MINISTRY TO NOMADS: A COMPREHENSIVE MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late father,

John Ronald Petersen (1932-1987).

And to my sacrificial mother,

Lydia Anne Petersen (nee Bougaardt, 1940-)

"These are the hands that held you when you were born,

They helped you take your first step;

These are the hands that when you fell picked you up,

They dried your tears;

These are the hands that paged your bedtime stories,

They put you to bed.

These are the hands that washed your clothes,

Combed your hair, dressed you and

These are the hands that worked to feed and educate you."

-Lydia Anne Petersen- (14 September 2010)

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Chapter One: Background to the study

Research is to see what everyone else has seen,

and to think what nobody else has thought.

- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi (Nobel prize for medicine, 1937)

1.1 Introduction

The old man sat close to where he could direct proceedings. I was attending a traditional Himba wedding and his role was to ensure the meat was cut and well cooked. After the pleasantries I offered him a cassette player. He obligingly accepted the player but with a puzzled look. I pressed the play button for him. His ears perked up at the sounds of his traditional music coming from the tape player. With sparkling eyes he listened. He sat spellbound until deep into the night when he sent for me. Without much fanfare he went right to the point and said; "This machine has stopped talking to me…" I asked to see the player and fiddled with some buttons. The batteries were flat. Invited to a (Himba) wedding I thought it would be an opportune moment to test the Himba-Bible story cassette. That is, Bible stories using Himba genre of poetry, music, storytelling and so forth. It was an ideal opportunity as the target audience (Himba men) was present.

Christian mission has found nomadic communities to be fortresses difficult to penetrate. For various reasons nomads have been able to keep Christian missions at arm's length. This thesis asks; how will nomadic peoples hear the gospel and be discipled? Would nomads first need to be settled? Must they first learn to read and write? In essence this thesis asks if the Christian God is indeed "I AM" or Immanuel, the God who comes to His people? How can the Church permeate the nomadic world?

Hood (1990:ix) speaks of Christianity as a Greek religion. That is, it is founded on the philosophical and sociological Greek milieu. Kelber (2003) argues that Christianity in the modern era was influenced by the highly technologized 16th century's printing press. With time Christian mission focused on establishing mission stations where potential converts could be brought to be converted (Buys & Nambala 2003:53; see also Johnson 1967). These, mission stations, stood apart from the host community and allowed only certain people in. This missionary method rippled into the 20th century with remnants still visible at the beginning of the 21st century (Shaw 2010). The ancient world was an oral world. It is reported that less than 10% of the Greek world was literate (Niditch 1996:39). Bosch (1991:38) highlights that students learnt from their teacher's through observation. This is an oral learn-

ing method (Ong 1982; see also Hunter, G 2000). There is no record of any of the apostles leaving a written treatise on their missionary journeys into new territories. The epistles that followed were counsels given later. In the modern era, the focus of Christianity moved with the changing technology. As the printed page transformed the community, Christianity became a more literate religion. Niditch (1996) argues repeatedly in her treatise that we today impose a literate culture onto the Bible. Here education became a focal point. It is at this point that nomads were ignored, marginalized and isolated. Their value to society decreased and they became inadvertently ignored by the Christian community. With no fixed address Christians forgot about nomads. Isolated from the education systems of writing, nomads did not have access to Christian thought.

This chapter gives the backdrop to this study and gives an outline of the motivation, purpose, and research methodology as well as presenting the problem statement.

1.2 Background to the study

The year was 1998. After numerous requests from various village folk I was persuaded to start Otjiherero literacy classes. I was persuaded because I thought the classes would help me in my evangelistic task. I could use the classes as an opportunity for evangelism (creating a primer using Bible stories) and second, having a literate people would assist me later in doing discipleship.

I was assigned to plant a Seventh-day Adventist Church among the Ovahimba of northwest Namibia. Being young I felt the challenge doable. I reasoned that these were simple nomads. My 26 years of Adventism would give me a head start. In my sixth month (July 1995) I was sharing some of the challenges with a fellow missionary of another denomination. After listening to me for a few minutes he simply said: "You must learn to love the people..." (Grobelaar 1995). I thought I was a Christian and I had no problem with the idea of loving these people. But in our conversation my friend identified a missing ingredient, love for the people.

In the eighth month I decided to conduct a baptism. Baptisms always look good on reports and it demonstrates one is working. But the reaction I received to the appeals for baptism shocked me. One chief responded; "You have heard these stories all your life... after a few months you expect us to change [and give up our traditions]..." (Muhenye 1995). I decided to press ahead with the baptism. Three candidates were baptized. Not one came from a Himba village. They had each finished high school. As I reviewed my first year, I knew change was required. But the first challenge I faced at this point was: "How does one *plant* a Church among *nomads*?" The concepts clashed; here was a blatant contradic-

tion of terminology. I did not have the mind to study about nomadism but that first holiday I spent at the library learning about what it means to be Ovahimba.

My evangelism moved from teaching to learning. I took the opportunity in the second year to learn as much as I could about the culture. I then took those cultural themes and shared something about the gospel. My thinking was still skew. I was the Pastor (that is how I was introduced) and these were the potential converts. I still had a paternalistic outlook. Dybdahl (1986:18) states that he learnt the idea of the missionary as the teacher and the potential convert the supplier of artefacts "through osmosis." It was not learnt in books or from a teacher. However, it was just part of the missionary DNA. And like Dybdahl it took me some time to learn that God's mission is about the missionary seeing a bigger God.

In my third year, my focus changed to being involved in the community. I now started doing things with the family I visited. (It is important to recognize that each family I visited was an invitation by the father to bring the gospel to his children.) If they were out in the field I would go to the field and join in the activity. If they were having a court case I would sit in on the court case. (Because these continue for days the father would stop at an appropriate place and then allow me a chance to share from the Bible.) I would take these activities and share a lesson from the Bible. This was the most effective method of sharing the Bible with my Himba friends. (It is also important to note that I used a translator. My Church did not afford me the privilege of doing language learning.)

In my fourth year, after numerous requests, I used literacy as the teaching moment. But in the third month of my literacy classes, an older Himba lady asked for the umpteenth time; "what is this letter again?" With agitation in my voice I answered her request. She easily mastered the art of writing down her name. But she wanted to catch it with her eye and read it. Her ear was familiar with her name. But her eye was unfamiliar with her name. It was this experience that challenged me on two levels; I wondered if my Himba friends would ever be able to read through the Bible for themselves. Second, a question arose in my mind; "Does God expect my Himba friends to learn to read before he accepts them?" Immediately, the answer came to me; "No!"

Missionaries first arrived among the Himba/Herero in the mid 1800s. (The Himba are a sub-group of the Herero.) The Lutheran missionaries settled close to Okahandja at what is today called Gross Barmen. This was the heartland of the Herero. Buys & Nambala (2000:52) report that 15 years elapsed before the first Herero converted to Christianity. They further contend that after the "Missionary Peace Treaty" of 1870 was signed the (Herero) Christian converts swelled (Buys & Nambala 2000:55). The steady growth among the Herero people slowed down significantly after ten years. Only after the 1904

Herero genocide, where three-quarters of the Ovaherero were massacred, did the Herero again convert to Christianity in great numbers. This was understandable as people were displaced. Their leader was in exile. The war shrunk their cattle herds. The mission station gave the people protection and it afforded them the opportunity to rebuild their cattle stocks. Buys and Nambala (2000:68) report: "It [the interest of the Herero in Christianity] was not in the first place the power of the Gospel creating a hunger for the Word of God, but rather the ruthlessness of German suppression, which resulted in severe need and dependency in the Herero community." It took a further forty years for the Christian mission to reach the Ovaherero living in the northwest, the Ovahimba.

Buys & Nambala (2000:47) contend further that many converts desired the material blessings that were associated with the Christian mission stations. Miettinen (2005) although writing about the Ovambo in the north, concluded that the Ovambo used the missionary as a way to move closer to "whiteness." Hence the title of her dissertation; On the way to whiteness. It was these types of situations that opened my eyes to the need to divorce Westernization from Christianity. The Ovaherero communities of the early 20th century were now considered Christian. However, when the corpse of Samuel Maherero, the now deceased leader arrived in Okahandja the missionaries were surprised to see the Christian community reverting to their traditional ways to say their good-byes to their chief. From this point forward there was a struggle to mix Christianity and tradition. This culminated in the formation of a new Church called the Protestant Unity Church (Oruuano Church) in 1955. As I read through the history of the Church I realized I was reinventing the wheel. Missionaries of other denominations had worked among the Herero/Himba for the past century and a half. My presence among the Himba was not the first. In reality it was the Himba who had a head start on me. They were acquainted with missionaries.

Missionaries are not *tabula rasa's* and neither is the host community. Hiebert (2008:12) argues in his final work (published post-humously) that the modern era of missions (which is the current era starting at the Enlightenment) has three phases. The first phase (which ends in the 19th century) focused on behaviour. The second phase, he suggests, was the 20th century focused on beliefs. The third phase is the 21st century focus on worldview. My Christian socialization geared me to focus on the Himba behaviour and beliefs. I arrived as the expert. Yet, it was not at the request of the Himba that I arrived in their area. Although the fathers of different homesteads requested my presence with the invitation; "Come teach my children about Jesus..." It was after the end of the first year that I realized we had two different expectations. This could be ascribed to our two differing worldviews. However, I was alerted to the fact that my missionary endeavours were a repetition of what others did and are doing. I realized that I needed to build on the past yet not repeat any meaningless exercises. As I studied about Christi-

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anity in a nomadic environment I discovered that few converts were realized. Second, it would appear that nomads could not perceive God as one with them. This developed the need to study Christian mission in a nomadic environment.

This thesis proposes a holistic approach to doing God's mission in a nomadic environment. God, the Creator-Redeemer of the Bible, created humanity as a unit (mental, social, physical and spiritual) not in divisions. Unless Christianity addresses the person, the task of doing mission will remain one dimensional and flat. George Hunter (2000) suggests that the Church can learn from the early Celtic Church in Ireland. This thesis concurs with that analysis. Saint Patrick addressed the whole Irish person not just the religious aspects. Donovan (1982) argues that religion for the people of Africa is not isolated into a compartment. Rather religion for Africans is their being. That is, religion is not something done on a specific day of the week or at a specific place. Religion is absorbed in everything an African does (see also van der Walt 1998).

1.3 Motivation

Nomads through the centuries have appeared impervious to Christian mission. This could be because of the distance between sedentary people and nomads. It could also be the inherent marginalization experienced by nomads because of their lifestyle. Jesus gives his Church a commission not to exclude any community (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Yet it would appear that nomads have remained on the outskirts of Christian mission praxis and thinking. This study is spurred by the need to leave no community behind. Thus the study hopes to stoke the fire of mission research among nomads so the missional task among nomads will move from the back burners to the forefront of Christian mission. The fear and other prejudices associated with nomads can only be eradicated through a collaborative effort to understand such people. Thus the motivation is twofold: first, to understand why nomads have remained elusive to the Christian mission and second, to ignite a fire within Christian mission leaders to see that God cannot be restricted by human prejudice or convenience.

1.4 Theoretical framework

Bosch (1991) adheres to the idea that each generation (or epoch as he calls it) has its own mission framework. There have been a number of mission frameworks. Bosch walks his reader through the Christian era starting with the New Testament gospels through to the last decade of the twentieth century. He proposes that an ecumenical framework will guide God's church forward. Bosch is not being prescriptive. He has studied mission history, he understands the world we live in and he perceives that

unless there is cooperation between denominations the task of making God known will not be realized.

In the early part of the 20th century Roland Allen (1962a first published in 1912) asked the question whether mission practitioners follow their own method or that of Paul. Later he turned his primary thesis (of his seminal book) into a statement, The spontaneous expansion of the Church (1962b). He proposed that Christian mission needs to return to the example set by the apostle Paul. The method of mission being to preach grace and then to "retire from his converts to give place for Christ [to work]" (Allen 1962a: 148). Thus he was advocating the ideas of self-support, self-governing and self-propagating groups or congregations advocated by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson. These were mission leaders of the 19th century living on opposite sides of the Atlantic. However, Allen was adding the idea of self-theologising.

In the latter part of the 20th century, Evangelicals used contextualization as a point of departure. The Catholic Church coined the concept inculturation. These are similar approaches to the missional task with slight variations. Inculturation and contextualization focused on understanding the host's world. Respect for the host's culture played a significant role here. The goal was to take a foreign idea (Christianity in this case) and package it in a culturally appropriate way so as to attract converts and then to help them grow as Christians. Shaw (2010) contends that this approach is still very much paternalistic. What contextualization does is that it imposes what is required that is, the concepts are foreign but the packaging is home grown. Thus it still speaks to the audience. Hiebert (1985) construed the idea of critical contextualization. By this he wanted to ensure that the Bible took primacy in the dialogue with culture. Moreau (2006) argued for a comprehensive contextualization. No matter how the contextualization is packaged it is still something from the outside, it is foreign. Hence it needs to be contextualized.

Hiebert's (2008) idea of worldview transformation as a mission framework for the 21st century needs to be considered. It is important to note that the idea is rooted in the contextualization school of thought. Thus the point of departure is challenging. However, the focus on transformation is important.

Shaw (2010) takes innovative communication theory and suggests that mission theory needs to move beyond contextualization. He however, sees the two working in tandem. For transformation to be effective he should rather see his idea as building on the work of contextualization. Keeping in mind Bosch's (1991:366) understanding of a paradigm shift, it is "both continuity and change."

In the context of nomadism what has been the missional framework? Three lines of endeavour appear

in the published literature. The first is found in the Evangelical literature with the emphasis on contextualization. The second comes from the Catholic approach and the third appears in a social context.

In the Evangelical literature not much has been reported. Because many nomads are located in those politically sensitive countries it does make reporting more complicated. However, David Phillips (2001) of WEC International was commissioned to research missions among nomads. His focus is to demonstrate the need for Christian mission among the nomads. He entitled his work: Peoples on the move: introducing the nomads of the world. Malcolm Hunter (2000a-d), another Evangelical with SIM, who worked for 40 years in Africa, shares his ideas in a few articles commissioned by the International Journal of Frontier Missions. His work was primarily among the nomads of both East and West Africa. From an Evangelical point of view they do not present specific methodologies for working among nomads. Their goal is really to highlight the need for ministry among nomads.

Phillips (2001) in his monumental work introduces nomads to the reader. He researched, identified and documented nomadism, covering the length and breadth of the earth. He presents a kind of nomadologue of the various nomads. Although this forms the bulk of the book he introduces his reader to possible entry points for nomadic ministries. Then he documents a possible nomadic theology. His point of departure is similar to that of Malcolm Hunter (2000c) who suggests that the reader must be aware of the nomadic examples in the Bible and use these to build a theology for nomadism. The goal of this work is to highlight the need for Christian mission among nomads. His book is not about methodology per se, as the subtitle says: "introducing the nomads of the world." The book outlines who nomads are, where they live and the challenges around nomadism and Christianity.

Malcolm Hunter, who spearheads the Nomadic People's Network, has a lifetime of experience working with nomads in Africa. He unfortunately, has not published much. However, he did help in a series commissioned by the International Journal of Frontier Missions in 2000 on nomads. In these articles he argues for a new paradigm of doing Church. However, what that would look like he leaves to the reader or mission practitioner to discover. He does not really address the issue of doing evangelism among nomads. His focus is more on the end product. Being a trained engineer his focus however, is on doing development type projects. Yet he cautions that this requires dedication and cannot be addressed as with sedentary people. Neither Phillips nor Hunter really ascribe to any specific form of mission practice.

In the Catholic Church, Father Paul Tablino and Father Vincent Donovan share about their ministries in East Africa. They worked around the same time but each ministry had a different focus.

Father Paul Tablino has done an important work. He documents the missionary work undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church among nomads in northern Kenya and other east African countries. He authored: The Gabra: camel nomads of northern Kenya (1999) and Christianity among the nomads: the Catholic Church in northern Kenya (2004 with a second volume published in 2006). His documents also highlight his contribution to mission and current missional methods used in the area by the Catholic Church. His material presents excellent studies on the people. His method of evangelism among the people, however, takes a traditional sedentary approach to mission. It does not respond to the appeal of Father Dal Canton (in the early part of the century) to be nomadic per se. Hence he argues that he approaches them as agriculturalists that are different from other agriculturalists. This is a challenge that every missionary to nomads will need to deal with, the transitional nomads. Pastoralists can only work on traditional land yet modernization and national governments encroach on this land in diverse ways. Formal education (schools), health facilities, road networks, telecommunications, and television and so forth enlarge the nomadic world. Thus, the younger generations vacillate between tradition and modernization. The question is, do they remain nomadic or have they become sedentarized? Father Tablino believes they retain their nomadic identity. That begs the question what is a nomadic identity? He does not answer this question.

Father Vincent Donovan, an American Catholic missionary to Africa of the Spiritan order evangelized among the Maasai of Tanzania for 15 years. His goal was to plant an indigenous church planting movement. Now he would never use this term. In fact he abhorred the idea of planting a church. So to be true to Father Donovan I need to define what I mean by planting a church. Firstly, he planted a church (with a lower case "c") meaning a congregation as opposed to a Church as an institution. Second, he planted a "pilgrim people" to quote Bosch (1991:373-374), journeying with God.

He arrived at Loliondo mission station and accessed the situation as follows: a mission station that served a community covering 5000 square miles; a hospital for the sick with priests serving as ambulance drivers; a school for the many children; numerous priests in the area who had lots of Maasai friends but they would seldom speak to the Maasai about God. After his first year in the area he wrote to his bishop informing him of his burden to "go and talk to them [the Maasai] about God and the Christian message" (Donovan 1982:15). His goal was to share the gospel without foreign interference. His point of departure being that the missionary is not a priest. His task as missionary is to evangelize, that is, to share the gospel and the task of the convert was to interpret the message for his context. Having read Roland Allen's; Missionary methods: St. Paul's or Ours? he decided to enter an area and leave it. His specific missionary order had served the Arusha district for a century and not a single person

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was converted. The children who were converted returned home not knowing how to be Christian in the home environment. He (1982) recounts his experience in <u>Christianity rediscovered: An epistle from the Masai</u>.

Donovan used Allen's directive as his point of departure. At no point in his book does he refer to the inculturation principles of evangelism advocated by his denomination. I think this is deliberate as he introduces his idea to his bishop by questioning the logic coming from the ivory towers of America and Europe. He feels these are disconnected from the reality on the ground. Bowen (2009) suggests that he applied the principles of inculturation. This is true but as Bowen (2009:79) points out he surpassed the general application of the concept. Donovan wanted very little to do with Western Christianity. He desired to enter the Maasai kraal with very little preconceived ideas. Thus when introducing the idea of going on "safari" he informed his bishop that he would cut himself from the mission station physically and socially. He states: "I know this [cutting off] is a radical departure from traditional procedure, but the very fact that it be considered so shows the state we are in" (Donovan 1982:16).

From a social perspective there are commentators who felt the need to share about the impact of the Church among nomads. One such commentator is Rigby (1981). Peter Rigby, an anthropologist, argues that missionary activity at the turn of the 20th century was focused on releasing the slaves of the day through money provided from the Church in Europe and America. He further contends that the mission organizations focused on removing children from their traditional environments and grooming them into Christians. However, this approach backfired as the now grownup children discovered the collaboration the Church and government had. Here they understood the goal being to isolate their traditional people. With this Rigby suggests that the converts rebelled by returning to their traditional homes. He uses two examples of such individuals and how eventually they both became leaders in their traditional community. Rigby really informs his reader of a different focus in Christian mission. It is one the 21st century mission practitioner should not overlook. That is, the social impact of Christianity on the nomadic family.

This thesis uses the worldview transformation approach as its theoretical framework to forge a ministry among nomadic people. Such a framework wants to abandon the idea that mission belongs to the Christian community and uses the *Missio Dei* as its point of departure. It is God who initiates the mission and God who sends his people into the world. Such a point of departure recognizes that neither church denomination nor individual is in control of the missional task except God himself. As Christopher Wright (2006) says in the title of his book: <u>The mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative</u>. Like Shaw (2010) and Allen (1962a) this study wants to demonstrate that God calls people, and

then sends them into the world as his representatives. Thus God enables his people to represent his intentions in the world (Shaw 2010:212). This theoretical framework is an integration of Allen's idea of Paul's missionary methods (which are actually the methods of Jesus), Shaw's model of innovation and Hiebert's idea of transforming worldview. The foundation therefore of this model will be the incarnation (God coming to be with his people). The premise of this study then suggests that God is only visible to a people as he incarnates himself.

1.5 Limitations of the study

It is a fallacy to consider a people group called nomads. Nomads are not a people group per se. Nomadism is a lifestyle attributed to pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and peripatetic people. This suggests that nomads are not confined to a specific country or area. Rather, nomads are scattered throughout the world. Every continent is home to a group of people who can be classified as nomads. This makes the study relevant yet challenging. It is impossible for this study to reflect on every nomadic group.

Phillips (2001) indicates that nomads are present on every continent. However, to know what Christian mission is doing among these nomads would probably require one to know a number of the languages prevalent in the different areas. Language then becomes a barrier in this regard. Since the researcher is English-speaking reading papers in say French, German or local languages becomes challenging to say the least. Southern Africa, although home to a number of nomads (such the Himba, the San and the Karretjie people) has very little research in this area. Mission practitioners in West Africa are inhibited to write as many nomads live in creative access countries such as Chad, Niger and Mauritania. Writing about Christian activity in these countries would put the converts and current Christian workers at risk. Thus the social receptivity to Christianity plays an important role in documentation. Besides that, the fact is that most of West Africa speaks French. East Africa is home to a number of nomads (such as Maasai, Gabra and Somali). These live in a number of countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and others). Although English is used widely in this area few commentators have written about Christianity and nomads in East Africa.

The reader needs to also note that although the researcher lived among a nomadic people for the past 16 years it has not been as a nomad, but in contact with nomads from a central location. The researcher lived in a town and launched "safaris" (to quote Donovan 1982) into nomadic homesteads. Thus the researcher was not in daily contact with nomads throughout this period. Living amongst a pastoral nomadic group also challenges the researcher to keep up with the family. This is really impossible. The family splits into groups and following the family into these groups is nigh impossible and an invasion

of their privacy. Thus, the researcher was not able to follow the every move of the different families known to the researcher.

These are some of the limitations of the study. The study will, therefore, concentrate in particular on the nomads of northwest Namibia, the Ovahimba.

1.6 Problem statement

The problem this thesis contends is that nomads have not experienced the Creator-Redeemer of humanity as being one with them. Christianity arrives pre-packaged. The package includes; Westernization, a written text (the Bible), a church (a building or meeting place), a congregation (new social structures), and *koinonia* (weekly fellowship) to mention a few. These do not correspond with nomadism. This pre-packaged Christianity implies that nomads cede their lifestyle for that which they abhor - sedentarization. Stated differently, the problem this dissertation addresses is, can Christian mission be open to God's leading and re-package Christianity for nomads?

1.7 Research questions

Missio Dei is the point of departure of this study. However, if God is the originator of the Christian mission and if he is the one that will see his mission come to completion this study asks; how can God be nomadic when his Church is sedentary? How can an oral people hear God through a written text? What role does the organized Church play in a nomadic community - pre-evangelism and post-evangelism? These questions need to be addressed for the study to develop principles for doing evangelism among nomads.

1.8 Purpose of the study

Will nomads ever experience the Creator-Redeemer of humanity? This study argues that if mission practitioners persist in clothing the Christian message in written texts and Western applications the nomads will never experience the Creator-Redeemer of the Bible. It is imperative, therefore, that the Christian mission among nomads be repackaged using an incarnational approach. Thus the purpose of this study is to identify principles of evangelism that will allow the mission practitioner to help the nomadic communities of the world to know and experience God as one with them.

1.9 Objectives of the study

For this study to realize its purpose, it is important that the researcher clearly identifies what the Christian mission hopes to achieve. Although Christians have the same point of departure, namely the Bible, diverse interpretations abound. Giving the reader an understanding of what is meant by Christian mission for this researcher is foundational to this study. As highlighted above different approaches were attempted by different missionaries or mission agents while working among nomads. This was so because of their diverse points of departure on what the purpose of "Christian" is.

A second objective would be to give the reader a basic background on nomadism. Nomads are often prejudiced by sedentary people because they do not know them or seek to know them. To give the reader a peek into the world of nomads would therefore be helpful. Establishing who nomads are will also help to formulate some of the challenges to Christian mission in such an environment.

A third objective is deliberating about mission among nomads. In the end this objective will seek to present a worldview transformational model for working among nomads.

Thus the objectives of this study are to explore:
- the intrinsic interest this study brings to the nomadic context
- the principle of incarnational ministry as a model for working among nomads
- an approach appropriate to developing a missional oral-nomadic church

1.10 Research design and methodology

This study has as its primary research design that of describing and exploring the impact of Christian mission upon nomads. Peil (1982:3) contends that research is about knowing so "future occurrences can be predicted and policy decided." Nomads have remained not only on the margins of society but of Christianity as well. This study, therefore, explores this phenomenon in order to better minister to these marginalized people. Missiology being a multidisciplinary subject this study wants to describe nomads from an anthropological point of view. Therefore, this study is undertaken for its "intrinsic interest" in terms of the "internal context" (Mouton & Marais 1990:51). In particular this study wants to explore the possibility of sharing the gospel with nomadic men. These it has been discovered are the movers and shakers of nomadic society. In a previous study it was discovered that youth cannot serve as catalyst for transformation. Or to use Malcolm Gladwell's (2000) term, they cannot serve as the "tipping point."

Nomads are scattered across the planet. They live in diverse areas. It would be impossible to physically enter these communities in a lifetime. Social scientists, therefore, advice researchers to choose a sample and not try to cover total study unit (Peil 1982:26). This thesis will use the Himba of Namibia as a sample of the nomadic community. However, Peil (1982) and Layder (1993) further advices that participant observation is essential for the task. Layder (1993:40) describes a participant observer as one who is willing to live and interact in the community as opposed to one who merely enters a community for the purpose of research and departs. This Layder suggests will overcome the personal biases of the researcher. And it will allow for an authentic qualitative research as it seeks to discover from an "insider" perspective (Layder 1993:39).

Arriving in the area of the Himba the research pool was basically laid out for me. Upon arrival a number of families were previously identified for me by local Christians. These were two homesteads located at Ombazu and Otjipanga and two villages, Okapawe and Okarukoro. Okarukoro is home to primarily Ovathemba (also spelt Ovadhimba or Ovazemba). This is a related group. Ombazu is also known as an Ovathemba village but I was invited to a Himba homestead.

In my second year my reputation went ahead of me as one who preaches at the homestead rather than in a church building. Requests started coming from everywhere: "Come and teach our children about Jesus..." Soon I was engaged with eleven families. I visited two families or villages per day five days per week and on Saturday afternoon I visited a village with a car load of Church members. These were Oukongo, Ovinyange, Okapawe, Ombazu, Okarukoro, Otjipanga, Ondore, Orokapare, Orotjiuma, Ondore and Okapembambu. These are the homesteads or villages I was connected with. However, the homesteads that assisted me primarily in my cultural research were Ombazu (where chief Muhenye was the primary informant), Orotjiuma (where Mr. and Mrs. Katundu served as primary informants - Mrs. Katundu is the director of women affairs in the traditional Himba community), Ovinyange (where chief Muharukua was the primary informant), Otjipanga (where the three Kuroro brothers were the informants) and Okapembambu (where Kanuoyova and Tjiuri Hepute were the informants). Later I made contact with the paramount chief or king of the Himba, Chief Uziruapi Tjavara (who also stayed at Ovinyange). He became a valuable informant. I also made contact (just two visits) with the paramount chief of the Ovandamuranda group at Ohandungu (Chief Thom).

My actual nomadic experiences were afforded to me at Orotjiuma and Okapembambu. Mr. and Mrs. Katundu were so taken by my interest in their culture that they adopted me as a son and made me an honorary family member. This meant I needed to learn hands-on about life among the Himba. To achieve this goal they urged me to build a house at their homestead (which I never got the chance to

do) and they placed me under the farm manager (their son Mbonono). It was Mbonono's responsibility to ensure that I become a farmer (as much as a city sleeker could). I went out with Mbonono herding animals. He taught me about the wildlife and the various flora as well. If animals were missing it was assigned to us to go looking for them. This relationship continues today.

At Okapembambu I met a young man by the name of Kaunoyova Hepute. He has his own homestead. We only met in 2003 but the friendship has blossomed through the years. Kaunoyova allowed me the privilege of travelling with his young family to the cattle post to care for their animals in the dry season. His wife Tjiuri helped me to appreciate the challenge of maintaining a home in a very sparse environment and complemented her husband in supplying information on nomadic life. Thus these two families helped me experience Himba (nomadic) life.

Knowing, understanding and experiencing Himba nomadic life would only serve one side of this study. The study also required me to connect with spiritual leaders. I made contact with numerous spiritual leaders. Traditionally the head of the home is the spiritual leader in the home. However, a more revered person is the clan spiritual leader (*omupueye*). I was able to meet with and receive support from three clan heads, namely, Chief Uziruapi Tjavara, chief Muharukua of Ovinyange, and chief Muhenye of Ombazu. A Christian spiritual leader, Rev. Matundu Matundu, served as a valuable informant. He commented on both the traditional and the Christian side. Reverend Matundu has been earmarked as the next *omupueye* of his clan. He is torn between the traditional and his Christian worldview. Other spiritual leaders I consulted were Rev. John Tolu (Bible translator with the Lutheran Bible Translators - it is important to note that he has lived for many years among the Himba but he is of the Themba tribe), Rev. Jason Ngambwe (Dutch Reform minister also of the Ovathemba tribe. He however, has lived all his life among the Himba and is from Ombazu), Rev. Solomon Tjakuapi (Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, local district pastor), Rev. Job Mukungu (Nazarene Church at Okorosave), Rev. Rizera Hipakua (Nazarene Church at Opuwo), Rev. Daniel Muharukua (Mission Work for Jesus Christ), Rev. P. Kananbunga (Oruuano Church), Rev. Uetjerevi (Oruuano Church) and Rev Mutambo (St John's Church). These are all Christian spiritual leaders who are Himba.

Himba are a hospitable people. I was welcomed by these numerous spiritual leaders. However, it was important to win their confidence and not just assume it. My relationship with many of the spiritual leaders both traditional and Christian was cemented when in 2002 I embarked on the road of creating audio Bible stories using Himba communication styles. After listening to such a recording, Rev. Mutambo (2004) commented; "You [Gideon] really want to reach the heart of our people..." Rev.

Ngambwe (2002) said: "I did not know we could use tradition in the Church..." He was referring to the traditional styles of singing. However, in 2005, the town in which we all live developed a water crisis. I took the initiative to call all the Church leaders together and together we created a plan of action to assist our town. This tore down any wall of partition between me and the other ministers of the gospel. Through these experiences I built trust not only among the general population but also among the leaders of the people (traditional, local government and clergy). Having the trust of the people was always paramount for me as it afforded me the privilege of hearing detailed information about the culture and traditions. When it came to Church relations, I needed to be very intentional. This I did by being friendly with everyone and taking the time to be inclusive when doing various projects for the community (this may imitate Bosch's, 1991 idea of an ecumenical approach to doing the mission task; see also Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman 1984:4-6). Pocock, van Rheenen and McConnell (2005:248) refers to this as "collaboration" they state: "This trend is the result of efforts to expand the impact of the gospel by building on the strengths of shared resources, ideally through commitment to a common purpose."

Shaw (2010:208) states that missiology is "intrinsically cross-disciplinary." It takes in social studies, theology and religious studies. This research study, therefore, is a qualitative study that was conducted over a number of years in the northwest corner of Namibia. The primary source of data gathering has been participatory observation. By this I mean that I lived and experienced life with the nomads but I also interacted with the knowledge as I experienced it by asking in-depth questions about how and what the experience does for the people. The participation was not a passive looking in through the window. No, it was an active participation with the people and enquiring about the implications of the experience. Sometimes my assumptions were misconstrued and an informant would need to allegorize the value of the experience.

1.11 Ethical considerations

With my limited knowledge of Otjiherero (the Himba language) I tried to forge an understanding of the Himba worldview. Thus, trust is an important ethical consideration in this context. My reflection will be to the best of my ability a true reflection of my experiences. It is important to note that cultures differ as different families apply it differently. This is significant especially among nomads. Rev. Mukungu always reminded me that singing differs from area to area and one can tell from which area a person comes from, by the way he or she sings (Mukungu 2006). The application I have of the Himba culture will be in the context of my experience. I always informed my informants on the reason for my doing the research and they were very happy to assist me in my search. They were aware that my final

goal was to be able to present God in culturally relevant ways. Thus the relationship of trust I developed with all my informants is what drives this thesis to remain faithful.

1.12 Value of the study

Christian work among nomads has been limited to a few records. Phillips (2001) identifies numerous nomadic peoples around the world. Yet a Christian mission to nomads remains elusive. This study will have value as it will highlight the nomadic challenge. Second, this study will highlight that God has a desire to want to include these wanderers in his kingdom. Third, Christian communication has been confined to specific methods and places. This study addresses these restrictions. The study suggests that God's mission cannot be limited to or by our human limitations. It must exceed our smallness and embrace his diversity and magnanimity. The real value of this study therefore, is to place the nomadic challenge at the forefront of Christian mission and to assist mission leaders to plan more effectively in working among nomads. There are a few mission agencies involved in mission among nomads. Yet, nomads remain a majority people who have not heard the gospel presentation.

1.13 Study outline

This study seeks to give the reader a peek into Christian missions in the nomadic world. Often nomads are perceived to be isolated and marginalized. In the 21st century this is more complex. Technology has made the world a smaller place even for nomads. However, technology has not affected the immediate nomadic world. It has affected the nomad's communication ability with the outside world. However, before discussing who the nomads are (part two) it would be vital for this study to expand on what mission is all about in the 21st century (chapter two). Throughout the modern era Christian mission focused on developing people. This reflects the Enlightenment mindset of the day. However, with the fall of colonialism and the introduction of international development it would be important for this study to help the reader see where Christian mission is headed in the 21st century. Chapters two and one will therefore form the background to this study.

The second part will not only give the reader an idea of who the nomads are by looking at the Himba of Namibia but also help the reader understand some of the implications of Christian mission when it encounters nomads (chapter four). In part three the focus will shift to what Christianity has to offer nomads and how this can best be communicated. There is a feeling that Christians have struggled to effectively teach nomads the gospel. This thesis argues that Christians approached nomads with values that were contrary to the values of their lived world and therefore could not merge with their world.

Thus they did not reject the gospel message per se but rather they failed to understand what Christianity attempted to introduce. Thus communication plays a key role in Christianity's presence among nomads. It will be argued that many nomadic people are primarily oral people, i.e. a people who are blind to letters. This blindness has hindered the Christian missionary as s/he attempted to mould the oral person into a literate world. Hence it is not the nomads who have resisted the Christian message but the Christian missionary who has packaged the message using material and packaging that did not speak to a lettered-blind people. Thus chapter five gives value to a worldview approach to doing mission among nomads. Chapter six ends part three, by developing communication principles for addressing people at the worldview level.

The final section is chapter seven that gives the conclusion to the study with an analysis of the objectives presented here.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter gives the reader a background to this study. It aimed to give the reader a glimpse into how this study developed and how the researcher will continue through the study. The next chapter forms part of the background as it presents the foundational principles for doing the missional task.

Chapter Two: What does Christian mission hope to achieve?

There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who, with the help of their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun. - *Pablo Picasso*

2.1 Introduction

In the past centuries as well as today Christians leave their homelands and sacrifice limb, health, family members and cultural insensitivity for the sake of sharing the gospel. Compelled by the love of God many leave the country of their birth to extend the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 5:13 & Matt. 24:14). Others go because they want to be reunited with God and bring an end to the destructiveness of sin (Matt. 24:14). Still others venture into foreign cultures and deprive themselves because it is a command from Jesus and they can do no other but follow his instruction (Matt. 28:18-20; all Scripture in this thesis uses the New English Bible translation unless stated otherwise). In our contemporary world, businesses (big and small) are driven by the reason for their existence (O'Brien & Meadows 2007). They gather people around a common purpose and vision for the company or organization. It is the vision of the company that motivates employees as well as helping to forge strategic plans (Manasse 1985:150). It is keeping the end in focus that helps individuals not to be blurred in their objectives or actions. The previous chapter presented a general introduction to the study. This chapter outlines God's mission by using strategic planning as a point of departure. This is relevant because knowing the purpose of Christian mission is vital to the task. Discovering the vision will give focus to that which the Christian hopes to achieve.

2.2 Strategic planning

This subsection presents a brief outline on strategic planning. The focus of this chapter is to identify what Christianity hopes to achieve. Strategic planning helps the reader see the bigger picture but more specifically the *telos* of Christian mission. First I will outline in brief what strategic planning is. Second, I will discuss vision from a strategic point of view. Third, I will talk about action plans.

2.2.1 Defining strategic planning

Strategic planning has become an important tool in contemporary business (Grant 2005 & Webster 1992). A "strategy is a plan" or a "path (set out) to get from here to there" says Mintzberg (1994:23). Marrus (1984:4) speaks about strategic planning as the purpose of a company and "where it wants to

go - and determination of the best means to achieve those goals at a broad level." Grant (2005:18) states that "strategy is concerned with planning how an organization or an individual will achieve its goals." In contemporary language, strategic planning is like a GPS. To use a GPS effectively, it is important to first inform the computer where one wants to travel to. Without this information the GPS is unable to guide the driver. The directions dictated by the GPS are based on the final destination. A strategic plan in this thesis can be seen as knowing the purpose and the vision of the Church and devising a plan of action to arrive there. The objective of doing a strategic plan is to ensure the vision (or end, the *telos*) is kept in view. Loewen (1997:199ff) argues that vision is required but it also requires taking action. Casting the vision is only the beginning. Creating a strategic plan as Maxwell suggests, gives a procedure by which to realize the vision. It allows for goals as well as time frames and checking the financials. All this is evaluated on what strategists call the balance scorecard developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2006; see also Grant 2005:56). Here the goal is to balance the various entities involved in a strategic plan or as Grant says to "provide an integrated framework." An important part of the balance scorecard is for it to serve as a measuring stick. It lays out the potentials and then measures each achievement against its potential. In other words, the score is given ahead of time. To state it differently, knowing the examination ahead one can plan to get good marks. The scorecard helps everyone keep score and know where they stand and how far they have come in the plan. This suggests that the value of the scorecard is to allow the team to make adjustments as needed so improvements can be made. This in summary is what strategic planning is about.

2.2.2 The vision

The vision of any organization gives the organization direction and helps forecast the future. Without a vision it is difficult for an organization to know where they want to go or how they plan to get there (Maxwell 1999:148). It would be important then to first define the term 'vision statement'. The Oxford dictionary defines a vision statement as that which "outlines what the organization wants to be, or how it wants the world in which it operates to be." That is, "it concentrates on the future. It is a source of inspiration." O'Brien & Meadows (2007:558) suggest that a vision is consciously chosen by a group "to represent their preferred pathway or destination."

From the above definitions it is evident that a vision statement helps an organization articulate their *telos* or end goal. Thus in this thesis a vision statement is perceived to be the articulation of what the Church cannot see today.

Casting the vision has value as it motivates the team and helps build confidence and give direction

(Mannase 1985:150). For, says Eden & Ackermann (2004:15), it is "an image of the future that is attractive and worthwhile." And De Kare-Silver (1997:18) says it "binds and drives" the organization. As circumstances change in the world, the vision needs to be refocused. That is, life circumstances change and the vision of the organization needs adjustment (Grant 2005:20). Hannagan (2002:181), however, warns that change is not an event. In the context of the Church it is important to ask whether her vision has adjusted to meet the diverse circumstances in which she operates. This will be discussed below. It would suffice to say that despite change being a constant in the world, God declares himself to be unchanging. Thus God's vision (for humanity) has never deviated across the millennia of time. This chapter, therefore, wants to bring the Church's vision into focus.

Here are some examples of vision statements from different denominations and mission agencies. I will start with my denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It reads as follows: "In harmony with the prophecies of Scriptures, we see the climax of God's plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness"
(http://www.adventist.org/world_church/name_mission/index.html.en).

The mission agency, Adventist Frontier Missions, states its vision statement as: "reaching the unreached." (http://www.afmonline.org)

The Christian Reformed Church states their vision as follows:
"The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide"
(http://www.crcna.org/pages/mission_vision.cfm).

The New Apostolic Church has the following vision statement:
"A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life"
(http://www.nak.org/en/about-the-nac/vision-and-mission/).

From the above sampling of vision statements it would appear that the Church has a variety of visions. For some the emphasis is on reuniting with God. For others, the vision is to accomplish a task of spreading the gospel. There are those who want to see the kingdom of God extended to areas where Christianity has never entered before. Others perceive the Christian mission to be that of nurturing members. All these institutions base their vision on the Bible. Yet there would seem to be a plethora of ideas of what the vision is.

The Church is not a chameleon that sees in multiple directions. O'Brien & Meadows (2007) argue for multiple visions. They call this "visioning choices." What they are suggesting is bite-size visions at various points along the way that will move the organization to the ultimate vision. The vision needs to be a uniform vision. From the above sample, the focus of many Christian entities seems to be on what can be accomplished humanly speaking. It is at this point that Webster (1992) is correct. A spiritual organization focused on the tangible appears to be a contradiction. One commentator suggests that a vision helps the workers or clients to buy into the organization (Manasse 1985:150). Thus numerous denominations and Christian mission agencies have a vision that is tangible. A tangible vision makes it more measurable and easier to present a report. O'Brien & Meadows (2007) would argue that this is a stakeholder vision. What they suggest is an integration of the various entities involved. Hence they call vision making a process where various entities come together to work towards a joint vision.

When the Church focuses on a stakeholder vision, she inadvertently transfers authority for the vision from a spiritual plain to a physical or tangible plain. Having a vision like the Seventh-day Adventist Church, places the vision in the hands of God. It will be realized at his will and not by human devising. Shenk (1999:7) states, "To be authentic, mission must be thoroughly theocentric. It begins in God's redemptive purpose and will be completed when that purpose is fulfilled." Thus the vision must remain spiritual. The vision defines or guides the mission. Having a vision similar to Adventist Frontier Missions ("reaching the unreached") that is tangible, suggests that the organization becomes redundant once the vision is realized. What this thesis wants to propose is that the vision needs to align with God's vision rather than on a stakeholder vision.

This thesis asserts that God has a vision. His subsidiary, the Church, needs his wisdom to devise a strategic plan for achieving his vision. Webster (1992) may not agree with such a proposal. He has the belief that devising a strategy has to do with numbers or growing the Church numerically. This thesis does not understand strategic planning to imply increasing the number of converts. Neither does it see strategy as a marketing tool. Strategy, in this thesis, is not about reaching targets for the sake of reaching targets. It is about knowing where one is headed and how one will arrive at one's intended destination. The premise of this thesis is that God had a vision that has been unchanging through the eons of time. This vision he wants to see realized through his agents, those who choose to trust him.

2.2.3 Action plan

Strategic planning is a process that incorporates various activities. Identifying the vision is an impor-

tant step. Having an idea does not make it a reality. It is important to introduce significant steps to help one reach the vision. In strategic planning this is called an action plan.

The objectives are a broad statement of purpose. The goal on the other hand is "specific and concrete, with measurable results and a stated time period" (Marrus 1984:16). These combine to form the action plan. In strategic planning the action plan becomes the yardstick. The objectives and goals are specific and therefore become measurable. They can be ticked off, that is, marked completed. As these are completed the vision comes closer in sight. Or to state it differently: the action plan helps to lift the fog so the vision is made visible. Therefore, the action plan must be SMART (Hannagan 2002:69). SMART is an acronym meaning: Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time framed. When action plans are SMART they become road markers that remind the driver that he or she is moving in the right direction and on the right road.

Action plans are steps taken to realize the vision. The vision is the invisible end an organization attempts to reach. The vision is not measurable neither is it concrete. Thus it becomes important for Christian mission to have a vision focus rather than an action plan focus.

A strategic plan also involves a mission statement. However, a mission statement is merely the overall statement of the organization's understanding of its activities (Marrus 1984:12). There are other vital steps such as the SWOT analysis and creating a balance scorecard but these are not relevant to the discussion. This is not a chapter on strategic planning per se. It is merely highlighting the value of keeping the vision in focus rather than an action plan. Below, I will discuss the stakeholders involved in Christian mission as this is significant to the study. I will also briefly share some methods the Church has been engaged in. First, however, we must identify the vision of Christian mission.

2.3 The Christian mission

This chapter aims to understand the *telos* or vision of Christian mission. Above, in subsection two, the value of having a vision is established. This section will seek to establish what the Christian vision is. It would be good to keep in mind Wright's definition of mission. He states: mission is the "long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned actions" (Wright 2006:23). First though, I will present the current religious milieu. Second, I will present God's dream.

2.3.1 The setting

Christianity does not operate in a vacuum. Here I want to outline the religious environment in which Chri   stianity operates.

There is a saying which states that a person is a product of his/her time. Through the ages, Christianity has placed diverse emphasis on her mission. This Bosch (1991:349) ascribes to the Church reflecting her contemporaries. This section could present a history of Christian mission. However, such a venture would be futile, as the history of the Christian mission has been dealt with extensively (Bosch 1991 & Bavinck 1960). Rather a synopsis of Christian mission will be given and a brief review of the current environment.

Yohannan (1995:13-14) in his 1992 introduction to his book; <u>Revolution in world missions</u> presents a large sweep across the centuries of Christian mission. He is of the opinion that there have been three waves. The first wave was the disciples of Jesus who took the gospel message to just about every country of the then known world. He classifies the next wave starting with William Carey and running through the colonial period. He suggests the third wave to be the "native missionary movement." Escobar (2003) refers to the term "native missionary" as the missionaries from the south. Bosch (1991:181) using Kuhn establishes six epochs of Christian mission. He names them as:

   The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity

   The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period

   The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm

   The Protestant (Reformation) paradigm

   The modern Enlightenment paradigm

   The emerging ecumenical paradigm

Bavinck (1960) identifies similar epochs of the Christian dispensation through the centuries. These epochs or periods of Christian mission will not be the focus of this thesis. It is important to recognize the transformations that took place through the centuries and to understand them. For without having the knowledge of what has gone before it will not be easy to understand our present situation. It is therefore, essential to recognize the environments were different in each epoch and this is reflected in the focus of the Church during each period. As Bosch (1991:366) warns we should be careful not to be too critical as we evaluate older epochs. Our view is different. It is also significant to note that our values are different and therefore our perceptions of the world are different. However, in looking back it is important to learn the appropriate lessons so we can forge God's vision for his people today.

Getting back to the 21st century there are some similarities with the 1st century AD. As in the 1st century, Christians today, live in a world where Christianity has become a minority religion (Kraemer 1956:36). Not that this was ever different in any other generation. Christianity only became a world religion through the political manoeuvring of world powers. That is, it was dependent on political power for her status in a particular country. What makes the environment different from other generations is that currently numerous former Christian countries have rejected Christianity. This says Newbigin (1995:5) suggests that Christians "bear witness to the gospel from a position not of strength but of weakness." Kraemer (1956:27, original emphasis) calls this "the shattering of *Corpus Christianum.*"

Second, this generation of Christians recognizes the value of other cultures (including their spirituality) and the impact these spiritualities have on individuals (Oostwerwal 2005:60). There was a time when missiologists felt that Christianity could overshadow other religions (Bosch 1991:480, see also Hiebert, Shaw & Tiénou 1999:13). This was based on the Enlightenment idea of establishing truth. Once truth is established all falsehood would disappear. However, the opposite has happened. Religions the world over are growing. Those educated by Christian teachers are questioning their spiritual loyalties. Others are finding ways to combine the new faith (Christianity) with their old spiritual connections.

A third element working against Christianity is migration. Whereas previously Christianity only dealt with other religions in their own territories (across the oceans), today followers of these religions are in neighbourhoods that were traditionally Christian (Escobar 2003:70; also Pocock, van Rheenen & McConnell 2005:79ff). The adherents of other religions living across the road are not only from other countries. They are former Christians who have changed their religion. In nations where Christianity was traditionally the dominant religion it has become one of many. This is also true of other religions. Where, say Buddhism, was the singular religion in a country it now shares the "religious market" with other religions. This cross-pollination has made the world pluralistic.

The current religious environment appears to suggest that to proselytise is not acceptable. It is an environment where tolerance has become an all important concept. Tolerance meaning that one should allow each individual to express his/her religious belief without interference. It also means that one should not seek to impose a different kind of thinking on the person. This is also the age of religious freedom or some may refer to it as secularism. That is, the government should avoid imposing any religious belief upon the people within its borders. In some countries the opposite has resulted. Here the people want their religion to be enforced by law so as not to allow the immorality of the world to descend upon them as a people. In mostly former Christian countries and former colonies of these countries, the concepts of tolerance and secularism are growing. These are then seeking to impose democ-

racy upon other countries where, traditionally, these freedoms are unknown.

This indeed is the ambiguity of Christianity. For the Christian God is one who allows individuals the freedom of choice and who seeks to be tolerant. However, he is one who will not "give up" on his creation (Hos. 11:8). He continually seeks after his children and wants to draw them closer to himself (Jer. 31:3 & Col. 1:19). This may appear confusing. Therefore, it becomes valuable to understand God's vision. Knowing God's heart will guide the Christian mission through this malaise of pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

2.3.2 God has a dream

God foresaw these times and, in his mercy, prepared the Christian Church for the religious milieu of today. Christian mission for centuries centred on extending the Church among new peoples. Without giving the details of Christian mission through the centuries it would suffice to say that Christian mission was primarily about growing a denomination (Verkuyl 1978:3). In the twentieth century God prepared Christians through theologians and missiologists such as Karl Barth, Roland Allen and Leslie Newbigin in helping the Church see that mission is not about what the Church does but what God does in and through the Church.

As stated above, the premise for this study is that mission belongs to God. Bosch (1991) concurs with Karl Barth that mission belongs to God because he introduces the mission and completes the mission. This is a biblical theme. God is the *alpha* (beginning) and *omega* (end) of all things (Rev. 1:8). However, Bosch perceives the incarnation of Jesus as the starting point of Christian mission. Yet, the reign of God stretches further back than 2000 years. In the words of Jesus (Jn. 8:58): "before Abraham was born, I am." The apostle John said; "When all things began, the Word already was. The word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was" (Jn. 1:1). The apostle Paul sees Jesus as the rock in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4). White (1898:315; see also White 1900:287) suggests Jesus was the pillar of fire by night and the cloud covering Israel along their desert wanderings by night. God lives from eternity past to eternity future. Although Bosch is not explicit about the role God plays in the Old Testament, he does agree that God has always been involved in human history. As Barth contends the coming of God to humanity started at creation and has never stopped.

The term *missio Dei* is a Latin expression, meaning "God's mission". The originator of the term, Karl Hartenstein merely gave a term to the concept Karl Barth was talking about (Verkuyl 1978:3). Over

the past half century this term has really come to define Christian mission. However, it is only in the first decade of the 21st century that the praxis of the term has come to its own. Blackaby and Willis (2002:3) understand it as being "on mission with God." Here they are suggesting that "God reveals Himself to you so you can adjust your life to Him and join Him on His mission." Understanding mission as belonging to God suggests that it is not under the control of or owned by any person or institution other than the Creator-Redeemer of the world. It also suggests that the called out ones (the *ekklesia*) are members of the body of Christ. This understanding of mission has significant implications for God's mission among nomads. For whom belonging is an important value.

Let me repeat, the point of departure of this thesis is that mission belongs to God. It is not developed in an ivory tower in a great big city of the world. Neither was the Christian mission conceived by some political power. These would suggest mission is about establishing specific projects (this is evident in Bosch's third, fourth and fifth epochs). We should learn from history and not repeat it. The Creator of the world conceived the Christian mission before creation (Hesselgrave 1980:20 & Rev. 2:8) and he invites each person to join him on his mission (Blackaby and Willis 2002:3; 1 Cor. 3:9). The Christian mission is not new neither does it have human origins. Rather, humans are the beneficiaries.

The beloved apostle, John, reports that before the foundations of the world were laid, God conceived a plan of action should the adversary obtain humanity's allegiance by deceit (Hesselgrave 1980:20). This was not a reaction to a crisis, but a plan by which to redeem humanity should the need arise. Thus the story of redemption stretches back further than the time when God called humanity to account in the Genesis story (Gen. 3:12-15). However, the *telos* or vision of the plan was not realized then but the action plan was set out. This origin gives those living in the 21st century the assurance that God initiated this mission and not a human institution. It also gives the hope and the assurance that the *telos* or vision will be accomplished. Or as the archbishop emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu (2005:127) puts it: This is God's world, and God is in charge of this world" and in the fullness of his time, his vision be will realized.

A distinction needs to be made between God's vision or to use Wright's (2006:23) words God's mission and his plan of action. Why would the Creator or father of the world decide to pursue a plan that would involve him condescending himself and becoming a human being? Not just becoming a human being but living in abject poverty and subjecting himself to his adversary. In the end the one who knew no sin was tempted as one under the curse. The one who was eternal put on a degenerate body. Although being God he became a creature (Phil. 2:6-8). Being scorned and reviled by the very people he formed with his own hands. Moses in the wilderness, reminds God of his status and responsibility

when he pleads for the lives of the Israelites (Ex. 32:1-14). In this story again it is the character of God that is at stake. For says Glasser (2003:23) "whatever he does is a reflection of his character." From these examples it is clear; the mission was not the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The death of Jesus merely accomplished the legal purposes. It was an action plan that helped bring the vision into focus. The law demanded a life. The one who sins must die. So what then is the mission of God?

To state it in strategic planning terminology the life, death and resurrection of Jesus was a goal to reach a specific objective. The objective was to pay the debt of sin. Together these form the action plan. It was measurable. Paul, the apostle, suggests that Jesus came at the appointed time (Gal. 4:4). To a different audience the same apostle suggests that death is destroyed in Christ (1 Cor. 15:50-57). God can tick it off as being accomplished. He is now closer to realizing his vision and finishing his mission. Remember, a mission is achieved once the vision is realized. Hence Christianity needs a clear vision, something to move towards.

The fall of mankind presents another objective. Using the same goal - the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God - the objective this time is to tear down the wall of partition between God and humanity. In the Garden of Eden, Eve, the mother of all humanity, was tricked into disobedience. Hers was not a wilful rebellion. Neither was hers an intentional desire to go against God. However, the manner in which she fell into sin suggests she had a lack of trust. Glasser (2003:35) argues the point that humanity had a unique relationship with God, different from the other creatures (see also Wenham 1987:5 & 23). Therefore, Eve's lack of trust calls into question God's reliability. She failed to trust him as she doubted what he claimed about himself. This called into question God's reputation and character. When Jesus says, "I have come to show you the father." He is hinting at the broken relationship and the distrust shown by humanity. John quotes Jesus as saying, "I have glorified you." Again Jesus states; "I have shown you to those whom you have called out." These words speak to the need for bridging the trust between God and humanity. Lencioni (2002) argues that the "heart" of a relationship is trust. (Although Lencioni is talking about relationships within a team the principle can be applied to any relationship.) Because Eve mistrusted God, God's credibility is at stake. This trust was destroyed by deception. It cannot be restored through deception. It requires self-sacrificing love to restore it. This was the Messiah's objective; to tear down the wall between God and humanity. This is symbolically recorded by Matthew when he states that at the death of Jesus the veil or curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two (Matt. 27:51). Thus his coming to earth, his death and resurrection is a conduit to demonstrate God's trustworthiness. The mission was not to die. The mission was not to carry a cross. The mission was not to spill blood or give his life as a ransom. These were steps or action plans

required to complete the mission. That is, these steps helped make "God's dream" (to use Bishop Tutu's term) possible (Tutu 2005).

So what then is the mission? The above discussion highlights God's actions on behalf of humanity. It is important to show his vision. Genesis 1:26 says; "Let us make man..." This is an act of love. It is also an act of grace. It is something God decides to do by himself. But God does not decide to create the earth and then randomly goes about achieving the task. He creates systematically and with a vision (*telos*). Each day builds on the next. He puts things in place so he can then put the next object in place. It all comes to a crescendo when he finally makes humanity, male and female, and in his image. Everything is set in place for one purpose, to accommodate humanity. And then God declares mankind very good. As the story unfolds God takes the time to commune with humanity (*adamah*). The record indicates that God reveals himself (Gen. 2:15ff; 3:8). God did not hide himself from mankind. Wenham (1987:76) indicates that by using "the LORD God" in Genesis 3:8, "the narrator hints that God can still be man's covenant partner as well as his creator and judge." Thus God made humanity to be with him as a friend or to use Wenham's term in a "relationship" as someone to commune with him (Wenham 1989:5). When humanity broke this relationship God once again through his grace and love intervened. He wanted to restore that relationship again. It was his purpose to restore humanity back to their high estate as custodians of the earth (Gen. 1:30) and as his friend. In other words, his greatest desire has always been for his creatures to be with him. The mission is to reunite God with humanity. Paul, the first century apostle to the Gentiles, calls it the "service of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18). In restoring this relationship, God restores harmony to the earth and his creation. This is God's mission.

Jesus, as quoted by John the beloved disciple, expresses the mission most eloquently. "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Here the vision is described as having "eternal life." This eternal life suggests being in the presence of God. That is, being face to face with the Creator. Eternal life further suggests that death is conquered. This has to be achieved before receiving eternal life (the vision). This Jesus came to do and this is the good news. There is no need to fear death (1 Cor. 15:54-55). Death is overcome and our reunion is sure (2 Cor. 5:18). In the book of Revelation (21:3), John says it thus: "Now at last God has his dwelling among men." Here one sees the longing in God to be with his creatures. This then is his vision for humanity: to have his children in his presence again. This is why he decided to give all of heaven and to leave no stone unturned in pursuing humanity. He longs to be with humanity. His *vision* is to hold his children in his arms again. His *mission* "is a revelation of His character of love" (White 1900:415). This may sound simple. However, the gospel does not require years and years of study. It requires a simple response to a loving God who wants to be reconciled with his children.

Hosea (11:8) asks: "How can I give you up?" (See also Jer.31:3).

By definition Christianity claims to be a people converted to be called God's children. Thus Paul says, we are "adopted" into God's family and hence we can call him "*Abba* (father)" (Rom. 8:15). If this is so the Christian mission cannot be different to God's mission. The Christian mission must complement his mission. Wright (2006:23) reminds us that subsidiaries are allowed to have mini-missions that would lead to the ultimate vision (he uses the word mission but defines it as the goal or purpose). O'Brien and Meadows (2007) would concur with such an idea. Thus it is acceptable to have multiple visions but they should be directed toward the greater purpose, in this case God's dream for humanity.

2.4 The stakeholders in the Christian Mission

Having a purpose and vision it would be important to identify all the stakeholders involved in such a venture. As mentioned above the premise of this dissertation is that God is the *alpha* and *omega* of the Christian mission. The Christian business is therefore centred in God, the triune God. That is, he who created the world in seven days. The one who then came as a man and lived upon the earth for 33 years before giving his life as a ransom to redeem humanity. Thus he is the primary stakeholder and this makes the venture a spiritual one. The other stakeholders are: the adversary of God who is commonly known as Satan, unconverted humanity and converted humanity as well as all the angels (good and bad).

2.4.1 God

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16). These famous Bible words spell God's role in his mission. Paul puts it this way: "he made himself nothing" (Phil. 2:6-8). It is clear from the words of Jesus that the mission belongs to God. It has its beginning (God sent) in him as well as its ending (eternal life). The mission did not require any outside prompting or urging. Jesus states: "God loved the world so much…" This makes God the primary stakeholder. It is God who takes the initiative to reconcile with humanity. This is demonstrated at the fall of mankind when God comes looking for Adam and Adam decides to remain hidden (Gen. 3:1-9). God always takes the initiative in his relationship with human-ity. Therefore, one needs to look no further than God, to understand the subject of Christian mission.

The purpose of God's mission is to ensure that the people of the world have access to eternal life. That

is, so they may participate in the life of God. Jesus presents it in two words as "eternal life." But this is really loaded with meaning. Firstly, he qualifies it by saying those who believe should not perish. The present condition of humanity is perishable. Humanity is mortal. However, God desires to never remove his breathe from humanity again. His love is so great that he desires to have the perishable put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:54). This, says Jesus, is accomplished through God's son, Jesus himself. Second, eternal life is about being in the presence of God. It is about dwelling together or communing with God. What Jesus is really saying is that God loves the world so much that he longs to be together with humanity again. This too is accomplished through his son, Jesus of Nazareth. This suggests that God's mission is uniting God with humanity. God's mission is not how he accomplishes the mission, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

In a nutshell John here summarizes God's vision. Here John lays out the how, where, what, who and the when of God's mission. Besides providing a rescue mission, the verse speaks about allowing humanity access to God again in a direct way. This access could not be gained in an indifferent way. God had to follow the law. The law required a perfect lamb. In this way reconciliation is accomplished.

2.4.2 God's angels

White (1890:64) argues that the angels desired to do the task necessary to accomplish the mission. This was not possible. She states only God could accomplish the task. Any other creature would not suffice. The challenge facing God was his challenge. He could not send an envoy to accomplish what he wanted to do. Isaiah suggests that Lucifer wanted to scale the throne of God. That is, he intentionally rebelled against God. He attempted a failed *coup d'état*. To achieve his goal he needed to spread lies about God. This is why Jesus calls him the father of lies (John 8:44). White (1890:37) contends that the lies Lucifer spread basically amounted to name-calling. That is, God was not what he made himself out to be. He was not trustworthy. If God is untrustworthy then surely he needed to demonstrate his trustworthiness? He alone could achieve the purpose of demonstrating himself trustworthy. Thus White (1890:53) argues that the angels were to minister or serve the incarnated God and all humanity as intermediaries. This suggests that from time immemorial God never required a mediator between himself and humanity. He would incarnate himself and act as the mediator. This again demonstrates that God is the author and sustainer of His mission. It was his reputation on the line and he needed to defend it. Sending a creature to defend his character would not suffice. Thus, because of love, he chose to be incarnated (John 3:16). The law demanded the life of the creature. No creature could give himself a ransom to redeem humanity except the Creator. Thus the role of the angels of God is merely as support or to be ministers for him. The book of Revelation speaks about the angels as

worshiping God night and day. Isaiah echoes this. However, the book of Daniel (for example) speaks about angels coming to minister to people. Daniel received comfort, instruction and encouragement from the angels. However, there is a distinction between the work of the Holy Spirit and the angels. In essence the Holy Spirit is God whereas the angels are created beings (Ps. 8:5). This raises the issue of polytheism within Christianity. Christians are not polytheists. Polytheism is adhering to worship or serving multiple gods. The Christian God is talked about as three persons with one purpose. The bottom line is that linguistics limits one's ability to describe the Christian God. From the first chapter (verse 26, emphasis added) of the Bible God says: "Let **us** make man…" Here it is clear that God is not an individual. However, their purposes are one. Throughout their dealings with humanity their purpose is united. The Israelites, who also worship the Creator, speak of him as one; "the LORD is our God, one LORD" (Deut. 6:4). Thus angels serve the Holy Spirit. They are two distinct beings. They are not even similar. God the Holy Spirit is the Creator and angels (ministering spirits) are creatures. They serve God as he seeks to rule the universe.

God then is the primary stakeholder in the Christian mission. He is the primary stakeholder because the mission is really about him and his desire to reunite with his creation. He created angels as ministers who work alongside him. They do his bidding.

2.4.3 The converts

The apostle Paul considers converts to be "God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor. 3:9). Converts therefore, do not have a unique agenda. Their task is in collaboration with the Creator of the world. They do not operate independently, in their personal capacity, with their own vision. Jesus states it thus; "as the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). God calls out people from the clutches of the father of lies to live under truth and reconciliation. Those who respond positively to this call are converts. They have undergone a conversion experience where they recognize humanity's (their own and others) estrangement from God. Through the millennia, Christians have attempted to make converting other people their priority. This is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-13). Humanity per se is the object of God's love. Converts rejoice in this love and become workers together with God in helping others see the value of God's love and affection. Converts, therefore, become witnesses of the power of God's love in a world that is in turmoil and controlled by deception. That is, they become trophies who demonstrate the power of love in the life.

Who are these converts? Converts are people who have repented and have decided to follow and connect with God. They are not in rebellion against God but in awe of him. They are people who recog-

nize that God is trustworthy and that sin if not checked, will lead to rebellion. They have accepted the outstretched hand of God in seeking reconciliation. They recognize they cannot do anything to reunite with their Creator. It is God's prerogative. They acknowledge that the incarnation was the sacrifice necessary to reunite God with humanity. That without this sacrifice there is no reunification. Thus, Jesus is their way to eternal life. He is also the truth about who God is and he is life (John 14:6).

Converts align themselves on the side of the Creator. They recognize that separation from God leads to death for in God alone is life. They therefore accept Jesus as God incarnate and the only mediator between God and humanity.

2.4.4 The adversary and his cohorts

The word adversary says it all. He is against God. If he is against God he is against the objects of God's love, humanity. As an adversary it is important to note that there are distinct differences between God and the devil. God is the Creator of all things. The devil is a created being. However, the devil has desired to be in the place of God. Thus the devil is really the opposition, if we use strategic planning terminology. He opposes God and is against what God stands for. Understanding the two teams involved here illustrates that the character of God is what is being challenged. However, God wants to deal with the problem of rebellion. That is, intentional disobedience.

As noted above, Jesus calls the devil the father of lies. That is, the originator of falsehoods. This says Isaiah, the prophet, took place while the devil was still known as the Morning Star or Lucifer and the head of all the angels (see also Ezekiel 28). The book of Revelation suggests that Lucifer was thrown out of heaven with a third of the angels (Rev. 12:7). The Bible does not give any indication as to how many angels God created. It just mentions that one-third pledged their allegiance to Lucifer. They accepted his lies. They were misled but they have intentionally decided to mislead others as well. In so doing they joined Lucifer's rebellion. Today they continue to serve as workers of rebellion. They want the rebellion to rule amongst God's creation on earth. The devil unlike God is not omnipresent. This is a characteristic that belongs to God alone. The devil, therefore, uses his cohorts to ensure he can thwart the plans of God. He places his spirit beings all over to ensure the rebellion is promoted.

The role of the devil therefore, is to keep all creation in fear of the Creator. His cohorts assist him in this task. These cohorts joined him in the rebellion that took place in heaven.

2.4.5 The unconverted

The redemption of humanity is complete in Jesus. That is, the act of redeeming humanity is accomplished in the work of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah. What remains is for humanity to make a choice. They can accept or reject the work of redemption in Jesus. A third group of people are those who are not familiar with the work of God through Jesus for humanity. Those who reject God outright join the rebellion of Lucifer. Those who are not familiar are not fence sitters. They are unaware of God's decision to reconcile with humanity. The group who are fence sitters had the opportunity of knowing that reconciliation has been attempted but have not made a choice either way. These are the unconverted people.

God and the devil perceive people differently. God in trying to protect his reputation and his character wants to demonstrate to all humanity that he is trustworthy and that he has dealt with sin totally. In so doing his task is to regain the trust of the people. The devil on the other hand wants to ensure that the rebellion he started in heaven continues. He wants to ensure that each person rejects God and chooses to join the rebellion. Thus both parties choose to work alongside the converted and the unconverted. God wanted to demonstrate his trustworthiness and the devil wanting to sow discord. Thus God's mission is ongoing in both groups until such time that he is physically reunited with humanity. In Jesus the reunification has been established. However, people now need to demonstrate their trust in God.

These stakeholders and their roles suggest the task at hand. From the beginning God created humanity as a friend. The adversary destroyed this friendship. It is this relationship that God wants to restore. He desires to reconnect with the creature he created. To restore this relationship God has to put down the rebellion. He must deal with sin. In dealing with sin through Jesus, who is God incarnate, he demonstrates that he is trustworthy. God's vision, therefore, is to ensure that all humanity have the opportunity to return to his presence, to have eternal life. Christians for centuries have made dealing with sin the primary focus of God's mission. This is putting the cart before the horse. God's real purpose is reunification/reconciliation and to achieve reconciliation he must deal with sin. The subtle difference here is vital to what Christians accomplish in mission. When the purpose of God's mission is perceived as dealing with sin the focus of the Christian life is on self and what self must do to remove sin. It also suggests that the unconverted struggle to see how they can be "good enough" to be connected with a righteous God. When the purpose is focused on reconciliation God becomes the primary actor. Humanity becomes the objects of his love. The focus of Christians will be to demonstrate God's character in a sinful world rather than being focused on themselves and what they need to do to get ready to meet with God face to face. Knowing and understanding the purpose of Christian mission is vital to

the task of mission among nomads.

2.5 Missionary methods

Thus far in this chapter I have identified who owns the mission and what the mission seeks to accomplish. I have identified the various stakeholders and their roles in this mission. Then I also identified the steps that the primary stakeholder, God, took to achieve his purpose. In this section it would be important to define what Christian mission is and then share some action plans or methods Christians used to arrive at the mission. Finally, I will propose a method of Christian mission for the 21st century.

2.5.1 Defining Christian mission

Understanding what Christian mission is, is vital to her identity and her role in society. I have established that the Christian mission is connected to God's mission. God's mission has been clearly identified above. But what is the Christian mission?

Lesslie Newbigin (1995:56) states: "Mission is concerned with nothing less than the completion of all that God has begun to do in the creation of the world and of humankind."

Christopher Wright (2006:22) defines mission as: "our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation."

David Bosch (1991:519) concludes his *magnus corpus* by stating: "It [mission] is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world."

I will define Christian mission as: to participate together with God in making his dream a reality. And, it is with this meaning that the term "Christian mission" will be used in this thesis.

2.5.2 Christian missionary methods

In the two millennia there have been numerous applications of doing the Christian mission. Some have done well. Others have been ineffective. Still others have neither moved the mission forward nor backward. I will briefly share some of these.

2.5.2.1 Translating the message

I am borrowing Sanneh's (1992) words. But the concept is that of incarnation. Sanneh argues that from its inception Christianity has been translatable. His focus however, is on "the missionary impact on culture" (the subtitle to his book). Here I want to suggest that the principle of translation however, is a major Christian missionary method. God introduced this method by sending Jesus, his son, to this earth. He was the word that became flesh, the incarnation (the translated Word). Thus, he was the first translation into the culture of 1st century Palestine. This method of doing mission has at its centre the coming of God to a people.

2.5.2.2 Proclamation

The apostle Paul went about the Gentile world proclaiming the good news of salvation. The apostle Paul had one message with a dual meaning. His message was to proclaim that Jesus came to save and seek the lost. Yet, this has both messianic meaning and missional implications. Thus it is a call to repentance and at the same time, a call to share with others. Luke testifies that the known world was turned upside down through the preaching of the first century apostles and others (Acts 17:6).

2.5.2.3 Crusades

When Constantine became a Christian, Christianity flourished within the Roman kingdom. However, a new opportunity arose for Christians. Instead of being persecuted and haunted by the authorities they were now in authority. With the desire to ensure that all people should come to Christ, the conquering armies were sent to bring down pagan worship and install Christian rites among the conquered. Here I am using the term crusade as a general term to suggest a specific method of "evangelism" namely, the use of force upon various people around the world. Newbigin (1995) highlights that there were some who have remained Christian because of this conquering approach. But as Glasser (2003:23) states God's character is revealed in everything he does and I would add, in what he does through his ambassadors.

2.5.2.4 The great commission

William Carey motivated his desire to go to the heathen lands by using the text found in Matthew 28:18-20. It is important to note that this verse was not considered the great commission prior to this. This definition of mission has transformed through time. There has been an emphasis on going. Some have emphasized the discipling section. Others have highlighted the need to teach pagans. Still others

have emphasized Mark's (16:18) version that God would protect his emissaries not allowing any harm to come nigh them. Here the goal was to follow the command of God that spurred people on their missionary journeys.

2.5.2.5 Mission stations

Buys and Nambala (2003:53) mention this as a mission that is holistic and addressing the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the people. This led to the establishing of printing presses, schools, hospitals and churches. This was called the Comprehensive Approach to doing Christian mission. Here the goal was to isolate the convert from the community and build the convert in a safe environment. It also afforded the missionary protection from the barbaric heathens.

2.5.2.6 Spontaneous church expansion

One of the first missionaries to challenge the idea of a mission station was Roland Allen (1962b). He argued for the Church to return to Paul's method of doing mission. Newbigin (1995:129-130) summarizes Allen's ideas well. First, Paul entrusted the church to a local leadership. Second, "Paul does not establish financial relations with the new church." Third, Paul treats the new converts with respect and does not lay down any laws. This they will discover as they mature. Lastly, "Paul does not impose on them a ministry chosen and trained by himself." Allen argues when these principles are followed the church will grow spontaneously without external influences.

2.5.2.7 Church growth

Donald McGavran (1957) also challenged the idea of a mission station as it appeared to be a contradiction in terms. A mission is about going and station is about standing still. McGavran through his experience in India realized that congregations grew when missionaries lived and participated in the life of the people. Rather than removed people from their environment he advocated helping the people to live as Christians in their social networks.

2.5.2.8 People group movement

In 1974 at Lausanne, Switzerland, Ralph Winter introduced a new focus in Christian mission, people groups. *Panta ethne* (all nations or peoples), became the new focus of Christian mission (Winter, 1984). Many peoples of the world have a collective think. Thus the focus of mission turned to helping

communities make decisions to follow Christ rather than addressing individuals or geopolitical countries as a people group. Through this movement the need to identify the people groups of the world became a focus point. Here the various people groups of the world could be ticked off as reached or unreached. Thus the motto of this movement became: reaching the unreached.

2.5.2.9 Church planting movement

Also in the last quarter of the 20th century another focus point came to the fore, namely, the church planting movement. Here the focus was on establishing a local congregation within a community and allowing this community to mature and become a missionary movement. This was in the mould of John L. Nevius (1958).

2.5.2.10 Contextualization

A significant development within Evangelical missionary thought was the introduction of contextualization. The idea of contextualization is to incarnate oneself into a community. Here one would take the time to understand a people sufficiently to be able to contextualize the message of the gospel for that people. This method is very similar to the translating the message method. The premise here is that God owns the mission and he will accomplish his purpose. However, the difference is that contextualization remains an imposition of ideas from outside. The contextualization process was not restricted to the gospel message. It added the doctrines of the denomination or mission agency which the missionary represented. This has a patronizing impact. It does not allow the Holy Spirit to teach without a human agent interpreting the message.

These are a just a few methods that were implemented through the centuries. I would like to present a method for mission for the 21st century.

2.5.3 Worldview transformation - a Christian missionary method for today

Bosch (1991:5) warns that mission requires a focus, a purpose toward which it is moving. In the modern era of mission (beginning with the Enlightenment period) the focus of mission according Hiebert (2008:10-12) has been on people's behaviour and their beliefs. This was a result of poor conceptualization of the mission task. Here the mission task was perceived as preparing people for the kingdom of God. Others stated the mission as reconciliation in the sense of being able to behave in such a way as to be granted a reception with the King of kings. It is for this reason that the (contemporary) method of

Christian missionary work must keep the vision in view.

2.5.3.1 The humanity of God

Just like this thesis this method of Christian missionary work is centred on the coming of God to humanity. "In Jesus Christ," says Barth (1961:43) "there is no isolation of man from God or of God from man." It is his coming to humanity that in verity makes him human and brings us into communion with God. When the Word is translated into the human context the message becomes clear that God's love and grace is unfailing and it is dependent not upon an individual but upon him. Of himself he gives so humanity can partake in his presence. When humanity experiences God's presence the response is one of reflection upon such unconditional love. Those who enter this magnanimous presence of God will recognize that no person is isolated from God. God's humanity reaches to every person and none is excluded. This is the premise for the thinking of a method of doing God's mission in the 21st century.

2.5.3.2 Transforming worldview

Here I just want to outline the basic idea of this method. Hiebert (2008) in his book by this title (Transforming worldview: an anthropological understanding of how people change) undertakes to share how a biblical worldview needs to be espoused. His goal therefore, is anthropological but in the context of Christian conversion. Hiebert concludes his book by moving his reader toward a biblical worldview. Hiebert is not suggesting that the Bible has only one worldview – just one way of viewing the world. Rather he is suggesting it is "the human understandings of the underlying givens in Scripture" (Hiebert 2008:265). In this thesis and in this method of mission, a transforming worldview is about recognizing that our humanity is not tied up in ourselves (I think therefore I am). Neither is our humanity limited to what Mbiti says; "because we are, I am" (see also Newbigin 1995:68, 102). Our humanity is wrapped up in God's humanity (because Jesus is, I am). This humanity of mine is also the humanity of those around me. Their humanity is wrapped in God. Thus the transforming worldview here is about seeing humanness as God sees humanness and seeing the world around us as God would. This method of mission is about being. It is not an activity or a task. It is about a relationship and being in communion with an awesome God.

Shaw (2010) in his article calls for a new missionary communication method that is beyond contextualization. He uses the innovative method as one that can address the challenge of building relationships rather than talking to a person. Archbishop Tutu portrays this concept in his book, God has a dream: a vision of hope for our time. Here Bishop Tutu presents the heart of God as being with humanity in

their daily struggles. His is not a missional book. His book is a portrayal of a personal God who is engaged and not distant. When God incarnated himself in the 1st century in the man Jesus of Nazareth his actions and his words spoke one language (Jn. 7:46). Here the focus is not on teaching but on modelling a connectedness to the humanity of God. That God is above all yet has come to be with us. When this realization permeates our being, we will see not another individual but a person with whom God wants to reconnect. Thus the translation of the Word of God (Jesus) continues not in the written text only but in the lives of all God's people. In translating the Word, the interpretation is left to the one experiencing the Word. Jesus says to his disciples; the Holy Spirit will "confute the world..." (Jn. 16:8-11).

This method of mission is centred in the text that says; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind... love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). It is establishing a connection with God that elevates oneself and then in turn thinks well of others to the point where they are to participate with one in the presence of the Almighty. This in capsule form is the Christian mission today.

2.5.3.3 Missions exist because worship does not

Missions (plural) is about what I as an individual or a group can do. The focus is on the accomplishments; that is it is mission focused on the stakeholder vision. So that task(s) can be ticked off. It is a Christian mission, but it is not focused on God's universal vision of drawing everyone into his presence. Because the emphasis is on personal achievement, worship of the Creator-God is excluded. Such missions will continue to exist because worship does not (Piper 1993:11).

When humanity experiences the humanity of God something happens inside that person. A response boils over from the inside out. Buys (1998:85) refers to this as the "overflow." This "overflow" is worship. This is seen in the lives of numerous Bible characters such as David, Moses, Abraham and Jacob. The awesomeness of God coming to participate in their lives in tangible ways resulted in their need to acknowledge this "wholly other" (to quote Barth 1961:41). David did it through psalms of praise and worship. Thus the Christian mission becomes a lifestyle of worship. This lifestyle of worship matures into a desire to have others experience the same worship.

This in a nutshell is the method of doing Christian mission in a pluralistic, multi-cultural, and multilingual world. God wants to connect with humanity and he wants his humanity to be experienced. For this is the best way for him to be known through a "glass dimly."

The chapter asks; what does Christian mission hope to achieve? The answer lies in God's initial vision for creating the world. He desired a friend who would commune with him. The Christian mission must join God in this quest. God has taken all the steps needed to realize the fulfilment thereof. He requires witnesses (trophies) who will demonstrate that his plan does succeed.

2.6 Conclusion

These introductory chapters have set the pace for this study. The first chapter gave a general survey of the thesis. The current chapter identified who is in control of Christian mission and what the purpose of that mission is. The next chapter will start the empirical search on nomadism.

Part Two: The Nomads

<u>Chapter Three: The nomads of Namibia</u>

<u>Chapter Four: Mission implications in a nomadic environment</u>

Chapter Three: The nomads of Namibia

Omunwe umwe kautoora ona – Himba Proverb
One cannot pick up a louse with one finger (rough translation)

3.1 Introduction

In the first part of this dissertation a general introduction was given. Here the body of the dissertation starts. This chapter will answer the question, who are the nomads? This will be covered by addressing the following points:

* defining who nomads are

* identifying where nomads live and what they do

* understanding nomadic social makeup

* religion among nomads

* their use of space

* the challenge of sedentarization

This thesis acknowledges that nomadism is inclusive of different people groups from across the world. It accepts that this diversity makes it impossible to generalize about nomads. For this reason, although interlaced with some generalizations, this chapter is focused on one particular nomadic community, the Ovahimba.

3.2 Defining nomads

Nomads have been a mysterious people. Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson (1980:15) hint at an almost love affair relationship anthropologists have with nomads. For this reason anthropologists have tried to unravel the mystique around nomads. To a certain degree they have been successful. However, to Christians and others in society nomads remain enigmatic. B.J. van der Walt (2006) argues that the only way to come close to a people is by learning about them. This section seeks to unravel the mystique around nomads by defining who they are.

Generations back nomads were prominent among the peoples of the earth. There were lots of generalizations made about nomads. Such as, being fleet footed warriors or capturing wild stallions and taming them. There are nomads who have these skills but not all nomads can be classed as warriors. Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson (1980) warn about such generalizations. Lindner (1982:690) declares that

the nomadic history was left to the fleeing literates to archive for the coming generations. The nomads kept an oral account and their story is seldom told. These are usually confined to the family. A literate community can therefore share the information with a broader group of people, especially those from outside the community. So who are these nomads?

Salzman (2004:17) indicates that "nomad" was a term given to pastoralists. The original Greek word meant people who care for animals. Nomads are, therefore, keepers of animals. These vary from alpaca to camels to cattle to goats to llama to reindeer to sheep to yaks or any combination of these. There are areas in the world, "Where the production, harvest, and storage of fodder is not an available option because of shortages of capital or of labour, migration to exploit seasonal pastures represents the best strategy for maintaining a regular supply of food for livestock" (Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson 1980:17). Hence they become "peoples on the move" (to quote Phillips 2001). However, they do not move about randomly. Smith (1992:127) says; "the yearly movement of pastoralists is a cyclical transhumance, rather than a random nomadic response." Salzman (2004:2) says nomads use the natural pasture. That is, they do not attempt to enhance the land. They use it in its natural condition. To achieve the best results the herds are moved from place to place so overgrazing is not experienced yet the animals have sufficient to keep supplying the needs of the family. Keeping this balance is the nomadic challenge. Through innovation and ingenuity they have mastered the art of living in these conditions and have learnt to use them to their advancement as a community. Their animal husbandry skill is the backbone of their economy. Despite their isolation and their subsistence farming they are an asset to surrounding nations. They produce meat and animal products such as milk and cheese. They also produce leather, wool and other valuable products. Although subsistence farmers the excess is traded with their neighbours at their own convenience. These broad strokes describe nomads. Khazanov (1983:15) warns that sharing such blanket information is futile as nomads vary from place to place and region to region. This variety hints at the fact that nomads are not a people group. Here people group is the contemporary term for a tribe or nation. That is, they do not come from one ancestry. The fact that they live on every continent suggests they are not family. They do not form a cultural unit except that their lifestyles are similar. Thus nomadism is not a culture per se rather it is a lifestyle. This is why Barfield (1993:4) says nomadism is as much "a way of life as a way of making a living."

When referring to nomads, people often think of wanderers or people who roam. Perhaps it is because of this stigma that nomads are often found on the fringes of society (Chang and Koster 1994:1). The above explanations regarding nomads indicate that they are anything but people who roam. They travel specific routes with purpose Often the geographical location of nomads isolates them from the general populace. This could be due to the harsh topography. National laws also keep them isolated. To avoid

taxation laws or other such situations nomads avoid society. Often animal diseases keep them quarantined and away from other people (Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson 1980). Nomads however, find it necessary to move about. This movement often isolates them from others. The result being they have not been caught up in modernity. Modernization does not appeal to their sense of independence. However, being people who adapt, there are aspects they find charming. These they have incorporated. On the whole, foreignness has little fascination to nomads. They are content with themselves.

The saying: "No man is an island", holds true for groups of people as well. Nomads are not in total isolation. They interact with other people to various degrees. Eriksen (2002:11 & 19) indicates an identity is formed in the presence of another person ("us and them"). Thus nomads, to create their own identity, need to be in contact with other people(s). The interaction may be limited or it may be extensive. Those who limit their interaction with others are often the "true nomads." These "rely exclusively on their herds" (Phillips 2001:27). Generally the interaction with other peoples is diverse and varies from place to place and from people to people. Influencing factors could be security, food, health or land tenure. This interaction involves an exchange of ideas and ways of doing things.

 Tablino (2004:142) reports that missionaries struggled to enter nomadic areas. The colonial authorities left nomads to their own devising. They were not a bother to the colonial government. The colonial government did not need them and so ignored them. When colonialism was dismantled, the independent nations promoted the idea of geopolitical nationhood. This program extended to the far flung corners of the new countries. This forced the isolated nomads to suddenly participate in the national forum. Chang and Koster (1994:1) highlight that this in itself is challenging. National independence has introduced restrictions on the nomadic lifestyle as borders were introduced. The restrictions were not just physical. With nationalization came the idea of development. Development implies there is under development. The point of departure here is the perception that the nomads are primitive or backwards and need to move to something other than what they are. In essence development means becoming modern and sedentary. This has no appeal to nomads. Schools were introduced. Some were successful others were not. As Rigby (1981) reports, when faced with adverse circumstances, such as drought, parents would send their children to these schools. In the late 1990s the idea of mobile schools were introduced among the Himba. Initially the idea was resisted by numerous communities. With time these were accepted and eventually became permanent features of some communities (Muharukua 2009). Nationalization also implied that a new authority now established land laws. This authority came from outside the group. In Namibia the independent government has not yet influenced the traditional land issues. However, with the advance of modernity, there are farmers buying into the idea of fencing (Kamudyariwa, 2010). In the area about 60km south of Opuwo a few farmers have fenced off

land. Granted these are not nomads but it is on their traditional pasture lands. All these slowly impinge upon the nomadic psyche. This century has seen the growth of the information age. Here are no physical boundaries. The airwaves and cellular technologies connect people over vast distances. Through these connections, nomadic youth have been sucked into modernization. On the whole, though, nomads remain marginalized. Nomadic parents are complaining that they are losing their children and their children perceive them as backward (Kuroro 2010). That is, (nomadic) children are starting to see their parent's lifestyle as untenable. Such challenges prompted Khazanov (1983:xlvi, original emphasis) in his monumental book, Nomads and the outside world, to suggest: "It is clear that when modernization is primarily conceived in terms of constant technological innovations and economic growth, it is not applicable to mobile pastoralists [nomads] - *until* they become a specialized but integrated part of a modern society, with a stake in the wider distribution of its benefits." Many nomads refuse to remove the animal hides (they use as clothing), the body paint and other peculiar identifying marks. They prefer to trust their skills rather than modern methods. Khazanov continues to argue that joining the modern economy gives nomadic people extra stress. "The stress is even greater if the subsistence technologies undergo some kind of modernization but continue to operate within the framework of traditional social organization and land tenure" (Khazanov 1983:xlvii). In the contemporary world of information technology, a great value is placed on knowledge through scientific research. In this environment nomads have become isolated and frowned upon. 'Progress' into the information age has been deliberately ignored. The accumulated information of tradition has been trusted for generations. Irrelevant information is seen for what it is; knowledge which has no bearing on their world. Knowledge about the area and how to operate in the area is passed down from father to son. People are the experts (knowledgeable) not an inanimate object (books). The knowledge of the place or animals is stored in their orature (Kavari 2000:111). Phillips (2001:xv) warns: "We envision nomads as both carefree and stubbornly keeping to an uncomfortable life." This "stubbornness" has given nomads the ability to survive in adverse circumstances. The information age does not speak to their needs or circumstances.

So who are these nomads? Nomads are people using their natural environment to make a living. These are pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. With time the idea of nomads expanded to include people who move about. Thus an urban group has been included among the nomads, namely peripatetic.

3.2.1 Peripatetic people

Peripatetic people have no permanent address. Webb (1960) writes about his experiences with the Gypsies and calls them the "secret people." Gypsies are also referred to as Romany. Cvorovic (2006:130) maintains that Gypsies originate from north-central India. Their history, however, is not

fully known (Webb 1960:23; see also Cvorovic 2006:130). He suggests that there is much speculation around the Gypsy origin. One such speculation is that the name Gypsy is an abbreviation for Egyptian. The speculation is due primarily to the fact that the people are different and therefore, remain secretive. Webb (1960) decided to break those barriers down by getting to know them as people. Today the peripatetic people living in Europe are known as Travellers. Kearns (1977) distinguishes the Irish Tinkers from the Romany of Europe. However, in Ireland the Tinkers are also known as Travellers or Itinerants (Kearns 1977:538). As can be seen by the name calling, these people are not very welcomed. Traditionally their "relationship with the rural population was one of reciprocity" despite being regarded as inferior (Kearns 1977:538). The role they played in the rural area had significance socially as well as economically. Webb (1960) tells a story of how a Romany couple supplied milk and then without notice disappeared and a new supplier was needed (and there was none close by). Thus despite being of value if a need arose to move on (whether by outside force, a policeman, or personal desire) nothing would prevent the family from taking the road again. Travellers move with no real purpose or so it appears. Phillips (2001:9) however, states that their movement is: "systematic," "deliberate" and "thought-out." Wherever they decide to pitch camp they will see if there is a need in the neighbourhood and try to supply that need. With no formal education, they are prepared to try their hand at anything. However, a man learnt much from his father. And a girl learnt much from her mother. Thus they are self-taught artisans serving the community. Kearns (1977:539) states that Travellers "subsisted by finding and filling [the economic] gaps" in society. The skills are varied such as blacksmith, peddling, tinsmiths or general farm labour (Kearns 1977:538). These skills they use to keep food in their pots. Their home would be a trailer drawn by a horse. Today this is more likely to be a motor home. Literally their home is on wheels. Kearns (1977:539) points out that they originally walked from place to place, "covering short distances." Their mobility has transformed with time. First they acquired tents and later horse carts and still later motor homes. Webb (1960) hints ever so slightly at the challenges of the growing urban sprawl. Kearns (1977:540) writing almost two decades later states emphatically that modernization and industrialization has taken its toll on the people. Yet their focus remains on the cracks in the urban labour market. Tasks or jobs which others are unwilling to do, they will perform. It implied learning new skills but Kearns (1977:541) reports that they were up to the challenge.

In South Africa there is a group called the Karretjie people living in the Karoo. De Jongh (2002:442) calls them the "rural foragers - the modern nomads of the Great Karoo." They are a landless people although they have lived in a given area for generations. De Jongh (2002:443) sees them as the "poorest of the poor" and as a "rural underclass" that is invisible to most of South Africa. Although many of the settled residents in the area know about them, very few actually interact with and know the Karretjie people. Whereas Kearns (1977:538) perceive the Irish Tinkers as "finding" an economic gap, de

Jongh (2002:443) sees the Karretjie people as "engage[d] in a form of foraging that requires a series of opportunistic relationships with the settled population in order to sustain their itinerant existence." In that their primary skill is sheep shearing, they travel from farm to farm as sheep shearers. De Jongh (2002:449) calls it their "life-blood." They also engage in other farm labour. This would be considered seasonal work but somehow they survive. De Jongh (2002:444-448) presents a brief history of the people. He suggests that the settlers usurped the area and forced the indigenous people (Khoesan) off the land. As farming needs increased the farmers and the nomads adapted. The farmers became complaisant towards the roaming people as they no longer needed them full time. De Jongh (2002:448) makes the point that like the Tinkers, the Karretjie people first travelled on foot. With time they acquired pack animals. And later they acquired carts. It is only in the early 20th century that they became known as Karretjie people, people who live on their donkey cart. Their lifestyle is threatened from various angles. They don't have the urban sprawl enveloping them as in Europe. But other challenges address these nomads. As in Europe they camp on public land. Often police are brought in by sedentary people to urge them to move on. Legally they cannot stay on public land. Another challenge De Jongh (2002:450) highlights is the new sheep shearers coming to the area from outside. These shearers come to the area and then return home after the season is over. These are some of the challenges facing the Karretjie people, the modern nomads of the Great Karoo. Often peripatetic people are not schooled in Western scholasticism. Both Kearns and De Jongh discuss the challenges around education. Both indicate a desire by some peripatetic people to accept the need for learning to read and write. However, they are still challenged by the sedentarization of schooling.

Peripatetic people are nomads living in the city or at the edge of the city. They are really an urban people who do not own land. Another nomadic group similar to peripatetic people are the hunter-gatherers. They are a rural people moving about in search of food.

3.2.2 Hunter-gatherers

The hunter-gatherers have a home but are not settled. That sounds like a contradiction. Home meaning an area in which they operate. They are unsettled in the sense of not being sedentary. They are a people on the move within a specific area foraging for food. Their skill is the relationship they have with their environment. Smith (1992:34) says it takes a "spiritual form." They are so well acquainted with the fauna and flora of their area, that when looking at a rock painting, the observant onlooker will be able to tell exactly which month the drawing is talking about (Smith 1992:35). This knowledge allows them to fend for themselves without the assistance of modern technology. They stalk and track animals for food. Seasonally they gather roots, berries, herbs and other plants. This is not from a cultivated

garden. They forage food from wild plants. Neither do they possess domesticated animals. They prefer to understand the animals and hunt but not keep or care for them. The hunt is primarily for food. In times of distress like when a wild animal threatens or endangers the community, they will hunt the animal as a group. Here the purpose is to kill.

As foragers they do not travel long distances. But when it comes to hunting they can track an animal for a few days if necessary. Using primarily a bow and arrow or a spear they are patient and wait for the right moment to catch their prey. Not having guns or dogs to assist them they often do not catch their prey very quickly. They are nomadic as the seasons take the wild animals to different areas. To keep alive they must follow the animals. Knowing the animals and the area they know where to set up camp. Hunter-gatherers have very few material possessions. Since they do not keep domesticated animals, their possessions are limited to what they can carry when they travel.

Traditionally, hunter-gatherers are perceived to be the most 'primitive' people. Understanding their lifestyle however, one cannot imagine them as being 'primitive.' To be able to take a plant and use it at the tip of an arrow to poison an animal requires a brilliant mind (Smith, Malherbe, Guenther & Berens 2000:8). Then to wait so the poison leaves the blood stream. That is not primitive. Having no formal education, this is an enormous understanding of physiology. So what is primitive? This boxing of people into groups such as primitive, advanced, developed and so forth is all relative. It would be better to understand the knowledge and wisdom which a people possess. It is impossible for a people to survive for generations in an environment without adapting to it and creating knowledge to live in that environment. Having a Christian foundation, this thesis adheres to a Creator who formed and shaped the world. This Creator formed humanity with the potential to grow. That is, he endowed humanity with mental prowess and innovative skill. He created people with the ability to reason. They can therefore, be ingenious in various situations. Thus the idea of primitive does not feature in describing hunter-gatherers.

3.2.3 Pastoralists

Neither a peripatetic nor a hunter-gatherer would be considered a true nomad. Khazanov (1983:15) goes to great lengths to explain that these are not nomads. Pastoralists on the other hand he suggests are nomadic. He breaks these down into what he calls forms of pastoralism. Khazanov (1983:17-25) highlights the following forms: Pastoral nomadism proper, semi-nomadic pastoralism, semi-sedentary pastoralism, herdsman husbandry or distant-pastures husbandry and sedentary animal husbandry. Khazanov uses economic categories to describe his various forms. He does this as often nomads are

considered to be wanderers. This term, wanderer, he (1983:15) prefers to reserve for hunters and gatherers. Yet that would be unfair as hunters and gatherers do not walk about aimlessly. Nomadism has come to mean someone who moves about. The origin of the word, however, suggests something different. A nomad initially meant a group of people who kept animals. This is taken from the Greek. It means to "raise livestock on pasture" (Salzman 2004:17). Over time and with the different kinds of people who move about such as hunter-gatherers and others, nomadic became an inclusive term representing people who are on the move. Each nomadic people group moved about with purpose. Peripatetic people take their services to different communities. Hunter-gatherers move about in search of more convenient environmental conditions. Pastoralists move in search of water and pasture for their animals. Thus movement is very intentional among nomads. It is not an aimless wandering. Neither is it sporadic or seasonal movements. Salzman (2004:18) defines it as "the regular and frequent movement of the home base and household." This thesis is concerned about the pastoralists group in particular. Therefore, this thesis will retain the original name of pastoralists, namely nomads.

So who are the nomads? In this thesis nomads are pastoralists eking out a living as they care for their animals. The next sub-section will discuss their lifestyle.

3.3 Where nomads live and what they do

As described above, nomadism describes an intricate and complex group of people. This subsection will unravel a little about the whereabouts and the routine activities of nomads.

3.3.1 The home of the nomads

If it is true that nomads don't roam or wander about the earth where do they live? Can we key in their address and then find them? Or perhaps key in the coordinates and pinpoint where they are?

The Bedouins are probably the most well known nomadic group. However, the Middle East desert is not the only home of nomads. Every continent has a representation of pastoral nomads, including the continent of Australia (Phillips 2001:15). Some are better known than others. The different continents have different climatic conditions. This suggests that nomads live in diverse environmental circumstances. Each environment poses its unique challenges to the people living there. This further suggests different terrains are encountered. The diverse conditions also imply that different animals are present. To box nomads as a uniform response to their environment is also not appropriate. Both people and animals respond differently to these environments. Barfield (1993:6) states "The interactions among

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the animals, land, and people produce a complex web of ecological relationships." The location of Europe suggests it is very different to Africa. The opposite extremes in climatic conditions exist. Europe is cold and desolate. Africa is warm and desolate. In the tundra of northern Europe the Saami subsist on the reindeer. Barfield (1993:6) highlights that the tundra does not have the variety of species of other areas. Besides he argues that the reindeer do not exist in other areas. He says the same about the llama of South America. Europe is probably closer to Asia in the climate yet the environment is different. Asia has the steppes and the mountains. The tallest mountains in the world can be found here, the Himalaya Mountains. The diversity even here is also noteworthy. Some areas have the yak and yak hybrids. These are the higher regions of Asia. In Tibet for example where the air is thin and the winters bitterly cold, both people and animals experience these climatic conditions as harsh. Here they work with yak, sheep, goats, horses and cattle/yak hybrids. The variety is important under the circumstances. The lower regions have cattle and camels as well. In Africa the conditions are opposite. It is extremely hot and dry. Here in the desert and semi-desert areas the people work with cattle primarily as well as sheep, goats and camels. In sub-Saharan Africa the Maasai and Fulani are the better known pastoralists. In southern Africa the Himba of Namibia and Angola are best known. In the Middle East or Arabia the primary animals are camels and sheep. The desolation and bareness of these places is what makes nomads so diverse yet a unit. Chang and Koster (1994:9) contend that people are pastoralists because of "their cultural commitment to animal keeping, even if for some individual herders the actual number of animals is paltry." The Himba will agree with this assessment. For a Himba is not a Himba without his animals. Nomads are keepers of herds. These herds vary but it is their commitment to animal keeping that makes them to be who they are and dictates where they should live.

The environmental conditions suggest a variety of animal species be kept. The conditions are such that nomads cannot afford to specialize in one species exclusively. However, a primary or key animal is more important. This emphasis on a regional key animal Barfield (1993:10) suggests "is the product of remarkable synthesis of ecological possibilities and cultural ideals." Thus he gives four criteria that must be met for an animal to be the key animal. First, he suggests the animal must be well adapted to ecological conditions of the area so large numbers can be supported. Second, the people must value the animal enough so every family cannot do without the animal. Third, the lifestyle of the people will be determined by the needs of the primary animal species. Finally, he contends, "the key animal must in some way define a nomad's social, political, or economic relation to the world." That is, like the Bedouin, the camel is not just well adjusted to the desert it also gives the Bedouin the freedom of movement they desperately seek. Barfield is really suggesting that there is interdependence and interplay between the people, environment and animal. Chang and Koster (1994:9) state this categorically: "Keeping a herd of animals requires human beings to shape their lives - socially, culturally, economi-

cally, and ideologically - in ways that are structured by interdependence with their animals." This is why Smith (1992:127) can say that even the location of the homestead (he uses the word camp) is dependent upon the animals and their needs. Their need for movement is not hypothetical; it is practical for their livelihood. Chang and Koster (1994:9) add; "The husbandry of animals represents a commitment to a way of life." It is this commitment to these harsh conditions that many sedentary people struggle with. It is not just the harsh physical conditions but also the harsh climate and lifestyle. Nomadism is a lifestyle that makes economic and social sense for a specific group of people. Nomads do not expect sedentary people to become nomadic.

The nomads live in mountain regions, on grass plains, in arid and semi-arid areas. The coordinates on a GPS may locate the general area but their home is really the whole area that they traverse. One could go to Google earth and locate the general area in which they live. However, the weather patterns will dictate their current location. This is because their primary activity is caring for livestock. Below, the livelihood of nomads will be expanded upon.

3.3.2 The nomadic livelihood

Nomadism is often perceived as an offshoot of hunting. Smith (1992:36) states: "If hunting/foraging is a different mode of production to pastoralism we can suggest that the transition from one to the other will be fraught with great difficulty." Smith (1992:32-36) argues in detail about the differences in relation between hunter and animal and herdsman and animal. In herding he argues the onus is on ownership. This speaks about control. Whereas hunters cannot own much and have no desire to own much. They have a relationship with nature which Smith (1992:34) considers to be a "spiritual form." This fundamental difference affirms Salzman's (2004:34) assessment that "nomadization and sedentarization have been ongoing and complementary processes for millennia." They are, however, alternate economies although they are both based on moving with animals. In hunting the animal is wild. In pastoralism the animal is domesticated. There are compelling reasons to retain the pastoralist economy. First, it is not dependent on outside individuals, it is a family business. Second, the economy is connected to the ancestors and the Creator. These are trustworthy and dependable. They are the ultimate providers of all good things for the family. Third, the animals can be restocked. If there is a natural disaster or a raid, the social system is such that herds can be restocked. (It's like going to a bank only here there is no interest charged.) This subsection deals with the pastoralists' livelihood.

3.3.2.1 The currency

The livestock is really the livelihood of nomads. Livelihood implies it is the economy of the nomadic society. To put it differently it is the currency of the people. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between land, people and animals is vital for a sustainable lifestyle. In sub-Saharan Africa cattle are of great value. How does this economy operate? Nomadic use of space is an important asset (Jacobsohn 1995; see also Crandall 1996:331). The Himba homestead (*onganda*) best illustrates the value placed on the animals (see Figure 3.1 below). The Himba homestead is traditionally divided into left and right or male and female (Jacobsohn 1995:64, 80-82). This she says even applies within the house (*ondjuwo*). There is a male side and a female side to the house and homestead. For the Himba where there is a dual lineage this has deeper significance. If one is related to the head of the family one has freedom of movement within the homestead. The spiritual take precedence in one's ability to belong. Thus the male side of the homestead belongs to one's spiritual connection and the female speaks of one's material side. In my observation there is another spatial dynamic. This is not a male over female dynamic. It highlights the value placed on the animals. The Himba homestead is circular. In my observation there are three concentric circles that make up the homestead. The outer circle I will call the crust or wall (or physical circle). Then there is the inner (sacred) circle and finally there is the core (economic circle) of the Himba homestead.
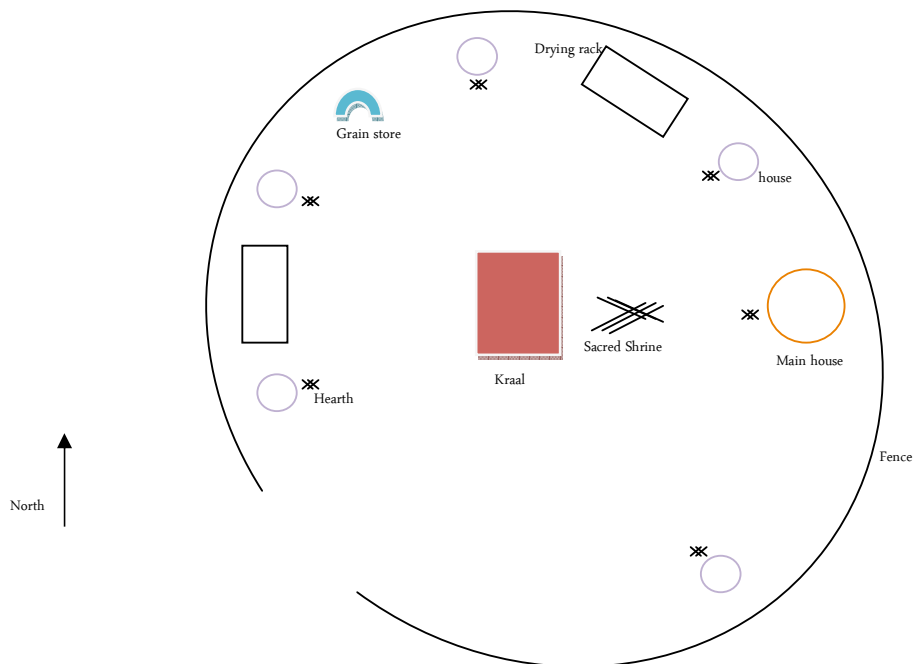
Figure 3.1: Diagram of a Himba homestead

The outer circle or crust of the homestead contains the various houses of the family members. These are the homes of the wives, sons and daughters of the head of the homestead. Each house has its own hearth or fire. These form a wall of protection around the homestead. No one can enter the family cir-

cle without a member of the household inviting them in. A stranger, visitor or a predator must pass through this outer ring. It echoes the idea of "me against my brothers, my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins and me against the world" (Barfield 1993:16).

The inner circle is the spiritual connection of the family. This is where the ancestral fire is located. The ancestral fire traditionally forms the *omuvanda* or sacred line with the entrance to the main house to the East and the entrance to the kraal to the West. This sacred line divides the homestead between left and right. In the circular thinking of the homestead, however, the sacred fire now forms the spiritual connection of the family (who are on the outside). It also forms the spiritual protection for the animals that are at the core of the homestead. The spiritual circle stretches over the family and the animals.

The core of the homestead is the kraal or animal pen (*otjunda*). This is where the wealth of the family is centred. The family business is contained in this centre. However, as Salzman (2004) notes the animals are not uniquely the animals of the homestead. The animals extend to the dead. It is as much the wealth of the ancestors as it is the wealth of the living family. Thus the wealth has a physical protection through the outer wall and a spiritual protection through the inner (or sacred) circle. The *otjunda* does not hold all the animals. However, it symbolically represents the family business. The Himba do not keep all their animals in one place, even in the best of times.

The value of the animals is demonstrated through this circular symbolism of the homestead. Although the setup of the homestead is practical, it also has symbolic significance. Little regard is given to one who does not have animals. Barfield (1993:19) referring to African pastoralists agrees: "Ownership of cattle is the key determinant of a man's wealth and status." It is said; "a Himba without animals is not a Himba." A person without animals is not respected. A person with many animals is respected and given the title *omuhona*, lord. Wealth is measured by one's ability to increase one's stock or extend one's *otjunda*. This emphasis on wealth has great implications for Christian workers, especially missionaries. Missionaries generally are people who are sacrificial. When they arrive in a nomadic community they see huts rather than modern housing; they see animals and not wealth; they see no school building and think the people are ignorant and so forth, they will want to identify with the people and they identify with what they perceive as poverty. In so doing the nomads reject the missionary and his/her God because neither the missionary nor his/her God can assist them in improving their wealth. However, traders are more than welcome. As long as they have something to offer the Himba, they are welcome. If not they will be ignored. Thus Barfield (1993:4) is correct in his assessment that nomadism is as much "a way of life as a way of making a living." Animals are the currency. If animals are the currency it is important not to eat it up. Smith (1992:24) states that where cattle or camels are

the primary herd they are well nurtured while the smaller stock is used for food. "In this case cattle are only slaughtered on special ritual occasions, while milk becomes the mainstay of the diet."

3.3.2.2 Transhumance

Barfield and Salzman glorify the ability of nomads to take uninhabitable areas and transform these into areas of purpose for their animals. They achieve this by moving their animals from place to place. This is based on numerous factors; the weather, pasture, water and/or animal needs (for example diseases). This is called transhumance or range management. It may not be a set rotational pattern each year but there is a need to move the animals. Their ability to maximize their topographical space is valuable to their livelihood. If they were to remain in one area (as in ranching) they would not be able to produce as many animals. Moving the animals to various locations at different seasons implies they can exponentially increase their herds. Range management therefore, is vital in making nomads who they are.

Range management is complex. Here the family head makes the decisions. Yet his decisions are not made in isolation. Consensus is the preferred method of decision making among the Himba. He will discuss with his adult sons, his wife as well as the other men in the area about possibilities. In real extreme drought he will also need to consult with his brothers (as they too have shares in the assets). If an elderly father or mother is part of the homestead, their needs require great consideration as they cannot travel as far. The greatest concern though is the protection of the herd by careful and calculated division. Smith (1980:127) highlights that different breeds of animals require different patterns of movement. Being an experienced farmer, the father must make the best decision that will sustain the herd and the family. Often in the dry season there is very little to eat. All these as well as other challenges make range management very complex (Müller, Linstädter, Frank, Bollig & Wissel 2007).

3.3.2.3 Traders and other outsiders

Needing to manage the herd, family and pasture/water, what role do outsiders play? Khazanov (1983) argues that nomads have always had a relationship with outsiders. Barfield (1993) argues that nomads like all people, do not live in a vacuum. That is, nomads never lived in total isolation or without any relationship with outside people. Their social organization is centred on caring for their personal (family) needs. (This is based on the harsh conditions in which they live.) In expanding their social network it is for the enhancement of their personal need. Their social network, therefore, expands to outsiders who are able to meet these needs. That is, they are open to people who will help sustain their lifestyle. These can be spiritual workers (Christian or traditional), traders, a market to sell their products, gov-

ernment officials who can assist them such as veterinarians and so forth. Among the Himba, healing is an important value. Witch-doctors have an important role to play. They do not have tribal witch-doctors and so allow "foreign" witch-doctors to operate in their midst. Usually, these are from a specific people group, the **Ovangambwe**. This is but one example of the presence of outsiders among the Himba.

Smith (1992:33) makes the point that when herding is a priority, there is a sense of competitiveness. He further argues that when this happens class distinctions come about. This is transferred to outsiders. The role one plays cannot be changed in the community. If one enters as a trader one cannot change that identity. Hence to a degree outsiders are kept at a distance. They are to remain in their role. They may live in the community for years but will never be consider an insider (part of the family). No outsider should think s/he is indispensable. Pastoralists are ingenious in creating opportunities for themselves. Thus their relationship with outsiders is on a need basis. As with their pasture, they will shop around for alternatives.

3.3.2.4 Labour

A significant part of the nomadic economy is labour. Kauuova (1999:35) indicates that a primary goal of having children is to ensure there is labour. Harpending & Pennington (1990) indicates that Himba (they speak about the Herero – these are one people just the Herero is more sedentarised) have a tradition of fostering out children to a sister or a brother to assist with work. Nomads do not operate as a unit. Each homestead is an economic entity on its own. Here the homestead must have sufficient workers to care for the needs of everyone. A homestead usually consists of a father, his wives and their children. These form the basic unit of the homestead. The parents of the father can be present. The homestead is also open to the father's unmarried sister or brother. Among the Himba servants are hired. These are usually from a different people group, usually Ovangambwe or Ovathemba. A servant usually has his own house and moves with the family as needed. The work force is sufficient to ensure all labour challenges are covered.

Phillips (2001:33) indicates that there are times when extra labourers are required. He suggests that usually pastoralists will turn to their next of kin for assistance. In the Himba tradition this is common especially in the summer when gardens are made or ploughed. Here young men from the extended family will assist. The sharing of labourers is also visible at harvest time. Here children from adjacent homesteads assist. Another communal task is the dipping of small livestock. Here all the young men in the area come together and have a great time dipping all the animals. Like in any economy productiv-

ity is vital. There are seasons when there is much to do and seasons when the work is slack. Thus the Himba work hard and they play hard. However, the overseer (the father) does not have much time to play. His task is to ensure that the animals have good pasture away from disease and access to water. He does this through continual discussion with other farmers in the area or the area he wants to go to. Although the land is communal and accessible to everyone it is important to keep current residents in the know of one's presence. This is just being courteous.

The Himba labour market is not only confined to the existing family. Usually as a man matures he inherits animals and his herd grows. This increases the workload of the family. Soon his wife is unable to keep up with the tasks required of her. To ensure economic stability and growth, she will encourage her husband to take a secondary wife. The secondary wife will not only provide extra labourers but she herself will be an extra worker. Her role is to serve the first wife in her duties. The secondary wife will therefore often be related to the first wife. This ensures the labour market does not slowdown. Kauuova (1999:36) does not deal with this aspect of polygamy. He does, however, highlight some practical needs around polygamy. While he does not take the space to deal with the challenges around polygamy he condemns it as an unbiblical practice. This will be addressed further in the next chapter.

In brief, this is where the pastoral nomads live and the business they are involved in. This thesis is focused on pastoralists. It would be valuable to have a brief discussion of the other nomadic groupings. However, that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.4 Understanding the social makeup of nomads

Nomads are very sociable. This however, is often limited to the immediate family. This can be seen in the often quoted saying: "Me against my brothers, my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins and me against the world" (Barfield 1993:16). Here I will discuss the nomadic society as it relates to the Himba of Namibia. Again it is important to remember that nomadism is not universal.

3.4.1 The family

The nomads are not a people group (this was established above). Nomads are made up of different people groups that use the nomadic lifestyle to create a living for themselves. However, there are similarities between the different peoples. Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson are adamant that nomads live very complex lives. The complexity of their lives has numerous factors. In some areas it would appear that their social makeup is due to the biotic environment such as the Gabbra of East Africa (Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson 1980:26). In other areas, they band together for security reasons. Smith

(1992:20) sees this especially among the North African nomads such as the Tuareg. So the diversity stretches across the nomadic world. The smallest unit of any community is the family. Other factors affecting the social make up of nomadic families, include land tenure, political challenges, marauding groups, the market as well as the number of herds owned. Even within tribes social responsibilities and social make up can differ for the same reasons. The Himba social structure is centred on clans.

Family or lineage connects the Himba. The Himba are often heard saying: "We are all related to each other..." Others are heard saying; "somehow we are connected to each other..." This suggests that the family is the unifying element in the society. Being part of a family gives one a sense of belonging and connectedness. Family, therefore, is a link that connects all families into the people group. Khazanov (1983:140) states it as "The notion of common descent provides a theoretical foundation for social integration."

In most pastoral groups the family is made up of a mother, a father and their children. That is, children consider themselves a family unit when they share the same father and mother. Children from another wife or concubine are still family but not to the same degree as sharing a mother. Often these siblings will share a homestead but more often they will not share a fireplace. Although they are family and related they are a unit on their own. The idea of family therefore, takes on a different meaning in the Himba context. It is important to remember that the Himba have a double descent (Malan 1973). Through one's father one is connected to one's ancestors (spiritually). Through one's mother one is connected to the animals (materially). Thus the role of one's mother is vital. Khazanov (1983:127) differentiates between what he calls a "primary kin group" and the family. He highlights that as an individual, a wife although under her husband forms a unit on her own. This he regards as a nuclear family in a nomadic setting. Mbiti (1969:140) speaking about the African context refers to a mother with her children as a "household." In a polygamous society then the nuclear family is not the homestead. The nuclear family is the head of the homestead and a specific household (as defined by Mbiti). Myburgh (1981:107) confers that a wife in a polygamous marriage and her children forms a nuclear family. Thus some commentators may refer to the other wives as extended family. Similarly, one's father's brother (who is referred to as father) is also regarded as extended family. Khazanov calls this group the "primary kin group." He defines the primary kin group as people who share a common ancestor. He (1983:128) states: "The primary kin group consists of several autonomous economic cells which do not automatically have the right to make claims on each other's property and labour." In stating this Khazanov is suggesting that a family is the group who form an economic unit. This usually consists of a father with his wives and children, i.e. a homestead. Beyond this there can be a primary kin group where the father's brother's share in the larger family business but each is an economic unit on their

own. This is a significant understanding of family in a nomadic setting. It gives a different meaning to family than the Western idea of family. It also gives a completely different understanding of owner-ship. For the animals of the family are the animals of the primary kin as well. Thus one really works for the family enterprise incorporated rather than for oneself or for a private individual.

With all these kin and interconnections, Khazanov highlights that it is through these that social identity is created. What appears to be a loose social connection actually forms a very tight and strong bond. For the Himba that bond is the ancestor through the father.

3.4.2 Family members and their roles

The family has been identified as the bond that unifies nomads. However, it is important to define their roles within this structure.

Tate mukuru rume (**the ancestors**) – What makes the family are the ancestors, the progenitors of the family. And it is through the father that the family is connected to the ancestors. The family is not complete if the ancestors are not identified. Mbiti (1969) calls these the living dead. These go as far back as the father can remember the names of the ancestors, usually five generations. Malan (1973) says the Ovahimba call this *eaanda* (the patrileage). Here the value of genealogy is vital to the exis-tence of the family. Knowing one's genealogy (roots) implies knowing one's value in society and in one's connection to others. In the Himba tradition the *eaanda* is one's spiritual inheritance and connec-tion. The ancestors serve as the family mediator to God. Thus they will speak on behalf of the family to *Ndjambi Kalunga* (God). (It is believed that God is spirit and only spirit beings can speak to him – the dead are spirit beings. However not all dead are good spirit beings.) They will ask for rain, protec-tion, healing and so forth.

The ancestors set the rules for the family to live by. These taboos if obeyed will ensure the family will be in good health and prosperous. If these rules are broken by a family member the ancestors have the power to punish the offending person and eventually the family. If an offending person does not rec-ognize his/her wrong doing, the punishment spills over to the family as the father of the family is not honouring the rules. The family will then need to conduct a cleansing ritual. Here the guilty party will need to be brought to the Ancestral Fire and acknowledge wrong doing and the father seek forgiveness on behalf of the family. In this way the family will be cleansed and can start afresh.

Tate (**father**) – Smith (1992) mentions that there are people where the father does not have the pri-

mary role in caring for the animals. Among the Himba the father is the chief provider of the family. As mentioned above his provision is directly dependent upon his relationship with the ancestors. If he neglects this relationship it suggests his ability to provide for his dependents will falter. This is accomplished by putting aside the milk of the holy cows each day. The ancestors are only acquainted with the father as living mediator. No other family member can serve in this capacity.

The Himba regard God as a distant provider. He is unapproachable. The father (creator) fulfils the same purpose in the Himba family. He is not approachable by his children. They must speak to him through their mediator, their mother. The role of a father then is to provide and ensure the animals are taken care of. The rest of the family must come in line with his wishes. However, adult children are consulted when transhumance is encountered. The wife or mother is also consulted at these times as well as when big decisions are required.

Mama (**mother & step-mother**) – The number one role of a mother is to provide children. Women in the Himba society are perceived to be the providers of labourers. This is an important role as it moves to the next phase. She must train the children to be farmers. As the primary herder of the small livestock her role is to use these as a training school to educate the children (boys and girls) in the finer art of herding. This includes climatology, animal health, range management and so forth. As her daughters mature they assume these responsibilities under her tutelage. Through this process she needs to ensure that the family has food security and the children are clothed. So another important role is to ensure that the garden produces food in the summer so there can be a harvest in autumn.

Providing shelter is the work of the mother. The homestead belongs to her husband but the house she lives in is hers. She designs it and the construction is under her guidance. Her husband will come to her house as he does not have a house of his own. Thus she seeks to make her house attractive for her husband and have food ready at her fireplace. She will not share her fireplace with another wife.

As a step mother she is still a mother. Although not actively engaged with a rival wife's children, the children must show her respect. A senior wife and her children are usually afforded special honour in the family.

Ovanatje ovakazona (**daughters**) – Their primary role is to help their mother ensure food security and to serve the family business through caring for the small livestock (the goats and sheep). If she has a child and the father of the child does not pay the necessary price the child is adopted by her father. In effect her child becomes her sibling. Here the value of connection is highlighted. Every child must

have a connection to a father and in turn to an Ancestral Fire. Without this connection the child cannot be a member of the family. Thus the grandfather adopts the child.

Ovanatje ovazandu (sons) – Sons play a significant role in the family. It is through the sons that the family line will continue. Kauuova (1999) indicates that through the sons the ancestors are immortalised. It is also the sons who will be the primary herders of the animals until they set up their own households. From childhood, he will learn the basics of farming under his mother's tutelage. Talavera (2002:32) states that boys before they are circumcised are treated as girls. They will live with their mother in her house. Thereafter they will be placed under the care of an older brother. While under his mother's tutelage the son learns as much as possible about animal husbandry. Until about puberty he still cares primarily for the small livestock. However, once puberty is reached he graduates to do full-time care of the cattle. He goes to the cattle post with his older brothers and/or cousins to learn about the finer details of animal husbandry.

Grandparents – The grandparents play an important role in Himba tradition. Here the grandchildren learn about life. At night it is the grandparents who share stories from times past. It is also the grandparents (primarily) who will share stories around the fire (*ongano* - fables) that will teach moral lessons.

These form the homestead. This economic unit has the father as the head.

Tate (father's brothers) – One's father's brothers also serve as one's father. The relationship is the same as with one's own father. When the father dies, his wives are given to his brother (starting with the oldest).

Aunts – One's father's sisters play an important part in the family. Their children will inherit the major portion of one's father's property. In some cases they can even inherit his wives.

Honini & Inyangu (Uncles) – One's mother's brothers are regarded as uncles. One is allowed to marry his daughters.

Mamatjiveri & Mama (mother's sisters) – These play a special role as the younger sister will serve her older sister. These become real mothers to the older sister's children.

Omupueye (clan priest) – The father of the household maintains connection with his ancestors

through the Ancestral Fire. However, if there is any need for mediation the clan priest is the one who will represent anyone in the clan.

Ozongombe **(cattle)** – All animals are an inheritance from the ancestors. Every animal has a genealogy and this genealogy is passed down to the sons. The sons are entrusted with care of the animals. The cattle bind the clan to the ancestors. Thus the cattle form an important part of the family circle. They complete the family circle. Therefore, Smith (1992:34) states: "To the pastoralist, his domestic animals are considered family." Wallace (2003:359) quotes an unpublished article by Kirsten Alnaes which affirms this idea: "... it is through the holy fire [*okuruuo*] that the intricate web of relationships between cattle, forefathers, men, women, children and the extended family is mapped out ... [it] is a centre around which, and through which, basic factors in Herero life meet, where transformations take place, where misfortune is undone, and where life begins and death is completed."

All these together form the family or clan business.

From the roles outlined above, it is evident that the primary focus of the family is sustainability of the family and the herds. Although the animals play a significant role, it does not imply the family members are mere objects in the course of improving the herd. There is interplay between the two. Without the family the herds cannot exist. Without the herds the family will have no livelihood to sustain them as a people. Thus nomadism can be perceived to be very materialistic as the lifestyle of the family hinges on the needs of the animals (the currency). The type of housing, the clothing, the diet, the movements of the family and so forth all depend on the needs of the animals. For the Himba the primary motivator however, is the relationship between the ancestors and the animals. The lifestyle, therefore, is a result of the need to keep the herds multiplying for the ancestors. As ultimately the animals belong to the ancestors who started the herd. So really the lifestyle is to appease the ancestors and wealth is a by-product. Hence, Christian Himba say; "A Himba cannot be a Himba without the ancestral fire." And this becomes the core challenge in sharing the gospel.

3.4.3 Marriage

Weddings are not big in the Himba society, in the sense of major celebration. (They are becoming more of a celebration.) Funerals are big events. People travel from far and near to attend a funeral. It may not be a celebration but it is a get together of the larger community. Weddings are localized events which can happen at any time.

This is how a young man proposes. He speaks to his mother about his need to have a partner. They will discuss the matter and identify the young woman he is interested in. At the appropriate time (not immediately) the mother will speak to the father about her son maturing and ready to establish his own family. The father in turn discusses with his brothers and only with their permission does he make a decision to visit the young woman's family. At no point is the young man involved. His involvement ends when he spoke to his mother. (Today this is changing.) Kauuova (1999:30) mentions that in the initial contact not much is said between the two parties. He states the woman's father will say: "We have heard your desire and interest. We will tell others and think about it." The reasoning here is that "we are not the only parents" and we must "consult [with] others." Here time has no boundary. Kauuova (1999:30) mentions that the negotiations could take seven to upward of twelve months. Among the Himba of Kaokoland (North Kunene) this process could take years. This is especially true when Christian young people are involved. The primary discussion around marriage (within a family) is the suitability of the bridegroom to be wealthy and provide for the daughter. Also the ancestry of the man is looked into. The family needs to be at peace about who the man is and where he is from. When the woman's father has a response he will send a message that he has a response. If the answer is favourable, only then will negotiations begin. This could take a few meetings. At every phase of the negotiation the woman's father keeps the family informed and discusses with all the elders of the family the responses. The man's father has a similar role. In this the young man allows the elders to do the talking. (Many Christian young men today are putting demands into the negotiations.) When the woman's family is content they will call a final meeting to inform the man's family that they are ready. They will give a date for the wedding. It is also at this time that the *ovitunya* (bridewealth) or wedding gift exchange is finalised. Only at this point will the couple be considered engaged (Kauuova 1999). Without this taking place a wedding will not take place.

Traditionally the fathers will discuss the marriage without the knowledge of the children. Parents would just inform their daughter that she is now married. And the same goes for the man. This is usually between cross-cousins. In the contemporary world these traditions are eroding. Young people want to choose their own spouses. Kauuova (1999) observes that because young men earn money they want to have a say in the choice of bride.

Every culture is more or less uniform when it comes to life phases. A common life phase is marriage (Shorter 1978:156). Above, a rough description is given of a Himba marriage negotiation process. Despite the idea of marriage being universal the meaning may not be the same. The forms are similar, the processes appear to be similar but what does marriage mean. Kauuova (1999) goes to great lengths to demonstrate the similarities and (slight) differences between Christian and traditional African mar-

riages. And then gives a great exposition on the virtues of Christian marriage. Yet he rushes over the implications of the difference in meanings when the two cultures come together. This must be addressed. Chapter four will discuss this further. What is important to note now is that the meaning of marriage in various people groups is different. And this can be ascribed to worldview.

The family unit among nomads is indeed complex. The social network therefore, is also complex. Within the group there are connections that bind people. Crandall (1998) speaks about *omuhoko* and *ovatate*. These relationships differ as the one is related to one's mother (matrilineal or the material) and the other is related to one's father (patrilineal or the sacred). This subsection has given a brief summary of the familial relations. Next I will discuss religion.

3.5 Religion among nomads

These subsections are attempting to give the reader some insight into the lives of nomads. It is by no means exhaustive. Religion has great significance among nomads. Thus they are very religious. However, in the light of this thesis it would be important for the reader to distinguish between spirituality and religiosity. Spirituality can be define as desiring a connection with a force or power greater than one's self. Religion on the other hand, has to do with rituals to keep one connected with or in obedience to such a power. The difference is subtle but it is present.

Although the Ovahimba understand *Ndjambi Karunga* to be the Creator, they do not perceive him as participating in their lives (Crandall 1998). He made the world for them to live in. However, he is not involved in any way with the human race. The only way to speak to this Creator is through the ancestors. The ancestors, it is understood, are spirit beings living with the Creator. They alone participate with the Creator in his life. God cannot be approached by flesh and blood creatures. Luttig (1933) therefore, emphasises the need for a representative. This individual he calls the priest-chief (*omurangere*). The clan priest (priest-chief) he describes as being with the ancestors through a specific ceremony. Upon completing this ceremony he alone can intercede between the living and the ancestors. The ancestors in turn intercede with God.

The above description of the Creator as being absent is transferred to the father of the homestead. The father of the family is perceived to be an absent provider. Although he forms the backbone of the family, he is uninvolved in the daily lives of his wives and children. They are to serve his purposes and desires rather than him serving them. (It is important to note, as discussed above, that consensus is an important value.) In this microcosm the mother serves as mediator between her children and their father. The father is not accessible to the children. If he needs assistance from his children he will speak

to them but if they require him they need to speak through their mother. She will find the appropriate time to address the issue with her husband. Speaking out of turn is not punishable; however, it demonstrates disrespect to the roles provided in the family structure. In the same way God is unapproachable by flesh and blood. He can only be approached by spirit beings, the ancestors. This is how the social structure was engineered.

The role of religion is vital in the understanding of how Christianity will be perceived. In the Himba tradition, religion is about conducting appropriate rituals to free one from the tyranny of being under a curse. The curse is about disrespect shown to the laws or taboos set forth by the ancestors of the family. These taboos keep the community together and under the subjection of the ancestor. There is little attempt to build a relationship with the ancestors. One needs to know what the ancestors expect and abide by those rules. If one does not live according the taboos laid down the person disrespecting the rules can bring about a curse upon him/herself and/or the family. The goal, therefore, is to live in such a way as to be free from the curse (*otjihuha*). The only way to remove the curse is to participate in a cleansing ceremony (*okuhuhurwa*). *Okuhuhurwa* is about forgiveness. Here forgiveness implies the repentant person confesses his/her transgression and commits him/herself to never repeat the offence.

The focus of religion then is to remove the curse from the family. This is accomplished through rituals. The rituals are aimed at restoring the equilibrium that was broken. Healing becomes an important and vital link in religion (Wallace 2003). Through healing the family is restored to their rightful place in society. It is this healing that suggests the family is forgiven. Without this healing the family will remain isolated and under the curse. Once it is established that a member of the family has infringed upon a taboo it is important that the family conduct the *okuhuhurwa* ceremony. Without this ceremony there is no forgiveness and no restoration. Living in harmony with the unseen family members is really the goal here. Restoration is thus an important part of traditional religion. However, it is restoring the balance between the family and the ancestors.

In studying the religion of nomads commentators speak about the influence of other religions. Here it would be important to talk about the influence of Christianity on the Ovahimba of Namibia as an example. Nomads in general have their own religion (as discussed above). However, being people who adapt to their environment (socially or physically) they often assimilate into the major religion around them (the Wosa Boorana of northen Kenya is a good example as discussed by Aguilar 1995). The Ovahimba of Namibia has assimilated their religion into Christianity. Many regard themselves as Christian. However, it is not evangelical Christianity. Neither do they ascribe to mainstream Christianity (Catholicism or Lutheranism). In the 1950s many Herero-speaking Christians decided to return to

the religion of their forefathers. (Wallace, 2003, explains very well the transition from tradition to Christianity and back to tradition and then the mixing of the two.) However, they retained their Christian identity by combining their traditional religion with Christianity. As a result a new Christian denomination was formed, viz. the Oruuano Church or the Protestant Unity Church. The unity in this case was between traditional Lutheranism and traditional Herero religion. Here the Christians were allowed to return to their traditional ways of going to the ancestral fire and to speak to God through their ancestors. Having the opportunity to combine the two traditions has afforded the Ovahimba the privilege of being free to be Christian and Himba.

Prophet Kanambonga the first local missionary to Kaokoland used this principle extensively. When he arrived although a stranger he was known because of his connection through an ancestor. Shorter (1978:157-158) makes the point that blood relations are not important but the social connection or lineage of the person has value. Thus, Prophet Kanambonga received a warm welcome. As an insider, prophet Kanambonga, was well acquainted with the traditions. And being a Christian he was familiar with Bible teachings. He then combined the two traditions and focused on prayers and healing as a ministry to the Himba. Through this interaction many Himba converted to Christianity, the Oruuano Church (Buys & Nambala 2003:186). Other denominations have struggled to establish themselves among the Himba (Petersen 2006).

In uniting traditional religion with Christianity the Ovahimba are suggesting that God needs to be appeased. It also suggests they prefer to retain their ancestors as their mediator than to trust Jesus whom they don't know. These and other implications of uniting the two religions ultimately erode the essence of Christianity. The essence of Christianity is that God became a human to dwell in community and to intercede on behalf of mankind. The two religions cannot unite. The Himba must hear to understand and be given the opportunity to respond to the gospel of God's grace. To respond, the people must be transformed spiritually. However, while being transformed, they need to retain their identity as a people. This is the challenge of sharing the gospel with nomads.

Christian missionaries through the centuries have attempted to share the gospel with nomads. For one or other reason they have been unsuccessful (Rigby 1981). Father Donovan did a gallant task in Tanzania as did Father Tablino in Kenya. But on the whole Christian mission among nomads has not been effective. This thesis wants to understand the nomad to such an extent that principles of sharing the good news of salvation can be practical in the nomadic environment. Furthermore, this thesis hopes to ask how Christianity can be nomadic rather than sedentary. That will be discussed later. Now it is important to continue examining who the nomads are. A value among nomads is space. This will now be

discussed.

3.6 Nomadic use of space

A significant part of nomadic makeup is space. This has to do with their economy (animals) as well as the social use of space. As mentioned above the range management of nomads is phenomenal. Their ability to manage the physical space in the environment speaks much about their ability to grow their economy. Thus space has an economic value. Here however, I want to focus on the social-religious value of space.

The Ovahimba homestead is divided into the material side and the religious side. This is made possible by the ancestral fire (Crandall 1996:336). A Himba homestead is defined by the *omuvanda* (the sacred line). The omuvanda is the invisible corridor that runs from the entrance to the cattle kraal (in the West) through the ancestral fire and ends at the entrance to the *ondjuwo onene* (big or main house), in the East. Here the homestead is divided between sacred and secular. This division is transferred to the house (*ondjuwo*, Jacobsohn 1995:80). The same space is developed in the house - male and female sides. What space does among the Himba is to assign roles to family members.

The Ovahimba have a double descent. That is, the inheritance is from both parents. This double descent divides the homestead into left and right sides. The left side belongs to the patrilineage while the right side belongs to the matrilineage. The father represents the sacred or the connection to the ancestors and is the carrier of the ancestral fire. The wife represents the material (economic) side, that is, the children will inherit animals from the wife's family rather than from their own father. This does not mean the father does not give his children any animals. The father has numerous sacred animals that cannot change pratrilineage and must remain with his sons. However, the bulk of the inheritance is received matrilineally.

Essentially what the *okuruuo* (ancestral fire) does is significant to being Himba. Crandall (1998) gives a long exposition on the life cycle of a person. At birth a male child receives an animal as a gift from his father. This must take place at the ancestral fire. In other words the child receives the gift in front of the ancestors. This establishes the child as a member of the clan. Without this ceremony the child cannot be considered a member of the clan and cannot come under the protection of the ancestors. When the father dies a commemoration service is conducted a year later. At this service the now adult son will give his dead father a heifer. This becomes a holy cow, the milk of which can only be used by those related to the clan. Neither is the animal nor its offspring allowed to be sold. They must remain

holy animals in the service of religious rites. Crandall (1998:112) states; "A man whose father made gifts to him not only requites the gifts by furnishing his own children with cattle on identical occasions (i.e., by shifting the gift to the next generation), but also by returning the gifts whence they came (i.e., to the previous generation), thus linking together at least three generations through the movement of cattle as gifts commemorating ontological advancement." The meaning of space becomes valuable at this point. It is not just a left over right issue. Neither is space about matrilineal versus patrilineal. It is really about connecting the living and the dead and keeping that connection alive. Himba space, therefore, separates the sacred and the secular. It categorizes life into two cosmological worlds yet allows the two worlds to come together through mother and father. This understanding of Himba space has fundamental missional implications.

The nomads of Namibia have been described. They are truly nomadic. However, they are challenged as sedentary people have not come to grips with an alternative lifestyle. These challenges will now be addressed.

3.7 The challenge of sedentarization

Father Paul Tablino speaks about working among nomads who have become agriculturalists but who retain their nomadic worldview. This sounds almost like a contradiction. Nomadism is a lifestyle. It is not a culture. The culture of the people is who the people are. The nomadic lifestyle forms an integral part of the culture of the people. There are various "push" and "pull" factors involved. These factors will now be discussed.

3.7.1 "Push" factors

"Push" factors are outside influences pushing nomads into a settled lifestyle. These are outside influences such as (inter)national laws, natural disasters (drought), modernization and so forth. Those listed here are not exhaustive and relate to the Himba.

3.7.1.1 Education for All (EFA)

The United Nations has set the year 2015 as the year when every child must be in school. That is, education for all (EFA) has become the slogan of educators around the world. This suggests that governments are trying to find ways to instil Western style education in the most remote corners of their countries. Part of the goal is to build one nation out of many nations. That is, one people out of many

peoples. Western style education is an attempt to bring all peoples of the world under one umbrella, viz. analytical thinking. Lovejoy makes the observation that oral thinking is different to written thinking. This was also observed by the researcher Walter Ong (1982). Herbert Klem (1995:60) however, suggests that to shape one's thinking takes years of schooling. Thus the international organizations emphasize on education for all. This emphasis also suggests that to be economically viable countries require an 'educated' workforce. What this thinking suggests is that nomads are uneducated. It is true that nomads are uneducated in a Western context. But the nomads can say the same of those educated by Western style education. Western style education has a different emphasis to nomadic education. They can be mutually exclusive but not necessarily so. They are two different systems meeting two different needs. It is like training a doctor and a mechanic. The purposes are different hence the style will be different. Each system educates youth for a different world. The emphasis in Western style education is for the job market in a consumer orientated economy. The emphasis in nomadic education is on a lifestyle that includes one's livelihood and preserves natural resources.

Dyer (2001) speaks of the challenge nomads face in regard to education. With governments pushing for schools to be established among nomads many are challenged. She highlights that nomads realize the goal of schools is to "push" them to become sedentary. She then gives an example of what her organization did in India. Instead of creating a separate school they joined a family and became a school in the homestead. They would teach basic literacy focused on the needs of the people. In Namibia we also attempted this approach. In the Indian experience, an initial successful program collapsed following a break for the monsoon season. The people were no longer interested (probably because they forgot what they learnt). In our experience in Namibia the middle aged and twenty year olds were determined to continue learning. Our classes ranged from 3-6 months per year. In our experience we covered four communities and taught at a central point. Each community received one day per week. At one community, folk were walking 10-15km, one direction, to attend classes. Unfortunately, our funding ran out. Our English language project faced two challenges; human resources and funding. To compensate for the human resources we decided to create lessons on cassettes. These were not as effective as face to face classes. Our focus was not development and so we could not run a big enough project to validate funding. Thus we had to close our English language project. The point being that there are alternatives to putting every nomad into a classroom.

In the Himba community, the government has built schools literally everywhere. Besides the schools of the government, the Norwegian government established a program called the Ondao School. This started a mobile school program. Where teachers used tents supplied by the Norwegian government and the community allowed the school to be present. This school initially set camp and moved with the

families. The challenge this program had was "who do they move with?" Which family do they follow? Because during the dry season families move in different directions. Eventually it was decided that the school would remain at the permanent homestead and not move in the dry season. This meant establishing dormitories for the children. Initially the tent doubled as a classroom and a dormitory. The Norwegian government eventually handed the project over to the Namibia government. At this time there was a push for permanent structures. The government complied and, while the Ondao School still exists, it now forms part of the larger school system. This puts pressure on the families to settle. The school brings with it shops and houses for teachers. Thus the schools are becoming little settlements.

3.7.1.2 Cash economy

As discussed above the nomadic currency is not money but animals. Among the Himba the need for money is becoming greater each year. They need money to go to the hospital. Their children need money to attend school. Many families have now bought 4x4 vehicles to assist in their farming. These need maintenance and often cash is needed. The government also gives out a pension each month. How do they keep this money without an address? The banking system demands an address. Food is not bartered but bought with cash. Often this implies that someone in the family should find a job to keep the cash flowing.

3.7.2 "Pull" factors

The "pull" factors are what draw the Himba to become settled. They are attracted by certain experiences. These will be discussed briefly.

3.7.2.1 Markets

Müller et al (2007) speak about the markets being inaccessible to the Himba before independence. Since independence the markets have opened. This is both for purchasing animals and for selling animals. In my observation many of the *ovahona* (rich farmers – the Himba call themselves farmers not nomads) are moving their animals south where there is better precipitation and they are closer to the market. (Here south means below the red line. The red line is the line drawn by the colonialist to isolate the animals from the north, the communal farmers, from the commercial farmers.)

3.7.2.2 Technology

When I arrived in the former Kaokoland in 1995 the road was a gravel road to the capital city, Opuwo. The telephone system was a farm line. There were two shops in town. One a general dealer selling everything from food to car parts to gardening equipment. The other was a supermarket. It sold food items and some material. The industries in town were non-existent. A government operated hospital was really the primary industry at the time. In 1999 the Namibian government introduced a decentralisation policy. This meant that Opuwo would become the regional capital of the Kunene Region. This implied government offices needed to move into Opuwo. Systematically, the government has introduced various government departments into the area. Meaning the government has become the biggest industry. With this influx of people Telecom Namibia installed a fibre optic cable and thus improved services. This has had a domino effect. Banks were introduced to the town. A tarred road was developed. Shops came to town and the cattle market became more accessible. All of these factors pulled especially the youth to condemn the nomadic lifestyle. One hears: "I don't have anything to do at home..." "Go to the village! It's dirty there..." These are comments heard today from Himba youth who have enjoyed the fruits of modern technology.

3.7.2.3 Modernization

It is important to mention a common practice among the Himba today. A number of Himba attended school. Some finished and went on to tertiary institutions. Many have done enough to secure government jobs. Of this generation many are "retiring" early. They have built themselves sufficiently in the new currency and simultaneously have stocked their farms. When they feel they have sufficient stock and money they "retire" from their employment and return to farming full time. It will be very interesting to see whether this mindset will repeat with the present generation. These will have had even further education and a longer period away from the traditional lifestyle. Will they too retire early or will they continue in the work environment? The "pull" here will be modernization and keeping in step with the demands of a modern family.

Salzman (2002) argues that change is difficult to define. As can be seen from the above discussion, this is true. The real challenge is the subtleness of change. It is the little changes here and there that build on each other. Khazanov (1983:xlviii) mentions that nomads must be challenged, however, the challenge needs to be met by sedentary people first. Sedentary people need to commit to the alternative lifestyle or economy and find ways to incorporate it rather than to change it. It is for this reason Salzman (2002:260) sees sedentarization as a process of adaptation rather than a coerced or forced change.

3.8 Conclusion

There are many myths about nomads. This chapter presented an introduction to the nomads of the world and what they are about. This chapter notes that nomads are diverse. They are not a family or people group. Nomads are people who share a similar lifestyle. Thus it would be important for any mission practitioner to take the time to learn and understand the host people group.

Chapter Four: Mission implications in a nomadic environment

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved

at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them" - Albert Einstein

4.1 Introduction

The first chapter sets out the background to this study. In the second chapter I define what Christian mission is all about. The third chapter gives a peek into the nomadic world. In this chapter I want to demonstrate the mission implications of looking at the worldview of a nomadic people. In addressing the worldview there are significant implications for the way mission is done. The mission practitioner cannot merely duplicate what was done before. Innovation is required. The first implication therefore is about how one goes into the nomadic world. The second implication is the consideration required when the two worlds clash. First worldview will be defined and the nomadic worldview briefly discussed.

4.2 Defining worldview

There are numerous cultures around the world. One often hears about the African or European culture. However, these are broad categories. There are numerous sub-divisions of the cultures such as Basotho and Ovahimba or English and Italian. Yet these too can be subdivided. They become regional sub-divisions. These all have some kind of name or label. It is natural when speaking of people from different areas to designate them according to the area from which they originate. These sub-divisions arise naturally from the concept of worldview. Although cultures are essentially similar, the life-experience of each people group is different. Thus different people groups in different areas perceive the world differently because each has their own unique worldview.

Worldview is an important element of culture. It helps to shape the individual and the society. It gives the culture its uniqueness and its identity. It is the worldview that guides the members of the culture to make constructive decisions and help others understand the decisions that individuals make. It is also the worldview that confuses people of a different worldview, as they watch each other make decisions. For example, in the Himba tradition, a man will never be seen walking behind or next to his wife or his children. To someone with a Western worldview this appears chauvinistic. A Himba has been socialized to protect his family. The best way to do it while walking is for the family to walk in his footsteps. If any danger threatens the family, the father will be able to confront the danger. The orientation of life

is diverse and the response to life is diverse. Worldview is shaped by life's experiences and dictates a specific response so that others in the community will not be confused or challenged by one's actions.

The behaviour of a culture is visible. It can be studied and analyzed. The beliefs of a culture are also visible, but only as they are expressed in behaviour or actions. Worldview cannot be seen yet is played out in daily life and becomes visible. One speaks quite easily about one's beliefs or socialization but seldom does one hear about doing things because of one's worldview. This is primarily because worldview is so fluid. It is not static. New experiences implant new ways of responding to the environment thus influencing one's worldview in one direction or another. Thus van der Walt (1994) warns that worldview is not the foundation of culture. Culture is not built on worldview. There is an interaction (a dynamic) between life experience, one's beliefs, one's behaviour and one's worldview. These combine to form one's culture. It is this dynamic that makes culture to be constantly transforming or in a state of flux. This dynamic allows a person or a people to either grow or degenerate.

So what is worldview? Allow me to use a contemporary metaphor; worldview is like a computer operating system. It is present (running in the background) but it is oblivious to the one using the computer. Yet, it directs how the computer is being used. As new software is updated new ways of using the machine become available. However, if a virus strikes the computer, the operating system may degenerate or disintegrate. Operating systems have progressed over the years. Worldviews cannot progress. Rather it would be better to recognize that people are learning to use the true extent of their operating system. It is inbuilt in humanity. God as designer does not need to improve on what he has made. Thus, the person or people group is growing because their full potential has not been reached.

Hiebert (2008:25) defines worldview as: "the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives." Here Hiebert is specific about declaring that the whole person (thoughts, emotions and values) is involved in understanding reality. However, when Hiebert talks about "foundational" he speaks in concrete terms. It makes it difficult to change a worldview. This does not mean he means it is impossible. No, it is only difficult. He therefore argues that: "Worldviews often act more as keepers of tradition than as initiators of new worlds" (Hiebert 2008:33). However, the foundational assumptions and frameworks can be challenged and they do change.

Van der Walt (1994:39) gives a more descriptive definition of worldview, he states; it is "an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes and motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity." This is a very good definition of worldview. It is

complete and well rounded. Here van der Walt is saying that one's understanding of reality is given meaning and direction by one's worldview. What is especially meaningful in this definition is firstly, his use of "confessional perspectives on reality." I think this idea is vital. It is not just a perspective on reality but how one actually lives out that perspective or responds to the perspective. A second aspect to his definition I find important is the word "underlies." Underlies is very different to foundation. It is beneath the surface yet has influence in shaping and motivating, and giving direction and meaning. Thirdly, in the fast pace world in which we live where worldviews are constantly affected, this definition makes worldview more fluid and transformative. It is not as static. Although Europe remains Europe, it is not the same as it was a century ago. Back then the world was agrarian. So the world was perceived through those eyes. It has moved into an industrialised world. Here everything has changed from being people centred to being device or object centred. In the 21st century, the focus is now on information and technology. Here thinking is totally different, the homogeneity of the world has disappeared and people are more pluralistic in their thinking. In other words this definition allows room for growth and reaching the full capacity of the human potential.

I don't think I can improve on van der Walt's definition. It is this definition that will be used in this thesis. I will now briefly outline a nomadic worldview - the assumptions nomads make about the world.

4.3 The nomadic worldview

The nomadic worldview may sound clumsy. Nomads are not a people or a tribe. They are different peoples with a uniform lifestyle. So this chapter will address the Ovahimba worldview in particular. However, a number of the worldview facets are found to be common across nomadism. It is just the particular application of the idea that may differ here and there. I will not be able to address every aspect of the nomadic worldview.

4.3.1 Hospitality/Community

A significant part of the nomadic lifestyle is hospitality. This arises from their genuine spirit of community. Van der Walt (1994) calls community "communalism". Hospitality is prioritized because of the harsh conditions under which they live and their deep sense of community. Here hospitality has nothing to do with entertainment. Rather hospitality is about welcoming strangers or visitors into the homestead. In the Himba tradition it is not acceptable to allow a sojourner to pass one's homestead. It is polite to invite the person in and allow him/her to rest a while. One will usually give the person a

drink of water at least. If it is mealtime, the person will share in the family meal. Smith (1992) makes the point that herdsmen do not share food as easily as hunter-gatherers. However, Apeh (1989:8) makes the point that no African will ask a person if s/he is hungry. He seems to indicate that it is an insult to ask such a question. Rather, if it is mealtime the person must be invited to participate. The point here is about timing. Food is only offered at mealtime. Thus community is built through the hospitality of the hosts.

A stranger travelling through an area is not allowed to pass by without sharing news from their point of commencement and about their destination. Besides receiving rest and a drink of water, the sojourner must give news. One can imagine the value of sharing news in such an environment. If the traveller were to keep silent the people would be suspicious of his/her mission. Sharing the news connects the different people and the different areas. This builds community with the larger group. Community is about building harmony between the diverse families and/or clans (Hiebert 2008:124).

4.3.2 Respect for authority

Related to community is the value nomads place on authority. This is perceived in the different roles assigned to different people within the community or family. The nomadic society is made up primarily of family. Within the family, names or titles are given to different people. One speaks of an older or younger brother and an older or younger sister. These positions in the family each come with an inherent role. Their birth assigns these roles within the family and the broader community. The roles continue into adulthood. As the older sister or brother to one's mother or father, the roles are outlined specifically. This is very different to Western family structure in which no specific roles are attached to one's parent's siblings. In the Himba social order, however, one has specific roles based on one's position in the family. This allows for greater respect for people in authority. In the English language school conducted among the Himba, questions regarding roles (in a Western context) were often asked by the students (Petersen, 2010). Adult learners failed to understand that a society could call every person by the same title (aunt or uncle), rather than give specific functions to different people. Titles and in turn roles are associated with the respect due to the person. The respect given to each individual is based on his/her position in the family or community.

In the broader community, leadership is really only assigned to one who is willing to take leadership. If one demonstrates bravery in fighting (in a war or against a wild animal) the community will sing the person's praises and that person will be assigned greater responsibility. If one receives special dreams or communications from supernatural powers then one receives a different status. Thus besides the

roles one plays in the family, these outside roles give one status in the community.

4.3.3 Nature

A nomad has a very close connection with nature (Phillips 2001). From an early age nomads are working with the force of nature. Understanding nature is vital to the life of a nomad. Learning meteorology, botany and all the other sciences in nature is vital to survival as a nomad. This is not learnt by attending a formal school. It is through life experience and the family educational system that one learns meteorology (weather patterns), rock formation, botany and physiology of the animals (Petersen 2009). The knowledge base of nomads gives them a totally different understanding of and appreciation for nature compared to people growing up in the city where nature is not part and parcel of life.

Andrew Smith (1992) indicates that herdsmen are not as connected to nature as the hunter-gatherer. This may be true but it does not annul their connection with nature. They continue to live in the wild with the elephants, hyenas, lions and so forth. My wife had an experience that describes this relationship. It was the dry season. A herd of elephant were in the dry riverbed blocking their access to the English class across the river. A Himba man from the area was in the car with her. He told the driver to switch off the car's engine. He then told everyone to remain in the car while he jumped out. He whistled a signal and the elephants trumpeted and then moved in the opposite direction. Without such a relationship it would be very hard for people to live with these wild animals. Their worldview is definitely impacted by their experience with nature.

4.3.4 Time

The Western adage "time is money" has very little meaning to nomads. A U.S. Peace Corps volunteer was returning from the city to the town of Opuwo. She was anxious to show her friend her "African home." She was in a rush. About 16km south of Opuwo there is a sharp bend in the road. It requires some cautious driving. Not being familiar with the road, as a driver, she failed to make the turn. Fortunately, she did not roll the car. But a wheel was damaged and she needed to fit the spare wheel. A Himba man came to assist her. While helping her he enquired; "Why were you driving so fast?" She responded; "I was in a hurry..." Upon reflection later (while relating the story) she asked rhetorically; "I'm on holiday, why did I need to rush?" (Kim 1997)

Time in the Himba worldview is not about an event either. Time demonstrates the value of community. Hiebert (2008:115) speaking about rural people says; "Time is not a commodity to be bought or sold

or something that can be measured or that runs out." But to say that time is "concerned about life here and now" is to impose a Western understanding of time (Hiebert 2008:114). It is for this reason that Crandall places time in relation to its spread over an activity. An activity by itself does not imply that time is assigned to the task or event, rather, it is the meaning given to the event. Crandall (1998: 108) states: "a unit of time is not simply associated with a particular activity, but with the value and temporal meaning suffusing that activity before its selection as a measure of time." Time cannot be boxed into days or hours. Time is measured by the value of the activity. This is why the Himba will not consider the next year to start until the rain comes. The rain will signal the beginning of a new year (Müller et al 2007).

4.3.5 Belonging

"In the Western world it is assumed that biological relationships are identical with kinship and affinity as social phenomenon" however what takes priority is not the blood or affinal relationships but the social relationships (Shorter 1978:157). Shorter uses the levirate system as an example here. In the levirate system a man marries his deceased brother's wife and has children with her but the children are not regarded as his (the biological father) but his deceased brother's. The children will therefore inherit from his deceased brother rather than through him as biological father.

Among the Himba, belonging to a specific patrilineage is vital to one's existence. Without this patrilineage it is difficult to belong. This belonging stretches through one's father to one's ancestors (Mbiti 1969). It is this belonging that allows one to remain connected to the community as the community is inclusive of the ancestors. Hence the first question most Himba ask when meeting someone for the first time is "who is your father?" They need to know where one belongs. Van der Walt (1988:3) ascribes this to communalism (community). Thus he states that African people do not speak about personal possessions rather they speak about "*our* land" or "*our* goats" (van der Walt 1988:9; original emphasis).

4.3.6 Orality

Most nomads are blind to letters. That is, they cannot read or write. It is for this reason Lindner (1982:690) describes them as leaving their history to their "settled prey." However, they have an oral tradition in which their stories are stored (Finnegan 1992; Ong 1982). This oral tradition is not stored in any object (such as a book) but it is entrusted individuals in the community (Petersen 2009). Thus orality is a significant worldview issue for nomads.

Literate people think analytically whereas oral people think additively. These and other characteristics are given by Ong (1982:36- 57; see also Hunter 2000:71). Thus nomads do not "see the world"; they "hear" what is happening. When a Himba tells a story he will start by saying "My father told me the story in this way…" Firstly, it is not his story. Second, he is ascribing the story to someone with authority. Third, if there are any questions about the story, one needs to find the source to contest the accuracy of it. Further, an oral people share stories as a means of retaining information. Thus their documents are the stories or poems but the library in which these are kept becomes the minds of the poets, story tellers, and historians (Petersen 2009).

4.3.7 Nomadism

A fundamental understanding of the world for nomads is their nomadic lifestyle. This is dictated by various circumstances. However, nomadism presents a specific way of looking at the world as different to that of sedentary people. The essence of nomadism is the need to move. However, among nomads this is essentially dictated by the needs of the primary animal of the people. In the Himba tradition the primary animal has two distinct values. They are: economics (matrilineal animals) and religion (patrilineal animals). Crandall (1998) indicates that about 40% of the herd will belong to the patrilineal line. This is a huge emphasis that they place on these animals. Thus the animals are not all about materialism. It is about the connection with the ancestors. This keeps them seeking better pastures and water and ensuring the grazing is sufficient for the dry periods. Thus range management plays a significant role in the life of the Himba (Müller et al 2007). It does mean they are not settled in one place year round.

4.3.8 Cosmology

Van der Walt (1988) makes the point that people need to get to know each other on a deeper level. By this he is suggesting that people move away from being acquainted with each other within predefined social categories and get to know each other's worldviews. Of significance in this discussion is the Himba understanding of the cosmos. Hiebert (2008:105) identifies that most tribal people (which he defines as "small-scale societies") have a three-tier cosmology. This consists of the visible world (the living), the invisible world (the dead and the unborn) and the other worlds (God and the other supernatural beings). Hiebert presents a great Western understanding of small-scale society's cosmology. This is also visible in his book <u>Folk religion</u> which he co-authored with Shaw and Tineou (1999). Although their goal is to reach the worldview level, as their desire is to eradicate "split-level Christian-

ity," their focus remains on the beliefs. Their approach to mission is not holistic. The worldview of a people is more than their religion. Shorter (1978:11) observes that the anthropologist (today we can also add the missionary) focuses on the structure and tries to analyse the structure. He states; "The anthropologist should be studying the teleological (final purpose) function of social facts towards the structure - the relation of the parts to the whole." To understand the cosmological worldview then, one needs to dig deeper than the visible aspects of the people. Van der Walt states that the African understanding of creation, places humanity at the centre (see also Magesa 1997:285). This is not about the human ego (self). Rather van der Walt (1988:8) states: "Creation is man-centred and man is socially directed." Crandall (1998:111) speaking about the Ovahimba in particular, describes life as being a movement through various stages starting with birth, moving past death and ending in ancestorhood. This Magesa (1997:285-286) refers to as the "life force" of humanity that can be built or destroyed. The cosmology, as understood by the Himba, needs to be kept in balance for the purpose of aiding or favouring, humanity. If knowing the worldview is the goal, then the worldview needs to be the focus and not the rituals.

These in brief give the reader a glimpse into the nomadic worldview. My topic is trying to establish a ministry to nomads thus it becomes important to extend this understanding of the Himba worldview and see what the implications for mission are.

4.4 Mission implications

Missionaries travel far and wide from land to land sharing the biblical gospel. Daniels (2011:16) states that the mission practitioner must be converted. It is with this in mind that this sub-section attempts to present the implications of understanding a foreign worldview on mission. The worldview approach to engaging God's mission has two implications. The first concerns the missionary and the second is how the missionary understands a different worldview.

4.4.1 The Missionary is a foreigner

 What the above discussion underscores is that the cross-cultural missionary has a different way of viewing the world to the nomadic people. There are numerous voices warning the missionary to be aware of the cultural baggage that inadvertently tags along as s/he travels to another people group (Shaw & van Engen 2003).

Hiebert *et al* (1999:369) encourage the learning of the culture and language with a special emphasis on

the religion. Here the emphasis is on achieving the goal of critical contextualization. The 21st century missionary must not repeat the mistake of our missionary forebears by ministering to a people's behaviour or beliefs. Understanding a people's religion and/or culture and helping them see a different belief system will merely continue the missionary practice of the great missionary century. Hiebert (2008:11) re-evaluates his understanding and comes to this conclusion when he writes: "It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that transforming explicit beliefs is not enough to plant churches that are faithful to the gospel." If addressing the worldview is going to be the focus of 21st Christian mission then it is vital that the missionary does more than just a study of the host's culture and language. The missionary must be incarnated into the society. As far as possible the missionary needs to be at-one with the people. Being an outsider and not related patrilineally (in the context of the nomads of Namibia) the missionary will never be an insider. However, to demonstrate togetherness, it is vital that the mission practitioner demonstrate an intimate understanding of the people and not just book knowledge. This can be achieved through participating in the daily lives of people.

In the previous wave of Christian mission with a focus on contextualization, the missionary observed from the outside (analytically). Here the missionary became the cultural expert but the knowledge of the culture was paternalistic (Shaw 2010). The missionary did not experience life to the same degree as the people. In an incarnational approach, the focus is on immersing oneself in the lives of the people. Then speaking out of those experiences about what it means to be a Christian. This is not easy, because to experience life as an insider one needs to recalibrate one's assumptions about life. This requires transformation yet one needs to retain one's identity as a Christian. But this in essence, is what the missionary wants to see accomplished in a potential convert; A transformed life in one who maintains his/her national or tribal identity.

Here the missionary recognizes that s/he is a foreigner and does not assume to be a member of the host people group. Thus the identity of the missionary must not be lost. Losing one's identity as a person will bring confusion to the hosts and converts. Yet, being aware of the cultural baggage is essential to sharing the gospel. A biblical metaphor that illustrates this is found in 2 Corinthians 5 where Paul speaks about converts as ambassadors. An ambassador is one who is a foreigner representing his country.

4.4.2 One size fit all

Today one finds numerous products that have multiple goals. Men's socks come in this form as the socks are made in one size yet can supposedly fit all feet. There is also the two-in-one hair product.

Here the shampoo and conditioner can be found in one container. A clear example is found in the "transformer toys". One moment it is a fancy car, the next, after a few twists and folds, it is a super-hero character. Car parts can also be found in this form. Universal pirate parts for cars are common. These are often not as effective as using the specialized product. It is this contemporary thinking that needs to be avoided for effective ministry among nomads. Such an approach to mission or evangelism does not consider the diversity of the human experience. This subsection challenges the belief that diverse approaches are in conflict. It also challenges the idea that all methods can be universally applied. Here the ministry of Jesus will be used as an example.

Jesus ministered in various situations. But his understanding of mission was based on mission principles and he applied these to diverse circumstances. In my estimation, Ellen White (1904:143, emphasis added) sums up Christ's mission best when she states; "The Saviour *mingled* with men as one who desired their good. He showed His *sympathy* for them, *ministered* to their needs, and *won* their confidence. Then He *bade* them, 'Follow Me.'" This approach to mission implies that first the missionary must be transformed because living in another person's world is not easy. It requires a lot of giving of oneself. It is for this reason that Hiebert (2008:311) states "how we define transformation determines how we go about evangelism and missions." I want to take the reader to a deeper level. Unless one knows God's *telos* (vision) for his people, one cannot be transformed and in turn become agents of transformation. It was Jesus' understanding of God's will that allowed him to connect with people at a heart level and in turn, be an agent of transformation (Jn. 4:34).

During Jesus' ministry he seldom repeated his methods (application of the mission principles). Yet, the focus of his mission remained the same. His application on how he would communicate varied from person to person and it varied from circumstance to circumstance. Jesus met his seekers at their point of need. He understood God's purpose and he applied it to the individual or group. Jesus gives an important principle of mission/evangelism in Luke chapter 10. He speaks about God's mission having reached the harvest phase. This principle is applied very well in his ministry. He is always seeking to find ways to address people who are ready for the harvest. He does not seek out individuals who are antagonistic. (He counsels his disciples not to waste time with those who do not accept them: Matt. 10:14 & Lk. 10:11.) If one views his interaction with the Pharisees and other religious leaders, it is very different to the way he interacts with one who is truly seeking and is ready to be harvested. The purpose of his interaction with them is the same, to draw them to God. However, his approach is different. With the Pharisees, he tries to meet them at their point of need and lead them into a relationship with God. For example, see how Jesus deals with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-21). With the general public he demonstrates God's desire to come to them. For an example, see the faith of the Syrophoenician

woman in Mark 7:24-30. This suggests there are different kinds of enquirers. There are those who are seeking to know how much one knows. There are seekers who just want to learn something new. There are those who seek but are unsure what they seek. Some seekers have encountered an experience and desire a new way of life. The last two groups Jesus refers to as harvest fields ready for the harvest.

The above discussion points out two reasons why Christian mission cannot be applied universally. First, the seekers differ in their levels of inquiry. Second, the seekers' spiritual experiences differ even though all come from within the same culture. In our mass production age, of assembly lines, we produce multiple cars for various scenarios. However, people are not machines. Each person is unique. Recognizing that humans are not machines will help Christian missionaries understand how best to value the individual as opposed to putting people into a box. Understanding culture has value. Understanding the diverse worldviews has value. But knowing the individual has greater value. It is the individual or the family one seeks to draw, not a mass of people.

Christian evangelism through the modern age addressed the unchurched at two levels; the intellectual (cognitive) level and the ethical (emotional and behavioural) level (Hiebert 2008:11). This approach neglected the underlying assumptions an individual makes about reality. When Christ ministered in the hills, dales and cities of 1st century Palestine, he broadened their experience. Take for example the woman at the well (Jn. 4). Christ's first point of call understands that the people of Samaria were ready and ripe for harvesting. However, conducting an evangelistic campaign would not be effective. He was a foreigner, of Jewish descent. (The Jews are the ones with the racial superiority problem.) He stops at the well and asks for a drink of water. The request from this Jewish man would take any woman by surprise. A conversation ensues between Jesus and the woman. The conversation is based on the experience at hand. Soon however, it moves to a different experience. Jesus addresses the woman in a very personal manner. She is amazed - how does this stranger know her so intimately? But Jesus keeps focus on his purpose; the whitened field. So he speaks about the well and raises his status above that of the father of the nation, Jacob. He identifies himself as the Messiah, God's anointed. A rare moment, but he uses it to convince the woman regarding his own identity. She takes him back to the prejudice of the Jews. She refers to the fact that they claim that Jerusalem is the place to worship. Jesus counters by addressing the prejudices of both sides by mentioning that neither Jerusalem nor the Samaritan mountain has significance or value in God's eyes. When worship of the Great I AM is done, it is in spirit and in truth. This forces her to run home and invite others to come and hear a man who must be the Messiah. Here Jesus not only addresses her assumptions about reality, he introduces a different picture of God. Jesus' evangelism focused on introducing new pictures of God – these transform the worldview and in turn the life.

It is Malcolm Hunter (2000d:12) who often quotes a Somali nomad who said to him: "When you can put your Christian church on the back of my camel then I will believe Christianity is meant for us Somalis..." This sums up a poor understanding of Christian mission. A call to make people something they are not. The Samaritans did not move to Jerusalem in order to live out their new found trust in the Messiah. They continued their existence in Samaria. This is the mission of God. He comes to people. He is Immanuel, the one who meets people where they are. When he meets people it is on their terms. Therefore, his approach varies from person to person and from people to people. He does not have a "one size fit all" approach. He does not work off an assembly line. He works with individuals (or families). And he addresses each as an individual belonging to a group. Once Jesus had established himself as trustworthy, he could spend time with the people. The community responded; "We believe because we have heard for ourselves." For nomads to hear the gospel, this kind of approach is needed.

The two implications discussed above demonstrate the impact of understanding another's worldview on God's messengers. The next subsection will discuss the implications of the gospel on a nomadic worldview.

4.4.3 People on the move

As discussed in chapter 3, nomads are people who are continuously in search of pasture and water for their animals. Phillips (2001) highlights in his book <u>Peoples on the move</u> that nomads can identify with numerous nomadic biblical characters. Taking this into consideration, he suggests that those stories are essential for the purpose of giving the nomads something familiar. He concludes that nomads require a different 'church' to a settled people (see also Hunter 2000:10). What these authors are doing is addressing an experience of the nomadic people.

Since the arrival of the Christian Church among the Ovahimba, there has been no attempt to remove the perception that Christianity is embodied in a church building. It has always been the Himba who made the adjustments. It is true that missionaries came and made many sacrifices to live and work in the area. However, few sacrifices have been made (to use a Catholic term) to accommodate to the people or to contextualize (to use an Evangelical term) the gospel message or its understanding. A church building in a particular place is really the focus of the Christian missionary enterprise. For people who only remain in a given area for a few years this presents a challenge. For the Himba who are not in one place year round, it presents an insurmountable challenge. It is true that they return to the main homestead when the grazing conditions are favourable. However, there is still another factor the sedentary

worldview must appreciate and that is the Himba live their lives in the open air. Their primary purpose in any construction is the security of their animals and food supply. They construct pens for their cattle and goats. The Himba also construct a granary built on stilts, to store maize. Buildings however, are limited to a place to sleep and a store for farming equipment. A house is seldom occupied during the day. All public meetings take place in the open. The only designated spot for a meeting would be the *okuruuo* (ancestral fire). Based on this evidence of minimal construction, it becomes impractical to have a settled church. It also suggests that God is only available in a specific place. This contradicts Jesus' saying to the woman at the well. He said: "the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem" (Jn 4:21). The same needs to be said of church buildings. Nomads require a different kind of church.

Addressing the "wandering" is only one experience of a nomadic lifestyle. From a Christian perspective, 'doing church' or 'establishing a congregation' is something that happens after the people have converted. It is bringing like-minded people together. Thus the idea of the Somali nomad; "show me how to put your church on my camel" is really a question even the Himba demand. In all my experience of living among the Himba, I often heard the invitation; "come preach at my homestead, my children must learn about Jesus." These are really twin requests. These are not questions about location or method. In looking at the homestead of the Himba, one can understand the point clearer. The Himba homestead is about space (see discussion in chapter 3.6 and 3.3.2.1). The meaning of the questions raised above must be viewed when looking at the significance of the ancestral fire (*okuruuo*). The *okuruuo* is a place of prayer. This has many implications for Christian mission. Here only the father is allowed to pray. Only the family priest is allowed to speak to the ancestors who in turn speak to God. The prayers of the family are through the priest, not individually (Mbiti 1975:2). The real question being asked (by the Somali and Himba nomads) is; how will Christianity fit into the existing family structure? The significance of this question should not be overlooked. Hunter sees it merely as a physical thing of taking Church along. However, to me the question is about:

> 1. How will the sacred area of my homestead impact my wealth?
> 2. How will it affect my family's physical well-being?
> 3. Can Jesus be present at and benefit my homestead?

These are questions of belonging. The sacred must stretch into the inner and the outer "circles" of the homestead. For Christianity to make inroads into nomadic society this must be addressed.

Christianity for a people on the move is not about a physical building. It is about how God reaches down and participates in their daily lives. In our listening to the nomads, we need to hear their quest for belonging rather than the ability to form appropriate "Western-style" gatherings. The ancestral fire

is in the homestead. The spatial significance should not be overlooked. However, its symbolism should also not be overlooked. Most homesteads do not have an ancestral fire. They merely have the firewood to symbolize that the family priest has the fire. Thus the ancestral fire becomes symbolic of the presence of the ancestors and God (their sense of belonging). Christian mission needs to demonstrate that this belonging is still real outside of the congregational service and church building while they are on the move.

4.4.4 An oral people

At a gathering of the Nomadic People's Network, a gathering of Christian workers among nomads, the reports presented indicated that everyone worked with oral people. An oral people, are persons who do not read or write, or have very little access to writing and reading. These are usually referred to as primary oral people. In both the Muslim and the Buddhist nomadic contexts there is an elite group that reads. But overall the society is oral-based. The representatives from East Africa also indicated that the communities they represented were oral based. This section discusses some of the implications centred on an oral worldview.

Mission in the colonial era was embedded in the idea of Western schooling (Prah 2001:133). Missionaries were often teachers. Diverse denominations prided themselves in teaching illiterates how to read and write. Thus the goal was twofold; helping a nation to learn to read and write and to help a nation learn to read, so they can understand the Bible. The latter was obviously the religious reason and the primary focus for missionaries. In the 21st century this approach needs to be evaluated critically. Firstly, this approach suggests that potential converts must learn to read and write before they can understand or grasp Christianity. This may be an unconscious thought. However, it is a real struggle in the missionary environment. Secondly, the focus of many has been on youth because they can learn to read and write easier. Thirdly, it implies the hosts learn a foreign language. Literacy is usually based on a written trade language or the *lingua franca* of the area. Triebel (2001:23) states; "Definitions of literacy are not innocent. They are subject to renewed political evaluation." These challenges catapult into the mission sphere. In the end the convert learns the gospel in a foreign language and thereby its application remains foreign. Put in the context of Christian mission, the idea of helping a people to learn to read and write although admirable can be harmful. Shaw (1988:254) warns: "As long as individuals are dependent on other people [and/]or languages for their knowledge about God, Christian development will be less dynamic." This is especially true in oral communities when literacy is used. Bosch (1991:447) says it well, "The Christian faith never exists except as 'translated' into a culture." For oral people orality plays a significant role.

Why is orality so significant? Walter Ong suggests that an oral culture is very different to a literate culture. Ong (1982:36-57) presents nine characteristics of oral people. Hunter, G (2000:271) uses psychological terminology to distinguish between oral and literate people. He speaks about right and left brained people. These characteristics are important to know and understand. In the context of mission, it suggests that oral people should not change but the messengers of the gospel need to understand that oral people learn differently (Petersen 2009). Marshall McLuhan's (1967) focus on "the medium is the message" becomes noteworthy. This is especially true when doing Christian mission. The Christian message is obligated to use a medium that would speak to an oral person. This includes language but it extends to oral genre as well. The combination becomes the heart language of the people. Using the heart language of an oral people will give new impetus to the goal of mission. It allows the Christian message to be inclusive as it speaks in the tongue of the people and addresses them in ways with which they are familiar.

Orality not only affects the evangelism phase of mission. It impacts every aspect of mission. Orality begs the question; "How does one disciple an oral learner?" However, one cannot stop at this level and ignore the leadership training. Thus orality is a package that needs to be embraced from start to finish. Training oral learners will require tough choices and determined effort. Gospel Media (a division of the Bible Media Institute) operates a study program for early school leavers. That is, students who have not completed Grade 12 but would love to prepare for pastoral studies. Such programs are literacy based. In a nomadic environment principles of orality are vital when involved in education (Petersen 2009).

The Chronological Bible Storying method (espoused by New Tribes Missions) has been advocated over the past three decades. Chronological Bible Storying is a system of teaching the Bible using the chronology of the Bible. Terry (2008:23) states: "By organizing the biblical teaching this way it is relatively easy to follow the timeline of the Bible..." But Terry also highlights that oral learners require something different. It is true that Terry (2008:17) does not deviate from the Chronological Bible Storying method but he does say oral learners: "give highest attention to what is relational and practical, not what is speculative or theoretical. Stories that are closer to their actual lives and that suggest teaching that is do-able or acceptable will gain the greatest attention." In working with nomads the Chronological Bible Storying method would be inappropriate. However, the storying idea should not be shelved. Oral people are story tellers and enjoy hearing stories. The primary form of communication among oral people is the story form. The chronological idea, however, is challenging in the context of a nomadic world. Terry (2008:20) makes the observation that chronological storying aims to address

specific worldview issues. However, it does not give the listener a context or stated differently, the context is unfamiliar to the listener. The Christian language (*lingo*) is foreign. The history of the Bible stories is foreign. The focus on Bible chronology can come in the discipleship or leadership phases. It should not feature in the evangelism phase. When using the chronological Bible storying method the challenge is the audience. In a nomadic society one can never tell who will be present at the next gathering, that is, the audience keeps changing. The family needs takes precedence to listening to God's word. Thus chronology is not as essential upfront. These twin challenges of context and audience suggest an alternative be found to chronological Bible storying.

Storying is a universal language. However, there are many different ways to tell a story. Jesus used many different storying methods in his sharing. He primarily used parables. In talking to the Pharisees and other religious leaders, he used historical teachings as hooks for them to understand what he was talking about. Every people group will be different. The principle in storying is to use the familiar story telling method of the people. This can be challenging to someone from outside the group. It will, however, be the responsibility of the mission practitioner to know the various story forms used by the people. Poetry seems to be an important communication form for nomads. Learning to use poetry would be important. This is using the heart language of the people. Doing this instinctively informs the listener that God is not a foreigner. In 2004 after sharing a presentation of Bible storying using the Himba genre one listener said: "You really want to reach the heart of our people, don't you?" (Mutambo 2004) This is the goal, allowing God to reach the heart of the people. Using local communication styles instinctively allows peoples' ears to perk up. However, the goal is not merely to catch their attention but to present something of substance.

The challenge in this approach is two-fold. First, it would be hard for a foreigner to learn to communicate using local genre. Having said this it is not impossible. However, it would take a foreigner longer to learn the local genre. The nuances in local genre will require a lengthy period of study to understand and then implement. Second, for a people on the move it would be difficult to introduce the biblical teachings in one setting. Getting to everyone will be challenging. Coupled with this, a team will be required. With modern technology this can be overcome. However, it implies the people become familiar with foreign mechanical media. Learning about these mechanical media and how it would impact the community is vital. In Namibia the radio is a well-used instrument among nomads. This is not foreign nor does it need to be imported. Using familiar media such as this would be vital to the work that needs to be done. Other media can then compliment this one. These can include cassettes, compact discs or mp3 players. Some communities may be familiar with these. Others may not know them. The mp3 players would work best as the others can easily be destroyed by the dust, sun, rain and so forth.

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Ministering in a nomadic environment demands that the mission practitioner be innovative in his/her communication of the gospel. It is important not only to use appropriate genre but address worldview issues as well.

4.4.5 Socially knit together

Nomads are generally knit together in family units. The family is the smallest unit as with any society. However, the family is really the most important unit. The clan then forms the next important unit followed by the community or village. Barfield (1993:16) records: "Me against my brother; my brothers and me against our cousins; my cousins, brother and me against the world." This demonstrates the value of each social grouping. In the spiritual realm this is also the case. Nomadic religion is centred on rituals, but those who participate in a ritual feast or gathering would all be from one clan. These rituals are not for people of a different clan (or patrilineage).

Christianity however, is not a family religion. It extends to everyone. It is not an exclusive religion for specific individuals. It is a religion that is open to anyone who desires to make the religion his or hers.

The Christian religion indicates that God is ever present, all knowing and all-powerful. These same characteristics are considered true of the ancestors as included in the Himba worship within the context of the family. Although the ancestors are not a god, they represent the family before the Creator-God. Their role is to mediate between humanity and the all powerful spirit (God). Traditionally, Christianity would want to understand intellectually the role of the ancestors and then counter this through analysis that suggests ancestors are incapable of truly protecting or providing the family's needs. For example, a Seventh-day Adventist Christian would argue that the ancestors are dead; they are, therefore, unaware of any requests. Here the emphasis would be on the state of the dead. Christians from other denominations (such as the Dutch Reformed Church and the Nazarene Church) will argue that the ancestral fire is an idol. This is argued from the point of view that it contravenes the second law of God given by Moses. These arguments fail to understand that these are arguments from a Christian perspective. It requires a different worldview to understand the role of the ancestor. These intellectual arguments are in direct contrast to the reality and experience of the family. The Himba experience suggests that the ancestors do exist and provide for the family. Using intellectual prowess to tear them away from this understanding of the world is a non-starter. Experience always surpasses intellectual acumen. The worldview issue has nothing to do with the nature of humanity at death. The challenge has to do with belonging. As a member of the patrilineage, I need protection and I need to connect to God. This

needs to be demonstrated from a Christian perspective. Mwansa (1999:125-131) argues that the power of God through healing and miracles must be put back into evangelism. It is this power that is required for the gospel to take root. What such a power encounter (as Peter Wagner, 1981 calls it) does is to demonstrate the authority of God. This would still not address the worldview issue of belonging. The Creator-God is invisible; therefore, it is hard for the Himba need to recognize that they are directly connected to him. That God himself will come to them. It is this encounter that will transform them to change their assumptions about belonging. They need to see that they are part of a bigger clan – God's clan with Jesus as clan-priest.

4.4.6 The nomadic church

Above in section 4.4.3 I discussed the implications of nomadism on Christian mission. Here it would be important to focus on what happens when nomads are converted. What will a nomadic church be? This is not referring to the church building but the organization of such a church in the light of the global Church.

Before entering a nomadic environment, the Christian community needs to have an idea of what it would like to achieve in the area. This will not be the final response; however, it is important to recognize that a nomadic Church will not be a traditional Christian Church. It cannot have weekly meetings. Neither can it conduct services in the traditional Western worship style. One possibility is to use the Abrahamic model - family worship through the father. Church services or gatherings for Christian fellowship needs to be placed in the context of the nomad.

This thesis proposes that Christians get together whenever they can however, there needs to be in place specific times when festive occasions can result in large communal gatherings of Christians. The Adventist Church when it was founded in the mid 19th century faced a similar challenge. The agrarian society in which it operated needed a way to keep all the members together. Church leaders encouraged what other denominations were doing, the use of camp meetings (White 1901:32). Camp meetings were an annual get together of people in a specific region or area. These would be high times when people took time off in the summer to spend with fellow believers and encourage and uplift one another. This thesis proposes similar gatherings. A local harvest celebration can be one such gathering. This would be to celebrate what God has done for them as a people in supplying their temporal daily needs. There can also be a high celebration soon after the first rain. Thus at least two really big camps can be arranged. A drawback of this approach is that the church becomes centred among certain families. This can be detrimental to the growth of the Church. However, it would be the task of the Church

at large to encourage and challenge members to move outside their home and share the gospel story with as many people as possible.

In the 1800s when Church members lived scattered, many denominations had newspapers that they sent out to their members. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church such a paper was started by James White, one of the founders of the Church. This paper helped people keep in touch with Church development and growth (Wheeler 2003:54ff). This would really be a great way to keep nomads informed and help them to spiritual maturity. However, the Himba are a primary oral people, so alternative communication media would need to be investigated, such as radio. The radio is well used among the Himba. Here programs can be generated to keep the Christian community connected. Radio programs can also be used to disciple members and develop leadership.

In the nomadic context there is no separation between sacred and secular. This is a fundamental challenge to the traditional Christian approach. For nomads one's religion is not confined to a specific day of the week or specific hours. The issue of religion is a daily experience and one needs to be in constant obedience (van der Walt 1994 & Mbiti 1975). The learning and growth takes place in the context of the family. There is no need for what Adventists term the three legs of society (Church, school and home). These are all found in the family. A struggle many a missionary faces when working with Himba converts is that the children are often given to relatives to be raised. These relatives may not necessarily be Christian. The question then arises whether the influence of the not-yet-Christian environment is positive for the child. A Himba needs to be part of the community. The child belongs to the community and must be raised by the community not necessarily by the biological parents (van der Walt 1994 & Harpending 1998). This ensures that the appropriate training to live and survive in the community will be given to the child.

Christians have an education system through the weekly church services. Some denominations have mission schools. These institutions (which are valuable in a sedentary society) introduce new and alien institutions to the nomadic social structure. It is this challenge that needs addressing. The Christian upbringing should not be separated from the family (the larger family). Thus Hiebert (2008:12) warns that conversion needs to be corporate and should intentionally define what it means to be a Christian in that context. The role of parents (and adults) is to raise the child so s/he can know how to behave in society. Thus Christianity impacts the traditional roles. Understanding the roles of adults in society as a whole and in religion in particular is vital to the new roles as Christians. If these differ substantially from each other it makes it more difficult to embrace Christianity. Unless Christianity permeates every aspect of nomadic society it will remain stunted.

This thesis suggests that when nomads are converted, the process of incarnation needs to continue. It cannot merely be a foreign missionary method. The converts need to demonstrate a transformed life. They cannot live isolated and separate lives from their families. Not-yet-Christians will need to learn what it means to trust God in their context. This is best illustrated through the lives of converted nomads. This would be redeeming the culture rather than imposing foreign institutions.

4.5 Conclusion

The implications of Christian mission among nomads require close study. Such a study cannot be done in isolation. The missionary cannot do it by him/herself. The local congregation cannot do it alone either. It will require dialogue with all stakeholders. Such a dialogue will be broad and continuous, as people mature in their Christian experience new ways of expressing their Christianity will develop. This chapter has identified some of the implications around doing mission using a worldview approach. The next two chapters will deal with how God wants to do his mission among nomads.

Part Three: God's mission among nomads

Chapter Five: A worldview approach to God's mission

Chapter Six: Communicating at the worldview level

Chapter Five: A worldview approach to God's mission

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy." - Francis of Assisi

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters present a brief summary into the challenges of participating in God's mission among nomads. Nomads have remained elusive primarily because they have not been a priority for many Christians. They are usually found on the fringe of many societies and therefore, are not prioritized. Another reason for neglecting this group is that the Church has become settled and merely aspires to the title of "pilgrim people." The idea of "pilgrim people" is metaphorical, but the implication is that Christians do not belong to the present world. Nomadism incorporates the idea of belonging even though nomads systematically move about. Christianity has become sedentary and this has mitigated against any attempts to target nomadism with the Gospel message. Compounded to these challenges as mentioned, is the issue of orality. Many nomads are considered primary oral people. This is a serious challenge because since Guttenberg Christianity has traversed the world on paper. Literacy has become an essential feature of Christianity; hence the emphasis that many a mission project places on education. These challenges suggest that God's mission among nomads requires that Christians should experience the world differently. Therefore, this thesis is suggesting a different approach to sharing God with nomads. My underlying thesis, therefore, is that Christians cannot continue with traditional approaches when entering a nomadic environment. This task requires that mission practitioners think differently and to be led by the Holy Spirit. Hence, I want to propose the worldview approach to Christianity in this chapter. First I will present the foundation on which the model is based. Then I will outline some principles for using the approach.

5.2 What is a worldview approach?

A worldview was defined above in chapter 4. As mentioned above, there are different levels of worldview just as there are Africans, Europeans or Asians with numerous sub-divisions. This thesis contends that there is a larger human worldview that is common to all peoples everywhere. While it is expressed differently by different people, fundamentally, it is common to all humanity. This is the view that God is separate from humanity or that God is unapproachable. Verster (2008:7) calls this "a radical disruption of the relationship with God." Kraft (1989:55) puts it slightly differently: "for most

of the cultures of the world the ultimate ground for these [ethnocentric] sanctions is supernatural. It is by their God or gods that most people understand their worldview and their culture as a whole to be validated." This was expressed by Adam and Eve (humanity's first parents) in the Garden of Eden when they hid from God as he came for his daily meeting with them "at the time of the evening breeze" (Gen. 3:8). Hiebert (2008:289) therefore argues for the oneness of humanity. It is this oneness that implies that all humanity feels guilty and does not want God to come close. Humanity would prefer to remain hidden. These are expecting God's wrath to fall on them. In so doing, humanity attempts all kinds of methods to appease the wrath of God. This is expressed differently by different people. Thus Verster (2008:55) warns that reconciliation with God is only available in Jesus of Nazareth. It is the view of God that needs to be addressed. In the Garden of Eden, God addressed it personally, and he wants to do the same today. He wants to come in person to each individual person and demonstrate himself to be trustworthy.

Hiebert (2008) in his book <u>Transforming Worldview: an anthropological understanding of how people change</u> presents a picture of worldview from anthropology and uses this as a basis for transforming the worldview of people to a biblical one. After giving some facts about worldview, he proceeds to discuss differing worldviews in general. Finally, he hesitatingly proposes a biblical worldview. Here he demonstrates how such a worldview can transform a community. However, he emphasizes that; "Transformation is the work of God..." (Hiebert 2008:307). This is fundamental to participating in God's mission. The mission practitioner cannot transform a people. S/he is merely a conduit through whom God can make his will known. There is no missionary method that can transform a people either. It is the transformed life through whom God can make known his desire to participate in the life of another person. Thus Hiebert is really suggesting that Christian mission is the fusion of three worldviews, these are: that of the mission practitioner, of the convert and of God. What this suggests is that God's mission is "the message of God's grace" and therefore a "proclamation of God's will for reconciliation" (van de Beek 2008:i). That is, God allows a potential convert to observe how he has transformed another individual and then through that experience, calls the convert into his own presence so that s/he too can be transformed. Thus Hiebert (2008) is correct in suggesting that God's mission cannot be centred on beliefs or behaviour. It is the life of the person that needs transformation, not merely his/her thinking or actions. This is wholistic mission. It reaches into every nook and cranny of the individual life. Addressing a person's worldview, addresses the fundamental questions of life that allows transformation to take place. Hiebert prefers to call it a biblical worldview. However, the Bible is a revelation of who God is (Glasser 1989; Davidson 2000:58 & van Bemmelen 2000). Thus I prefer to call it God's worldview. The mission practitioner merely applies his/her understanding of God's worldview in his/her context. God cannot be confined to individual understanding of who he is. The freedom to be

guided by the Holy Spirit should extend to the potential convert. In other words, the mission practitioner should not dictate a specific interpretation of God's worldview. Rather, the mission practitioner should see new aspects of God's character as s/he engages God through the new community. In a different community different questions will be asked and thus new answers will need investigation. Thus the picture of who God is will extend beyond the mission practitioner's original understanding. This adds to his/her already transformed worldview. Thus mission becomes a progressive process or to use a theological term, it is the process of sanctification. At no point would the Christian suggest that s/he has arrived. In doing that they would become God. It is this challenge that Verster (2008) warns against. It is also this challenge that Verster identifies as the challenge in Christian mission as it points to the fact that humanity is responsible for the choices of including sin, having a distorted understanding of God or both. God is too big for humanity to conceptualize. However, the transformation through Jesus allows humanity to view the world differently and to understand God in new ways. Yet, mankind can never arrive at the point where there is a complete understanding of who God is.

So what is a worldview approach to mission? In chapter 2 the goal or *telos* of God's mission was shared. Keeping this goal in mind is essential to the task of participating in God's mission. Escobar (2003:89) warns: "Missionary enthusiasm and activism can sometimes take us to the point of acting as if mission is a purely human enterprise subject to human calculations... When we recover biblical vision we experience the wonder of being invited to enter God's plan, which has far broader implications than choosing a career or going on a pleasant vacation abroad." Thus, for this researcher, a worldview approach is essential. If reconciliation or re-uniting God and humanity is the goal, it becomes essential that the object of God's love (humanity) be transformed from the distorted ideas they have of God. This demands a worldview shift. Such a worldview shift is only possible as humanity experiences God participating in their daily lives. This White (1900:419) refers to as a "transformed body [people]." She is of the opinion that one's character will be the only luggage one will carry to heaven from this life (White 1900:310). As Job (1:21) said; "Naked I came from the womb, naked I shall whence I came." Here the emphasis is on material possessions. However, as one matures and grows, one's character is developed. It is God's intention that one develops one's character so as to be imitators of him. It is this transformation that is essential.

This is essential when ministering in a nomadic environment. Nomads have not understood the need for what the post colonial world has called development. Development was a neo-colonial term to force individuals to be imitators of a different culture. Instead of suppressing people through the barrel of the gun, the goal through development was to suppress people by requiring that they become what they were not. Hence, development went through numerous phases. Christians bought into the idea of

development, as it allowed them to enter an area where the government would otherwise not allow Christian access. Here mission focused on making individuals to be imitators of other people, the ones bringing the development.

Christian mission is participating with God or as the apostle Paul says being "God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor. 3: 9). When Christians participate with God, a greater vision of what God wants to accomplish will be realized. That vision is to share in his life. Such a vision requires not change but transformation of who we are as people. This demands a worldview shift and not merely a paradigm shift. We need to love as he loves. We need to give as he gives. We need to love when hatred is demonstrated. Thus Jesus taught what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). He presents a worldview approach which cannot be sermonized. It is the incarnational approach to mission. That is, participating in the life of the people and demonstrating a peace and joy that only comes from being transformed by the Creator. It is a demonstration that God is resident in the life of the convert and that presence gives one the peace to continue existing despite the evil and destruction all around. Thus, a worldview approach to doing mission is a holistic approach. It penetrates every aspect of one's personhood. It is not limited to one's spiritual life. Like the nomads, one's spirituality impacts the life. The worldview approach therefore penetrates every nook and cranny of the person much as the sun's rays penetrate every nook and cranny of the earth.

5.3 Immanuel – God with us

God's coming to humanity is the premise of this thesis. This is also the foundation for the worldview approach to doing God's mission. Kraft (1989:123) states that God chooses of himself to come to humanity. There is no one urging God to get involved in the lives of humankind. He does it of his free choice. Thus understanding God's coming to humanity is an essential for doing God's mission. It not only acknowledges God for who he is, it also announces his continued connection to humanity.

God's choosing to become a human being is God's clarion announcement that the human struggles are his. This ties the human dilemma with the great God of the universe. More importantly it connects the human identity with God. In other words, humanity is incomplete without the connection with God. This stretches first to creation and second to the incarnate God, Jesus and his ministry on earth (including his death and resurrection). It is in this God that the true human nature will be discovered. Thus the incarnation is more than God becoming flesh and blood and subject to abuse from the god of the world. The incarnation indicates his willingness to be human (a creature whom he created). He becomes God with humanity – at-one with his creation.

The coming of God to humanity is significant as it gives humanity a glimpse into the character of God. This is foundational to a worldview approach to mission. The character of God is what is most important. This character needs to be visible in the way people do God's mission and it must be the focus of communication. God's coming demonstrates his willingness to forgive and to reconcile. This is grace as God in his love chose this path. He is Immanuel - God with us in our need.

5.4 Mission principles in addressing the worldview

It is important to distinguish between a model and principles. A model is "a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure." A second definition highlighted by the dictionary is "a system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate." Looking at these definitions the first speaks in concrete terms and is not applicable in this context. The second applies to the discussion at hand. It has greater fluidity yet it requires a close application to the original. Luzbetak (1991:64) affirms the second definition; "By mission models we mean postulates, inferences, and systems of motivation employed for guidance and imitation in carrying out the worldwide task of the Church. Such models are exteriorized in the priorities, strategies, and approaches of those engaged in mission." The challenge with using models is the universal application. Models are usually appropriate for a specific context. Humanity is not a concrete being. Rather humanity is a physiological being. This recognizes that humanity is always growing and changing. Humanity cannot remain constant. Models are constant. They need to be reviewed and redesigned after some time.

A definition of the word 'principle' states that it is "a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning." Alternatively, the dictionary states that it is "a fundamental source or basis of something." The Concise Oxford Dictionary adds "(when used in the plural) personal code of right conduct". I prefer the idea of principles to models as principles are more fluid. Principles do not change or transform. They can be expressed differently but the principle remains. Thus the concept 'principle' is more universal yet its application is diverse.

When God asked Noah to build a boat, he gave him a model. The same applies to Moses when requested to build the tabernacle. But when God called Moses to liberate Israel from bondage he did not present a model of how this can be done. What God outlined in his call was to describe himself as the one who comes to humanity and the one who is all-powerful (*El Shaddai*). Then he merely asks Moses to be the conduit through whom he can work. Other than that, no plan or model was presented on the

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methodology. The vision was placed before Moses. He needed to trust in the one who revealed himself as the "I AM" to act.

The principles outlined below are taken from the life of Jesus whom Escobar (2003:97) calls "God's best missionary." Roland Allen (1962a) asks whether Paul's methods or modern method's should be followed. Really it is neither. Christians are to be imitators of Jesus and hence his disciples in the full meaning of the word 'disciple'. The source must be followed. So I agree with Escobar (2003:97) that Jesus is "God's best missionary." Paul applied God's mission principles in his context. God asks those at the dawn of the 21st century to do the same. This chapter then wants to take the reader back to the basics of Christian mission.

5.4.1 Worship

Here worship is not about music in church or Christian fellowship. Here worship is defined as being obedient to God. However, obedience presupposes that there is a relationship or a connection with God. If there were no connection it would be difficult to be obedient and trust him. Mark (1:35) reports that it was Jesus' custom to find a place to just be with God each morning. Without this daily communion with God, his ministry would not be effective. It is recorded that, on a different occasion, Jesus intentionally removed his disciples from ministry to rest a while and spend time in prayer and communion with God. When the disciples failed to heal a certain man but Jesus did it, he commented that this is done through prayer and fasting. These examples illustrate the intimate relationship a person needs to be a messenger of the great I AM.

In ministry Jesus was always between the "mountain and the multitude" (to quote a common Christian saying). This saying best talks about Jesus' need for worship. It also highlights the point that worship is a lifestyle. It is not as a reaction to life's situations that Jesus sought the presence of God. The mountain was his meeting place. It became his private office where he could be alone with God away from the demands and clamour of human need. Here God talked to him as to a friend, revealing what he wanted Jesus to do. Jesus says, "I do nothing on my own authority…" (Jn. 8:28). He needed to remain in daily touch with God or he could not follow instructions. This lifestyle radiated the love of God to those around him. It is this lifestyle which mission practitioners of the 21st century need to emulate.

In worship it is also the place where the awesomeness and holiness of God is experienced. This experience both draws one in and pushes one out. The wooing of God is seen in his glory but that same glory ignites a fire to want others to share in the experience. Jesus declares in his priestly prayer; "I

have glorified thee…" (Jn. 17:4)Worship has a dual purpose. It invites one to experience the glory of God but that same glory drives the worshipper to become a witness of the glory of God. The Psalmist says it well; "Taste, then, and see that the LORD is good" (Ps. 34:8). This is what worship should do. It drives one into a life of obedience and trust in the Creator-God.

Mission therefore begins in worship, it develops into a life of witness and in the end there is a return to worship as others join in celebrating the awesomeness of God. This principle is fundamental to per-meating the worldview. The focus of one's witness is God and not Bible doctrines or behaviour. A life of worship will lead one to recognize that one is a pilgrim in the world.

5.4.2 In the world but not of the world

Jesus says; "the Prince of this world approaches. He has no rights over me…" (Jn. 14:30). As the re-gent of the earth Satan seeks partners. A worship lifestyle transforms one to have a worldview that does not imitate the emperor of the earth. Although one is resident in this kingdom, one lives different-ly. As the apostle Paul said; one becomes a "new order" (2 Cor 5:17). As a new creation one is trans-formed into the image of God and one matures in a new direction. This new life (or worldview) is cen-tred on building and not destroying. Escobar (2003:158) states: "when he came to understand the re-conciling love of Jesus Christ... Paul had not only a new vision of Christ but also a new way of looking at human beings." This is what it means to live in this world but not to conform to its worldview. Christians experience God and then see the world through his eyes.

This has great significance for those living in a pluralistic society. Here one interacts with people from diverse walks of life and different backgrounds. One's neighbor can be a Hindu, another can be an atheist and still another can be a Christian of a different persuasion. Besides the religious convictions of one's neighbors, they each have their own political views and understanding of the environment. All these put together can make for interesting neighborliness. It is at this point that one needs to under-stand the dynamics of society. Roger Sider (1980:267) warns that everyone is acculturated (socialized) into one or other culture. Based on this culture "everyone else who is different is treated as such." Be-coming a missionary then, he continues, involves "giving up all the benefits of acculturation" and in the end the Christian will "not quite belong" to any cultural group because s/he is not of this world (Sider 1980:269 & 275). Wright (1999:139) says it thus; it "involves a voluntary muting of one's eth-nic or national pride." Jesus foresaw this and it is an issue which He addresses in his prayer as record-ed in John 17 (read verses 9-23) "… the world hates them because they are strangers in the world . . . . I pray thee, not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." One who becomes

a Christian and hence, a new creation, is tempted to change his/her identity. Retaining one's identity is, however, vital to the missionary task to which each is called. Conversion entails a change of worldview rather that a change of identity. This is the Christian task to live with a new vision of the world.

This is not only seen in the teachings of Jesus but also in his life. He treated people very differently than those around him. He was often accused of associating himself with "sinners" and other outcasts of society. A new view of the world will allow Christians to live differently. Jesus lived as a "marginal person" because he understood that God saw each person as valuable.

Being a "marginal person" however, challenges the Christian identity to the core. This leads the Christian missionary to recognize that his/her humanity is fully revealed in God.

5.4.3 I am because Jesus is

Rene Descarte stated: "I think therefore I am." This has become the watch word for many Western people. However, in a sense, this is a selfish foundation. John Mbiti (1969:141) coined the phrase "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." This has made people realize that we live in community and it requires a community to raise a child. But Mbiti's idea stretches further than the Western idea of community. When Mbiti speaks about "we are" he is including the ancestors and the Creator-God. Community, therefore, is inclusive of everyone known to me. Here Mbiti succinctly summarizes the African philosophy of *ubuntu.* It basically states that my humanity is wrapped in your humanity.

Escobar (2003:158) states that it is only when Paul received a new vision of who Jesus is that he realized his own humanity and the humanity of others. The humanity is wrapped up in God, the creator and redeemer of humanity. It is only here that one will have a sense of who one is and one's worth. In seeing one's personal worth to the creator of the world one cannot ignore the value of another person. The grace that stretches to one, woos the other. It is only the revelation of God that will transform my thinking of me and others. It is for this reason Jesus says "love to God" is the greatest command and the second is love for self and others. In realizing God's love the true human nature will be realized. This is God's desire to ensure that each person becomes a person of value. That each person can experience him and in so doing be transformed.

Jesus recognized that without God he had no purpose. When Jesus wept for Jerusalem it was the value

that God placed on it that made him weep. Seeing the world through God's eyes allowed Jesus to go to the cross. The worth of humanity is centred in God and not in ourselves.

Knowing our true identity gives Christians the ability and the opportunity to live in diverse circumstances. The Christian will follow the call of God to incarnate in the world.

5.4.4 Incarnation

The incarnation is very different to living in the world. If we look at the incarnation of Jesus there are a few steps involved. First, it was voluntarily. God says he sent his son into the world. Jesus allowed his father to use him to come to the world. Second, it is to a specific people. Third, it is to be a "marginal person" (to quote Sider, 1980) rather than a pilgrim. Fourth, it is to be a conduit. I will now discuss each point.

5.4.4.1 Volunteer

A volunteer is one who sees a need and gives him/herself to the cause. A volunteer is not one who seeks a reward or something in return for the services rendered. Jesus volunteered to enter the human race. At each step of this endeavour he needed to remain close to the one who sent him. In doing this he was able to move the process forward. Wright (1999:139) states: "Although Christ fulfilled the Father's will, yet whatever He did, He did voluntarily."

Escobar (2003:28) reports that Christian missionaries struggle to explain why they decide to go as missionaries. "They [missionaries] see themselves engaged in mission as a faith commitment, a response to what God has revealed about himself and what he has done for them" and for humanity as a whole. This drives Christians to go to the four corners of the earth to experience a God who wants to come and be with them. They volunteer not because it is a law or an expectation rather it is a "willing response of joyful volunteers" to the heart of God (Wright 1999:138). It is a response to the glory of God.

5.4.4.2 A specific people

Jesus came to his own reports John (1:11). Jesus came to his creation, humankind. He came to introduce them to the God they chose to hide from. He came to reconcile God with humanity. Not just a particular group of people but all humanity.

God's universal Church has the task of going to all people. However, as an individual this is impossible. God sends individuals to different places to different people. He has an assignment for each person. "Any person who is so caught up by a vision of reaching the whole world for Christ that he races off in a hundred different directions, cannot but produces a shallow result" (Wright 1999:143). But God does not send people to places; rather he sends them to people. People need the LORD, not places or institutions. It is only as people go to people that God can be seen. These people are not confined to certain regions of the earth. They are across the globe and in every corner. The call is to go even to the neighbour next door or the person halfway round the world.

5.4.4.3 A "marginal person"

Here it is important to emphasize that God places people among other people. This requires that one live as a transformed person in the community in which God places one. The idea of a Christian being a pilgrim has value. However, of greater value is the idea proposed by Sider (1980:265-278) that Christians live as "marginal people" in the world. This concept was discussed above in the context of Jesus. To live incarnationally does not imply one is focused on an alternate life. The focus needs to be on the present. Sider suggests that Christians live in their communities with the purpose of renewing the culture. That is, as people willing to develop their faith within their context. Thus the missionary lives on the periphery not belonging to the community yet a member. Thus incarnationally ministry is an intentional lifestyle.

5.4.4.4 A conduit

Jesus' ministry was not for himself. His ministry was for others. However, he was unable to minister in his own strength. His ministry was accomplished in spite of himself. It was God working through him to display his glory. He availed himself to God and allowed God to display his power through him.

This is significant as in many missionary endeavours; a missionary wants to convert so many people. Goals are set of the number of churches to be planted and so forth. These all smack in the face of God being the initiator and sustainer of his mission. Jesus accomplished the tasks set by God and not himself. A conduit is useless by itself. It requires someone or something to use it. Christians need to be used of God rather than think they are doing God's mission. Jesus advices his disciples; "As the father has sent me, so I send you." This is Christian mission.

5.5 An example of a worldview mission approach among the Himba

The experience of God's missionary people (as van Engen, 1991 calls Christians), through the centuries, suggests different methods of sharing God and his gospel. However, it can be safely said that God has seldom been without a witness. However, there appears to be a people who have eluded the Christian message. These are the nomads of the world. Primarily, when working among nomads, Christians approached them with sedentary methods. This subsection presents a worldview approach among a nomadic people in Namibia. It suggests that nomads cannot be approached through traditional Christian methods of public evangelism or personal evangelism known to the Christian community. Rather, I want to illustrate that the mission practitioner requires innovative methods of evangelism. The chapter, therefore, presents an overview of the work done among the Himba, secondly, it presents my response to the challenges of working among nomads and finally I will lay out the method I used for sharing.

5.5.1 An overview of the missionary influence among nomads

The Ovahimba are not averse to spirituality. They often welcome spiritual leaders to their homestead. In my personal experience (this is also attested by Father Tablino) the fathers invite Christian spiritual leaders to their homestead in the hope that they can help their children learn about Jesus. An open invitation such as this would suggest an openness to the gospel. However, upon closer examination and through time this invitation is not really an invitation to learn the truth of the gospel. Rather, it is an invitation to learn about Christianity and to have another base covered through prayer for the family. Van Rheenen (1991:21) indicates that animist people seek to discover what beings and forces can influence their lives. It is this desire to know that allows nomads to search what kind of influence Christianity can extend on their lives. The missionary approach must be universal as in East Africa and Namibia the nomads desire their children to learn about Christianity. Buys and Nambala (2003:47) seems to indicate convenience. Miettinen (2005) indicates the converts desire to aspire to whiteness – I would rather say it is an aspiration to have the material benefits rather than whiteness. Among nomads (a primary oral community) Christianity can be perceived to be a literate religion. Hence the desire to have children taught as they have the capacity to learn the new technology of writing. Pool (1991) highlights this in the story of a Herero chief, Samuel Maherero, in the latter half of the 19th century.

In my personal experience having received invitations to preach at various Himba homestead I was baffled when no one responded to appeals for baptism. Upon reflection I noticed:

a) The audience changed from week to week with one or two core members being the wives of the head of the family.

b) The men were often absent from the meetings although they invited me to their homestead.

c) Little interest was expressed in hearing the word of God.

d) Despite sharing week after week most attendees were unable to answer basic questions such as, "What did we discuss last week?"

The above challenges forced me to ask some probing questions:

a) Who must hear the story of Jesus to transform the community?

b) What must I communicate to challenge the people?

c) When is the best time to share the gospel with the family?

d) Where is the most appropriate place to share God?

e) How must I communicate to be effective?

Wrestling with these questions I realized before I could teach I needed to learn. I was teaching without understanding and knowing the people. Hesselgrave (1978: 24) warns about this and advices that the mission practitioner take time to learn and understand the host culture. Thus cultural learning became an essential ministry tool. Father Tablino (1999) collaborates this as he became an expert on the Gabra people.

For example, as I learnt the Ovahimba culture and worldview I discovered that fathers are the movers and shakers of their families. I also learnt that decisions were made at the family level not at the people group level. This has implications for my assigned task – to develop a spontaneous Church.

This gives the reader a brief insight into the challenges of mission work among nomads. It does however, highlight that Christians cannot answer today's questions with yesterday's answers. A fresh approach is required for these unique circumstances.

5.5.2 Christian mission among nomads

The above sub-section illustrates the challenge of entering a nomadic environment with arrogance. I arrived in Namibia with the goal to change the people. I was naïve. I could no longer remain the teacher. I needed to become a learner. This sub-section highlights the lessons I learnt and my response to them.

5.5.2.1 A cultural outsider-insider

Christian mission practitioners face the dual challenge of going local and isolating their own tradition. Numerous authors warn against the former challenge. Not being born into a culture one will ever re-

main an outsider. One may have insights into the culture but one will be ever learning and growing. With time one can eventually lay off the former culture and put on the new culture but this requires intentional living differently. Often a missionary may put on the local dress or adopt a local tradition within the family circle. This should not be perceived as becoming local. It should rather be perceived as wanting to be incarnational. Being incarnational one recognizes one limitation as an outsider adapting to the local context. The latter idea of isolating one's own people takes significance here. The host culture will not recognize the missionary as a local yet the sending community can perceive the missionary as wanting to be local through the activities s/he engages in. In so doing, s/he can be isolating the support team. Here it is important to maintain constant communication with the sending partners so as to avoid the misconception of doing away with one's own culture. Here the message of Paul is essential (1 Cor. 9:22ff). One becomes a Himba in the context of working among the Himba. It is for this reason I can agree with Shaw and van Engen (2003:151) when they argue that the missionary becomes a catalyst for Christian ministry among a people rather than the expert theologian/evangelist. They purport the missionary is the advocate (as an outsider) and the insider is the innovative (on how to share the gospel). In sharing the insider will become an advocator to others (Shaw & van Engen 2003:143). However, I would take it a step further. The missionary also becomes a catalyst in the opposite direction as the sending community learns about what it means to be a Christian in a different environment. It is this equilibrium that the missionary is an outsider yet an insider. Bruce Olson (2006) in his book <u>Bruchko</u> records this catalyst approach.

5.5.2.2 Communicating the gospel

Here the challenge was three-pronged; message, medium and audience. It is important to note that I arrived with a pre-packaged message. I did not need to identify an audience. The Himba father's came requesting my presence at their homestead. This arrogance did not ooze ethnocentrism as it did not deal with my dealings with the people. However, I discovered with time that it was the highest form of ethnocentrism. It was the same ethnocentrism demonstrated by the missionaries of yesteryear.

Before addressing these three-pronged challenges, I need to address the challenge of the ethnocentric approach to Christian mission. I did not see this ethnocentric approach in my own experience as I felt called to the task. Yet it spoke loudly to my audience.

The constant appeals I received from various fathers to visit their homestead led me to understand that the Himba did not reject the biblical message. However, it appeared they rejected the traditions Christendom tried to impose upon them. This suggested that traditional mission and evangelistic methods

were not possible. For such methods suggested to nomads that God is calling them to be sedentary. That is, to establish a new way of existence. It is at this point that Christian mission has been ethnocentric. But Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us; "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others" (quoted by van Engen 1991:74). This is imitating the model of Jesus. In his humanity Jesus came close to the people, so he could best serve the people. His was an incarnation that is, experiencing life as a person not a theoretical undertaking. In doing this he was able to identify with the people and eloquently address their needs. Thus, for this researcher, the 21st century mission must address people at the worldview level. An incarnational approach is different from contextualization. Contextualization is about the missionary trying to know how to package the gospel to a specific context. The emphasis is on the mission practitioner and his/her ability to contextualize the message and the application of the message. An incarnational approach is about living as a follower of Christ in a given context. A fundamental difference is perceived here. The contextualized approach is a runoff of colonialism where the missionary sets the agenda. Hiebert (1985:193ff) tries to minimize the neo-colonial idea by suggesting that a new community of believers be allowed to understand God's word in their own context. Hiebert devotes a chapter to this idea. Finally he concludes; "self-theologizing, recognizes that Christians need to develop theologies that make the gospel clear in their different cultures" (Hiebert 1985:216). The incarnational model would therefore ascribe to using aspects of the critical contextualization process suggested by Hiebert (1985) to demonstrate sensitivity to the culture. However, unless the missionary incarnates him-/herself the ministry will face challenges among nomads. The incarnational approach allows the host community to internalize the gospel in their way so they can express the gospel using their speech and lives. That is, the missionary will allow the Holy Spirit to guide and lead the convert rather than try to control how the convert should express his/her new experience. For Shaw and van Engen (2003:150) the missionary is the advocate who becomes the mentor and equipper of insiders who can most effectively know how to present Christian within the specific context.

In the nomadic worldview knowledge is gained through experience. Knowledge is not theoretical. To know means to experience. Thus an incarnational approach is more pertinent in a nomadic context. Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:21) suggest that our identities become exclusive as we try to identify with people of similar backgrounds to ourselves. They are suggesting the old English proverb is true that birds of a feather flock together. Since this is a reality for most people they suggest that when one moves between groups stress is created. They therefore argue that Christ challenges his followers to "leave self behind" (Matt. 16:24). Here they interpret the text to mean that the Christian, for the sake of the gospel, must give up his/her cherished familiarity and move into the realm of the unconverted so like the apostle Paul s/he can say: "I have made myself every man's servant, to win over as many as

possible…" (1 Cor. 9:19-23). As workers together with God, missionaries are to enter the lived world of the hosts. Such a lifestyle will influence the hosts more than the doctrines presented. For it is through the lived world that the truth is applied to one's new experience of life. This modelling becomes essential to all who observe.

The model of Jesus reminds the mission practitioner that there is no one-size fit every context when engaged in God's mission. As God reaches out to humanity, so the missionary must meet people not the people meet evangelism. Every situation is unique and demands unique approaches. This calls for creativity and innovation. Lewis (2010:41) in discussing Insider Movements as an alternative approach to traditional Christian evangelism suggests that the issue is not contextualization but the "integrity of the gospel". For Higgins (2004) the issue is missiological. For him, theological reform is needed. He wants to reintroduce the idea of the incarnation in the 21st century. This difference is very important. As a mission practitioner from the Seventh-day Adventist tradition or to use Lewis' term "socio-religious identity" it would be important to recognize that faith needs to be developed within the context of the individual rather than outside or independent of that socio-religious environment. In the Seventh-day Adventist community the concept of Faith Development in Context (FDIC) has been developed (Roennfeldt 2005:31-48). Although developed for the Muslim context, its principles can be used in all socio-religious contexts. The term FDIC is preferred to Insider Movements as it refers to what needs to be developed. It is the Christian faith of the people that must be developed within their socio-religious context. This suggests that the mission practitioner put on the new culture (incarnate) rather than try to contextualize the gospel for the culture. FDIC speaks about transforming people as they allow God to transform their personhood. The purpose of both concepts is to ensure a Christian witness can be experienced in very restrictive communities. Higgins (2007) concludes that the real test of these ideas will not be theoretical but in the application as individuals wrestle with the various challenges in and around their spirituality and their socio-religious identity. However, Lewis' perception that contextualization should not be the primary motivator is important. The creativity is essential but the most valuable contribution to the context is presenting an unadulterated gospel. Keeping this in focus gives the convert the freedom to hear the Holy Spirit speak and allow him/her to develop an application of the new spirituality within the context of his/her socio-religious world. Hiebert (2008:12) understands this lived world to be the flesh (*sarx*), the world (*archeon*) and the age (*eon*). Each of these is God-given or God ordained. However, a perversion can be introduced because of our distorted understanding of God. To counter balance this in Christian evangelism Escobar (2003:68) observes that a holistic approach is necessary. Hiebert (2008) reminds us that Christian mission in the past focused on aspects of a person either their mental capacity or their social ability (behaviour). He concludes that the 21st century needs to focus on worldview transformation. Such an approach Kraft (1989) would

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concur is inclusive of the whole person and not aspects of the person. It addresses the way an individual perceives and views the world. It addresses the lenses people use to view the world. It operates from the inside out rather than from the outside in. However, to transform a worldview the methodology is but an instrument for sharing a life-transforming message so the same experiences and lived world can be perceived differently. Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:115) suggest that as people draw close to God the transformation that takes place is to break the prison of selfishness as they apply their cultural values and rules in the context of honouring God rather than themselves. It is this desire that will uplift the nomads and help them remain nomadic yet challenge their self-centeredness. It will allow Christianity to remove the shackles of foreignness and eliminate the ethnocentric approach to being a messenger of God in a distorted world.

5.5.2.2.1 The message

I arrived in Namibia with a message. The message was to call an unreached people to repentance and salvation in Jesus. Such a message held no relevance to the people. As I learnt about the people they are secure in their religious convictions. In talking about their need for salvation, the message was irrelevant. The message was not wrong but inappropriate to the audience. This did not require a new theology. Neither did it require learning new contextualization methods. Rather it required a repacking of the unadulterated gospel, as Lewis (2010) suggests or as Whitehouse suggests a "process of de-contextualization" (quoted in Roennfeldt 2005:35). Here Whitehouse is referring to the undressing of the cultural elements from the gospel so the core of the gospel is presented within a given context. This applies to the message and the application of the message in the nomadic context (Shaw & van Engen 2003:188-191).

5.5.2.2.2 The medium

As discussed in chapter six the medium is the message. Loss (1983:61) suggests that a major contributing factor to missionary burnout is the expectations placed on the missionary. One such expectation is the "*doing* rather than *being*" (Loss 1983:68, original emphasis). Thus the missionary arrives with a pre-packaged message. In my experience this was a great challenge. It spoke the loudest about an ethnocentric approach. A pre-packaged message did not consider the target audience. In reviewing the example of Jesus and the apostle Paul one notices that the message is essential and does not change. However, the medium of the message changes with different audiences.

As I studied the Himba I was challenged on two fronts. The first was illiteracy. A person who did not

attend school was considered illiterate. Thus I embarked on the journey of literacy classes. However, after three months of literacy classes I realized literacy was not the answer. If literacy was ineffective, how would the converts mature as Christians? At this point in my experience, I began to study Himba communication styles and providentially discovered orality. The people were unable to hear because the medium (preaching) was unfamiliar to them. However, in using local media (singing and dance) it allowed the Himba to hear without hindrance. This is communicating in the heart language of the people. As one respondent said to me, after listening to a cassette of Bible verses in Himba genre, "You want to reach the heart of our people." Tom Avery (1998:7) speaks about "heart music." Here heart language is not about speaking Otjiherero (the language of the people). It is about using local language and genre. This also affirms that God comes personally to his people. He does not need a foreign language or medium to speak to people.

This led to the second challenge of a medium for public address. In oral societies there is a dialogue that takes place with the orator. Using modern technology this dialogue is impersonal. Among the Himba the radio has become a valuable medium to communicate with a people on the move. The transmitter allows for people to hear at vast distances. A significant technology of the 21st century is the mobile telephone. The Himba have embraced this technology. Here the challenge is literacy. However, the technology has advanced to the point where video has become a significant part. The Himba however, have not accepted this part of the technology yet. Cassette players are outmoded. They are also ineffective as people can record over them. A number of mission agencies are moving toward solar-powered mp3 players. This is a new technology for the Himba. There are several models on the market. MegaVoice produces one that requires specific software for the machine to be loaded. The computer sticks used by Faith Comes By Hearing are unsuitable as they can be easily be misplaced or lost. Using mass media is essential to the task of evangelism among oral communities. Søgaard (1991:22/3-4) advices that mission agencies dialogue with the audience or the impact of the material will be lost. The medium has two prongs: namely, the genre and the mass medium appropriate for the audience.

5.5.2.2.3 The audience

The message needed to address the Himba worldview. The medium needed to speak to the people. However, the medium needed to be appropriate to the audience. The general invitation by many fathers to visit their homestead was misleading. Often a father would prefix his invitation with; "My children must learn about Jesus." However, the children were not allowed to make a decision for God without the father's consent. This is a significant social dynamic that cannot be overlooked. Upon

learning about this very important social dynamic I needed to learn about communication to men. Instead of going to speak to the wives and children of the homestead, I stopped preaching. I wanted to learn what it means to talk to men and how this can best be accomplished.

Men, the movers and shakers of the family, are often on the move. They are the real nomads. They move between the various *ozohambo* (cattle posts). They are seldom in the same area for extended periods of time. They are moving around ensuring their animals are in safe areas. They are also attending community meetings and other activities. To follow the men would be a challenge.

In the Himba society men gather at funerals, auctions, and other farming related gatherings. This kind of travel can take a man in various directions. However, his travels are often very well planned yet very spontaneous. To accommodate such a lifestyle, it became important that the presentation of the gospel be allowed to accompany him on his journeys. This implied using a medium familiar to the man as well as a technology that he understood. Thus, it was decided to use Himba genre such as *ondjongo*, *ombimbi*, *omiimbo*, *omiano* and so forth. However, it also became essential to use a technology familiar to the Himba man, namely the radio. A radio however, has limitations. It is confined to a specific time and day and cannot be repeated or reviewed. The listener is dependent on the radio station. This does not conform to the Himba lifestyle. Modern technology has advanced to the point where a more versatile technology can be used. The shortcoming of the cassette player was discussed above. Thus, the solar-powered mp3 player was found to be a good medium appropriate to the audience.

In addressing the men, the goal is to address the movers and shakers of society. Here not only the target audience will be reached but also the women and children. However, if only the women were to be addressed the men would remain isolated. It was important that this change. Thus the audience in a worldview approach to doing evangelism targets the movers and shakers of the community. Among the Himba these are the men.

5.5.3 The worldview approach

The above discussion sets the tone for a worldview approach. In section 5.5.2 the issue is really communication. Here the how of mission communication is outlined, a worldview approach. Allen (1962a) speaks about the work being established under the appropriate conditions. How the missionary teaches lays the DNA for future growth of the converts. He does not use the term, DNA, but the principle is implied. So missionaries are to be careful in the way they do Bible teaching because there is a danger of presenting a Greek understanding of God (Hood 1990:1). Here Hood is delineating that Africa has

not understood the world through a Greek worldview. And the missionary is immersed in Greek thinking. This makes mission communication challenging. In their book on mission communication Shaw and van Engen highlight that the how of the communication must be relevant to the audience. They present a tri-dimensional model for this purpose (Shaw & van Engen 2003:196ff). Here the focus of their model is the spiritual dimension (as revelation of God), the technical dimension (this emphasises the what of mission communication) and the relational dimension (how the messengers participate in the process). This model emphasises that a missionary cannot enter a field with a pre-packaged message. A pre-packaged message is not centred on the audience. Thus, Shaw and van Engen are highlighting that it is important that the mission communicator focus on God so s/he can understand what needs to be communicated and how to appropriately address the audience.

B.J. van der Walt (2003:61) argues for effective mission communication the mission practitioner must "(1) understand the message of the Bible in the light of its religious-cultural background, (2) understand the relevance of the Gospel message for his own culture, and (3) transfer the message in such a way that it will also be understood by the people of the third culture…" Cultural knowledge has value and significance. It gives the missionary an insight into the people. However, it is the worldview that maps out the culture. Therefore, learning the worldview has deeper significance. The worldview is not visible to all observers. A worldview needs to be dug out as hidden treasure. This requires time and patience. Van Rheenen (1991:31) argues that the missionary "conceives of reality through his own background and experience." It becomes the responsibility of the missionary to search out the assumptions of the host culture. Van Rheenen adds, the missionary "must learn to look beyond superficial similarities to perceive the distinctive ways in which people pattern their cultural reality." It is at the worldview level that the missionary will transform the community. The worldview study is inclusive of the cultural study but the culture study does not necessarily include the worldview study.

In Namibia it became important to understand the Himba worldview. The Himba worldview is an animistic one. Van Rheenen (1991) identifies different worldview traits of animistic people. However, a particular culture gives a different emphasis. It became vital to understand what kept the Himba focused on life.

Michael Carr-Gregg speaks about a cultural hole that every culture has (in Klingbiel 2010). That is, an issue that their worldview is unable to satisfy. Knowing the Himba cultural hole gave value to the cultural study. It was not easy to find the Himba cultural hole. This was also the experience of Don Richardson (2005). He wanted to communicate the how of the gospel. He searched and came up empty. Until one day he learnt about the peace child. Not every culture is dramatic is the Sawi culture.

The Himba it was discovered lacked peace. They are always searching for something better yet yearning for the past. They are content within themselves yet always searching for something better. Thus, they have a common expression *katjitwaenda* - that is, things are not what they use to be. If translated literally it means "we did not come like this." This unsettledness keeps them moving to improve their herds and find that utopia. In presenting the gospel it became important to address this cultural emptiness of what life was like at the beginning and what the true inheritance of the people are. [I am deeply indebted to Sabyn Ndjamba my local counterpart who helped me reason through this. It was at his advice that I arrived at this cultural hole of peace. He also recommended the challenge of *katjitwaenda* and pointed out a solution in inheritance.]

5.5.3.1 Katjitwaenda

Addressing a people at the worldview level is essential to sustained spiritual development. Identifying the cultural hole gives the mission practitioner the opportunity to fill that hole. However, people are individuals. It is important to come close to the people and address individual holes as well. Important as each individual is, this study looks at the worldview of the Himba.

Addressing *katjitwaenda* touches the core of the Himba worldview. This takes a well known proverb and addresses the challenge of change the Himba is experiencing. It is important that the mission practitioner recognizes the hopelessness that the Himba sense in the face of modernity. This includes many choosing Christianity. The Himba recognize that change is inevitable. However, there appears to be a desire to return to what was before. This gives the Himba a feeling of hopelessness as adapt to the changing world. Thus in using the proverb the mission practitioner is challenging the Himba worldview to look beyond the generally accepted answers. Yet, the answer to *katjitwaenda* or returning to the past is not found in the story. The mission practitioner will hint at a different interpretation and pointedly present hope and peace. Although the void is addressed it is not filled completely. The goal is to help the Himba recognize that they need a new interpretation of life. This is the goal in addressing the Himba worldview. The answer only comes in presenting the gospel story. The gospel story will fill the emptiness completely. Yet, this too must be addressed at the worldview level.

5.5.3.2 The bridge

Finding a bridge to Christianity has been at the forefront of Christian mission across cultures, however, Shaw and van Engen (2003:118) indicate that this requires "considerable research." The nomadic lifestyle can serve as a bridge to Christianity, as Christians often refer to themselves as a pilgrim people –

a people on a journey. Pilgrimage and nomadism is about movement but pilgrims are moving toward something whereas nomads are "settled" within their environment and are not headed to a distant land. This would be an ineffective bridge. Here I want to discuss possible bridges in the Himba worldview.

5.5.3.2.1 Male/female space

As discussed above (chapter 4) the male/female space is what brings families together. It is also representative of the spiritual and material worlds thus uniting the spiritual and the material. This has a deeper worldview effect. This unification illustrates that God and humanity can be united and live together.

The Himba have an understanding that God created the world and then left it to itself. That is, God has no connection with the world. It is this relationship that is impenetrable. Yet God has given a bridge to address this challenge. The marriage of a man (spiritual power) and a woman (representing the material world) indicates that the spiritual and the material can unite. This is not presenting a new meaning to the people. It is using what is currently practised and emphasising its symbolism. It will therefore, point directly to God's desire to participate in the daily lives of each family and individual. The male/female space therefore is a type in the culture of God's desire to unite with humanity and restore the relationship. This demonstrates that God does not need to be feared.

5.5.3.2.2 The curse

To compliment the primary bridge there are little bridges God has placed within the Himba culture. An important understanding of the Himba world involves being cursed. When bad things happen (illness, floods, death and so forth) these are a result of being cursed. Upon the death of a family member it is important to understand who caused the death. That is, the family asks; "who placed a curse on the person?" When illness persist and is prolonged again it is very important to identify who cursed the deceased. However, from a Himba philosophical understanding, the God who made the world is responsible for the good and the bad. It is this deep seated understanding of the world that must be addressed for transformation to take place.

Without seeing the bigger picture the chains of the here and now will always overwhelm the Himba. Bonita Shields (2011) recently suggests that people have different learning styles. She suggests that it is in addressing these learning styles that people are transformed. Evangelism is a spiritual experience yet it is important to recognize that people are made up of individual personalities. The Holy Spirit can

only work as the person is addressed. Thus it is important that Christians speak to the Himba in relevant ways that address the Himba worldview as opposed to the pet doctrines of the mission practitioner. Digging to understand the worldview of the target audience is vital to sharing God.

Generally, Genesis chapter three is talked about as the "fall of man." In a Christian context this is acceptable language. It is relevant and it speaks to the person being addressed. However, the Himba (who are not Christian) do not have a reference to this kind of thinking. Thus in sharing the story of Genesis 3 a bigger picture of the curse must be presented. That is, the curse is not a localized event. It is important to present the wider picture of the curse God placed on humanity. Addressing the subject as the curse gives the Himba a point of reference. Here the value of understanding the worldview of the people becomes visible. This is the goal is adopting the worldview transformation approach to 21st century mission. The bridge here is the concept of the curse. It is nothing concrete but a way of viewing the world that is similar but localized. In helping the Himba to see the universal application of the curse, they will see that they are not alone and that they need a greater power to release them from the curse.

5.5.3.2.3 The cleansing (okuhuhurwa)

The Himba perform a ceremony when a curse is perceived on a family or family member. Here the family will go to the priests homestead and perform a cleansing ceremony. The cleansing ceremony is centred on killing an animal (usually a sheep) whose blood (taking the life) then cleanses the individual and the family.

Here the Himba have a wonderful and almost perfect type in the culture to point them to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin (curse) of the world (John 1:29). To arrive at this bridge it is important to lay the foundation of the curse and give assurance that God and man can live together. It is this bridge that helps to restore God's original intention and to ensure that life can be as it was at the beginning. We do not need to live in a continued round of blessings and curses or longing back for the past (*katjitwaenda*). But through the lamb provided by God himself we can look to our future inheritance.

5.5.3.3 Okurumata (our inheritance)

An important value among the Himba is knowing that one will receive an inheritance. Sharing the gospel in the context of inheritance helps give the Himba a hook on which to understand the Christian message. When one is cursed one cannot receive an inheritance. Thus having a washing ceremony is vital to receiving an inheritance.

Inheritance for the Himba has two dimensions; the material (wealth) and spiritual (ceremonial ani-mals). God desires to restore humanity to his full potential and recreate whole people. This includes material, spiritual, physical and mental. Thus, the Himba will be transformed to think beyond the here and now. For a people who like to experience to know this may pose a challenge. However, it is not impossible. When placed in the context of *katjitwaenda*, God's inheritance can be visible despite not being experienced. Thus the inheritance is the answer to the challenge of continued change from gen-eration to generation. John 14:1-3 would not be a great inheritance for the Himba. This would once again speak about a sedentary lifestyle. However, if read in the context of a homestead (rather than a house as conceived by an urban dweller) then indeed it will appear attractive. Instantly, a place of be-longing is given. Also a father is presented who has enough animals for all to take care of.

The greatest inheritance would be the presence of God, the father. This deals with the fear inherent among the Himba of God. God is unapproachable. However, the good news is that God has a longing to be with every person and thus he invites everyone to belong to his homestead. This implies, the homestead would have his protection and his provision. Thus, as Creator he would ensure the peace and sustainability of the family. Here the true inheritance is realized when everyone can belong. And the cultural hole filled.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the worldview approach to doing God's mission among nomads. The chal-lenges and different approaches were shared. The chapter highlights that the mission practitioner needs a transformation in order to be an agent of transformation. This suggests that the mission practitioner needs to take time to understand the lived world of the target audience. Through this identify bridges to the underlying worldview of the people. This process among the Himba (in my experience) was pre-sented. A strategy of sharing the gospel was then highlighted. Here it was suggested that the mission practitioner point out the cultural hole in that people group. Next, use the bridges God has placed in the culture to direct the seeker to God's answer. God's answer however, can be a pie in the sky solution. It needs to be a culturally appropriate prop that points to God's answers.

Chapter Six: Communicating at the worldview level

Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words - *Francis of Assisi*

6.1 Introduction

The Christian God has always been a communicator. Before the fall of humanity God talked to our first parents face to face. After the fall God continued to be communicative. He came down to talk through the problem. Once he introduced the curse of being separate from humankind he kept the lines of communication open. At no time in human history has God separated or isolated himself from mankind's presence. God has often communicated to mankind and demonstrated his desire to be present in the lives of people throughout time. He has done this through various means through the centuries. The author of the book of Hebrews says it succinctly: "In times past God spoke through the prophets but today he speaks through his Son." Jesus is not present in the world today but he has sent his followers into the world as witnesses of what he can do in the life of those who trust in him. It is thus that the apostle Paul can say: "You are letters sent to the world..."

6.2 God the communicator

Before embarking upon mission communication today it would be important to highlight that God has always been a mission communicator. Mission communication today needs to have a foundation in God's eternal purpose. This subsection therefore asks, what is God's purpose in communication?

There are some Christians who understand that God needs persuading to get involved with humanity. Some religions in the world accept the Creator-God but do not perceive him as one who wants to connect with a lower creature. The Himba for example, accept that the world could only be created by someone greater than mankind. However, it is their conviction that the Creator wants nothing to do with humanity. He is spirit and will only communicate with spirit beings (Muhenye 1996). Thus, the Himba believe that only at death can one have access to God. To connect with God prior to death is impossible. It would remove the role of the ancestors. In this cosmic thinking one can connect with one's ancestors who will then represent one to God (Mbiti 1969:108). However, to connect with God directly is neither practical nor possible. This understanding suggests that only one's ancestors have a concern for one's wellbeing. It further suggests that God does not communicate to flesh and blood creatures. Among the Himba, this understanding of God is played out in the family as children are not allowed to communicate directly with their father's. In this context a mediator is required and it usually falls on the mother to take on this role. God is perceived as the father of all mankind. Therefore,

he is unapproachable. It is this perception of God that requires Christians to declare God as a communicator and lover of people.

The nature of God is to communicate (Søgaard 1993; Kraft 1989; Hesselgrave 1978). In mission communication this is a given. There is no need to try to explain this. It is the point of departure for Christian mission. So what does God want to achieve through his communication? For Christians God's communication is about him revealing who he is. Through the Bible, through nature and through Jesus God's purpose is the same. He wants humanity to know who he is. However, this is more than information dissemination. Kraft (1989:123) argues: "God's communicational aim is not simply to inform. He desires a relationship with his creatures." The concept of God among the Himba (and many other people groups) illustrates the significance of God being open to reveal who he is. In perceiving that God is separate from humanity in reality these people are the one's hiding from God. This is also reflected in the story of Adam and Eve. It was Adam and Eve that hid from God when he came to talk to them. Therefore, Shaw and van Engen (2003:12) state: "Gospel communication then, involves the mystery of God's self-revelation in human cultures." God can only reveal himself in a cultural context. God's purpose in communication then, is similar to his purpose in mission; to reconnect with humanity. Or stated differently, his communicative desire is to ensure his mission purpose is fulfilled.

God's desire to communicate with humanity, therefore, is not new. He has always had a communicative connection with humanity. When humanity separated from God, it was he who embarked on a road of reconciliation. Reconciliation implies there was a prior connection. The connection must be re-established. To have any meaningful relationship communication is vital. Thus God has always been in communication with humanity. Nida (1960:157) speaking about communication in general states: "Communication never takes place in a social vacuum, but always between individuals who are part of a total social context." God remains connected with humanity through his desire to remain in relationship. The social and cultural contexts are diverse. God therefore, communicates through diverse ways to diverse people. Ultimately, God's communication is about "knowing God in God's hiddenness" (Shaw & van Engen 2003:14).

From creation and through creation God is in constant communication with humanity. His communication took on a new urgency when humanity separated from him. It was his turning to humanity (Gen. 3:8-9) that allows humanity to "know God in God's hiddenness." Creation, however, speaks haltingly about her Creator. God, therefore, stepped down into the created world as a human being. He entered the social context of humanity to reveal himself more poignantly and in so doing he demonstrates his

desire to reconnect. In establishing a connection with individuals, God demonstrates through these individuals (on a micro level) his desire to connect universally with all humanity (on a macro level). God, therefore, does not become weary in revealing himself for he desires to reunite with all humanity. In reconnecting with individuals, God extends his communication network. He can now communicate through these individuals to others. Hesselgrave however, warns that the missionary cannot be preoccupied with a pre-packaged message. For the missionary in believing the message was saved and was strengthened by studying it. Hence the missionary is spurred on to preach it to those who do not know the gospel message. Now Hesselgrave concludes (1978:69); "But before they [the missionary] can do so effectively, they must study again – not just the language, but also the audience. They must learn before they can teach, and listen before they can speak. They need to know the message for the world, but also the world in which the message must be communicated." In acknowledging that mission begins and ends with God, Hesselgrave is suggesting that Christians join God on his mission. It is also an invitation to imitate God's communication method. The foundation of this chapter then is that God has always communicated with humanity and that he communicates with people within their context. Mission communication does not begin outside of God – this is *Missio Dei.*

The hiddenness of God cannot be revealed by someone other than God. To assume humanity can reveal God is presumption. There may be aspects of God that can be shared. These would be limited to the experience of the individual sharing. Understanding that mission communication is centred in God and not the human agent is vital to the communication process. This will affirm the purpose or goal of the mission communication process – to reveal the mystery of God. This is illustrated in the story of Moses and Elijah. God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock and then paraded pass Moses. The mystery of God illustrates that communication cannot be limited to Christian doctrines rather it points to an all powerful being who wants to be known. Such communication is about God (immortal) wanting to establish a relationship with mortals.

6.3 Communication

This chapter looks at what Christian mission communication is. Hesselgrave (1978:20) identifies numerous different words in the New Testament that are different forms of communication. However, these are really methods of talking. Communication is more than words. Communication has its roots in Latin. It suggests communion or bringing together. Communication is the act of sharing information or the act of sharing for the sake of building community. There are different levels of communication. One can share for the sake of giving information. One can also share for the purpose of building rapport with a group of people or an individual. However, deep communication is actually getting in-

volved not just with one's words but when one is able to share through even the context being part of the communication process. Communication therefore is a continuum. On the one end is bare information. On the other end is heartfelt connection with the person(s).

Bare information   heartfelt connection
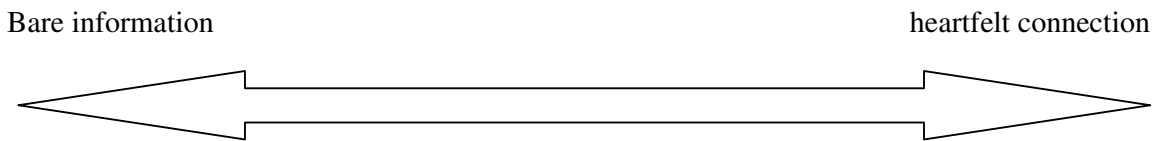
Figure 6.1: Communication continuum

Looking at communication theory Hesselgrave (1978:28) identifies Aristotle as the originator of the concept of the most basic model of communication viz. a speaker, the speech and the audience. Generally, communication has been modeled as thus.

Message

encode

Source

decode

Respondent
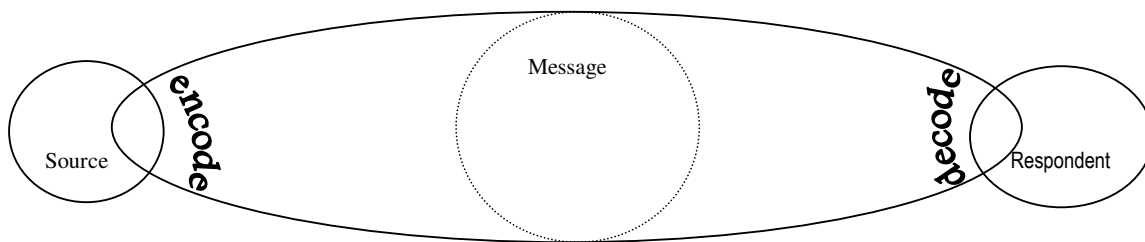
Figure 6.2: Basic Communication Theory (Hesselgrave 1978:29)

Hesselgrave highlights that Christian communication adopted the legacy of Aristotle and Cicero as their benchmark in sharing the gospel. These communicators had the idea of persuading their audience and they called it rhetoric. Through the ages of time this idea was expanded but Christians retained the basic theme of persuasion. Yet in the definition of communication the goal of communication is to build relationships. The purpose of God is also to build a relationship with humanity (see chapter 2 above). Persuasion is an important role player in Christian communication but it should not be the focal point. Persuasion is dependent upon rhetoric. Rhetoric is really a monologue. Thus Aristotle speaks about a speaker, a speech and an audience (whether one or more). This in essence says Søgaard (1993:51) is not communication. Communication is a dialogue. Communication is an attempt to arrive at understanding. Understanding so a new relationship can exist. This says Søgaard requires that the initiator of the communication process take cognizance of the audience and how the audience responds. Thus he presents a model for communication with an emphasis on knowing the audience and feedback.

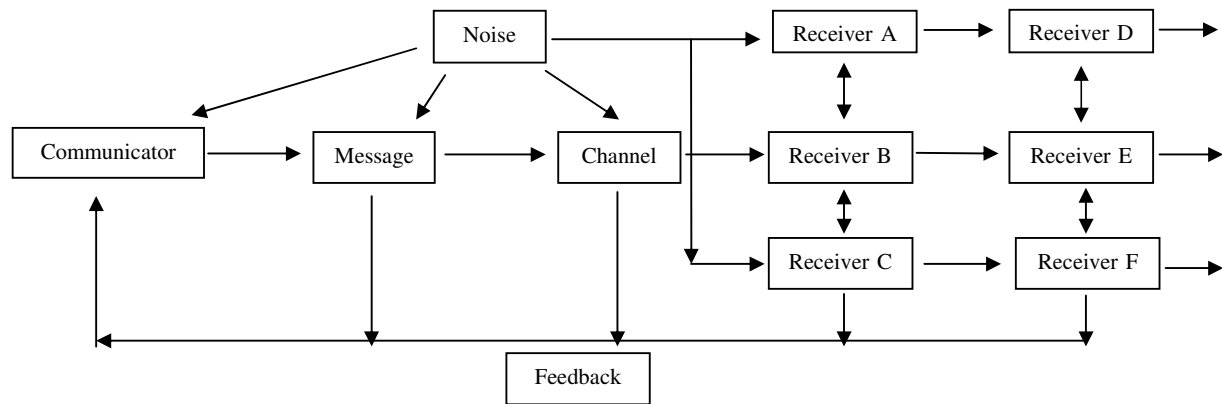Figure 6.3: Søgaard's mass communication model (Søgaard 1993:42)

Christian communication however, is a little more complicated. If one accepts Søgaard's (1993:17) premise that Christian communication is about "Bible teaching" then indeed this model would suffice. For then it is about disseminating information to the masses. The complexity of mass media is still about Aristotle's idea of communication, viz. persuasion. Søgaard's emphasis on research and feedback is merely to better present one's argument. In his estimation and other communication theorists meaning can only be achieved by the receptor. The filters through which the receptor receives the message will give meaning to the message. Thus the value for research and feedback is so vital in his understanding of communication.

Søgaard's communication model has significant value. However, there is a missing dimension. In his theory of Christian communication he speaks about the incarnation as "the ideal model for communication" (Søgaard 1993:17). Yet he does not include this "ideal" in his model of communication. The incarnational model suggests that the message of the Christian is not his/her own. It originates from outside the missionary. Søgaard (1993:15) states it this way; "Christ is sending us to represent him, and to communicate him by his standards and his methods." Kraft (1989:122) puts it more forcefully. He states; "the Incarnation is the ultimate contextualization of the Christian message, since with messages aimed at affecting life, 'the person who communicates the… message is not only the vehicle of the message, but the major component of the message.'" Kraft (1989:127) goes further by defining the incarnation as "He [God] comes to where we are as persons in a way that is maximally within our context and intelligible to us – through other persons." Thus Kraft (1989:128) emphasizes that God's communication with humanity are not merely "word messages". Word messages are for sharing information. Words are not sufficient to communicate who God is. "What he [God] offers needs to be lived by the communicator to be truly intelligible" (Kraft 1989:128). In the words of McLuhan and Fiore (1967) "The medium is the message." God uses the converted person to be his medium through which he sends a message to all those around the person. The message is he desires a relationship with

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every other person. Thus McLuhan and Fiore (1967:8) can state: "Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication." Or to use the words of Francis of Assisi; "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words." It is for this reason Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian passivist, made the indictment on all Christians when he said, "I would be a Christian if it were but for Christians." The medium spoke louder than the information communicated. So what would an incarnational model of communication look like?

6.4 Incarnational Model of Communication

The Christian message originates with God. This suggests that humanity is the messenger, the one carrying the message. Søgaard (1993:17) suggests the message is "Bible teaching." However, he (1993:15) comments further that "Christ is sending us to represent him, and to communicate him by his standards and his methods." The Christian message is therefore the person of God which is best revealed through God's son, Jesus. Søgaard (1993:12) correctly says that "God is by nature a communicator." So he communicates through various ways to his people. Romans chapter one speaks about him communicating through nature. Psalm 19 says that the heavens declare the glory of God and speaks of his great love. This is the Christian doctrine of general revelation. Hebrews chapter one speaks about a revelation through the prophets and God's son, the Bible. In looking at general revelation (nature) everything is set to communicate God's love for all creation. Everything has a place and operates in such a manner as to be harmonious. The cynic will argue that nature is destructive. Nature is not inherently destructive. Neither is humanity inherently destructive. Humanity because of sin has a propensity to destruction. Humanity is not evil by nature. The malfunctioning of humanity is what tends toward evil. This malfunctioning impacts nature and the world around us. Christians generally use the argument of the lion and the lamb sitting together in heaven as an illustration that mankind's malfunctioning impacted the natural world but God will restore all these to their natural uninhibited state of peace (*shalom*). The impact of sin on nature has caused nature to be less effective in her communication of her God. Jesus, being God (Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:13-17) is the fullest revelation of God. The Christian Church refers to this doctrine as special revelation. Kraft (1989:123ff) suggests that Jesus' revelation is the best form of communication, namely the incarnation. To be effective in communicating God, this model would therefore be the most appropriate.

Before I present this model it would be important to understand how Jesus revealed God. In John 17 Jesus speaks about having completed his work of declaring God or revealing his name to the world. Søgaard (1993:39) uses McLuhan and suggests that Christians are an extension of who Jesus is, just as

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the pen is an extension of the hand, the microphone an extension of the voice and so forth. But that is running ahead. Here it is important to merely share Jesus' communication style.

6.4.1 Jesus understood his purpose

In John 4:34 Jesus speaks about doing "the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." Knowing and fulfilling the task assigned is an important part of communication. In John 17:4 Jesus declares he completed his assigned work. In the same breathe he declares his assignment – to glorify the name of God in all the earth. In verse 6 he says; "I have made thy name known…" Jesus came to make God known to the entire world. This became important as people lost confidence in God. The character of God was challenged by Lucifer. He somehow assassinated God's character. The character of God needed to be vindicated and declared for all to see. Wright (2006:66) argues that God's purpose and Jesus' task became one. Although Wright is not talking about communication what he is suggesting is relevant in understanding the incarnation. The incarnation was a form of communication – the medium is the message. The medium became the loudest advocate about God's purpose – wanting to be with his people. The apostle John (1:11) suggests he came to his own creation but they did not receive him. His purpose therefore was encapsulated in his coming – he (as God) desired to be with his people. His diverse ministry then reinforced this message. He says to some curious onlookers; "It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick" (Matt. 9:12). Here Jesus speaks about restoration. Although at face value it speaks about the unconverted needing help, it is also suggesting that the converted also requires restoration. This is made clear as it requires the patient to recognize his/her need for a physician. A physician although willing to assist, is dependent on the patient to acknowledge his/her condition. The symbolism of making whole in this context (of the physician) suggests that humanity is incomplete without the presence of God. Thus Jesus is suggesting that to be whole people God must be present or involved in the life. If this is not possible the sinner will be consumed as God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). Malachi (3:2) suggests that as God envelopes the life the dross is removed and purity is restored. Thus restoration or healing is only possible through the presence of God. The wholeness God seeks for each person is his purpose.

6.4.2 The content of Jesus' message

Jesus did not remove his scroll from under his cloak each time he spoke to someone. Neither did he insist on using Chronological Bible Storying methods. Bible study was a foreign idea back in the 1st century. So what did Jesus talk about? He spoke about everyday issues. No, politics was not an important subject nor the weather. He spoke about real life issues people experienced. His goal was not to-

wards self-help ideas. Neither did his subjects address issues for dummies. His talk was about being the best God intended for the person.

Nicodemus was a rich Pharisee. He was familiar with the scriptures. He came to Jesus at night. An odd time it may seem. However, as a spiritual leader it would be awkward to speak to Jesus, the unlearned rabbi from Nazareth, with everyone around. So he sneaked a visit at night. However, being a ruler of the people he struggled to find the right words to say. So he stumbles over his introduction. Jesus ignores his stuttering start and addresses an important principle, viz. being a new person. Nicodemus is shocked to say the least. The imagery Jesus uses is seared into his brain. Not only is the imagery seared it challenges his thinking that a Jew needs baptism (Jn. 3:1-21).

Another example, Jesus sits down on the mountain slopes and talks to the people. He does not quote the scriptures. He talks to them about how to be better people. However, he starts off with blessings. These blessings come to specific kinds of people. Their characters need to be such that they can be blessed and a blessing. Then he proceeds with how these people will live as children of God in a world that has a totally different worldview. It is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt.5-7).

So what did Jesus preach/teach? First, he taught God's character. Second, Jesus addressed the assumptions people made.

In sharing God's character Jesus was addressing every aspect of the person. He was not only dealing with their spiritual condition. He was helping people to develop and grow as individuals – holistically. To achieve this goal he needed a relationship with God. He needed to know God personally so he could divulge the character of the one he represented. To effectively talk about this God he needed to know him. Hiebert (2008:266) implies this (about God's messengers) when he states; "To understand Scripture, we must seek to understand the worldview themes that underlie the whole." For these he continues are "God's progressive revelation of himself to humans." When Christians (like Jesus) grasp the purpose of God then their communication will be focused on who God is rather than the doctrines which addresses the person at the intellectual level (divulging information).

Jesus' text book was the scriptures. His desire was not to present the details of the text but the principles found therein. He used these principles to address the worldview (or the underlying assumptions) of the person. In other words he made the principle relevant to the person. Hiebert (2008:267) warns that if the Christian messenger only addresses "change in behaviour and rituals or beliefs and atti-

tudes" s/he is merely doing lip service to the idea that the Bible has underlying assumptions about God. Through these principles then Jesus taught about a loving and caring God, a God that wants to be involved in the lives of all his people. This is what Jesus talked about. He talked about the character of this God through worldview portals. The wise king Solomon would call this focus on character building, wisdom sayings. For example, Jewish tradition misinterpreted God's message. Jesus did not directly attack this tradition. Neither did he teach the stories of the Torah. However, he used the stories to paint a different picture of God (as in the case of Nicodemus shared above).

Jesus' purpose was clear and his message was clear. His message was not just his talking. A message can be audible as well as visible. Thus the medium becomes the message. In the case of Jesus of Nazareth the medium (the person) became the message.

6.4.3 The role of prayer

While Jesus walked the streets of Capernaum and the dales and plains of Galilee he said: "I do nothing on my own authority" (Jn. 8:28). He also suggested that he does not speak his own words (Jn. 12:49 & 14:10). Jesus' goal, therefore, was to represent the one who sent him. How did he know what to speak? Mark (1:35) records that Jesus was in daily communion with God through prayer. Later when Jesus' disciples struggled with healing a diseased man he was able to heal the person without much fuss. He responded to them; "There is no means of casting out this sort but prayer" (Mk 9:29). The new King James Version of the Bible says it thus: "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." This suggests that Jesus had a specific lifestyle that was in constant communion with God. He did not stop at an emergency and decide to pray or fast. He had a lifestyle that suggested if an emergency arose he could deal with it appropriately. Kraft (1989:128) asserts; "His [God's] primary medium is life. He demonstrates in and through life what he recommends for life." However, Jesus could not do this of his own. The connection Jesus had with the source of power outside himself enabled him to deal with any situation. This is the key to Christian communication. Crosby (1999:117) calls prayer "the wind in the sail" of Christian mission. He uses the illustration of a sailboat team going out to sea. The impact is two-fold. The individuals involved in prayer are transformed and harness the power of an outside force (the wind, Holy Spirit) to work on their behalf. Jesus used this important tool as part of his communication process. Without it he would be ineffective and unproductive.

6.4.4 How Jesus communicated God

It is presumed that God was the subject of Jesus' communication. However, the question remains how

did he go about sharing his subject? This will now be discussed.

6.4.4.1 He varied his methods

The Bible records that Jesus interacted with people from diverse walks of life. He addressed the Pharisees. He also spoke to women. He spoke to the sick or downtrodden. Besides these he spoke to the sinners, considered as such by their society. But Jesus did not limit his communication to the Jewish people he also addressed people of other communities. So the first principle of Jesus' communication is that he had no prejudice as to who his audience should be. This, however, does not address the challenge of how he shared God with the people. But it does present an insight into his method. It suggests that his communication style varied depending on the audience. He did not address children in the same way he spoke to adults. Neither could he address the same subject material when talking to "sinners" as when he spoke to the religious leaders. The first principle of his communication method is variety.

6.4.4.2 Parables

Jones (1982:28) observes that parables "addressed hearers in ongoing life rather than readers removed from the experience." Parables Jones, therefore, purports is an "oral event." In other words it was shared as part of a people's experience. It was not alien to the people. Grills & Grills (1987:84) report that Jesus used parables because it was part of the Jewish tradition. This suggests that Jesus spoke in the heart language of the people. He used their language and genre but more than that he also used their lived experience to share principles of his subject, God. Thus Jesus introduced his audience to God using a familiar communication style. In an oral society interactive communication styles are vital. Parables are such a form. It allows the listeners to interact with the story and the storyteller. The open-endedness of parables allows the listener to make his/her own conclusions. Yet, this is achieved through interaction. Grills & Grills (1987:84) make the point that in doing this Jesus allowed his listeners the opportunity to interact with him. This is significant in the light of Mark 4:10-12 where Jesus suggests he speaks in parables in order to keep people in the dark. Basically, Jesus is suggesting that he gave his audience the opportunity to interact with him about the meaning but they chose to move on without understanding.

6.4.4.3 His life

A messenger is one who has a relevant and significant message. Often the messenger is not only a car-

rier of a message but one who must demonstrate respect for the sender and the receiver of the message. This is important in an oral community. The messenger is as important as the message. The example of the messenger who brought the news to David gloating at the fact that David's enemy fell (2 Sam. 1:1-16). He did not understand who David was. In the end David had him killed because of his inconsideration for the anointed of God. The message and the life must speak the same language. There needs to be a consistency between the two. Here the messenger is not merely the delivery person. He or she has value to the one receiving the message. Another example is the woman at the Samaritan well (Jn 4). In this particular story the woman did not take the task upon herself to tell the story of Jesus. She invited her community to come see the man that spoke to her so intimately about herself. She became a witness of transformation and this endeared the community to experience Jesus for themselves. Søgaard (1989:166) says it succinctly; "the Christian communicator has to be like a clear window pane through which others see Jesus and through which his light reaches them, and not like a stained-glass window that blocks the view and draws attention to itself."

Jesus speaking about God (himself really) spoke through his life. The temple soldiers sent to arrest Jesus returned without him saying; "No man... ever spoke as this man speaks" (Jn. 7:46). White (1905:469) commenting on this says; because "never [a] man lived as this man." In oral communities this has great significance to the audience. The life and the words must be related. This is why spiritual things cannot be left to children. Spiritual realities are for responsible people within the community. In such a way that the medium, the sender, uses has great significance to the people as the medium is the message. Jesus was God incarnate. His life is the message to all people. For Søgaard the method of communication adds value to the Christian as a witness. He states in mission communication there is a need "not for preconceived answers or pre-packaged stories and programs, but life involvement on behalf of the communicator with the people among whom he or she is sent to communicate Christ" (Søgaard 1989:166). In other words the messenger must be so involved in the life of the community. This will endear the audience to the message. Here the communication is not pre-packaged rather the medium becomes the message as the life of the person is meshed with the community and they observe that transformation is not a theory but a reality.

6.4.5 The incarnational model

Communication is about sending messages and interacting with the message so the intended goal is accomplished. The standard definition of communication however, is more than just sharing information and achieving the goal of the sender. The word communication suggests building community. The idea of communication therefore, is about relationships between the sender and the receptors. Or to

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state it differently, it is about connecting the two parties. This then is what Christian communication seeks to achieve; a reconnection between the sender (God) and the receptors (the world). The above discussion outlined how Jesus built community between his audience and God. Here I want to present the incarnational communication model for Christian mission communication.

Kraft (1989:123) articulates it this way, "God's communicational aim is not simply to inform. He desires a relationship with his creatures." To have a relationship with God, reconciliation is required. An abyss exists between God (who is inherently good) and humanity (who chose to depart from God's presence and live under evil). So God's goal is really reconciliation and growing the relationship into a dynamic personal friendship. Thus Christian communication is more than sharing information. It is about reconciling God and humanity. Thus Christians are really peace negotiators between rivals. It is about reconciliation. This underscores that God has always been a communicator. But it highlights further that God is the originator of the message and not the converted or the messenger. The convert becomes an extension of God the sender. The messenger becomes the message that the reconciliation is possible.

Christian mission communication, therefore, is three dimensional. It is the connection the Christian has with God and then the connection the Christian has with the people around him/her. The third dimension is God communicating directly with the unconverted person. However, it is important to note that God is unable to get involved in the life of the unconverted unless he receives permission. This permission can come from the Christian or the individual. Hence the model depicts two arrows between God and the unconverted. One demonstrates the speed in which God is involved. The other indicates the hesitant response of the unconverted/respondent. The convert or messenger has a double arrow indicating the dialogue or interaction that takes place between the convert and the unconverted as well as with God. Whereas with the unconverted there are numerous barriers going in both directions there are no communication barriers when God communicates with his messenger or the respondent. God has full understanding of people hence he has no challenge communicating with humanity. Because the unconverted has not responded positively to the message there is hesitancy in his/her communication with God. The messenger (ideally) has an open communication link with God (the sender) hence the model depicts the dialogue between God and the convert as interactive. Through this dialogue the messenger is sent into the world to dialogue with others. This is depicted with dotted lines indicating the barriers that occur in human communication.

In this model the respondent has the privilege of dialoguing on two fronts. S/he can dialogue with the messenger or directly with the sender or originator of the message (God). Thus the message is not pre-

packaged it is an individualized message directed at a specific audience. This indicates the coming of God to the person either personally or through his messenger. Thus the message is incarnated. It is important to note that the arrow in the model represents the message of God to humanity. The arrow heads indicates interaction with the message and not so much between individuals.

The colours are also significant. The convert has been covered by the blood of Jesus; therefore, the convert is represented in red. The unconverted person is represented in green to indicate growth or the potential for growth. Thus this is a positive model indicating that every unconverted person is a potential convert. God is represented in orange as he is depicted in the Bible as a consuming God, i.e. one who is surrounded by fire.
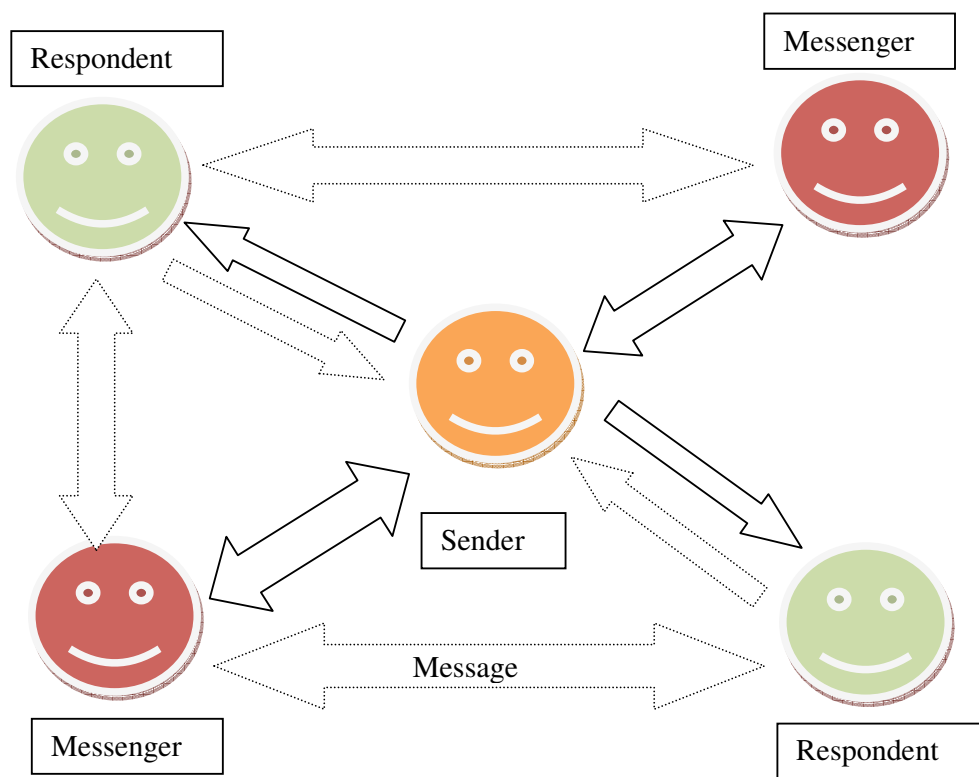
Figure 5.4: Incarnational Communication Model

This being Christian communication the premise is that God is the originator of the message. Thus he is placed at the centre of the model. It is from him that the message flows to all humanity. The convert is merely the messenger. The message does not originate with the messenger. Thus, the model depicts a beautiful sense of community as the interaction finally builds harmony or understanding between the various players. In the end the goal is to develop communion not just with God but with all humanity. With God at the centre the goal of Christian communication is to develop the character of God.

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The models purported by Søgaard (1993) and Hesselgrave (1978) are static models of communication. That is, they are unidirectional. Søgaard emphasises the need for feedback as he uses mass communication. It remains static as the goal of this communication remains persuasion or dissemination of information. Mission communication must move beyond these constraints. If communication is about communion then a mission communication needs to portray such communion. The incarnational model presented above focuses on achieving such communion. Thus the foundation principle of the incarnational model of communication is building community as opposed to sharing information to persuade a respondent. Such an approach places a strong emphasis on connecting with people. Hesselgrave (1978:24) warns, "They (the missionaries) must still learn if they are to teach, if they are to communicate Christ!" Although the learning here is more intellectual. The learning suggested in this model moves beyond intellectual acumen of the respondent. It is learning to connect in a direct and personal manner so as to build communion with the person. The respondent does not become an object but a person to be nurtured and developed. This then is the essence of mission communication in the 21st century. It requires Christians to look at the challenge of communication with fresh insight. Mission communication cannot remain flat, it must become three dimensional where God takes primacy in the communication process and the messenger is merely the agent or conduit through whom God sends his message to the world.

Thus far in the chapter I have presented the theoretical factors around Christian communication. I also presented a case study in the life of Jesus as an example of the theoretical factors. Now it would be important to apply these principles within a nomadic context. I will in particular highlight communication within the following areas: orality, worldview and social structures. These are all relevant to a nomadic society. I have chosen these because of their intrinsic value to Christian communication to nomads. There is another topic that needs urgent attention and that is the question of a Bible. I want the reader to take special note of this and this is the reason why I am making it a subsection on its own. In reality the Bible gives people direct access to God.

6.5 Oral communication

It is said that two-thirds of the world population are oral. That is, they learn through oral styles rather than literacy. Havelock (1986:65) states: "Orality, by definition, deals with societies which do not use any form of phonetic writing." This indicates that there are people who learn in different ways to literate people. It is not an inferior or superior method rather it is a different method. It is different as Ong (1982:78ff) indicates "writing restructures consciousness." Ong (1982:57) argues further "In a literate culture verbatim memorization is commonly done from a text" and it is practiced until perfected. The

individual will return to the text to check for "verbatim mastery." This is not the case among oral people. Among oral people the formulas and themes of a song or story are the same but it can never be repeated in the same way twice (Ong 1982:59). It is for this reason Goody (1987:155) argues that orature is not an exact copy or a photocopy.

With this in mind, Hiebert et al (1999) suggest that when entering an oral society the missionary needs to put off his/her known learning styles and adapt to the oral community. This is essential as oral learners do not learn in the same way as a literate person. Here it is important to remember Shaw's (1988:254) warning; "As long as individuals are dependent on other people [and]/or languages for their knowledge about God, Christian development will be less dynamic." In recognizing the differences between a literate and an oral learning style one acknowledges the need to be sensitive to the challenges around communication.

I embarked on a literacy project in the hope of helping my nomadic friends to "hear" the voice of God. How ironic? Ong (1982:59) states that when oral people learn to read and write they are "disabled" because "it introduces into his mind the concept of a text as controlling the narrative and thereby interferes with the oral composing process." It is this creativity and ingenuity that should not be restricted. As Christians we speak about the voice of God but we "hear" him speak through our eyes. Hearing through one's eyes is not appropriate in an oral culture. Weber (1957:5; see also Weber 1981:4) states that oral people are blind to letters. Thus, the voice of God should not be reduced to reading. This would inhibit the retelling of the story. The story would need to be told among oral people using their genre and styles so that the retelling of the story can be spontaneous. If it is read it implies one must first learn to catch words with one's eyes and then send it through the voice to another's ear. It is for this reason Havelock (1986:64) asks: "What, after all, is orality all about, if not a performance of a person's mouth, addressing another person's ear and hearing with his own personal ear the spontaneous personal reply?" For oral communities to hear God's voice through someone else perpetuates the belief that God is distant and not part of the community.

So what then is oral communication? Ong (1982:82) would argue that it is natural. It is the daily prose as well as the diverse genre of poetry, myth, story, eulogies, laments, songs, proverbs and so forth. Each genre has its own formulae and mnemonic forms that help the listener to recall the story or theme. Niditch (1996:3) highlights this in the creation narrative found in the Bible. Here she points out the additive formula in the story. These principles become relevant to the communicative task of the missionary. The missionary must take time to learn the oral communication style particular to the people group s/he is working with.

As mentioned above oral literature or orature is not found in objects. Orature is found in people. The local historian, poet, singer, dancer and so forth are the repositories of oral literature. They recall the stories of old and recite, chant or sing them. It is through these individuals that the oral community moves from one generation to the next. In the Himba tradition genealogies play an important part of the family history. Here I am not only talking about the human history but include the genealogies of the animals. It is through the telling of these stories that bravery is instilled in the next generation. Such a genealogy is unique to the family and will not be repeated to others. It is for this reason chief Muharukua said to Michael Bollig (1997) that during the war the "cattle slept." Basically he was telling the researcher that the history died. He could no longer tell the story of those animals to the next generation. This suggests three distinguishing factors between oral and literate societies. One, knowledge is communal rather than personal. Second, the fragility of life suggests that often there is more than one person with sufficient knowledge to keep the stories flowing to the next generation. Third, the messenger must be believable. If the messenger is not trustworthy the message becomes irrelevant. It is for this reason that roles are outlined for different players in the community. There are singers, dancers, poets, historians and so forth. Chief Muharukua as the one carrying the genealogy of the animals is also the keeper of the animals. He must care for the animals and in turn he holds the heritage of the family by being the head of the family. Thus the message and the messenger often form a unit. And to quote McLuhan again; "The medium is the message." The medium becomes an extension of the message. Oral people then understand the incarnational communication concept. In an oral community (as in the incarnational communication model) it is the unity between the message and messenger that gives the message credibility.

The idea of poetry, singing and so forth speaks about a specialist orator. There are also daily stories that are common to all. Usually, these stories are shared after a hard day's work. In the Himba tradition it falls on the grandparents to share insightful lessons through stories around the fire. These are usually *ongano* (fables) that give lessons to build character. They are usually filled with laughter but carry great lessons about life.

Oral communities are being exposed to writing through modern technology. Mobile telecommunications has stretched to include these once enigmatic communities. The Himba community is such a community. An important part of mobile communication is messaging. This suggests that oral people are exposed to writing at a different level. One Himba mother reminded me one day; "Remember I can't read it is better for you to call me…" (Katundu 2010). To read the message she would require the eyes of one who can make the words audible. Words should not be captured. They are to be sent from

one person to another (mouth to ear). These technologies need to be used in discipling oral people. However, caution is needed in using the text side of technology. There are audio and video components to these technologies. These must be utilized as the technology is familiar to the people. This suggests that researchers need to establish programs created to use these technologies not just for the youth but the oral communities.

Oral communication although centred in the speaker and audience is moving to the airwaves. This is seen in the use of radio technology for the Himba. The interface is in the sharing of the messages heard via the radio. It is no longer a direct interface with the speaker but through other listeners. The information is shared and discussed. It is this changing face of orality that missionaries also need to be aware of.

Søgaard (1993:15, 25) states that the Christian commission is to communicate. This communication can be measured in three ways; by God, the messenger and the audience. This suggests that the sender (God) gives a message to the messenger (the Christian) who communicates it to an audience (receptor). However, in oral thinking the messenger must be a trustworthy servant of the one who sends him/her. This in my mind sums up oral communication. The parts or diverse genre are only aspects to help us understand that different messengers are acceptable. Yet, for effective communication to take place in oral communities requires a trustworthy messenger.

6.6 Addressing the nomadic worldview

Bosch (1991:447) argues that the gospel is never presented except in cultural terms. Here I do not want to repeat the worldview of the nomads. I merely want to highlight what Shaw (1988) suggests is the meeting of three cultures (see also van der Walt 2003:61). However, I want to suggest that it is the meeting of three worldviews not merely cultures. There is the biblical worldview (the principles about God), the messenger's worldview and the worldview of the hosts or recipient. The missionary needs to be aware of each and not just of the nomadic worldview.

Hiebert (2008) makes the point that the missionary needs to study the Bible in such a way so the biblical worldview (the underlying assumptions) can stand out. He highlights numerous principles that come from God's word and suggests that these are merely starting points for further reading. This is vital to the mission task. It is at this point that worship becomes vital. Worship is taking the time to be with God. It is entering into the very presence of God. It is only as the missionary enters the presence of God that the truth about God opens to the worshipper. Worship is always a dialogue between the

one being worshipped and the worshipper. And the essence of worship is experiencing God. It is this intimate knowing of God that reveals the underlying principles of God's worldview for effective evangelism.

Every person (including missionaries) is socialized into a specific culture. No person can be isolated from a culture. It is important therefore to know one's personal worldview and understand this worldview in the light of the biblical worldview. Not only does one take one's culture to the mission field, one also carries the underlying principles of one's culture along. It is this challenge that gives impetus to the message the messenger brings. For it is at this point that the messenger and the message become one. In oral and nomadic communities the traditional messenger is well established. S/he is known to the community to be trustworthy and a protector of his/her genre. When doing evangelism the messenger is a stranger, the message is foreign and the God from whom the message comes is not necessarily understood in the same way. Thus the role of the messenger is to ensure oneness with God for effective cross-cultural communication.

Often in mission communication this aspect is neglected. There is a fair concentration on the host culture but very little emphasis on the messenger's culture and worldview. I would like to suggest that neglecting time to know one's personal worldview is detrimental to the task of mission. For nomads who understand the messenger and the message to be one, the missionary's paraphernalia speak louder than the message. That is, the material possessions the missionary has become necessary requirements for the potential converts. The lifestyle of the missionary indicates it is a necessary requirement of converts. It is at this point the nomads are challenged and reject not the message per se but the accoutrements they perceive. A fine line between being with the people and becoming one of the people is vital at this point. The principle of being in the world and not of the world has meaning here. The need to be peripheral takes precedence in the foreign culture as much as it does in one's home community.

Based on the above discussion the term missionary can be redefined. I will redefine a missionary to be one who enters a culture (home or foreign) on the periphery to transform it by first being transformed by dwelling in the presence God. Sending missionaries then becomes an important exercise. Mission agencies need to evaluate whether potential missionaries have a desire to understand their worldview in the light of the Bible and in turn are prepared to live on the periphery of society yet with a desire to be agents of transformation.

In chapter 4 the worldview of the nomads was discussed. It would be sufficient to merely restate the value of learning the host's worldview. However, it would also be important to remind the reader that

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just as a child, a foreigner, although an adult needs time to learn and understand the people to whom s/he is sent. This does not happen overnight. What one learns from the internet, books, articles and so forth is very different to living with the people. Brewster and Brewster (1982) encourage missionaries to bond with their hosts. Being connected with the people is the beginning of building community and this requires intentional nurturing. Yet it also requires a daily connection with God or the communication purpose will not be achieved. Making the mission event a three-way dialogue at all times. The missionary dialogues with God (the sender). Thereafter a dialogue ensues with oneself and finally, there is interaction with the host people.

To address the worldview of the nomads requires a transformed messenger. This messenger will incarnate into the host people yet remain on the periphery of the society. That is, the person will serve as a transformed person within the community. Thus the messenger is in the world but not of the world. This is not being physically separate from the community rather her/his worldview is transformed as s/he lives within a community.

6.7 Social structure and communication

In any society protocol is significant. It is no different among nomads. A missionary is a foreigner and brings a foreign message. Apeh (1989) makes the point that the appropriate protocol needs to be followed at all times. Hiebert (1985:261) states: "The relationship between missionaries and the non-Christians they seek to serve lies at the heart of the missionary task."

It is very seldom that one hears of a youth who has become an agent of change to his or her family. A young Christian may influence his/her siblings but not the adults. In the Himba society there is a saying; "What can a child teach his father?" Also the sacred is entrusted to an elder (one with authority) not a young person. These all disenfranchise the mission task if the appropriate protocol is not followed.

Above I have identified the father as the spiritual leader in the Himba community. Here the value of knowing roles is significant. Culture learning will assist the missionary in the task of identifying roles within a said community. Besides learning the traditional roles, the missionary also needs to identify how these roles will be played out in the Christian environment. The Christian environment refers to evangelism and conversion (that is, in establishing a Christian faith community). How will the two roles mesh? Building relationships with the appropriate individual(s) who are the spiritual leaders is vital to the mission task. These are what Malcolm Gladwell (2002) calls the "tipping point" of their

communities. The appropriate leaders will spontaneously become agents of transformation. However, as in the case with the Himba if they are overlooked they will hesitate to be involved. This can be seen in the story of Samuel Maherero (Pool 1991:21). The young Samuel Maherero was influenced by the church through the schooling system. However, his father merely wanted him to learn to catch words with his eyes and the language of the foreigner, so he could have a trustworthy interpreter. Hiebert (1985:255) states: "Only if the pattern of expected behaviour is broken is the relationship called into question." The missionary as foreigner breaks into a new social organization. S/he fits into the structure by the status assigned by the community. Hiebert (1985:265) suggests the missionary take on the role of learner. This role is common to many communities. Through this process the missionary will earn his/her "achieved status." Only then would it be advisable to engage in evangelism and with the appropriate person in the social structure.

Father Tablino (2006) reports that he was invited to the Gabra homesteads by the head of the family. This was my experience as well. However, upon arrival the father was seldom present. The point being that the Bible and the stories the missionary related were regarded as being for children. It would be important for a study to be undertaken in this regard. A deeper understanding of this request and the response of the people is required. As mentioned above my understanding is that it was an indirect appeal to ask the missionary to fit the Christian message and practice into the current social setup. Thus it is not only the social structure that is important but also the religious rituals or mechanisms that have value. These may be different to the Christian understanding but it is the meaning of these mechanisms that must be studied to determine if there are any bridges that can be used between Christianity and the host people. These would not be foreign to the people and will help them understand deeper the biblical worldview.

In overlooking the various aspects of the social structure one will disqualify oneself as a messenger with a significant message. This can be seen amongst the Himba. The Christian Church in sending youth to speak to the Himba has annulled the message. What the Church is affirming is that the message is for children and not the whole community (Petersen 2006). The Church needs to seriously rethink its strategy when working with nomads and demonstrate respect for the social structures and work within those parameters so effective communication can take place.

In these three subsections I have discussed mission communication within a nomadic environment. Each of these can be studied individually. What I have highlighted is that unless the mission practitioner is aware of these challenges the message s/he brings will not add value to the people. I want to now turn the reader's attention to an important part of discipleship. The three subsections above dealt with

evangelism communication. The section below talks about discipleship. There are other challenges around discipleship such as nomadism, leadership and so forth. But these have been discussed above. Here I want to highlight the communicational challenge which I have identified as God speaking directly through his word to an oral people (a people who are blind to letters).

6.8 An oral Bible

There appears to be a contradiction within Christianity. The word Bible means book. Yet, often Christians speak about hearing the voice of God when reading the Bible. It is not an audible voice. It is a voice through the eyes. The words on paper speak. People who are letter-blind are challenged then to hear through their eyes. For them to mature and grow as Christians the word needs to be translated for their ears rather than their eyes.

The Bible (Book) it is said is God's word to humanity. It is through the pages of the Bible that God speaks to humanity through diverse circumstances. It is also through the Bible that humanity learns about who God is. Here humanity interacts with God and receives instruction on what it means to be a child of God. Yet, the Bible (Book) is written on paper. Weber (1957), in the 1950s went to the country of Indonesia to share God's word (a Book) and discovered that his audience was blind to letters. To compensate for their letter blindness he endeavoured to share through pictures. However, this may not have been a familiar form of communication to the people. The technology of pen and paper among oral people is unfamiliar. Rock paintings however, are not unfamiliar in oral cultures. Thus using another foreign means has little value. It would still imply learning the new "technology" (art). Usually rock art is about everyday life yet it would leave a message to those who follow. The Bible art would introduce a different world. Using a technology familiar to the people implies first learning that technology and learning how the host culture uses that technology. Rick Brown (2004:173) states that sound has a greater impact on oral people for it is the voice that holds an appeal to the listener as well as the language the storyteller uses. In hearing a story oral people have the ability to reproduce that story. This thesis, therefore, argues that God's word in oral forms would speak to an oral people.

An important principle in communication is using communication styles familiar to the audience. One may be able to speak a specific language however; the method of sharing may be foreign to the audience. For oral people paper is foreign. It is a technology oral communicator's find intimidating. Communication in oral cultures is based on the voice. It is this medium that needs to be used for effective communication to take place. Using oral forms will underscore the message that God is Immanuel. That is, he has come to be with his people. A foreign medium will illustrate the opposite. The receptor

needs to move into God's realm of paper. The goal of Christian communication is to build community between God and humanity. This can best be done when God communicates in ways that are familiar to the audience. And this is his desire. It requires the messenger to adjust his/her thinking. It also requires the broader Christian community to study how this can be done effectively when the broader Christian community communicates differently. Here is the challenge for Christian mission communication. As stated above orality and literate communication styles are not superior or inferior to the other. Rather they are different means of communication. The missionary bringing God's message must adapt to the challenge of communicating in a different milieu. This is vital to the task. Yet it requires deep study and humility.

This raises an important challenge. If the medium changes, does it change the message? If one takes a novel for example. Usually these are written documents. However, a film producer may decide to put this novel into pictures and dramatize it. Here the medium of the story moves from the printed page to a film. Often readers would question the interpretation of the film. However, the film would be produced from the perspective of the producer and script writer. Every translation of the Bible is a new document because the translators would give it a new emphasis. Yet the translation of the Bible (in this case from one medium to another) should remain faithful to the original. Yet it is important to note that "Translated materials usually sound quite foreign and unattractive unless they are translated in a natural and attractive style" (Brown 2004:174). This is especially true in oral translation. But how does one remain faithful to the text? Here it is important to know the message of the Bible. Thus the message is retained but the medium changes. The Bible itself has numerous genres. Each genre speaks to a different audience in a different way. The message of the Bible will be conveyed to an oral learner using oral features. Here the message is important. Hill raises these challenges. It would however, be impossible for the oral learner to hear solely through the eyes and mouth of another person. Thus understanding orality requires study and how to use it effectively for the purpose of sharing God. In particular this section asks; how the Bible can effectively be translated for an oral people?

So often an oral Bible is defined as recording Bible stories. These stories are then to speak to the people. This is not a complete Bible. It is sections of the Bible and often sections of stories. Such a method has two challenges. First, it perpetuates the colonial mentality that a foreigner can decide what is important for the audience to learn. And second, the goal is not to mature people in their relationship with God rather the goal is for conversion purposes. God preserves his word for purposes of conversion and for purposes of maturing a person. It is this researchers understanding that to mature converts it would be essential to have access to the (completed) Bible. In the oral context, this suggests translating the Bible into the heart language. This requires a great investment of time, money and human resources.

Expertise in orality, ethnomusicology, Bible translation, Bible exegesis and Bible translation need to unite to create an effective translation for oral people. Sanneh (1992) states that when the Bible is available in the vernacular the Church grows spontaneously. Shaw (1988:254) concurs that unless the Bible is in the language of the people they will struggle to develop as Christians. This thesis suggests that there is another dimension to Bible translation and spiritual growth in an oral context.

Oral people hear best. "What, after all, is orality all about," asks Havelock (1986:64) "if not a performance of a person's mouth, addressing another person's ear and hearing with his own personal ear the spontaneous personal response?" If this is orality the Bible must audible for an oral people. However, it cannot merely be a reading of the written text. Oral features in the language must be identified. The Bible translated for an oral people would require that the translators be local people rather than foreign speakers of the language. Besides, the actual translators would need to be an oral review committee so that the oral diction of the language is audible. This would usually need to be the traditional oral story tellers, poets and so forth, the griots of the community. These would work in unison to form an oral Bible translation team. But an important member of the team would be the media specialist(s). The media specialist will need to identify the most appropriate medium of sharing the gospel among a specific people. This could be radio, cassette, compact disc, mp3 players or any combination of these. Søgaard (1989:162) states; "From a mission strategy perspective, it is too costly not to use media, and from a stewardship perspective too costly to misuse media." But Søgaard (1989:161-162) also warns that mission communication should be directed at the audience rather than focused on the media or a specific program. To create an oral Bible the team is varied and these must work unitedly to create an effective way to communicate God's word.

Hill's (2006:84) observation is noteworthy. She mentions that language has two purposes; to communicate and to give identity, with identity having the greater significance. So often, Christianity is associated with a particular language. This is usually associated with the colonial power or the language of the foreign missionary. Sanneh (1992) in his book, <u>Translating the message: the missionary impact on culture,</u> asserts that Christianity from its inception chose to be translated into the vernacular. That is, Christianity chose to use the language of the people from the first century to the present. However, God chose to translate his Word for humanity throughout the ages into the language of the people. Hence Bosch can state that mission can only be done in a cultural setting. What Sanneh highlights however, is that Christianity was intentional about being identified with the people rather than choosing to be a foreign religion (that is, through using a foreign language). Here the incarnation of Jesus, takes on a new meaning. The incarnation becomes the ideal translation of God's message into the vernacular. It is in the incarnation that the true identity of Christian communication is best realized. For it

is here that the Christian learns that God comes to humanity and the world (the cosmos) and not just to a special people. God comes to the Israelite and to the African, the American and the Asian. God wants to reveal himself to all humanity and humanity in turn demonstrates to the world (the cosmos) that God is faithful. He is not faithful to humanity per se but to himself (Lam. 3:23). It is for this reason that God's Word must be translated for an oral community. It will identify God with such people. In turn, it will identify the people with God. If the Christian message remains a message connected only with a certain people God did not come to the world (cosmos). The Word of God needs to be liberated from a specific language and it must be translated (through human agents) into the language of the people.

For effective discipleship or Christian maturity to take place the oral community must hear God's voice. This cannot be accomplished through the reading of the Bible. Rather the Bible needs to be translated into an audio format. This format however, cannot be a reading of the Scriptures. It must be an oral format, that is, a non-written format. An oral Bible therefore is a contextualized-dramatized Bible. It is distinctly different from an audio Bible, which is just a verbatim reading of the Bible.

A contextualized-dramatized version of the Bible must use the local genre and present a complete oral version of the Bible. Here translation will take on a new meaning. Green (2007:77-101) asks whether textual meaning, local genre, orality or media should take primacy in the translation process. This is not a study in Bible translation. However, it is important to recognize this important challenge in oral translation. A new lens is required in oral translation. In literate translations the above mentioned categories are important. In an oral translation of the Bible faithfulness to the text is paramount yet the heart language of the people is essential. This suggests the translation must speak to the audience yet communicate God's *message* retaining the genre of the written text. Here, it is important to keep the poetry of Psalms, for example. Yet, in an oral format it must take the form of chanting or singing. The genealogical aspects of Scriptures need to retain the contextualized form of sharing genealogies. Thus there is no primacy except that the translation brief will outline the purpose of the translation. It is for this reason an oral translation team must consist of a diverse group of experts who can work in unity for the purpose of the translation brief.

In a nomadic environment an oral Bible will give much impetus to Christian growth. Nomads cannot attend regular gatherings. They are dependent upon the natural forces and cannot commit to being present at regular intervals or set times at designated places. Using an oral translated text the nomad will find it easier to listen and use the oral document at his/her leisure. An oral document can be carried into the mountains. It can also be carried without much fuss for its weight. In a nomadic setting then an

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oral Bible will serve two purposes; first, it helps the people hear and second, it makes God's word mobile as they travel.

6.9 Conclusion

Effective Christian communication cannot be restricted to a major language or a dominant language. Effective Christian communication needs to be in the language of the people. This includes their styles of communication yet it also includes the messenger becoming one with the people. However, the messenger is just that a messenger sent by God. This premise cannot be overlooked. Yet the messenger is connected with God as much as s/he connects the audience with God, s/he must be connected with the audience. This three-way communication will build community in three directions. This is Christian mission communication for the 21st century.

Part Four: Conclusion with recommendations

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Chapter 7: Conclusion

"When you can put your Christian church on the back of my camel then I will believe Christianity is meant for us Somalis..." – A Somali to a missionary

7.1 Revisiting the purpose

Nomads are a people who live on the fringe of society. This study has demonstrated that nomads remain at the edge of the Christian community as well. The purpose of this study was to explore ways in which the nomads can hear God speak to them. That is, they should not have an excuse to say that they were unable to hear because of the methods used by Christians in sharing the gospel story.

For nomads to effectively hear the gospel this study has demonstrated that nomads are different to sedentary people. The difference indicates that nomads need to be understood as nomads. That is, for missionary work to be effective among nomads it would require the people of God to make the effort and take the time to live among nomads to understand their worldview. In accomplishing this task the method of sharing will become apparent as the missionary will then shed his/her intrinsic methods of sharing. Thus the answer to the question posed in chapter one; "how can God be nomadic when his Church is sedentary?" can only be answered by the demonstration of God becoming a man in Jesus and Christians imitating this model of sharing.

This study therefore affirms the idea that multiple methods are needed to present the gospel in a nomadic environment. There can be no universal methodology when working with nomads.

The second objective was also realized in chapter three where an introduction to a nomadic people was given, namely the Ovahimba of Namibia. This discussion gives the reader the opportunity to explore further the worldview of nomads. However, there was also sufficient information to allow the researcher to explore the implications of a nomadic worldview on Christian mission.

Finally, a detailed discussion took place on exploring missionary methods among nomads. Here the researcher intentionally moved away from traditional approaches to mission by looking at mission through God's eyes rather than through the eyes of God's agent, the Church. This point of departure is fundamental for mission work among nomads. It is this foundation that allows the people of God to see through new glasses and explore alternative methods. It is also this point of departure that allows God to transform not the unconverted but also the agent he uses, the convert. This transformation is essen-

tially a worldview refocus. It is seeing the world through the eyes of God and this includes one self, others and the world around us.

7.2 What this study revealed

This study has explored ministry to nomads. Work among nomads has not been reported upon extensively. The study, therefore, has a number of intrinsic revelations. These will now be shared.

7.2.1 Understanding a worldview as opposed to the culture

Christian mission has been inexhaustibly connected with the age of Enlightenment. It is this worldview that has placed a high emphasis on knowing people. Christian mission in the past had a high value on behaviour change. This can be attributed to the differentness encountered when meeting people of different faiths and worldviews. Unfortunately, missionaries tended to look at the culture and not at the underlying worldview foundations. This thesis therefore reveals the value of looking deeper at people, at their worldview level. In so doing the people will be understood as opposed to merely knowing about the way they are or how they do things. This is a fundamental difference – knowing and understanding.

7.2.2 Value of knowing the vision

The task of Christian ministry has been designed according to human measures. These can be reaching the unreached. These are measurable. Thus the focus of Christian mission has been on achieving the target of finishing the work so Jesus can come. This focus is task oriented which is also an outflow of modernity. Modernity is concerned with productivity. Often productivity is associated with time constraints. This thesis demonstrates that Christians refocus on God's purpose. It is argued here that God's vision is making people whole and then holding these people in his arms of love. Therefore the thesis suggests a movement away from a task and focus on the relationship that God is seeking.

7.2.3 Incarnation

This is not a new idea. However, this thesis removes the incarnational model from contextualization. Contextualization, this thesis contends, is a form of neo-colonialism. That is, it is ministry that happens outside of the people and introduces foreign forms and ideas. To quote the Somali that met Malcolm Hunter: "When you can put your Christian Church on the back of my camel then I will believe that

Christianity is meant for us Somalis." Although a distorted understanding of Christianity this also speaks about foreignness. When incarnated into a people the missionary will become familiar with the people and in so doing address the person or group at the felt need level rather than at the surface level of culture or merely trying to contextualize a foreign message. Incarnation implies putting one's pre-packaged ideas and message aside and just being in community with a different people. This is imitating Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God. This thesis demonstrates the value of being as opposed to knowing. Contextualization is about knowing and incarnation is about being. In the 21st century being has great significance.

7.2.4 Using the heart language

In times past missionaries often arrived with a pre-packaged message. This included the message and the method of delivery. This thesis argues that such a method causes people to become deaf to the messenger. Being with the people demonstrates a desire to be one with them and remove all communication barriers (from the perspective of the communicator). This implies that the communicator needs to learn to use communication styles that are unfamiliar to him or her but relevant and known to the audience. Here the heart language of the audience becomes valuable. Not just the spoken language of the people but also using their genre. In addressing the people in such a language the message will be repackaged for the audience. Thus the message remains intact but the method will vary.

7.3 The implications of nomadic ministry

Besides studying the people, a nomadic ministry will require multiple partners. The team will especially need Spirit-filled theologians. Theologians need to be open to the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit as opposed to merely applying the traditional understanding of the Scriptures. Here dialogue becomes an important value as foreigners and locals wrestle with the application of what it means to be Christian in a nomadic environment.

Another implication has to do with leadership. The leadership style of the mother church cannot be imposed on a nomadic people. The social structures within a nomadic people need to be respected. This requires the Church to think outside the box when it comes to ecclesiology and the development of local leaders (lay persons and trained workers).

Spiritual growth is an important principle in Christianity. Nomads are a primary oral people. This suggests that orality will be a significant influence when it comes to spiritual formation and leadership de-

velopment. Literate leaders will need to be creative in how to disciple oral people and train oral leaders.

7.4 Recommendations

This study has highlighted a number of mission challenges. Here are some recommendations as the Church of God moves into this frontier.

a) *Assume the role of learner* – so often missionaries go out with an arrogance that life revolves around the information that they are about to disseminate. However, the role of learner will enable the mission practitioner to develop material appropriate to the audience.

b) *Theologian and mission practitioner in partnership* – Often the mission practitioner works in isolation of other experts. For effective ministry among nomads dialogue is an essential ingredient. This will also ensure that there is unity in the diversity. Applying Christianity to a different worldview is not an easy task and cannot be done in isolation. Church leadership, the missionary and theologians need to partner together to make the work easier.

c) *Invest in local leaders* – Allen (1962b) speaks about the spontaneous expansion of the church. This can best be accomplished through local workers. This is easy to theorize on but very difficult to implement. However, when working among nomads a different kind of leadership is required and a different way of conducting Christian fellowship will be implemented. This suggests that there should be no fear in trying to employ people. The natural flow of conversion should be that the family unit becomes the focal point of ministry. The investment here is recognizing the value of the social structure and working with that structure.

d) *Orality* – This should be the primary medium in doing evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. This can be live or through a modern technology. It would be vital to study the impact of modern technologies on the society before choosing a technology.

e) *Oral Bible* – I am making this a separate recommendation as the Bible is a significant instrument for Christians. Bible translation has not reached the masses of people. With more than 60% of the world's population oral oriented it is imperative that Bible translation teams reconsider the need for oral Bibles as opposed to written Bibles. Here it is important to retain the genre of the audience as opposed to merely translating for a literate audience. This requires deep study of orality and teams of various experts working for the purpose of making God's word audible to oral people.

7.5 Conclusion

The Creator-God is one who desires a relationship. Such a relationship cannot be based on information per se. This God wants to reveal who he is. He wants humanity to know him and eventually to be with him. Thus, it is his purpose to connect with humanity. He does this through human agents who can demonstrate that he is present in their lives. This encounter has eluded the nomads of the world. This can be attributed to God's agents focused on the task rather than on connecting or reconciling humanity with God. This thesis proposes that hearing is a small part of the missional task. The higher task is to build relationships. This thesis has discovered that this is a fundamental nomadic understanding of the world. A core value identified in this study for nomads is belonging. In approaching ministry among nomads from this perspective then will enable the mission practitioner to connect at a deeper level and in so doing affirm their need to belong. This then will remove Christianity from the shackles of being foreign.

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Abstract

Immanuel, our God is with us. Somehow Christianity has struggled with this very basic Christian belief. There has not been a theological struggle. The struggle has been the application among a people different from those influenced by the Graeco-Roman thinking of the West. In so doing it became easy for the Western missionary to impose his/her own understanding of God upon others and hence they were able to impose doctrines that would outline such thinking. This thesis argues that this application of Christian teaching did not coincide with the belief that God comes to all humanity. A group that was isolated by this kind of practice are the nomads of the world. Nomads have not rejected Christianity per se, however, they have questioned the need to change to something they are not in order to be Christian. Thus this thesis proposes that Christians enter a nomadic environment with the goal of allowing God to be one with nomads by using their communication styles and lifestyle. This requires a deep study of the people before embarking on such a journey. It also requires that the mission practitioner learn to become a learner and respect the people. In the end the mission practitioner will not dictate what and how the new believer ought to understand God.

To achieve the stated goal this thesis suggests an incarnational approach that would connect the nomads to God through a demonstration of God's presence in the life of the missionary. Such an approach will address the heart issues of the people and demonstrate a coming of God to humanity.

Opsomming

Immanuel, ons God is met ons. Christene worstel met hierdie mees grondige begrip. Dit is egter nie 'n teologiese worsteling nie. Die worsteling handel oor die toepassing daarvan onder mense wat nie die Grieks-Romeinse denke van die Weste deel nie. Die Westerse sendelinge het dikwels slegs hulle eie begrip van God oorgedra en so ook hulle eie denkpatrone aan ander deurgegee. Hierdie verhandeling poog om aan te toon dat dié uitgangspunt in die oordra van die Christelike leer nie die oortuiging dat God na alle mense gekom het onderskryf nie. Die Nomadiese groepe is juis in hierdie opsig geïsoleer en te na gekom. Die Nomadiese groepe het nie die Christelike Evangelie per se verwerp nie, maar wel die oortuiging dat hulle in iets totaal anders as wat hulle werklik is moet verander om Christene te word. Die uitgangspunt van hierdie verhandeling is dus juis dat die Christene die Nomadiese wêreld moet binnegaan deur hulle eie vorme van kommunikasie en styl te gebruik. Hierdie weg kan slegs gevolg word na 'n diepgaande studie van die mense en hulle gebruike. Die sendeling moet ook 'n leerder word en respek vir die mense ontwikkel. Die sendeling sal dan ook nie selfs bepaal wat die nuwe gelowiges oor God behoort te glo en verstaan nie.

Om hierdie doelwit te bereik word 'n inkarnasionele benadering voorgestel wat God se teenwoordigheid in die lewe van die sendelinge aan die Nomadiese persoon vertoon om hulle sodoende te bereik. So 'n benadering sal die hartsake van die mense hanteer en die koms van God na mense demonstreer.

Key Terms

Christian mission

Evangelism

God has a dream

Incarnational ministry

Mission communication

Nomads

Oral Bible

Orality

Worldview Transformation