

**THE PHENOMENON OF CHURCH HOPPING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY
OF RUSTENBURG: AN INVESTIGATION INTO SOME UNDERLYING
FACTORS.**

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Chapter 1. Introduction	Page 1
1.1 Church hopping	1
1.2 The setting and general impression as a member of the community of Rustenburg:	1
Chapter 2. Literature review.	
Introduction	6
2.1 What could lead to church hopping?	7
2.2 Recruitment strategies	9
2.3 Ecclesiology	10
2.4 Leaders	13
2.5 African Culture and the church	13
2.6 Women in mission	15
2.7 Rituals	18
2.8 Are they winning (new churches), or are we (mission churches) loosing?	19
2.9 The Zionist Churches	20
Chapter 3. Methods Chapter	21
3.1 Aims and objectives	21
3.2 Relevance of the study	22
3.3 Study design	22

3.4 Method	22
3.5 Validity and Reliability	24
3.6 Triangulation	24
3.7 Ethical considerations	24
3.8 Data Analysis	25

Chapter 4 : Narratives on Church Hopping in the Black Community of Rustenburg

	29
4.1 The Shekeinah Tabernacle	29
4.2 The Tent worship/ Crusaders	31
4.3 The Bethany Christian centre- Interview 3	32
4.4 Interview Pastor 4- Bethany Christian Church	34
4.5 Interview 5. (With a member of the Universal Church of the Kingdom Of God) – UCKG	35
4.6 Interview 6 - Universal Church of the Kingdom Of God) – UCKG	36
4.7 Interview no 7 . A member of the Grace Bible Church	37
4.8 Interview no 8. A member of the ZCC Church	39
4.9 Interview no 9 Another member of the ZCC Church	41
4.10 Interview no. 10 – International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC)	42
4.11 Interview 11- Church of Jesus Christ Of the Latterday Saints	44
4.12 Interview 12- Zion Church	46
4.13 interview 13 Amapostoli	47
4.14 Interview 14 Apostolic Church Bishop	48

4.15 Interview 15 Makonyana Church “ Tshenolo, The Holy Church	50
4.16 Interview 16 The Roman Catholic Church	53
4.17 Interview 17 The Christ Embassy Church	60
4.18 Interview 18 The Bophelo Apostolic Church in Zion	62
4.19 Interview 19 The Berachah Bible Church	65
4.20 Interview 20 Oppressed for being a spiritually gifted woman	68
Chapter 5. Results	
Analysis of factors informing Church hopping.	71
5.1 Themes.	71
5.2 Attributes of Church Leaders	78
5.2.1 Commitment of the leader	78
5.2.2 Use of the media	80
5.2.3 Availability of the pastors	80
5.2.4 The founders who are regarded as Christ-like/ Messianic	81
5.2.5 Need of Power	81
5.2.6 In need of promised blessings	81
5.2.7 Leadership struggles	82
5.2.8 Politics	83
5.2.9 Spirituality of women Priests	83
5.3 Help seeking behavior of the church members	83
5.3.1 Seeking the church guided by the spirit of God	84

5.3.2 Seeking Salvation	84
5.3.3 Financial burdens on church members	84
5.2.4 Healing	85
5.2.5 Palliation	87
5.2.6 culture	87
5.2.7 Youth Programs	87
Chapter 6	
Discussion: Church Hopping revealing the need for a holistic understanding of mission	88
6.1 Holistic mission	88
6.2 Holistic Evangelism	90
6.3 Holistic Healing	94
6.4 Holistic Liberation	99
Chapter 7	102
Conclusion	102
7.1 The need for Unity in the Rustenburg Community	102
7.2 The need for Unity in mission	103
7.3 The relevance of church in the HIV pandemic	105
Bibliography	105

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ABSTRACT.**TITLE: THE PHENOMENON OF CHURCH HOPPING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF RUSTENBURG: AN INVESTIGATION INTO SOME UNDERLYING FACTORS.**

Introduction: Rustenburg is a fast growing city in the world. This growth influences establishment of new faith based churches which is, in many respects at the expense of mission churches. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and diseases related to stresses results in movement of Christians from one church to the other. Christians are vulnerable when facing life stressors which results into changing allegiance to a particular church.

This is a qualitative descriptive/ exploratory study

Method: The researcher purposely selected respondents from the black Christian community of Rustenburg. These are those Christians who have moved from one church to join another .From these interviews the themes that emanate are discussed. Leaders of prominent churches were also interviewed .

Findings: The qualities of church leaders have an influence on the movement of its members. The media, especially the local radio station has been widely used to attract new members. The availability of a pastor in times of need plays a vital role. Power struggles seem to disappoint some loyal Christians who may reluctantly leave the church. Financial benefits also play an important role in attracting membership. The faith based churches have grown both in numbers and in membership. Women with their healing power are active especially in the Zion churches. The help seeking behaviour of Christians also influences their affiliation to a particular church such as seeking

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction:

“The First Stage: We begin going to a church, excitement, thrilling, love Jesus, the church is exciting, all things new.

Second Stage: We begin getting involved, learn behind the scenes things, feel privileged to know the church staff and leaders more personally, we are totally excited.

Third Stage: We see things you start to question, the thrill of the big church meetings wanes, as it seems more and more predictable, the leaders seem more human now and not as special as first.”(Schweyzer H 2005)

Rationale for doing this study:

There are many new Christian churches in Rustenburg. The newer Churches are very active and are growing in number. The mission churches have been challenged by the newer churches. There seems to be forces that challenge Christians to change allegiance from one Church to the other.

1.2 The setting and general impression as a member of the community of

Rustenburg:

The population census of Rustenburg according to statistics South Africa is 1 million people. One of the older churches is the Anglican Church which was established in 1871. The Dutch Reformed church is also the centre of the strength of the mission churches of the 19th century.

The community of Rustenburg is predominantly of the Batswana people. The Royal Bafokeng influence is the force for the Black people in Rustenburg, thus the region belonged to the Bafokeng administration. Rustenburg is in the North West province and is growing fast due to the platinum mines and the farming activities there. Rustenburg is also renowned for the many game reserves that were established during the Bophuthatswana government (Part of the TBVC states). Because of these mines, one finds many other ethnic groups populating the area. Informal settlements have sprung enormously and unemployment and poverty have become real problems. On the other hand one also observes some people becoming economically advanced due to opportunities that come with employment .This ‘population explosion’ has also seen the establishment of newer churches in the town.

Rustenburg has two municipal districts, namely the Bojanala and Moses Kotane districts. These municipal districts are taken together because earlier Bojanala was part of Rustenburg while Moses Kotane comprised of the villages around the town. .

In the townships, there are the mission churches, Pentecostal and faith based churches. The older mission churches do not seem to grow at the same rate as the newer churches. The study covers the Black townships of Tlhabane, Lefaragatlha, Phokeng, Luka, Chaneng to Rasimone, informal settlements of Boitekong, Meriting and Mogajane. There are two theological seminaries in the township. The first is the Marang (Which means sun rays), training Lutheran theological students and the second is the SAST (South African School of Theology) training Evangelical pastors

There are a number of approaches to the problem of Church hopping. Some people in the West have written about hopping that is just out of curiosity or circumstances. Church hopping can extend to changing from one religion to the other, such as joining Islam, Hinduism,

The question that one can ask oneself on Church hopping is – is it good or bad? Is it significant? Why do people hop?

While practicing as a doctor in the Rustenburg community, the researcher observed that there are new churches that are being planted in the Black community. There are also active campaigns to get new members to join these new churches. The mission churches seem to have lost members towards charismatic churches, African initiated Churches (AIC's) and faith-based Churches. The up and coming young pastors use platforms such as funerals and hospital visits to campaign for new members.

While the researcher observed that Christians are changing from one church to the other, there are those Christians who join other religions. This phenomenon shall however not form part of this research, though this study can be embarked upon as another of its own. Due to its mining potential, Rustenburg has several challenges. Among these challenges is that the town has experienced a high prevalence of HIV infections and serious socially related issues. Teenage pregnancy and the use of drugs and alcohol are also on the rise, challenging the moral status of the people. This can be associated with the springing informal settlements, housing accommodation crisis and unemployment.

Job opportunities in Rustenburg:

For those who may be fortunate, there are job opportunities, especially the young graduates who have taken mining courses. The Church plays an important role in the job seekers. Those who may not be fortunate look for churches that will answer or address their needs. Some may seek prayers while some may go to traditional healers for help. Some engage in illegal dealings such as dealing with platinum from the mines, dealing with cannabis or engaging in crime. When arrested, the church is expected to bring the ministry of repentance and reconciliation.

In many communities, there are pastors who visit the prisoners in jail.

Palliative care:

Palliative care is offered by some churches as a response to the HIV pandemic. The hospice in Phokeng is a joint venture of the community, the Non government organizations (NGO) and the Roman Catholic Church. The St John's churches have homes for those who suffer from a variety of diseases and who opt for alternative medicine therapy.

There are certain challenges that face the church in the light of growing taverns where the young generations of the community are leaving schools and have become addicted to alcohol at the very early stages of life, teenagers becoming pregnant, necessitating a structure in the community that shall own up to the moral regeneration of the youth.

Worse is the fact that the church in some instances has become liberal in allowing itself to be drawn into accepting these social inclinations by allowing its members to use celebrations such as baptisms and funerals as excuses to indulge in parties that end up with complete deviation from the behavior in keeping with Christian way of living.

Dissatisfaction of a particular member(s), be it genuine or not, may probably become a reason that would result in a member(s) leaving particular fellow worshipers to become a member of a different church. The question that one has to ask oneself is if the church meets the expectations and aspirations of its members, or if it has become irrelevant and incapable in addressing particular needs.

Young adults seem to indulge in activities that distance them from the church. Some seem to have lost faith in the church. There are some who just do not belong to any church at all. Losing this generation is critical in that there might be no church in the future.

Christians face challenges that may lead them to change allegiance with a particular way of Christian worship. This is in the light of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, depression, marital dysfunction, pressures as a result of material need in modern day living, debts (avoidable and non avoidable), businesses endeavors, frustrations posed by the micro loans (that literally own the lives of many in the communities), etc. and these are as they search for deeper spiritual answers. There is migration of Christians on the ground. Some leave the mainline churches to join the newer faith based and Evangelical churches. Is the church listening to these challenges, or does it distance itself from the real issues? Does the church do enough to go to the lost such as the prostitutes, the corrupt, the drug lords and the alcoholics? Or is it a church for the wealthy and healthy, or the politicians?

This research intends studying the challenges facing the Black Christians in Rustenburg and how they hop from one church to the other.

Chapter 2.

Literature review:

Introduction:

The very existence of African independent Churches is a historical event. There were reasons that led to the establishment of these churches as alluded by Benght Sundkler that 'The Bantu independent church Movement in South Africa already has a history. It is a history of bold aspirations and baffled endeavors. With all its weaknesses it is part of Christian Missions.'(Sundkler B.G.M. 1976: 38).

Pentecostals and other independent churches seem to be on the rise. The question is 'what does a remarkable growth of African Pentecostal churches and the corresponding decline in membership among the older churches mean to our mission methods? "

(Anderson A. Otwang S. 1993: 136)

One positive fact in the South African situation is the fact that people are still mindful of going to church as opposed to what happens in some European countries such as what I saw when I visited Belgium .I noticed that churches have become museums and purely tourist attractions; the icon of Christ on the cross has become a lonely statue. However this idea is shared by Bishop John Selby Spong who writes in his article entitled:

European Christianity: A Bleak Picture (2007), that' Christianity in Europe is sick, perhaps mortally sick. Across this continent, only 5-6% of the population still has some connection to any church tradition, according to church leaders I talked to. Rome, despite

its proximity to the Vatican, has become one of Europe's most secular cities. Things are not different in the Netherlands, Denmark, northern Germany, and Scandinavia.'

2.1 What could lead to church hopping?

Many people who attend church for a while can sometimes become set in their own ways and forget the true reason why they are in the church (to learn about Christ). Instead they get easily offended and begin church hopping, only to realize that the church they initially left is the church that truly fits them the best. Very trivial matters offend them, such as a change in the seating arrangement when in church. ([http://www.tv.com/king-of-the-hill/church hopping](http://www.tv.com/king-of-the-hill/church-hopping) visited 21/10/2009).

Steve Cornel writes in a title 'Church hopping, a disturbing trend' as follows- "Church hopping is an example of the overall instability of our culture. It reflects a deeply troubling trend of how easily people slide in and out of commitments. People are endlessly looking for better things than what they have. But *better*, often means more exciting, entertaining; more satisfying to the ruling self. Churches calling for higher levels of commitment should expect to be smaller.

In an article entitled "Confessions of a (Recovering) Church-hopper", John Fischer acknowledged that, "In our free-market, commodity-rich society, it's understandable that we would approach church as we would a shopping mall of spiritual products and services. This is the way our culture operates. In our hymnals we can still find those great hymns of the church like 'A Mighty Fortress' and 'The Church's One Foundation,'

but in our worship and practice we are probably more consistent with the Motown hit ‘You Better Shop Around’.

He goes on to say that pastors should also be careful about receiving those who “hop” their way. When church hoppers hop your way and gush praise all over you (while criticizing their former church), it’s often only a matter of time before they leave your Church with the same critical attitude. Church-hoppers should remember the old advice, “If you find a perfect church, don’t join it because you’ll ruin it.” (Cornel: 2007)

Fischer (in Cornel 2007) describes the following scene from a church-hopping family:

‘Where shall we go this morning, dear?’ he says. ‘The music is great at Calvary but I like the teaching at Grace.’ ‘Don’t forget the kids,’ she says. ‘The youth program at Bethany is the best of all.’ ‘I’ve got it. We’ll drop the kids off at Bethany and go to Grace for teaching, and then we can start going to the Saturday night worship and praise services at Calvary.’

2.2 Recruitment strategies

Evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. There is no new humanity if there are no first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel. The church Evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of the people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieux which are theirs.(Anderson G.H , Stransky T.F.1979 :77)

To have members in the church seems to be the primary aim of many churches so that members are recruited from all possible places that one can think of. Spiritual growth involves growth in faith and the full understanding of the power of Jesus Christ and the existence of the Superior Being; the limitations of human nature; the power of prayer and many practical experiences that show the power of God. This Spiritual growth is demonstrated in a number of ways such as in witnessing about God, Jesus Christ and through fellowship; with spiritual growth there has to be a change in a person's life- a true Christian living or a life dedicated to God.

Recruitment of new members occurs commonly in those who may be vulnerable due to problems in their churches, in those afflicted by disease and ill health or in those with tensions and frustrations of life and living.

The most common places where members are sought are at the hospitals, during funeral services, door to door visitations, cell evangelism, and by mass evangelism that involves the power of preaching sermons in the churches, or even through the media-such as radio stations and televisions (tele- evangelism) whereby people may share their experiences with a particular church. Lyle Schaller in his book "It's a different world!" says- It is harder today to be a preacher. Today a lot of people wake up early before going to church to listen to a preacher on television who has a stage like a small heaven, with a pulpit that is immaculate, a choir and an orchestra that sings like heavenly angels. In the evening or throughout the day one can tune in on the television to watch ministry throughout the day and evening up to midnight and beyond. People compare what they see to what they

have. Sometimes what they watch is far from what they have in their churches with the result that they are attracted to similar churches that come to their communities (something far from their reality and then they join the churches that may be closer to what they have seen). “It is a lot harder today when the people walk into a small church on a Sunday morning to see a tiny choir that may be off-key and hear a green (boring- *my interpretation*) preacher after they’ve spent an hour watching one of those television preachers with a big choir and everything in living colour”(Schaller L.E. 1987: 22).

2.3 Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is, therefore, the study of the church as an entity.

David Bosch writes:

“Any individual Christian’s understanding of God’s revelation is conditioned by a great number of factors. These include the person’s *ecclesiastical* tradition, personal context (sex, age, marital status, education), social position (social “class”, profession, wealth, environment), personality and culture (world view and language, etc). Traditionally we have recognized the existence (even if not the validity) of only the first factor, that is, the differences caused by ecclesiastical traditions. In more recent years we have begun to recognize the role of culture and religious experience. The other factors are equally important (if not more) important.”(Bosch D.J.1996:182)

Ecclesial tradition here has a lot of influence on Christians belonging to a particular church. **Ecclesiology** is the study of the theological understanding of the Christian Church. Specific areas of concern include the church's role in salvation, its origin, and its relationship to the historical Christ, its discipline, its destiny, and its leadership. (Laertius D. 2008 in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiology>)

Ecclesiastical factors play an important role in the identity of the church. The important ecclesiastical factors or questions that Christians ask themselves about the church are

1. Who is the church? Is it a visibly or earthly cooperation or is it a body of believing Christians regardless of their denominational differences and disunity

2. Must one join the church? - is worship fulfilling the spiritual need? Is it in fact necessary? Can salvation be found outside of formal membership in a given faith community, and what constitutes "membership? Is it through baptism or formal acceptance of a creed? Is it regular participation?

3. What is the authority of the Christian church? Who gets to interpret the doctrines of the Church? Is the organizational structure itself, either in a single corporate body, or generally within the range of formal church structures, an independent vehicle of revelation or of God's grace? Or is the Church's authority instead dependent on and derivative of a separate and prior divine revelation external to the organization, with individual institutions being "the Church" only to the extent that they teach this message? For example, is the Bible a written part of a wider revelation entrusted to the Church as faith community, and therefore to be interpreted within that context? Or is the Bible the revelation itself and the Church is to be defined as a group of people who claim adherence to it?

4. What does the Church do? What are the sacraments, divine ordinances, and liturgies, in the context of the Church, and are they part of the Church's mission to preach the Gospel? What is the comparative emphasis and relationship between worship service, spiritual formation, and mission, and is the Church's role to create disciple of Christ or some other

function? Is the Eucharist the defining element of the rest of the sacramental system and the Church itself, or is it secondary to the act of preaching? Is the Church to be understood as the vehicle for salvation, or the salvific presence in the world, or as a community of those already "saved?"

5. How should the Church be governed? What was the mission and authority of the Apostles, and is this handed down through the sacraments today? What are the proper methods of choosing clergy such as bishops and priests, and what is their role within the context of the Church? Is an ordained clergy necessary? Who are the leaders of a church? Must there be a policy-making board of "leaders" within a church and what are the qualifications for this position, and by what process do these members become official, ordained "leaders"? Must leaders and clergy be "ordained," and is this possible only by those who have been ordained by others?

6. What are the roles of 'spiritual gifts' in the life of the church?

7. How does the Church's New Covenant relate to the covenants expressed in scripture with God's chosen people, the Jewish people?

8. What is the ultimate destiny of the Church in Christian eschatology?

2.4 Leaders

The prophetic nature of a leader has the potential of keeping members focused and committed to the church.(Kretzschmar L 2006:338) in a sub-title of her presentation on 'what sort of leaders does the church and society need?' leadership is commonly understood to refer to the capacity that some people have to influence the lives of individuals, groups and even the entire nation. Leaders are able to develop visions that

inspire and direct the energies and loyalties of others.” Kretzschmar stresses the importance of ‘spiritual formation in the development of Christian leaders’.

2.5 African Culture and the church

Cultural processes include inertia (the stabilization and preservation of existing patterns) and momentum (growth and change), which expresses itself in additions, losses, and displacements. (Nida E.A 1979: 231)

When a society cannot resolve the tensions of conflicting interests produced by too wide a gap in the participation of all persons in a culture, a revolution is inevitable.(Nida E.A 1979:233) Tensions caused by cultural differences in the church have become real issues.

Tinyoko Maluleka (in Hodgson J : 2003 : 117) examines cultural issues in the Anglican Church. The issue of “appropriation of Christianity” in the African context is a prophetic challenge to the “English-speaking churches (meaning western churches) to take the ‘pockets of Africanized Christianity’ in their midst seriously as valid African appropriation of Christianity. Practices such as ‘pre-funeral night vigil, the foot stamping, the repetitive choruses, the ceremonies of ‘taking off the black mourning clothes’ the peculiar African preaching style, the Manyano and the Amadodana traditions, the funeral celebration etc. To this we would add various Anglican developments relating to prayer, healing, holiness and the founding of indigenous religious communities.

It is this “appropriation of Christianity” as well as indigenization that communities seek in order to create a ‘place to feel at home’ in the church of their fore-fathers.

The church is adopting a patriarchal culture that is embedded in Africans. This culture puts women at a lower scale than men. The feminist critique of culture has pointed out that nature and biology are not the 'destiny' of women but rather sexist culture and its socialization. Women are denied the full range of human potentiality. Women are socialized to view themselves as dependent, less intelligent and derivative from men. Christian churches and theologies still perpetuate the "feminine mystique" and women inferiority through their institutional inequalities and theological justifications of women's innate difference from men. Christian ethics has intensified the internalization of the feminine passive attitudes of meekness, humility, submission, self sacrifice, self denying love, which impede the development of self-assertion and autonomy by women. (Fiorenza E.S in Anderson G.H. 1979 : 190)

There are differences in opinions on culture and the church. Some leaders, societies and churches regard African culture as anti-Christ. Other churches regard culture as a means of identifying with African lives and even quote the Bible verses such as The Old Leviticus 1-7, which refers to different sacrifices to the Lord. Some churches that display cultural forces 'are regarded as unitary class of religious movement, not only do they display a common structural form but they also constitute an indigenous category, both from within and without as Ba-sione (Zionist) and as " dikereke tsa moya" Churches of the spirit") (Camoroff 1985: 186)

Culture of the African Christians, especially the Zionist is associated with the beating of the drum. 'You can see the Zionist anywhere. His dress, the way he holds his body, and

the look in his eye, who he may marry- its all laid down. He's not the same person once he starts to follow the drum" (Camoroff 1985:191)

2.6 Women in mission

"Whether intended specifically as a recruitment device or not, healing featured prominently in the outreach of virtually all the influential women missionaries who distinguished themselves as founders of African Independent churches"(Daneel M.L. 2001:312)

Ma-nku churches are mostly the St John's churches and women are in leadership positions.

For many decades in Christianity women are suppressed and oppressed. "They do not exercise their own power, but manipulate men's power; they are not supposed to express their own opinion, but to be silent or to voice only that of their fathers, husbands, bosses or sons. (Fiorenza E.S in Anderson G.H. 1979 : 188)

Women are excluded from hierarchical orders on the ground of an antiquated and simply false historical exegesis. Protestant theologians and churches pay lip service to the equal rights of women; for even though they ordain women, they erect "qualifying standards" and "academic quotas" which effectively keep women out of influential parish or seminar positions.

"Subordination of women in the church cannot be the Spirit of God"(Oduyoye M.A 1995: 116). The fact that a woman has revelation from God should not limit her to

express her spiritually. The patriarchal hierarchies in some instances result in women being oppressed in their supposed places where they need to feel at home. These tensions generate barriers to unity and community and result in formation of churches that may be authoritative in their own right, free from male domination or where women and children can express themselves freely.

Anecdotally and based on personal experience in many Black townships and villages around Rustenburg on Fridays there are taxis and private cars at filling stations transporting mainly women (identified by their white head gears) with only a few men going out to evening services (especially belonging to the Zionists churches) Could this be a revolution of women who politely run away from the mission churches as reflected by Oduyoye (1995: 117) “where women are limited in their exercise of initiative and authority to women’s groups, where they meet to decide, to plan and to work to contribute to the unified budget of the church, a budget in which they have absolutely no input.”

There are undoubtedly many unheard voices that might be leaving the churches in the light of them not being able to come out to speak about oppression in the church. Nico Botha (2003) in an article ‘Towards the en-gendering of missiology’ traces the life narrative of Mina Tembeka Soga who was a strong voice that was neither heard nor recognized at her time of living. Botha quotes Haddad that there is a “need to ensure that all voices are heard- particularly the whispering and silent voices” Indeed there are many women who are powerful and whose power is oppressed by a variety of contexts and situations.

The power of women is evidenced by many St Johns Apostolic church healers whose influence cannot be underestimated.

2.7 Rituals

Rituals are a feature of all human societies, large and small. They are an important part of the way that any social group celebrates, maintains and renews the world in which it lives and the way it deals with the dangers and uncertainties that threaten that world. For those that take part in rituals, they have important social, psychological and symbolic dimensions. (Helman C.G 2007 : 225). The ritual of death and mourning is important in the Black communities. In most non-Western societies, death is seen not as a single event in time but as a process whereby the deceased is slowly transferred from the land of the living into the land of the dead; simultaneously, there is a transition between social identities from living person to the dead ancestor. The dead is still regarded as part of the family. Under these circumstances there are certain ceremonies that are performed; they dress or act in special ways and generally withdraw from ordinary life. In some cultures women are prohibited from remarrying for a specified period (sometimes forever). The attitudes of the church towards acceptance or rejection of the rituals of a particular community is important in retaining or rejecting its followers.

Hertz in (Helman C.G 2007 : 231).

“The dead never die” in most traditional societies. In much of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and in parts of Latin America, they remain as an omnipresent of their relatives and invisible members of the family. (Helman C.G 2007 page 233)

The Burden of Disease as an influence to Church hopping;

The biggest threat of this century is the burden of disease that is on the rise.

The impact of HIV/AIDS and TB cannot be ignored as the cause for patients to present at many traditional healers and at churches to seek healing that is deeper than just the physical.

Witchcraft and sorcery are social problems and the media has reported many ritual murders in the villages of Pella in Rustenburg. Churches have been called to do something to heal these communities which have been affected by these unfortunate deaths. Ritual killings perpetrated by individuals or small groups within a society that denounces them as simple murder are difficult to classify as either "human sacrifice" or mere pathological homicide because they lack the societal integration of sacrifice proper. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice#Ritual_murder)They may also be classified as Satanic in nature.

These social dilemmas have influenced some people to have negative attitudes towards cultural and ritual rites.

2.8 Are they winning (new churches) , or are we (mission churches) loosing?

It is not unusual to find children not belonging to the same church as the parents. The younger generation wants to express religion in the context of their modern lives.

"The new churches offer transformations that are both personal and cultural. Converts feel free to speak and think for themselves in a way that was not possible when they were required to show deference to the old hierarchies of church and state."(Phillip Jenkins in Armstrong CR).

The Faith-based churches- “Abazalwane”

These are newer churches that are now in fashion. They seem to be growing at a fast rate.

While these churches are growing, the question is whether they are growing at the expense of mission churches, as alluded by professor S.S.Maimela in his foreword in Allan Anderson’s book “Tumelo”,(Anderson A, Otwang S 1993: vii-ix) or is this still a field that needs to be researched further. Bishop James L. Davis of the African Methodist Church, of which I am a member, in one of the institute lectures came up with a topic “are they winning, or are we (mission churches) losing”, referring to this problem of inter-church movements of Christians.

Why do we all of a sudden see new Evangelical churches coming up and gaining members that the mission churches could not gain in the past?

2.9The Zionist churches

The men in Zion use *ikhali* (sticks) which are in line with one’s prophecy. Some of these *ikhali* are in the form of a cross, a circular shape, or just plain sticks. *Ikhali* shape is the result of a prophesy or the spiritual revelation to an individual. “The holy sticks are also a symbol in Zionist dreams”(Sundkler BGM 1976:214).Men wear white dust coats .

The Zions do not clap hands when singing. They also do not make use of instruments to accompany their singing.

The women wear green, blue or white dresses. “green clothes are referred to as the dress of the spirit,(izingubo zika moya)”Sundkler B.G.M 1976 ;214)

Their dresses are long.

Finally:

Reasons why people join the church may vary greatly and may often have little to do with commitment to what the church is supposed to stand for. (Bosch D.J. 1996:415)

Healthy church growth can to be viewed along three categories namely, spiritual growth, numerical growth and organizational growth. (Kennedy D.J. 1996: XVI)

CHAPTER 3.

METHODS CHAPTER

Introduction:

The researcher has observed that as a response to challenges that Christians face in life, one of the ways of seeking relief is through changing allegiance with fallow worshipers. Churches do become proactive in attracting new members. Even after joining a new Church, Christians may still find themselves dissatisfied and continue to look for another place of worship.

The missiological motivation is based on the biblical passage Psalm 122 which reads thus; I rejoiced with those who said to me, “let us go to the house of the Lord”. Our feet are standing in your gates, Oh Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord according to the statute given to Israel.... May there be peace within your walls and *security* within your citadels.

This *peace* and *security* has to be met with for Christians to stay in the Church.

3.1 Aims and Objectives

Aim :

To investigate the underlying factors leading to the phenomenon of Church hopping in the Black Christian community of Rustenburg.

Objectives:

1. Factors resulting in a Christian leaving one church to join another.
2. To investigate reasons behind changing from one church to the other.
3. To identify the features and qualities of the church that has become a new home.

3.2 Relevance of the study:

If we understand what Christians expect from their churches then the mission of the churches could become meaningful. Can we have change of attitude towards those Christians who hop from one Church to the other as a healthy phenomenon? Does the church need to conduct self introspection when its members become unstable? Unless the church reflects on its mission and seeks to improve the quality of care, then the Churches shall continue to loose members to other denominations offering solutions to their needs.

One important challenge that the researcher is concerned about is that the devil's advocates thrive on the instability of Christians themselves and interpret this phenomenon as a weakness.

3.3 Study design:

Qualitative Observational Study.

3.4 Method:

3.4.1 Sampling:

The respondents are purposefully selected from the Black community of Rustenburg through contact at various community activities. The researcher looks for the information- rich respondents. The selection is based on the churches that are active in the community of Rustenburg. The respondents form core/principal interviews. The sample size is not finalized before the study commences but may change as the study progresses. (Struwig & Stead 2001:122).

3.4.2 Data Collection:

The researcher conducts the interviews. The questions are open ended with no formal structure. Talking to people and observing how parishioners behave and believe and also noting comments that people make about various churches shall be additional information included in principal interviews in order to give a broad view about the church or concern; Snowball sampling is applied in this study. This means that once information is obtained from participants, further information which may provide additional information pertinent to the study is accepted. This in this study is done through visits to known members who left their churches to establish their own; through talking to various church leaders; dialogue with patients who came for consultations at the researcher's medical practice.

Interviews are conducted at different places that are as homely as possible. Notes are taken and recorded. The researcher asks open ended questions. The interviews are conducted until saturation is reached. Saturation is obtained through repeated interviews for clarity where necessary. This means that contact with the interviewed individual is maintained should there be need for further clarification.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Adults residing in Rustenburg
2. Blacks
3. Persons who have changed church of worship to join any other Christian church.

Exclusion criteria:

1. People not residing in Rustenburg.
2. People who have joined other religions.
3. Other than Black.

3.4.3 Bias:

Researcher bias:

Researcher effect could have an effect and this refers to the degree of bias in reporting and interpreting the findings. The researcher background can include certain prejudices. The researcher's presence may encourage or discourage certain responses. Males and females may respond differently especially in gender related issues towards the male

researcher. The researcher, being a doctor, may influence inclination towards health related problems.

Selection Bias

Some of the interviewed are known to the interviewer as patients, and/ or as members of the community and this might influence their responses. The researcher would request the respondents to give honest answers (approximation of the truth).

The researcher is not aware of potential selection bias in the sample as any body has an equal chance of being included. There is a possibility of bias in the interview as the interviewed could give the information that the interviewer wants to hear.

3.5 Validity and reliability:

Validity:

Validity, also referred to as trustworthiness or credibility is considered in qualitative research. Validity is not easily tested in qualitative research.

Descriptive validity: refers to whether the information is factually accurate and comprehensive or whether it has been partly omitted or distorted (Struwig & Stead 2001: 144). In this regard the respondents have been interviewed on more than one occasions ((if need be) in order to verify the information provided.

Interpretative validity: eliciting comments is a way of maximizing the interpretation.

The selection of respondents is purposeful in that all have moved from one church to the other.

Reliability:

Reliability is synonymous with consistency (Struwig & Stead 2001: 133). Interview reliability is guaranteed by the fact that the interview is conducted only by the researcher. The information gathered is reliable in the sense that the respondents are free in expressing their views. The information is recorded during the interview. Should there be any misunderstanding of meaning; the respondents are called to explain at a later date what each meant.

3.6 Triangulation:

Triangulation in this regard was obtained through record keeping of the interviews and referral to the previous encounter and interviews of a group of people to obtain the same information.

3.7 Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations: The respondents are interviewed after being informed about the study .The respondents give a verbal consent for participation in the study.

Confidentiality has been ascertained as no identity about the participants is included.

3.8 Data analysis:

Data is analyzed from the recorded interviews and the themes are identified.

Qualitative research can relate to the characteristics of language (Struwig & Stead 2001: 14) . Content analysis refers to the gathering and analysis of textual content. The content refers to messages e.g. words, meaning ,symbols and themes.

The recorded interviews are analyzed and the themes that come from the interviews are grouped together.

Interpretation of data in qualitative research should not deviate from the research aims. If this occurs, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the aims and perhaps adjust them to account for additional interpretations (Struwig & Stead 2001 : 172) .

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVES ON CHURCH HOPPING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF RUSTENBURG.

My approach is to look at the churches that are conspicuous in the community of Rustenburg.

3.1. The Shekeinah Tabernacle:

Looking at the township, the researcher noticed that the Shekeinah church is apparently the most active. When one enters into the Tlhabane Township, all the entrances are marked by billboards that invite readers to the ‘centre that heals, a centre of miracles, and a centre of hope’. There is a phone number given of the 24 hour help line. There is a promise of miracles of healing on the billboard.

The founder of the church is from the Eastern Cape and has been in Rustenburg for the past 20 years. He works with his wife who is a prophet.

The church runs a religious phone-in program on the local radio station especially for those who have life stresses, the sick and people have reported change since they experienced intervention by the church.

Interview with Pastor 1 of Shekeinah.

Among the pastors of the church is one whom the researcher has known to be an epileptic patient from his student days. His seizures have stopped since he joined the church. He testifies about this healing and has invited many sick people to join the church. He and

his family were Anglican Church members. He is the only one in the family who has joined the Shekeinah.

Since he has been healed by the Shekeinah , he wanted to give those who may be sick like him a chance to be healed. Currently he has left the church to start his own ministry which he believes is not the same as that of the Shekeinah. He told me that he left with the blessing of the Shekeinah pastor.

Gospel music as well as instrumental music forms a pillar of activities of the church. He told the interviewer about many HIV/AIDS patients who come to the church for counseling and healing prayers who have joined the church from other denominations. Those who initially were hopeless came back very positive about life. One could only be happy about the counseling they have received.

These are some of the positive things he likes about the church:

- Daily prayers for those who are troubled by unemployment, who are sick, and those who need prayers for their social problems.
- Hospital visitations irrespective of church affiliation.
- 24 hour crisis centre phone in program.
- Coordinating community projects during important days.
- Involvement in school/educational programs; Including preaching at school assemblies in the mornings.

The Shekeinah church seems to draw a large crowd on a daily basis.

The researcher had the experience of his patient who was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma(cancer) who came to him and ‘complained’ that while he was at the hospital,

very vulnerable because he was awaiting a decision from the doctors concerning an amputation of his arm he was visited by this church. He had to decide on the operation since the only cure was amputation. The Shekeinah pastors came to him while in hospital and advised him against the operation and promised a miracle cure from God. He then phoned me saying that he was getting confused as he now had to decide to follow the churches' advice against the doctors advises concerning the operation.

Finally his arm was amputated and he is now happy with the out come of the operation. He underwent psychological treatments that allowed him to cope with the amputation and to adjust to the new life. He unfortunately became an alcoholic after this ordeal for which he is treated currently. The patient was bitter concerning this experience because the church was not realistic in its advice to a person who needed to be told the truth. (Truth telling is an ethical dilemma)

3.2. Tent worship/ Crusaders:

Interview with Pastor 2 who is active in tent ministry/ Crusades.

Interview of Pastor 2 is a follows :

He has been trained at the local seminary. After qualifying, he started his evangelical work from a small tent which attracted many Christians. He belonged to the Anglican Church. His calling became evident when he visited a tent himself following unemployment. His first church was never able to discover his spiritual gifts. He is a singer and a good preacher known to many in the township.

He was a teacher at first but has left teaching. He earns a good salary as a pastor. The congregation comprises “ Abazalwane” and they are tithing their 10%. He is happy where he is. He invites preachers from Soweto as well as those from Africa. There is prophesy and healing in his church. The church gets people who were not attending churches at all, those who are drinking heavily and those who have social problems. The crusades are advertised well ahead of time and they use loud speakers mounted on a van which would move around the township or village.

Once in a while he goes to the near by spots stadium and has a big gathering which is almost always well attended. He does not think of joining a mission church at any stage. He has become economically balanced from the amounts that the church pays him.

During ht e Crusades, cripples have thrown their crutches, the blind have regained their sights and some have reported that those who are diabetics have stopped taking chronic medications after being prayed for at the tent.

The tents attract many worshippers from different denominations. The crusades are popular in the townships and surrounding villages. While these crusades offer healing, they are also meant to attract potential worshippers for the local pastor. What happens is that a pastor from Africa is invited.

3.3. The Bethany Christian Centre: Pastor 3.

He was originally from the Lutheran church. He was not a regular church person though until he met the Lord at tent worship. He has since been converted and has dedicated his

life to God. His church never cared to know about the challenges he was experiencing in life. He told himself that he is not going to make the same mistake that the Lutheran church has done to him.

Bethany Christian Center attracts many young people. Their music is outstanding. The church has a slot in the community radio station where the pastor delivers a sermon, followed by a response phone –in program by the listener's. At one such phone- in program the researcher heard a lady who witnessed how she got a job after the pastor 3 prayed for her. She received a mysterious call from an unknown caller who told her to go to the mine because her job was waiting for her. She believes strongly that the job, which she got just after joining the Church, was reserved for her by God. This she perceives to be true because she received the job while not having the required matriculation certificate.

On Sundays there used to be two busses coming from the outlying villages to the Tlhabane Bethany church. Due to the rapid rising membership, there are satellites established in the villages so that members are worship in their villages with pastors visiting (organizational growth).

Currently pastor 3 is oversees to further his studies, but the church is still growing at a fast rate. What people say about the pastor is that he is learned, dedicated and has healing powers from God.(When talking to some of his congregants). The researcher has had an informal talk with the pastor after a night vigil service and discovered how dedicated and prophetic he is in his account of God's power. He is indeed prophetic and there are good reasons for people to follow such a leader. He has a good convincing language, very

gentle in his speech. He has a vision about the church, and is has the will to serve the community.

The church has a powerful youth program. There are strong support groups in the form of cell prayer sessions.

Interview pastor 4- Bethany Christian church:

The researcher subsequently met another young female pastor of the Bethany Christian Centre who told him how she was converted and found the power of God in the Bethany church. She is originally from the NG Kerk. There she basically was a church-goer. She became a Pentecostal church member by marriage and also became a church-goer, though there was something burning inside her about serving God. She is a teacher by profession. One time as she took children out on winter school teaching at a farm, they would have evening prayers which suddenly spoke to her inner person. She went to the church at the Pentecostal church. She remembers well the day one congregant stood up during the ‘alter call’ to say that he has decided to serve the Lord while he is still young and energetic. She took the decision which was a turning point in her life. She used to visit the Bethany Church due to proximity to her house, lo and behold, she found that it was there where she was fulfilled spiritually.

This pastor was known to the researcher as a business person who had nothing to do with God. She was a “ happy-go-lucky person”

What was outstanding for her about Bethany Christian centre was:

1. The pastor taught them relevant bible studies
2. She was encouraged to attend lectures at some centre in town

3. She also attended Bible studies at the Shekeinah church
4. She was taught a great deal about intercession.

Through the church and its activities, the youth become the pillar its ministry. Through the youth, adults are brought into the church. She sites a biblical analogy of young Paul who became Christ's ambassador. Paul also influenced the ministry of young Timothy. The vulnerability of the modern youth means the church must intensify its role of saving them from the hostile world.

She has no regrets about her new church and would not go back to the mission church. Her husband, who was also anti- church, has joined her in the love of God. This she says, follows on their teachings that a Christian cannot get married to someone who does not know God

Interview 5. (with a member of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG))

One member of the UCKG who is currently an assistant pastor, belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. He was however only a member who was inactive in the church. He was invited by a friend to join the church, which he did. He has stopped alcohol and smoking and his whole family joined the UCKG .He has become a responsible and successful businessman in the community. The success is attributed to him joining the UCKG.

This member of the church invited the researcher to come personally and experience the church, which he did. I did not tell him that I was going to go there because I wanted to be objective.

I had a pastor pray for me for what I perceived to be what I personally wanted. This followed on an invitation I received from young person who was placed at the cross road. I was given stones and ordered to go to the church where I would have a pastor pray for me. After a prayer I was invited to come to a service that would be relevant to my supplications and that would be on a Friday. I also received a publication about other activities of the church in South Africa with other people who received help for a variety of problems.

This member of the UCKG says he sees no church outside the UCKG. His whole family is in the church.

Interview no 6. – Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG)

The researcher interviewed a former member of the Anglican Church became an active member of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) because the pastor, who was a heavy drinker, shouted the congregation during the Holy Communion saying that some came to the sacramental table even though they have not paid their church dues. She left to join the church that does not 'have many funny rules'

She has however stopped attending there regularly when the church moved to premises that are far for her to attend(as she is old). The fact is that, after leaving the UCKG she continues to attend church(at the Anglican church she was an occasional worshipper) and has now joined the Faith mission church close by, attending services regularly and paying her tithe.(remember that she left the Anglican Church complaining of a small amount that she was paying as church dues)

Interview no 7. a member of Grace Bible Church

Clearly one cannot miss the type of cars that park outside the buildings of the church. My experience with this church is when I noticed that in our church we had a member who had dual membership with the Grace Bible Church. This member had cassettes of the preachers of the Grace Bible church. He wanted to have spiritual fulfillment in that church. He joined services during the week. The main reason that he gave was that, when his business experienced serious problems he needed prayers from fellow worshippers. These prayers were not forthcoming from the mission Church pastors nor did he receive any comforting messages from the fellow congregants. He is a preacher and a class leader in of the mission church. While a member of the Grace Bible church, he actually never left the mission church- he had dual membership.

Being a preacher in the mission church he brought with him mannerisms from the Grace Bible church. Words such as 'In the name of Jesus' which are associated with the 'Abezalwane'. His wife was from an evangelical church and never really enjoyed the

husband's mission church .After joining the Grace Bible church he became aware that there is a difference between attending church and being a "born again" Christian. He believes that salvation is the way to go fro all Christians and not just to attend church.

The reaction of the people in the mission Church was that he was bringing what is not their tradition so that he did not feel at home any more. What the researcher heard about what some traditional members of the mission church did not like about 'Bazalwane' was that these members over emphasized the doctrine of being 'born again Christians', they experienced people praying simultaneously at worship, with some praying with raised hands. They did not like the manner at worship of people having to write their problems on papers, taking these to the preacher believing that when they have written such problems situations would necessarily improve.

The next year the mother church sent a new pastor who was also a 'born again Christian' The pastor in the same mission church was believed also to be part of the same 'bazalwane' dualism. This resulted in dissatisfactions among other members who actually threatened leaving the church. Paradoxically, an interesting phenomenon took place in the mission Church. Membership started to rise with this new method of worship. Interaction with some members of the mission church said something about the new look church and threatened to leave, but it never came for them to leave. New members joined the church most coming from the mines. I was told that even those who were conservative have changed their attitudes because of the raised spirituality in the church. There is amazing

spiritual growth. There were rumors that the pastor would leave the church to start a charismatic church but this never happened.

The church is influenced by the teachings of the Rhema Church. It is one of the prosperity churches.

Interviewno 7. A member of the ZCC church.

Mr X was not a member of any Christian church. He is brought up in a family of Sangomas. His whole life has been that of traditional medicines. He interacted with a pastor from the ZCC in Rustenburg. He had lots of domestic problems as well as economic problems. This pastor gave him “ ditaela” from the ZCC church. He started going to prayers and he felt changes in his life. He was then baptized in the church at Moria. His wife did not join him because she did not like the church, but later she and the whole family joined. He is now one of the pastors in the church.

His main reasons for joining the church was that witchcraft is not allowed in the church. Many African people need to be protected against the evil spirits.

He believes in the power of healing in the ZCC. They use coffee, special cooking oil and milk for healing.

These are some features of the church that the interviewer got form him and other members of the church:

The researcher also through interviews and experience has discovered that at the times of annual ceremonies to Moria, some women come to get injectable contraception with the hope that it would stop them from menstruating. A menstruating woman is regarded as “unclean”. She does not go to church nor is she allowed to touch anything that belongs to the church. She is not allowed to cook for her husband. After menstruations, she has to wait for seven days and there after wash with water that has been prayed for (“ metsi a thapelo”) and sunlight soap.

The members of the ZCC continuously use ‘ditaela’ ,which are prophesies they get from the priests. ‘Ditaela’ comprise of ‘*metsi a thapelo*’ coffee, milk and fish oil. They only use *bupi ba mabele* (sorghum maize)

The ZCC is by far the largest church in Rustenburg and the vicinity. Members do not easily leave the church to join other churches.

There are two groups of ZCC Churches. The group that wears a ‘star badge /naledi’ and the group that wears a ‘ dove/ leeba’ badge. The researcher is told that even at Moria these two groups worship side by side. They are led by brothers , Barnabas and St Engenas respectively.

What is particularly interesting with this church is that many people tend to leave their churches to join them for a variety of reasons such as:

- Affliction by disease such as HIV.
- Treatment for chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis
- Diseases that could not be healed by other institutions including modern medicine and traditional healers

- Protection from witchcraft
- Seeking employment
- Business endeavors

The researcher has observed outstanding features of members of the ZCC which indicate commitment and loyalty to the church. These are:

- Generally men dress in their Khakhi suits, wear hats and put on a badge for worship services.
- Women wear their head gear in a manner that is peculiar to them. In fact one can identify ZCC women easily even if she may not have her badge on.
- All have a string called “moitlamo” tied around their waists, or they have all their clothes marked with a green piece of cloth.
- Always wear the church badges.

Interview no 8- A ZCC member :

The researcher would like to include at this stage an interview with a patient who has been known to the researcher since 1982. He came in to the consulting rooms in January 2006 wearing a badge of the ZCC. He was all along a member of the Anglican Church as this was the church of his parents. He did not attend the church regularly. What made him join the church followed his misfortunes in the business. His business was vandalized; his cars were involved in accidents resulting in severe loss of income. He then joined the church. Great changes occurred. He is now a full member and he has since discovered the power of God. He is committed to the church to the extent that he has traveled as far as

Botswana and the Eastern Cape to pray with some members of the church. He shared with the researcher that the prayers that they hold to support each other are very important to many church members. His wife is not yet a full member yet but she supports her husband. She is still considering joining the church. The children are still members of the Anglican Church.

He also moved to the ZCC because he wanted to be protected against witchcraft.

Interview no 9. IPHC member.

The member interviewed by the researcher was originally an Anglican Church member. He joined the IPHC after he had a criminal case that he had to defend in court. The founder of the church personally prayed for him and assured him that he would not be found guilty. At court the next day he was indeed discharged as there was insufficient evidence against him. He is now a dedicated member who goes to church regularly.

While at the Anglican Church he was not very active, he is very active in the IPHC and is also occupying a senior office in the church.

The church is located at Phokeng village. There are certain outstanding features about this church. The outstanding feature is that the church attracts many male congregants. Males are allowed to wed more than one wife. The man who wants to wed another wife must get permission from the first wife/wives, who must actually go out and request the prospective wife to marry him and also must participate in all cultural requirements such

as payment of the dowry / lobola. The man must show to the church that he can afford taking care of all the wives that he has married.

Marriage is conducted in the church and there can be many couples in a marriage ceremony. I am told that the dowry is paid to the church primarily. The man can decide to also pay to the prospective bridal family.

There is a strong belief that the head of the church, Modise has powers that are almost similar to the powers of God or Christ. They follow the teachings of the Old Testament. The popular hymns of Zion, sung by many protestant and independent churches glorify God and Christ. Funerals are held on Sundays as opposed to the services held on Saturdays by most churches. Those that go to the funeral may not go to church on that Sunday because they are regarded as being “unclean”.

- Church services are held on Saturdays and on that day they are not supposed to do any work.
- Funerals are held during the week away from the Sabbath/Saturday.
- They regard themselves as the chosen people (Bakgethoa)- just like Israelites who were chosen by God.
- There are strict rules that must be abided: women do not wear trousers, they are to always wear a head gear at all times
- Their Christmas is in a September according to the African traditional calendar, during which time they take their first fruits to the church.

Interview 9. “Church Of Jesus of the Latter-Day saints”

Of late there have been young students from the “Church of Jesus of the Latter –day saints”. These are young students who usually come in pairs, usually dressed in black trousers and white shirts, usually boys (I have never seen the girls).what seemed strange to me is that these boys use bicycles; mostly it is a black boy paired with a white boy. These boys have done door to door visits and actually give out their “Bible” (Called the book of the Mammon) to prospective people (at least they gave one to the researcher). They came to the me and wanted me to join this church. I however did not even understand what they were saying for the reason that he was studying for his junior degree in theology at the time and did not want to confuse myself with other religions least to say I had no prior knowledge about the Church of Jesus of the Latter- Day Saints.. The next time that I actually heard something made mention about them was on a television station. I became interested in finding more about their activities in Rustenburg and how they operate. The fact that these young boys came to my practice was a pointer to the fact that they were on an active recruitment campaign. At that moment I had not heard if they had active members in the community. One pastor friend of mine from the Assemblies of God, himself a student in theology, was very critical of these young boys that they were confusing the community about their gospel. Their church building is in Phokeng village. It however proved difficult to trace members of the church. I contacted these young priests and showed interest in getting contact with them. They then invited me to their other church in town.

In 2007, I came across a patient who is a member of this church. His parents belonged to the Lutheran church. When he became very ill he joined the St John's apostolic church seeking help there. After a while, his healers (*basebeletsi*) behaved in ways that were not impressive to him and he stopped attending church. Later then he met these missionaries. He was impressed by what they said and decided to join the church. He is currently visiting the Church of Jesus of the latter-day saints with the intension of joining them. He shall take his family along to this church.

He likes the church because it teaches that people must not forget their ancestors. The church explains the relationship between ancestors and Jesus Christ. They teach about where we are and where we are going in the gospel. For him, this church is unique in that it is a mixture of mission churches and "Bazalwana"

I believe that in the near future this Church is going to be a force to reckon with, especially that in the United States this faith has more than twelve million adherents in 2003 (Carman 2004: 80). It is estimated that there are more members of this faith outside the US (estimated at 15% in the US) following on its rapid growth world wide. I was told by my relative that in Soweto this church has many followers already.

The church is administered through the priesthood system like many independent churches. Boys (also called missionaries) are deemed worthy from the age of twelve. These priests work under the guidance of a "home teacher" and they visit homes monthly. Tithing is the requirement in temple worship.

Similar to the Independent Churches, this faith is based on the prophetic messages that in the latter days, all things will be made new and that a prophet shall be sent to earth. The saints believe that this prophet is Joseph Smith, Jr.

Interview 10. “Zion Church”

There are many different types of Zions in Rustenburg and the surroundings. An interview with a Zionist evangelist who is knowledgeable about the church told me this: He is originally from Nongoma in Zululand and has come to work in Rustenburg. His whole family is still there at Nongoma.

When he was asked if they get people from other churches joining them, he says yes they do. The reason why people join them is basically those who need spiritual healing.

Positions of authority and power in the church are important. There is respect for the preacher (*umfundisi*) and the bishop. They are a symbol of respect and authority.

Positions that an individual could attain is based on one’s spiritual gift of preaching, healing or prophecy.

The positions in the church start with ‘*gosa*’ –who is a door keeper, ‘*umshumaeli*’ (a preacher, ‘*umvangeli*’(an evangelist), ‘*umdikoni*’(deacon) , ‘*umfundisi*’ (pastor) and u-bishop. He holds the position of a pastor in the church.

Family and culture play an important role in membership to the Zions. The pastor and bishop are usually elderly married males. By law the leaders do not shave their beard.

This interviewed candidate attended the apostolic faith church due to transport reasons. When he was at the apostolic church he realized that it was not quite like at home. He did not receive the recognition that he wanted and discovered that the Batswana culture did not fit with his Zulu culture in church. Finally he decided not to go to church any longer as he was getting spiritually frustrated.

Interview 11- Amapostoli.:

The Saint John's apostolic churches in Rustenburg are among the churches that have a following among the Black communities. They are members of Ma-Nku churches. They could be easily confused with the Zions from their attire of green, blue and white. They also have lots of traditional cultural influence.

Closer to the researcher's practice are two the St Johns churches and there are many more in the township. They are known for their music with drums. A pastor of the St John's told the researcher that there are '*basebeletsi*' in the church. These are gifted leaders who heal the sick. '*Basebeletsi*' treat patients. They do not advertise their services. Patients are referred to them by those who have received their healing.

On some Sunday mornings they go on marching through the township. Most young congregants are seen taking part in the beating of drums. They march like the drum majorettes or soldiers. The researcher was asked to clearly observe the committed young men and women, the youth in the drum majorettes. Physical and spiritual healing

programs are I place at the houses of the healers, They call these houses 'diagelo'.

Patients are brought the similar to an admission to hospital in modern day language.

Amapostoli:

Since there are people who have indicated joining the St John's church, the researcher has this to note about the church:

- Beat drums at worship services
- They do clap hands when singing and singing is accompanied by moving in circles.
- They wear colorful regalia
- Mostly they do not have church buildings and others may be found worshipping in the school class rooms. Some have their churches in their own homes at the back rooms or with makeshift structures.
- Their leaders are predominantly Bishops with several other subordinate pastors.
- They also have their specific conferences whereby they come together for worship.
- The church has prophets who may have the gift of traditional healing.

Interview 12- Apostolic church Bishop

I interviewed a Bishop of the St Korlonias Apostolic Church in Zion at Boitekong settlement in Rustenburg.

Back ground information

The Bishop is originally from Botswana and he belonged to the St Apostolic church there. He left the church in Botswana because there were problems:

- After the death of the founder of the church in Botswana, the remaining pastors started fighting among themselves as to who was to succeed him. This confusion has sacrificed some church members who left to join other churches.
- When his brother and sister died, the church could not bury them and he never could forgive the church for having been so brave as to leave them when they so needed help.

He subsequently was without a church for 6 months.

He had already met with people who were from Botswana (and others who belonged to no church) who also were not happy with the church following on the confusion that started after the death of the leader. Subsequently all these people convened a meeting and a decision was reached for the necessity to form a new church which would be a continuation of the tradition of the Batswana back I their country of birth.. (A need of fellowship among people with common culture)

About the church:

- The church has been registered in Pretoria.
- The worship services are held in a corrugated make-shift house .
- People who join the church come initially because they want to be healed spiritually as well as physically. Some come because they want to serve their ancestors who are forbidden in the mission churches. Some went to the ZCC for healing but have since come back because they still were not

healed. He said to me that the people need the church with an African beat.

- The services are held on Sundays from 11- 14.hr30
 - There are services that are held on some Saturday evenings through out the night up to the next morning (tebello/ night vigil), and then into the Sunday service.
 - Hymns and singing is done through clapping of hands and they use hand-made drums(African drums made from cow skins)
 - He holds conferences – the Good Friday and a conference in September.
 - Healing is part of his activity- the church - they use bathing of “patients”. They also give enemas as well as inducing vomit to treat those who might be bewitched through ‘ sejeso’ (African poison) They also use candles as part of the healing process.
- He is also a traditional healer.
- He works for as a carpenter in town.
 - **Baptisms:** done by way of emersion in running waters at the mountains

Interview 13. Makonyana Church -“ Tshenolo, the Holy church”.

The researcher interviewed a lady who came to the rooms due to ill health. She also had domestic problems which the church was dealing with.

Her family previously belonged to a mission Church. The researcher personally knew this family as they worshipped together. The whole family was dedicated and strong in their Christian affiliation. They now belong to the Makonyana church in Phokeng.

After attending the mission church, they realized that they were not spiritually satisfied. The whole family moved to join an Apostolic church where they met with a leader who gave them a prophesy that they were actually not in the right place as yet, they were in transit towards a “Revelation Church” which shall specifically be led by a woman. At that time it did not make sense to them.

Reasons for leaving the mission Church, or for not belonging to the main- line churches:

- They experienced spiritual dissatisfaction.
- They were told, after one of the children became sick, that the child was talking to the spirit daily at 12h00. This young girl used to vehemently refuse going to church and would not back down in her insistence that the church had no meaning to her. Now where she is, she is fulfilled and attends church whole heartedly.

About the church:

- The church is said to be a revelation of God coming from the European countries to settle in Africa.

- Christ has chosen the poor, as Christ was also poor.
- Christ, on coming to Africa, a predominantly Black continent, would come in a different shape (as a woman) contrary to the biblical male picture of Christ. There are also dissatisfactions that angels are depicted as white. There is the belief that the founder, Mme Kubese Motaung is Christ herself. Mme Kubese Motaung is still alive and is stationed at Dikepu in the Moretele district of the North West province.
- Church services are held on Tuesdays at 6.in the morning, starting with women collecting water in preparation for healing rituals during the day. There is another service on Friday from seven in the evening The Sunday service is held from eleven in the morning. Members must be in church from five minutes before eleven so that at exactly eleven the service starts. Those who are not in the church by eleven should remain outside until they hear a hymn being chanted. There is not formal scripture being prepared beforehand The Bible is just opened by a person who shall be picked from the floor, and that becomes the scripture for the day. Everybody has the opportunity to preach. When they come to the church, there is no formal plan as to what is going to happen; every thing takes place by the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- Baptisms are not planned events. The Holy Spirit may just instruct whoever that there must be baptisms. This means that there are no formal baptismal days planned on the calendar.
- Everybody is welcome. All the spiritual gifts that a person may have are welcome. Those who have the power to heal do that at an amount of R 7-00.

A person brings two candles- one, the person takes home with, and another one stays behind at the church. During the healing ritual one is not supposed to give a “Christian name” but an African name. A married woman is called by her husband’s name and the children are addressed in terms of the relation to their ancestral genealogy.

- The church has very strict rules She is prepared to follow these difficult demands by the church-Some of these rules are that ladies are not allowed to be without any head gear at all times, (taken from the African culture) nor are they allowed to wear trousers. This she has no problem up holding as this is an exercise of endurance.

After this mind challenging interview, the researcher asked if she is happy to be in this church, the answer was that there is no better church for her than this. They are actually getting many people from other churches There are however those who find it difficult to follow all the church instructions and who then find themselves belonging to other churches simultaneously.

This has taught the researcher that there are many churches that African Blacks belong to that remain their own secrets. Further research in this regard would undoubtedly yield lot of interesting findings. She mentioned many distinguished figures in the community who belong to the church but who wished to remain anonymous.

Interview 14. The Roman Catholic Church:

The researcher met a patient who came for arrangements towards her preparations towards delivery of a baby. It came out during the consultation that the patient was an ex-Nun from the Roman Catholic Church. She informed the researcher that her partner was currently a priest in the church and was currently serving notice following their relationship and the subsequent pregnancy.

Later on her partner (The Priest) accompanied her as she came for ante-natal care and he was there also when she had come for confinement. At the time of delivery he had already resigned as a Catholic priest and he had joined another Catholic Church at a nearby village as an ordinary congregant. During his priesthood he was a popular figure, powerful in his ministry and loved by many.

Having come to contact with some congregants from the church, the researcher had different attitudes towards the couple. (The priest and the Nun). One of the congregants was “disgusted” by the priest and a nun’s relationship and the way they used to behave. It was, she said, frustrating to her that other church members used to see the relationship developing and it was not surprising that she subsequently fell pregnant.

Did they feel like leaving the church? No. despite what happened they are loyal members of the church as they feel that they would rather be part of the changes that the church needs to make rather than bringing changes from outside.

I have watched them and realized that they were really happy as a couple. Their body language tells it all.

These facts came out of the interview:

- They do not regret their actions and feel that at this age and time, the Church seems to be out of step with real life.
- They do not intend leaving the church, despite numerous encounter with some of the people they led who said that if they were to open their own church, they would gladly join them.
- During his ministry, he had used methods of deviating from the normal Catholic style and accommodated African ways, and this greatly kept the church together and they saw many members joining. Young couples were kept in the church.
- He prayed by laying hands, was open minded and advised people's consciences on the use of contraceptives.
- At end of each year he would arrange special prayers for those sitting for examinations.
- He prayed for water that people believed would cure them- he was convinced that people's beliefs were important in making the church meaningful. He went about sprinkling water at their homes if they believed that they were seeing "Tokoloshis". One woman came to him and confessed to him that since he left the church, there is no more meaning in the Catholic Church and that she has joined the '*bazalwane*'.
- Following on his style of worship, he was disliked by other priests who became somehow happy after his down fall.

- Following on their actions, they have had numerous other young colleagues who also intend following them. Their friend who is currently abroad, indicated that he considered leaving the church and leading a 'normal' life. This friend was recruited into Catholics by one of the prominent political leaders during the apartheid struggle era. Now that the political stability has set in, and that that leader is happy in his marriage and doing well, he feels he has been misled and he would like to lead a "normal" life.
- The lady when asked how other women regarded her in this situation, she says only the other nuns have a problem, but the women in the society have no problems at all. She has no ill feelings about the church, but would like some practical life experiences to be considered. She acknowledges that monastic life is declining in the world and only the poor countries still follow it. Most of the nuns are now only of the older generation and the young ladies do not enter the monastic life. She says that the young ones are harassed by the old nuns out of frustration, as they have reached the cul-de-sac in their lives.

Subsequently I interviewed a lady who belongs to the same church/parish about the effect of the incidence in the church, and this is what she said:

- She was happy that they left before there was a scandal
- The young choir members used to claim him and this frustrated him. The fact that he became involved with the nun even made them angry to the point of hating him.
- After the incidence, many are not as active in the choir- reason is that he used to be a good organizer.

- He got a lot of pressure from fellow leaders as they claimed that he was from the family of the Apostolic Church and they felt that he was using the church only so that the church could educate him and then he would leave
- She thinks that he was vulnerable as he used to be alone with these young members during confessions. The present priest is always is with a third person in order to avoid doubts, as he is young too.

There is in the same church a member of the church who was a nun. After qualifying as a nurse, she then worked at a Catholic hospice that was part of the church project. She later went to work for a private hospice and later left the convent so that she could lead a 'normal' life. She is currently an ordinary church member.

The researcher had another interview with a member of the same Catholic Church in Tlhabane who told him that she became a Catholic when she went to the Catholic school at St Anne's Catholic School. This school was regarded as the best in the early 60's ,subsequently many students who attended there then became Catholics. Her family belongs to the Lutheran Church and she is the only Catholic in the family. She gave names of similar ex-students who are now Catholics as a result of their schooling

In the Catholic Church, "Whites" did not allow them spiritual freedom. They felt spiritually trapped. They did not enjoy listening to the pastor/Father without them having an opportunity to "witness" like other churches do.

Later, when the “Fathers” were Black, their music changed and they had drums beating to have the African Rhythm, they then had a choir that sang African hymns and they also had opportunity to participate in competitions like other Churches.

Through the choir singing at funerals and other occasions, they have recruited many people into the church.

The sister church members in town have occasionally joined in the township services and the comments have been that the services in the township are noisy. Those attending services in the township have also attended services in town and they complain that services there are boring.

They now enjoy services whereby the pastor preaches as opposed to the liturgies of the past tradition. They used to come in and go home without feeling that they participated in the service but rather went to listen to a man reading for them.

Some people left the Church to join other Churches when the offerings were introduced like it is in other churches. The Catholics were used to the fact that there were donations towards Church buildings. Now they have to offer and they are to give building funds as well as monies for the chairs and for erection of the fence as well as general maintenance. Like all other churches now, when one has not participated in these projects, there have been disappointments when such dues are to

be paid before a person can be given a service, such as funeral, wedding etc. When such disappointments are experienced people have then decided to leave the church.

In the past they did not have night vigils during the good Fridays, they now have them and they are now part of the African community.

The youth used to leave *en masse* to join other youth organizations in other churches, especially the evangelical churches. With the African leadership in the local church, the young generation is now active and has attracted youth from other churches.

There have been great changes since the church fathers are of African descent.

According to the Catholics, a Catholic woman who marries a man who is not a Catholic attracts the man towards her church. There are women who are Catholics and whose husbands continue at their respective churches. This leads to a situation where the wife attends a different Church from that of her husband. Since men generally do not attend church, women continue being members of the church while their husbands are 'sleeping' members.

She reported that there are now prophets in the Catholic Church, something that was not there when "these Whites" were there.

In conclusion, the researcher wishes to mention that the main church has not granted the priest a dispensation to marry. They have now joined the Shekeinah church and they are now legally married.

Interview 15 - The Christ Embassy Church.

This church was started in April 2006 in Tlhabane .It started with six members and now, according to the pastor, membership stands at five hundred (in less than eight months). The six members used to go to Randburg for their worship. When they realized that there was a possibility of establishing the church in Rustenburg, they approached the officials at the head quarters who then supplied them with a pastor.

The researcher knows some members of this church as having been members from other churches. The researcher has personally observed the growth of this church since the pastor rented his house. It became easy to have discussions that provided first hand information as well as to observe about their growth.

These are some facts that the researcher established about this church from its pastor:

The Church is led by the popular pastor Chris Oyakhilome who delivers sermons on television and performs miracles of healing. This church has branches in major South African cities. Pastor Chris is in America and also travels world wide. In South Africa it is Pastor Chris' brother who takes care of the church.

The researcher has watched the television program in which pastor Chris conducted a service. The program showed real life witnessing of clinical conditions by patients. Some

of these conditions were diagnosed at hospitals. Those healed included patients who have been subjected to medical treatment and were told that they would not be healed. The contrary happened as the patients would be healed in front of many people. People fall to the ground and after being 'blown' by the pastor. Having seen how healing takes place, some members come with expectations of been healed in the same manner.

The researcher received a 'rhapsody' which is a booklet sold for twenty five rand by the members of the church. This booklet serves as a recruitment instrument. The researcher has received numerous calls to join the church.

The local pastor is originally from the Eastern Cape. Prior to coming to Tlhabane he had a dream that his ministry is needed in the North West Province. He has undergone training through the Rhema church. He also attempted his Bachelor's degree in theology at Unisa.

He has been trained to teach on tithing. Congregants choose the departments where they would like their contributions to go. They are urged to partner in these activities. Monies raised are used for specific purposes. Such partnerships are for example in ministerial upkeep, church building, administration etc.

He recruits members by doing house visits in the township. When a new member joins the church, he/she is not just left alone, but gets a praying partner and is also taught on

discipleship. The trained 'disciple' then recruits new members. There is constant monitoring and education of the new incumbents in the church.

He goes on the local radio station, the time slot for which is paid for by local business people in the church. The church gets support and members from wealthy community members.

This church has recently separated from the main church following on what he called difficult financial demands by the head quarters in Randburg . He says that he has become like a slave to the main church since the church demands lots of money from him irrespective of what his expenses. When he showed resistance, he was replaced by a pastor from Nigeria. There were bitter fights and the church split in two groups. He has since established a new church.

At his new church, he has started a new theme in ministry and is recruiting new members. He has already done so by inviting a popular "kwaito" musician (who is most loved by the youth) at his crusade.

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Interview 16. The Bophelo Apostolic Church in Zion.

The church is in Chaneng, a Moses Kotane local municipal district. Chaneng is a semi-rural township.

The church leader is a Bishop known well by the researcher : He was born a Lutheran Church member. It occurred to him that a day in which he was to be confirmed as a full member in the Lutheran church, he became blind. A realization came to his family that he probably was in the wrong church. The family then joined the faith mission church and then moved to “Back to God” church and then the full gospel church.

He went on his own and joined the Philisa Apostolic church (St John’s) in Tlhabane.

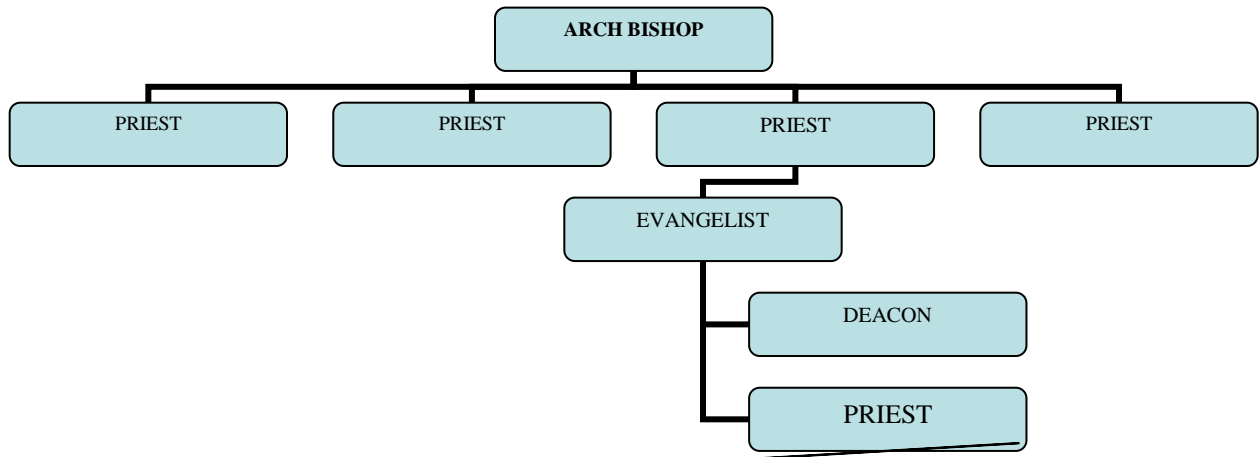
While at Philisa Apostolic church, he had a vision that showed him a church that he was to start- the people of that church were to wear green and yellow garments. This is how the Bophelo Apostolic church was founded in 1994, being assisted by the Bishop of Philisa Apostolic church.

When the church started the only members were himself and his wife, who also came from the Lutheran Church. While establishing the Bophelo Apostolic church he also became a traditional healer. Some of the patients from his traditional healing joined the church .Some of the fellow congregants from Philisa Apostolic church also joined him. There were also people who came from the community.

He holds daily prayers for everyone who needs spiritual support.

Since then the church has grown from one small church to fifteen other branches, extending right into Botswana, where there are three branches.

Women are a force to reckon with in the leadership of the church; seven women and eight men in total. The organogram of the church is according as follows:



He used to have a strong youth program which is currently affected by internal power struggles. The church attracts young adults.

Church activities are as follows: Saturday: 13hr-16 hr teachings on HIV AND STI'S (sexually transmitted infections) Sunday: 11hr – 14 hr Church service. There is co-operation between the church activities and the traditional healing programs.

Their church dues are R14-00 annually Baptisms: emersion in the *running* river.

He is involved in many community organizations. Currently he assists in the DOT (Direct observation of treatment) program on TB management. He was active in the Rustenburg moral regeneration forum, but has since stopped attending meetings because of the attitude of the 'Bazalwane' pastors who, after discovering that he is a traditional healer, despised him. They stopped greeting him by hand. He is an outcast by virtue of being a traditional healer in this forum.

He has received members from the local congregational churches who joined his church. This movement has resulted in strained relationships with the leaders of those churches who feel that he is taking their members away from them.

Of late he experiences a ‘plot’ within his cabinet, to oust him from his position. This worries him greatly- There are prophets in the church who want the church to distance itself from traditional or cultural concerns. What surprises him though is the fact that when they established the church they understood exactly who he is (a traditional healer).

His prophets use tea, water, and milk in their healing practices while he uses the same together with traditional medicines.

In summary this church is prophetic in nature, healing includes faith healing, exorcism. The bishop runs a church that is a mixture of Zion, Apostolic as well as traditional healing. He is also a member of ‘Thapelo ya sephiri’ with some of his fellow members. The researcher has attended one of the services which were organizer from Friday through Sunday .The services are held annually as thanks giving. There is a sacrificial celebration held at 12 midnight symbolizing Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac. Preaching proceeds through out Friday evening up to the Saturday morning. The researcher noted that this service combined culture and religion in a symbiotic fashion.

Interview 17-. The Berachah Bible Church.

This church was established by a lawyer in 2002 .He belonged to the ZCC and later became a strong 'Mzalwana' who would even organized prayer services at the magistrate offices during lunch periods on Wednesdays. He has since now established his own church which is growing fast.

His mission theme is "Africa back to the Lord".

The church building in Mogwase has big inscriptions which read: **Berachah Bible Church- Africa back to the Lord.**

He left the ZCC because he did not believe in their associations with ancestral worship. He then joined 'Faith city' ministry in Tlhabane which was itself founded by a pastor who was from the Lutheran church.

While he was at "Faith city" he received a prophecy and a ministry from God to establish a church called Berachah with the theme "Africa back to the Lord". The church has three branches with a membership of 150-200. The other two sites are tent ministries.

His membership comes from three sources:

- Those who never belonged to any church
- Those who come from mainline churches who were not "born again" .
- Those who are "born again" and come from other "born again" churches.

His ministry:

His ministry is that of deliverance which strongly condemns African culture. Africans must relinquish ancestral worship as this divides their attention from worshipping God wholeheartedly. He teaches the congregants to first renounce ancestral powers within themselves. Africans he says are the only nation that follows both Christianity and

ancestral worship and this delays their service to God. Only after the person has exorcised the dead people within themselves can a person join the church (they must chase ancestral spirits away). He does not believe that a dead person, who has enjoyed his/her life can now come into a living person and start giving instructions to slaughter a cow in order to have ones life to be in order. There is no dead person more powerful than oneself” he said to me.

He believes that religion cannot be separated from politics.

He says “that there is no European in the Bible. The Bible is purely African.

- The Queen of Sheba went to Jerusalem for blessings
- Job was African
- Genesis 2 also illustrates the African nature of the Bible.

Some of these statements are not clear to me though- Further explanations would have to take place at another platform.

His ministry has 5 levels of activities:

1. The congregation has to spread the gospel among themselves
2. He preaches the ministry to other churches.
3. He uses the media such as television (future) and radio. He has a program on the local station (Radio Mafisa) on Sundays at 6.30.and on Thursdays in the afternoons.
4. He is gets books and pamphlets which he distributes to the local communities.
5. He goes into the continent of Africa. He is a member of ‘Intercession for Africa’ a body that holds conferences in Africa with the same message.

He believes in a ministry that is relevant for the Africans and does not believe in preaching about issues in the bible that do not form part of the African context. He does not want to preach to Africans as if he preaches for an American congregation. The political context of the message must be relevant, addressing issues such as rape and crime, for instance. Religion must be able to explain what is currently happening in the lives of people, such poverty and why only Africans are found at the squatter camps and not other people. He does not believe in preaching a colorless religion/theology.

When the researcher asked him about the Berachah church which established and the one in Houston/Texas, he admitted that they are not linked. Berachah means 'blessing' and is a Greek word. Blacks are blessed, and yet they are not aware of it.

Healing is done by 'lay of hands' (Just like Jesus).

The Berachah church is both Pentecostal and charismatic and he pointed out that most mission churches have lost these two important dimensions that are inherent in Christian mission.

In the Berachah church he is the Bishop and there are three assistant pastors and three deacons.

Interview 18. Oppressed for being a spiritually gifted woman.

The researcher interviewed a lady from Ledig who came because she wanted to be cured from her generalized body pains. She had consulted several doctors but her health needs were not addressed. By applying a biopsychosocial approach in the interview it became clear that she had suffered immense stress. Giving her medication without attending to her real problems was not going to be of any value to her. The best I could do at that moment was to listen to her:

She is a member of the Zionist Apostolic Church. She believes that she has spiritual gifts herself to become a prophet. In the course of her illness, she consulted medical doctors, traditional healers, and she has gone to many churches in need of help.

Some of her supposed helpers have made attempts to discourage her from taking leadership positions in the church. One traditional healer made her condition worse when he realized that she had healing powers herself.

In her frustration she then went to the ZCC Church. The same thing happened when a ZCC priest discovered that she is herself a healer.

She was destined to go to Moria to be baptized there as part of her healing when she then decided to leave the ZCC Church since she was not interested in joining them full time, but only was seeking their help.

She had problems at home too. Her husband is a priest in the same Zion and he also made her spiritual life difficult.

He had issues himself about church and was power hungry. She was aware that he had absolutely no spiritual gift. What he wanted in church was just power and money.

He was first an ordinary member of the Church, and then he became a priest. When this church did not elevate him to a higher position he decided to join another Zionist church. He then left and established his own apostolic church where he became the Bishop of the newly formed apostolic church.

All along in his ministry she followed him but he suppressed her spiritually because he was aware that she was spiritually gifted in ways different from him. She would pray for people in the congregation with pleasing results. This resulted in dissatisfactions from the husband and she had to stay at home at some stage.

Having listened to her story which she had never shared with any body before, she felt a lot better. Was she paranoiac? No, in essence, the researcher has noted a change in subsequent consultations when she finally joined a new church and became a spiritual healer.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFORMING CHURCH HOPPING

From the interviews above, I have discovered various reasons that led to the respondent leaving a particular church

These are as follows:

5.1 THEMES

Interview 1.

1. Disease- cured from epilepsy.
2. prayer
3. preaching
4. He has moved to establish his own Ministry (has hopped twice)

Interview 2. Tent mission

1. Disease cure
2. preaching
3. healing
4. prophesy- people want to know what is going on in their lives

Interview 3 Bethany

1. 24 Hours phone in program
2. Youth program
3. Prophecy- people want to know what is going on in their lives
4. Prayer- cell formations.

Interview 4 another Bethany

1. Spiritual fulfillment

Interview 5. (with a member of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG))

1. Invited by a friend
2. Spirituality

Interview no 6. UCKG

1. have many funny rules- not happy with the leader
2. Problems related to the distance.

Interview no 7. a member of Grace Bible Church.

1. spiritual fulfillment
2. prayers
3. “born again”
4. salvation

Interviewno 7. A member of the ZCC church.

2. Domestic problems as well as Business problems
3. Protection from witchcraft
4. Healing
5. Business success

Interview no 8- A ZCC member:

1. Business success
2. Witchcraft.

Interview no 9. IPHC member.

1. Protection on a legal matter.
2. Prayer.

Interview 9. “Church Of Jesus of the Latter-Day saints”

1. Recruitment
2. Dissatisfaction with a healer.

Interview 10. “Zion Church”

1. Employment
2. spiritual fulfillment
3. Authority and power to preach the gospel

Interview 11- Amapostoli.

1. Healing
2. preaching.

Interview 12- Apostolic church Bishop

1. Culture
2. healing
3. Death of the founder
4. cultural identification
5. spiritual fulfillment

Interview 13. Makonyana Church -“ Tshenolo, the Holy church”.

1. Spirituality
2. healing
3. wanted a female healer

Interview 14. The Roman Catholic Church:

1. Church not accommodating sexual feelings
2. Church dispensation too rigid.
3. Church not accommodating cultural issues

Interview 15 - The Christ Embassy Church.

1. Financial matters
2. Power of the media
3. Sermon/ preaching

Interview 16. The Bophelo Apostolic Church in Zion.

1. Serous threat of disease.
2. healing
3. culture
4. Belongs to many other religions- Thapelo ya Sephiri

Interview 17-. The Berachah Bible Church.

1. From ZCC to Mzalwana
2. Political
3. Healing
4. Culture (opposed)

Interview 18. Oppressed for being a spiritually gifted woman.

1. Healing
2. Oppression as a woman
3. Spiritual healing

After the particular member has left the church, there are then attributes that the particular member discovers in the new home. These then further encourages the member to either stay, or to leave and seek another home some where else.

These are as follows according to the above interviews:

Interview 1

Music, 24 hour phone in program, community involvement, and hospital visits by church members

Interview 2. Tent mssion

Music, preaching prophesy- people want to know what is going on in their lives

Interview 3 Bethany

- 1.24 Hours phone in program
2. Youth program
3. Prophecy- people want to know what is going on in their lives
4. Prayer- cell formations.

Interview 4 another Bethany

1. Found the Power of God in the Church
2. Enjoying Bible studies

3. She was encouraged to attend lectures
4. Intercession

Interview 5. (with a member of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG))

1. Business support

Interview no 6. UCKG

Interview no 7. a member of Grace Bible Church.

1. spiritual fulfillment
2. “Born again”
3. salvation

Interview no 7. A member of the ZCC church.

1. Power of healing
2. Success in Business

Interview no 8- A ZCC member :

1. Business success
2. Power of God
3. Opposition to Witchcraft

Interview no 9. IPHC member.

1. African values upheld
2. Discipline in the church
3. Likes the church because it tells people not to forget ancestral worship.

Interview 9. “Church Of Jesus of the Latter-Day saints”

3. likes the church because it tells people not to forget ancestral worship.

Interview 10. “Zion Church”

1. Authority and power to preach the gospel

Interview 11- Amapostoli.

3. Healing
4. Preaching.

Interview 12- Apostolic church Bishop

- 1 Culture
- 2 Healing
- 3 Cultural identification
- 4 Spiritual fulfillment

Interview 13. Makonyana Church -“ Tshenolo, the Holy church”.

1. discipline – time and dress
2. work ethic
3. the power of women
- 4.

Interview 14. The Roman Catholic Church:

1. Freedom to some African cultures
2. Freedom to feel as a biological being

Interview 15 - The Christ Embassy Church.

1 . Freedom of expression.

Interview 16. The Bophelo Apostolic Church in Zion.

1. He actually experience lots of challenges tht made hm associate with many religions

Interview 17-. The Berachah Bible Church.

1. Political freedom

Interview 18. Oppressed for being a spiritually gifted woman.

4. Healing
5. Oppression as a woman
6. Spiritual healing

Two prominent factors have been identified out of the interactions with the Black Christians in Rustenburg. From these factors the researcher has determined other associated factors that result in these Christians staying in a particular church or leaving to join another They these main factors are:

- Attributes of church leaders themselves and
- The help seeking behavior relating to the congregants.

5.2Attributes of Church leaders:

5.2.1 Commitment of the leader:

The Bethany Christian Church and the UKCG organizes busses that collect people from the mines to worship especially on week-ends. The Zion Christian church has regular

busses to Moria where members go for baptisms or to receive prayers for a variety of problems. - The effect of this is that Christians are then organized as a support group or in *fellowship*.

Some Church leaders take part in school programs such as at school parades/ assemblies in the morning (The Christ Embassy church and Shekeinah) as well as participating in the Student Christian Fellowship meetings. This to the researcher is good in the light of the discontinued religious education classes that used to be part of the curriculum. -

Community involvement.

Bible studies have been mentioned by the members of the AME Church, Shekeinah, Bethany, Grace Bible Church as well as some Mission churches, as ways of teaching the members about God. Bible studies seem to be adhered to and liked by Faith- based churches. These are attended during week days in some churches and seem to be significant influences towards church growth. - *Christian education and indoctrination.*

The crusades are organized with utmost commitment by the organizers. Whatever the leader may benefit, those in the communities who may be troubled get some listening ears, prayers and healing.- This is a *source of hope* to those who may be in despair.

Pastor of the Bethany Christian centre is personally known to the researcher. He is a popular figure in the township and has kept his composure in the Christian community of Rustenburg. He and his wife are currently oversees on a church mission. The members are eagerly waiting for him with expectations that when he comes back, the church is

going to grow more than where it is currently. He is a good role model. His commitment to the youth is overwhelming. This is a form of *mentoring (role modeling)*

5.2.2 Use of the media:

The local Radio station, called Radio Mafisa makes use of the pastors in their programs. Opening and closing station services are an important publicity opportunities. There are also other programs that are special broadcasts where church services are delivered. Some of these programs are purposely set to promote the ideologies of specific churches. There are other ways used to promote churches such as selling musical/ gospel cassettes, recorded sermons on DVD's and cassettes , as well as other print materials. The Christ embassy church sells its 'Rhapsody' and other print materials. The UCKG also distributes its periodicals to members and members –to be. - This is *advocacy of Christianity*.

5.2.3 Availability of pastors:

The Shekeinah undoubtedly is a force to recon with as the leader runs a program that is active throughout the day. It is like been there when most needed. - *A life line*. It has become clear that availability of a pastor is throughout the day. The UCKG is also a church that offers activities throughout the day so that someone in need gets attention at any time of the day.

It is not uncommon to hear people from mission churches joining churches that have services during the week just to get prayers. At these times, most mission churches are locked and the doors would open only on Sundays or during special services.

The biggest influence to a church is experienced in times of need. Funerals, unveiling of tombstones and weddings are celebrations that are led by the church. Even those who do not have churches need a pastor at least to start the services. Such people then would 'buy' a pastor, especially 'Abezalwana' to do the job. Indeed some pastors take advantage of such situations, an action which is missionary *par excellence* if applied with good intentions.

5.2.4 The founders who are regarded as Christ-like/ Messianic:

The Tshenolo Holy Church and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) are clearly churches in which the leaders form the basis of their belief system. For the ZCC Lekganyane is the centre of their faith. Going to Moria for church services and baptismal is crucial.

5.2.5 Need of Power:

The Founder of the Berachah Bible church elevated himself to be Bishop after leaving the ZCC, being a 'born-again' Christian and ultimately establishing a church of his own; The Zionist priest at Ledig also elevated himself to become a Bishop when his church took a long time to elevate him to that position. The Bishop of the St Korlonias Apostolic Church in Zion elevated himself to position of Bishop after he founded his own church as well as Arch Bishop of the Bophelo Apostolic Church in Zion- *Absolute power corrupts.*

5.2.6 In need of promised blessings :

Has the church become a commercial or business entity? Members who would not tithe in the mission churches do so in the faith-based churches. The researcher, having a chat with a pastor from the Presbyterian Church was told that some people literally take every dime to the church while they themselves have nothing to eat. It is because at the AIC's there are sermons that are dedicated to the theology of 'giving'. The scripture of Malachi 3:10 – 12 forms the basis of encouraging the congregation to make donations. Tithes in the Faith based churches are said to yield results thus the big donations to the church. The reasons for this action are that at least the church (faith-based) does pray for them and they seem to see the results of what they are paying for- "blessings". *Prosperity Churches*

5.2.7 Leadership struggles:

The effects of leadership tugs of war cannot be underestimated in the establishment of new churches in Rustenburg, especially among the African initiated churches. Daneel (Daneel M.L. 1987:138) in his study of African Independent Churches also notes that 'one of the great appeals of these movements is the existence of structures which offer authority and prestige- in other words, fulfillment of leadership ambitions'. Exploitation of membership by leaders is a worrying factor especially in trying to survive socio-economically.

Ownership of Christians by their leaders as meek sheep ready for slaughter,

The Christ Embassy church also experienced this schism when the priest was dissatisfied with the mother church. Schisms result when there are perceptions that leaders themselves create a situation of confusion and uncertainty. Here members are forced to

take sides in the conflicts. Those members who would not like to be caught in uncertain situations would leave to join other churches.

It has also been noted that internal leadership problems were the main reasons for dissatisfactions in Bishop of the Bophelo Apostolic Church.

5.2.8 Politics:

Politics plays a part where members felt that Christ was not to be depicted as coming from Europe, but as an African. Affirmation of the power of Africa also is clear where it is stated that the Angels are not to be viewed as being white.

It is the Berachah church that seems to use politics to attract new members. Poverty is sited as the main political tool.

5.2.9 Spirituality of women priests;

Feminist theology does feature as a reason also that can result in some joining a church that is established by women leaving male led churches. This may be due to the fact that women are caring when it comes to palliative care, especially in chronic diseases.

Women sometimes prefer to be led by other women.

5.3 Help seeking behavior relating to the congregants.

With this aspect what came out significantly from interacting with respondents are health related matters such as care needed in times of illness, grief and life stresses. Need for

spiritual fulfillment, as well as coping with the stresses of life. Factors here are related to the trilogy: Body, mind and soul.

5.3.1 Seeking the church guided by the spirit of God

Spiritual healing seems to feature predominantly in reasons for leaving, or joining another church. Spiritual fulfillment is sought from the pulpit and outside the pulpit; at the pulpit congregants wish for a sermon that is fulfilling.

5.3.2 Seeking Salvation

There is evidence of the paradigm shift concerning this “throbbing heart of mission” which is usually rigorously addressed in the faith based churches.

‘Bazalwana’ always argue that it is not in going to church that counts, but to be ‘born again’.

5.3.3 The financial burdens on Church members:

Financial management flaws and embezzlement of church funds have the tendency of destabilizing even the loyal members of the church. Monies collected by the church should be viewed as part of stewardship. Kretzschmar (2006) is of the opinion that the church has to be vigilant about what it tells the world about its use of financial resources, be it for stewardship or for enriching individuals. There must be financial accountability. Lack of financial accountability could result in dissatisfied and unstable church members. Kretzschmar (2006) recognizes financial mismanagement, escapist theology, authoritarian or inept leadership as well as sexual scandal of Christian leaders as realities in Churches. The researcher regards the above factors as contributory to instability of membership in churches.

Mission churches do not generally follow the payment of dues through 10% tithing. The Church dues are generally stipulated by the council and apply to all members. The stimulated amounts are basic and may not adequately meet the demands of the church. In modern day running of churches, members have been asked to pledge amounts according to their own convictions in order to augment for church projects. Such financial demands have made mission churches notorious. They have been labeled as only being interested in collecting monies rather than on spiritual fulfillment. Tithing is promoted and strictly followed by most “Abezalwane” movements.

5.3.4 Healing:

This is an important factor that either brings people to the church or that pushes them away. There is an issue of visits to the houses, hospitals, or those who have lost the loved ones. The impact of this cannot be underestimated especially when the church is has to be care at crucial times. A preacher who commands respect of the listeners through a healing sermon at occasions such as weddings and funerals has the potential of getting new members who may be missing that ingredient in their churches.

An experienced pastor in the mission church told the researcher that ‘people in churches of the law (referring to mission churches) do not disclose their problems’. When they leave mission churches, they disclose their problem with ‘Bazalwane’ who would then respond appropriately. He has now changed the liturgy in his church by adopting some faith based church style of praying for the sick.

Adult baptism is a healing tool used to show that the church is doing more than just praying for the sick. The ZCC, the Zionists, African Apostolic churches baptize by emersion and this ritual signifies commitment to becoming a full member of the church. For the ZCC baptism at Moria signifies loyalty to the church and confirms full membership.

The churches such as the ZCC and the IPHC have healing programs for among other diseases HIV/AIDS as well as combining culture in their approach, a 'person centered model of healing' .

When members of the church see no effect to their problems they move to have healing at some of these churches. Some become new members there, only to leave once their problems have been attended to.

An important healing tool that the churches have is in lifestyle modifications. The ZCC and the IPHC are known to be strict on their members to stop alcohol as well as smoking.

Ceremonies of the African independent churches 'provide a therapeutic context within the impoverished social context' (Mkhize H. in Kitshof 1996:164).

Seeking concerns and prayers for employment is also of importance in the Rustenburg communities, especially due to the influx of people coming from other areas. Some are in

the informal settlements because of unemployment. In this way people seek a spiritual home.

5.3.5 Palliation:

The hospices are created by the non-governmental organizations and some churches. The Roman Catholic Church is active at the Phokeng hospice. The ZCC and some traditional healers offer ‘diagelo”, which are places where HIV/AIDS sufferers are offered treatment and counseling. This is a partnership between church and medicine. There are doctors who take care of patients at the hospice

5.3.6 Culture:

Some churches have changed their ways by introducing the African rhythm in the church in order to retain members.

5.3.7 Youth programs:

The churches that have organized youth programs and that address youth concerns seem to attract the young members of the church. For the International Church (UKCG) is seen to have young adults participating in the recruitment as well as in the services of the church.

Music with the provision of musical instruments contributes to the vibrancy of the churches, especially in the Assemblies of God Churches

Chapter 6

Discussion

CHURCH HOPPING REVEALING THE NEED FOR A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

6.1 Holistic mission

Church hopping is a symptom that calls for serious introspection in mission. It should be an indicator of possible problems or solution for the Christian communities. If a way could be devised to measure this problem, then improvement in mission could be instituted.

Holistic mission can be defined as "the task of bringing the whole of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ"(Hughes, Dewi. 2004.) and includes the affirmation that there is no biblical dichotomy between evangelistic and social responsibility.

When people move from one church to the other, the church is not gaining in its mission, but is actually loosing out on the battle of disease and suffering of our communities. The church needs to be well equipped to effectively deal with the problems that its members face.

With holistic mission there is need for dialogue with people who may have different belief systems .The whole process must be done respectfully as well as with a prayerful attitude.

A study on holistic mission by Eun Moo Lee in "Holistic mission in Asia"(Lee E.M 2007:13-22) considers mission in three areas namely (1) geographical (2) type of ministry and (3) indigenous leadership patterns. The geographical concept recognizes the fact that

Asia is a vastly populated area (making 61 % of the world's population according to Operation World) which is a rich culture, as well as having four different religions. The type of ministries in Asia is rooted in democracy and capitalism, although there remains a gap between poverty and wealth, aggravated disorder in politics and society, and trends to pursue unity by religious syncretic dialogues. In the Asian context, there remains potential clash between Islam and Western civilizations, wherein Christianity remains silent to avoid unnecessary conflict between different religions.

Indigenous leadership should not be in the direction of insinuation as a means of communication, but rather should help in building "nations for their own posterity"

Lee also looks at De-westernization of Christianity needed to be addressed in order to solve the problem of Christianity to stand on its own on Asian soil.

Social responsibility is part of church mission. Lee quotes Peter Beyerhause quoting John Scott in the Church Bulletin "mission equals witness plus service"

Mission for the liberal theologian means dialogue and service. The reason for service ought to be performance of love which is service rooted in love as stated, "God is love".

Where there is love, there is God and where there is God, there is love. In other words, love means God and God means love. Social service is an expression of love that identifies with God, thus there is no particular reason to convert people of other religions. One important thing is to find common ground to serve society with the heart of love for world peace.

Holistic mission must mean that the greater effort must be directed towards those who have no access to the gospel.

One of the strategies of the Lausanne committee for world evangelization paper number 33 at Pattaya, Thailand in September 29 to October 5, 2004 states that “ they call the church to effectively use media to engage the culture in ways that draw the non-believers towards spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways”

The Lausanne committee “affirms the priesthood of all believers and the call on the church to encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfill their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the wide task of evangelization.

There is also concern in holistic mission about “the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is regarded as the greatest human emergency in history”. The Lausanne movement calls churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

6.2 Holistic Evangelism:

Matthew 9: 35 reads as follows: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. The word of God must be planted at all nations.

Preaching the gospel is the heart of evangelism in mission.

Evangelizing and mission involves those who have not yet become Christians as well as those who were Christians (or no longer) and those who want to become Christians.

(Bosch D.J 1996: 410). While people move to new areas, it becomes the task of the church to identify, lead and support them.

David Bosch writes an important fact that “evangelism is not the same as church extension”. Present day approaches to evangelism remains adding to the church newly baptized. Conversion remains a numerical affair and success in evangelism is measured by counting the number of baptisms, of conversions and of number of services that the church can hold on a Sunday.

Evangelism is at times erroneously used in ‘situations where church membership is declining and the church reluctantly decides that in order to stay in business, it better resign itself to an evangelistic campaign (Bosch D.J.1996:415)

This ‘campaign’ is in certain quarters interpreted as using evangelism to lure membership, and not as a spiritual exercise. There are serious financial benefits that go with large memberships and this has unfortunately tainted the motive towards some crusades.

Some Churches are more interested in what the members contribute in the form of monthly church dues. Tithes and Church dues are used a self enriching strategies and little to do with mission or community service delivery. If we allow the leaders to follow this route, then Christians should take responsibility on the demise of the House of God. The purpose of bringing people to God’s house has be clean business.

One of the Aids sufferers, who came out of the dreaded disease came to the researcher and quoted Isaiah 1:18 that this is the message she can never forget that came from the pastor of a faith based church- “Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD.

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." The lady told me that she was a prostitute. Her church had deserted her when she was diagnosed and nobody ever came to visit her. She came out believing that it is not medications that healed her, but God through the messages she got when she was regarded by fellow church members as terminal and left to die. She was originally a staunch Catholic but left because she had realized that with the Catholics only the pastor read the bible and that after a service, she could not reflect on what she had gained spiritually. The Jehovah's Witness church took her over. She was again disappointed when they hardly visited her at times when she needed them the most. The evangelistic factor that she benefited from the church was that she now believes if she, a prostitute could be healed by God, then there is no need for her to go back to her old ways. Interestingly she praises God at every opportunity that she gets and witnesses about the glory of God.

What the churches have done in evangelizing and spreading the Gospel is to make "every Christian a witness". It is not unusual to hear members of the evangelical churches witnessing publicly about what God has done for them. "Christ's first instruction to His new followers in the first book of Mark were, 'Come ye after me, and I will make you become fisher's of men'. Christ's last instruction to His disciples in Acts 1:8 reads: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' Evangelism is also pronounced by the great commission 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19).

A similar experience of evangelism different from mission churches is expressed in a study by Allan Anderson at Soshanguve where “People in the Pentecostal churches (in particular) often state that they like going to the church because it is a place where they found ‘salvation’, where salvation is being preached and where their spiritual needs are met.’ (Anderson A 1993:16). The church also puts emphasis on prayer and intercession. This issue of salvation and the ‘born again’ has become an issue that polarizes Christians, especially when the advocates of salvation are derogatory to other churches. James Kennedy recognizes this potential polarization and attributes it to the way the concept is introduced to people. “A smooth and gradual transition into the gospel is a far more preferable method” (Kennedy D.J1996: 56)

The challenges are that the Catholics and Protestants continue to define salvation in traditional terms while for the new the faith based churches salvation means among many factors, liberation from superstition, traditional beliefs and culture. While culture promotes sacrifices in ceremonies, following most Old Testament traditions such as forbidden food, for them Christ has abolished them all and he himself is the sacrifice for the world.

The churches aligned to Old Testament obedience still follow the tradition of not eating some foods such as pork, a rabbit, and some sea foods.

Salvation manifests differently in different churches. The IPHC and the Tshenolo Church, Kereke ya Sephiri are the chosen few or ‘Bakgethwa’. The same is recorded by

Allan Anderson(1993:19) that the IPC members believe that their church is the only correct one... they are the 'flock' of God, the 'sheep' and that all other church members are the 'goat'

6.3 Holistic healing:

The Lausanne discussion(2004) group on health makes this comment globally: “ local churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America have responded, often in partnership with Christian non-government organizations such as World Vision, MAP International, Food for the Hungry, Samaritan’s Purse, Tearfund and Trans World Radio. Programs have: begun in the affected community; built on local assets; developed multifaceted ministries; strengthened local capacity; addressed disease prevention and health promotion; and become sustainable.”

It is the duty of the church to be holistic in its healing ministry. The church, especially in the advent of the many diseases and social problems in the society would be relevant in offering counseling services. Counseling must be taught and offered as training in the curriculum of pastors. With good counseling in the church some people will find God in the struggle and the wrestling through life and this gives way to celebration. In this way counseling becomes an outreach and evangelism to the community. (Rupp G; 1998)

The church must know its limitations and refer accordingly. Like in medicine where there are different levels of care, the church must recognize where it cannot offer help. Modern

medicine must also have reciprocal respect for the spirituality of the church and its ability to cure disease.

It is irresponsible in some situations for the church to claim success like advising against medical cure, instead the church should assist in medical care. Medicine religion and culture should be complementary rather than hostile towards one another. There needs to be dialogue.

In a country like South Africa, where the church has untapped rich resources and is an institution that has enormous influence in the daily lives of its members, it should partner with other stake holders in addressing the Aids pandemic. "Most institutions active in the field of health are necessarily specialized and focus on a limited type and number of interventions. The effectiveness of a given intervention depends on a chain of complementary actions being taken at the same time. In this sense, *partnerships* can play a key role in ensuring the solidity of this chain and the participation of all relevant disciplines to the solutions. (Currat L.J in Matthey J 2006 :21)

Churches have to deal with psychosocial problems where the trust is more on the church than on the medical profession. The psychosocial capabilities of the church should not be underestimated as much as its reality. ' many African societies have informal healing practices ,like the healing practices of the Zionist church ,which have been completely ignored in Western-based formal health religious and educational policies'(Mkhize H: in Kitshof 1996:164)

People who occupy church pews on worship days constitute a mixed bag – there could be doctors, social workers, politicians and business community in addition to ordinary people. When in church, they seek a solution which is not necessarily medical but that which seeks divine intervention as illustrated by this Dr Rupp's case:

“Recently, a successful lawyer came to the counseling center depressed and devastated that his wife and children had left him after enduring fifteen years of physical and emotional abuse. By his own admission, he had never seriously considered God or his own spiritual needs. However, in the brokenness of his marriage, God comforted him, and he was converted. He stated, "In all my life, I've never cared about anyone but myself. Now I want to know God and learned to love my wife." A tragedy was redeemed.

With regards to HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Lausanne committee in its reports in 2004 writes:

“Additionally, a declaration on HIV/AIDS was developed, calling for a response to this complex biological, behavioral, cultural and socio-economic issue which affects both youth and a disproportionate number of women. A response of compassion was advocated, addressing the root issues of poverty and injustice and the challenge HIV/AIDS brings to world evangelization” (Lusanne reports;2005)

Women are subjected to sexual assault both in the streets as well as in their own homes through inter partner violence; the anatomical being of women make them prone to sexual transmissions and HIV/AIDS infections more than their male counterparts.

The church is challenged to respond to the increase of female prostitution that is linked to poverty as well as socio-economic problems that demands of them to fend for their fatherless children.

Prostitution has become the highest paying job available to many of the women of Southeast Asia with 20.000 prostitutes in 1957 in Thailand.

AIDS is spread rapidly and efficiently by the brothels because, basically, ".Men do not like to use condoms, and the women can ill afford to refuse a customer who will not."(<http://www.links.net/vita/swat/course/prosthai.html>). The Church is an important partner in promotion of healthy living and can prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

On holistic mission and Aids according to the Lausanne committee for World

Evangelisation :

- HIV is: is a biological issue, a behavioral issue, a child and youth issue, gender issue, a poverty issue, a cultural issue, a socio-economic issue, a justice issue, a deception issue, a compassion issue and a World evangelization issue.

Palliative care and home base care:

“ If the church cares for the sick and the dying, comforts the orphans and widow, shares its message of redemption and transformation, disciples its members, and works for justice, then the worth and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will shine like a light and the nations will stream towards it”

The pastors have to be taught of the importance of patient-centered approach, about care of the dying; about being part of the multidisciplinary approach of palliative care; about

pain and suffering as well as acceptance of death; about how to break bad news; The art of arranging for a family conference; how to deal with sensitive information; and about taking care of the remaining family members when there is death of a principal member.

Kübler Ross cycle of grief includes five different stages such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Indeed a person in denial needs a good counselor who may be a pastor. A depressed person needs to be listened to. One cannot blame a person who gets taken to another church if the pastor does not do his/her gospel calling. A counselor who is with the patient through all the stages of grief has the propensity of gaining that individual's confidence.

Communication in palliative care is important. Body language might seem insignificant to the pastor, but is important for the sick and the inflicted person.

Cultural issues need to be considered when taking care of the sick. A health care worker, including the pastor and other church members must acknowledge cultural differences and respect them.

The church should prepare the family beyond death and sustain them.

The plurality of health care involves a healthy relationship between the Church, and traditional healers. The use of both biomedical and non biomedical systems by the same person is well documented. The different health care systems have existed side by side for a long time in South Africa, not in isolation but as a dynamic inter- and intracultural

process which consumers do not necessarily experience as a separate or mutually exclusive.(Muller A, Steyn M:1990 in Gilbert L,Selikow T, Walker L: 80)

6.4 Holistic liberation

Not all Christians will agree with changes that the church applies. One has to agree that there are those conservative congregants who want to preserve and maintain old traditions and culture of the church. On the other hand some may not even agree with the changes that the church has adapted to changing situations and thus leave that church. Bate in the article “inculturation in process influence of the coping-healing on the attitudes and praxis of mainline churches” (Bate S.C in Robert D.L. 2003: 177) notes that the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa is “where it is one of the many other Christian denominations.” Bates goes on to explain this necessity of spiritual relevance that “this pluralism gives the South African Catholic theologians the advantage that they are more likely to seek and find other ways in which the spirit’s unifying presence is manifested in the community of faith that makes up the complex ecclesiastical reality of the Southern African community.”

While some may feel that the old traditions are restrictive, others may feel that the church has become too liberal. The young generation is moving away from a church that restricts them on their type of clothing when they attend church services. They may want to wear casual clothes even in church, while some feel strongly that the church has bent too much to accepting the needs of the people. The church is under immense pressure to balance

the needs of its community members in order to maintain its membership; this should be done without losing on its own integrity.

Seeking liberation from the current rejection of cultural imprisonment has come up in some of the interviews conducted. There is now a move towards accepting the cultures of the local Christian community. This has been done by some churches through accepting traditional healers in the church as well as by allowing African drums in the church, by bringing in healing practices that are inline with traditions of the locals. Certain practices have been accepted by some churches to the benefit of the church. These include practices as such as exorcism of evil spirits, performance of cultural rituals, praying for water as a healing symbol and the use of candles in healing rituals.

A contrary argument by those who oppose culture is that Blacks are wasting time with allowing their cultural beliefs into Christianity. 'Bazalwana' condemn those who go to graves to venerate their ancestors. They oppose those who offer sacrifices to their ancestors. Tombstones are highly regarded as doing too much for the dead. The concept of the 'anonymous Christian' by Rahmer is that "Christians must realize, however, that besides the explicit faith which they profess as believing members of the visible Church, there is an implicit faith which is also salvific"(McCool G.A 1975 in Kritzinger JNJ 2001:36)

One finds in this research strong condemnation of culture from the Berachah church as well as from the faith-based churches. This attitude has also contributed to the negative

attitude from other denominations that are pro- African culture who may say that the church is culturally insensitive.

Mary Roger Thibodeaux (in Anderson G.H 1979:161) about a Black Nun writes “to be both Black and a Catholic is to belong to two “emerging” groups.”

Chapter 7

Conclusion

CHURCH HOPPING INDICATING THE NEED FOR UNITY IN MISSION FOR THE RUSTENBURG COMMUNITY

7.1 The need for unity in mission in the Rustenburg community

Taking into consideration the fact that Rustenburg is a mining town which is growing at an alarming rate, there is a need for the church to get itself organized in order to meet with challenges that lie ahead.

What the churches in the community of Rustenburg are doing as such is good as the church is undoubtedly showing its face especially during these days of need. The church needs to concentrate on the real issues at hand such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, psychosocial issues etc.

Individually the churches are doing their bit, but collectively there are obvious cracks and divisions, thus the need for unity in mission or ‘church in mission’

About mission:

Missio Dei: Karl Barth says it is “an activity of God himself” or “the church is a missionary church or it is not a church” and there is no other church than the church that is sent to the world” (Blauuw 1962:120,121 in Daneel M.L 2001:50).

It is evident from this research that the communities need healing.

Secularization of the church is surely the reason why people do not get the spiritual satisfaction. Promising the “The New heaven and New Earth” is eschatology that “can prevent the church from becoming secularized. (Bosch 1996:390).

“All ecclesiology must be measured against and expressed in terms of the gospel, the heart message of the Christian faith. But what does this gospel message mean? Edward Schillebeeckx and many others have repeatedly warned that although the gospel can be identified and formulated, it cannot be held in a vacuum, loose from or transcendent to human reality and culture” (Gort J.D in Daneel 2000: 48)

And Newbegin says “there can never be a culture-free gospel” (Gort J.D in Daneel 2000;48)

Church hopping clearly brings forward a challenge to the understanding of mission by the churches:

At international level, the IMC (International Missionary council) stands for what is related to organized mission.

7.2 The need for unity in mission:

Seeking unity does not mean seeking to join all “existing churches; it means seeking the true Church” (Saayman W.A:1984:3). Indeed this is a ‘pressing concern’ for unity in the church for *Missio Dei*

The process of Church hopping is a very complex phenomenon in the light of the complex definition of Mission: Like in the early church, mission was defined in a variety of ways; in soteriological terms as saving individuals from eternal damnation; in cultural terms; as introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West. Often it was perceived in ecclesial categories as the expansion of

the church (or of a specific denomination); as salvation; as world evolution ;(Bosch D.J.1996:389).these processes are still part of our Christian challenges.

“The Church stands in the service of God’s turning to the World. The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not be simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather it has to be service to the *Missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany” (Bosch D.J.1996:391)

Indiscriminate church planting does not necessarily address the need of the community of believers. What we need are stable churches, visible and true fellowship and “reaching and preaching the Bible in a myriad of varying contexts; all committed to the same universal truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ, all aspiring to discipleship of the same Lord in ways appropriate to their own situations” (Bosch D.J.1996:391) .I regard church people to be vulnerable and, in their vulnerability may be mislead by unscrupulous leaders.

The proponents of African religion within the same communities say that Africans ought to sing their own songs, write their own songs, poems, novels, and philosophy; reject the European ways of burials. These Western burials have become expensive. African culture

in the olden days used the cow skin as a coffin. They also criticize Christians who have rejected their own ancestors to worship the ‘God of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob’

7.3 The relevance of the church in the HIV pandemic:

Patients seek an organization or a healer who is prepared to make a difference in his/her life and to go beyond just a narrow approach .In medical terms a patient would leave a doctor to look for a doctor who is prepared to go all the way; a doctor who would be available in times of need; a doctor who would do house visits; who would offer advice even outside office hours. In the same way, the sick who go to the church might expect the church to be available at all times, that visits at home or at the hospitals; the church that expends services beyond the pulpit. A church that is sympathetic and empathetic. Church hopping is a phenomenon that needs to be studied and researched upon. The researcher has discovered the different reasons that make people leave the church of worship or religion. There are challenges that face the church and these need to be tackled in order to preserve the good name of the church.

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