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**THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS  
CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN MASERU, LESOTHO.**

**PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A brief background of Lesotho**

Lesotho, as it is now known, was formerly known as Basotholand, the land of the Basotho nation. The former king and founder of the nation, King Moshoeshoe 1, declared Lesotho a free religious country and all ministers of religion were given the name "Baruti ba Moshoeshoe" i.e. Ministers of Moshoeshoe.

This means that he accepted and recognised all the ministers of the Word of God as equal and free to practice their religions according to the doctrines of their different denominations.

It is a known fact that Christianity came into the Mountain Kingdom through the work of the three French Missionaries, namely: F. Casalis, T. Arbousset and C. Gosselin. As a result, Lesotho is now predominantly a Christian country.

Presently the ministers of religion of most - if not all churches - are Basothos or Africans. It is only in rare cases like in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa where white missionaries still exist.

# HOW THE DIFFERENT CHURCHES CONTEXTUALIZES THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN MASERU-LESOTHO

## CHAPTER 1: The Theology of mission

### 1. *Mission Theology Defined*

#### 1.1 Mission

Within this enterprise the most central question has to do with how one defines "mission" itself. What is mission? And what is not mission?

Johannes Verkuyl in his work, *Contemporary Missiology*, defines missiology as the "study of salvation activities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit throughout the world geared toward bringing the Kingdom of God into existence" (1975:5).

According to J.H. Bavinck, "the science of mission is concerned with the "apostle", the sending forth, the execution of the apostolic task of the church" (1975:xvi).

Bavinck quotes Abraham Kuyper referring to mission as "apostolic", a word which is extremely suitable to express the "notion of missions in general", including the work of Christ, that of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and ministries (1975:xvi).

Charles van Engen, in his work, *Mission on the Way*, beautifully defines mission as multidisciplinary, integrative, analytical and truthful (1996:17).

Charles van Engen further elaborates on the definition of mission: "Mission is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers from church to non-church, faith to non-faith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of God in Jesus Christ;

This task is achieved by means of the church's participation in God's Mission of reconciling to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, and gathering them into the church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ" (1996:26-27).

Mission, therefore, is the Trinitarian activity regarded as "Missio Dei". Scripture defines it in John 20: 21: "As the Father sent me, so I send you", and it is elaborated by the Son in Acts 1: 8 when He said: "And you will be witnesses for me... and to the end of the earth." (Good News Bible, Today's English Version).

I am therefore convinced that mission is the Trinitarian activity regarded as "Missio Dei" as Bosch said, and as Scripturally defined in John 20: 21: "As the Father sent me, so I send you", and elaborated by the Son in Acts 1: 8 when said: "And you will be witnesses for me... and to the end of the earth." (Good News Bible, Today's English Version).

Being the Trinitarian work of God in the world, mission has to do with the comprehensive task of the church in the world. Mission is the church on the move. Mission is by definition comprehensive and total. Mission includes evangelism and social involvement, preaching of the gospel and inculturation.

## 1.2 The Picture of Mission

D.J. Bosch (1991:1) explains that mission had a fairly circumscribed set of meanings:

- (a) The sending of missionaries to a designated territory;
- (b) The activities undertaken by such missionaries;
- (c) The geographical area where the missionaries are active;
- (d) The agency which dispatched the missionaries;
- (e) The non-Christian world or mission-field and
- (f) The centre from which the missionaries operated on the "mission-field".

He explains that in a slightly different context it could also refer to

- (g) A local congregation without a resident minister and still dependent on the support of an older, established church or
- (h) A series of special services intended to deepen or spread the Christian faith, usually in normally Christian environment.

J.H. Bavinck (1954:159-160) summarises the issues confronting the planting of the church as goal of mission:



- 1) When a church is established in the mission field, the question is whether it should maintain the unity of a people by developing the church as a national institution. In other words, should the nation be regarded as a factor and to be taken into account in the establishment of the church?
- 2) Secondly, the concept of accommodation plays a pivotal role. This means that the newly established church must ask the question whether to accept and accommodate as far as possible concerning the prevalent customs and practices of the nation.
- 3) Thirdly, the question is how to keep the relationship between the newly established church and its mother church always alive, no matter that the newly established church is independent.
- 4) Fourthly, how should the established church bring its side by expanding, and establishing other new churches with its mission work?

Mission includes the vast task of the church from a certain perspective. The picture of mission is therefore always comprehensive when dealing with the church and others.

### **1.3 The Goal of Mission**

As a Dutch theologian, Gisbertus Voetius said, Mission has a threefold goal namely:

(1) The Conversion of the Gentiles; (2) The planting of the new Church; and (3) The glory and manifestation of God's divine grace. (J.J. Kritzinger, P.G.J. Meiring and W.A. Saayman 1994:1).

On the other hand, Müller (in Bosch 1991:2) says that the goal of mission is:

(1) Propagation of the faith; (2) Expression of the reign of God; (3) Conversion of the heathen and (4) The founding of new churches.

Saayman (1992:159-173) clarified that the goal of mission should always be seen from the perspective of the glory of God. All other goals should be viewed from this central aspect. The goal of mission is therefore to magnify the Name of God in bringing the total message of God to the world. Culture should be accepted as part of the message of God to the world but should never become the main issue in the goal of mission.

## 1.4 The Church as One sent

It is clear that the church, according to the Scripture passage Acts 1: 8, is the one Christ had sent: "And you will be the witnesses for me... and to the end of the earth"... (Good News Bible, Today's English Version).

- i. The church is sent with the mission of conversion of the heathen, or Gentiles
- ii. To plant new churches
- iii. To express the reign of God on earth and
- iv. To manifest the glory of God's divine grace.

Mission expresses the reign of God on earth and manifest the glory of God's divine grace. It is true from the Scriptural passage that Jesus said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." Mark 1: 15 (RSV)

Evangelization has come into picture. It begins in the discovery of the glory and grace of God.

And as far as our socio-political involvement in mission is concerned, the greatness of God's love for us, his infinite and totally unmerited grace towards us, renders any response from our side based merely on charity completely inadequate (Kritzinger 1994: 2-3).

Further, the glory and the manifestation of the God's grace, requires nothing less than our solidarity with the poor, the destitute and the oppressed in seeking first the Kingdom of God and his justice-righteousness (Matt.6: 33) (Kritzinger 1994: 2-3). The Belhar Confession came into picture where it describes God who revealed Himself in Christ.

Jesus made it clear to his disciples into the world that "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matt. 28: 18). It is through divine grace that humankind may be saved, especially when God through Jesus Christ exposed his love to humankind (cf. John3: 16).

### 1.4.1 Definition of the Church

Charles van Engen defines the church as "a congregation of believers seeking God's purpose. The global church is the body of Christ, purchased by His blood, also called His People in the world." He also refers to the

church as “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic community of the disciples of Jesus Christ, gathered from all the families of the earth, around the world, Sacrament and common witnesses” (1991:28).

Charles van Engen continues and refers to Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, where Paul saw the local church as an organisation, which should continually grow in the missional expression of its essential nature in the World (1996:105).

Van Engen says that the church is God’s missionary people. The members should understand that “the church is simultaneously a human organization and divinely created organism. Its mission is both gift and task, spiritual and social” (Van Engen 1991:35).

From this statement it is clear that the church has a special call to proclaim gospel and evangelise the Gentiles, though it seems as if there is a similarity in defining the Gospel as well as the process of Evangelism. The two concepts go together in the four Gospel Books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament. It is therefore regarded as the Good News or Good Tidings of Evangelism.

With Evangelism the connotation is different because there the emphasis is on converting people to accept the Good News by faith. Evangelism is to preach the Good News to the people.

#### **1.4.2 Where is the Church?**

According to van Engen, the church is “in the world but not of the world” (1991:44). The church is the instrument of God in the Global World or in the universe. It is the one sent by the Trinity to prove that mission is “Missio Dei” and therefore it is “Missio Ecclesia”. The Scripture repeats itself: “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (John 20: 21), as well as: “and you will be witnesses for me... to the end of the earth”. (Acts 1: 8) (Good News Bible, Today’s English version).

James D.G. Dunn (1998:537) in his book *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, attested to the definition of the church as “Ekklesia”. He referred to it as the most appropriate term the apostle Paul used when referring to the groups of those who met in the name of Christ.

According to Dunn (1998:537ff.) Paul addresses letters specifically to the church "of the Thessalonians", to "the Church... which is in Corinth" and to "the churches of Galatia" which came within his commission. Clearly, then, "Church" is the term with which Paul most regularly conceptualized the corporate identity of those converted in Gentile mission.

Dunn (1998:537) went further saying that: "most notable are the phrases "qahal Yahweh or qahal Israel" (1998:537) referring to the church of God or community of God or "the assembly of Israel".

It is through the light of Scripture that the people were identified as church (cf. I Cor. 12: 28; Eph.4: 11). "God appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers..."

He further referred to the church as "the temple of God" now for believers. Paul's reply is clear: "You are God's temple" (I Cor. 3: 16-17). "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 6:19) or again "We are the temples of the living God." (II Cor. 6: 16) (1998:545).

He further referred the church as the body of Christ in a sense that "the bread which we break is... participation in the body of Christ (I Cor. 10: 16): "just as the body is one and has many members... so also is the Christ" (I Cor. 12:12) "We all are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12: 5) (Dunn 1998: 548-549). It is evident that the place of the church of Jesus Christ is on earth as He directed in Great Commission.

According to Bosch (1991:166), Paul usually refers to the local church. "Hospitality has to be differed to fellow-believers from other religions as well" (cf. Rom.12: 13).

### **1.4.3 Contextualization.**

According to Turaki, contextualization is defined as follows: "Contextualization means many things. However its overriding goal is that of making Theology relevant and meaningful in its application with context. That which goes beyond indigenization or Africanisation is the question of Theological relevance. Whatever might have been indigenised, Africanized or whatever indigenous Theology might have been developed and produced, the question of its relevance to the African context is paramount.

Contextualization as the tool of doing theology in Africa focuses principally on making the essence of Christianity relevant and understood within context" (1999: 19-20).

According to D.J. Bosch, the word "Contextualization" was first coined in the early 1970s, in the circles of the Theological Education Fund, with a view particularly to the task of the education and formation of people for the church ministry. It soon caught on and became a blanket term for a variety of the theological models (1991: 420-421).

Bosch (1991:420-421) borrowed from Ukpong that there are two major types of contextual theology, namely: the "indigenization model" and the "socio-economic model".

He further elaborated that: "...the indigenization motif presents itself either as a translation or as an inculturation model; the socio-economic pattern of contextualization can be evolutionary (political theology and the theology of development) or revolutionary (liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology, etc.)" (1991:421)

Although Bosch accepted the definition by Ukpong, he made his views clear that, "only the inculturation model in the first type and only the revolutionary model in the second qualify as contextual theologies proper" (1991:421).

Bosch explains also that Mission as contextualization involves the construction of a variety of "local theologies". Contextualization, on the other hand, suggests the experimental and contingent nature of all theology (Bosch 1991: 427).

Contextualization is therefore absolutely necessary. A few remarks in this regard are necessary.

- It should always be inferior to the truth of the Gospel.
- It should be done from the perspective of the Gospel and not from the perspective of culture.
- It should never replace the proclamation of the Gospel.
- It should never become a means to an end.

## **1.5 Mission and the Bible**

### **1.5.1 Biblical Background**

As indicated in the previous paragraphs mission has a threefold aim, namely the conversion of the heathen, the establishment of the church, and the glorification and manifestation of divine grace (Bavinck 1977:155).

#### **1.5.1.1 Old Testament Perspective**

It is clear from this statement that Mission is an act of God. Its roots are back in the Old Testament. It is during the time of the Old Testament that the God of Israel was known as God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Charles van Engen says we cannot have mission without the Bible, nor can we understand the Bible apart from God's mission. The *Missio Dei* is God's mission (1991:37).

The God who revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush reveals Himself as Yahweh, the God of the whole universe. (cf. Ex. 3) It is a fact, from the Scriptural point of view, that Israel was not a big nation, compared to the Philistines and many other nations of the Old Testament, but because God had a mission with Israel, He sent Israel to other nations. They had to introduce Him as the real God, the Almighty God and to attract those pagan nations to the real God with their lifestyle. Lastly they should be called to serve God Almighty rather than the idols.

Charles van Engen correctly quotes the powerful views of Johannes Verkuyl, when he says, "in choosing the people, God intended to reach out to the whole world. In choosing Israel as a segment of all humanity, God never took His eyes off other nations, Israel was the *pars pro toto*, a minority called to serve majority. God's election of Abraham and Israel concerns the whole world" (Van Engen 1991: 55).

Scripture proves the might of the Almighty God against the powerless "Baal", the pagan idol (I Kings 18: 25-39).

It is from the beliefs of Israel that God used the individuals as tokens of the real and Mighty. God used Samson as a figure representing His might, used Gideon to expose His omniscience and omnipresence as well as the different judges to protect his image and defend Israel against their enemies. God

exposed His mission work in the times of the Old Testament by calling and sending prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many, many others. When God sent the prophet Jonah, it was clear that God is not God of Israel only but God of the whole universe. It was evident that God had a Great Commission in the times of the Old Testament missionary work, because with His sending, one could cross the barriers just like the prophet Jonah (cf. Jonah1), and Ezekiel, who was exiled with the nation of God (cf. Ezek. 2) (cf. Van Engen 1994).

Bosch (1991:17) went further clarifying the Old Testament perspective of understanding mission by saying: "As the God of history God is, secondly, also the God of promise. This becomes evident once we reflect on the Old Testament understanding of *revelation*."

The third point Bosch (1991:18) raised towards the Old Testament perspective of mission is that, "God as revealed in history is, thirdly, the One who has elected Israel. The purpose of the election is service, and when this is withheld, election loses its meaning. Primarily Israel is to serve the marginal in its midst: the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the stranger."

Furthermore attested by Bosch, there has been the conviction that God's compassion embraces the nation also. He is of the opinion that there is an ambivalent attitude towards the other nations in the Old Testament. According to him they are on the one hand Israel's political enemies or at least rivals; but on the other hand God himself brings them into Israel's circle of vision (Bosch 1991:18).

### **1.5.1.2 New Testament Perspective**

It is in the light of the four Gospels in the New Testament that one should see Jesus Christ.

Bosch says that in spite of different approaches and accentuation, we find in all four Gospels, in fact in the whole New Testament an unmistakable, fundamental witness with regard to the basis of missions. He explains that the church is busy fulfilling the time by its missionary involvement in the world. (cf Bosch 1991:52-55).

It is from these four Gospels that one can have a clear picture of the Great Commission where Jesus sent his disciples into the world with mission in mind. (cf. Matt.28: 18-28; Mark.16: 15ff; John20: 21 and Luke24: 46-49).

Bosch (1991:56) pointed out that the New Testament scholarship for a long time appeared to have very little interest in Matthew 28: 16-20 which is regarded as Great Commission by Matthew. According to him there are no a sustained and, in fact, expanding interest among New Testament scholars in the closing lines of Matthew's gospel.

All this means, according to Bosch (1991:56), that the "Great Commission" has traditionally been utilized in providing a biblical basis for mission has to be challenged or at least modified; but also that scholars are agreed upon, that Matthew 28: 18-20 has to be interpreted against the background of Matthew's gospel as a whole.

According to Bosch Luke also gives the mandate of mission in the form of a fact and a promise; as such the words of Jesus at the end of the gospel corresponds to what He says in the beginning of Acts (1:8) (1991:91).

The sending of the disciples during the New Testament era was not channelled to the Gospel Evangel, but also seen from the other books of the New Testament, like the Book of Acts, where Jesus Christ said to His disciples: "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts1:8).

Since the start of this mission, many people witnessed to Jesus Christ to the end of the earth. Amongst them tribute can be given to Stephen, Paul, John, and many more. These apostles were all sent with mission. Essential were the following aspects of the ministry: Kerugma, Leiturgia, Diakonia, Koinonia and Marturia.

It is clear that mission is comprehensive. It has to do with the whole existence of the church. The church should engage in mission, but also in contextualization of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world in which we live.

1.6 The Relevance of this section:



As mentioned at the opening paragraphs, it is clear that mission is an act of God; therefore it is "Missio Dei".

Jesus made it clear that mission is an act of God in John 20: 21, (RSV). He further sent his disciples in Great Commission. As a result, He even elaborated further in the book of Acts 1: 8

The content of the Great Commission, as well as Acts 1: 8 clearly depict mission as an act with "one" aim. The pivotal act of mission is "unity". The Trinity Act is visible in mission and the attribute thereof is "unity" i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the Great Commission, Jesus Christ in Matt. 28: 18-20 made no exceptions or even segregations, but emphasised: "to all the nation of the earth".

Again, the Apostle Paul in his letter to Ephesians 4: 1-6 attested to the "unity" as calling to all, as a bond of peace.

It is evident from I Peter 2: 9 that the calling as unity was for all nations. As a result, the church was born from Christ calling to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

The church, which was called "ekklesia" by Jesus Christ through His word, had a mission to all the nations of the world irrespective of colour, creed, nationalism or tribalism (cf. Rom.1: 16-17) (RSV).

The church sent into the world in Great Commission had a mission to fulfil, that is to make disciples of all nations, secondly, to baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and lastly to teach them to observe "all that I have commanded you" (cf. Matt. 28: 19).

The second aspect of mission to the nations of the world is God's liberation. God in his mercy liberated all the nations of the world through the crucifixion death of his only beloved Son, Jesus Christ. God liberated the nations from their sins and wrath of hell through the work of Salvation rendered by Jesus Christ on the cross.

It is through "sending" that the church became the voice of the voiceless and that the righteousness of God be for all humankind, by his justice. This

resulted in seeing the churches working together for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ which he attested in Matt. 28: 18 where Jesus Christ said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

The church is one sent, has to practice unity among people of nations, liberate those who are in distress and observe what Jesus Christ commanded them in the scriptures. Therefore, the church as one sent has to contextualize the Gospel of Jesus Christ "so that the world may believe."

It is the duty of the church when contextualizing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to implement the attributes commanded by Jesus Christ in his Great Commission of kerugma, leiturgia, diakonia, koinonia and marturia to witness to the end of the earth.

It is also of pivotal importance that the church in its present situation implement these attributes because Jesus Christ has promised to be with his church to the end of the earth. (cf. Matt.28: 20(b)).

## **CHAPTER 2. Methodology and background**

### **2.1 Research Methodology**

The aim of this study is based on the research conducted amongst different churches in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, with special attention given to their contextualization of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the emphasis on their sermons and services, caring for the poor and ill, their fellowship and their witness to the entire nation of the Basotho.

The main purpose is not to establish new ways of contextualisation but to recognise different ways of contextualisation in churches in Maseru and then to make suggestions from the empirical research.

It was also important to discuss the present and future accommodation of the ATR throughout the research, as this too is part of Africa.

This research was conducted from the different Christian Churches in Maseru, the capital of the Mountain Kingdom. Information was gathered by means of interviews with the local pastors, the church elders, and church members, from their respective denominations. The interviews were conducted in Sesotho, the local language.

For the interviews, the pastors and the church members were targeted as individuals and groups with relevant information, as they are people with background and knowledge of their respective denominations.

Intellectuals, educated and professional people were selected for interviews. Questions were posed to them to obtain the required information.

Before going into details of the interviews, one has to understand the meaning of the term "interview", which means: It is a "conversation where the outcome is a co-production of the interviewer and the subject" (Kvale 1996:xvii).

In this case, the "interviewer" becomes the "traveller" or a "minor" who unearths the valuable metals, he sought objective facts to be quantified, or on the other hand seek nuggets of essential meaning (Kvale 1996:3).

Transcribing them from the oral written mode purifies the precious facts and meanings (Kvale 1996:3-4).

Further, Steinar Kvale elaborates that the reporter hears and sees stories which have to be interpreted qualitatively (1996: 4).

He is of the opinion that through conversations, the traveller can also lead others to new understanding and insight as they, through their own story telling, may come to reflect on previously natural meaning matters of the course in their culture (Kvale 1996: 4).

He concludes that the research interview is based on the conservation of daily life and is a professional conversation (Kvale 1996:4).

Why was this method chosen?

The reason for choosing this method of interviewing is that:

Firstly, the interviewer could come face to face with the interviewees.

Secondly, the interviewer could meet and get to know the interviewee personally.

Thirdly, the interviewer could give the interviewee the freedom to express him/herself.

The interviewees are granted enough time to express themselves.

Furthermore, the interviewer personally introduced the topic of interview, e.g.

Interviewer: What is your position in your church?

Interviewee: I am the bishop, occupying the highest positioning in our church, and a leader.

Interviewer: What do you emphasize in your sermons?

Interviewee: Jesus Christ as our Saviour and head of his church, the only one who died for us on the cross, because it is only through death of Jesus that we are born again, we are new creatures.

An interview was conducted to achieve the goal of research. Five concepts were introduced and in a nutshell definitions of these concepts are:

(i) Kerugma

It is a Greek word meaning what is preached, or proclamation or message. Louw and Nida (1988:417) refer to kerugma as the content of what is preached.

Charles van Engen wrote that it was at Pentecost when an explosion of the disciples, who upon receiving the Holy Spirit, immediately moved outward to the streets to "proclaim" the truth which had changed their lives (1991:92). According to this teaching, it is obvious that the theme was the "proclamation" of the lordship of Jesus of Nazareth (1991:92).

Oscar Cullmann (In Van Engen 1991:92) asserts that the New Testament church adopted "Jesus is Lord" as the core of its faith and identity. As a result, the earliest Christian creed took the form, "Jesus is Lord".

The lordship of Christ drives the church outward in its proclamation of the gospel to the world (Van Engen 1991:92).

Harry Boer (In Van Engen 1991:92) cites such texts as Rom. 11:25,26; 16:25; Eph 1:9-10; 3:3-11; 5:32; Col. 1:26-27 and Tim. 3:16 to show that the lordship of Christ is not simply lordship in the church and over individual believers, but rather lordship with cosmic and universal proportions (cf. Acts 4:25-30).

The kerugmatic confession "Jesus is Lord" is necessarily proclaimed by the church to the end of the earth. Therefore, the church of Jesus Christ exists when people confess with their mouth and believe in their heart that Jesus is Lord - Lord of the church, of all people, and of all creation (cf. Col.1: 15-20), according to Charles van Engen (1991) in his book *God's Missionary People*.

(ii) *Leiturgia*:

This is a Greek word meaning worship, service, etc. Louw and Nida (1988:533) refer to *leiturgia* as service or ministry or in this regard: "to perform religious rites as part of worship."

In his book, *God's Missionary People*, Charles van Engen explains *Leiturgia* as "worship" and "liturgy". In other words, one has to understand and have a picture of how church services are conducted, the way the whole church services in different congregations are being conducted (1991:94).

(iii) Diakonia:

It's a Greek word meaning ministry, service, contribution, help, support, mission, perhaps office of diacon or authority (cf. Rom12: 7). Louw and Nida (1988:461) refer to service as part of the term.

Van Engen (1991) referred to "Diakonos" as "The Least of These My Brethern". He also refers to Donald A. McGavran who explains that there is the scriptural proof that the slave (doulos) is no greater than his lord (Matt.10: 24; John 13: 16, 15:20). Therefore the disciple who confesses that Jesus is Lord can expect to live a certain lifestyle and go through certain experiences as the servant of the master (Van Engen 1991:94). Diakonia means that "an attitude of humble service is also required of his disciple" or followers of todays date (Van Engen 1991:94).

Van Engen (1991:94) further explains that reference may be made to the three different aspects of discipleship as servant, namely: witness, personal service to each other, and suffering for Christ's sake (cf. Matt.5: 1-16 and Luke 6: 17-26). The word Diakonia also depicts the image of stewards reporting to their master. As servants, they are judged by what they did or did not do for those in their world who were obviously in need.

He states that as a result immediately after Pentecost, the disciples began working miracles, healing the sick, and caring for the needy. It was learnt in the Book of (Acts 6) that when the disciples could not attend to diaconal work, a new model for ministry developed – the deacon (cf. Acts 9: 36-42). The poor could not do without the clothing she provided for them (Van Engen 1991: 95).

He concludes that furthermore, the church ministry of Diakonia still witnesses to the church's authenticity and contributes to the emergence of the missionary church, the loving diaconal fellowship of those who confess allegiance to Christ (Van Engen 1991:96).

(iv) Koinonia:

This is a Greek word meaning fellowship, a close mutual relationship, participation, sharing in, partnership, contribution, gift, etc. Louw and Nida (1988:446) refer to close mutual relations.

Van Engen defines it as: "Love One Another" (1991:90). He said one of the simplest but most complex words describing the church is the command of Jesus: "Love". In Mark 12:29-31 he refers to the Summary of Torah of "Love of God and neighbour". He explains that this type of love was new in kind, though it had continuity from the Old Testament. It now meant a transformed kind of life, qualitatively new in its outward, sacrificial, self-giving sense (Van Engen 1991:90).

Van Engen shows that the new commandments is to love one another according to the incarnation of Christ (cf. Joh.14: 23 and Joh.13: 34) (1991:90-91).

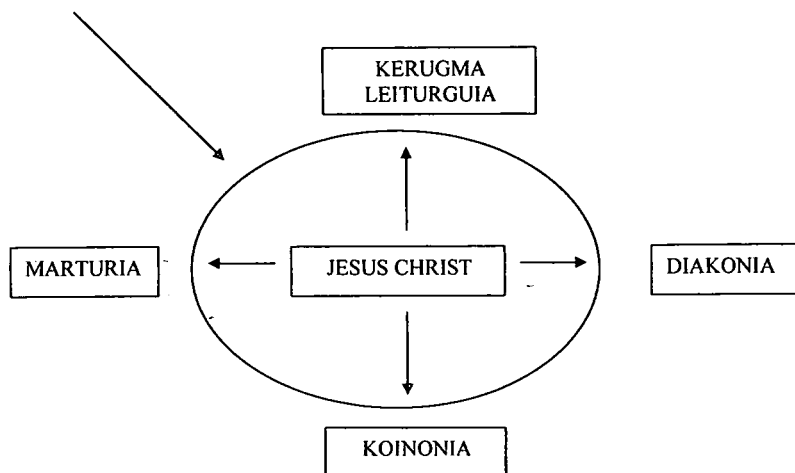
(v) Marturia:

Marturia is also a Greek word with the meaning of testimony, witness, evidence, reputation (cf. 1 Tim3: 7). Louw and Nida (1988:418) refer to testimony in Mk14:55 and witness in 1 Cor 1:6.

Van Engen (1991:97) translates it beautifully when saying: "You shall be my Witnesses".

In Acts 1:8 Jesus Christ before his ascension said to his disciples: "You shall be my witnesses, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading outward geographically and culturally to the end of the earth" (1991:97).

THE CHURCH



### Summary

Charles van Engen beautifully summarises these concepts by saying: “At level of the local congregation the missionary church discovers its reason for being in the world as it becomes the loving Koinonia fellowship of disciples of the crucified Jesus, confessing in word and deed that Jesus is Lord, and witnessing to the greatest event of all time - God with us” (1991:99).

Multiple questions regarding the research interviews are connected with these concepts.

## 2.2 The Present Situation in the Different Churches

### 2.2.1 The African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Sekokotoana, the local pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) Agnes-Ball explained that Bishop Richard Allen Harley founded the church, the A.M.E in 1815 in Philadelphia, USA. According to Inus Daneel in his work, “*Quest for belonging*”, Bishop Richard Allen



Harley founded this church as a result of "colour bar" in the Methodist Church in the USA (Daneel 1987: 50).

He further elaborated that from the grassroots level there is a "class". Here the confirmed members living in a certain geographical area within the jurisdiction of a certain church are under a pastor. A "class leader" leads this group. He/she guides this group in prayer meetings, collection of dues and any other business of the church. It is the primary duty of a class leader to visit the sick and report problems concerning members of the "stewards". The class leader also reports deaths, unveiling of tombstones, wedding ceremonies, etc.

Rev. Sekokotoana added that the members of the church are divided into various groups called "Axillaries". This includes:

- i. Stewards, i.e. Pastors Board, who are also being nominated by the pastor.
- ii. Trustees, who are in charge of the property. The pastor nominates twice the number wanted and members elect among those elected.
- iii. Women's Missionary Society (WMS), i.e. matured mothers join the society at their own will.
- iv. Young People's Division (YPD), i.e. the youth of the church
- v. Richard Allen Young Adult Council (RAYAC) consists of members of the church between the ages of 23 and 45.

Other organisations in the A.M.E. Church include:

- i. Lay organisation
- ii. Church school/ Sunday School
- iii. Choir
- iv. Allen Christian Fellowship
- v. Sons of Allen

### **2.2.2 The Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane, the General Secretary of the Lesotho Evangelical Church, General Synod explained that the three French Missionaries namely, E. Casalis, T. Arbousset and C. Gorsellin founded his church in 1833. Their church, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, known as "PEMS", sent the three missionaries. After their successful work, the PEMS had officially handed over to the Lesotho nation in 1964 and the church is since known as the Lesotho Evangelical Church.

He further explained that:

- i. The L.E.C. has a Presbyterian kind of polity. This means that it is amongst the people. There is a church council for each group with a leader from the villages, which is responsible for the daily running of the church, at the local churches, consisting of the minister or evangelist, elder and convenors of prayer meetings and a president.
- ii. From the church council, (We) have the "Consistory", which consists of membership from various out-stations. They actually have representatives, composed of the out-stationed congregations, which too form the "Parish". The Pastor is the overseer, and his main duty is to "preach the Gospel" or the Word of God, hold "prayer meetings", to do some administrative work and all works concerning the Parish.
- iii. In each consistory an elder, whose duty is to hold prayer meetings at the villages or at different wards, especially at times after deaths, represents the first hundred (100) members. The Presbytery is constituted of Ministers of Parishes in a given region, an Evangelist from each Parish, two elected elders from each Parish and one representative of each of the association approved by the Synod, i.e. "Seboka" and representatives of church departments.

There is an overseer of the Presbytery called "Motsamaisi" i.e. leader or president. In brief, the presbyteries are the pyramids of the Lesotho Evangelical Church. The chairperson of the presbytery is the moderator or president. The moderator in this capacity is working together with the executive committee consisting of ten (10) members, five lay people and five members from the clergy.

- iv. Then the final and highest office in their church is the "Synod" or "Seboka". They have only one "National Synod". This Seboka consists of elected representatives of Presbyteries, 84 in number, members of the executive committee, 10 in number, representatives of the Mother's Union, one representative from the Association of Evangelists, other members nominated by the retiring executive committee, 6 in number.
- v. There is Mother's Union, established in 1998, and was officially recognised by the Synod at its baronial meeting in 1999. The Mother's

Union is usually better known as “Bo-mma Bana”, i.e. Mothers of the Children.

- vi. There are 101 Parishes, 64 of which have resident ministers, while 37 are without ministers. They also have 12 to 15 parishes in South Africa, mostly based on the Rand, i.e. Gauteng Province and one in Free State in the Goldfields.

Development:

- vii. There is a Theological Seminary for the LEC church at Morija. This Theological Seminary was established in 1882. It is the centre where ministers and Evangelists of the L.E.C. are trained. The trainers include both men and women. The Seminary is open to ministers and evangelists of other protestant denominations and also independent churches who wish to train at this institution.
- viii. The L.E.C. owns two hospitals in the Mountain Kingdom (one in Morija, and the other at Tebellow in the mountains) and few outpatient clinics. Primary Health Care has become an important function of the Medical Services of the L.E.C. Hospitals. In Morija, at Scott Hospital, there is also a centre for rehabilitation of alcoholics.

Education:

- ix. As in many other African Countries, education is still the responsibility of the church (cf. Van der Walt 1994). The L.E.C. is responsible for 46 primary schools and 59 post primary (secondary) schools. There are 2454 primary school teachers. The building of schools and provision of their equipment together, as well the maintenance is the responsibility of the church. The government officially recognises the payment of the teachers' salaries in schools.

### **2.2.3 The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. A.K. Tlale, of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa-Maseru Mission, who is still awaiting for a call or to be stationed, after completion of his training with the University of Natal, gave the formation or structure of this church from the grassroots level to the highest level as follows:

- i. Local Congregation:

It consists of the presiding local pastor, the church council of "Makosa", i.e. elders and the following segments:

ii. The Class:

They form class meetings as well as the minute meetings with the congregation. This applies to all members of the congregation who consists of a "class" of maximum of twelve members and a class leader. The reason for such number is that the leader must have the exact knowledge of his/her students and follow their day to day lives, and have an opportunity of teaching them the dogma of their church in depth.

iii. Catechism:

From the class you find the catechism class where the members are fully taught the doctrine of the church, the Holy Scriptures and the history of their church, from where they could be confirmed as "full-members" of the church.

iv. The Confirmation Service:

During this occasion, there is a "special service" in a form of a special sermon directed to the graduates. The issuing of certificates and acceptance to the celebration of the Holy Sacraments, namely Holy Communion, Baptism and Wedding. As a result, the adult baptism is allowed especially for those who have just been confirmed. Referring to the marriages, no wedding or marriage is solemnized before the couple are both confirmed.

#### **2.2.4 St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church at Ha-Tsosane**

Bishop Moabi said that the church originated in Evaton, South Africa, under the leadership and founder Prophetess Christina Nku. It was well known as "Manku Church" in the Vaal Triangle. It came to Ha-Tsosane in Maseru, the Capital of the Mountain Kingdom in 1984 through the work of the late Reverend Lawrence Moabi, the husband of Bishop Moabi.

Structures:

i. The Youth Development:

From the grassroots level, two groups of children are found, namely the younger boys, known as "brothers" and the second group, the younger girls, also known as "sisters". These groups consist of minors under the age of eighteen (18) years. Once these groups come together they are known as "Batjha Ba Modimo", i.e. Youth of God.

ii. "Bahlahlobi" or Examiners

This is a group for the adults.

iii. "Basebetsi" or Workers

This is a group of members working in the Hospital. There is an apartment at the church called Hospital for the sick patients.

iv. The Evangelists:

They are the beginners who are learning the church dogma so that in the future they may be "Baruti", i.e. Pastors. They start their training of "worship" under the guidance of the Bishop. The Bishop is the only one who can recommend their ordination as Pastors. These Pastors are males and females. Those who have "talents" of preaching are also candidates of "Boruti" (Pastorship). Only married people are ordained or honoured to this office, the exception being those who are widowed and those whose spouses died while in the service of the church. The Evangelists are the ones who are one step away from being Baruti, from whence the Pastors, who have the capabilities, are ordained by the Bishop.

### **2.2.5 Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

The resident minister, Reverend Tabi, outlined the structure of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa-Maseru as follows:

i. Composition:

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa - Maseru is one of the churches in the Dutch Reformed family. It is a protestant church and has the same structure as the other Reformed Churches, namely:

ii. Congregation

- a. Church Council
- b. Presbytery
- c. Regional Synod
- d. General Synod

iii. Congregational Development:

- a. Sunday School:

From the grassroots level, there are the two youth developments, namely the junior and senior youth. The juniors are composed of the "Sunday School" and "Kinder Krans" i.e. "Bana ba Lebese". These kids are minors below the age of fifteen.

This is followed by the senior youth who are the catechism class and the Christian Youth Movement (CYM).

The Catechism class attends their class for a maximum period of two years, where they prepare to be confirmed as "full-members". They can at this stage join the CYM as "followers", i.e. "Balatedi".

The Christian Youth Movement (CYM) is the senior youth with their own constitution that guides them under the leadership of the Church Council.

From the CYM, we find the Christian Women Ministries (CWM). This movement is a pillar of strength in the church, or the SOS. They also have their own constitution, and they too are under the guidance of the Church Council.

However, there are active and inactive members who do not participate in any church movements.

The Church Council is the governing body in the local congregation, with responsibility to all the activities in the church and decision making for the future of the congregation.

The local Churches then come together in a Presbytery formed under the jurisdiction and geographical boundaries of the churches. The Regional Synod is formed by the churches in a geographical area and forms the jurisdiction of the province.

The General Synod completes the church structures.

### **2.3 The Church in the World: a review**

Let us turn to the main aspects of church life and see how each of these churches relates to them.

### **2.3.1 Kerugma and Leiturgia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana says that the church emphasises in sermons and services the central message that "Jesus Christ is the "author" of their salvation through his death (blood) and resurrection. He is the finisher of our faith. Concerning human beings they emphasise that they have to be treated with dignity. Hence their motto: "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Man Our Brother".

Concerning the church service, they are more African than Western. This implies that when they preach, there is singing in between. When they sing, they move slowly in a dancing pattern, clapping hands, or beat on hymnbooks, ringing some bells. The reason for this is that the congregants want to be lively (Turaki 1999: 18-19).

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev Lentsoenyane said that in their preaching, the emphasis is Trinitarian. Jesus Christ is emphasised as the head of his church.

On this conjuncture, the L.E.C. is lacking something. It must be contextualised in its cultural situation, because culture is not static, but it is continually changing. The L.E.C. still has elements of missionary influence or Western Culture.

Concerning politics and religion he stated that it cannot be kept completely separate (i.e. *Missio Politicus*). As a result the L.E.C. holds the view that the Gospel deals not only with man's soul, but also with his total being. The Gospel of Christ is to be proclaimed to humans everywhere. It is also to be proclaimed to humans in every aspect of their being. Church leaders do not find anything wrong with it that righteousness or public matters will bring calamity to the people. Christians must constantly keep in mind that they must obey God rather than men (cf. Acts 4: 19, 5: 29).

Finally, the church must be the voice of the voiceless in most of the countries where participatory governments are unknown or no longer exist or where demonic powers are at work to destroy the church of Christ.

Concerning *Leiturgia*, Rev. Lentsoenyane said that they are still using liturgy according to the missionaries' fashion. They do not move while singing, like other Africans. He is not happy about this, because as far as he is concerned, their style is still indoctrinated by the missionaries. However, this has begun to change and he hopes that the style of the services will transform in the near future (cf. Turaki 1999: 18-19).

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale of the Methodist Church of the Southern Africa - Maseru, said the central message of the Methodist Church in S.A. concerning the proclaiming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of His Church. He is the author of their Salvation through His death on Calvary. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, hence the youth guild motto: "One Heart, One Way". The Mother's Union or Women's Manyano's motto is "Emmanuel", i.e. "God is with us".

Prop. Tlale further attested that the Methodist Church is an open and non-racial church. Their way of proclaiming the gospel is Africanised. They do not stand in one place like the Westerners do. They even sing while preaching and echo some sentiments (cf. Turaki 1999: 20).

Furthermore they prefer practical theology in their sermons. They don't believe to be abstract but to be concrete and more practical in their daily lives. But still Jesus Christ remains the centre of their message and proclamation (cf. Turaki 1999:20).

Concerning *Leiturgia*, Prop. Tlale said that the Methodists since their inception were the ones who conducted their services in African style. They are fortunate that they have not been indoctrinated by the White Missionaries' way of preaching. In their services they do not stand still while they are singing, but stand and move, clap hands on or their hymnbooks, ring bells or beat. They even express their message in body language as a token of livelihood.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church.**



Bishop Moabi, emphasised that the introduction in their church is based on "Mme Christina Manku", the founder and prophetess of this church, but the central figure in their doctrine is Jesus, whom they regard as the "Angel of Bishop Moabi and the Prophetess Nku". Furthermore Jesus Christ is proclaimed as God and Redeemer.

There are no earthly politics in their sermons. Therefore they do not mix the Gospel with politics.

In their proclamation of Gospel, they normally include baptism practiced by John the Baptist, hence the name St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church. The Lord's Supper is also proclaimed as the union with Christ and they use the Trinity, i.e. they baptise in the name of Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They too are also Africanising when it comes to the preaching of the Gospel. They move, and sing in between while preaching. They do not sit when they sing.

#### ◦ **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Rev. L. Tabi attested that the URCSA puts its emphasis on the Head of the church which is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ established a new church with his blood on the cross. Again it is Jesus Christ who sent His disciples to the world to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts. 1: 8).

The message or preaching of the Uniting Reformed Church like other Reformation churches is Trinitarian in Jesus Christ as the centre of our Salvation.

The URCSA believes that the Gospel of Christ must be Africanised, as they believe that the time has ripened for that.

The URCSA is totally in disagreement to material things when it comes to proclaiming the Gospel. They believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be indigenous and contextualised to all human kind, irrespective of the situation or wealth.

The URCSA strongly believes that Jesus Christ is also for Africans, and as a result He is an African. He lived in Egypt, according to the scripture (cf. Matt. & Luke). As a result they even went to an extent that God is also for

Africans as they had saying in their Prayer that says: "Modimo o motjha, rapela wa kgale".

Concerning their church service, their way of conducting church services is based on the scriptures. Referring to the triumph of King David, while singing, they rejoice with Jesus Christ. They rejoice Him with music, clapping of hands, or use of beats and ringing bells, shunting and dancing. They modify songs from the hymnbook to be Africanised.

They believe in the word of Ps 130 while they are together to worship the Owner and His church. They do not believe in the missionary way of doing things, especially when coming to praise their Saviour.

### **2.3.2 Diakonia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the African Methodist Episcopal Church said that the poor to whom the AME sends is very poor. They pray for the poor and the sick. Healthy members of the church visit the poor and the sick at home and hospitals. They usually provide them with clothing and food to the best of their ability. As the event of giving takes place annually, (on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2004), Agnes Ball Temple of A.M.E. Church will again donate clothing to the poor at a place identified in Maseru.

Furthermore they have embarked on counselling the victims of HIV/AIDS. Here the emphasis is on one partner and the use of condoms is strongly discouraged. Young people are also discouraged to enter into sexual relationships before marriage.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane of the Lesotho Evangelical Church said that in this field his church is not doing enough. In actual fact, they are marginalised. As a result, they as a church still need to travel an extra mile, especially to assist those people who are in need.

In the church they are preaching about the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They are also encouraging people, i.e. members of their church, to assist the victims.

They discourage the use of condoms and encourage people to change their behaviour for the sake of good "morality". The emphasis is on "morality".

From the Health Services Department, the L.E.C. owns two hospitals in the Mountain Kingdom, one at Morija and the other at Tebellow in the mountains, as well as a few outpatient clinics.

Primary Health Care has become an important function of the medical services of the L.E.C. hospitals. In Morija, at Scott Hospital, there is also a centre of rehabilitation for alcoholism.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale of the Methodist Church of SA said that "diakonia" is an important mission in the church. Diakonia is the church's involvement within the community.

The church focuses on life issues in the broader sense as Jesus has done, i.e. "We are sent to do things on earth". The Kingdom people are called to do things that announce the presence of the Kingdom that make the Kingdom visible. So whenever people experience the forgiveness of sins, the empowerment of God's Spirit, the end of division healing from sickness, pain and hurt, removal of justice, there the Kingdom is announced and made visible.

The church is amongst other churches in the Mountain Kingdom that has embarked on building hospitals. There is one existing at Semonkong to assist those living in the mountains and who need treatment.

There are also mission work concentrating on building schools, both primary and post primary (secondary) at different sites on the outskirts of Maseru to assist the poor inhabitants of Lesotho so that they too may have the light of education.

Furthermore, they have different unions partaking actively towards caring for the sick and the ill, the needy and the poor people of Lesotho. They pay visits to hospitals and bring home visits, as their priority. At the year-end, there are some donations in a form of material presents to assist the needy and the elderly.

## • St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church

Bishop Moabi of the St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church said that their church puts emphasis on the sick people. In the church they have two types of patients that they assist, namely those who are physically ill and those who are spiritually ill.

The physically ill patients are cared for in the hospital. It is a priority of Basebetsi to bath, clothe and feed them, as well as preparing bedding for them.

The second responsibility is with the spiritually ill patients. These are the patients who do not understand their calling from God.

This is a priority of "Bahlahlobi" i.e. examiners, who expose these patients to their calling by interpreting their dreams, visions and so forth. Bahlahlobi mostly read passages from the Scriptures, particularly John 5 about the "Lake of Bethesda", and from other passages that have messages for the patients, such as I Samuel 28: 1-24; I Kings 28: 1-12. According to the dogma, people who do miracles are called "Saints" because they believe that he/ she performs these miracles through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The processes followed to heal the physically ill patients are as follows:

- i. The use of "blessed water" for vomiting (i.e. ho khapha).
- ii. The "spyt" with blessed water.
- iii. The use of the "bath" with blessed water.
- iv. The use of "Sefutho" (i.e. Steaming).
- v. Lastly, but not least, is the usage of "Schwasho" (i.e. white paved regarded as medication).

The victims of HIV/AIDS are not neglected in the church.

The old-aged, orphans, widows and disabled are cared for by the "Woman Manyano" who makes some monthly contributions towards buying them some food.

Those who are without families or their next of kin are visited by the Woman Manyano.

The youth, who are known as “Batjha ba Modimo” take special interest in the orphans. They raise funds for them by organising music concerts. With the funds collected, they buy food and try to provide them with their daily needs, especially for those who are still at school.

Widows are encouraged to attend handwork classes, where they can establish themselves for their future independence. Some of the handwork performed is sewing, knitting, dressmaking, and so forth.

#### ◦ **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Peter Moletsane, the elder and the church council scribe of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa-Maseru, said that the Mother’s Union, which is known as Christian Women Ministries (CWM) is the one group that is responsible for the aged. Once a year they take food-parcels to the old-aged and make them lunch.

Secondly, together with the church council they see to it that the aged, widows, orphans are provided with blankets.

The senior youth, which is the Christian Youth Movement (CYM), visit the sick at the hospitals with a month-round-robin. They also pay visits to the mentally handicapped patients at “Mohlomi Hospital” and the leprosy patients at Makonyane Hospital, as well the orphanage at Ha-Mochochoko Children’s Home, where clothing is distributed, and lastly they pay visits at the general Hospital Queen Elizabeth II Hospitals for prayers and services.

Furthermore, the church has lent a hand to the building of schools in the Mountain Kingdom to assist in the education of the Basotho children in the rural areas.

Concerning the victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic the church does not neglect them. Counselling is given to them through preaching in sermons; special prayers are made for them. They are cared for, as some are visited at hospitals. The most important fact that they are told, is that Jesus Christ loves them and died for humankind on earth, including them.

As a matter of fact, the church discourages young people to get into sexual relationships before marriage and discourages them to make use of condoms. The church encourages one-partner relationships and a Christian lifestyle.

As a result of this, the Christian marriages are getting momentum and the number of traditional marriages of "Shobediso" is decreasing.

### **2.3.3 Koinonia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the A.M.E. Church said that people want to be helped to find a home in the church where their culture and their weakness, both spiritually and physically, are accommodated.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that their church, the L.E.C. accommodates other religions and churches in their church services, working together from all different parts of the villages in the Maseru area of the Mountain Kingdom. Secondly, they are really striving towards unification with the different denominations by working together. Thirdly, he in particular has realised that the church is the cause of division, though it is the duty of the church to have fellowship with the other denominations. Locally, they come together in the form of prayer meetings, meeting as heads of churches, where the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) takes initiative, as well as the joint Good Friday celebration under the leadership of the Bible Society of Lesotho.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale of Methodist Church of Southern Africa-Maseru said fellowship with the circuits at the district are originally of utmost importance. All Maseru circuits come together, especially during Easter Weekend for the great Easter occasion. During this period they get to know each other, and to work together as districts.

At the Methodist Church, meeting is of prime importance as members learn about the events, the happenings and the enthusiasm of their church during Easter Weekend.

People are in distress, lonely, have problems at home, therefore they have to flock to the church as the only place of comfort. It is the place where young people are assured of their talents and they join the "Youth Guild". Some

offer their services to the church, especially in other departments in the church. It is where the slogan of "One Heart, One Way" is being shouted, as well as Emmanuel: "God is with us".

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi of the St. John AFM Church in Maseru said that they have the unions (i.e. "mekgatio") established together.

There are catechism classes held for those who are known as "mekgatio".

There are no academic qualifications required to be an office bearer, but the criteria used are the "gifts" and "talents" of a person. The gifts are capabilities, the good behaviour and responsibility, to do the work of the Lord through his church.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Paki Kolobe of the Uniting Reformed Church in Maseru said that koinonia is fellowship, and an attraction of coming together, where most people find the church a place of refuge; a place where different people with different problems may come together and ask for solutions to their difficulties from the Lord Jesus Christ, Our Saviour through prayers and devotion.

It is through the church that people could come together for peace of mind rather than being at stadiums, or bars where fights are so regular. Meeting at a place like the church is like coming to the paradise or even the "Promised Land" because one is relieved of one's problems and sorrows.

### **2.3.4 Marturia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the A.M.E. Church explained that in their church they have embarked on sermons: preaching and teaching to get people outside the church into the church. They use music or singing in African fashion as the way of attracting people into the church.

This has to take place at their homes and should continue at the church. Revivals in the villages are also used to draw people into the church and also those who have come into the church are also challenged with "qhoqha" i.e. devoting themselves to the work of God, through his church, which is done by the youth.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane of the L.E.C. said that the church should always remain a missionary church, i.e. "missio ecclesia". The church should be prepared and ready to reach those people who are outside the church.

The church should not be confined to the building where they are praying. The church has embarked on the campaign of going out to the people. In actual fact, they have a tent outside the village, where they can preach the Gospel of Christ to the people.

"House visits" is one of their priorities. People are visited regularly at their dwellings.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale of Methodist Church in Maseru stated that they are one big family, which is active, and enjoys embarking on calling people into the church. To achieve the goal, they go out, singing and preaching throughout the streets of Maseru.

They have formed choirs to attract music lovers to come and praise the Lord with their beautiful voices in their church.

Revivals as well as "qhoqha" are the most powerful tools they use to catch big fish, and also to encourage them to devote themselves to serve the Lord in his church.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi of St. John AFM Maseru said that their prime priority is the youth. The youth are asked to put their differences aside for the sake of the work of the Lord. They are once more asked to be active and supportive in



all church activities. This results in them being ambassadors of the church and attracting the others into the church.

There are some competitions, where scriptures are discussed and questions answered. There are prizes to be won, including among others, a trip to the beach, where the church carries all the expenses for the trip. Other participants will receive trophies and other awards.

On the other hand, the mothers compile a year plan whereby they embark on winning all their youths for the current year.

Last but not least, there are traditional ceremonies where everything is done according to African tradition like attire, food, dancing, music, and so forth. These happenings bring joy and happiness to the youth which they do not forget easily, and as a result, they attract other youths into our church. The "youth" i.e. "brothers and sisters" keep asking their new friends to join them.

#### ◦ **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Moletsane of the URCSA Maseru, stated that this is one job the CYM as well as the CWM enjoy the most. Once every quarter the two movements are respectively given an opportunity to conduct a church service. Here the lost sheep are caught.

Again they go out to the streets of Upper-Thamae preaching the Gospel and singing hymns using their beats and ringing bells. Most of the youth outside the church, automatically join them, up to the church buildings. Some go to the extent of joining the church choir, while others join catechism class and others devote themselves to church services. "Qhoqha" is one tool for those who volunteer to work for the church and serve the God the Creator.

House visits are another task targeted by the residing minister, including visits to the sick at homes and hospitals.

Prayer meetings are held regularly at the wards where neighbours are invited to attend the gathering.

There is a commission for the sick and tired, whose members pay those in need a visit every Tuesday.

There are some occasions like weddings and funerals where the attendants enjoy the music and singing of our youth. As a result, they keep asking to join our church or decide to the same at their churches.

## 2.4 Summary

At a cursory glance there are similarities between the churches in Maseru.

- 1) Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is their priority.
- 2) Calling the non-believers to conversion is what they do with all their heart.
- 3) Development and activeness, like building of schools, hospitals, are also important tasks for them.
- 4) Visitation of the sick and ill are done devotedly.
- 5) Helping and assisting their fellow poor people are also of great importance.
- 6) "Qhoqha" is practiced in all churches as a tool to catch big fish for the Kingdom of God.
- 7) They love their Africanism as the way of singing indicated.
- 8) They also love their country just like the Israelites loved Sion (cf. Ps. 137: 5-7).

## **CHAPTER 3 Contextualization in Church and Culture**

### **3.1 Introduction**

One has to understand the meaning and definition of culture to engage in contextualization of the church in a certain culture.

Culture can be defined as a comprehensive whole. Furthermore culture is passed on from one generation to the next as a social heritage. It is also a way of life (Anthropology I Guide I Unisa 1973:13). In brief, culture comprises the ways of acting and thinking and material objects recognised as standard by human groups and acquired by individuals through learning (1973:14). Therefore culture is always found in conjunction with human beings living as a group (1973:15).

From the Collins Pocket English Dictionary, culture is defined as the ideas, customs, and art of a particular society (1984:120).

The question that has to be answered is how the church relates to culture. The relation towards African Traditional culture and religion is very important.

### **3.2 Church and Culture: a view from the churches**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of African Methodist Episcopal Church replied that the church fully accommodates the different cultures of the people where it serves.

- Firstly, beliefs of Africans are fully accommodated in the A.M.E. Church-Agnes Ball, Upper Thamae, Maseru. This means that members of the church are allowed to practice culture practices, such as "Lebollo", and are allowed to practice customary marriages. They are not forced to use Western or Biblical names when they baptise their infants.
- Secondly, ATR is fully accommodated in all the services of the church.

- **Lesothó Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that the L.E.C. still accommodates the African Traditional Religion, though not in a convincing fashion. The ancestors or forefathers are still worshipped by members in a cultural way at their homes. At some stages, the Pastors are even invited to open the ceremonies with Scripture reading and prayer. They even eat with the rest of the attendants on that occasion.

It is usual that young men still go for circumcision school without the knowledge of the parents and the church. Once they have returned from this schooling everybody knows about the occasion held at home.

The Booth marriage of "Shobediso" is still practiced by some of the church members though the church is not fully in support of it.

Culture is part of religion. So as a result the church has the opinion that it must be practiced, but not mixed with Christianity.

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Prop. Tlale said that culture is beautiful and it must not be destroyed or abolished. The Basotho, as "peace loving" people, because of their culture, are known worldwide for their traditional dances of "mohobelo", singing with beautiful voices, their blankets and "modidietsane", i.e. melody.

Culture is a gift from God for every nation or tribe. So seeing church members coming to church with traditional attire is a good thing and can be admired too.

- **St John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi said that culture is important towards church teaching. The church accommodates culture, though not to its fullest. Culture is part of their religion but in most cases it is practiced indirectly.

There are times when some ceremonies are conducted according to their culture, for example, the visit to the tombs of beloved ones who have passed away, the cleaning of the graves, giving water to the ancestors.

Culture as part of ATR must be kept alive but not practiced in a disturbing manner.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Kolobe stated that the URCSA is a reformation and protestant product, and he believes that culture is an integrated whole. It comprises all fields of life, including religion.

As a result it must be practiced, whether it is African or Western. He believes that God in his calling uses his prophets with their weaknesses and strengths. God sent his prophets to reach his goals with the cultures, irrespective of their nationality or tribe.

All nations of the world have different cultures and still serve God, Lord of all Lords, King of Kings. So culture must be practiced and accepted fully. There is no culture on earth that is better or more perfect than the other. God created people and gave them their own culture to practice. ATR must be accommodated in the churches and be practiced to the fullest, but not mixed with Christianity.

### **3.3 How the different churches in Maseru-Lesotho accommodate the beliefs of Africa in their churches regarding the following:**

#### **3.3.1 Kerugma and Leiturgia?**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana said that in the A.M.E. Church no member of the church can be disciplined for taking their children to "Lebollo" i.e. circumcision school, as Lebollo is a belief of the Basotho where they follow the footsteps of their predecessors.

He regards Lebollo as present in the Holy Bible and that it was practiced in the times of the Old Testament. As a result the AME accepts the Old and New Testament as one Holy Bible. The Old Testament forms part of the Canon, which are the books of the Bible.

Rev. Sekokotoana said that apart from Lebollo, traditional dances are applicable in the church which includes "mohobelo" and "modidietsane", which is the Basotho's way of expressing excitement in a special occasion.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that regarding kerugma the church must work hard to be African church, but still proclaim Jesus Christ as its head. In their "preaching" they do not preach the "ancestors" or "forefathers", but they are at times invited to open the cultural ceremonies with scripture reading and prayer.

Just like in any nation, they too, have their own culture. As a result emphasis is laid on visiting graveyards where beloved parents are laid to rest. It is also according to their culture that people may slaughter animals for them in remembrance and appreciation for what they did to them while they were still alive.

The Western missionaries brought Christianity in the "European blanket" and wanted to remove the ATR.

The Gospel as the Word of God is not brought to the people only by preaching, but also with hymns.

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that the Basotho as a nation, also praise God in traditional songs, with "mohobelo" and "modidietsane". They normally sing while standing and not seated as the Western missionaries taught. As a result they are interpreting and contextualising the message of ATR.

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Prop. Tlale said that the Methodist Church in Southern Africa - Maseru also accommodates the beliefs of Africa, but they do not practice ancestor worship as the Western missionaries put emphasis of criticism on it, and preached about it.

There is a strong belief that the beloved ones who passed away, need to be remembered by ceremonial unveiling of tombstones. Reference is made to this in the book of Kings (cf. II Kings 23: 17 RSV).

Prop. Tlale said that concerning Leitura it is the style of the Methodist church that when singing they move from one place to the other, but they don't sing while seated. In their singing they have the expression of body language as well as in preaching. In preaching they denied the Western style of not moving.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church.**

Bishop Moabi stated that although their church may be one of the youngest in Maseru, they too, like other churches in Maseru, accommodate the Africans beliefs in the church. If Christianity makes room for African beliefs it is a good thing, because Africanism is practiced in Africa. Because there is a saying: "While in Rome, do what the Romans do".

There are members who sleep in the churchyard with the purpose of doing night duties. Their responsibility is to welcome in the morning those who come for church services. The attendants are welcomed by being sprinkled with blessed water all over their bodies, even beneath their feet. The reason being to cleanse them from whatever they met along their way to the church and before they enter the Holy place in the Temple.

Bishop Moabi said that concerning Leitura, there are traditional ceremonies where most things are done according to Basotho customs, for instance, the attire, food, dancing, music and so forth.

They wear Sesotho traditional attire of "Seshoeshoe" and blankets. Meals are also prepared in Sesotho traditional way, like "dipabi, dikgobe, maqebkwane, lekgotlwane, motoho" and so forth. These happenings bring joy and happiness to the young people who are still learning the African beliefs.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Kolobe said that as far as the church is concerned, the beliefs of Africa have to be given a chance, because the church is situated in Africa, so the Africans have to worship God in their own way.

They believe that, since God is God of Africa, God of the forefathers, He is still God of the children. They believe that He is God of King Moshoeshe,

God of all totems of the Basotho. As a result, God has to be served according to the beliefs of Basotho, the Africans.

Mr. Kolobe said that it is during the festival of "thanksgiving" i.e. "Dilopotsea" where the climax of these services is exposed.

Firstly, they believe in praising the Lord as the scriptures attested to this in Ps. 150 RSV.

Secondly, the celebration is in Basotho traditional attire, with traditional meals, and traditional drinks like "motoho wa seqhaqhabola".

This is followed by music and dances like "mokhibo and mohobelo". In most cases, this kind of celebration ends successfully.

### **3.3.2 Diakonia**

- **African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana said that little is done in that department.

The traditional healers are accommodated, as they too are regarded as children of God. They too, have a special and traditional calling from above. What makes them acceptable is that most of them rely in their calling on the name of the Lord. Some even went to the extent of using the Apostolic Creed in conducting their divination.

The traditional healers are also of great importance to the church and church members. They attend church services and render their services to the church where needed.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane replied that the LEC does not accommodate the African beliefs, especially "Dingaka", i.e. traditional healers. The church puts emphasis on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially the "miracles" performed by Jesus Christ Himself.

As an individual, he accepts the African doctors or traditional healers as they are called, being "Mokoma" or not. His church does not have a clear policy



on them, because these people even participate in the Holy Sacraments, and as a result, the church has some conflict about them.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale said that his church has little to say or to do regarding diakonia and the traditional culture. His personal view is that the diaconal services rendered by the traditional healers to him as an individual is of an utmost importance. They perform wonders, even miracles, when they are given a chance.

According to him the beliefs of Africa still exist, because it is not the only professionals that can perform wonders. According to him, God can use those who are underestimated to perform the unexpected.

The traditional healers are helpful because with the herbs they use, they have helped many people, for instance those who are suffering from flu, colds, headache, and many illnesses.

They are helpful because they even help at the mountain school. Young boys and girls are even educated to know their customs and totemism, e.g. Motaung, Mokoena, Mofokeng, Motsoeneng, Mosia, etc.

- **St John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi said that as far as the diaconal services of the African beliefs are concerned, it plays an important role in his church, especially for the healing of the physically disabled and the sick. It is the ancestors - through dreams and visions - who provide the medications to use to heal the patients.

They do not deny the fact that prayers play the role in healing the patients, but the medications they use are also helpful. They don't use this medication without the blessing of the prayers.

The other belief is that the ancestors who give this medication also bless them.

With the help of these medications, many lives have been saved, especially those with the beliefs of Africa and God the Creator.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Moletsane said that the Uniting Reformed Church has a standpoint different from the previous White missionaries. They really accommodate the beliefs of Africa.

In the first place, they accept that they are Africans who worship God in Africa, and that God has given them the wisdom to serve Him in an African way. Therefore, they believe that their beloved ones who have passed away are with God, the Creator.

As a matter of fact, the traditional healers are to be fully accepted, because, they too are children of God. According to his understanding, it is correct to say that Jesus Christ also died for them on the cross.

The circumcision schoolteachers are Africans who play a big role in building the future nation and keeping their customs alive. Young men and women who have graduated at the mountain school, know exactly where they come from, and know their traditions and customs.

History has taught the Africans that there are herbs even medication called "Pitsa" that helps women who do not have children, and many, many others.

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church.**

Rev. Sekokotoana said that the main aim of the beliefs of Africa was to bring people together with what is called "Phutheho", i.e. meetings. It is at these gatherings where important matters are discussed, especially matters pertaining to nation building. It is worthwhile because they get to know each other and determine who are related to whom.

According to the ATR the coming together helped a lot, especially in times of drought where they could bring their prayers together in an African traditional way to ask for rain. During the times of harvest, they come together and plan how to tackle harvesting. It is the time of "Letsema" where they work together peacefully. The same has to apply in the church where members have to work together as a unit to achieve their goals, especially in singing, praying, fundraising and other normal work together.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that Koinonia plays a very important part in ATR, because it is where "Mekete" brings them together, and they eat and sing together.

Everything that they do, they do together. So this "Mekete" makes them eat even food that they don't eat at their homes, which is healthy food. Some of these foods are even cooked traditionally.

It is a meeting place. At times some even hear about work, to be employed and carry on about their lives.

Last, but not least, this food is actually "free of charge" especially at "Mphabadimo, funerals and weddings" to mention a few.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale said that the beliefs of Africa concerning fellowship are very important to the church and society at large. The coming together has the fruits of happiness and love. Many reliable people give themselves to the work of God and the community as well. It is during these occasions where people have the opportunity to eat together, enjoy themselves and meet their relatives and friends. It is healthy gatherings for the sake of the Africans. It is also to some extent the lending of a hand of friendship, kindness and hospitality to the needy ones.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi said that concerning fellowship in African fashion, there are many events that take place. They come together as one, as a unity. Once in a year they have a prayer meeting for those who have passed away. The gathering by itself is named: We remember those who have passed away. For those who died in service of the Lord, a special prayer is offered, that God may remember them during the day of resurrection, and that they may rise to life and not destruction.

During this occasion there are food cooked for ancestors, i.e. "Mphabadimo", bread that they eat together. This occurrence is similar to the Lord's Supper that Jesus Christ introduced to his disciples.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Moletsane said that the Uniting Reformed Church believes that the beliefs of Africa pertaining fellowship are still important. Bringing people together in good spirit is really a healthy and good thing. There are ceremonies, i.e. traditional ceremonies that bring the nation together, like weddings, funerals, meetings, and so forth. During these occasions the nation can mourn together or share happiness at weddings and meetings where matters will be solved or attended to or new business to be delivered to the nation.

According to the understanding of the Uniting Reformed Church, fellowship is very, very important, because it brings "unity" amongst them. It is where the Sesotho idiom becomes applicable for unity saying: "Kopano ke matla" i.e. Unity is strength, or in other words, "united we stand, divided we fall apart".

### **3.3.2 Marturia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana said that in their church preaching the Gospel to the people outside is the primary assignment of our church. With this preaching, they try to fulfil the Great Commission given by the Head of His Church, Jesus Christ. According to the beliefs of Africa, it is important to the members of the church to practice what they preach. To witness to the outside world that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, is an African and He's the Saviour of man's life. People who believe in Jesus Christ must also go to the outside world and call others to repentance, to serve the Lord and work together with others as one nation chosen by God.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that the L.E.C., in order to achieve their goal has to go to the people, preach to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Saviour. The church has to work hard to bring people together and iron out problems that

are in the way, so that they may come into the church and serve the Lord. The church must always be exemplary and bear witness to the community as well as the government.

- **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale said that the church enjoys going out to the people. This is done by "Revivals" that they conduct as church members, or at times with groups or Manyano or guilds. These groups share themselves and visit different departments appointed to them. It is through visiting that they witness to the world that the church has a mission to accomplish. On top of that the Methodists are used to visiting the old age homes as well as the orphans to show their interest in them. The preaching of the gospel and the proclaiming of Jesus of Nazareth is their priority in all circumstances. The Methodists witness to the community like Christ who cared for the poor and the ill and such Africans will do through their church.

- **St John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi said that in their church members are actively involved when coming to witnessing the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ.

Members do not witness Jesus Christ by preaching his Gospel only, but with deeds, for example caring for the sick and ill people outside the church.

Orphans and widows are looked for as most people are sitting home while others are without churches as a result of unemployment and the HIV/ AIDS pandemic. The church witnesses to these people that Jesus Christ is calling them through his church to salvation.

As a result, many people come to the church for help, that they may be healed while others come for the sake of work or employment.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Kolobe said that witnessing to the world, i.e. people outside the church, that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, is their priority, but people may forget their roots. It is a known fact that king Moshoeshe I, the founder of Basotho nation, was a nation builder. His expression is still applicable in our church, when saying: "Ke se bone n̄tja e matha ka lesapo la motho?" (literal

translation: it will not be wise to see a dog run with the bone of a human being.) In other words, this expression of king Moshoeshoe I makes a contribution towards people outside the church. The church through the ministers of Moshoeshoe has to bear witness to this people that the church needs them and cares for them.

### **3.4 Conclusion/ Summary**

The research conducted through interviews shows that Christianity is the prime religion practiced in Maseru.

The churches in Maseru are doing their utmost to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as best they can. In most cases the Bible is the source of their information.

It is clear that the churches in Maseru as well as the Basotho nation are jealous of their culture. But what is learnt here is that, the Basotho nation through their churches do not forget their beloved ones who have passed away.

It is interesting to learn that the churches in Maseru are doing much to follow what is written in the Great Commission and being the witness of Jesus Christ to the entire Basotho nation.

The churches in Maseru share the importance of togetherness from the cultural point of view. It is their desire to see "Letsema" or "Togetherness" in the church to fulfil the scriptures.

As a result, culture plays a great role amongst the Basotho residing in Maseru. It is their desire to see it applied in the churches or even Africanism taking the place of Christianity. In other words they want to Africanise Christianity. They don't forget their roots and they are not in favour of the European missionaries.

## **CHAPTER 4     The future accommodation of the African traditional culture and religion in the church.**

It is clear that the question of how the different churches in Maseru contextualise the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and how they relate to the traditional religions and cultures of the Basotho nation are creating different approaches, attitudes and methodologies among themselves.

Concerning the future accommodation of the ATR in the church kerugma, diakonia, koinonia and marturia were again important.

### **4.1     The future accommodation of beliefs**

#### **4.1.1 Kerugma**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church- Agnes Ball, emphasised that it is very important that the church should do more to accommodate the ATR beliefs in their churches than what they are doing at present.

The use of African musical instruments, like drums and other musical instruments of African origin should be encouraged in the churches. The clergy should use the traditional attire more often along-side the present attire used in the church.

The mode and form of transmission and the content transmitted need to be examined critically.

He explained that it would be wise for the church to Africanise Christianity because the author of Christianity, Jesus Christ, is an African. So, the message being delivered to the nation must be clear that, Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, Saviour and Lord of all Africans.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane of the Lesotho Evangelical Church said that the L.E.C. should work hard to be an African church, but still accept Jesus Christ as the head of the church. At present the LEC is still a European church, because in the Lesotho Evangelical Church there are still Westerners. The Church itself is still the one that was brought to them by the missionaries. The songs are the ones taught and composed by the missionaries. Though, in African tradition, they don't sing seated, but standing, with "modidietsane" or "mohobelo", praising God the Creator.

It is obvious that the ministers in their preaching do not preach the ancestors or forefathers. However they are invited to open traditional ceremonies with scripture reading and prayer.

Just like any nation, they too have their own culture, and as a result, emphasis must be on encouraging people to pay visits to tombs of their loved ones who have passed away or even slaughter for them in remembrance and thanksgiving. Christianity came in the "European Blanket" and wanted to remove the ATR, which has to be changed.

#### • **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

Prop. Tlale of the Methodist Church in Maseru said that it would be wise for the church if the ATR beliefs were accommodated in the Methodist Church in Maseru, because it played a very important role in their daily lives. His argument being that, "you are what you are by nature." Even religion or Christianity cannot change one from one's culture.

People should be encouraged to visit the graves of their beloved ones who have passed away, just like the women of the Bible who visited the tomb of Jesus Christ after he was buried (cf. Mark 16: 2 RSV).

People must be educated that there is life after death. In other words, their beloved ones are still alive where they are, near God, just like in the case of "The rich man and Lazarus" (cf. Luke 16: 19-31).

Furthermore those traditional marriages are important in the past, today and tomorrow, according to their customs. People should be encouraged to practice the traditional marriages as the present government recognise them.



Last, but not least, though the teaching of scriptures are Good News, and have to be accepted by faith, it has still to be remembered that scriptures came to the people through Western missionaries who wanted to take the land by means of Gospel.

◦ **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi of the St. John Apostolic Faith Mission said that of course, people do easily forget their roots. So, as a result, in future the ATR beliefs should be accommodated in the church, as it is very important for the new generation. People have to know where they come from.

It is through the importance of ATR beliefs that people may know their responsibility. There is education in all different fields of life.

The ATR beliefs should be accommodated in future in the churches, as Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the church as an African, whom together with the ancestors gave the gifts of healing to the sick and the ill through his serving of people in the church. The calling of the God is important to all, irrespective of colour or culture.

◦ **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Moletsane of the Uniting Reformed in Maseru said that God does not change. He is God of all humankind. As a result, the ATR beliefs must be preached in services. God must be worshipped with all they have (cf. Hymn 159; Hosanna: My liggaam, my hart, my siel). All sorts of musical instruments are to be used in the church services to praise and worship God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be proclaimed through scriptures only, but with deeds as well. Room has to be made for ATR beliefs. Again God has to be served with the cultural ceremonies, because He is the provider of culture, and with these ceremonies, it is a clear indication that He is present.

Mr. Kolobe echoed this sentiments saying: "God is of 'old ages'". His beginning is unknown. He is culturally present amongst them and has to be proclaimed that way. Just like Jesus Christ who died for all human kind of the world many years ago, but is still remembered even today even in years to come by the offspring. So, the feeling is to Africanise Christianity in our church.

#### **4.2.2 Koinonia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the African Methodist Episcopal Church-Agnes Ball said that they at the A.M.E. Church Agnes Ball really appreciate the existence of ATR beliefs for the sake of oneness.

The accommodation of ATR beliefs regarding Koinonia is really worthwhile, because they see family members and relatives staying together, sharing what they have. It will be wise to rename their villages after their surnames as well as their names.

Again their future "oneness" will contribute towards sharing the "lands", helping each other ploughing the land during harvest time.

He sees Koinonia as the right symbol of fellowship amongst the Basotho nation and should always be encouraged and adopted for future generations to come.

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane said that at the L.E.C. Maseru really appreciates the ATR beliefs on fellowship. This Koinonia would make the coming together of the nation strong, healthy and fruitful. In brief it will build a strong nation with people who understand each other.

The other side of the coin is that this fellowship will give opportunity and continuation to the Basotho nation at large to praise God together. Here the name of "Tlatlamacholo", which is God, will be heard repeatedly by the nation.

The fellowship of the Basotho nation has taken them back to where their forefathers left them. They have special places to visit and revere as they bear a great history for the present and future generation to remember.

The togetherness (fellowship) always brings harmony, happiness, love and passion amongst themselves. They enjoy it so much, as they believe that

there is no “makwere-kwere” (i.e. aliens) amongst them, but Africans, i.e. brothers and sisters.

Totemism also plays a big role amongst them, as this is a token of bringing them together as Bataung, Bakoena, Batsoeneng, Bafokeng, Basia, etc. In actual fact, Koinonia must not only be preached, but also practiced.

The importance of accommodating Koinonia in the ATR beliefs is to practice it in full.

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Prop. Tlale of the Methodist Church- Maseru concerning “Koinonia” said that it is great to see the Methodists singing, preaching and chanting together in future and forever.

Fellowship amongst one nation or children of God is really beautiful, as it can be seen in Acts 2: 42 RSV.

So, it is the duty of the Church to encourage people to “unite” rather than to separate in “schism”.

The congregation grows big, financially, spiritually and arithmetically or statistically, because of Koinonia, which is fellowship, which made a contribution towards church growth.

Movements come to a standstill as a result of fellowship “Letsema”, where people come together to do good jobs such as building schools, churches, hospitals, and many more. The monuments stay for long, for future generations to come and behold it as tokens of remembrance and history to tell.

Koinonia should not be preached in the churches only, but should be practiced for the sake of the new generations to come.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi of the St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church Ha Tsosane Maseru regarding “Koinonia” said that if all the churches could

accommodate the ATR beliefs on Koinonia which is togetherness, then there would be no divisions in the churches. The "Oneness" of Koinonia plays a big role presently, even in the past, and will last forever even in years to come.

The church must teach people and adopt the style of non-neglecting others, not discriminating against them or even classifying them. Because all Christian churches belong to Jesus Christ who died for them all. Again the Basotho are one nation, so Koinonia will be a good testimony for them.

Koinonia must be applied in an African way in their community, because the community must come together, work together, eat together, and so forth.

He saw Koinonia as the "emblem" of the nation that stays together, etc. It is God's gift.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Moletsane of the Uniting Reformed Church Maseru regarding "Koinonia" said that from the scriptural point of view it is a good thing cf. Ps. 133: 1-3 RSV. At the "Uniting Church they see "unity" as a gift of God.

If the nation could unite, come together, they would have communion with God, the Creator. They may come together for prayer meetings for rain, harvest, church services, etc. and God will always be in their midst.

With the Uniting Reformed Church, Koinonia is a challenge, and it plays a big role for them because it is their mission to accomplish. Their church has a great task even an assignment to fulfil the Priestly Prayer according to John 17, hence the name "Uniting". They relate to their motto saying: "Forward ever, backward never".

Last, but not least, the "Uniting" church believes that Koinonia must accommodate the ATR beliefs because it is "God's gift of Togetherness". One holy, apostolic church as well as one nation created by God the Creator.

#### **4.2.3 Diakonia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Agnes Ball said concerning Diakonia that they saw it as welfare services. In other words, it's where the church has to extend its hand to the community in present and future times.

As Africans are calling people, people to feel for others who are suffering, the diaconal services really force the church to accommodate the ATR beliefs and implement them. The ATR beliefs must not only be taught in church services, but also be practiced as it's also of great importance for the new generations to come.

• **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane of the Lesotho Evangelical Church Maseru responding to this question said that it is realistic to his church, the L.E.C., to continue with the diaconal services that they rendered to the Basotho nation, especially those living in the mountains.

It is crucial for the church to take services to the people. The implication here is that the churches must build more hospitals and clinics nearer to the needy people living in the mountains.

It will be wise for the church to accommodate the ATR beliefs where the entire nation is to be helped. The African way must be used for caring for all.

• **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Prop. Tlale said that the Methodist Church in Maseru has laid a foundation towards nation building as far as the African Church in Lesotho is concerned.

Health services are paramount services for the Africans of Lesotho who live in the rural areas. Those people are disadvantaged in almost all sphere of life. Access to fresh water, electricity, even a mode of communication is very difficult, so the church must take initiative in this respect, as it is the mouthpiece of the voiceless.

He strongly recommends to the church to accommodate the ATR beliefs regarding "Diakonia".

- **St John Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

Bishop Moabi said that they at the St. John A.F.M. Maseru have already started embarking on the diaconal services. The church has branches in most parts of Lesotho, with mini hospitals. There, patients from different parts of the country are served spiritually and physically. The traditional herbs, which are African medicine, are used to cure the patients who are physically suffering.

It will be useful for the churches to accommodate the ATR beliefs in their churches for the sake of the new generations to come.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Kolobe said that at their church, the Uniting Reformed Church Maseru, little has been done in this regard. Most of its services are rendered for its church members.

In their quest to achieve missions as a church sent, they have built schools comparable to those of other churches in the Mountain Kingdom.

The old aged, orphans and widows as well as the prisoners are the people mostly visited and prayed for. They are also provided with second hand clothing. Patients at different government hospitals are visited. In brief, diaconal services are still performed in Western style: this means, only those belonging to the church are cared for. For example, once a year there are food parcels to its members only.

It will be wise for the church to accommodate the beliefs of the ATR in the church and forget about the Western style of practice. He stated that Western/European missionaries' time has passed; as a result, Africanism must take its course. Therefore, he strongly recommends that the church should accommodate the beliefs of the ATR regarding diaconal services for the sake of the new generation to come.

#### **4.3.3 Marturia**

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Rev. Sekokotoana of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Agnes Ball, said that regarding Marturia, his church is a living church: "actions speaks louder than words."

The church must make itself visible to the community, so that its message may be clear and accepted. They have campaigned to deliver the entire nation irrespective of their denomination. The people must see the church as a place of refuge, a helper, a parent and a caretaker of all countries. The church should bear image of unity to the new generations. It must always try to be a centre of attraction to the whole nation

- **Lesotho Evangelical Church**

Rev. Lentsoenyane of the Lesotho Evangelical Church Maseru concerning this question said that the church must be compared to the sower with seeds in his hand, since it is one of the churches with a big following in the Mountain Kingdom.

It is a great disappointment to see the church at the courts of law, trying to solve its disputes. This is common amongst the L.E.C. in Maseru. And as a result, this causes division and even misunderstandings amongst the members.

He therefore recommends that it should be the responsibility of the church to witness to the world that "unity is the strength", that the church is the voice of the voiceless.

- **The African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Brother Tlale of the Methodist Church Maseru in this regard answered by saying that although his church experienced division in 1979, it was a bad element of the entire nation and not only the Methodists.

The church must strive for "unity" and resemble it to the nation, because the church is holy, just like Jesus Christ is holy.

The church has to witness to the nation that it is a house of refuge, and that all people are accommodated in it, irrespective of culture, race and nationality.

- **St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Ha-Tsosane Maseru**

Bishop Moabi of the St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Ha-Tsosane, Maseru said that the message of the church is straightforward, and that is: "Go therefore and make disciples of all-nations..." As a matter of fact, the church has been given an assignment to do. It is the responsibility of the church as well as the Africans to care for each other, and help together in times of need. The church must be an example to the young ones, the church members of tomorrow.

- **Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa**

Mr. Kolobe of the Uniting Reformed Church Maseru said that it will be wise for his church to respond positively by witnessing to the world the message of being "sent" by Jesus Christ to all the nations of the world.

It must witness the message of "unity" to the present and the new generation and stick to the "Confession of Belhar". It must bring a message of liberation to the people of Africa, that they are liberated from Apartheid as well as Colonisation.

The church, Uniting Reformed Church Maseru must assist in unification of other churches, distancing itself from divisions and not allowing the courts of law to solve its disputes.

Its mission must be to bring the nation together, serve the poor and the ill, and to praise the Triune God. It must forever stay a place of refuge, a home of everybody who prays the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and be Africanised.

#### **4.4 Summary**

It is evident, that the churches in Maseru have mostly common views regarding the accommodation of the beliefs of the ATR in the future.

Mostly their wish is to be exemplary to the new generation or to the future church members. They wanted to be "united", which is a good thing. They



all reject their disputes being solved in the courts of law, though division is a common factor amongst most of them.

It is with great appreciation acknowledged that they are mostly embarking on primary health services like other developed countries. It is clear from their calling, though that they want their religion to be Africanised, they still have love for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

They enjoy going out to the outside world to witness to the greatness of Jesus Christ and call to salvation those who are still outside.

They showed that they have responsibility towards the nation at large.

It is only with regret learned that most of these churches have experienced schism and their disputes have been solved in the courts of law.

## CHAPTER 5 Conclusion and suggestions

D.J. Bosch (1991:389ff.) in his work *Transforming Mission* made it clear that mission is "Missio Dei". The implication here is that God is the author of Mission.

From this stance it is clear that Jesus Christ attested to Mission as "sending" "from above", because He says: As the Father has sent me, even so I sent you (John 20:21 RSV).

Mission is the Trinitarian deed of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The action of mission has to be performed on earth, cf. the Great Commission Matt.28: 19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father, of the Son and the Holy Spirit..." (RSV)

### 5.1 Mission and contextualization - African Theologians

According to Dr. Yusufu Turaki, "the most important theological issue in the concept of salvation in African Theology is that of equality of all religions. This view ultimately leads to "pluralism and parity" (1999: 29). He strongly disagrees with this view, but shows how it is present in the different theologies in Africa.

The question of how the Gospel of Christ relates to the traditional religions and cultures create differing approaches, attitudes and methodologies among African Theologians and scholars (Turaki 1999:30). According to Turaki, the fundamental question therefore is: "Is there any continuity or discontinuity between the traditional religions and cultures and Christianity? (1999:30).

He refers to the fact that Traditional Africans do have a religious worldview and a religious language, which provide a "pre-understanding" or "self-understanding." (Turaki 1999:31).

According to Bediako there is a dualism, which holds that: "the Christian faith possessed its own set of beliefs, distinct from the belief system of the traditional religion" (Bediako 1995:69).

Turaki made it clear that "African theologians and scholars usually rejected Western definition of African religions as "animism, fetishism, totemism, and polytheistic and idolatrous" (1999:26).

According to Sanneh, however, Christianity in Africa has "come of age", it is no longer foreign, but indeed an African "religion" (1992: 22). This means that the Christian religion should be Africanised.

Turaki attested that the view is "not only to strip Christianity of its entire Western strappings and coverings and then indigenise it, but also the need to control the institutional Christianity and determine its destiny in Africa. Africans must be seen to be in charge and control of the church and mission policies that affect their destiny" (1999: 18-19).

It is therefore important to note that contextualization is a theological method, which is complex (Turaki 1999: 20).

"The search for a Theologia Africana and contextualization has not been able to give us a final word in this area, but instead, has heightened the quest for better theological methods. What type of Christ or theology does contextualization produce in Africa? (Turaki 1999:21).

However, contextualization must make the Bible and Christian theology the primary tool (1999:21).

The successful key to the use of translation principle is the "Vernacular translation". Sanneh emphasizes this principle by stating: "Mission adoption of the Vernacular, therefore, was tantamount to adopting indigenous cultural criteria for the message, a piece of radical indigenization for greater than the standard portrayal of mission as Western cultural imperialism" (1992:23).

The other extreme is the use of random Bible texts and Christian doctrines to address the traditional religions and cultures. Therefore Sanneh is of the opinion that a Christian theology of the African Traditional Religions and cultures needs to be developed and formulated (1992:111 ff).

In this point, a question can be poised: How do we link the African religious past with Christianity? Bediako suggests "integration or synthesis". He states, "that it is important to recognize the integration of African Christian

experience as a religious reality in its own right". "Christ has affectively become the integrating reality and power linking the "old" and the "new" in the African experience" (Bediako 1995:6)

Last, but not least, it is explained that the work of Western Christian missionaries in Africa has come under severe criticism by both Christians and non-Christians alike. This is due to the fact that the missionary approach to the study of African Traditional Religions and cultures raised pertinent questions on the nature of the missionary presentation of the Gospel of Christ and the consequences of their work.

Sanneh explains that cross-cultural factor inherent in mission produced tensions between the mission agencies and the African indigenous Christians, especially in the areas of the interpretation of the nature of Christianity and theology. Debates defining the relationship between "Gospel and Culture" and African culture formed a major subject of discussions in *Missiology* (1992:115 e.v).

Turaki explains that two theological issues have come into the picture here, namely: (1) Presentation of the Gospel and (2) Transmission.

- i. The problem of presenting and transmitting the Gospel of Christ is created by how the African sees, understands, interprets and constructs Christianity within his traditional religion's worldview and context. This very seeing, understanding, and constructing of Christianity depended very much on how he, the African, received Christianity from his Christian mentors, the Western missionaries.

The missionary model of presentation was overwhelmingly negative of the African pre-Christian religions and cultural heritage. They operated under the belief that there is "discontinuity" between Christianity and the African pre-Christian religious heritage.

Nevertheless, the African received the Gospel while standing on the platform of his African religions and cultural heritage. How the Gospel was presented in Africa, created its own problems for Christianity in Africa (Turaki 1999:11).

Turaki continues:

- ii. Concerning Transmission, the mode and form of transmission and the content transmitted need to be examined critically. The missionary

who brought the Gospel had a Western worldview, which could be a mixture of Biblical values, Cultural Christianity and the general cultural and social values of the Western Society. This "mixture" of Western Christian worldview was what was transmitted to Africa. (1999:11).

Turaki (1999), remaining critical of the Western efforts, however, makes it very clear that no other gospel than the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be preached, and that the gospel should not be compromised. Ancestor veneration should according to him not be tolerated in the church.

Turaki (1999), an African theologian, is very critical of the methods of Africanising Christianity without taking into consideration the very important differences. According to him Christianity is not just another religion which can be changed to fit the original scheme of Traditional Africa. Although he is of the opinion that the essence of Christianity can be translated to be explained and inculturated in an African context, he remains of the opinion that Christianity must not be compromised for the sake of the African culture. He explains that the Hebrew Fathers, for instance, are quite different from the ancestors and are not venerated in the same way as the ancestors. They are not mediators and are not influencing the present world.

Sanneh (1992) takes in a middle position by emphasising the task of the church to translate the message in the world in which the gospel is proclaimed. The message has to be translated into the world of Africa. He mentions the work of Livingstone in translating the gospel in the vernacular of many African languages. According to Sanneh the essence is not changing the gospel but translating it into the world of Africa with the view of being authentic in Africa.

Bediako (1995) allows for total contextualization. The Old Testament and the traditional religions open the way for interchangeable relations. Referring to the Old Testament, he is of the opinion that the Hebrew fathers are indeed the ancestors of the Christian world and that the Africans may in the same way refer to their own ancestors as their religious fathers: "A theology of ancestors connects with an Ancestor-Christology in which Christ features as Lord among the ancestors too."

It is clear that the churches are in favour of radical inculturation and contextualization but are still not completely sure how to engage therein. Their views also differ from total inculturation and acceptance of African Traditional culture and religion to total rejection. Usually rejection is viewed as the a consequence of the influence of Western Missionaries (e.g. the LEC)

Turaki	Sanneh	Bediako
No Compromise	Translation	Acceptance
	URCSA	
	AME	St Johns AFM
	Methodist	

## 5.2 Mission work and local churches

Charles van Engen in his work, *God's Missionary People*, quotes Thomas Torrance, where he affirmed, "mission belongs to the nature of the church" (1999:29) and Johannes Blauw attested that "there is no other church than the church sent into the world, and there is no other mission than that of the church of Christ" (in Van Engen 1999:29).

As a result, a call for a new congregational Missiology has come from at least three different directions, namely:

- i. Missiologists have called for closer relationship between the concept of "Mission" and the "idea of church", focusing discussion on the missionary nature of the congregation.
- ii. Sociologists of religion began to stress the strategic importance of the congregation, and
- iii. Modern ecclesiologists, suggesting a new paradigm, which has for researching Missiological implications for the local congregation (Van Engen 1999:27 referring to K. Barth: Dogmatics Volume 4: 2).

Therefore van Engen is of the opinion that with the understanding and acceptance of these three arenas, we must first carefully consider "the relationship between Church and Mission" if we are to build missionary congregations in the world. He explains that the church of Jesus Christ may

find its fullest expression in relation to the world from within the kingdom of God only if it lives out its nature as a missionary people (1999:27).

Van Engen quotes from Emil Brunner that, "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning" (1999:27).

The implication from this statement is that, although people join a church for social, demographic, cultural, political, and economic reasons, no one should join the church that is not called, elected, justified, and adopted by Jesus Christ (Van Engen 1999:41).

Van Engen (1999:49) explains that the church's oneness is affirmation of faith because in the midst of our brokenness and dividedness the church's oneness is not an obvious fact to be observed. He says that this confession has practical significance; we receive by faith the oneness of the church, and therefore we strive to achieve that oneness (Eph.4: 1-3) (1999:49).

Therefore Van Engen states that Mission and unity are wedded in Paul's view of the church. One day we will have grown to such an extent that Christ will "present the Church Himself all glorious, with no stain or wrinkle or anything of the sort, but holy and without blemish (Eph.5: 27 NEB; cf. Rev.21: 9-10, 25-26) (1999:51-52).

In his Letters and Papers from prison, D. Bonhoeffer said, "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others. (Van Engen 1999:74). Van Engen therefore states that the church exists for humanity in that it is the spiritual body of Christ, and - like Jesus - it is sent to be a servant. As the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sent his disciples into the world for the sake of the world (1999:74) (cf. John.15: 13; 20:21; Matt.10: 39).

Van Engen attested that in the twentieth century Protestants and Catholics alike felt the need to redefine, reformulate, rethink, and reshape their ecclesiology. One more concept to the list was added, namely, "The Growth of the True Church". It was demonstrated that yearning for numerical growth as an essential mark of the presence of the True Church (1999:81).

Van Engen (1999:81 ff.) explains it like this:

- The One Church yearns to incorporate more and more men and women and unite everything and everyone at the feet of Jesus Christ. (Col.1)

- The holy church yearns to bring the holiness of God to bear in the lives of all sinful humanity.
- The Catholic Church yearns to spread her universal fellowship of loving believers to include all those who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The apostolic church yearns to go and make disciples of all peoples, because there, among all the nations, Christ has promised to be present.

The Lordship of Christ drives the church outward in its proclamation of the Gospel to the world. The Gospel begins with a major emphasis on the kerugma. John the Baptist comes proclaiming, "The Kingdom of Heaven is near". (Matt.3: 2) According to Paul, the Church of Jesus Christ exists when people confess with their mouth and belief in their hearts that Jesus is Lord-Lord of the Church, of all Creation. (cf. Col.1: 15-20). (Van Engen 1999:93).

Van Engen (1999:97) says that it is made clear that loving Koinonia (fellowship), a communal life, a kerugmatic proclamation that Jesus is Lord, a sharing with those in need though a loving diaconal ministry all brought about *marturia* - a powerful witness to the Church' missionary nature.

The missionary church begins to take place in ministry in the world when its nature is translated into priorities, which lead to intentional mission goals.

The implications are clear. The church should always have unconditional alliance to Jesus Christ the Lord. Christ is the head of the church. Christ the Lord should be acknowledged and honoured in all the different aspects and realities of the church.

This means that the church is allowed to bring the gospel in the culture of the people among whom she works. Culture is part of the world in which the gospel should be proclaimed. Culture is not neutral and it should be acknowledged that the Gospel should be inculturated in the different cultures. However, when the Gospel is compromised or there is deviation from the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the Lord, inculturation becomes very inappropriate..



### **5.3 Is Mission work accomplished in Maseru?**

Since the departure of White missionaries in most parts of Lesotho, including Maseru as the capital of the Mountain Kingdom, one would say, mission work in Maseru has been accomplished.

However, the reality is not like that. There are still Africans who have to cross barriers and do church mission work in Maseru.

Mission work is a long process that can be determined by the need of the church. As Jesus Christ said, the church should be Jesus Christ's witness to the ends of the earth. Acts 1: 8 RSV.

Mission work is a deed of the Trinity, so as a result no person can say that it has come to its conclusion.

There are a lot of absentees at church meetings on Sundays as a result of businesses.

People are still traditional and the message of the Gospel has not reached their hearts.

Mission work is a process, which leads to the sending of the church into the world.

### **5.4 The Church as one sent**

The Scriptures attested to it (John 16: 15-17) that God sent Jesus Christ to the world to save humankind. This message implies God as the author of "sending". Jesus Christ, before his ascension, sent his disciples to the end of the earth in his Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20).

A missionary is the one sent to cross the boundaries on behalf of his church, to preach the gospel, which are the good tidings. But it is not easy for a missionary to achieve his goals if he does not use some strategy.

For a missionary to reach the converts, he has to accommodate and adjust himself to the customs, practices and mores current among a people

(Bavinck 1954:169). Bavinck emphasised that the missionary who is a pioneer among distant and foreign people will have to wrestle with this problem from the beginning. He will in all probability try to imitate their way of life as far as possible. For example, he will build the same kind of house, eat the same kind of food, learn their language, and respect their customs and manners. He will as far as possible try to act as one of them. This entire accommodation is, however, temporarily and tactical and is not intended to be permanent (1954:169).

However, a problem encountered by the church is the negative influence on the relationship between African Churches and churches in the First World. Again that this is further complicated by the effects of economic and power inequalities, which characterize the global economy and which also impact negatively on relations between churches.

According to Gourdet (1996:399) inculturation should be much more developed than in Bavinck's view: "identification" means "casting one's lot fully with the local community by becoming with it one in communion and one in communication" (cf Luzbetak 1988:215 in Gourdet 1996:399).

Gourdet (1996:400) refers to Nida who sees identification as a very complex concept involving the totality of inter-human relationships. He best describes it by saying what it is not. It is not imitation, a process that usually involves cheap paternalism or superficial ingratiation, and not real empathy" (:399).

Nida elaborated further: "identification involves entering and participating in a community from that community's frame-of-reference" (Gourdet 1996:400).

Gourdet (1996:408) explains that the emphasis of contextualization is to seek identity in order to communicate the gospel because Christ himself identifies with humanity. She continues that Jesus is the heart of the gospel and to communicate the gospel interculturally, we must know Christ's true identity and make sure it is adequately communicated and to do it effectively, we must discover whom he is, where to find him and how to relate to him.

An example of how contextualisation of the church in Africa is sometimes done is the Africa Independent churches. Oosthuizen (1995:30-31) mentions that it would be fair to say that, in the AICs, the reconstructive mission of

the church has begun. The fundamental principle of traditional African religion has been analyzed and interpreted in the Christian context.

Certain features of the ATR are vital to the dynamic growth of the AICs. The most prominent of these are a strong sense of fellowship; of sharing and caring, and of not being individualized when it comes to mutual assistance.

“In The ATRs, the paramount reality is human relationships, not individuated being; and relationship means ‘more power and transcendence’, for power flows through relationship” (Oosthuizen 1995: 30).

This understanding is the basis of all relationships, within the context of the extended family. It also finds expression in the thousands of small AIC single-congregation fellowship, which act as fully-fledged denominations, in which Christian beliefs play a decisive role (Oosthuizen 1995:30-31).

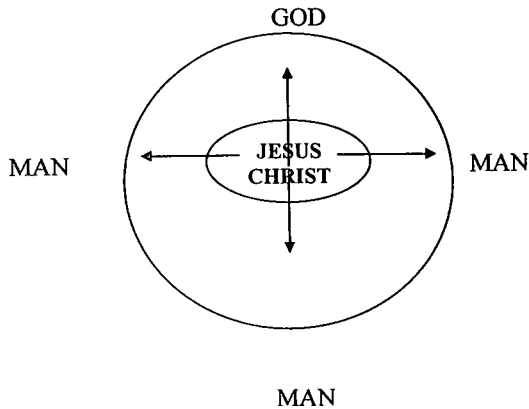
According to Rwiza (2001:108), inculturation is understood as the insertion or introduction of the Gospel message into a particular culture so as to transform and to elevate that culture and an able it to be the medium of expression of the Christian life or Gospel proclamation. Inculturation of Christian conscience in modern Africa has to take into account both traditional African values and modern values.

The central mission of inculturation is to make Christianity enter the inner life of the Africans; to make it answer their aspirations and anxieties; to help African Christians develop an integral identity rather than living in divided loyalties, with one foot in Christianity and the other in African traditions. Inculturation is an honest attempt to make Christianity evermore relevant in people's concrete and existential situations (2001: 109).

Inculturation is in this context a genuine way of life that qualifies Christianity. According to Cardinal Thiandoum, inculturation emerged as an overriding concern. It concerns every aspect of the life of the Christian in Africa. It is the marriage of professed faith and concrete life. Its final aim is sanctity in an African manner (2001: 109). To finally evaluate these positions the future must come into play.

### 5.3.1.2.2 Future Prospects:

The Scriptures, from its interpretation shows clearly that the two concepts of “centrifugal” and “centripetal” are a force to reckon with in mission. The diagram here explains it all.



It is a deed of God to man to be saved by Jesus Christ with his “Cross”. And again it is man sent by Jesus Christ to the world (cf Acts 1:8) to be his witnesses.

The gospel according to John puts it clearly that “For God loved the world so much.....that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”. The reason here being that humankind is to be saved.

So it is too with the people in the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, especially people from their capital, Maseru, where missionaries came to them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but the majority are still without churches to serve the Lord, Jesus Christ their Saviour.

In conclusion, I would like to borrow the words of Bavinck when he says: “The missionary enterprise is not a human undertaking, in which we must take into account our forces and counter-forces, but it is the work of Jesus

Christ who will gather to himself, through our instrumentality, a congregation out of every nation. It is upon this that we based all our expectations. We are engaged in the work that has received great promises from God" (1954:309).

The only thing that is fit for us to do is to go calmly forward now - and in the future - in the power of the Lord. For in ourselves we are more powerless than ever before. We learn more and more to understand that God alone can accomplish what needs to be done. Everything depends upon him. The firm trust that God is the king and that much can be accomplished by prayer (1954:309).

Therefore, this verse is of significant importance in the present situation where the Scripture according to Luke says: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
CCL	Christian Council of Lesotho
cf	Compare
CWM	Christian Women Ministries
CYM	Christian Youth Movement
Dr	Doctor
e.g.	For Example
ff	and further
i.e.	That is
L.E.C.	Lesotho Evangelical Church
N.E.B.	New English Bible
N.T.	New Testament
O.T.	Old Testament
PEMS	Paris Evangelical Missionary Society
Prop	Proponent
RAYAC	Richard Allen Young Adult Council
Rev	Reverend
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SADC	Southern African Development Community
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
WMS	Women's Missionary Society
YPD	Young People Divisions

## Abstract

The main issue in this dissertation is to establish what the different ways of contextualization among Christian churches in Maseru, Lesotho are. To reach this objective, church leaders from various churches were interviewed, with the aim of establishing their different approaches to contextualization. Their approaches to the main concepts of Church service were evaluated namely kerugma and leiturgia, diakonia, koinonia and marturia. Persons from the following churches were interviewed: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Maseru, Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Maseru, St. John Apostolic Faith Mission Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Views on contextualization of three main theologians were then also evaluated namely, Turaki, Sanneh and Bediako. After this evaluation the churches' position were reassessed. In the final instance the way forward for the churches in Maseru is discussed.

## Keywords

Christian churches in Maseru, Lesotho.  
Contextualization.  
Inculturation  
Church services  
Church and culture  
Church and Africa Traditional Religion.

## Opsomming

Met hierdie verhandeling word gepoog om te bepaal op watter wyse kontekstualisering van die evangelie van Christus in kerk in Maseru, Lesotho plaasvind. Onderhoude is gevoer met kerkleiers van verskillende kerke om hulle standpunte ten opsigte van kontekstualisering te bepaal. Hulle standpunte ten opsigte van die hoofsaak van kerklike lewe is bepaal naamlik t.o.v. kerugma en leiturgia, diakonia, koinonia en marturia. Die kerkleiers met wie onderhoude gevoer is, is van die volgende Kerke: Die "African Methodist Episcopal" kerk Maseru, die "Lesotho Evangelical" kerk, die Metodiste kerk van Suidelike Afrika in Maseru, die "St. John Apostolic Faith Mission" kerk en die Verenigende Gereformeerde kerk in Suidelike Afrika. Die beskouings van drie belangrike teoloë is ook bespreek, naamlik Turaki, Sanneh en Bediako. Die kerke se standpunte is daarna opnuut geëvalueer. Ten slotte is die toekoms van die kerk in Maseru bespreek.

## Kernwoorde

Christelike kerke in Maseru, Lesotho  
Kontekstualisering  
Inkulturasie  
Kerklike bedieninge  
Kerk en kultuur  
Kerk en Afrika Tradisionele Godsdienste