying’ Africans because they stifled their aspirations for higher education for fear it would ‘spoil’ them” (Jacobs 1982:181).

Despite the fact that the European churchmen “viewed the move by the AME Church into the Cape Colony as unduly ambitious and unnecessary, since in their opinion the field to the south was well represented denominationally and was in fact overcrowded,” the AME Church expanded its mission all over Southern Africa (Jacobs 1982:177). The reason for the European church-men heralding this opinion was out of fear that “the colour of AME ministers would place them at an advantage in the competitive Cape field” (Jacobs 1982:177).

Jacobs (1982:181) notes that the AME Church attracted the attention of the Government as a result of the various and frequent criticisms that were levelled against it in letters that were written to the Government. Furthermore, the acquisition of plots located on crown land and in districts where European mission societies were already operational captured the government’s attention (Jacobs 1982:181). As a result of competition for government subsidies, European church men and women reacted with animosity when local magistrates allot sites to the AME Church without their recommendation. Subsequently the magistrates relied on the information from the missionaries about the AME Church and hence they “labelled AME schools ‘opposition’ schools and they would accuse the people who supervised them of being anti-white or holding views that were antithetical to imperial ones” (Jacobs 1982:182).

In addition, when these negative reports reached the Native Affairs Department or the Prime Minister with increasing frequency, “the Cape Colony Government adopted a cautionary policy towards the AME Church ... Therefore, rather than deny AME site requests, the Native Affairs Department resorted to a policy of processing the applications in an intentionally dilatory

manner and on completion of the process, more often than not the requests were denied” (Jacobs 1982:182).

These and other tactics were used to retard the growth of the AME Church, “which they viewed as the ‘parent’ of the South African independent church movement, or as they called it, ‘Ethiopianism’” (Jacobs 1982:182). In addition to the above, the Prime Minister, W.P. Schreiner insisted that the movement of the AME Church be monitored and its growth be restricted as much as possible through denial of church and school sites as well as the issuance of marriage forms. Moreover, fears that Africans through the help of the American Blacks would all vote together and presumably take over the reins of government were heralded (Jacobs 1982:184).

Jacobs (1982:188) remarked that despite the official inquiry into the independent churches or the mischievous motives attributed to them, no concrete evidence could be collected against the AME Church with which they could prosecute the church for sedition. Nevertheless, these reactions reveal the conditions under which the AME Church laboured in Southern Africa. Although the government of the day and sister missionary societies viewed the AME Church as an adversary, the Africans and others viewed the church as integrationist and gauged it as the best organised and most aggressive of the black churches involved in the mission activities, as the AME Church “took a leading role in what one scholar has called the Evangelical Pan-Africanist movement” (Jacobs 1982:191).

3.4 Structure and doctrine of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

As noted earlier, in order to understand the subsequent role of Christian leaders in the AME Church, one needs to grasp its doctrine and structure. These insights help to explain the basis upon which decisions are made and the structure provides information relating to the leadership hierarchy and how the decision making process operates.

3.4.1 Key doctrinal issues

The AME Church operates on the basis of three spheres of governance. These are the Executive, that constitutes the Bishops and General Officers (more fully explained in 3.5.3); the legislature, which is the General Conference; and the Judiciary – which refers to the Judicial Council – that works with appeals and legal cases within the church. The AME Church follows a connectional model. This implies that every church is connected to the other and is not an

independent unit with her own sets of rules. Thus all churches are governed by the same rules. These rules are reviewed every quadrennial at the General Conference of the Church and captured in what is known as (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:90)⁵.

The Church follows the twenty-five (25) Articles of religion, such as faith in the Holy Trinity, of the Son of God who was made very man, and the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:17–31). The AME Church acknowledges only two sacraments, the Supper of the Lord and Baptism, including the baptism of infants or children (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:25–27).

The AME Church does not condone the dogma of Apostolic Succession. The members of the AME Church “believe that there is no separate priesthood under the Christian system, set over the church. That the sacerdotal theory of Christian ministry is a dishonour to our Lord Jesus and is especially condemned by the tenor of the Epistle to the Hebrews” (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:371–372).

Furthermore, the AME Church follows a class system as introduced by John Wesley in 1739, where church members are divided in classes in terms of their residences. This system aims at effective ministry to members of the church as well as feedback on the wellbeing and stewardship of the members to the pastor and leadership of the church (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:66–72).

3.4.2 The spread of the AME Church worldwide

Up to 1884, the AME Church was comprised of only ten Episcopal Districts (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:310–311). However, over time the Church grew in leaps and bounds. Currently the Church has twenty (20) Episcopal Districts spreading throughout the world. Districts one to thirteen are in North America while Districts fourteen to twenty are spread over Europe, the Caribbean, India and Africa. The Southern African Districts are the present-day Fifteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Episcopal Districts. Each Bishop is then assigned to an Episcopal District for a period of four years (*The Doctrine*

⁵ This book is the product of the legislative review of the 1884 General Conference and was printed in 1885. The 2018 print is the one used for this study. There were no changes made to the original text.

and Discipline of the AME Church 2012, 2013:188–205)⁶. Each Episcopal District comprises one or more Annual Conferences. For example, the 15th Episcopal District is comprised of the Angola, Namibia, the Cape, Boland, Kalahari, Eastern Cape and Queenstown Conferences. (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 2016*, 2017:285–287).

3.4.3 Meetings, Conferences and Conventions

Every Organisation, Commission, Committee, Society or Department follows the hierarchical structures inherent to the AME Church and they are expected to report their work at their respective Conventions and/or Conferences (*The Doctrine and Discipline of AME Church 1884*, 2018:83–108).

“The progression of governmental authority in the AME Church moves through a series of ‘Conferences’ in the following order; The Church Conference, the Quarterly Conference, the District Conference, the Annual Conference and the General Conference” (Bearden 1984:205).

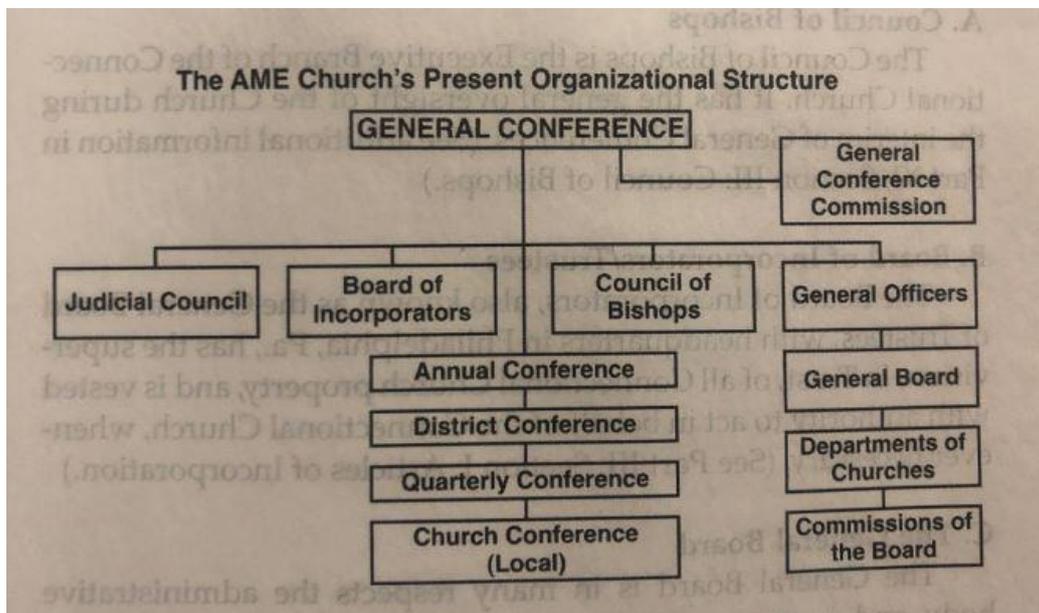


Figure 4: Organisational Structure of the AME Church (*The Doctrine and Discipline of AME Church 2012*, 2013:116 as described in 1884, 2018:83-108)

⁶ The Book of Discipline and Doctrine is denoted with the year in which the General Conference took place, but the print is only completed in the following year.

3.4.3.1 The Church Conference

The Church Conference is a meeting of the members and the minister of a local church, which meets at the beginning of each ecclesiastical year, for the purposes of consolidating the administration, plans and budget of the year for the local church (Bearden 1984:205). The pastor appointed to the circuit(s) must ensure that the Church is organised within thirty (30) days after the Annual Conference, as appointments of pastors and officers are only valid for one year (*The Doctrine and Discipline of AME Church 1884*, 2018:90–108). In addition, the local church elects from her lay members the persons who aspire to be delegates to the General Conference. The persons duly elected by the local church competes at the session of the Annual Conference with delegates from the other churches in the Conference to be elected as a delegate of the Annual Conference (*The Doctrine and Discipline of AME Church 1884*, 2018:83–86).

The work started in the Church Conference is continued in the Official Board Meeting, which is a monthly session that sits only for one day. The Official Board constitutes the elected leadership of the church and its meeting is chaired by the Pastor. Reports measuring progress made in respect of the execution of the activities planned for the month are tabled by different auxiliaries at the Official Board Meeting of the local church or circuit (White 1965:42).

3.4.3.2 The Quarterly Conference

The Quarterly Conference is the meeting at which the overall plans and policies of the local church are considered, reports of the business of the church conducted for the quarter are tabled and this conference is normally chaired by the Presiding Elder of the District. The meeting cannot sit for longer than one full day, unless appeals are heard (White 1965:39–41).

3.4.3.3 The Annual Conference

An Annual Conference is a yearly meeting of circuits grouped under that specific Conference. Each Annual Conference elects clergy and lay members from the churches within the Conference as delegates to the General Conference. Note that the delegates are elected by the Conference and not appointed by the Bishop. This particular aspect will be discussed further in Chapter 4 as it contributes to tensions in the AME Church. The Annual Conference is the forum at which the Presiding Elders and Pastors account to the Conference on the conduct of their business for the year and is chaired by the Bishop. The session cannot be longer than seven (7) days, but normally takes place over five (5) days. It is at this meeting that pastors are ordained and commissioned (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC 1884*, 2018:90–96).

3.4.3.4 The General Conference

The General Conference is the Supreme body that sits only every four years. It is composed of the bishops and general officers and delegates from different annual conferences of the Episcopal Districts (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:83–85). The quota of a district is based on membership and the financial contributions of the Episcopal District to the general budget. The General Conference transacts all the business of the church and is the highest appeal body of the Church (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:83–90). During the session of the General Conference, the church legislation is reviewed, and the Bishops give reports of their work in the Episcopal Districts. The Judicial Council provides a report on the number of appeals and cases they adjudicated. The General Officers also provide reports on the work of the Connectional Departments, and Commission Chairs on the work of the different Commissions (i.e. Health, Education, Economic Development, etc.) they are heading. The following is a summarized version of the decision making structure of the AME Church.

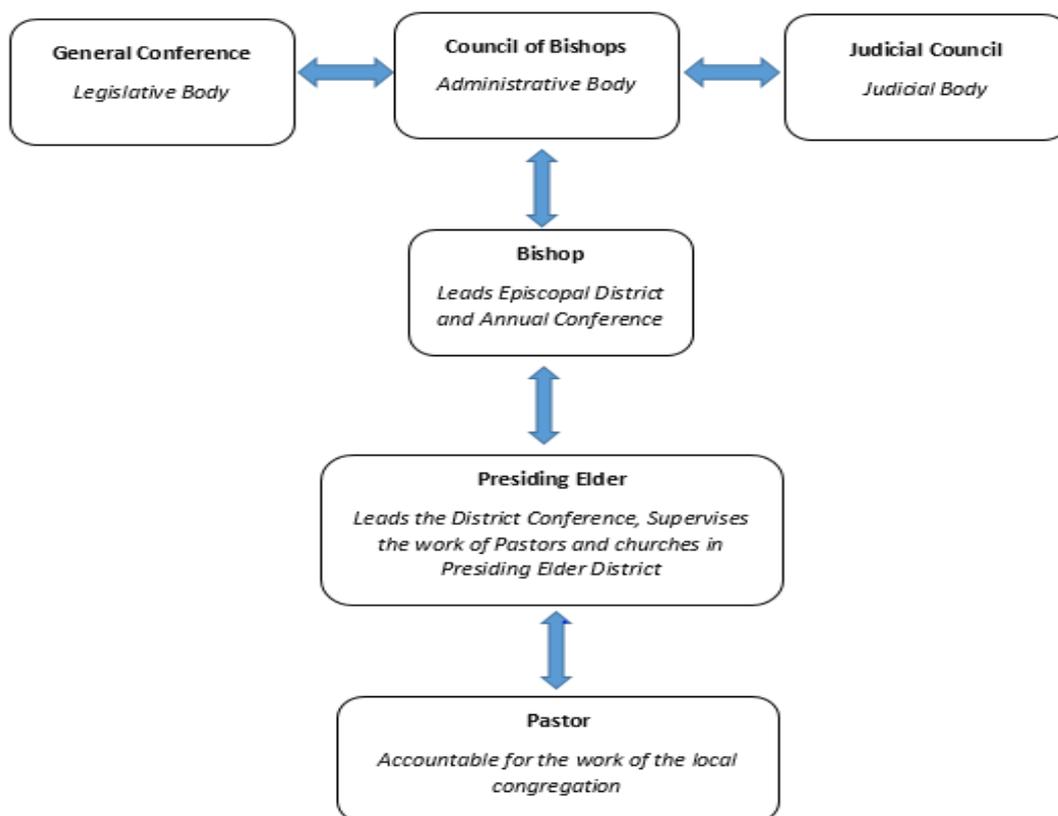


Figure 5: The Decision Making Structure of the AME Church

3.4.4 The ministry of the Church

The AME Church only acknowledges and practices two orders. These are Deaconate and Elder ordinations. Bishops are Elders who are elected and consecrated at the seat of the General Conference; and the position of Bishop and that of a Presiding Elder are called “an office”. Presiding Elders are appointed by the Bishop to oversee a group of churches led by itinerant ministers and provide quarterly reports of the same. Although the church propagates itinerant ministry, the church also has local orders for pastors, i.e. Local Deacon and Local Elder – that can only serve within the confines of his/her local church and mostly under the supervision of an itinerant minister (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:109–162). A candidate for ministry who has been studying theology as prescribed by the church, for two years, and has satisfied the Annual Conference with respect to his/her studies and involvement in the church ministry, may be elected and ordained an Itinerant Deacon. An itinerant deacon who studied for two more years and has satisfied the Conference may be elected and ordained an Itinerant Elder of the Church. (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:109–162).

The AME Church also provides both codes and rules that pertains to the moral character and conduct of a minister of the Church which reflects on the values as discussed in chapter two of this study, and many these practical examples of good behaviour include the following:

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed or triflingly employed. Never trifle away any time; neither spend any more time at one place than is strictly necessary.
2. Be serious. Avoid all lightness, jesting and foolish talking. Converse sparingly and conduct yourselves prudently with women. 1 Tim. 3v.2. Be ashamed of nothing but sin. Let your motto be ‘Holiness unto the Lord’.
3. Take no step towards marrying without consulting your brethren. A Methodist preacher ought not to be married to a woman without the consent of her parents.
4. Believe evil of no one without good evidence: unless you see it done, take heed you credit it not. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always to be on the prisoner’s side.
5. Speak evil of no one, because your word especially doth eat as a cancer. Keep your thoughts within your own breast until you come to the person concerned.
6. Tell everyone under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that lovingly and plainly as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.
7. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time: and do not mend our rules but keep them; not for wrath but for conscience sake.
8. Avoid all affectation. A preacher of the gospel is a servant to all. You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go always not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most. It is not your business only to preach so many times and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many as you can: and with all your power to build them up in that holiness,

without which they cannot see the Lord. Remember a Methodist preacher is to mind every point great and small in the Methodist Discipline. You will therefore need to exercise all the sense and grace you have.

9. Act in all things not according to your own will but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which we direct: in preaching and visiting from house to house, in reading, meditation and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in the vineyard of the Lord, it is necessary you should do that part of the work which we advise at those times and places we judge most for His glory (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, 1884, 2018:133–135*).

These provisions show that it is expected of the AME preacher to be faithful to God and His Church and to live according to the values outlined in chapter two of this study. The AME Church advocates for holy living and encourages her preachers to lead a holy life that is rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the preachers must be continuously engaged in prayer, reading of the scripture and preaching the evangel. He/she should fear no one but God!
[Faithfulness]

It is expected of him/her to practice affection, i.e. love God and your neighbours, as love is not a part of Christianity; Christianity is love! Thus charity should be expressed through visiting members from house to house, enquiring about their condition with a genuine intent to help and minister to them. [Love]

Coupled hereto, it is expected of the AME Church preacher to be a servant of all. Thus servanthood is stressed as an important element for the leadership of the Church. [Humility]

In addition, an AME Church preacher should always stand up in defence of justice. Therefore, his/her actions should be just, fighting against injustices meted out towards those he/she leads. The AME Church stresses that its preachers should not believe evil conduct of any person without good evidence or unless one is a witness to such an action. This Church cautions that the judge is always on the prisoner's side, meaning that an accused is innocent until proven guilty. Thus the AME Church advocates social justice in the strongest terms possible due to the historic past her members endured as slaves or as the oppressed. [Justice]

Furthermore, it is expected of an AME Church preacher to be honest and truthful. AME preachers should not be afraid to speak truth to power. They should tell everyone under their care what they think wrong in such a person's conduct and temper. Thus an AME preacher should be a person of integrity, whose actions speaks volumes of his/her character. [Integrity]

As an important element of priesthood, the church is serious about respect for the next person. AME preachers are expected to act respectfully towards other people despite their condition, status or creed. The Church acknowledges diversity of people's and subsequently, their different languages, cultural practices and beliefs. Hence AME preachers are expected to be serious, thoughtful, avoiding all lightness, jesting and foolish talking. [Respect]

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter showed how the different schisms in a few selected churches led to the eventual establishment of the AME Church. The chapter also discussed the first great schism of 1054 where a widespread agreement and disagreement on ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues and the differences in culture and tradition contributed to the split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Western Roman Catholic Church. It further discussed the Protestant schism and stressed Martin Luther's position that there was a need for the "Roman Catholic Church to reform its theology and practices so that it could be in line with the word of God" (Rhodes 2005:109).

In addition, this chapter also showed that the Methodist Church was established as a result of the fact that the Anglican Church was not ready to accommodate the revitalisation of church life in England. John and Charles Wesley's witness and leadership drew thousands to the Methodist society. The enormous growth of the Methodist Church in America strengthened the church and the simple evangelical approach, appealed to many. While the Methodist Church in the USA was a proponent for anti-slavery, in 1787 the inhumane and racially discriminatory practices towards the black people at St. George's Church led to the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA. This too was a failure of leadership on the part of the officials of the Church.

Considering the establishment of the AME Church in South Africa, it has been shown that many black people belonging to the Methodist Church in South Africa, joined Rev. M.M. Mokone in the formation of the Ethiopian Church in South Africa because of the discriminatory practices of the Methodist Church. In 1896, the Ethiopian Church saw her way clear to merge with the AME Church in the USA and subsequently the AME Church in Southern Africa was established. The AME Church went through several trials and tribulations as she developed and spread her influence through Southern Africa. Major

tensions were experienced between the AME church and the different governments of the different colonies as well as the white missionary leaders who accused the AME Church of unlawful practices. However, among all the dangers, toils and snares, the AME Church survived and grew from strength to strength.

Finally, and to set the scene for the events discussed in chapter 4, this chapter outlined the doctrines and governance structures of the AME Church since these are pertinent to the conflicts and schisms discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The AME Church schisms

This chapter will discuss the three schisms that took place in the AME Church in 1899, 1904 and 1908. These events have been selected firstly, because they took place in Southern Africa. Secondly, each of these events provided a turning point in the life and legacy of the AME Church. Finally, the study sought to establish that these events took place largely as a result of some unethical and unwise actions on the part of the relevant Christian leaders, which is the crux of this study.

In addition to other literature, the work of four main scholars will be used in the discussion of the AME Church schisms. The first scholar is Charles S. Smith who was a Historiographer, who served as the Head of the Department of Research and Scholarship of the Church. His literature contains both primary and secondary sources of the conduct of the business of the church over the periods of this study. The second source is a Doctoral thesis by a former pastor of the AME Church, Rev. Dr. Adonis C. Booyse who served as a Historiographer of the Fifteenth Episcopal District and did extensive research on the history of the AME Church in Africa – especially South Africa. The third source is a Doctoral thesis by Dr. Josephus Roosevelt Coan, an African-American pastor, who was a missionary of the AME Church in South Africa, from 1938 to 1947. His work discusses the expansions and missions of the AME Church in South Africa over the period 1896 to 1908. The fourth source is a Doctoral thesis by Dr. Joan A. Millard. Her work discusses schisms of the Ethiopian type churches and contains valuable information that pertains to the schisms of the Methodist Church, the Ethiopian Church and the AME Church.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section discusses the schism of 1899 where Dwane and the majority of the pastors left the AME Church, and the reasons that gave rise to this schism. The second section discusses the schism of 1904 when Samuel Brander and his followers seceded, and the third part discusses the 1908 schism when four pastors and 1000 members left the AME Church. In the discussions of the different schisms, the role of the Christian leaders, especially the Bishops, is examined. The reason why the Bishops were selected is because they are the supreme leaders of the AME Church.

4.1 The schism of 1899

History has it that the AME Church grew rapidly between 1896 and 1898 due to Dwane's efforts which saw him travelling widely to recruit new members for the AME Church. Dwane organised several revival campaigns and over time even some members from the Wesleyan Methodist Church joined the AME Church and the AME Church spread her wings all over Southern Africa.

4.1.1 Events leading up to the schism of 1899

Bishop Turner visited South Africa at the end of 1898. According to Coan (1979:149), the general purpose of the visit was to help the new church in her transition from a non-episcopal polity to that of an episcopal form of government and to provide episcopal guidance, as well as to lead the mission to a new and advanced level. In essence the visit was aimed at giving organic validity to the AME Church's missionary work in the field, to re-organise the conference and to gain personal knowledge of the needs of the work and of providing for its supervision. It was reported that the membership then stood at 10,000 registered followers (Coan 1979:149–150).

The expectation from the people was that the Bishop would organise the Southern Africa churches into conferences, ordain preachers, receive more people that were willing to join the AME Church, and to appoint a Bishop for South Africa (Coan 1979:152–164). Coan (1979:164) further reports that both the newly organised Transvaal Conference and the South African Conference voted on the appointment of a Vicar Bishop in South Africa. The Rev. James M. Dwane used this opportunity to impress it on the members and Bishop Turner alike, the need for a resident Bishop in South Africa (Booyse 2010:83–88). Coan (1979:164) notes that the three-point preamble of the resolution explained the reason for this request.

The first point put emphasis on the distance between the United States and South Africa; this would make episcopal supervision very difficult. The second point stressed the urgent necessity for regular and constant episcopal supervision, while the third point called for the need for a resident bishop just like other societies in South Africa, with episcopal forms of church government. The resolution stipulates as follows:

Resolved, That we humbly and reverently pray his Lordship, the Senior Bishop of the AME Church, our present honoured chairman, to consecrate our General Superintendent, and invest him with the power of ordination, that we, in South Africa may

also have Episcopal supremacy present with us, and such recognized authority as will keep our ministry and church here in harmony with our mother, the AME Church, the world over.

Resolved. That if our prayer be granted by his Lordship, the Senior Bishop, that the Suffragan, or Missionary Bishop be regarded by us as subject to the regular Bishop of Africa who may be appointed from time to time, and he shall take orders from his Lordship, and to the law making powers known as the General Conference, even to the extent of ceasing to exercise the functions of his office; and we hereby renew our fidelity to the AME Church and the covenant afresh to abide by its rules and authority and to assure his Lordship, the primate we ask only this favour in the interest of ours in South Africa.

We remain, Reverend Father in God your children in Christ.
Jacobus G. Xaba, Benj. Kumalo, Abel S.M. Gabashane, Jantyi Z.
Tantsi. (Coan 1979:165)

The dilemma that the Bishop and the people were faced with was the fact that the General Conference where Bishops are elected, consecrated and commissioned would only sit in the year 1900 (Booyse 2010: 83–88). Having been presented with the social problems with which the people of South Africa were confronted, as discussed in chapter 3, and based on the resolution presented to him by the constituents of the South African AME Church to appoint Rev. Dwane as a Vicar Bishop, Bishop Turner was caught off guard. The reason being, there was no such provision for an office of a Vicar Bishop within the laws of the AME Church. Bishop Turner realized that if he acceded to the request he would be contravening the laws of the AME Church with serious repercussions for him.

Conversely, should he ignore the request, the possibility existed that these members of the newly established AME Church could leave and join another church. In addition, to delay his response and inform the members that the decision on the matter will be taken at the General Conference in 1900 would worsen the situation. While weighing his options Bishop Turner requested Rev. Dwane to write his opinion on this request which was made by members of the AME Church. Rev. James M. Dwane wrote the following statement:

Queenstown, Cape Colony, South Africa, Apr. 18, '98
The Rt. Rev. H.M. Turner, D.D. LL.D.

Your Grace, Having heard the request made of you by a resolution of the two Annual Conferences, I most humbly and respectfully beg to inform you that I am a loyal minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and I am determined to live and die

so. If it be in keeping with your judgement that I should be the chief representative of the AME Church in this country, I shall be obedient and loyal to the regular Bishop of Africa, whoever he may be, or any other ruling power of the church, and do all in my power to unite our people and to build up a great wing of our church in South Africa, and should I be directed to cease exercising the functions of the office, I will comply without murmur and fill any appointment assigned to me. While I may not be the man for the place, nor do I covet the hard work and travel, which the duties will involve with its sacrifices, yet I see that such an arrangement is an absolute necessity in our present condition, if it is possible to make it.

I have the honour to be, Your Grace, your obedient servant,
James M. Dwane, Superintendent. (Coan 1979:166)

Coan (1979:166) further notes that this issue became a dilemma of intellectual judgment for Bishop Turner even though he was fully aware of the acute need for episcopal supervision in South Africa. While weighing the three options as discussed earlier, Bishop Turner concluded that whoever criticizes his decision is void of the spirit of missions and would come only from brethren who cared nothing for Africa (Coan 1979:167). In the end, after much consideration Bishop Turner appointed Rev. James M. Dwane as Vicar Bishop (Booyse 2010:83–88). In the light of the rules of the AME Church and subsequent events that followed this appointment, it could be argued that it would have been better for Bishop Turner to appoint Rev. James M. Dwane as an Acting Bishop until the General Conference.

Bishop Turner's decision to appoint Rev. James M. Dwane as Vicar Bishop was welcomed by the members of the AME Church in South Africa. This was evidenced by the rapid spread of the AME Church throughout Southern Africa. In summary, Bishop Turner's visit, to South Africa, marked a turning point for a more vigorous advancement of the independent church movement. The missionary societies in South Africa on the other hand viewed the work of Bishop Turner as mischievous interference, since Bishop Turner's visit and the subsequent rapid manner in which the church grew raised an alarm, fear, bitterness and distrust of the AME Mission, as more and more members (numbers are unknown) left the original mission churches and joined the AME Church. As far as the colonial government was concerned, Coan (1979:174–175) notes that, despite the mounting pressure placed on them by the missionary societies, the government followed a policy of tolerance and non-interference.

However, the reaction was different in the USA as compared to Africa. Upon his return, Bishop Turner gave a report on his trip and mission to South Africa, and what necessitated his actions in consecrating and appointing Rev. James M. Dwane as a Vicar Bishop for Southern Africa. His report was received with mixed feelings by the constituent members of the AME Church in the USA. On the one hand, the report was received by the Bishop's Council as information and a resolution was passed, commending Bishop Turner on the devotion of soul and heart in travelling long distances by sea and land – which allowed him to enter the far interior of Africa, and his success in setting up two Annual Conferences, and admitting thousands of people to the connection (Coan 1979:182–183).

On the other hand, Bishop Gaines came to the Council meeting ready to charge Bishop Turner with 'maladministration', for the appointment of Rev. James M. Dwane as a Vicar Bishop (Coan 1979:183–184). Coan states that Bishop Turner's explanations were, firstly, that the entrance into the Southern African mission fields created a situation for which no organisational and administrative machinery was set up, that took cognizance of the distance between USA and Southern Africa – that is a cause for concern for regular episcopal supervision. Secondly, the ethnological differences between the Afro-American and Bantu was not reckoned with, and thirdly, that both the members and clergy represented diverse denominational traditions that needed to be assimilated into the AME Church (Coan 1979:178).

It can be argued that the issues of cultural shock on the part of the Africans and ethnocentrism on the part of the African Americans were equally at stake. Bishop Turner advanced ten reasons as to why he took the actions discussed earlier, as follows:

1. The necessity to have a resident head of the church who had at least limited episcopal authority;
2. His high regard for Rev. James M. Dwane's moral and intellectual qualification;
3. His admiration for Rev. James M. Dwane's love and devotion to the Christian Church, which was demonstrated by his extensive travels and sacrifices;
4. A matter of economic consideration, to have a resident African Bishop as opposed to an American that would make frequent trips to South Africa;
5. The danger of frequent travelling on the high seas;
6. The problem of the difference in languages – American English as opposed to the indigenous African languages spoken by the people in Southern Africa, and Rev. James M. Dwane's ability to speak and write in four of these languages;
7. His consideration of the request for a Vicar Bishop stems from the nature of the request as the people did not ask for a 'regular Bishop but rather a Suffragan or missionary Bishop;
8. The alertness to the trend in foreign missionary policy towards indigenous leadership;

9. The death of Bishop J.H. Armstrong (his colleague and AME Bishop, serving a District in the USA) that left a void in the episcopacy (reference to the Council of Bishops as discussed in chapter 3) and pressure on the surviving colleagues with other re-assignment or supervision of that district until the General conference in 1900;
10. Resultant to the above, the period that would lapse before a 'regular' Bishop could visit South Africa would be too long, leaving the necessary ecclesiastical work in abeyance (Coan 1979:179–181).

4.1.2 The secession

Smith (1922:184) argues that the appointment of Rev. James M. Dwane as Vicar Bishop “was wholly without authority, and the actions of Bishop Turner relative thereto were repudiated by the home Church”. Booyse (2010:89) notes that a colleague of Bishop Turner, “Bishop Wesley Gaines spelt out the irregularity committed by Bishop Turner’s actions”. He further denounced Bishop Turner’s actions through an article titled “Defence of Church Law” which appeared in the *Christian Recorder* (the official newspaper of the AME Church) of December 1, 1898. Gaines went further and circulated his article in the greater USA and South Africa. Bishop Gaines’ actions had numerous negative results as it “paved the way for doubts and disruption, not only among members of the AME Church, but moreover among missionaries and colonial officials, who for a long time questioned the legitimacy of the AME Church” in South Africa (Booyse 2010:90). Booyse (2010:90) further states “although Gaines’ criticism of Turner was a bone of contention for a long time, the Bishop’s Council approved Turner’s action”.

Although Coan (1979:174–175) remarked that both the Southern African AME and the Council of Bishops approved the appointment of Rev. James M. Dwane as a Vicar Bishop, (Booyse 2010:90–94), many of the clergy under Rev. James M. Dwane were not satisfied with the turn of events. Equally, the news that was spread by Gaines as to the unconstitutionality of the new office conferred upon Rev. James M. Dwane as Vicar Bishop had far-reaching consequences for the AME Church in South Africa. The missionaries and the government alike started to question the legitimacy of Rev James M. Dwane’s appointment as Vicar Bishop. As noted in the previous chapter, in the Cape Colony the AME Church was not recognised (Booyse 2010:90–94), to the extent that marriage licences were revoked and or denied to the pastors of the AME Church in South Africa. This state of affairs was counter-productive to the Church’s mission and massive losses were experienced compared to the gains that were made in presenting the AME Church as a legitimate body and a Christian Church.

Smith (1922:184) notes that Rev. James M. Dwane was invited to the USA for greater exposure to the AME Church. He was invited to experience the AME Church in an environment where it was functioning properly. Dwane left Cape Town on 28 September 1898 and arrived in New York on 26 October 1898 (Coan 1979:192). Booyse (2010:94) states that during the mentioned period, Dwane continued to justify his position as Vicar Bishop and expressed himself against Gaines' insensitivity to the South African situation. He also solicited funding for the education institution he wanted to erect and was promised a large sum of money to the tune of \$10,000. When his sojourn to the USA came to an end, he had to return to South Africa. Dwane returned from the USA, in February 1899 (Coan 1979:208) after being consecrated (the form of ordination for Bishops in the AME Church) as a Missionary Bishop by the Council of Bishops (Coan 1979:232). He was wholly exposed to the AME Church and became conversant with how the organs of the church functioned – as explained in chapter 3 of this study.

Upon his arrival in South Africa, Rev. Dwane informed the constituent members of the AME Church in South Africa of the promises the AME Church in the USA had made. These promises were:

- Renewed support to the work of the mission field and full concurrence of the Church with Rev. James M. Dwane as Missionary Bishop and eventually full Bishop (Booyse 2010:90–95);
- Funding to the tune of \$10,000 for the Queenstown College;
- The assistance to Rev. M.M. Mokone for the building of a church in Cape Town (Coan 1979:240).

By August 1899, Rev. Dwane saw that the AME Church in the USA was not keeping its promises (Booyse 2010:90–95). During the period after his return, no communication was received from the USA, stating plans about changing his status to a full Bishop or when the Southern Africa AME Church would receive the funds that had been promised. However, from the American perspective, all the decisions that the Church concluded with Rev. Dwane could only come into effect after the 1900 General Conference, since the General Conference was the only body that could express herself on the recommendations of the Bishop's Council and the General Board. The actions by Rev. Dwane could be described as precipitous, coming from a person who had just been exposed to the AME Church as a whole.

However, Coan (1979:238) states that controversy surrounding the office of the Vicar Bishop, led to a situation where Rev. Dwane started to question the validity of the AME Church's

Episcopacy, as he continued to serve as a Missionary Bishop without any signs of a possible change in status. Subsequently, in August 1899, he approached the Rector of the Church of England at Queenstown to seek advice on the issue of Episcopacy. To add insult to injury, the rector of the Anglican Church, Rev. Julius Gordon convinced Dwane “that the AME Church could not hand on Episcopal orders because they had never received them” (Coan 1979:238–239). This was said against the background of the doctrine of apostolic succession as upheld by the Anglican Church, which the AME Church does not support. (See the declaration made at the eighteenth General Conference in *The Book of Doctrine and Discipline 1884* (2018:376)).

Rev. Julius Gordon further advised Rev. Dwane to approach the Archbishop West-Jones in Cape Town in order to obtain permission to establish the Order of Ethiopia under the auspices of the Anglican Church (Booyse 2010:96). Coan notes that Dwane wrote to the Archbishop of Cape Town in August 1899, where he requested the Church of the Province of Southern Africa to give him and his followers a “distinct organisation” within the Church. This distinct organisation referred to the Ethiopian Episcopal Church that was to be established by Rev. James M. Dwane and was intended to operate under the supervision of the Archbishop of Cape Town, having its own rules and discipline, “and it was not to be interfered with by European brethren” (Coan 1979:239).

On 6 October 1899 Rev. Dwane called a special Conference for the purpose of the secession. The Conference lasted for three days, from 6–9 October 1899, and was attended by only between 17 and 30 members. The exact number cannot be established, as the attendance versions differ (Coan 1979:245). Coan (1979:245) notes that the low numbers of attendance could be ascribed to the fact that the Anglo-Boer War was raging in the Transvaal and the Free State, rendering travel to Queenstown impossible. This was a special session of the South Africa Annual Conference, where Dwane advocated and led a revolt from the AME Church. (Smith 1922:184). The session was called to order at three o’ clock with the Vicar Bishop as the chairperson and Rev. Benjamin Khumalo of Bloemfontein as secretary. The chairperson announced the two items of business, namely; a consideration of a notice of motion and secondly, the appointment of a committee to investigate the actions of Presiding Elder J.G. Xaba in connection with some of the ministers serving in his district (Coan 1979:246).

The chairperson requested Presiding Elder Ngcayiya to read the motion. After the motion was read, Rev. Tantsi, requested the roll of the members of the Conference be read as a concern was raised that three fourths of the members of the two Annual Conferences were absent. Despite these legitimate concerns, the votes were taken, and the results show twenty four in favour and six against the motion. The persons against the motion were, Presiding Elders J.Z. Tantsi, P.S. Kuze, Abraham Mngqibisa and Elder William Mashalaba and two unnamed licentiates (Coan 1979:248).

A notice of withdrawal which was sent to Bishop Turner reads as follows:

My dear Bishop, I have been instructed by the special conference of the South African and the Transvaal Annual Conferences, which met at Queenstown on the 6th, 7th and 9th of October 1899 to inform you that they have withdrawn from the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Signed: B. Khumalo, Secretary of the Special Conference (Coan 1979:249).

Booyse (2010:96) notes that the grounds for the revolt by Rev. James M. Dwane and subsequent secession were; firstly, the negative effects of Bishop Gaines' letters, which were widely circulated. Bishop Gaines' letters evoked hostility among white missionaries, which was the reason for the Cape Colony not to recognize the AME Church and led to the withdrawal of the support of a number of prospective donors for the proposed college in Queenstown (Walker 1957:143: Booyse 2010:96). Secondly, "that the church had no authority to create bishops. The controversy over his office as Vicar-Bishop led him to believe that the AME Church had no Episcopal rights" (Booyse 2010: 96). Finally, "the money promised by the AME Church to erect the proposed college that never materialised, as well as the promise given to Mokone by the Church that he would receive \$1000 for the erection of a church in Cape Town" (Booyse 2010: 96).

According to Smith (1922:184), all the ministers present at the meeting except the Revs. P.S. Kuze, Abraham Mngqibisa, William Mashalaba and J.Z. Tantsi voted to secede from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, as they concluded that the AME Church was not ready to trust the indigenous leaders to govern the AME Church in Africa. Sadly, Coan (1979:253) remarks that Rev. M.M. Mokone, the founder of the Ethiopian Church and the kingpin in the merger with the AME Church also seceded. He further notes that by January 1900, Rev. James M. Dwane's followers had decreased from twenty-two to seventeen and that both Revs. M.M.

Mokone and B. Khumalo returned to the AME Church and that most of the ministers remained loyal to the AME Church (Coan 1979:266).

4.1.3 Reflection on Christian leadership

What does this discussion on the 1899 schism say about the role and conduct of several Christian leaders? In order to support the hypothesis, the actions of two Christian leaders, Missionary Bishop James M. Dwane and Bishop Gaines will be discussed. This reflection is based on these two leaders because it is argued that the role and conduct of Rev. James M. Dwane and Bishop Wesley Gaines largely contributed to this schism. The discussion will use the composite model of an ethical leader – as discussed in Chapter 2. This model espouses the values of faithfulness, love, humility, justice, integrity and respect. These values are important in order to establish whether the mentioned Christian leaders practiced these values in their respective roles and conduct.

Let us begin with the role and actions by Rev. James M. Dwane, the Vicar or Missionary Bishop. It can be argued that Rev. Dwane was precipitous in his decision, to sever ties with the AME Church. Earlier accounts of his work showed that he had earned the trust of the AME leaders, in that he was invited to be exposed to the functioning of the AME Church in the USA. This strongly suggests that the Church had the intention to appoint him as a Bishop for the AME Church in Southern Africa.

Therefore, it can be argued that Rev. Dwane was not *faithful* to his call or to the promises he made to his own people and the AME Church, especially to Bishop Turner, at the eve of his consecration as the Vicar Bishop. As a Christian leader he did not seek to find an amicable resolve for the impasse, instead he chose to withdraw. A withdrawal is the final act in any situation, and the reasons advanced for the secession are – arguably – not sufficient grounds for withdrawal, especially as he made no attempt to find out why the AME Church in the USA had not acted on their promises.

Furthermore, it is clear that from the outset of his ministry, Rev. Dwane developed a deep *love* for the Church and her people, based on the tireless efforts he made towards the expansion of the Church in Southern Africa. Equally, one could see how his love for the Church and her people, had faded hence his choice to secede.

Rev. Dwane, once a *humble* and subservient servant of the gospel that accepted the authority of the American Bishops, as evidenced by his consecration vows, turned into a frustrated and disappointed person, possibly with selfish ambitions that saw him betraying his own people and the AME Church. Dwane's actions, had adverse consequences on the Southern Africa AME Church since the American AME Church ceased to trust the Southern Africa AME Church with the leadership of the AME Church. Hence no Bishop was elected from the ranks of the Southern African leaders, leaving the Southern African District in the hands of the American AME leadership that only led to further problems.

Rev. Dwane stood for social *justice*. This is the reason why he raised the issue about funding for an educational building, of Mokone's Church, and the College in Queenstown that had been delayed, and the fact that the AME Church leadership in the USA did not honour this pledge for such a long time. In mitigation, his feelings of mistrust and frustration were exacerbated by the failed promises and disappointments he had previously experienced.

Furthermore, the fact that Rev. Dwane turned to the Anglican Church for advice, whereas he came from a Methodist background, shows that he was not fully honest with himself and his followers. It would appear he secretly favoured the Anglican way of worship, above the AME way of worship. Furthermore, he held a clandestine Conference with people that were less than the required quorum to advance his self-centred agenda of secession. His level of *integrity* as a Christian leader is therefore questionable. His actions suggest that he was seeking the power to act independently.

The *respect* he once had, especially for Bishop Turner, vanished like mist. Similarly, he showed no respect for the people he once led, as was evident during the clandestine Conference he held, where he did not want to listen to reason when the other colleagues tried to advise him that the meeting could not continue on the basis of a lack of representation from different constituencies. Therefore, it can be argued that the leadership role and actions of the Vicar Bishop Dwane significantly contributed to the secession of 1899.

The second Christian leader whose actions need examination is Bishop Wesley Gaines. Firstly, the critique of Bishop Gaines was technically correct. The AME Church did not at that stage have a position called Vicar Bishop. Therefore, Bishop Gaines was strongly convinced that Bishop Turner's actions which resulted in the consecration of Rev. James M. Dwane as a Vicar

Bishop, were in contravention of the positive law of the Church. The question worth raising in this instance is, ‘was Bishop Gaines *faithful* to his calling, to the church and to the missionary agenda of the Church?’ If Jesus charged Christian leaders to go and make disciples of all nations, then one can conclude that the actions by Bishop Gaines which resulted in the succession of Rev. Dwane, showed that he insisted on the letter of the law and was not *faithful* to the wider mission of the Church. His actions significantly harmed the missionary agenda of the Church and reversed the advances – in terms of church expansion in Southern Africa – that leaders such as Bishop Turner, Rev. James M. Dwane and Rev. Mokone had made up to that point.

His *love* for the church and the people of Southern Africa AME Church is also questionable, given the irresponsible manner in which Bishop Gaines rejected the decision by Bishop Turner which caused more harm to the Southern African members of the AME, image of the Church and the fragile mission field in Southern Africa.

His approach to the matter did not show any *humility*; he did not recognize the circumstances of the time or accept the considered and well-reasoned decision by Bishop Turner, but sought to lay charges against him. This suggests that he was a legalistic authoritarian leader. His further actions to publish the incident and circulate it in the USA and even in South Africa, added insult to injury. His persistent quest to criticise the actions of Bishop Turner was malicious, given the acceptance of Turner’s action by the Council of Bishops, and constituted an *unjust* act that further tarnished the image of the AME Church in Southern Africa.

His negative attitudes and damaging actions further suggest that he was not a Christian leader endowed with *integrity*, as his concerns about the Vicar Bishop raised at the Council of Bishops meeting was adequately discussed and adjudicated. Therefore, there was no need for any further action such as publishing it in the media. The way in which he attacked Bishop Turner and Rev. James M. Dwane alike showed that he had no *respect* for his fellow leaders and by extension the Southern African AME Church. Based on the above concerns, one could conclude that the unchristian character and actions of Bishop Gaines also contributed significantly to the schism of 1899.

4.2 The schism of 1904

The aftermath of the 1899 schism and the damage caused by the letters and publications of Bishop Gaines cost the AME Church dearly in South Africa. Coan (1979:237–238) reports that these letters and publications even reached the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Honourable William Phillip Schreiner. As a result, the church lost its recognition in the Cape Colony and the ministers lost the privilege to be appointed as marriage officers.

4.2.1 Events leading up to the schism of 1904

Coan (1979:278) states that between 22 October 1899 and 15 February 1900, at least 25 letters and other documents were sent from the Southern Africa AME Church to the AME Church in America. These letters and documents provided various accounts of the crisis created by Rev. James M. Dwane and the subsequent remedial actions that were undertaken by the local leadership of the AME Church. In addition, these letters and documents made an urgent call on the Church to immediately send either Bishop Turner or a competent minister to help resolve the matters of the AME Church in South Africa. Since Bishop Turner was sick at the time (Coan 1979:279), Rev. I.N. Fitzpatrick was sent – as an envoy of the AME Church from USA – and he arrived in South Africa on 13 February 1900 (Coan 1979:280).

His primary tasks were to have the AME Church recognised as a legitimate Church by the Cape Colony and other political regions in Southern Africa (Smith 1922:221), to assess the spread of the secession movement and – if possible – to win the lost ones back to the church (Coan 1979:280–282). Rev. I.N. Fitzpatrick consulted with the Honourable Prime Minister, after which – as Coan (1979:281) notes – the Prime Minister had a favourable disposition toward the Church. However, according to Coan (1979:237) because the Prime Minister, was suspicious as to the legality of the actions of Bishop Turner, with respect to the mass ordination and consecration of Rev. James M. Dwane as Vicar Bishop, he demanded a copy of the minutes of the Bishops Council in which the controversial matter was settled. Moreover, the Prime Minister “preferred to postpone the recognition until after the General Conference had cleared up all matters regarding a resident head of the AME Church in South Africa” (Coan 1979:282).

As a result of the aftermath of the 1899 schism, and the subsequent impact it had on the life of the AME Church in South Africa, loyalists led by Reverends Brander and Sinamela requested that an American Bishop be assigned to the AME Church in South Africa until the damages caused by the Rev. Dwane’s secession was repaired, and the image of the church was restored.

This request was communicated clearly to the effect that an American leadership was to be appointed until the people of Southern Africa had recovered from the aftermath of the schism. However, within the rank and file of the American leadership, two schools of thought developed. The one school of thought – of which Bishop Turner was a part – understood the request for an American Bishop as an interim measure until restoration was effected. However, the other group understood it as a permanent measure by which the African leadership acknowledged their inability to lead and hence require Americans to lead them. The second group convinced the General Conference, as a result, only Americans were elected and consecrated at the 1900 General Conference (Booyse 2010:104–111).

At the 1900 General Conference, the Council of Bishops recommended that four Bishops be elected, however, “a direct vote was ordered as to the number of Bishops to be elected – four or five”. The votes cast were in favour of five Bishops (230 for five Bishops and 161 for four Bishops) (Smith 1922:215). On 17 May 1900, Evans Tyree, M.M. Moore, C.S. Smith and C.T. Shaffer having received a majority votes cast on the first ballot were declared elected, while L.J. Coppin was elected by verbal acclamation following a motion to suspend the rules of elections (Smith 1922:216). (This act of suspension of the rules is permissible when only one candidate is available for election).

The AME Church sent Bishop Levi Jenkins Coppin as the first resident Bishop to South Africa and he arrived in the Cape on February 9, 1901. In less than one month after his arrival an important victory for the church was realised, namely the formal recognition of the AME Church by the government of the Cape Colony (Smith 1922:221). Subsequently, the AME Church obtained recognition as a “Church within the meaning of the Marriage Order in Council of 1838” and was allowed to have twelve marriage officers among their clergy (Millard 1995:61–62).

4.2.2 The secession

Upon his arrival in the Cape, Bishop Coppin stated that he could not honour Bishop Turner’s pledge to provide money for the erection of a college, as neither Bishop Turner, nor the General Conference of 1900 gave him any money for that purpose (Booyse 2010:6). This was later to be a reason for dissent in the AME Church in South Africa under his leadership. In addition to that, Bishop Coppin was confronted by a Methodist pastor regarding the proselytising activities of the AME Church (Booyse 2010:111–116). Proselytising technically means a type of

evangelism which seeks to convert someone from one religion or belief to another, e.g. from Hinduism to Christianity. In this context it meant that instead of converting non-Christians, the AME Church missionaries could only garner converts through pilferage from established churches, sometimes referred to as “sheep stealing”.

Subsequently the AME Church ministers were viewed as “missionary raiders”. This behaviour was seen by other missionary societies as a deliberate undertaking to hamper their work (Jacobs 1982:178). Instead of defending his pastors against the unsubstantiated allegations of proselytising, Bishop Coppin meted out threats of expulsion to the members and leadership. Pastors such as Ngcayiya were accused of proselytising to the extent that the AME Church was called in to appear before the Native Commission (Booyse 2010:111–116). The AME Church was also accused of being part of a planned Afro-American seizure of the African continent, however, the government could not collect any concrete evidence for sedition against the AME Church (Jacobs 1982:187–188). Booyse (2010:111–116) notes that due to the absence of solid evidence in this regard, the administration of Native Affairs failed to prosecute the AME Church in South African.

Due to their newfound recognition the church was able to secure land, which was very difficult previously. At the 1896 General Conference in the USA, the AME Church had voted for a \$10,000 donation to South Africa for the erecting of an educational institution which money was to be paid annually in portions of \$2,500. This money was not received and again the AME Church did not honour its pledge to donate \$10,000 to the Church in South Africa. In addition, instead of Bishop Coppin building an educational institution in Queenstown where it was envisaged previously, he chose to purchase a building in District 6, Cape Town simply because Cape Town was growing as a city and offered direct access to transportation to the USA. Through much efforts he secured a down payment for the building (Booyse 2010:111–116).

Bishop Coppin then appointed an American, Rev. Henry Attaway, an unskilled administrator, together with Afro-American clergy and lay members, as well as Africans that had studied at the Schools and Colleges of the AME Church in the USA, as teachers at the Bethel Institute in Cape Town. Due to poor administration by Attaway and the fact that the church could not keep up with the payment schedule, the building was lost within four years of operation. Bishop Coppin later assisted Rev. Henry Attaway to start a practical, literary, mechanical and industrial training school. Again, due to lack of funds to pay off the mortgage as well as poor

administration and planning, the school was closed in 1906 after operating for a year (Booyse 2010:111–116).

Furthermore, the South African leadership of the AME Church saw an influx of leadership from the USA, which over time took over the most essential supervisory and leadership positions in the AME Church. Bishop Coppin would – without consultation – unilaterally appoint these American pastors into positions of authority and influence, such as the Editor of the Church Newspaper, Presiding Elder, Principals of Schools etc. This had a demeaning effect on the South African leadership. In addition, Tanner, the Editor of the AME Church newspaper, *The Christian Recorder*, circulated news in which he described African ministers as poorly educated and illiterate. He accused them of not having financial and administrative skills and not able to understand and apply the laws of the church (Booyse 2010:111–118).

The events that precipitated the 1904 secession included, when Bishop Coppin nonchalantly decided, without prior consultation with the Southern Africa AME leadership, that four of the six seats allotted to the Southern Africa delegates to the General Conference be occupied by the American leaders, with only two given to African leaders (Booyse 2010:111–118). His autocratic style of governance and decision-making brought Bishop Coppin in direct conflict with the local leadership. It is a tragedy, even a dereliction of duty that Bishop Coppin, an autocratic leader was sent out from the USA to lead a group of people who were just emerging from a confusing and vulnerable period, as a result of the 1899 secession. He had no regard for the cultural differences, as he publicly embarrassed and belittled the local leaders and placed the foreigners above the indigenous people (Booyse 2010:7). He also sided more with the government and its oppressive laws than with the people he was leading.

Coan (1979:321–325) notes that the Bishop frequently travelled to the USA and was at times absent from South Africa for periods of up to eleven months at one time, in which instance the Afro-American pastor, Rev. Attaway was acting as the General Superintendent. Also, Rev Tanner, an AME minister from Philadelphia in the USA, who was “malicious in conversation” towards Africans, had arrived in South Africa in 1902. He belittled members of the South African AME Church and in his book titled *A Manual of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* he argues that Africans would hardly understand the laws and practices of the AME Church due to their low levels of education.

These statements made by Tanner and the arrogance with which he advocated strict American control during his address to the South African constituents of the AME Church at Aliwal North spread discontent (Booyse 2010:111–116). According to Millard (1995:194), such remarks were made by Rev Tanner at a joint session of the Transvaal and Cape Conferences in Aliwal North, as well as the article by Rev. Tanner that was published in the *Christian Recorder*, which advocated stricter American control in South Africa led to a protest from four South African leaders.

Millard (1995:194) states that Reverends Tantsi, Ncgayiya, Brander and Kumalo sent a letter of protest to the General Conference. “The letter complained that ‘much has been said of Africa by strangers, but the time had come for Africans to speak for themselves’” (Millard 1995:194). They accused Rev. Tanner of placing them:

under the same condition which forced us to leave the white churches, to be placed under the superintendence of men who are ignorant of the people, their customs, traditions, and life in general; these men will have to require interpreters where ever they go, and they do not always seem to have sympathy with the people, having been disappointed with the state in which they found them (Millard, 1995:195).

Millard (1995:195) further states that the letter concluded by saying that the writers were tired of taking second places. Of the four signatories to the letter of protest to the General Conference, only Tantsi remained in the AME Church. Millard quotes Brander as having said the following in his parting remarks, “we thought as they were our own colour, they would help us up, but we found they helped us down” (Millard 1995:195). Thus the official reason for which Brander left the AME Church was “that all the monies collected by the AME Church in South Africa were retained in America and that the schools promised for our children were not being built ... we had to support our schools and everything here ourselves ... all the best positions in the church were given to men from America” (Millard 1995:195).

He was also one of the South African pastors of the AME Church who approached the American AME Church for financial assistance, however the AME Church refused to provide aid to Brander and his church (Millard 1995:196). An additional reason is the fact that the General Conference did not honour their initial request for an interim American leader – until the affairs in the Southern Africa AME Church returned to normalcy – instead these appointments became the rule.

As a result of these and other restrictions imposed by Bishop Coppin, Samuel Brander seceded from the AME Church with more than 1000 members (Booyse 2010:117). Subsequently, he established the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion and the first service of the church took place in Marabastad on 3 April 1904 with 45 members, and the first church building was opened on 8 May 1904 (Millard 1995:196).

4.2.3 Reflection on Christian leadership

This discussion will reflect on the conduct of Bishop Coppin who played the pivotal role in the schism of 1904.

Bishop Coppin arrived in South Africa when the church was experiencing several challenges that stemmed from the aftermath of the 1899 secession. Given the political climate then and the challenges the AME Church was subjected to, one expected Bishop Coppin to be present at all times so as to understand and resolve the matters at hand. However, he regularly absented himself from his duty station (he travelled back to the USA, at times without informing the leadership in Southern Africa) under the pretence of either reporting the state of affairs to the greater church or soliciting funding. In one instance, he was away for almost a year and Rev. Attaway was acting as the General Superintendent. This shows that he was not really *faithful* to the mission work with which the church entrusted him, as lack of consultation with local leaders and his absence led to so many problems in the district.

Bishop Coppin simply ignored the plight of the Southern African AME members when they were subjected to oppression and false accusations of proselytizing. His actions clearly illustrate that he did not show any *love* for the people of the AME Church in Southern Africa. Furthermore, he forced down his vision on the people by setting up the Bethel Institute in the Cape, as opposed to Queenstown. These and other actions by Bishop Coppin were autocratic in nature as he dominated the people, hardly soliciting their input, thereby abusing his powers and disregarding the cultural background and the needs of the people. This also shows that he was not a *humble* leader.

Bishop Coppin also imported Afro-Americans from the USA and appointed them in key leadership positions, even above the founding leaders of the South African AME Church. His actions were *unjust* as he allowed the foreigners to thrive at the expense of the local leadership, such that he even appointed them to be delegates of the Southern Africa AME Church to the

General Conference. He also failed to support local leaders when they were falsely accused by leaders from other denominations or denigrated by American leaders such as Attaway.

Regrettably he showed a blatant disregard for the suffering and the realisation of indigenous people's dreams especially the, Southern African AME leaders, who had carried the church during trying times. His continuous actions in which the black people were pushed back showed that he had no *integrity*, as he was not truthful to the original intent of the mission agenda, which was to advance the Southern African AME Church towards self-reliance. He continuously *disrespected* the local leaders as he continued to value the Afro-American leaders more and placed them in important positions. Bishop Coppin did not appreciate the diversity of the different ethnic cultures of the local AME members and was often very insensitive in his approaches to these cultural dynamics. His leadership role can be seen to be deficient in many ways, including the fact that he did not live out the relevant Christian values. Hence, his leadership failures were the main cause of the secession of Brander and others.

4.3 The schism of 1908

At the 1904 General Conference held in the USA, Bishop Coppin, provided a summarized report in which he sketched his labours in the Southern Africa District, by then called the Fourteenth Episcopal District to the General Church. In his address he informed the General Conference that missionary work was expanded up to Basutoland, as well as Mombo among the Mambunda, Makwanywa, Mankoya, Mo-Rotsi tribes and sixteen other tribes. He further informed the General Conference that they had started the Bethel Institute in Cape Town because they did not have access to the other parts of the country, which was not true as he was expounding on his missionary tours throughout the District. Further, there was no mention of the secession by Brander and his people in his speech. In addition, Bishop Coppin advised the Church to withdraw her mission work, lest the Church be humiliated because of the poorly funded missionary agenda. He however, informed the General Conference that if the AME Church is desirous of the mission work then it should compel herself to the task divinely committed to her by appropriating commensurate funding for the mission work, then an abundant harvest will reward her efforts (Smith 1922:228–229).

4.3.1 Events leading up to the schism of 1908

Booyse (2010:119) remarks that the 1904 General Conference started to grasp the problems that the Southern Africa District had with the American Bishops assigned to Africa. He further

states that the General Conference realized that the Southern African AME Church no longer wanted to be served by African American ministers and lay persons, especially in positions of importance and that they wanted to lead themselves, thereby securing greater control over their own church affairs – an opportunity that was denied to them in the past. However, Booyse (2010:119) states that “this envisaged change in approach was short-lived and confined to the corridors of power at the General Conference of 1904”. Thus the good intentions expressed never came to fruition and regrettably the business of the Church continued as usual.

During the year preceding the 1904 General Conference, much debate went on as to the possibility of electing a Missionary Bishop from among the rank and file of the Southern African leadership or electing an American Bishop again to serve in Southern Africa. Varying arguments were put forward such as the fact that electing a Missionary Bishop would interfere with the established procedures for the election and the rotation of Bishops. Others were of the opinion that a split in the church would be inevitable, should a Missionary Bishop be elected. Still other American members like Bishops Turner and Bishop Smith, as well as the Southern Africa members and leadership alike were strongly convinced that the church would never grow with an American Bishop serving in Southern Africa and that the election of a Missionary Bishop was inevitable (Booyse 2010:115).

Regrettably, Smith (1922:236) states that at the 1904 General Conference the Episcopal Committee recommended that no additional Bishops should be elected, and the report was adopted without debate. As a result of the above, at the end of Bishop Coppin’s tenure in the Cape Colony, (the Fourteenth District), Bishop Charles Spencer Smith, a peer of Bishop Coppin, was assigned to South Africa by the General Conference of 1904. In the broader AME Church, Smith was seen as an autocratic and uncompromising leader and hence his appointment to the AME Church in South Africa was questioned by many (Booyse 2010:125). Campbell (1989:174) comments that “Smith viewed his appointment to South Africa with mistrust and outright animosity” (Booyse 2010:119), as he had very little knowledge of the South African Church or the local practices (Booyse 2010:119). He also “uncompromisingly refused to acknowledge the influence of African cultural life on the AME Church in South Africa” (Booyse 2010:119) i.e. he was not wholly informed about the situation of the Southern African AME Church and was also seemingly against the decision of the General Conference to send him to Southern Africa as a Bishop.

Booyse (2010:123) notes that earlier in his life, Smith had a different view about the black people in Africa. He was strongly convinced that the Europeans should be condemned for the mistreatment and inhumane behaviour toward the blacks, and that the Europeans would not be able to dominate Africa forever, as Africa would eventually redeem itself and its descendants from bondage. However, in 1884, after his visit to West Africa, his attitude towards the Africans changed entirely. He publicly announced that:

he had been too optimistic in his initial ideas about Africans. He came to the conclusion that Africans were doing nothing to improve their situation. He described the Africans as childlike, irresponsible adults, of nature a lazy people. Africans did not have the capacity to manage their own religious affairs. He furthermore declared that he was of the opinion that the Europeans are in Africa to stay and that he would by no means interfere in the prevailing state of affairs of blacks (Smith 1885:5; Booyse 2010:123).

Concomitant to the above is the fact that Bishop Smith was the only Bishop who previously served in a well-established American District before he was sent to Africa. Subsequently, his appointment to Southern Africa was viewed by many as a demotion.

4.3.2 The secession

Coan (1979:397) notes that internal discord in the AME Church in South Africa deteriorated further during the administration of Bishop Smith, after his arrival in South Africa on 11 October 1904. Furthermore, Bishop Smith was also of the opinion that black people had rebelled against white people because they felt inferior to them. When the wage dispute at the Rand Gold Reefs reached a deadlock, Bishop Smith called together the Presiding Elders to discuss their attitudes towards white people. Campbell (1989:175) reports that Smith strongly reprimanded the Presiding Elders as follows:

- That should any minister of the Episcopal District be found guilty of any riotous offence in the diamond or gold mines, such a person be immediately suspended from the church.
- That ministers who were found guilty of proselytising also be suspended (the government was regulating this conduct by pastors).
- Those ministers involving themselves in politics in South Africa would be suspended and that the government authorities be notified accordingly in such cases in order to declare the ministers' marriage licenses null and void.
- That ministers who worked with Chiefs that had been deposed by the government authorities also be suspended (Booyse 2010:126).

In addition, Bishop Smith also met with the South African Native Commissioner and pledged his support to the authorities in South Africa and assured them of his intent to expel ministers

involved in any manner of politics. The actions of Bishop Smith clearly show that he was not on the side of the people whom he was leading, but rather on the side of the colonial government that was oppressing his people. Thus he was supporting injustice instead of fighting for justice for his people. These attitudes and actions led to several confrontations between Bishop Smith and the indigenous leadership (Booyse 2010:127–129). Bishop Smith suspended pastors due to their “involvement in politics”. He further suspended presiding elders, had travelling passes of ministers revoked and removed them from the roll of marriage officers. He caused divisions in some churches and caused rifts in others which resulted almost in the total destruction of the church (Booyse 2010:127–129).

Coan (1979:398–400) notes that Bishop Smith was confronted with two additional issues. One issue refers to the indebtedness of US\$14,000 of the Bethel Institute and its looming bankruptcy, as well as the fact that he was debarred from the northern territories due to the Martial Law that was still in place. In order to seek redress for these two issues, the Bishop made an unannounced journey back to the United States of America, with the aim of reporting to the Bishops’ Council, the double crisis he was confronted with in South Africa. The Bishop did not issue a notice to the leadership of his District, of his intended travel to the USA, which underscores how he had no respect for the local leadership. Subsequently, back in South Africa his absence was misconstrued as an attempt to run away with the monies given to the Southern Africa AME Church as decided by the General Conference, since some of the delegates to the Conference witnessed that the Church took the decision to apportion \$10,000 for the work in Southern Africa.

The impression the Southern Africa AME leadership and members had was that upon his arrival in South Africa, Bishop Smith already received the monies appropriated for the Southern Africa AME Church by the General Conference, which was not the case. Based on this assumption, Bishop Smith was regarded as a fugitive from South Africa. While the Bishop was in the USA, five Southern African Presiding Elders formed a Committee, which met and suspended him. The main reason for this suspension was the belief that the Bishop Smith had been given some money to pay for the debt incurred by the Bethel Institute, instead he had misappropriated it and that he did not have the courage to face the situation (Coan 1979:398–400). This move by these Elders was unlawful, as the Book of Doctrine and Discipline of the church has clear grievance procedures, which they did not follow. In fact, no committee of the church has the right to suspend a Bishop.

These Elders further made known the suspension of the Bishop to the Colonial Secretary and to the press. Upon his return in August 1905, Bishop Smith in turn suspended these five Presiding Elders. Subsequently, these actions “according to the report of the state of the church, intensified the hatred and mockery of the church’s opponents and disquieted a host of supporters and friends” (Coan 1979:399–400). Because of these and the subsequent arrangements of Bishop Smith with the authorities of the day, one of the stark opponents of Bishop Smith, Rev S.J. Mabote was refused a travelling pass, since Bishop Smith had reported him to the authorities. In addition, Revs. Ngcayiya, J.Z. Tantsi, Henry Msikinya and Isaiah Sishuba, highly respected indigenous leaders, were removed from the marriage officers roll (Booyse 2010:127–129).

Bishop Smith also refused to sign documentation for the construction of church buildings and the Church lost these valuable plots. He further wanted to substitute Rev. F.M. Gow with an American pastor, Rev. J.J. Pearce at the Bethel Church in Cape Town, where he was met with stiff resistance. Similarly, in Bloemfontein, Bishop Smith’s shenanigans split the AME Church into two parts, when he suspended Kumalo, since he was a friend to Chief Lerotholi, a Basuto who was not a friend of the government. These and other moves by Bishop Smith contributed to the division of the AME Church to the extent that the AME Church could not see the advantage of keeping Bishop Smith in South Africa any longer (Booyse 2010:127–129).

Smith (1922:241–242) states that Bishop Smith experienced some military restrictions on his travels due to the Martial Law that was still prevailing in South Africa. In addition, he “found that his path to success was menaced by certain malcontents among the adherents of the African Methodist Episcopal Church” (Smith 1922:241). Since “he could not achieve a measure of success in South Africa, fairly commensurate with his position and responsibilities”, he swapped with Bishop Derrick and went off to Liberia (Smith 1922:241). Upon his arrival, Bishop Derrick found the AME Church divided into two factions. The first faction was the loyalists to Bishop Smith and the other part was the one considered as the rebellious group that suspended Bishop Derrick. Bishop Derrick attempted to mend the broken relations and reconcile the two factions. However, “the loyalists to Bishop Smith were furious by the return of what they called rebels” and this unhealthy situation paved the way for another schism in the AME Church in South Africa (Booyse 2010:130).

The 1908 event was preceded by numerous intricacies. As could be clearly gleaned from the foregoing discussion, Bishop Smith's administration in the district did not find approval and support from the local people and this led to the departure of Rev. I.G. Sishuba and Rev. Fienry Ngcayiya from the connection in 1907 (Smith 1922:223–224). Leaving the connection means that the pastor has surrendered his ordination orders to the church. This move by these three pastors led to a larger group of people leaving the AME church.

This event was the impetus that led to the 1908 schism where Revs. Sishuba, Ngcayiya, Kumalo and approximately 1000 members left the AME Church a few weeks before the General Conference of 1908 (Booyse 2010:130). Again the question can be posed, 'why did the discontented group of people not register their complaints to the Council of Bishops or at the General Conference?' Was it perhaps an instance of not knowing which channels to follow, or did the people just give up on the never-ending discriminatory practices of the Afro-American leaders?' Both Coan and Smith are silent on any appeals that may have been lodged with the General Conference by the disgruntled members of the Southern Africa AME Church.

The 1908 secession was based on similar reasons as the schisms discussed earlier. Firstly, the group seceded because of the fact that the promises to provide schools with funding were not met, and the fact that in instances where schools were established the local people were not in charge of these institutions. In addition, those entrusted with the administration of the schools failed and the schools were eventually closed. Secondly, they resented the American control over their churches as they perceived the Ethiopian Church to be a church for a united African nation. Finally, there were no more avenues to gain further promotion in the AME Church than there had been in the mission churches (Millard 1995:199–201).

Smith (1922:223–224) states that the group seceded in 1907, while Booyse (2010:130) notes that the secession took place in 1908. Millard (1995:199–200) submits that;

although the Constitution of the Ethiopian Church of South Africa is dated 7 December 1908 it was only at the 1912 Conference that Sishuba and Ngcayiya finally took their leave of the AMEC ... At the 1912 Conference Sishuba, Ngcayiya and 17 ministers who supported them, were suspended by bishop Johnson of the AME Church.

It is crucial to note that Millard's assessment could be misunderstood as meaning that they only left the church in 1912, which is not a true reflection. What it indicates is that the required process of reporting at the General Conference each quadrennium, as to who had withdrawn

from the connection (meaning who has left the church), was only reported by the Bishop at the 1912 General Conference, since the group only finally seceded after the 1908 session of the General Conference. Judging from the facts at hand, one can conclude that the process towards the final schism started in 1907 with the surrendering of ordination orders by the seceding ministers. However, based on Bishop Derrick's reconciliatory approach in his ministry as discussed earlier, due disciplinary processes were initiated – which begin with reconciliation. The reconciliation process failed and hence the disciplinary process could only be concluded after the 1908 General Conference. Subsequently, the withdrawal of Sishuba, Ncgyiya and other ministers was not reported at the 1908 General Conference, but only at the 1912 General Conference.

The schism of 1908 robbed the Southern Africa AME Church of sterling leaders who were real trailblazers and sacrificial servants, who went through many hardships and discomfort to spread the evangel to many non-Christians in Southern Africa. However, for the American AMEs it would seem as if the Southern Africa AME Church went through her final schism. The unfortunate part of this schism was that it was reported to the AME Church in USA only four years after it took place and hence did not have the requisite impact on the decisions made by the AME Church in the USA. However, the schism had a major impact on the affairs of the AME Church in Southern Africa, to the extent that Southern African AMEs enjoyed the best representation as delegates to the General Conference since the establishment of the Church. In preparation for the 1908 General Conference, five delegates from the AME Church of Southern Africa were elected by their respective Annual Conferences to serve on the various committees of the General Conference (Booyse 2010:130–131). This move showed that the AME Church as a whole accepted that leadership positions could now be entrusted to the Southern African people.

4.3.3 Reflection on Christian leadership

This reflection focuses on the role of Bishop Smith in the schism of 1908. It should be noted that Bishop Smith's manoeuvres were tantamount to a betrayal of his responsibilities to Christ and the Church. He left abruptly, abandoning the problems he created for the people of Southern Africa. In other words, he was *unfaithful*. He abused the power accorded and entrusted to him by the Church to hurt the people he was supposed to lead. Instead of being loyal to his people he deserted them and only believed the worst of them. His efforts to prohibit pastors from being involved in politics speaks volumes of his intent and conviction as it pertains

to the lives and progress of the people. He blocked the aspirations of the people and countered progress. It is clear that Bishop Smith's ministry clearly showed that he had no *love* for the people in the AME Church of the Southern Africa.

An analysis of Bishop Smith's ministry leads one to conclude that he was never a *humble* servant due to the autocratic nature in which he conducted the Church business. It further shows that he acted contrary to the life and spirit of the AME Church. His was a complete disregard to the spirit of self-reliance and the notion that the AME Church is committed to the struggle against oppression as a fruit of spiritual redemption and the avoidance of anything that distracts its members from being agents of liberation and reconciliation (*The Book of Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 2012, 2013:1*).

Since politics is a vital vehicle or means through which one secures a better life for one's people, it aims at addressing the injustices and other evils that prevent development and self-determination of the people. Therefore, banning any "political involvement" and siding with the colonial government placed Bishop Smith against his own flock. The Bishop placed the interest of the discriminatory government above the needs of his people and failed to practice *justice* – which is one of the pillars on which African Methodism rests. Instead of fighting for social justice, he chose to support the government's position and threatened his own people if they spoke out against these injustices.

The AME Church purports that the life of her members – whether clergy, laity or staff, whether appointed or elected as officers or volunteers – is "to be a testament of wholeness in the midst of brokenness; of hospitality in the midst of discrimination; and of respect in the midst of oppression" (*The Book of Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 2012, 2013:269*). This is their moral task. However, Bishop Smith's ministry and that of his imported Christian leaders from the USA were in stark contrast to the AME Church's position. Bishop Smith dismally failed the Church, as he did not stand in defence of the people when they were abused by the government. He was supposed to intervene as the ultimate authority of the Church when people's livelihoods were at stake during the mine workers' controversy. Hence, his *integrity* as a leader is rendered questionable.

Smith perpetuated the abuse meted out by the oppressive regime of that time and instead of working towards the progressive realisation of the objectives of the Church and subsequent

development of the people, he disregarded the local leadership. The disrespectful manner in which they were treated cannot be overemphasized. Bishop Smith had no regard for the culture of the people and did not pay the necessary *respect* to the traditional leaders, as he did not fathom the role traditional leaders play in the lives of the many people including the members of the AME Church in South Africa.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the various schisms that took place in the AME Church as from 1899 to 1908. The discussion examined the reasons behind each of the schisms and the role of some Christian leaders in these schisms.

This study stresses the fact that the AME Church and the Ethiopian Church merged, with the ultimate aim to advance black people in Southern Africa to realize self-governance and self-determination. It is tragic to note that although the AME Church stands for social justice, its American leaders in most instances did not act justly in relation to the Southern African leaders and members, as a result the AME Church went through three schisms. While the Church went through these schisms it could be argued that no significant efforts were made by the AME Church USA to remedy the situation, except sending one American Bishop after the other who could not respond adequately, let alone as a Christian leader should, to the circumstances and unmet needs of the Southern African AMEs.

Although there were individual differences, several key issues were common to the three schisms. Firstly, the character and conduct of the different leaders were questionable. All the Christian leaders discussed, could not conform fully or even sufficiently to the values of an ethical leader. In all the mentioned instances, it is clear that the relevant leaders, at different times and various extents, failed to be faithful to their call. Instances of ungodliness, selfishness, a lack of love, oppressive and unjust manoeuvres, domineering attitudes, abusiveness, lack of humility, dishonesty or a lack of integrity, disrespect for people they were leading and insensitivity for cultural differences are evident in all three schisms.

Secondly, promises to provide funding for schools, theological seminaries and subsequent training of pastors as well as funding for the building of churches, especially the church under Rev. Brander and that under Rev. Mokone in Cape Town, were not kept.

Thirdly, both Rev. James M. Dwane and Rev. Samuel J. Brander wanted to adopt the Anglican or Catholic forms of worship as opposed to the AME worship style.

Fourthly, the American AME Church failed to recognize the capacity of the local leaders and the efforts employed to ensure the spread of the church. Instead, they ridiculed the local leadership – as did leaders like Rev. Tanner, Bishop Coppin and Bishop Smith – who continually remarked on their lack of education and capacity. Further, the American leadership treated the local leadership in a very unbecoming manner by withdrawing marriage licenses, revoking travelling passes, siding with the oppressive government against the local leaders and threatening them with expulsion from the church.

Fifthly, due cognizance of the cultural differences between Afro-Americans and Southern Africans, and respect of traditional leaders and cultural rituals of the people was not given.

Finally, the realisation of self-governance without American control of the church, with emphasis on African self-determination were ignored and suppressed through the actions of the American AME leadership, as they continually employed leaders from America in significant and prominent positions, such as Editor, Presiding Elder, Principals of schools, etc.

While the researcher is a proponent of ‘agreeing to disagree’, when disagreement is based on selfish and immoral conduct, it perpetuates division. As we have seen through the numerous examples above, division is not a good thing. It hampers progress, it affects unity; it damages relations and creates mistrust and strife, which are the very things that the Bible teaches human beings to guard against.

From the foregoing discussion on the different schisms it is clear that the conduct of many of the American and local Christian leaders did not exhibit sufficient adherence to the fruits of the spirit as taught in Galatians 5:22–23. It is expected of a Christian leader to be a faithful, humble servant, having love for others, ensuring social justice, honesty and being a person of integrity, and treating people with respect. Be that as it may, chapter 5 of this study discusses and reflects on the pathways needed towards restoration after schisms and also how the church as a whole, and the AME Church in particular, can avoid schisms in the future.

Chapter 5: Reflections on pathways towards restoration and the avoidance of schisms

First, this chapter discusses the pathways towards the restoration or the healing of people who experienced schisms as discussed above. The chapter argues that in the instance of restoration of schisms, the institutional unity as it was known and experienced before the schism may not be restored, but the broken relationships could be mended, and peace and harmony be established. Secondly, the chapter further discusses how schisms could be avoided in the future. In this respect, the moral formation of leaders and the community is discussed as a central pathway to avoid schisms in the future.

5.1 Restoring a church after schism

In Chapter 4 we investigated how the unethical conduct of the different Christian leaders contributed to the schisms in the AME Church from 1899 to 1908. The analysis revealed that the different roles of the American and Southern African Christian leaders, their attitudes, decisions and actions led to the different schisms that hurt and separated members of this church. Thus having assessed the different issues raised in these discussions, a twofold approach is used in this chapter, namely, where possible to resolve and reverse schisms and how to avoid schisms in the future life of the Church.

In the first instance, once the schism has taken place and the church has been torn apart into two or more factions, these factions may function as an independent unit, away from the institution they left. This is evident in the instances of the first great schism or the Protestant schism. In such instances, a plausible and realistic approach to restoration needed to be established. Naturally, after a given schism the church needs to embark upon a process of restoration to heal the hurting and to reconcile the separated. Although other examples of restoration may exist, it is argued below that the restoration attempts for the first great schism of 1054 could have been used as a case study for the AME schisms.

The discussions in Chapters 3 and 4 showed that the first schism and the relevant AME schisms took place in different periods. The first great schism was in 1054, while the AME schisms spanned from 1899 to 1908. Other differences are that the AME Church schisms took place over short periods, i.e. after every four years, while the first great schism took place after a

longer period. Furthermore, the AME Church schisms involved a small number of people and was confined to a specific area, while the first great schism took place over a much longer period. While the AME Church had less complex church institutions and governance structures, having no or little effect on the government of the day, the first great schism had a huge impact on the society of its day, and greatly affected the complex church structures, both in the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

However, certain similarities between these schisms can also be identified, particularly the role that Christian leaders played in these schisms, and how the followers were affected by the separations that took place in the church.

In the case study involving the schism and restoration between the Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, several sources were consulted. Examples include the article by Sylvia Poggioli (2014) on the 1000-year old schism that Pope Francis sought to heal, the article by John Spurr (1990:408–424) on schism and the restoration of the Church, and the book by Stormon (1987) titled, *Towards the healing of schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople*. However, particular use is made of the book by Stormon, because it contains comprehensive primary material with respect to the 1054 schism.

This book contains primary material such as letters and statements issued by the leaders of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church that were aimed at finding some common ground on which work towards the healing of the great schism. It also provides a framework on how schisms could be restored. The question remains ‘where else, then, could one commence, except at the beginning where it all started?’ Hence a brief account of the events that transpired between the two churches, which led to the process of restoration will be discussed, after which the restoration process as conducted by the two churches will be used as a basis to discuss the notion of restoration after a schism.

5.1.1 Summary of the 1054 schism and restoration process

According to Stormon (1987:128–129), on 7 December 1965 Pope Paul VI, through the *Brief Ambulate in Dilectione*, (deleting from the memory of the Church the excommunication of 1054), said that the Roman Catholic Church was turning over in mind “the sad events which in the wake of serious dissensions, led in 1054, to strife between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople”. He further stated that “things reached such a point that the Papal legates

pronounced a sentence of excommunication against Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople and two other Churchmen, and the Patriarch together with his Synod adopted the same measures in reprisal” (Stormon 1987:129).

Equally, on 7 December 1965, Patriarch Athenagoras through the *Patriarchal Tome* stated that “in the year 1054, by decrees only known to God, it was the lot of the Church to be terribly storm tossed, so that the general relationships between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople were thrown in jeopardy” (Stormon 1987:130). Further, that “the love that kept them together was so far injured that anathema found place in the midst of the Church of God” (Stormon 1987:130). Stormon (1987:129) adds that Pope St. George VII wrote after the abovementioned event “in the same measure as concord first proved a source of good, the subsequent cooling of charity on both sides proved a source of harm”.

Specific events such as the sacking of Constantinople by Western Christians during the fourth Crusade and the slaughter of Eastern Christians (1204), the western takeover of eastern churches and the establishment of a parallel Latin hierarchy in the Middle East further divided these churches. In addition, the influence of the Ottoman Empire, the fact that the entire Christian East was under Islamic sway, the increase of other Christian divisions, especially the Reformation, were among the reasons why the dialogue was not commenced earlier (Stormon 1987:1–2).

Later, several attempts were made to resolve the centuries old division. Stormon (1987:2) states that “during the nineteenth century popes and patriarchs attempted ‘dialogue at a distance’ through a series of initial papal encyclicals and responses from the patriarchate”. Furthermore, on the occasion of the First Vatican Council (1869–70), Pope Pius IX issued an apostolic letter to all the Bishops of the Churches of the Eastern Rite not in Communion with the Apostolic See. These letters, after strongly asserting papal prerogatives, extended an invitation to these Bishops

to come to the ‘General Synod’, as your ancestors came to the Councils of Lyons and Florence, in order that the conditions of our former love may be renewed, and the peace of our Fathers may be once more called to vigour, so that the light of desired union may shine brightly upon all. Thus may continual thanksgivings be ever offered up to the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Eastern Churches, when from heaven they look down on the restoration and renewal of that union with the Apostolic See, the centre of Catholic truth and unity (Stormon 1987:2).

With this invitation, as Stormon (1987:129) puts it, “the Papal letters called for reunion, but reunion was clearly expressed as a ‘return to the See of Rome’, only one partner needed to move”. This implies that through an invitation to restore love and promote unity, the Church of Rome was actually seeking a way to regain control over the Eastern Church. Unfortunately, the Pope’s letter was leaked to the media before the Ecumenical Patriarch could receive it, an action that added insult to injury. When presented with the letter, the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch informed the messenger that “he already knew the contents from the newspapers and so he could already reply that the principles and claims were not acceptable to the Eastern Orthodox Church” and that their attendance at the Council would just reopen old wounds (Stormon 1987:3).

However, the process of reconciliation gained momentum in 1920 when a call for the establishment of an Ecumenical Council came from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA. Initially the Roman Catholic Church remained aloof from active participation in the ecumenical movement as Pope Benedict XV did not support the idea, while the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church supported the notion wholeheartedly (Stormon 1987:5). Stormon (1987:4) states that in January 1920, before the preparatory Faith and Order Conference was held, the Ecumenical Patriarch addressed a letter to all the Churches of Christ and requested the Churches – despite their doctrinal differences – to meet in a frank exchange of Christian thought and love, and emulate the spirit of the League of Nations and have some organ (*koinonia*) of common expression and action.

In 1927, shortly after the first Faith and Order Conference, Pope Pius XI (1922–39) promulgated *Mortalium Animos* on fostering religious union. The Pope, without distinguishing between the Eastern Churches and Protestant Communion, stated that

the See of Rome perceived the movement at that time to be subversive of the very foundations of the Catholic faith by the desires of other Christians to treat the Catholic Church as one among many churches ... There is only one way in which the unity of Christians may be fostered, and that is by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it; for from that one true Church they have in the past unhappily fallen away. (Stormon 1987:6)

Despite the perception of the Catholic Church, that fostering unity means a return to the see of Rome by all the other churches, the ecumenical movement developed and matured over time and the Holy See shifted its evaluation and policy. “A year after the World Council of Churches

Assembly (1948), the Holy Office in the Roman Curia published *Ecclesia Sancta*, a letter that positively evaluated the ecumenical movement (Stormon 1987:6). The letter provided that those belonging to the ecumenical movement – even though separated from the Catholic Church – “believe in Christ the Lord as derived from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and thus for the children of the true Church a source of joy in the Lord” and since other Christians care deeply for church unity, Catholics must also “take those efforts seriously in charity and prayer” (Stormon 1987:6). Subsequently, it was provided that competent Catholics could also converse or participate in discussions on faith and morals with other Christians under very strict conditions (Stormon 1987:6).

A more radical shift in the Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of the ecumenical movement, its own role in it, and of its restored recognition of the Orthodox Churches of the East as ‘sister churches’, came after the death of Pius XII on 9 October 1958, and the election of Angelo Roncalli as John XXIII on 28 October 1958 (Stormon 1987:6).

5.1.1.1 Pope John XXIII

The radical change in the policy of the Roman Catholic Church requires an assessment of who initiated these changes. Angelo Roncalli or Pope John XXIII, hails from Sotto il Monte (Bergamo), born on November 25, 1881. He attended elementary school in the town under the tutelage of a priest called Carvio and joined the seminary at Bergamo at the age of twelve. Following a brief interruption in “his studies for service in the Italian Army, he returned to the seminary and completed his work for a doctorate in Theology and was ordained in 1904” (John XXIII 2019).

After his ordination, Roncalli became the secretary to the Bishop of Bergamo for nine years where he obtained “first-hand experience and a broader understanding of the problems of the working class” (John XXIII 2019). He further served as the first National Direction of Missions (1921) and four years later as the Holy See’s Apostolic Visitor to Bulgaria, where the vast majority of that nation’s Christians were of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Stormon 1987:6).

Having been warned of the hostility among the different religious groups in Bulgaria, Roncalli began his ecumenical apprenticeship as part of his “mission of peace” through a ministry of sincere and selfless charity among the orthodox clergy, laity and hierarchy. His visit to the

Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, Basil III on 25 March 1927 built relationships and sparked the return of love, respect for one another as well as a sense of unity (Stormon 1987:7).

In December 1944, the Archbishop Roncalli left Turkey for Paris where he served as the Apostolic Nuncio to De Gaulle's post-war France. "In 1953 he became the Cardinal-patriarch of Venice, where he expected to spend his last years of pastoral work" (Stormon 1987:8). However, on the occasion of the death of Pope Pius XII, on 9 October 1958, Angelo Roncalli was elected as Pope John XXIII on 28 October 1958. From the onset Pope John XXIII expressed his concern for reunion with separated Christians and advocated for world peace (Stormon 1987:8).

While the events around Pope John XXIII were unfolding, a new Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras took office in the Eastern Orthodox Church following his election on 1 November 1948 (Stormon 1987:4). A brief background of the Patriarch is detailed below.

5.1.1.2 Patriarch Athenagoras

Athenagoras I, originally known as Aristokles Spyrou, was born on 25 March 1886 at Vasilikón near Ioánnina, Greece. In 1903 he commenced his studies at the Patriarchal Theological School on the island of Halki near Constantinople. In 1910 he graduated and was ordained a deacon and moved to Athens (1919), where he served as archdeacon to the Archbishop Meletios (Patriarch Athenagoras 2019).

Having been an Archdeacon at Monastir (now the Yugoslavian city of Bitolj) for nine years, he had his first encounter with the Christians in the Western Church. In his quest to communicate with the Catholics there, he became a pupil at the school of the Marian Brothers under the pretext that he wanted to perfect his French (Stormon 1987:4).

In 1922 he became metropolitan of Corfu, where he spoke about the division in the church of God, whereas Christ wanted one indivisible Church. It was also at Corfu where he befriended Catholics, especially Archbishop Leonardo Printezzi (Stormon 1987:5). "In 1930, Athenagoras was elected Archbishop of North and South America, with headquarters in New York City" (Stormon 1987:5). In addition, Athenagoras succeeded in bringing unity to a politically fragmented Greek community, while giving his Church status and respect in a religiously pluralistic society (Stormon 1987:5). In 1948, after having served for eighteen years in the

Americas, Athenagoras was elected the Ecumenical Patriarchate's 269th leader under the name Athenagoras I (Stormon 1987:5).

In October 1958, Patriarch Athenagoras issued a press communique and the *Tomos Agapis*, (the Book of love), which documents the correspondence between the two Sees, received its first two entries (Stormon 1987:8). This marked the end of the earlier estranged ecclesiastical relations and lonely isolations between the two churches and paved a way for “a dialogue of charity and truth – the common journey of sister Churches towards the healing of schism” (Stormon 1987:8).

5.1.2 Specific actions towards the healing process

“On 25 January 1959, three months into his pontificate, Pope John XXIII announced his intention to convoke ‘an Ecumenical Council for the Universal Church’” (Stormon 1987:9). The Pope then “envisaged the Council to be of service ‘not only for the spiritual good and joy of Christian people but also an invitation to the separated communities to seek again that unity for which so many souls are longing in these days throughout the world’. The announcement also perplexed other Christians” (Stormon 1987:9).

The question that remained to be answered was whether Pope John XXIII's move was another papal attempt to reunite all Christians in the fashion of the Second Vatican Council of Lyons in 1274, “a common table, presided over by the Pope at which ‘reunion formulae’ could and would be signed” (Stormon 1987:9). Alternatively, was it an invitation to a meeting where all parties would meet as equals?

From this time onwards, both the Church of Constantinople and the Church in Rome engaged in preparatory work within their own spheres. The death of Pope John XXIII in 1963 and the rise of Cardinal Montini to the Papacy as Pope Paul VI, saw a new dimension of leadership and gave a new impetus to the stagnation of the healing process. He was the first Pope since 1584 to write an official letter to the Patriarch. At this time the Pan-Orthodox Conference had already accepted the principle of a dialogue on an equal footing with the Roman Catholic Church and had submitted the proposal to the heads of the autocephalous Churches (Stormon 1987:11). As a result, on 22 November 1965 a Joint Commission was established, which started the work. The Joint Commission comprised representatives from the Roman Church and Greek Orthodox Church. The representatives of the Roman Church were led by His Excellency,

Bishop John Willebrands, while His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton of Helioupolis led the representatives of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, in their respective capacities as Co-Presidents of the Joint Commission (Stormon 1987:118).

The Co-Presidents of the Joint Commission made a common study of the particular events of the year 1054, which took place between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople. According to Metropolitan Meliton, the cooling of charity between the two centres contributed to the separation of the two churches and the Joint Commission was tasked to explore together – some way of rectifying from either side – to establish what can be rectified, with the specific aim of removing any obstacles that could hamper the development of brotherly relations and the dialogue between the Churches. A further task was – in the most a conciliatory and constructive way – to interpret and formulate the common desire and will of the two Churches (Stormon 1987:118–119).

The Joint Commission then developed a specific framework that would guide the process, based on the addresses of Metropolitan Meliton who represented the Church of Constantinople, and Bishop John Willebrands, who represented the Church of Rome. Both were Co-Presidents of the Joint Commission. As a result, the text unanimously agreed upon, states “regretting these events and removing them from memory and the midst of the Church, so that they could no longer serve as an obstacle towards a drawing together in charity ...”. It was based on this text that Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras made a common declaration, on 7 December 1965 (Stormon 1987:1124–126).

This joint statement served as a token, showing how desirous the two churches and their leaders were in bringing about reconciliation and the fulfilment of their common desire to enjoy the Eucharist together. This gesture by the leadership, gave a renewed impetus to the Joint Commission to further their work, especially the reconciliation of theological ecclesiological language and to bring it to a natural conclusion (Stormon 1987:13). This dialogue of charity led to the beginning of reconciliation, “though not yet by all and not yet everywhere, nevertheless is a symbol of Christian hope and a realistic direction for the future ... Christians rediscover the unity of the same household which God has given and wills to manifest in God’s one mission to God’s one world” (Stormon 1987:13).

Notwithstanding the above, this restorative process did not lead to the institutional unity as aspired to by the two initiators that all Christians will make out the one Church of Christ as was initially intended. This is evident in their respective statements as quoted earlier. Stormon (1987:132) states that although differences with regard to doctrine, canonical order, divine worship and the use of the sacraments remained unresolved, “the basic presupposition of a gradual resolution of these differences, namely brotherly charity, is given its proper place, officially and ecclesiastically, as between the two first sees of the West and the East”. This process only restored peace among the two churches and relationships among their Christian leaders and members, as opposed to a complete unity as was envisaged. Subsequently, although cordial relations exist between the two churches, each church retained the autonomy of its governance and structures.

5.1.3 The process of restoration after schism

In section 5.1.2 a synopsis was given as to how the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople worked towards a final reconciliation process following the schism of 1054. In the next section we discuss the steps that one needs to consider when one is embarking upon restoration after a schism. This is based on the collective efforts made by the Church of Rome and the Greek Orthodox Church after the 1054 schism.

5.1.3.2 Measures that are useful for the restoration process

1. The very first element that is essential in the healing of wounds caused by schisms is for both parties to *acknowledge that they have acted wrongly*. The statements and actions by Pope Paul VI, Patriarch Athenagoras and others are worth emulating. Their actions were both honourable and genuine, as both desired mutual forgiveness and the effacement of the unchristian acts of 1054 that led to the anathemas, where the two leaders of these two church centres excommunicated each other. The expressed will and serious action of the two leaders and their synods gave due impetus to the process of reconciliation. Thus for the healing of wounds caused by any schism there should be an expressed, truthful and genuine will, by the key Christian leaders.
2. The earlier discussions on the events around 1054 show that schisms occur because *love was lost*. The joint statements by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, and their envoys underscored this point of view. While there may be other secondary reasons for the schism, the primary reason accorded to the 1054 schism was the loss of charity, rather than

ecclesiastical or doctrinal differences. Hence it underscores the fact that love is supposed to be the pivotal element in our churches, as Jesus taught us to love one the other as He has loved us (John 13:34).

3. Further, a move that propagates healing after schism should place all the parties involved on an equal footing. Thus, all parties involved should be accorded *equal status* and no superiority or inferiority claims should be tolerated. As noted earlier, for many decades the Church of Rome was of the opinion that the other parties must return to the Roman Church, as Rome's perception was that the other churches were the ones in the wrong. The Roman Church initially did not consider their contribution and the role they played that led to the eventual schism. Thus, it is essential for both parties to acknowledge their part or the role they played that led to the schism and to seek reconciliation on an equal basis. Moreover, the meetings of the Committees or Councils should be held at a neutral place and not at a 'stronghold' within the properties of one or the other party, as this may be perceived as intimidation or seeking an unjust advantage.
4. A *Commission or a Council* that will iron out the technical aspects of the restoration process should be put in place. Based on this example, both parties must identify and put together a team of experts or representatives to serve as a Council or Commission member that will work out the basis and 'roadmap' of the anticipated reconciliation. Each group should provide a co-chair and a representative(s) on the secretariat to ensure equal and fair representation.
5. A clearly thought out and *defined framework* of the reconciliation strategy and principle areas of redress must be developed by the team of experts. While the loss of love may be the primary reason for schisms, there may be other underlying currents that added fuel to the fire, such as doctrinal or ecclesiastical differences, which led to the eventual schism. Hence, during the process of healing, the Council, Commission or Committee duly appointed should meticulously examine all the possible causes and subsequently propose specific remedial actions.
6. After the reconciliatory framework is completed, a conscious process of building consensus around the issues and decisions duly agreed upon by the representative Council or Committee should be undertaken. Coupled thereto, *full participation of the constituent*

members during the process to aid the eventual reconciliation work cannot be overemphasized, as the process may be derailed if a faction of the constituent members is not in tandem with the proposed new arrangements. Concurrent to the above, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church issued a joint declaration that underscored the fact that the decision was endorsed by the two churches.

7. Stormon (1987:11, 294) pointed out the significance of the ultimate *celebration of the Eucharist*, the Feast of Love together, as the major aim to which the Christian leaders aspired. Thus, in all aspects of reconciliatory work, the ultimate objective should be clearly communicated in order for all the parties to work towards that common goal.
8. The next process would be to raise the necessary awareness and communication of the resolve and pertinent issues agreed upon with the church leaders, in order to solicit the ‘buy in’ and *agreement of the constituent members*. Thereafter the process whereby the resolve is cemented through a memorandum of agreement that would be signed and honoured by both parties would follow. Such an event must be undertaken publicly in order to make the reversal of the gains made – with the signing of the agreement – difficult as was done with the declaration by both leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church (Stormon 1987:124–131).
9. The final and most important step in the *implementation of the agreement* is apprising the constituent members about the dictates of the agreement. This must include the expectations from constituent members to uphold the agreement, as well as the subsequent esteem with which the two (or more) parties will hold each other from that point onwards, as was the case with the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople (Stormon 1987:359–368).

5.1.4 Restoration and the AME Church

Having clarified the above steps necessary for the restoration of the church and her people after schisms, the question that remains to be answered is, whether the AME Church could also go through such a healing and restoration process? The answer in this instance is a resounding ‘YES’. The basis for this argument is based on the fact that the process of restoration after the 1054 schism shows that time has no relevance to the process. It means that even after a thousand years of being separated, if people are convinced that restoration

can still take place, then the argument about the amount of time that has lapsed has no relevance to the process of restoration.

It further shows that schism has a bearing on the institution and not only on the individual person. Even though the 1054 schism was a direct result of preceding events and precipitating causes of two Christian leaders, the restoration process did not need their presence, as the two institutions took full responsibility for the actions of their leaders. Likewise, the AME Church and the other Churches that were formed as a result of the three schisms, cannot use the fact that those that delinked from the church in 1899, 1904 or 1908 are no longer alive, as a reason to fail to reconcile. The responsibility now rests with the leaders and constituent members of the current institutions to move towards restoring the broken relations as a result of the schisms.

In order to do the above, various obstacles that stand in the way of restoration need to be removed. Taking the example of the 1054 schism, Stormon (1987:1–7) raises multiple obstacles that hampered restoration then. These include geographical remoteness, political climate, hierarchical differences, fear of shifts in power and human rivalries over jurisdiction. However, in the instance of the AME Church schisms, one could also add doctrinal issues, ignorance of culture, abuse of authority, toxic relationships and an inability to cooperate.

Although some of the real reasons for the AME Church schism may have been resolved over time, or overtaken by events, one still needs to examine the reasons and areas of differences that led to the three schisms if restoration is to be achieved.

The main reasons that led to the three schisms were; firstly, the effect of Bishop Gaines' letters, which reversed the advances of the Southern Africa's AME mission work. Secondly, the question whether the AME Church as a whole had authority to consecrate bishops. Thirdly, the building of the proposed college that never materialised, as well as the promise given to Mokone by the American AME Church, that he would receive \$1000 for the erection of a church in Cape Town. Fourthly, the fact that the promises to provide schools with funding was not met and the fact that in instances where schools were established, the local people were not in charge of these institutions. Fifthly, they resented the American control over their churches, as they perceived the Ethiopian Church and by extension the AME Church to be a church for a united African nation. Finally, the fact that there were no more

chances to gain further promotion in the AME Church than there had been in the mission churches.

However, as time progressed the AME Church eventually addressed most of these and other concerns. Examples hereof, according to Brown (1995:70) are:

- The establishment of the R.R. Wright School of Religion, a seminary to train pastors and other religious leaders in Evaton;
- The Wilberforce Institute – the school that Rev. Dwane contemplated to build in Queenstown, which was later built in Evaton;
- The securing of stipends for pastors serving in remote poor areas;
- A pension system, which brought relief to preachers, widows and orphans, and
- The AME Hymnal was printed in various languages.

In addition, the church elected indigenous Bishops, Francis H. Gow in 1956, and Haroldt B. Senatle in 1984. In terms of *The Book of Doctrine and Discipline 2004* (2005), three more African Bishops were elected at the General Conference of 2004.

As discussed earlier, although the AME Church could have resolved some of the issues that contributed to the schisms, the AME Church has much more to do in order to ensure the restoration of relationships with these churches.

The AME Church restoration process would require first and foremost, Christian leaders of both sides to *acknowledge that they have acted wrongly*. The Bishops of the AME Church as supreme leaders should take the lead and extend the hand of forgiveness and goodwill to the Christian leaders of the other churches. Notwithstanding the above, in the event that it is established that there are issues still pending, then, the AME Church should express her willingness to redress the impasse of yester years or the other churches could advise whether these issues are still relevant or not. Further, the other churches could also rescind whether to concede some of these reasons for the schisms or to claim for restitution from the AME Church. In all instances both parties should be willing to make amends in order to realize restoration.

Furthermore, the AME Church should be clear in her approach, that of forgiveness and healing, with the aim of restoring the earlier destroyed relationships. That the restoration process aims at mending the *love that was lost* and that loving one's neighbour be realized as expected of all Christians in line with the great commandment.

The next aspect that will be critical in the restorative process is how the AME Church continues to view the status of the pastors that left the Church. In light hereof, during the restorative process the AME Church should be willing to acknowledge these Christian leaders equally, as ministers in full and correct standing, and hence hold *equal status* when discussions for restoration are embarked upon.

Subsequently, a *commission or council* comprising of AME Church leaders and the leaders of the other churches should be established. This entity would be tasked to – at a technical level – discuss the social, as well as theological differences that led to these schisms, and provide to the bigger body amicable resolutions as to the way forward.

The duly established Commission or Council should work out a clearly *defined framework* for the reconciliation strategy. The strategy may not necessarily advocate for a return to the AME Church but rather propose remedial actions that would culminate in complete restoration of relationships over time. The study further argues that the structures may not be reconciled in a reasonable time as each church has its own governance structures, unless the other church decides to merge with the AME Church.

The Bishops of the AME Church and the Christian leaders of the different churches need to endorse and accept the reconciliatory framework as prepared by the Commission or Council and present it to their constituencies. Here a process of consultation should be commissioned in order to ensure that a *full participation of constituencies* is obtained.

Even if the restoration process does not lead to the different churches becoming one body again, at the end of the day, the restoration process should be a process of forgiveness, fortification of faith in God, restoration of dignity and integrity of the people, the equality of leadership, and subsequent cooperation; as well as the desire for the communion of saints to fellowship and share the greatest expression of love – the *celebration of the Eucharist*.

Furthermore, the Bishops, clergy and lay leadership of the AME Church as well as the Christian leaders of the other churches should raise the necessary awareness and advocacy in order to obtain the *agreement of the constituent members* that shows that they are equally eager to work towards the restoration of relationships after the distress and injury caused by the schisms.

Finally, the Bishops, clergy and the entire leadership of the AME Church and equally those of the other churches should ensure the timely *implementation of the agreement* and the subsequent training and explanation that goes along with it. This will cement the restorative process and ensure that both parties honour the agreement and carry each other with the deserved esteem.

5.2 Avoiding schisms in churches

The previous discussion showed how schisms could be healed, since a schism is an event that has already taken place. However, in this section, this study discusses some preventative measures that would help churches to avoid future schisms.

The discussion in Chapter 2 showed that Christian leaders should be ethical leaders. The expectation therefore is that they know and trust in God wholeheartedly and serve Him in truth and in spirit. Thus in order to avoid schisms in future, churches need to emphasize the significance of spiritual formation; the importance of faithfulness, love, justice, humility, integrity and respect. The reason for the election of these specific areas is that each contributes towards producing competent, honest and committed ethical leaders that are spiritually grounded and morally formed. Be that as it may, an elaborate discussion on spiritual formation will follow in the next section. In addition, we will show the role that the formation of Christian leaders play towards avoiding schisms in the future.

5.2.1 What is spiritual formation?

Any discussion on spiritual formation should refer to seeking God first before all else (Matthew 6:33), since God is love and the creator. Christians believe that everything that exists and all that human beings have has its source from God; the earth is God's and all that dwells therein (Psalm 24:1). Therefore, Christians believe that there is need for a special connection between God and the Christian leaders, whereby their hearts, minds, souls and spirits are willed to God. Thus spiritual formation is,

first and foremost an activity of God. It is the Holy Spirit who draws believers deeper into a life of the Spirit; it is God's presence, love and joy that renew disciples. Humanly speaking, spiritual formation occurs when persons consciously and voluntarily enter a God-initiated process of becoming like Christ. It is an inner journey or pilgrimage (towards God and our true selves), a shared journey (genuine Christian fellowship) and an

outer journey (in mission and service to the world) (Kretzschmar 2006:344)

Moreover, according to Dallas Willard (2006:53), “spiritual formation in Christ, is the process whereby the inmost being of the individual (the heart, will, or spirit) takes on the quality or character of Jesus himself”. It “refers to the process of shaping our spirit and giving it a definite character ... it means the formation of our spirit in conformity with the Spirit of Christ” (Willard 2006:53).

In line with the above, Kretzschmar (2006:345) states that, “Spiritual formation is a transformation of a person, including the body, mind, soul, spirit, will, heart, relationships and lifestyle as she or he enters more and more fully in the warm, but challenging, recognition of being loved by God and responding by loving God”. On the other hand, Lee (1998:205) defines “Christian perfection as the dynamic goal in which the fullness of love is attained, where we become full of God, wholly directed by love” (in Bentley 2010:559). Equally, Wesley defines Christian perfection as “love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks” (Maddox & Chilcote 2015:15–16).

According to Maddox and Chilcote (2015:16) the definition conjoins two dimensions. These are; “an ability to love God and others wholeheartedly and an exclusion of sin from the life of the believer”. These scholars further remark that “Wesley believed and taught that both dimensions can be realized in this life in an instant and by a simple act of faith” as “the gracious gift of God that can be received in a moment through trusting faith that is never a static or finished state” (Maddox & Chilcote 2015:16). In other words, “being perfect in the sense that the person, although susceptible to sin, has been redeemed completely and has the capacity to live a righteous life” (Wesley 1993:16–17; Bentley 2010:559).

Since love is the integral yeast of spiritual formation, as God is love and human beings ought to love each other as He loved them, the absence of love sees the growth of conflict, inconsistency, jealousy, separation, hatred, and immoral conduct. Thus having no love has evil consequences, as the scripture teaches, in 1 Corinthians 13. As love is pivotal in one’s personal religion, whatever is not love must be considered as one of those things that cause the decay of one’s spiritual life. Thus a lack of love invites sin and a heart in which love does

not dwell, and which is not fortified by Christian virtues and values, is more open to the onslaughts of this evil world.

Furthermore, Kretzschmar notes that “spiritual formation along with moral formation is a lifelong process of discipleship, being formed in the likeness of Christ” (Kretzschmar 2006:345). According to Deason (1993:170), “A disciple of Jesus is one who believes His teaching, rests upon His sacrifices, imbibes His spirit and walks His steps”. Hence one’s personal life must be shaped by the word and not by the world, in order to live a spiritual life. This means “Jesus Christ is calling us to deny self and follow Him, but He is not asking us to deny our personhood” (Deason 1993:11).

To be a disciple means a “follower, one in training; trained one” implying that “to be a disciple one must be developing, growing, always following and learning” as the process “always involves a personal attachment of the learner to the teacher” (Deason 1993:5). Hence, discipleship during the time of Jesus simply meant “to go with him in an attitude of observation, study, obedience and imitation” (Willard 2006:6). This implies that discipleship in general is “living out the gracious inward transformation of faith, hope and love” (Willard 2006:8), an outward demonstration of their new life. Hence, in contemporary terms a “disciple is one who intends, upon becoming Christ-like and so dwelling in his ‘faith and practice’, systematically and progressively rearranges his affairs to that end” (Willard 2006:7). It follows that being a true disciple espouses the genuine ethical and spiritual qualities, that is to say, “to become in character and behave in conduct like our heavenly Father” (Deason 1993:204).

Christians generally believe that within the Church no one person is perfect – due to the sinful nature of human beings – “John Wesley consistently described the goal of the way of salvation as holiness of heart and life” (Maddox & Chilcote 2015:14). He envisioned the “Christian life as an organic synthesis of faith and holiness, while his concern for the fullness of faith is perfect love, and its foundation, the trusting faith in God” (Maddox & Chilcote 2015:14). Wesley further observes that “the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our parents” and that “entire sanctification or Christian perfection was possible in this life” (Maddox & Chilcote 2015:15).

According to Kretzschmar (2007:2), “in order for moral action and courage to be exercised, prior essentials such as the transformation of the human mind, heart and will need to occur”. She further argues that “spiritual formation is important for the development of leaders who are able to make an insightful, prophetic and constructive contribution to both church and society” (Kretzschmar 2006:338).

Equally, Naidoo (2013:8) (in Kretzschmar 2015:4) argues that “Moral formation is an aspect of spiritual formation; spiritual maturity results in moral formation and committed discipleship”. Thus “to be spiritually formed is to be formed in the image of Christ and this process results in the moral formation of individuals and groups” (Kretzschmar 2015:4). Therefore, moral formation, for the purposes of this study, “includes intellectual development (knowing), character development (being), relational development (relating) and the growing ability to do what is right in all spheres of life (acting)” (Kretzschmar 2015:4). By living according to the key values outlined in chapter two, Christian leaders give expression to their degree of progress in discipleship and spiritual formation.

Based on the above understanding of spiritual formation, we now reflect on the schisms of the AME Church from 1899 to 1908 and draw some lessons from those experiences, especially how the AME Church could improve on spiritual formation and by extension, moral formation as a means to avoid schisms in the future.

5.2.2 The need for spiritual formation to avoid schisms

In the above section we discussed spiritual formation and how it leads to moral formation, in both Christian leaders and their followers. In this section we take the discussion further and discuss the need for spiritual formation to avoid future schisms in churches, and in particular the AME Church. Therefore, the assessment of the ministry of the Christian leaders of the AME Church needs to be gauged against the model of ethical leadership and spiritual maturity of Christian leaders. In this regard, the essence of the argument is that the Christian leaders of the AME Church from 1899 to 1908 were not spiritually mature and hence failed to be moral agents who could build up the AME Church and its ministry to others.

To be spiritually formed appeals for *faithfulness* to the call and mission of God. This calls for a conscious and uninterrupted relationship with God, where the Christian leader realizes their responsibility, the charge they have to keep and the stewardship they need to render at the end

of the day. Realizing the above and putting it into perspective, the responsibilities of Christian leaders, is to be faithful in living a sacrificial and redemptive life which makes one clearly understand the *Missio Dei*, the ultimate mission of God (Kretzschmar 2006:346). Thus, one's character, convictions and intellectual capacity must demonstrate the depth of their faith. Further, a Christian leader's attitude, motivations, volition, affections and actions must be in harmony with the provisions of the Bible (1 Timothy 3:12, Revelations 2:10, Luke 9:62) and *The Book of Discipline of the AME Church*.

Examining the first schism of 1899, one finds that the ministry of Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone and Rev. James M. Dwane were not commensurate with leading a sacrificial and redemptive life. Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone whom one could accord the title of the founder of the Southern Africa AME Church, chose to leave the AME Church, despite the pleas of his colleagues, deserting the people who followed him after he left the Methodist Church. Equally, during the 1899 schism, the frustrated, self-centred and unwise actions of Rev. James M. Dwane cannot be overemphasized – especially when he called a clandestine meeting on 6 October 1899 and chose to leave the AME Church.

On the eve of his consecration as a Vicar Bishop, Rev. Dwane was given an opportunity by Bishop Turner to write his opinion about the request that had been made by members of the South African AME Church to have him made Bishop. In this brief he promised loyalty to the AME Church and that he would 'live and die so'. Further, he promised that if it was required of him to cease to exercise as a Vicar Bishop, he would 'comply without murmur and fill any appointment assigned' to him.

Rev. Dwane was given the opportunity and exposure by the Church, in order to gain first-hand experience as to how the machinery of the Church functions. However, upon hitting the first obstacle he opted to sever ties with the AME Church. One could understand the repetitive manner in which he experienced unjust discrimination and the failure of others to fulfil their promises, first with racism in the Methodist Church and again with the AME Church, where the promised money to build an educational institution in Queenstown was not received. However, one could argue that this was not a good reason to abandon his responsibility as a Christian leader from whom much was expected. Christian leaders need to be faithful until the end.

Based on the above one could argue that the need for a sacrificial and redemptive life that is expected of Christian leaders was lacking in Rev. James M. Dwane and Rev Mangena Maake Mokone. There seemed to be insufficient depth of insight and character on the side of the Christian leaders, when one considers the mentioned instances. Therefore, the AME Church needs to reinforce within her Christian leaders – through sermons, studies, workshops or retreats – the significance of living a sacrificial and redemptive life in order to clearly understand the *Missio Dei*, the ultimate mission of God, to make disciples of all nations. It is only when the Christian leaders themselves are true disciples of Jesus Christ, that they would be able to make disciples of others. Hence, the notion and concept of faithful discipleship needs to be revisited and emphasized to each member. The gospel of Jesus Christ must become the way of life of the people, as it would raise the level of faithfulness by the church to God and each other within the constituency.

Secondly, it should be noted that *love* is the pinnacle of spiritual formation, since God is love. Love for God and for one's neighbour is the cornerstone of spiritual formation, as it calls for purity of the heart. Hence, love is a great preservative against sin. "This can only be true if Christian leaders genuinely experience a relationship with God and become more deeply rooted in God's love" (Kretzschmar 2006:347). If they are loving they will be able to call those who are currently in a web of deceit, secularism, moral confusion, denial and disinterest in God back to the love of God.

If we endeavour to accurately trace the various causes of schisms in churches, we would without a doubt realize that in most instances, love will have faded. Needless to say then, that as the scripture teaches, "whoever loves his brother remains in the light and there is no cause of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10). It would seem schisms are taking place because of the causes of stumbling we put in the way of our brethren.

The above is proven by the unloving acts of Bishop Gaines, especially when he used the media of the AME Church to criticize Bishop Turner for consecrating a Vicar Bishop for the Southern African AME Church. This act did not only hurt Rev. Dwane, but it also caused serious setbacks to the Southern African AME Church, since the gains of mission were reversed, so much so that the legitimacy and status of the Church leaders of the day were questioned, marriage licenses were revoked, and plots for building Church properties were forfeited.

In addition, Bishop Coppin would, without consultation, appoint, the American pastors into important positions, such as that of the Editor of the Church Newspaper, Presiding Elder and Principals of Schools over and above the Southern African leadership. This had a demeaning effect on the South African leaders, and hence raises the question whether, that could be called love, or it was an instance of divide and conquer? He did not show care and sensitivity towards the local people whom he was called to love and serve. Love was not shown in his persistent tendency to promote ‘foreigners’ to leadership positions at the expense of ‘indigenous’ people that were meant to lead the Southern African AME Church members. Such acts conjure up unnecessary strife and jealousy, as was the case in 1904.

Sadly, when one considers the schisms within the African Methodist Church, one will realise that the causes of the stumbling blocks were tragically the same (social justice, racism and a lack of love) as those that resulted in them leaving the St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church. Yet the same pain that the American AME’s suffered was the pain they caused the African AME’s. Then one really wonders when one considers the litany of issues captured above, whether love truly exists in the realm of the Christian Church or it is mere lip service. This underscores the fact that the AME Church and Christian leaders of the day need to revisit love and its tenets. As the Apostle Paul teaches that “love suffers long and is kind ... does not behave rudely ... is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4–7). Thus, love is patient and conquers all things, but the absence of love in the life of the Church or that of a Christian leader is a very dangerous and unruly evil.

This state of affairs calls upon the AME Church to revise her Church School curriculum, especially, the catechism class syllabus with the specific aim to place emphasis on the great commandment. It must further elaborate that love is not part of Christianity, but that Christianity is love and the very first value to be instilled and nurtured is love for God and your neighbour. If this is cemented at the tender age of a church member, it would bear fruits and mature at the later age of the member. This does not mean that the church should disregard or neglect her theological or doctrinal education, it simply recommends that emphasis must be placed on the theological aspect of love.

Another meaningful aspect of spiritual formation is to foster the practice of *justice*. The AME Church in its essence, advocates for social justice. It calls on the Christian leaders to be just in their conduct and to have compassion for their neighbour. Practicing social justice leads to avoiding of pitfalls, such as the lust for power, sensation, money and possessions, the avoidance of strife, and conflict, treating people fairly as well as standing up for truth. When the above is not done, Christian leaders fail to protect the exploited. Subsequently, as Christian leaders often find themselves in these pitfalls, the moral influence of the church diminishes. When this happens, Christian leaders often avoid speaking out against radical evils. Often these Christian leaders are involved in immoral acts and corrupt practices, and such leadership does not lead to transformation of lives, and does not challenge wrongdoing, be it in the church or in the world, thereby bringing themselves and the gospel they proclaim into disrepute (Kretzschmar 2006:351–352).

During the 1908 schism, one notes that Bishop Smith was of the opinion that black people rebelled against white people because they felt inferior to them. When the wage dispute at the Rand Gold Reefs mounted, Smith called together the Presiding Elders to discuss their attitudes towards white people, and strongly reprimanded the Presiding Elders, saying that any minister or member of the AME Church that was involved in the riots of the gold mines (as well as those found guilty of proselytising – converting persons from white missionary churches to the AME Church) would be expelled from the AME Church. In addition, the ministers involving themselves in politics in South Africa and those who worked with Chiefs that had been deposed by the government authorities would be suspended.

The issues raised above, led to several confrontations between Bishop Smith and the indigenous leadership (Booyse 2010:127–129). Bishop Smith acted unjustly by suspending pastors due to their ‘involvement in politics’. He further suspended presiding elders, had the travelling passes of ministers revoked and removed from the roll of marriage officers. He caused divisions in some churches and rifts in others, which almost resulted in the total destruction of the church (Booyse 2010:127–129). Bishop Smith’s actions were themselves ‘political’ in that he actually supported the unjust manner in which the colonial government subjected the members of the Southern Africa AME Church.

Instead of being the voice of the voiceless and condemning the unjust actions of the oppressive government, Bishop Smith sided with the government at the expense of those he led. Thus, his

actions were contrary to the social justice policy advocated by the AME Church. The AME Church policy with respect to justice, calls on the Christian leaders to note that he/ she is always on the side of the accused until the contrary is proven. Therefore, the church has the responsibility to always be on the side of truth without fear or favour, regardless of the status, standing and position of the individual(s) to whom the truth must be conveyed. Thus, spiritual formation enables leaders to open the gate to truth with respect to different life-experiences and analyses (Kretzschmar 2006:355).

Based on the above discussion, it would seem that, the leadership of the Southern Africa AME Church were not sufficiently informed as to the need for justice in society and in the Church. Furthermore, the judicial processes of the Church, and the subsequent rights and duties which they had as members and leaders within the AME Church were not sufficiently known or acted upon. Therefore, as part of the AME Church's pastoral training, the subject of Church polity (the rules, Constitutions and governance of the Church) needs to be emphasized. The judicial process also needs to be given more attention at Leadership Training Institutions of the different auxiliaries of the AME Church, in order to ensure that every member of the AME Church is apprised of his/her rights and responsibilities.

The next pivotal aspect of spiritual formation is *humility*. In this respect a Christian leader needs to be a servant leader, as they are expected to imitate Jesus' leadership style, which states that whosoever wants to be the leader must first be a servant. Hence, the AME Church needs to advocate servanthood and the importance of servant leadership among her leaders. A Christian leader needs to have a shepherd's heart and to be like the "Good Shepherd" and not a hireling. The Bible teaches that, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." (John 10:11-18)

In Chapter four it was stated that Bishop Smith already had his own negative impression of the black people in Africa, and that he had an autocratic leadership style. This was clearly demonstrated in the manner in which he conducted his ministry. There was no meaningful interaction with the indigenous people as far as the mission work was concerned. The major part of his administration was orders and threats, and no or little engagement to hear the plight

and impressions of the people, i.e. there wasn't a single ounce of humility found in his leadership style. In the end, he left before his tenure ended.

The noble goal of the church was derailed by selfish agendas of those Christian leaders who were not willing to focus on the unmet needs of the people, but rather fostered their own understanding of what the needs of the people were. Therefore, based on the aforementioned, the AME Church has a great task to turn more of the hired hands into good shepherds, in order to ensure that fewer or no further church schisms take place. The AME Church needs to be increasingly aware of the strength that lies in the connectional model which it fosters with the structures therein.

The AME Church can no longer continue to focus on individual excellence. The AME Church needs to live out the model of connectedness or interdependence and expand it to establish new workable and lasting relationships among its members and other denominations throughout the globe, and thereby interwove systems of camaraderie and interconnections of various forms of ministry (Osmer 2008:17). This is imperative as “congregations are embedded in a web of natural and social systems beyond the church” (Osmer 2008:17) that has an impact on the lives of the members of the church. Therefore, the AME Church can no longer be ignorant in addressing the social aspect of the member's life and should address it in a similar manner to the spiritual aspect. This may possibly enable a relationship of mutual exploration and reflective consideration of options between the pastor and the people (Osmer 2008:19). This needs to be carefully thought out and understood.

More so, spiritual formation calls for *integrity* in the life and walk of Christian leaders. “Integrity means discerning what is right and what is wrong, acting on what you have discerned even at a personal cost; and saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong” (Enegho 2011:524). Spiritual formation enables Christian leaders “to discern good and evil and reflect on their own ministries”. Spiritual discernment is another element of spiritual formation that is pivotal for a Christian leader as “it involves judgment and insight that enables one to see beneath the surface of what is apparent” (Kretzschmar 2006:346).

Discernment applies to both the private and public life of the Christian leader, as sin destroys peoples' characters, thereby poisoning relationships, workplaces, interactions between communities, national affairs and international relations. It leads to poverty, war, suspicion,

injustice and all kinds of confusion, separation and strife. Thus spiritual discernment ensures that Christian leaders lead their congregations according to the will and obedience of God (Kretzschmar 2006:346). A Christian leader, as a supposedly spiritually formed being, has the responsibility to protect the integrity of both the institution and the members of that institution.

An instance where the integrity of the Christian leaders can be questioned was when Bishop Coppin appointed the American contingent of pastors as delegates to the General Conference of the Church to represent the Southern African District, while the law of the Church provided that elections for delegates needed to be held prior to the General Conference. The delegates duly elected must be from the constituencies of the conferences of the District (*The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church 1884*, 2018:83–86). He had knowingly disregarded the laws of the church, as both he and the Americans knew that they would not be elected by the Southern African contingent of the Church as delegates to represent them at the General Conference. This act by the Bishop showed how Christian leaders could abuse their powerful positions to do wrong things instead of being leaders of character and integrity.

Therefore, the modern AME Church must introduce a process where background checks, criminal record checks and character assessments of those that wish to enter the Christian ministry are made. In addition, stringent measures must be introduced to monitor the character and conduct of the Christian leaders both in their initial training and during their ministries in order to avoid future failures and subsequent misconduct of Christian leaders. For instance, a small group of respected, senior ministers, along with other leaders, such as Bishops, can be tasked with the responsibility to ‘minister to the ministers’.

Finally, spiritual formation results in a growing measure of *respect* for other persons and groups. During the three schisms it became apparent that God and the Christian faith were simply used by powerful individuals or social groups to legitimise their interests or ideologies. Thus, one could single out Rev. Carleton Tanner, who was also brought over from the USA by Bishop Coppin. His position as Editor of the *Christian Recorder*, the AME Church newspaper, caused more harm than good, as he regularly sowed seeds of dissension among the South African AME Church members and denigrated their leadership and members. He was always criticizing the South African leaders and always had something bad to say about them.

This clearly informs us that he had no respect for the people he had come to serve. His one-sided reporting was unjust towards the local leadership as most of the difficulties in the Southern Africa District were a direct consequence of the inability of the American AME Church to keep her promises. This shows that he was not a man that respected the truth as he was not an honest reporter and did not clearly discern facts. Instead he consistently painted a picture of the incompetence of the Southern African leadership. His constant references to their lack of education, which was indeed a crucial need for the Southern Africa AME Church, mocked the people rather than assisting them. This shows that he did not respect the local leadership, as the demise of the people of the Southern Africa AME Church did not worry him. Their request for education fell on deaf ears for many years, and the needs and aspirations of the people of the Southern Africa AME Church went unanswered. This act by the American leadership of the AME Church was tantamount to disrespect towards the Southern Africa AME Church members and leadership.

Linked to the absence of respect, the policy of episcopal supervision, which Brown (1995:52) states, is chiefly responsible for the lack of continuity in the mission field, requires redress. Brown (1995:52) argues that the frequent changes of Bishops every four years did not allow sufficient time for the duly assigned Bishop to familiarize him/herself with the national languages, culture and history or develop mutually helpful relationships with national churches or government leaders. In addition, when a successor arrives, this person comes unacquainted with the complex problems experienced in the mission field, or the needs of the people (Brown 1995:52). Therefore, the AME Church needs to emphasize spiritual formation as an important component of the program of the Bishop's Retreat and the pastoral training manual. Further, much greater awareness must be engendered in leaders of the need to consider the different cultural dynamics to which the Church is exposed, due to her mission work and agenda. Hence, a conscious training in this respect needs to be undertaken, placing respect of individuals and their culture as a pivotal element.

To implement the above recommendations, deliberate strategies need to be developed to promote spiritual formation, which includes personal and communal prayer, the intellectual study of spiritual and moral formation, counselling with pastors, teachers and spiritual directors, personal and communal times of retreat and reflection, active and ongoing participation within local church community (Kretzschmar 2002:52). Moreover, the Church needs to place emphasis on the training of both the ordained leadership as well as the lay

leadership. In this respect the Church needs to organize more retreats, seminars, workshops, leadership training institutes and convocations to impart knowledge. Knowledge that is specifically aimed at spiritual formation and how it builds on and leads to moral formation needs to be nurtured. Theological training, perhaps at an introductory level for all the lay members, especially the lay leadership is also important. The church needs to extend its doctrinal training to the lay leadership, to make them aware of the principles, beliefs, values and discipline heralded by the church.

Concluding the above discourse regarding the reasons why spiritual formation is necessary to avoid schisms in churches, it is important to note that it is the growth in holiness that gives the church its credibility, and our lives will be fully transformed if we allow God to be the God of love and compassion, both to us and through us. This then implies that Christian leaders need to be faithful servants of God. They have to equally love God and His people, as such, they should treat people fairly promoting social justice at all times. They should be humble leaders by nature, whose character speaks volumes of their integrity. They should have respect for the next person as well as the cultural backgrounds of those they lead. Only then can Christian leaders be acceptable and ready for the work of God in this world (Kretzschmar 2006:349–350).

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we argued that in order to mitigate schisms, an institutional unity in the former state may not be restored, but that relationships that became estranged could be mended and peace and harmony could be established going forward. Based on this, the AME Church could manage to restore relationships with those families or their descendants who left the Church. Therefore, the very first action that is crucial for the healing of the people after a schism, is for both parties to *acknowledge that they have acted wrongly*, and that *love was lost* among them. Further, an action that propagates healing after schisms should place all the parties involved on *an equal footing*. A *Commission or a Council* that will iron out the technical aspects of the restoration process should be put in place and work out the reconciliation strategy and come up with a *defined framework* as to the areas that need redress.

Once the reconciliatory framework is completed *a full participation of the constituent members* will be needed for the success of the reconciliation process. Both parties must desire

mutual forgiveness and efface the unchristian acts that led to schisms, such that they can join in the feast of love, the ultimate *celebration of the Eucharist*. Furthermore, both parties should take the responsibility of soliciting the consent and *agreement of the constituent members* in order to conclude the memorandum of agreement and the signing of the same. Once the agreement is endorsed by both sides, the responsibility of *implementing the agreement* must commence, as both parties undertake to keep to their promises.

The above steps are equally applicable to the AME Church in her quest to restore the severed relationships with those people that left the Church as a result of the different schisms discussed above. In this study we argued that the issue of the time that has lapsed or the fact that those that were directly affected may have passed on, is irrelevant since the reconciliation hand can still be extended to those that are presently leading those Denominations were formed following the schisms and the family members of those that were hurt as a result of these schisms.

In this study we further argue that in the instance where the Church wants to avoid schisms, the very first thing to be prioritised should be spiritual formation, since spiritual formation expresses and calls for the relationship with God, as a fundamental requirement. In light of the above, we stressed that Christian leaders ought to live a morally upright life. This means that Christian leaders as ethical leaders, first and foremost, must be *faithful* to God and their call to serve His people. Their faith should be grounded in God and hence their actions must show spiritual maturity. They should be able to *love* God and others wholeheartedly and as much as they can, exclude sin from their life. In other words, the church must make concerted efforts to foster discipleship and the quest for Christian perfection.

Furthermore, Christian leaders must be *just* in their decision making and adjudication of issues. A Christian leader should strive to the best of his/ her ability to be fair in all instances and also treat people with impartiality despite their status, position and attitude or how they may have treated them. Coupled with that, spiritual formation calls for *humility* in all aspects of Christian leadership, since a Christian leader is a follower of Jesus who is the ultimate symbol of humility.

The church should develop more Christian leaders that espouse ethical and biblical values, whose actions show *integrity* and can be trusted by the society and revered in the community.

Moreover, Christian leaders must *respect* the people they lead, since “people want to be guided by those they respect and who has a clear sense of direction” (Enegho 2011:526) According to Enegho (2011:526), “to gain respect, leaders must be ethical”. It is only then that leaders can earn respect in the Church and the community.

In conclusion, this chapter revealed that the AME Church needs to revisit its current levels of education and training. It was realized that more emphasis needs to be placed on spiritual formation as part of theological training. Furthermore, the study also revealed that the lay leadership does not receive sufficient training with respect to the doctrinal and dogmatic aspects of the church. Hence the AME Church needs to strengthen its training arm and hold more workshops, seminars, retreats and leadership training institutions to cement the ethical and biblical values as discussed earlier, and to create a critical mass of disciples in the Church. Until this happens, the Church will be subjected to stressful developments such as schisms that show a loss of love, since charity is indeed a measure of one’s moral character, and the principal ingredient of discipleship is love.

In the next chapter, we present a summary and recommendations drawn from this as well as proffer some concluding remarks.

Chapter 6: Summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research methodology and the subsequent conclusions reached through the different analyses and arguments. Firstly, the chapter outlines the recommendations for future research. While there may be other relevant areas for further research, the researcher proposes two specific areas for future research. These are research on the 2006 schism in the AME Church in Namibia and a research on schisms in other church denominations. These two areas of research are recommended mainly to assess whether there could be a correlation between the earlier schisms discussed in the study and those that took place more recently in the AME Church and other churches.

Secondly, the chapter provides answers to the research questions, a summary of the study and the researcher's personal experiences of schisms.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

This research has confirmed that Christian leaders in many instances played a significant role in schisms. In addition, other relevant issues emerged during this study, for instance, whether similar reasons could be accorded to more recent schisms, or schisms in other countries. Furthermore, the study established that differing cultures and governance structures of churches and governments may also play a role in schisms.

A key motivation for these research areas stems from the fact that in 2006 the researcher was one of the Christian leaders of the AME Church when a schism took place in the AME Church in Namibia. Although many reasons were given for this schism an in-depth analysis of the causes of this schism cannot be overemphasized. Firstly, such research will provide conclusions to many unanswered questions. Secondly, it will help the church to avoid those actions that lead to schisms. Finally, it will provide closure for the members and leadership alike and help to heal the wounds of those that were hurt and possibly to reconcile the severed family ties.

Furthermore, since schisms did not only take place in the AME Church, further studies to assess whether similar conclusions – like those reached in this study – were causes of schisms in other church denominations. This will help churches to obtain a broader knowledge of how the character and conduct of Christian leaders also lead to schisms in other churches. Finally,

it will assist churches in realizing how future schisms could be avoided, and how restoration after schisms could take place.

6.3 The Researcher's initial hypothesis

The researcher's initial hypothesis was that the schisms in the Southern African District of the AME Church that took place from 1899 to 1908 were as a result of the absence of spiritual maturity and morality in the Christian leadership of the time, especially as it pertains to faithfulness, the lack of love, justice, humility, integrity and respect.

The theoretical research carried out in this study confirmed this hypothesis in most areas. In this study we concluded that there was a lack of faithfulness on the side of the Christian leaders. Considering their actions, it could be argued that they were not spiritually mature. Cultural insensitivity and the manner in which the people were treated by these Christian leaders showed a lack of love. Several instances of the abuse of power, selfishness and autocracy demonstrated that the Christian leaders were not humble servants but were unjust in their actions. Moreover, the actions of some of the Christian leaders showed disrespect to those they led, and their integrity was questionable at times.

However, the AME Church schisms were not only caused by the attitudes, decisions and actions of Christian leaders. Other reasons such as theological, ecclesiastical and doctrinal differences, as well as discriminatory practices also played an important role.

6.4 Summary of chapters 1, 2 and 3: Research motivation and theoretical methodology

The study reveals the social, theological, doctrinal and leadership realities that confronted Christian leaders which led to several schisms in the relevant churches. The issues are immense and the challenges overwhelming, as it, at times borders on the personal life of a Christian leader.

To this end, the research topic was introduced as "*An analysis of the role of Christian leaders in the schisms in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Africa, from 1899 to 1908*". The aim of the study was to investigate the major reasons for schisms in the AME Church, and to determine the role played by Christian leaders in the three schisms within the Southern African District of the AME Church. Furthermore, the study aimed to provide

pathways that will lead to the restoration of those affected by schisms in the life of the AME Church and the avoidance of future schisms.

In order to achieve the above, a theoretical approach using literature on Christian leadership, ethical leadership and church history, in particular the AME Church history, with specific emphasis on the role of Christian leaders in the schisms within the AME Church were consulted. No empirical research was conducted, as the literature consulted contained sufficient information to substantiate the claim made in the researcher's hypothesis. As the study is rooted in the field of Christian leadership, and since it analyses the role and conduct of Christian leaders within the AME Church, it draws on theological ethics and church history as secondary disciplines. Subsequently the concepts of leadership, Christian leadership, Christian ethics, and ethical leadership were elucidated as they form the theoretical foundation for the study.

Since the study examined schisms in the AME Church, the different Church schisms over the designated periods that led to the eventual establishment of the AME Church in the United States of America, as well as in Southern Africa were discussed, together with the reasons for each of these schisms. The governance structure of the church was also discussed in order to explain the sequence of authority and how each level relates to the other. The conduct expected of a Christian leader of the AME Church was then outlined using the provisions of the *Book of Doctrine and Discipline* of the AME Church, important Biblical teachings and other literature. The study emphasized how Christian leaders ought to conduct themselves as well as the importance of ethical leadership, and why it is essential in the AME Church.

6.5 Summary of Chapter 4 and 5: Research findings

The research questions listed under section 1.5, enquired into the role of Christian leaders in the AME Church schisms. As the main research question was made up of the four sub-questions, answers to the four sub-questions are provided based on the findings of the theoretical research. These answers addresses the main research question. The main research question is as follows:

What role did the character and conduct of the Christian leaders of the Southern African District of the AME Church play in the three schisms that occurred over the period from 1899 to 1908, and what role can the moral formation of Christian leaders play in the healing and avoiding of schisms in the future?

6.5.1 Sub question 1

What is the relationship between Christian leadership and ethical leadership and what can be expected of Christian leaders in terms of their character and conduct?

In chapter two Christian leadership was defined as “a person who follows Christ and whom other persons follow” (Barentsen, *et al* 2016:6). Thus a Christian leader could be a person who works in a secular environment, but whose leadership qualities are rooted in Christian ethical standards – whether his followers share his Christian worldview or not. Ethical leadership was defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to the followers through a two-way communication, reinforcement and decision making” (in Barentsen, *et al* 2016:80).

Both definitions stress Christ-like leadership, as Christian leaders are disciples of Jesus that are mature enough to lead others that are willing to follow. Thus one could say that a Christian leader is a person that has “obeyed the gospel of Christ, committed their life to the service for Jesus Christ and his/her church, and seeks to be like Christ in every action and attitude” (Turner 1982:8). It then follows that a Christian leader has to be a very dedicated person, both to his/her family, job, church activities and above all, the Lord Jesus Christ and His commands, as they care for the Lord’s work (Turner 1982:8). They also have to be concerned about not just their own reputation, but also the Lord’s (Barna 2010:159).

Hence, their actions should show fairness, kindness and patience towards others. In essence, Christian leaders ought to be ethical leaders. Thus, ethical leadership is a way of life. Ethical leaders must be equipped with several personal attributes essential to moral character and integrity and should be guided by biblical values such as honesty, integrity, trust, humility, and the like. Therefore, it is essential that they also exercise power wisely and fairly.

In this regard, a composite model of an ethical leader was presented, which provides that an ethical leader espouses the values of *faithfulness* (the level of your faith in God; ‘mustard seed’ faith), *love* (an unselfish lifestyle whereby one loves God and shows affection towards others), *humility* (frank self-assessment and a caring attitude towards those you serve), *justice* (fairness towards others in the execution of your work), *integrity* (honest and obedient living

that is rooted in God) and *respect* (valuing others, including co-workers and respecting cultural differences).

To this end, the result of this study is that Christian leaders ought to be ethical leaders espousing most of the requisite values as presented, and who demonstrate Christ-like leadership in both their professional and personal lives.

6.5.2 Sub question 2

What gave rise to the general schisms in church history and how did these schisms contribute to the establishment of the AME Church in the United States of America and Southern Africa?

Although the general perception is that schisms in churches are as a result of differences on ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues, as in the instance of the first great schism, (the conciliar authority of Bishops rather than the Pope, the permissibility of marriage for clergy, the insistence on leavened bread for the Eucharist, and the rejection of the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed) (Foster 1998:287), in this study we argued that the unethical and unreasonable actions by Christian leaders from both sides, were significant causes for the schisms in the early church.

Similarly, in the instance of the Protestant schism, Martin Luther challenged the Roman Catholic Church to reform its doctrine and practices. He held that there were significant differences between the teachings of the Bible and those of the Roman Catholic Church. “He therefore set out to motivate the Roman Catholic Church to reform its theology and practices so it would be more in line with the word of God” (Rhodes 2005:109). For instance, Martin Luther was convinced that the salvation of a person does not lie in the hands of another, and his response to the question of how a person can be saved was clear: “By grace through faith alone!” (Foster 1998:292). Luther’s call for reformation within the Catholic Church failed for several reasons, but a key reason was that the Pope and other senior Roman Catholic leaders did not acknowledge the criticism of those who called for significant reforms. Therefore, they did not act to change certain doctrines or put a stop to corrupt actions such as selling indulgences. Eventually, this led to a major schism and the formation which gave birth to several Protestant Churches.

Furthermore, the study showed that the Methodist Church was established due to the fact that the Christian leaders of the Anglican Church were not ready to accommodate the evangelical revitalisation of Church life in England and they refused to implement religious reforms. This unwillingness by the Christian leaders of the Anglican Church to respond positively to religious revival and to restructure the traditions of the Church to accommodate the ordinary people contributed significantly to the Methodists secession from the Anglican Church (Booyse 2010:14–15).

While the Methodist Church in the USA was a proponent of anti-slavery movement, in 1787 the St. George's Church lost their initial conviction that the slave trade was immoral from a Christian perspective. Their stance for social justice became mere lip service when, because of their inhumane and racial discriminatory practices towards their own, black members, the latter withdrew to form their own church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA (Allen 1990:23).

In South Africa, for similar reasons, the black people that belonged to the Methodist Church in South Africa, formed the Ethiopian Church in South Africa. Both churches were established because of the unbecoming and unjust manner in which the Methodists treated their black leadership and members (Coan 1979:95–118). Again, it is apparent that the schisms from these Methodist Churches were to a significant degree the result of unwise and unethical actions on the part of particular Christian leaders.

Booyse (2010:80) notes that in 1896, Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone became concerned about the future of the Ethiopian Movement. His reasons were, firstly the decline in social and economic status of the black people, especially in the Transvaal, Orange River and Natal. Secondly, the repressive policy of the Boers as set forth in the Constitution (*Grondwet*) of the Transvaal Republic, declaring inequality between black people and white people in Church and State, and thirdly, the ruthless dispossession of Africans of their land (Coan 1979:95), which exacerbated the condition of the Church. Thus a special Conference was called in Pretoria on 17 March 1896 to take a decision with respect to the way forward (Coan 1979:104). During this Conference the Tembu Church of Nehemiah Tile under the leadership of Rev. Jonas Goduka, the successor to Nehemiah Tile, joined the Ethiopian Movement (Coan 1979:104). It was at this conference that “it was resolved to unite with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Smith 1922:182).

6.5.3 Sub question 3

What were the causes of the three schisms in the Southern African District of the AME Church over the period from 1899 to 1908?

We concluded that the character and conduct of some of the leaders of the AME Church were questionable. In this regard, the essence of the argument is that some of the AME Church leaders from 1899 to 1908 were not spiritually mature, and hence they failed to be moral agents who could build up the church and its ministry to others.

Booyse (2010:96) notes that the grounds for the 1899 revolt by Rev. James M. Dwane and his subsequent secession were: firstly, the negative effects of Bishop Gaines' letters, which were widely circulated. Bishop Gaines' letters provoked hostility among white missionaries but was also taken as the reason for the Cape Colony's refusal to recognize the AME Church.

Secondly, "that the church had no authority to consecrate Bishops. The controversy over his office as Vicar-Bishop led him to believe that the AME Church had no Episcopal rights" (Booyse 2010: 96). In addition, "the money promised by the AME Church to erect the proposed educational institution in Queenstown that never materialised, as well as the promise given to Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone by the Church that he would receive US\$1000 for the erection of a church in Cape Town" (Booyse 2010: 96). In instances where schools were established, the local people were not in charge of these institutions.

Furthermore, "all the monies collected by the Church (AME) in South Africa were retained in America and that the schools promised for our children were not being built ... we had to support our schools and everything here ourselves ... all the best positions in the church were given to men from America" (Millard 1995:195). An additional reason is the fact that the General Conference did not honour their initial request for an interim leader – until the affairs in the Southern Africa Church returned to normalcy.

The event that precipitated the 1904 secession was, when the Bishop imperiously decided, without prior consultation with the Southern Africa leaders, that four of the six seats allotted to the Southern Africa delegates to the General Conference would be occupied by the American leaders, with only two given to African leaders (Booyse 2010:111–118). Further, they resented

the American control over their churches as they perceived the Ethiopian Church to be a church for a united African nation. Moreover, the fact that there were no more avenues to gain further promotion in the AME Church than there had been in the mission churches (Millard 1995:199–201).

The 1908 succession was based on similar reasons as the schisms discussed earlier. Firstly, the group seceded because of the fact that the promises to provide schools with funding were not met, and the fact that in instances where schools were established the local people were not in charge of these institutions. In addition, those entrusted with the administration of the schools failed and the schools were eventually closed. Secondly, they resented the American control over their churches as they perceived the Ethiopian Church to be a church for a united African nation. Finally, the fact that promotions were reserved for the American leadership of the AME Church at the expense of the local leadership, caused some unhappiness as well (Millard 1995:199–201).

Finally, due cognizance was not given to the cultural differences between Afro-Americans and Southern Africans, and subsequent respect for the traditional leaders and cultural rituals of the local people. This had an adverse effect on the quest towards the realisation of self-governance and self-determination without the American control of the church.

6.5.4 Sub question 4

Did the AME Church leadership conform to the ethical norms and practices of Christian leadership during the relevant schisms in the AME Church?

The researcher assessed how the unethical conduct of particular different Christian leaders led to the schisms in the AME Church from 1899 to 1908. The examination revealed that the different roles of the Christian leaders in decision-making and governance of the Church did not conform to the ethical norms and practices expected of Christian leaders, and hence their actions led to the different schisms that hurt and separated the people.

The Christian leaders examined in this study were not *faithful* to their call and the people they were leading. For instance, Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone, Rev. James M. Dwane and Rev. Brander were not faithful to their call, as they abandoned the people who followed them. It could be argued that they had valid reasons to do so, however, in this study we argued that

there were other avenues at their disposal which they could have followed to respond to the situation at hand. In this study we further argued that Rev. Mangena Maake Mokone, Rev. James M. Dwane and Rev. Brander's secession from the Methodist Church led to their followers leaving to join the AME Church. Concomitantly, for them also to leave the AME Church reveals the fact that they were not faithful to the end.

Furthermore, it was established that the American leadership did not show charity to the AME Southern African leadership and members. The actions of the American AME leadership, such as Bishop Gaines and Bishop Coppin, showed that they had no *love* for the African AME Church members, as they did not empathise with their plight, or share their dreams. Their actions showed that they perceived these people as a means to an end. This is proven by the unloving actions of Bishop Gaines, especially when he used the media of the Church to criticize Bishop Turner for consecrating a Vicar Bishop for the Southern African AME Church and the negative consequences that followed, such as the loss of church plots and the right of AME Church leaders to conduct marriages.

The study further revealed that on repeated occasions the American Bishops appointed American clergy to key promotional positions in the AME Church at the expense of local leadership, thereby denying the Southern African leadership growth and development. When the wage dispute at the Rand Gold Reefs erupted, Bishop Smith's response clearly showed that he was not on the side of the people whom he was leading, but that he was on the side of the colonial government that was oppressing his people. Hence, there was no *justice* in their actions when they favoured oppressors or promoted American pastors over their African counter-parts.

Bishops Coppin and Bishop Smith demonstrated their unwillingness to listen to the needs and fulfil the wishes of the African AME Church members. There was no *humility* detected in their approach towards the African AME Church leadership and members, as they did not consider their opinions as valid. Their actions were far from servant leadership, which is the supposed norm for clergy leadership in the AME Church.

Both the American AME Church leadership and bishops did not honour their promises, for example, to advance the money to build schools and churches in Southern Africa at the places identified by the people. In addition, Bishop Coppin, appointed an American contingent of pastors as delegates to the General Conference of the Church to represent the Southern

African District, while the law of the Church specifies that elections for delegates need to be held prior to the General Conference. Duly elected delegates must also be from the constituency of the conferences of the District. Instead, they followed their own agendas with no successes at the end of the day, and hence their *integrity* was questionable.

In several instances, the American bishops and the clergy alike did not show any form of *respect* to the Southern African Christian leadership. A case in point is that of Rev. Carleton Tanner, who was also brought over from the USA by Bishop Coppin. His position as Editor of the *Christian Recorder* caused more harm than good, as he regularly sowed seeds of dissension among the South African AMEs and denigrated the leadership and members of the Southern Africa AME. He regularly criticized the Southern African leaders and always had something bad to say about them. This clearly informs us that he had no respect for the people he had come to serve.

Based on the above examples, and the preceding detailed analysis, it is prudent to conclude that the Bishops of the AME Church who had the ultimate authority and legitimacy to lead the Southern African District, along with all the other AME leaders as discussed in this study, did not conform to the ethical norms and practices of Christian leadership. Their actions were central causes of the schisms of 1899, 1904 and 1908.

6.5.5 Sub question 5

What role can the moral formation of Christian leaders play towards the healing of churches and avoidance of schisms in the future?

It was noted that the restorative process after a schism requires that various obstacles that stand in the way for restoration need to be removed. Taking the example of the 1054 schism, Stormon (1987:1–7) raises multiple obstacles that hampered restoration then. These include geographical remoteness, political climate, hierarchical differences, fear of shifts in power and human rivalries over jurisdiction. However, in the instance of the AME Church schisms, one could also add doctrinal issues, ignorance of culture, abuse of authority, toxic relationships and an inability to cooperate.

Be that as it may, in this study we argued that in the instance of the restoration of schisms, an institutional unity in the former state may not be restored, but that relationships that

become estranged could be mended and peace and harmony achieved. This is possible because of the divine grace and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that “requires the honest acknowledgement and confession of sin, the willingness to enter a process of healing and personal development and to fight for justice along with the marginalised” (Kretzschmar, 2006:345). Based on this assessment it is believed that the AME Church could manage to restore the relationships with those families or their descendants who left the Church.

Therefore, as it was the case in the restoration process of the First Great Schism, it is essential that the AME Church and those other churches that were established as a result of the schisms that took place from 1899 to 1908, as well as in 2006, *acknowledge that they have acted wrongly*, and that *love was lost* among them. Furthermore a conscious move that seeks healing after schisms should be embarked upon by the Bishops and Christian leaders of these churches. Such move should place all the parties involved on *an equal footing*. A *Commission or a Council* that will iron out the technical aspects of the restoration process should be put in place, having the responsibility to craft a *defined framework* as to the areas that require redress. Once the reconciliatory framework is completed *a full participation of the constituencies* will be needed for the success of the reconciliation process. It is essential that both parties desire mutual forgiveness and are willing to forgive and move beyond the unchristian acts that led to the anathemas, such that they can join in the feast of love, which is the ultimate *celebration of the Eucharist*.

Furthermore, both parties should take the responsibility of soliciting the consent and *agreement of the constituencies* in order conclude a memorandum of agreement and the signing thereof. The process can only be completed once *the agreement is implemented* and both parties undertake to keep to their promises.

Regarding the need to prevent the occurrence of schisms in the future, the study revealed that spiritual formation along with moral formation is a lifelong process of discipleship, being formed in the likeness of Christ such that the “people who grow in faith have the capacity to express their gifts in both a self-affirming way and in a way that contributes to the church’s wellbeing” (Kretzschmar 2006:344–345). Moral formation is a conscious and uninterrupted relationship with God, where the Christian leader realizes their responsibility, the charge they have to keep and the stewardship they need to render at the end of the day. Realizing the above

and putting the same into perspective the responsibilities of Christian leaders include being, *faithful* in living a sacrificial and redemptive life, which makes one clearly understand the *Missio Dei*, the ultimate mission of God (Kretzschmar 2006:346). Thus, one's character, convictions and intellectual capacity demonstrates the depth of one's faith. The gospel of Jesus Christ becomes the way of life of the people, as it raises the level of the faithfulness of the church to God and each other within the constituency.

Therefore, the AME Church needs to revisit its current levels of education and training. Emphasis should be placed on spiritual formation as part of theological training for pastors and the lay leadership. Further, due consideration should be given to the need to capacitate the Christian leaders in doctrinal and dogmatic aspects of the church. Subsequently, in this study it was argued that the AME Church needs to strengthen its training arm and hold more workshops, seminars, retreats and leadership training institutions to cement the ethical and Biblical values as discussed earlier, and to create a critical mass of disciples in the Church.

Furthermore, it should be noted that *love* is the pinnacle of spiritual formation, as God is love. Moral formation enables leaders "to genuinely experience a relationship with God and become more deeply rooted in God's love" (Kretzschmar 2006:347) and to draw back to Christ those who will have fallen into sin, deceit, confusion and loss of faith in God.

Another meaningful aspect of spiritual formation is *justice*. By acting justly, leaders avoid pitfalls, such as the lust for power, sensation, money and possessions. They further avoid strife, separation and conflict, and AME Christian leaders should treat people fairly as well as standing up for the truth. When this is not done Christian leaders fail to protect the exploited. Subsequently, as Christian leaders often find themselves in these pitfalls, the moral influence of the church diminishes. When this happens, Christian leaders seem to be unwilling to speak out against radical evils. This shows that they will be involved in selfish immoral acts or corrupt practices. This type of leadership does not lead to transformation of lives as they do not challenge any wrong doings, be it in the church or in the world, thereby bringing themselves and the gospel they proclaim in disrepute (Kretzschmar 2006:351–352).

Moral formation calls for *humility* and the need to advocate for the importance of servant leadership among her Christian leaders. The noble goals of the church were often derailed by selfish agendas of the Christian leaders who were not willing to focus on the unmet needs of

the people, but rather fostered their own understanding of what the needs of the people are, or worse still, ignored the expressed needs of their people whom they claimed to serve.

Integrity means discerning what is right and wrong, and acting on what one has discerned even at a personal cost (Enegho 2011:524). Spiritual formation “enables Christian leaders to discern good and evil and reflect on their own ministries”. Spiritual discernment is another element of spiritual formation that is pivotal for a Christian leader as “it involves judgment and insight that enables one to see beneath the surface of what is apparent” (Kretzschmar 2006:346). Thus spiritual discernment ensures that Christian leaders lead their congregations according to the will of God (Kretzschmar 2006:346).

Finally, spiritual formation results in a growing measure of *respect* for other persons and groups. It emphasizes the importance of extending due consideration to the different cultural dynamics to which the Church is exposed in her mission work. As respect for others is an essential element in the moral formation of Christian leaders, the need to develop deliberate strategies to promote spiritual formation cannot be overemphasized. The AME Church can achieve this by placing emphasis on personal and communal prayer, retreat and reflection, counselling, study of spiritual and moral formation, as well as active and ongoing participation within local church community (Kretzschmar 2002:52).

6.6 Concluding personal reflections

In conclusion, the researcher deemed it proper to reflect on some personal experiences of what a schism does to a church and her people. In 2006, a group of people with two pastors seceded from the AME Church in Namibia and formed what they called “The New AME Church”. The researcher does not know the reason behind the name, but what is clear is that somewhere along the line the leadership of the church hurt these people. The day they left the church was highly emotional and many things that the researcher thought would have been best left unsaid, were uttered. Those very words currently make it difficult for some that want to return to the AME Church to come back.

The secession process tore up households, families and friends, to the extent that people no longer bury each other, share in weddings or other family events. A serious wedge was driven between the families and friends on both sides, and tension can be felt whenever these two groups come together at any event. Children can no longer play together and the habitual visits

to each other's homes ended abruptly. No longer are calls made to share information or just a quick joke, as the lines were drawn and if the one group dares to socialize with members of the other, or extend a hand of friendship, such an individual is labelled as a traitor – although not expressed, but visible in the conduct of the members of the different camps.

Since the researcher has a first-hand experience of church schism and witnessed the hurt and divide that a schism in a church causes people, the researcher pleads with all Christian leaders, and especially Christian leaders within the AME Church, to be sensitive to the needs of the people they lead and to be conscious of their unmet needs. Several schisms have already occurred, and it is uncomfortable, difficult and painful to face or address them – and even more so to start a restorative process. However, this study has shown that a process of healing and restoration can be put in place. It has also been argued that additional schisms can be avoided if all people in the Church, and especially Christian leaders, willingly and deliberately participate in God's initiative of spiritual and moral formation. Therefore, spiritual maturity and ethical leadership ought to be the order of the day. It starts with each and every one who calls themselves by Christ's name.

To God be the glory, great things He has done!!

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