

*THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY*

*WITH A SCRIPTURAL FOCUS ON THE CARE OF WIDOWS AND  
ORPHANS*

2004

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# THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

WITH A SCRIPTURAL FOCUS ON THE CARE OF WIDOWS AND  
ORPHANS

BY

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*Submitted to*

*The Faculty of Theology and Religion Studies*

*In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

*Master of Theology (M.Th.)*

*In the Department of Practical Theology*

*at the*

*University of Zululand*

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Date of Submission: 01 / 02 / 2004

# SUMMARY

## THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY WITH A SCRIPTURAL FOCUS ON WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

A literary critique is offered on the publication "Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes", by Robert M. Brown. His view of Christian ministry differs fundamentally from the documented ministry of the early Church, described by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles.

A comparative analysis is presented in this dissertation.

A brief review is made of the Christian Church in South Africa, with reference to early Christian missionaries who helped establish the Christian faith in this country. The devastation caused to the Church and the nation by fifty years of Apartheid is discussed.

Attitudes towards the role of the Christian Church in society differ according to religious or philosophical belief. A brief examination of Atheism, Agnosticism, Deism, and Theism is undertaken, and conclusions drawn concerning their attitudes towards the Christian Church.

Situational Ethics is the *practical outworking* of many religious and philosophical views in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and is here exposed as unbiblical. It is also illogical, in that it expects the

Christian Church to provide 'social convenience', while offering no personal commitment.

Socio-medical aspects of South Africa's monstrous HIV/AIDS epidemic are presented, and a case study done of an orphanage in KwaZulu-Natal, to establish the precise nature, financial viability, and balance of spiritual ministry within this Christian Care Centre.

Recommendations for effective and biblical Christian ministry in the 'new' South Africa are presented.

# DECLARATION

I, Geoffrey Campbell, declare that this dissertation entitled:

*'The Role Of The Christian Church In South African Society, With A  
Scriptural Focus On The Care Of Widows And Orphans'*

Represents entirely my own work  
in conception and execution.

SIGNED

.....

DATE: 01 / 02 / 2004

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*My deepest gratitude to the following people, without who this monumental task could never have been completed:*

- Rt. Rev. Dr. Warwick Cole-Edwardes, who motivates men to equip themselves to serve God
- Professor Arthur Song, for his kind, patient, and tireless support
- My beloved wife, Elma, for script reading, and bibliography audit. She became an uncomplaining 'widow' during this project!
- Mr. Noel Wright, National Secretary of the Church of England in South Africa (CESA), for financial statements and information regarding the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre
- Kees & Anita Keyzer, founders of the Christian Care Centre, and special friends
- David Campbell, my son, for computer technology
- Nardus Le Grange, for photography

**"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, and for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"  
(Philippians 1:3-5, New King James)**

# *DEDICATION*

I dedicate this work  
To the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To His Church,  
&  
especially to  
Widows and Orphans.

*Who is on the Lord's side, who will serve the King?*

*Who will be his helpers other lives to bring?*

*Who will leave the world's side, who will face the foe?*

*Who is on the Lord's side, who for him will go?*

*By your call of mercy, by your grace divine*

*We are on the Lord's side, Saviour we are Thine!*

Frances Havergal (1850)

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

In deciding to write this dissertation, the issue of overriding concern to me is the role that the Christian Church should play in South African society, and in particular the balance or harmony of Christian ministry that is exercised within our society. The Church of the Apostolic era provided an example of balanced and harmonious ministry that is a role-model we should emulate.

When Christians refer to Scripture as the baseline or authority for their belief and actions, this is precisely where difficulties begin. The reason for these difficulties is clearly the *differences of interpretation* of Scripture by various individuals, churches, or religious groups. Most Christians accept that the Bible is our only basis for theology, but when this basis becomes the subject of widely differing interpretations, then disunity and disharmony result.

In the 21st century a 'Postmodernistic' theological view is emerging in which biblical interpretation becomes *the responsibility of the individual*, and his or her interpretation must be respected. No single person has the right to be critical of another's interpretation, and the Bible is seen as a book to be interpreted differently in different societies or in differing circumstances. Added to this is a popular belief that because the Bible was penned by fallible men, and written thousands of years ago, that we should not expect it to offer fully up-to-date and accurate information or advice on 21st century issues.

Many regard the Bible as a kind of 'reference-book' from which strength can be drawn, or ideas formulated, and which might or might not be pertinent to a modern situation. Many people believe that the Bible should be retained within the Church and not discarded, but that its writings should be freely interpreted, and always viewed through the 'tinted glasses of love'.

In other words, those sections of the Bible that are found to be loving and helpful should be received with joy, while those sections that do not appeal to our need for love and warmth should be ignored, or interpreted in a way that makes us feel more comfortable. For

example, it has become common practice among some Christians to cling passionately to Scriptures referring to *God's love*, while overlooking God's demands for justice, righteousness, and repentance from sin.

## 1.1 THE BASIS FOR THIS DISSERTATION

As a result of these differences of biblical interpretation, a situation has now arisen in which there is confusion over the *nature* and *composition* of the Christian Church, and also disagreement concerning its proper *role in society*. The latter disagreement stems directly from the former confusion.

It would seem that the Church has, to some extent, become confused about its own identity. Because of this, the Church has in some respects also lost its direction and focus concerning its true role in society. Various conflicting voices are heard, as prominent religious leaders advocate different policies for the Church of Christ regarding ministry.

In this situation, the dangers to the Church are enormous. Reactions from confused Christians tend to be extreme, resulting either in a complete withdrawal from social involvement due to lack of confidence, or to unbridled political and social involvement. Both these extremes lead to a personal ministry that becomes thrown off balance, or lacks New Testament harmony.

It is for this reason that I consider that it is both valid and urgent that this matter be considered in the form of a dissertation, in the hope that we shall be able to arrive at conclusions that are biblical, and helpful to the Church.

The position of orphans and widows in Kwa Zulu Natal is also a source of great concern to me, because in spite of numerous biblical injunctions to assist them, Christian churches frequently overlook their needs. These injunctions will be discussed in depth in the fourth chapter, but sufficient at this point is to quote James chapter 1:27 (New Living Translation) which reads as follows:

**“Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us”.**

## **1.2 AIMS OF THIS DISSERTATION**

- To establish the biblical basis regarding the role of the Church in South Africa, with special reference to *social and spiritual ministries*, and the validity of the hypothesis presented at the end of this chapter.
- To validate the hypothesis presented at the end of this chapter.
- To research the Church’s ministry to *orphans in KwaZulu~Natal* in the light of that hypothesis.

## **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

The Bible Translation used will be the New Living Translation (Tyndale) 1997.

Greek translations will be done using the Interlinear Greek/English (tr) NT (www).

In order to achieve the three aims stated above, I shall refer to numerous books, journals, newspaper articles, and magazine articles.

I also intend to make use of *international literature* available on the Internet in the form of major libraries such as ‘Questia’, as well as individual web sites. The extent and detail of literature to which I shall refer will be listed in the bibliography.

*Personal Interviews* and empirical research will be conducted at ‘The Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre’ situated in the Midlands of KwaZulu~Natal, as part of a case study on the care of orphans by the Christian Church.

A *Literary Critique* will be done on a carefully selected theological book, and points of agreement as well as disagreement will be established, with reference to the Bible.

In doing so, reference will be made to the New Testament Greek text, with special reference to the Acts of the Apostles, and the prevailing cultures of the Apostolic Era. The term 'culture' represents a complexity of social behavioural patterns and traits, and is defined as:

- a. The totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought.
- b. These patterns, traits, and products are considered as the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, The 2000. Fourth Edition P. 86).

#### **1.4 THE RELIABILITY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

We are dependent for our knowledge of Christianity in the apostolic age, on the books that comprise the New Testament. The Jewish historian Josephus furnishes little, if any, information. For the earliest period, covering the rise of Christianity in Jerusalem, the authorities are the closing chapters of the four Gospels and the opening chapters of the Acts. The Canonical Gospels came from the Apostolic Age, and contain the testimony of original witnesses to the life of Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles is of fundamental importance in gaining an understanding of the Christian Church in the Apostolic era. Its historical value has been disputed in modern times, although upon it rests the whole account of the greater part of apostolic history. (Columbia Encyclopaedia, The, 2000:398).

MacArthur provides more insight into the importance of the Acts of the Apostles:

Luke addressed his second book to Theophilus (Acts 1:3) and the book may originally have had no title. The Greek manuscripts title it 'Acts' and many add 'of the Apostles'. The

Greek word translated 'Acts' (praxeis) was often used to describe the achievements of great men. Acts does feature the notable figures in the early years of the Church, especially Peter (chapters 1-12) and Paul (chapters 13-28), but the book could more properly be called 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles' since His sovereign and superintending work was more important than that of any man (MacArthur, J. 1997).

There is no doubt that the author was a Greek physician named Luke. His place of birth is unknown, though Antioch in Syria and the city of Philippi are often suggested. Of necessity he would have received his medical training in one of the three universities of the day. These were in Alexandria, Athens, and Tarsus. We know nothing of the circumstances of Luke's conversion to Jesus Christ. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles about 63 A. D. while he was living in Rome (Ryrie 1961: 8).

It is highly probable that Luke collected his facts from both verbal and written sources. He had his own notes on Paul's travels. Apart from being a close companion of Paul, he was also acquainted with some of the leading 'actors' in the earlier history, such as Philip the evangelist, Agabus the prophet, Mnason from Cyprus, James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church (Acts 21).

The Acts of the Apostles may therefore be used as an authority of the first order. In Luke is to be found the first Christian historian. It may be added that an exegesis of the Acts of the Apostles, requires one to carefully follow the Greek text in order to preserve the accuracy of the record (Purves 1900:7).

Fairweather expresses his view of the Greek language as the medium for recording the Acts of the Apostles, by saying:

No one will dispute the importance of the Greek language to Christianity. The dictum of Augustine that 'the Greek tongue holds the highest place among the languages of the Gentiles' is commonly acknowledged by all scholars of Greek and of Christianity. The value of the Greek language as far as Christianity is concerned, lies in the superior quality of the language itself, its varied and extensive vocabulary, its almost infinite flexibility, its exact terminology, its capacity to give expression to the loftiest and subtlest ideas, and to distinguish between the finest shades of meaning. There is simply no

language on earth to which Greek can be compared. It has been described as a musical and prolific language that gives soul to the objects of sense, and body to the abstractions of philosophy. Its intrinsic excellence, combined with its widespread currency in the ancient world gave it unrivaled worth as the medium for distribution of the New Testament Scriptures (1924: 267).

Commenting on the selection of a suitable language for New Testament writings, Fairweather indicates that only two suitable options existed. These were Aramaic and Latin. Some centuries earlier Aramaic was in general use as a medium of trade between East and West. However, as a vehicle for religious thought, Aramaic was in no way comparable to Greek. Any Aramaic gospel book would have been restricted to a fairly small geographic area, and Christianity would have remained a 'Palestinian sect'.

Latin had asserted itself as the language of jurisprudence, as well as the official language of the military. Latin, however, was never able to compete with Greek as an instrument of international communication and religious expression.

The pride of the Greek nation lies not in the language itself, nor in the fact of its having been the medium through which the Old Testament became a 'world possession', but simply in the fact that the New Testament is universally acknowledged as a Greek book (1924:84).

This came about in the form of the publication of a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures that dates from the 3rd century B.C., and regarded as the standard form of the Old Testament in the early Christian Church. The Septuagint is still canonical in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Fairweather concludes by reminding us that New Testament Greek represented the ordinary vernacular of the First Century. The conquests of Alexander the Great not only vastly expanded the area over which Greek was spoken, but also led to further modification of ancient classical Greek by the Macedonian dialect (1924: 270).

## 1.5. LITERARY CRITIQUE

### BOOK TITLE

**'THEOLOGY IN A NEW KEY: RESPONDING TO LIBERATION THEMES'**

**(BROWN, R. 1978:2+)**

The reason for selecting this publication as the subject for critique is because it differs fundamentally from the concept of Christian ministry experienced by the Apostolic Christian Church, and stated in the hypothesis at the end of this chapter.

My first objective is to examine the author's *Hermeneutical method in interpretation of Scripture*. The second objective is to establish the author's main *Message*. Finally, the '*Balance*' of the Christian ministry proposed by the author will be *tested against the ministry of the Apostolic Era*.

The *Greek text* used by Luke to pen the '*Acts of the Apostles*', will be referred to exegetically in examining important aspects of the ministry of the infant Christian Church, against the *cultural background* of the day.

Brown makes frequent reference to the social ills within contemporary society, as well as within the Church. He attempts to discover the root cause of mankind's problems, and to offer solutions from his own theological point of view.

My purpose is to engage in academic debate with this author, and to show from a biblical point of view where I agree or disagree with his views.

No one can claim a monopoly on biblical truth, and no one can claim divine authority on his interpretation of Scripture. While this is true, it should not discourage us from seeking to establish biblical truth for ourselves, and having done so, to put this truth into practice.

My personal background is that of a surgical specialist, and so I shall occasionally offer a '*surgical*' point of view in discussing some of the theological issues in Brown's book. This seems appropriate to me because the author (who is a musician) presents the title of his book, as well as some of his theological views, from a '*musical*' point of view.

With this in mind, I would like to begin the critique by presenting the author's hermeneutical method of interpreting Scripture.

### 1.5.1. THE MUSIC

Brown's musical background is evident in his description of his hermeneutical beliefs with regard to Scripture. His opening statement is shown below:

It is my contention that we are at a time theologically when the established harmonies are not as 'established' as they once were. It is not at all clear that the theological future will be 'more of the same' (P. 23).

His reference to 'established harmonies' becomes clear as his book proceeds. These 'established harmonies' are the beliefs of so-called 'Evangelical Fundamentalist' Christians like Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, Dwight Moody and others. These men represented the view that Scripture (as originally given) contains no error, and is altogether reliable as an historical document, representing the actual Word of Almighty God to the human race.

Phillips, a contemporary Greek scholar, in his Introduction to *'The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament'* makes an impassioned plea for a return to a belief in Scripture along Fundamentalist lines:

Many people are turning again to these inspired biblical documents to see for themselves the foundations on which the Christian faith is built. To any true Christian, these are the most important documents in the world. If we believe with our adult minds that we live on a planet visited by God himself in human form, then the record of his life and teaching, and of the movement he began, are of supreme importance to the entire human race. Anything therefore which makes the significance and relevance of the Personal Visit clearer to the reader, is to be welcomed with open arms (1973:i).

Brown reminds us that musicians normally work within a set of rules, and that there are forms to be followed, conventions to be observed, and limitations to be honoured. However, he also says that the time must come when 'venturesome musicians will transcend these



rules'. When they eventually attempt to do this, Brown says that 'their failure or success will be the difference between shoddy craftsmen and genii' (P. 20).

In this statement Brown is clearly referring to the probability that established biblical interpretations, unquestioned for over 3,400 years by the people of God, are about to be changed by modern theologians. Moreover, when this happens, Brown says that provided the changes are made so gradually as to be imperceptible to the average reader, each subtle change will represent the work of theological 'genii'.

Brown reminds us that ground rules have also existed in hermeneutics, and that certain established methodologies have been hallowed for centuries. Working within these established theological harmonies have, according to Brown, become 'more or less predictable'.

He pursues this thought further by saying that the time has arrived when 'venturesome theologians' are beginning to introduce 'new forms and methodologies' into the interpretation of Scripture (P. 20).

While challenging what Brown calls 'the basic assumptions of 'evangelical fundamentalism' (notably its high regard for biblical inspiration and its insistence on the inerrancy of Scripture) he says that liberal theologians will bring to the reader of Scripture 'a freshness and genuine seriousness of interpretation that shall be far more helpful to the contemporary world' (P.21).

#### 1.5.1.1. The 'Diminished Seventh'

Brown makes the observation that once subtle changes in the 'music of Scripture' have been introduced, these changes '*may not easily resolve back to their original meaning*'.

He reverts to his musical analogy, saying that a composer may not *want* to stay within established harmonies, but instead may wish to go in an entirely unexpected and unpredictable direction. He says that the effect of this on the listeners might be to move them to astonishment, delight, or even anger, because of the unexpected change in the

music to which they have been accustomed all their lives, and which is now being played in an entirely different key.

The musical technique employed to achieve this, is through the subtle introduction of a chord known as a '*diminished seventh*', following which many new musical possibilities may be introduced. Following the change in key, there is *no requirement for the music to revert* to its previous key.

According to Brown, links between music and theology have been established over the centuries and have had a strong influence on each other. As an example of this, Brown cites the activities of the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, in which the political and social programme was linked to the great Christian hymn, '*We Shall Overcome*'.

Secondly Brown refers to the 12 massive theological volumes on 'Church Dogmatics' produced by Karl Barth, and which he says were 'greatly assisted in their production' by the fact that Barth, while shaving each morning, listened to the music of Mozart. This statement would have greater import had it come from Barth himself.

## 1.5.2. HERMENEUTICS

### 1.5.2.1 Existential interpretation

Brown's hermeneutics is based on an existential view, in which the interpreter looks at Scripture against the background of his own feelings and circumstances, and then tries to interpret it in a way that becomes *meaningful to him in his own unique situation*. This makes the interpretation of Scripture subjective and variable according to each individual. Brown expresses this concept particularly well as follows:

What we hear in Scripture depends on the viewpoint that we bring to the text. The same is true of what others hear in the text. If we know the point of view of another person, that helps us appreciate his or her interpretation of Scripture. Since nobody can possibly hear everything, we need not only to listen to what others hear in Scripture, but also to be open to correction of our own interpretations in the light of what they tell us (P. 85).

In the above statement Brown confirms that his theological views are based on existential interpretation. As this is a subjective methodology, it varies from person to person depending on his or her feelings and experiences, rather than being based on the hermeneutical discipline of words, grammar, and syntax. The obvious danger in the use of existential hermeneutics is that it results in as many interpretations of Scripture as there are readers.

An existential interpretation of Scripture has the ultimate effect of destroying any basis for truth. The Bible remains the inerrant authority, but if we question the validity of the author's intended meaning within the text, this has the effect of dissolving its authority.

### **1.5.2.2. Hermeneutical Circulation**

According to Brown, not only are we to anticipate the introduction of 'theology in a new key', but this new 'music' will also be subjected to what he calls 'hermeneutical circulation'.

The term hermeneutical circulation has been coined by Brown to describe a concept whereby Scripture needs to be interpreted by one reader, then passed on to others for their insights, and finally returned to the initial reader, who then makes up his mind as to the most appropriate interpretation of that particular Scripture.

This process could be considered a 'team effort' in which a Scripture is studied and analysed by a number of readers who circulate it back and forth among themselves, before settling on an acceptable interpretation that seems meaningful to those participating in the team.

Brown rationalises this method by explaining that when we confront Scripture, we are already dealing with the different interpretations of the ancient writers, and these interpretations will need further adaptation to our own historical situations. He expresses the view that the original biblical text was itself the product of ancient historical and cultural influences, and would probably have differed in style and content if written today.

With this in mind he believes that the task of the Christian today, is to try to find the correct interplay between the biblical text and its historical setting, and then to seek suitable

modification of the text in order to make it meaningful and applicable to our modern requirements. The ideal way to achieve this, according to Brown, is through the exercise of 'hermeneutical circulation', which he expresses this way:

Hermeneutics is always a two-way street. It goes from humanity to God, from God to humanity; from history to faith and from faith to history; from the human word to the Word of the Lord, and from the Word of the Lord to human word; from human love to the love of God, and from the love of God to human love; from human justice to the holiness of God, and from the holiness of God to human justice; from the poor to God, and from God to the poor (P. 85).

### 1.5.2.3. Ground Rules In Hermeneutics

Having considered Brown's views on hermeneutics, it must be conceded that interpreting Scripture can be difficult. We try to understand the correct sense of a passage of Scripture, but sometimes it seems that our interpretations are influenced by ignorance, prejudice, or emotion. We may even avoid questioning the biblical interpretations of others, for fear of being accused of 'hermeneutical arrogance'. After all, how can I say that someone else is wrong and that I am right? The original text of the Bible may indeed be infallible, but none of us is.

However, does interpretation need to be so subjective? Are there rules that can help us? The Bible has been given to us with the intent that we should understand it, and apply it. There are principles that should be followed in interpreting Scripture, and it is when these are disregarded, that we find ourselves sinking in deep waters.

God inspired the authors of Scripture to communicate specific truth to mankind. Theologians refer to this as God's *written revelation*. He chose to communicate in human language, because human language is adequate to communicate what he chose to reveal. In his book 'The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture' the author insists on proper hermeneutical correctness in interpreting God's Word, and believes that since God's message to man is in *written form*, we must use *the rules of written language* in our hermeneutics. Definitions, grammar, and syntax are applied to every text of Scripture, so that interpretation is solidly based, and not a matter of feelings or hunches (Pache 1980:32).

There is generally *only one correct interpretation* and one meaning for any Scripture. If it is claimed that there are multiple interpretations, they cannot all be correct. They may all be wrong, but a maximum of only one can be true. Although there is only *one* meaning for each Scripture, the Holy Spirit may demonstrate a *variety* of different applications. It is vital to realise that an *application* is not an *interpretation* (Pache 1980:219).

There are two views regarding the Scriptures that tend to be extreme, and thus unhelpful in terms of Bible study. The first claims that the Bible is *unimportant*, which results in a careless attitude towards the Bible. This view is usually because 'experience' has become more important than revelation. The second extreme view is that the Bible is *unreliable*, which devalues God's revelation. Doctrinal positions *based upon uncertainty* concerning the inspiration and authority of the Bible, are not helpful in hermeneutics and tend to undermine faith, because the Bible no longer represents authority.

According to Pache, the belief that Scripture is divinely inspired, inerrant, and authoritative, is regarded by some theologians as 'arrogant', 'presumptuous', and 'resembling the teachings of cults'. He says, however, that these same theologians are often willing to sacrifice traditionally non-negotiable biblical tenets for the sake of 'Christian unity'. Ironically, this camp strongly urges unity of believers, by *denying the true basis of unity*, which is biblical inerrancy and authority (1987: 147).

Any view of Scripture that undermines its authority and reliability must lead to the development of a 'schizophrenic' ethical and theological position. The reason for this is because logically speaking, if theology can only be based on good hermeneutics, then faulty hermeneutics must result in fragmented or 'schizophrenic' theology.

## 1.6. THE MESSAGE

### 1.6.1. BROWN'S MESSAGE

The fundamental message (or gospel) of Brown's book differs markedly from the message that was delivered to the community by the first century Apostolic Christian Church.

Brown explains the central message of his book very adequately in the quotation shown below:

The Gospel mandates the poor to take what is theirs. People have a right to the disposal of the resources of the land where they live. The gospel proclaims that no right of ownership supersedes human need. We know with certainty that no matter who possesses food, it belongs to hungry people. The Church is called upon through its ministry to support the poor as they reach out to take what is rightfully theirs (P.105).

This statement makes it clear that Brown's *ministry* is concerned with political change, economic improvement, and social upliftment of the poor.

Significantly however, there is no mention of spiritual change to the innermost man, and Brown's gospel has nothing to say concerning the total metamorphosis of nature and attitude brought about by the Holy Spirit, and which revolutionised the lives of individuals and communities in the Apostolic era.

✶ The empathy that Brown shows towards poor and marginalised people in society is obvious, and he deserves sincere commendation for this. In his passionate pleas for assistance to the poor, Brown echoes the commands of Old Testament prophets of Israel, and also the words of the Lord Jesus and his apostles. By reaching out to the poor and needy we do the will of God, and there is no doubt that the Church has often failed in this regard. Brown's book therefore, comes as a timely reminder to the Church to care for the poor and give to those who have need.

In terms of Brown's ministry, the Lord Jesus is depicted as *the political liberator of the oppressed*, offering the masses hope of political freedom, and freedom from oppression. There appears to be no individual spiritual ministry on Brown's agenda. It would seem

about the main reason for this is his apparent rejection of the biblical doctrine of 'original sin'. If this doctrine is ignored then there is no need for an individual spiritual ministry. Brown appears to absolve the individual from the guilt of his sin, by saying that God 'does not divide humanity in such a way as to save a select or chosen few, while hurling the majority into hell'. In fact he turns the argument around by insisting that God uses the select few as a leverage point for lifting up the many, in order to experience a better quality of human existence. In this way, says Brown, Jesus becomes the 'messiah of the poor' (P. 170).

It is frequently argued that modern day social ills demand a different *message* from the Church to the message delivered by the Apostolic Christian Church. This is flawed and dangerous reasoning however, because it leads to the inevitable conclusion that a different Bible is required for different periods in the history of the Christian Church.

## 1.6.2. THE MESSAGE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Before considering the *message* of the Apostolic Christian Church, the cultural and social background of those living in Palestine should be taken into account, as it is of fundamental importance to our understanding of the Christian message delivered by the apostles, and also the popular response to that message.

### 1.6.2.1. Cultural Background To The Apostolic Church

Greek culture was particularly relevant as the background to the emerging message of Christianity. The intimate association of Hellenism and paganism had a significant influence on the thinking of the day, and was to influence the ultimate response of the Greek-speaking people to the Gospel message of Christ.

Greek influence was so strong amongst the Jews that some even apostatised from Judaism; others tried to retain their old religion, along with the new Hellenistic mode of life. Antiochus Epiphanes had tried to suppress Judaism by force, and

failed. The Hellenisers in Judea influenced the outlook of Judaism through their cultural and religious practices (Fairweather 1924: 220).

When the Romans became the lords of Palestine, a strong Hellenistic influence already existed, and even a famous descendant of the Maccabean House, Aristobulus 1 (B.C. 105-104), had earned the name of 'Phil-Hellen'. At the dawn of the Christian era Herod the Great was a keen follower of Greek culture. Not only did he build temples for the Greeks in many parts of Asia Minor and the Aegean archipelago, but also actively promoted the interests of Greek culture *within his own kingdom*. He surrounded himself with Greek scholars and artists, and even instituted athletic games in Greek style, but in honor of Caesar (Fairweather 1924: 220).

Herod the Great rebuilt the Jewish Temple on a scale of great magnificence, but in Greek style, and (to the horror of the Jews) he adorned the 'Great Gate' of the Temple with a golden eagle symbolising Greek paganism.

These Greek influences led to the establishment of what became known as 'Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy', a term used to describe the fusion of the Jewish and Greek thought that developed during a period of 200 years prior to the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a strange philosophy with a peculiar combination of the Hebrew belief in God, yet combined with Platonic doctrines. On the one hand it conceived the distinct personality of the 'Lord of Hosts', but in a more philosophical way than that of the ancient Hebrew's. While owing its *intellectual form* to the philosophy of the Greeks, it derived its *vitality* from Judaism. The Jew who embraced it did not relinquish his devotion to Mosaic Law, but accepted the teachings of Plato and Aristotle as a more enlightened conception of the ancient Hebrew faith (Fairweather, 1924: 161).

The Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans were baffled in their attempts to work out their own salvation. Manifestly, the world was sick at heart, and labouring under a sense of defeat. The Greeks had failed in their ardent pursuit of wisdom; the Jews still groaned under the burden of the Ceremonial Law; the Romans, militarily strong and efficient, were unable to satisfy their own deepest spiritual needs.



Deliverance could come only from above. The old traditions and beliefs were crumbling, and there was a general yearning for something that would satisfy the soul. It was the time in history where there was a relative peace among nations, and men had the leisure to listen to what the Lord God would say.

John the Baptist turned the searchlight onto the Jews themselves, declaring that the mere fact of their descent from Abraham would in future count for nothing, and that no tree could stand unless it produced good fruit. John commanded the Jews to repent, and announced that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. His preaching was plain and direct, and his message was quite the reverse of the teaching of Judaism, which was so bound up with ceremony and the outward forms of religion. John's insistence was on compunction of soul, which he presented as an essential preparation for the new Kingdom, which was about to arrive in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek language had been forged, and was in readiness for use by the soldiers of Christ, while Roman highways were prepared for the feet of those who would become the messengers of the Lord.

So it was, that these three great cultures eventually found themselves standing burdened and heavy-laden at the foot of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having reviewed Brown's message and considered the important cultural background to the Apostolic Christian Church, I would like to present the contrasting message of the Church, as recorded by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles.

In the third chapter of Acts we have our first encounter with *the central message* delivered with great authority by the apostles of Jesus Christ, and with great clarity by the apostle Peter. The background is that the Holy Spirit had descended on the new fledgling Christian Church, inspiring them to great heights of spiritual activity, praise, and worship. It was their *central message* however, that is our focus.

Peter took the opportunity to preach Jesus to the thousands of Jews who had crowded into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. To these Jews the Messiah was a part of the Old Testament Scriptures, but Jesus of Nazareth was simply another

religious leader. To say that Jesus *was the Christ* was regarded as blasphemy. Nothing but the restoration of the glory of the Davidic throne would satisfy the national Jewish aspirations. They longed for their Messiah~King.

Reminding them of Old Testament prophecies Peter painted an eloquent picture of the Messiah, the focal point of his argument being the resurrection of Christ (Acts 10: 22 – 24). Peter told them that he was an *eyewitness to that miracle*, and of course he was speaking to residents of Jerusalem who had witnessed the resurrection of many of the ancient the believers from their graves at the time of Christ's own resurrection. These risen believers had walked into Jerusalem and astounded the Jews with their presence. (Ryrie 1961: 22 & Matthew 27: 52-53).

Without hesitation Peter informed them that they each bore the responsibility and the guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus some days earlier. While it is likely that Peter addressed the crowds in Aramaic, Luke the physician, recorded Peter's message in Greek as follows:

ACTS 3:15

τον δε αρχηγον της ζωης απεκτεινατε ον ο θεος ηγειρεν εκ νεκρων ου ημεις μαρτυρε  
ς εσμεν

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**But the Author of Life you killed, whom God raised up from among the dead, whereof we witnesses (are)**

The Jewish leaders were *accused of complicity in the murder*, not of a common criminal, but the '*Author of Life*', whose name was Jesus. This was the message they did not expect, did not wish to hear, but from which they could not escape.

A response was required from them, and they either had to accept or reject Peter's accusation. It became 'decision-time' for each individual listener, and those who

were to accept Peter's statement would open a door that would lead them to eternal life, and a privileged position within the family of God's New Israel.

On the other hand, those who rejected Peter's message would condemn themselves to remain forever with their guilt, forever outside of God's forgiveness, and outside of the family of the New Israel.

Each person listening was held accountable for *his personal role* in the crucifixion of the Messiah. Group responsibility did not matter, and *individual accountability for sin* was demanded.

The Greek manuscripts record that the vast crowd of agitated Jews was apparently κατενυγησαν τη καρδια (Interlinear Translation **pricked in heart**) and cried out to Peter, asking, "What must we do?" They heard Peter's message and recognised the truth of his words. They felt personal guilt for the rejection and death of their Messiah, and they realised the need for individual salvation.

Peter's reply was direct, personal, and unambiguous. Speaking to the huge crowds of Jews, he thundered his reply as follows:

#### ACTS 2:38

μετανοησατε και βαπτισθητω εκαστος υμων επι τω ονοματι  
ιησου χριστου εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων και ληψεσθε την δωρεαν  
του αγιου πνευματος

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**"Repent and be baptised each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit".**

The meaning of the Greek words *ωορδ μετανοησατε* simply mean 'to turn around, change one's mind, and go in the opposite direction'. This demanded a twofold change: *firstly a change of mind, and secondly a change of association*. It required a

basic change of mind that resulted in a changed life (Romans 2: 5). This meant receiving Christ as Lord and Messiah.

The baptism was in the name of Jesus Christ, and this meant severing their ties with Judaism, and associating themselves with the message of Jesus and his people. Even today, for the Jew, it is not his profession of Christianity, but rather his *admission to water baptism* that finally excludes him from the Jewish community and marks him off as a Christian (Purves 1900: 22).

In comparing Brown's gospel message with that of the apostle Peter, we may summarize the comparison by saying that Brown's gospel *offers hope of a social and political nature*, resembling Marxist social philosophy whereby those that have, are compelled to let go of their possessions, and those who have not, are authorized to take them.

Brown's message is addressed to the masses, or the community at large, and not to individuals. It is a message of socio-political reform, which does not demand repentance from individual sin, and neither does it require personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The message delivered by the apostle Peter, on the other hand, contained no political dimensions; neither did it address social concerns such as poverty, the practice of slavery (which was rife at the time), or the degraded condition of society in general.

It was a message directed *not at the masses*, but *at individuals* of different social standing, economic prosperity, ethnicity, and religious persuasion. The message was the same for everyone, and that message was to accept personal responsibility for sin, to recognize the role that each individual within earshot of Peter's voice played in the death of Christ, to repent, and become a follower of the Messiah.

Biblical teaching confirms that *all men are born as sinners*, and therefore need *personal salvation* from their sin. Indeed since the fall of Adam, all men have been born sinners, as confirmed by King David of Israel, when he wrote:

**"For I was born a sinner; yes, from the moment my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).**

One of the difficulties with Brown's social gospel message is that it makes *no provision* for this most important doctrine of 'original sin'. It somehow 'wishes away' the truth of this teaching, and makes no insistence that all men, as individuals, need to have the problem of their original sin resolved. Instead, it euphemistically, and wrongly, refers to all men as 'children of God' merely on the grounds that all men are *made in the image of God*, and irrespective of their personal commitment to Christ.

Another difficulty that pertains to the 'Social gospel' is that it does not offer individual people *peace in their hearts and minds*.

Jesus himself said to his disciples:

**"I am leaving you with a gift; peace of mind and heart " (John 14:27).**

Peace with God depends on a right relationship with God through Christ. Unless a person experiences the forgiveness of sin, and a right relationship with God, he cannot experience the peace of God, and the 'gospel' he has heard is not the Gospel of Christ. Political change, and social programmes may be useful, and may even be an urgent necessity, but can never be a substitute for the inner peace that comes to the individual as a result of forgiveness of sin, and a personal relationship with the living Christ. This is made clear by Paul, when he says:

**"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ has done for us " (Romans 5:1).**

Therefore we can appreciate that only by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, can a person be reconciled to God, and to his fellow men.

This was the message delivered by the Apostolic Christian Church. The apostle Paul (and Timothy, his partner in the ministry of Christ) spoke passionately of this message when they wrote to the Christians in Corinth. They used the strongest

Greek word possible as a preface to their message, to emphasise its urgency. It was the *ὡςδ παρακαλουμεν* (we exhort, plead with you).

The message continued:

**“Do not reject this marvellous message of God’s great kindness; for God says, ‘Just at the right time, I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you’ ” (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).**

## **1.7. COMPARATIVE MINISTRIES**

The purpose now is to examine important aspects of spiritual ministry, in order to assess ‘balance’ in four vital areas. The same areas of ministry will be examined in both Brown’s concept of ministry, and the ministry displayed by the Apostolic Christian Church. A comparison of these two differing concepts of Christian ministry will be made. The four parameters within Christian ministry that have been selected for assessment are:

- Worship
- Social Care
- Evangelism
- Biblical Instruction

### **1.7.1. WORSHIP**

Most Christians agree that worship of God is the primary duty of the Christian Church, and it is for this reason that this comparative study commences with an examination of the ministry of worship.

### 1.7.1.1. Brown

In his book, Brown expresses the view that true worship is an expression of social justice within society, and that apart from this there can be no worship. He expresses this very well in the following extract from his book:

Worship of God must be an expression of justice, and until there is justice there should be no worship. The Church should recognize that the time for worship will come when justice has been achieved. The God of the Bible hates worship that is oblivious to the plight of the 'stranger outside the gate'. Therefore we should not enter our sanctuaries to worship unless we have addressed the human destruction outside those sanctuaries (P. 93).

Notice that Brown believes that before we come to worship God, we should make sure that our social obligations to the poor have been met, and that we have 'broken the fetters of injustice from off the poor, and set free those who have been crushed' (P.176). He makes the point that there is no way that one can isolate worship from a concern for justice.

According to Brown, any knowledge of God is predicated on the doing of justice, and worship of God must be an expression of justice. In support of his view he cites the writings of the ancient prophet Amos who told the Israelites that their worship was not acceptable to God, because they had not attended to the social injustice within the land (Amos 5: 21-24).

Brown continues his argument, saying that if the message of the Bible tells us that *knowing God is doing justice*, it becomes logical that the *doing of justice* must become the engagement by which all men come to know God (P. 97).

From the above it is clear that Brown's concept of worship can be described as anthropocentric (orientated towards man) and is largely dependent on the actions of man in terms of doing social justice. It is therefore fair to say that Brown's concept of worship involves social action that will hopefully be acceptable to God. Man must earn the right to worship.

Brown clearly fails to recognise that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ opens the way to free and unrestricted worship of God. There are no preconditions to worship other than

to approach God with a 'true heart' that reflects gratitude and love to the One who has made such worship possible. The administration of social justice remains a requirement for the Christian, and but *is not a precondition* for worship.

### 1.7.1.2. The Apostolic Christian Church

The Apostolic Christian Church demonstrated the meaning of true worship.

Brown's reference to Old Testament prophets and their demands that social justice must be linked to worship is understandable only in terms of Old Testament theology. The New Testament concept of worship is entirely different, and is expressed in glowing terms by the writer to the Hebrews, when he said,

Dear brothers and sisters, we can now enter boldly into heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. This is the new way that Christ has opened for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us. Now since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's people, let us come right into the presence of God, with true hearts fully trusting him (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Luke describes this worship from within the fellowship of believers, because he was privileged to share in the most exciting part of the history of the Christian Church.

In a style of beautiful simplicity, Luke records as follows:

ACTS 2:46

καθ ημεραν τε προσκαρτερουντες ομοθυμαδον εν τω ιερω κλωντες τε κατ οικον αρτον μετελαμβανον τροφης εν αγαλλιασει και αφελотητι καρδιας

### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

And every day steadfastly continuing with one accord in the temple and breaking (in their houses) bread, they partook of food with gladness and simplicity of heart.



Their lifestyle bore witness to an inward change that had produced visible outward results. There was no ceremony or outward show intended to impress those around them, but rather a joyful and spontaneous communion with God and with each other. This was indeed true worship.

The effect of their worship and fellowship had far reaching effects on society. Luke explains in simple yet profound words, what he himself witnessed, when he wrote:

#### ACTS 2:47

αἰνούντες τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαὸν ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ' ἡμέραν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**Praising God and having favour with (whole) the people; and the Lord added those (who were being saved daily) to the assembly.**

The Lord stipulated that obedience is a precondition to worship, by teaching that reconciliation with our fellow men is needed before placing our 'gifts' on the altar (Matthew 5:23-25).

An example of how obedience is *linked* to worship was emphasised by Christ. Any public or ceremonial form of worship is unacceptable to God if not accompanied by personal obedience to his Word (John 14: 23).

*True worship is not 'doing', but 'being'.* Worship is not achieved by acts of kindness or generosity or by personal sacrifice. Such acts should be regarded as *the product* of true worship, which is a right relationship with God. This is the meaning of an Old Testament verse:

**“Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to God is much better than making offerings. Rebellion and stubbornness is equivalent to worshipping idols” (1 Samuel 15:22).**

The final word concerning true worship comes from the Lord Jesus himself, and is recorded in the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel. He describes how Jesus met with a Samaritan woman, and requested that she gave him some water from a local well, in a small town named Sychar. The woman could sense that this was no ordinary man, and took him to be one of the Jewish prophets. She decided to take the opportunity to settle a long-standing dispute that existed between Samaritans and Jews concerning the ceremonial worship of God.

She asked Jesus for his opinion regarding the relative claims of the cities of Gerizim (a Samaritan city) and Jerusalem (the centre of Judaism), as the official centre for worship, and the correct location for the temple of God.

Instead of replying to this question, Jesus proceeded to tell her of a new era that would be characterized by a completely different concept of worship. The old order, according to which worship of the true God was ceremonial, sectional, and local, was about to pass away. This was the order of Old Testament Judaism, in which God seemed distant to the ordinary person, and was only approachable through the High Priest.

Jesus explained to the woman that a new religious world, in which men and women everywhere would be able to worship God in spirit and in truth was about to come into being. The worshipper in this new dispensation would not worship merely in terms of the letter of the law as the Jews had done, nor would they partake in false worship, as the Samaritans had done by claiming to worship a God they did not know.

The woman was astounded by these words, and told Jesus that as Messiah had not yet come, she could not experience such true worship. The reply that Jesus gave astounded her even further, and is recorded by the apostle John as follows:

JOHN 4:26

εγω ειμι ο λαλων σοι

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**I am he (who am) speaking to you**

This amazing account in John's gospel shows that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and that it is through him, and through him alone, that true worship becomes possible.

Brown's concern for social justice is valid; but while social justice is clearly a biblical concept demanded by God, it cannot form the basis for worship.

The apostle Paul states that the basis for true worship is that we present *ourselves* to God as true servants, or slaves of Christ. He is quite clear:

**"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12: 1).**

From this we reasonably understand that true worship is giving ourselves to God, and not merely performing duties for God.

The Church in the 21st century would do well to reaffirm this principal of worship. As believers we need to purge the Church of false worship, and to promote the principles of true worship, which will glorify God and edify other believers.

Woodbridge draws attention to aspects of Christian worship in a way that recognizes not only its wonderful simplicity, but also amazing complexity in terms of its role within the Kingdom of Christ. He makes the following points concerning true worship:

- *Worship is participatory* indicating that the entire congregation of God's people should be involved in the worship.

- *Worship is exalting* in the sense that believers offer recognition that God occupies the highest and most exalted position in the universe.
- *Worship is reverent* and implies adoration, intimacy and awe.
- *Worship is fervent* and shows enthusiasm and zeal for God's glory.
- *Worship is edifying* and the Apostle Paul calls God's people to worship him and to edify one another.
- *Worship is Christocentric* and implies that the focus of Christian worship is on Christ and his work, not on man.
- *Worship is theocentric* implying that worship should be towards God, and not towards man.
- *Worship is prophetic* in the sense of its escatological anticipation.
- *Worship is triumphant* and is a celebration in triumphant form.
- *Worship is transforming* because in the final analysis it means a change or transformation of human nature.
- *Worship is evangelistic* and provides an opportunity to share our faith with others.
- *Worship is rejoicing* and is characterized by joy.
- *Worship is necessary* in the sense that man's greatest need is to be in a relationship with God (2003:125).

The Apostolic Christian Church provided a demonstration of true worship. South African Christian fellowships should emulate the early Church. In this way, not only will God be truly pleased with our worship, but we as believers will experience a closer relationship with him, and by so doing become maximally fulfilled, and personally effective in our individual ministries within South African society.

### 1.7.2. SOCIAL CARE

All Christians agree on the importance of caring for others, and this concept is referred to here as 'social care'. There is however, some difference of opinion among Christians regarding the motivation, extent, and prioritisation of the Church's social action within society at large.

### 1.7.2.1. Brown

Brown expresses strong views on the subject, including obvious disappointment with the Christian Church in regard to social and political reform. His views are properly summed up in the following paragraph:

The Christian Church must waken to the realization that the recognition and implementation of human rights is crucial to ministry. Christians must accept the right of the poor to food, shelter, education, medical care, and proper housing, as a fundamental biblical principle. Affluent societies do not regard these things as rights, because they are able to purchase them, and thus take them for granted. They fail to realize that these amenities and facilities are beyond the reach of most of the human family (P. 154).

Brown believes that it is the responsibility of the Church to see that people have correct food, shelter education, medical care, and housing. He criticizes the more affluent societies for being able to purchase these things with money, and thus take them for granted. He points out that many of these things are beyond the reach of most of the human family (P.176).

Brown's view that the Church bears responsibility for the social welfare of society has at least a flavour of Marxist ideology, and does not have New Testament authority.

There has been a tendency in recent years for evangelical Christians to leave 'welfare' in the hands of government agencies, perhaps in reaction to the 'social gospel' ideology. However, we must remember that 'faith' without appropriate action is useless (James 2:14-16).

### 1.7.2.2 The Apostolic Christian Church

The social and material needs of the poor in South Africa are quite desperate. What should the Church be doing about this? Are we to turn a blind eye, or should we become involved in supplying the needs of the community at large? Does the Church have a responsibility to feed and clothe those *outside* of the Church?

God has always been concerned about the poor, and he made this clear to his people, Israel. The pattern that emerges in both Old and New Testaments is that believers should give to the poor *according to their ability and resources*, and that they should never be party to *oppression* of the poor.

The existence of poverty in one form or another is recognised in both the Old and New Testaments as a fact of life. At the same time however, believers are instructed to be compassionate and helpful towards the poor.

The Lord himself instructed the Israelites saying,

**If there are any poor people in your towns when you arrive in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be tight-fisted toward them, but be generous, and give them whatever they need. There will always be some among you who are poor, and that is why I am commanding you to share your resources freely with the poor and with other Israelites who are in need (Deuteronomy 15: 9-11).**

The Church in the Apostolic era was also mindful of the poor, and the Apostle Paul writing to the Galatian church explains:

**"James, Peter, and John asked us to remember to help the poor, and I have been eager to do that" (Galatians 2: 10).**

This would seem to imply that there is a danger that Christians might forget the poor while being busy with other forms of ministry, and it is therefore a timely reminder to us in the 21st century, not to forget the poor.

As we in the 21st century look back on history, we realise that neither the welfare state, nor a system based on soulless capitalism, can provide the answer to man's deepest need. When the blessing of a life in covenant with the Lord is missing, the best human effort will fall short of the mark.

Luke related a true story involving the apostles Peter and John as they went to worship at the temple in the afternoon. The story illustrates the principle of love and care within society. The story is particularly thrilling when read directly from the

Greek manuscripts, because it allows the reader to become *a participator* in the dramatic unfolding of a human crisis.

Peter and John noticed a lame beggar sitting beside the gate to the temple, asking people for money.

The fact that the beggar sat there, tells us something about the condition of the Old Testament Church. The church as a divine institution was apparently *not bothered* about this man. The beggar was used to being neglected, and if the Church had no vision for him, he had probably also lost sight of his own real need. He asked for money because he was just trying to survive. A little money made the difference between his being a live beggar, and a starved-to death-beggar!

This man clearly represented a case of desperate social need, for not only was he paralysed and unable to help himself, but he was also alienated from the community and from the Church. He had no future, no circle of friends, no career, no home or property, no financial security, no social standing, no education, and no hope for the future. As such he presented an enormous challenge to the apostles. Luke describes Peter's response to the man's requests for money as follows:

ACTS 3:4

ατενισας δε πετρος εις αυτον συν τω ιωαννη ειπεν βλεψον εις ημας

INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And looking intently (Peter) upon him, with John said, "Look on us"**

Peter was aware of the man's financial need, but apparently carried no money on his person. He was able, however, to see beyond the man's material needs, and even his physical needs. He requested eye contact with him, and so opened the way for interpersonal communication.

Having gained the man's attention, Peter made an astonishing statement that was to mark the beginning of a new life for this beggar. Peter's words are recorded for us as follows:

## ACTS 3:6

ειπεν δε πετρος αργυριον και χρυσιον ουχ υπαρχει μοι ο δε εχω τουτο σοι διδωμι εν τω ονοματι ιησου χριστου του ναζωραιου εγειραι και περιπατει

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**But said Peter, "Silver and gold there is not (to me) but what I have, this to you I give. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk"**

To the amazement of everyone in the vicinity of the temple, the man rose to his feet, and then ran and jumped and joined Peter and John in the temple praising God. Luke recorded the reaction of the bystanders quite graphically as follows:

## ACTS 3:10

επεγινωσκον τε αυτον οτι ουτος ην ο προς την ελεημοσυνην καθημενος επι τη ωραια πυλη του ιερου και επλησθησαν θαμβους και εκστασεως επι τω συμβεβηκοτι αυτω

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And they recognized him, that he it was who for alms was sitting at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.**

That the man was completely healed is beyond dispute. Furthermore many people witnessed the miracle, and this gave the apostles further opportunity to preach about Christ within the temple area.

Consider the position of this beggar had he *only received money* from Peter. The quality of his life would scarcely have changed and he would only have received the means to survive another day. Now he received not only the gift of a healthy body and the ability to earn a



living, but he also came into a personal relationship with Almighty God, which caused him to join together with the apostles in praise and worship. The Apostolic Christian Church no doubt received him with great joy.

The apostles made it clear that this miracle had been done in the name of Jesus Christ, thus providing a powerful witness to the Christian Gospel, and to the social concern the apostles had for this man. Addressing the onlookers, Peter declared:

ACTS 3:16

και επι τη πιστει του ονοματος αυτου τουτον ον θεωρειτε και οιδετε εστερεω  
σεν το ονομα αυτου και η πιστις η δι αυτου εδωκεν αυτω την ολοκληριαν τα  
υτην απεναντι παντων υμων

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And by faith in (his) name, this man whom you see and know, made strong; name (his)  
and the faith which is by him, gave to him this complete soundness before all of you**

Apart from this particular story, the care among Christians for one another was all embracing and unique in the history of the Church. It represented a truly remarkable social transformation that took place in the lives of those who became followers of Jesus Christ. In the small home-based local churches in Jerusalem, new tables were set up for communion, where Jews sat side-by-side with the Greeks and Romans, slaves sat beside their masters, and the poor sat beside the rich. In this unique and marvellous fellowship all were on the same level, and without distinction. There was no special privilege, and they ate the same bread and drank from the same cup (Fairweather 1924: 229; Acts 2:44-47).

The transformation of the early Christians must be seen against the background of a world full of division, hatred, and bitterness that pervaded the Roman world in the first century. In this new and warm atmosphere of universal brotherhood, national differences and social antagonisms melted away. There was a wonderful sense of belonging to a common body, inspired by the same essential principles of faith and action, and combined with the power of the Gospel message to change men's hearts.

This new dispensation was particularly thrilling to those whose current philosophies had failed to deliver any meaningful social or spiritual purpose. (Undset, 1960: 135).

Luke bears simple yet dramatic testimony to the truth of this social caring, when he records his personal observations of the Apostolic Christian Church saying:

ACTS 2:44

ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΔΕ ΟΙ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ ΗΣΑΝ ΕΠΙ ΤΟ ΑΥΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΧΟΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΑ ΚΟΙΝΑ

INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And all who believed were together and had all things common**

In a short concise sentence, Luke is able to describe the most remarkable social scene in human history. It became the norm for the Apostolic Christian Church.

The early Christian Church had no *official* property, no buildings, and very little money. They met together, probably in the evening (Acts 20:7), and shared daily meals in their homes (Acts 2: 44-47)

This is a clear indication of the selfless love and attitude of caring that was prevalent among those early believers. They were united with a bond so strong as to make material possessions become the property of all. The Christians clung to Christ and to each other, instead of to material possessions, status, power and influence.

Not only did they share their material possessions, but Luke records that some properties belonging to Christians were sold in order to raise money for the poor believers that were among them. The Greek manuscripts of the Acts of the Apostles read as follows:

## ACTS 2:45

και τα κτηματα και τας υπαρξεις επιπρασκον και διεμεριζον αυτα πασιν καθοτι αν τι  
ς χρειαν ειχεν

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And their possessions and goods they sold and divided them to all according as anyone need (had).**

This amazing feature of the early Christian movement deserves special attention, and at a glance seems to represent a form of what might be referred to as 'Christian Communalism'. The record indicates that many of the disciples regarded their worldly property as being *at the service of the community*, and parted willingly with it to supply the needs of other believers (Acts 2:45).

The majority of believers were probably from the poorer classes. Others, like the Galileans, had left their homes and occupations to join in the most exciting period in the history of the Church.

The unique situation that had developed around this fledgling Church demanded emergency social action to ensure the survival of believers, many of whom had left their homes and their jobs in distant lands to join in the fellowship of the Apostolic Christian Church.

The practice of this 'Christian Communism' was apparently restricted to the community of believers, and there is nothing recorded in Acts to suggest that the *unbelieving wider community* were the recipients of the proceeds from the sale of the properties belonging to the believers.

The Church of Christ has historically always been a tiny minority within the total community, and there is no biblical mandate to suggest that social and financial services to the poor *outside of the Church* are the *responsibility of the Church*. Equally important however, is to understand that it is a great offence to God when *believers* who are experiencing poverty, are not cared for by the Christian Church (James 2:14-18).

Luke records that *widows* within the early Church were regarded in a 'special needs' category by the leadership of the Church (Acts 6:1-6). This principle was reaffirmed by the apostle Paul, in parts of the fifth chapter of his first letter to Timothy.

Widows were surely not the only believers who benefited from the care of the early Church, and the impression is gained that all poor or disadvantaged believers were included in the care ministry of the Church. There is every indication that the communal sharing of material possessions was spontaneous.

The New Testament record also makes it clear that distinctions between rich and poor were never entirely eliminated among the early Christians (James 2:2-3 & Galatians 2:10). While no reasons are provided for this, we must presume that Christians came from differing backgrounds, and that some had more opportunity for advancement than others. This is simply one of the harsh realities of living as believers in a secular world.

The social care displayed by these early Christians, was surely not limited to their immediate Christian circles. Each believer had undergone a complete metamorphosis of character as a result of receiving the Holy Spirit. As a result, the attitude of 'sharing and caring' would have extended naturally to those in the community who were not believers.

The physical and financial capabilities of such a small group of Christians was limited, and their services could never have been extended to everyone in the community. It does however, represent a great challenge to 21st century believers not to become obsessed with material possessions, but to seek first of the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, which by implication, involves caring for all men.

### 1.7.3. EVANGELISM

#### 1.7.3.1. Brown

The Protestant Reformation was an exercise in interpreting the Bible from the vantage point of 'justification by faith' or 'salvation by grace alone'. The story of Jesus can be read from 'socialist', 'free enterprise', 'mystical', or 'social' perspectives. (P. 116).

Salvation works in the struggle for economic justice and against the exploitation of people. Salvation works in the struggle for human dignity, and against political oppression. Salvation works in the struggle for solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair (P. 200)

In these statements Brown emphasises his existential hermeneutical approach to Scripture, in which interpretations may depend on one's background or personal experiences.

According to him, the message of evangelism is *engagement in a struggle* against the forces of political and social oppression.

He says that 'if we believe that Christ has redeemed the situation of every human life, then any human life that is threatened requires action from the Church, and the protection of such people is the responsibility of the Church'.

This means that the message of evangelism that is to be delivered to the community by the Christian Church is to bring down 'principalities and powers', be they political or military, if it is deemed that these are responsible for social and political oppression (P.12).

Brown uses a scriptural passage from Isaiah to justify his position. He cites the ancient prophet as demanding 'freedom for prisoners, removal of oppression, and the supply of physical needs to the poor'. In return, according to Brown, Israel was promised that 'salvation would come to them like the dawn, and that the healing of the nation would come quickly' (Isaiah 58: 6- 8).

Herein lies a classic example of *failing to understand the context of Scripture*. God required Israel to show their obedience to the moral content of the Law, as a sign of submission to him. In addition, the passage in Isaiah must be considered within the context of its Old

Testament setting. The 'salvation' referred to was that of *national deliverance* from the hand of an angry God, because of Israel's disregard for his moral Law. It was by no means a message of personal spiritual salvation, such as Christ offers. The message of Isaiah, therefore, should correctly be interpreted as a *warning to the Israelites* to mend their ways, and not as a message of personal evangelism.

Brown doubts the efficacy of the Christian gospel in the lives of individuals, and discounts the transforming power of the Christian Gospel. He expresses no confidence in the biblical teaching that conversions to Christ will result in radically changed individuals, or positive social change.

He is skeptical towards any 'personal gospel', because he says that this ignores the fact that 'individual sins become lodged in corporate structures' in ways that 'perpetuate socialised forms of evil', particularly within Capitalism. He therefore believes that 'individual responsibility for evil must become the responsibility of corporate or political structures'. Thus while acknowledging individual sin, Brown places the responsibility for that sin on oppressive corporations or organizations that represent Capitalism. (P. 124)

Brown concludes that the only way to bring about positive changes within society is through social and political action. However, centuries of history tell us that mankind has a poor record when it comes to delivering social and political reform, especially to the poorest of the poor, who in most cases have lived in poverty, and died in poverty. To the poor who know history, and who understand the basically evil nature of mankind, Brown's 'evangelism' cannot be interpreted as good news. Brown's 'evangelism' is really an offer of lifelong struggle for economic justice, human dignity, and solidarity with the poor. It is a 'combined struggle' against the overwhelming despair and misery of this world.

### 1.7.3.2 The Apostolic Christian Church

In sharp contrast to Brown's message, stands the evangelical message of the Apostolic Christian Church. This will be illustrated by further considering vital aspects of a sermon preached by the apostle Peter to unbelieving Jews.

After having stunned his listeners by implicating each of them in the murder of Jesus Christ on the Roman cross days earlier, Peter now introduced them to the good news evangelism of the Apostolic era.

Gazing directly at them, and speaking with great authority, Peter made a statement that contained a powerful promise:

ACTS 2:39

υμιν γαρ εστιν η επαγγελια και τοις τεκνοις υμων και πασιν τοις εις μακραν οσους α  
ν προσκαλεσηται κυριος ο θεος ημων

INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

To you (for) is the promise, and to your children, and to all those at a distance; as many as  
the Lord our God may call

Peter told them in plain words that despite the fact that they had, through ignorance, been accomplices in the murder of the Son of God, the covenant promises of the Old Testament that had been made to their father Abraham *still stood*, and that they were not excluded from the rich blessings of this new Christian dispensation.

The promise was not only to them but to their children also, as well as to all nations and peoples of the world, *whom the Lord God may call* to be partakers in his most wonderful salvation. This was truly wonderful news to those who responded to God's call.

The response of these Jewish leaders was very encouraging to the disciples of Christ, and Luke records that large numbers of them believed the good news of the Christian Gospel, set aside their prejudices and preconceived ideas concerning their Messiah. They repented, and became follows of Christ. He describes it thus:

ACTS 2:41

οι μεν ουν ασμενωσ αποδεξαμενοι τον λογον αυτου εβαπτισθησαν και προσετεθησαν  
τη ημερα εκεινη ψυχαι ωσει τρισχιλαιοι

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**Those therefore who gladly had welcomed his word were baptised and were added that day (souls) about three thousand.**

Such was the power of the Spirit of God operating through Peter's sermon, that in a single day over 3000 Jewish men became ardent followers of Christ, and were baptized in water as an outward sign of the inward change that had taken place in their lives. This was a baptism *in the name of Christ*, whereby they publicly identified themselves *as Christians*, and by so doing also renounced their ties with the ceremony, ritual, and legalism of the past.

This good news evangelism knew no racial, ethnic, or national boundaries, and many are the examples in the New Testament of Jews who were converted to Christ, and intellectual Greeks who gladly bowed before Jesus and became his ardent followers.

Gentiles, who were sometimes referred to as 'dogs' by the religious Jews, gladly took the opportunity of claiming a place in the new family of Israel, and many pagans of polytheistic background cast away their idols to follow the Living God. Jesus confirms this when speaking to a Gentile woman whose daughter was demon-possessed, and who asked Jesus for help in delivering her daughter. Jesus replied:

**"It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs".**

She replied, **"Yes Lord, but even the dogs are permitted to eat the crumbs that fall beneath their masters table"**(Matthew 15:26-27).

### 1.7.4. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

#### 1.7.4.1. Brown

The following paragraph from his book describes his somewhat vague view regarding the comprehension and teaching of Scripture:



Understanding biblical theology, and instructing others in the same, should be regarded as 'timely perception', rather than 'timeless truth'. In our reading and teaching of the Scriptures, we should be engaging in a conversation with the Bible. We should not emphasize the stridency and harshness of Scripture, as this will result in hearing Scripture on its terms, rather than using Scripture as an echo chamber for our terms (P. 77).

Once again we encounter Brown's existential approach to Scripture.

He denies its timeless truth, and says that each person's interpretation is merely a perception, and cannot therefore be reliably passed on to others as truth.

Brown's hermeneutical method is to 'debate' the message of God using his concept of 'circular hermeneutics', before reaching a conclusion with regard to Scripture's usefulness in terms of modern sociological and spiritual issues.

While some Christians may welcome this approach, believing it to be sensible, democratic, and academic, its inevitable result is to undermine biblical authority and to render biblical instruction arbitrary in the Church.

His concept of biblical teaching is problematic, in the sense that it passes on to the student that which has already been cast in doubt by the teacher. Brown encourages 'engaging in conversation with Holy Scripture', and in this way he uses Scripture as a 'sounding board' for his own ideas, and also the ideas of others. This approach is hardly a solid platform from which to teach Scripture.

In stark contrast to Brown's view of Scripture, the evangelical fundamentalist regards his personal role in the study of Scripture as that of a *listener* to the Word. He is not there to supplement, correct, or offer 'modern insights' to the Word.

In considering the subject of biblical instruction, two questions need to be asked. The first of these regards the question of *biblical authority*, and the second the *necessity* for biblical teaching in churches.

If biblical authority is established and accepted, then biblical teaching becomes a logical and important aspect of church life. If on the other hand (as suggested by Brown) biblical

authority is subjective and variable, then biblical teaching within the churches becomes optional and arbitrary.

#### 1.7.4.2. The Apostolic Christian Church

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy with great passion concerning the subject of biblical authority, and his words were recorded in Greek as follows:

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16

πασα γραφη θεοπνευστος και ωφελιμος προς διδασκαλιαν προς ελεγχον προς επανορθωσιν προς παιδειαν την εν δικαιοσυνη

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**Every Scripture is God~breathed, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness.**

It must be kept in mind that 'Scripture' to the Apostolic Church was the Old Testament. The apostles accepted every word of Scripture as 'breathed by God', and they regarded Scripture as a means of daily contact with God, a means of instruction for holy living, and a means of personal guidance through life.

The Scriptures represented God's personal letter to mankind, and therefore assumed the utmost importance within the Church. Luke, who also participated in biblical instruction (along with the others), confirmed this when he put pen to paper in order to establish the record thus:

ACTS 2:42

ησαν δε προσκαρτερουντες τη διδαχη των αποστολων και τη κοινωνια και τη κλασει του αρτου και ταις προσευχαις

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**And they were steadfastly continuing in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship and the breaking of bread and prayers.**

It is little wonder that these disciples continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles. They recognized the Scripture as God's personal letter to them, and nothing was going to prevent them from studying Scripture.

### 1.8 CONTRASTING MINISTRIES: A 'SURGICAL OPINION'

We have studied two markedly differing views of Christian ministry, and the question arises as to the cause of these differences. I would like to discuss the cause from a 'surgical' point of view.

As a correct surgical diagnosis is important to surgical treatment, so is correct hermeneutics vital to Christian ministry. Any person will accept that a medical misdiagnosis will become a recipe for poor treatment. Less obvious to many people however, is that faulty hermeneutics inevitably results in unbalanced spiritual ministry.

Just as a precise and accurate medical diagnosis provides a platform for proper treatment that will eliminate disease, in the same way disciplined hermeneutics provides the platform for balanced and effective spiritual ministry.

Brown must be commended for his social and political concern. However, because his diagnosis of man's illnesses is unbiblical, his treatment is aimed at *social symptoms, rather than at the disease itself*, which is of a spiritual nature (i.e. sin). Such treatment can only be palliative and temporary; disappointing in terms of man's eternal spirit.

The result of his hermeneutic weakness is that his concepts of worship, social care, evangelism, and biblical instruction, differ from those of the New Testament.

At this time it is fitting to be reminded of Luke's record that not only confirms the accuracy of Peter's diagnosis of man's deadly spiritual illness, but also provides the everlasting cure:

#### ACTS 2:38

μετανοησατε και βαπτισθητω εκαστος υμων επι τω ονοματι  
ιησου χριστου εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων και ληψεσθε την δωρεαν  
του αγιου πνευματος

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

***Repent and be baptised each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit***

The diagnosis was accurate, and the treatment prescribed was appropriate. Those who obeyed were destined to become new creations in Christ. They were to become as salt and light within a dark and sinful society. They were to become the social 'building blocks' with which a glorious new world would be built.

## 1.9 CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this chapter is the establishment of a hypothesis that would assist in establishing effective biblical ministry in South Africa. The methodology selected to achieve this goal was a comparison of two vastly differing Christian ministries. Brown describes the first of these in his book, while Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, records the second. A chart summarising 'Comparative Theology and Ministry' is shown.

## 1.9.1. COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY &amp; MINISTRY

	BROWN	THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE APOSTOLIC ERA
THE MUSIC	A "Diminished Seventh" Subject to change	A Finished Symphony
THE MESSAGE	18 <sup>th</sup> Century origin  A Social Gospel for the masses No individual accountability for sin	1 <sup>st</sup> Century Apostolic Church origin A Spiritual Gospel for individuals Individual accountability for sin
THE MINISTRY	Missiology: Prioritises humanitarian need and socio-political reform	Missiology: Prioritises spiritual need  Promotes the Kingdom of Christ
WORSHIP	Anthropocentric Achieved by administration of social justice	Christocentric Achieved by personal obedience to Scripture. A natural response of gratitude to God
SOCIAL CARE	A means of achieving godliness A hope of divine acceptance. Social problems seen as the illness within society	The result of divine acceptance of individuals. The product of a new nature. Social problems seen as symptoms of the spiritual disease of sin
EVANGELISM	Christology: Jesus, the Political Saviour and Liberator from oppression. Goal to improve socio-political structures Demands group change	Christology: Jesus, the Spiritual Saviour and Liberator from sin. Goal to extend the spiritual kingdom of Christ Demands individual change
BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION	Disputes inerrancy of Scripture. Restricts authority of Scripture. Proposes individual and existential interpretation of Scripture	Accepts inerrancy of Scripture. Accepts authority of Scripture. Implements disciplined hermeneutics in local churches

Identical parameters of ministry were used in both cases, in order to establish academic fairness, and to reach an honest conclusion. The ultimate search in both ministries is for 'balance' between the four parameters that were selected. These are worship, social caring, evangelism, and biblical instruction. This perfect balance was identified in the ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church.

The apostle Paul brings hope and encouragement to all South Africans when he put pen to paper, and wrote in the Greek language one of the most amazing sentences ever written. It reads as follows:

(2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

ὥστε εἰ τις ἐν χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις τὰ ἀρχαία παρῆλθεν ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ τὰ πάντα

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**So that if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation; the old things passed away. Look! Have become new, all things.**

The future hope of South Africa, and indeed of the world, is stated in the words above. When men and women are found to be new creations in Christ, the thrilling anticipation of a South African society that will reflect the same balance of Christian ministry that marked the early Church, is close at hand.

When considering the amazing social and cultural mix of the Apostolic Christian Church, one cannot help but to reflect on our land, South Africa, which is commonly known as the 'Rainbow Nation'.

We have eleven recognised spoken languages, nine provinces, and almost 50 million people who are so different from each other that only a divine miracle could bond us together in a way that would display the harmony and balance, witnessed within the society of the early Church.

That miracle took place in the first century Christian Church, where through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, a rich diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and nations were miraculously bonded together with a spiritual bond in Christ that has lasted for over 2000 years. God is no respecter of persons, and if he can do that for the Apostolic Christian Church, then there is no reason why he should not do exactly the same thing for the 21st century Church. The key factors in achieving this are firstly our willingness to live lives of personal obedience to Christ, and secondly our willingness to share this great Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with our neighbours, whoever they may be. Our focus and attention must be on Christ.

The communistic Peoples' Republic of China is a 21<sup>st</sup> century example of a land with social tensions and artificial barriers between its peoples, in the form of 48 so-called 'minority groups'. Writing in the publication 'Rising Sectionalism in China', the author mentions 'serious economic disparities intertwined with ethnic differences' (Wei 1996:1). It is a land ripe for the Gospel of Christ, which alone is able to transform the lives of men and women, bringing about reconciliation, love, and true unity in that land.

South Africa and China are both examples of nations ripe for the Gospel of Christ. The peoples of these lands provide a perfect setting for another miraculous transformation of society by the Holy Spirit, and it is to this end that we should all work and pray.

If this is to happen, it will be through the ministry of the Christian Church, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Church in society thus becomes of great importance, and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 2.

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 2.1. SOCIETY DEFINED AND DISCUSSED

The term 'Society' means different things to different people, and for this reason it seems appropriate to seek a formal definition.

It is widely accepted that a French sociologist named Auguste Comte (1820) was the first person to coin the term 'Sociology', and this was the first scientific attempt to recognize that society is composed of individuals, who in turn makeup groups and institutions (World Book Encyclopedia: P.460).

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language defines society in somewhat different terms as follows:

Society reflects the totality of social relationships among humans, with each group broadly distinguished from other groups by mutual interests, participation in characteristic relationships, shared institutions, and a common culture. The cultural institutions that develop are often of a self-perpetuating nature (2000:752).

In the book 'Origins of Sociology', Small explains modern trends in defining society, by making this observation:

In the 21st century, sociologists have specialized in many different areas, with the result that the definition of society has become extremely complex. There is no longer a clear definition of society *as a whole*, because this concept became so broad as to become useless in practical terms, and so no longer exists. Instead sociologists now define a multiplicity of differing societies (1999:24).



No matter how we define society, it is never a completely homogenous, uniform entity, but is comprised of complex structures, groupings, and sub-groupings that vary within each community, geographic area, and nation throughout the world (Small 1999: 121).

Nevertheless, within the complexity of modern sociology, the application of statistical and other techniques in understanding the way people act and think as members of social groups, remains the most important sociological function.

### 2.1.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN SOCIETY

The individual is the basic unit of any society. This fact is of great significance when considering the role of the Christian Church in society, because by implication, changes that take place *within individuals* will also affect society as a whole.

Individuals form groups, and groups form institutions such as colleges, schools, churches, clubs, and financial organisations. The framework for Law and Justice within society is normally the function of statutory bodies such as local, regional, and national government.

The individual's concept of 'Law and Justice' depends largely on principles learned during childhood experience within the family unit. It is at this early stage that authority figures within that unit, shape an individual child's perceptions. This is an ongoing educational process.

### 2.1.2. SOCIAL CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION

The term 'education' in the widest sense is the sum total of mental, psychological, spiritual and physical input into a child's learning experience. Family influence plays a major role in the process of such education. The way in which a child is educated is a matter of opinion and varies in different societies and nations.

Irrespective of the methodology used in teaching individuals, the total educational process is what produces patterns of interaction between individuals, and with various groups within society. This is of great importance in the establishment of a stable society (Onyejiaku 1982:32).

Numerous ideas have been propagated concerning behavioural patterns in society. Two theories summarise types of human behaviour in a rational manner, although representing the extremes of practical psychology. Both these theories begin with the individual and his or her immediate family environment, and both take environmental factors into account.

#### 2.1.2.1. The Theory Of Passive Compliance

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many sociologists believed that the behavioural patterns of individuals within any society depended entirely on the various social forces (pressures) of society upon an individual. They refer to this as the 'Theory of Passive Compliance', which implies that external social pressures determine human behaviour (Young 1979:39).

Young refers to the difficulties of individual decision-making ability within society, and makes the point that individuals face a 'multiplicity of choice problems' imposed upon them, and which limit their decision-making capacity, causing them to act in ways that may be foreign to their childhood learning experiences (1979:13).

This highlights the fact that the family unit, and other 'pressure groups' within society have considerable weight in influencing individual decision-making. In terms of this dissertation, it is important to include the *Christian Church* among those institutions that influence the total educational process of individuals within society (Peterson 1986:91).

The theory of Passive Compliance supposes that individuals have *little choice* in the formation of their characters and behaviour. Negative behaviour is seen as the inevitable result of external negative pressure on the individual. According to this theory there is no

real expectation that an individual need take personal responsibility for his or her behaviour, as this has been determined by others (Fields 1996:17).

The theory has emerged in various modified forms, and remains popular in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in modern psychology and medical psychiatry. It places the responsibility for negative behaviour more on the environment, and less on the individual.

The result is clearly demonstrated within the justice systems operating in various countries (especially Western countries), where those who break the law receive minimal penalties for relatively serious offences. Decisions taken from the legal bench are increasingly demonstrating a shift of blame away from the individual, and onto environmental factors. In this way two individuals committing the same offence, but coming from different environmental backgrounds, may be handed down markedly differing sentences from the same judge (Chiarloni, Gottwald, & Wratten 1999:157)

In a similar way, medical psychiatrists testifying as expert witnesses in courts, tend to favour the view that guilt associated with Passive Compliance, produces various neuroses and psychoses, and that the blame for dangerous or criminal behaviour, is therefore to be laid at the feet of the community in which the individual grew up (Moseley 1995:1).

### 2.1.2.2 The Theory Of Active Assertion

Representing the other extremity of sociological thought in terms of the aetiology of human behaviour, is the theory of Active Assertion.

In terms of this theory, although environmental factors are not entirely discounted, there is an expectation that the individual must ultimately be held responsible for his or her own actions. The proponents of this concept maintain that 'broadly accepted behavioural norms' should apply to all individuals, irrespective of their environmental background.

Stated differently, each individual has the *inherent capability of resisting* external negative pressures from society, and expressing positive assertiveness in terms of behaviour (Christensen 1994:74).

Alan Friedman, writing about assertiveness in society defines it by saying that assertiveness is a term referring to 'self-expression that enhances the individual's ability to control his or her own behaviour'. In his view this second theory of causation in human behaviour is in reality *the opposite* of the first theory. He points out that 'assertiveness implies neither self-centeredness nor belligerence' (2001:262).

According to Schur, this is a positive way to think about assertiveness, bearing in mind that some take it to mean selfishness, which is generally considered a negative force within society (Schur 1976:74).

The theory allows for an individual to exercise moral or ethical choices, which are able (and expected) to over-ride the various negative pressures of society. In this way individuals become accountable for their behavioural patterns, despite the pressures of the immediate environment (Friedman 2001:156).

Gardner makes a most interesting statement with regard to Chinese methods in child education, and the significance of his remarks in the South African context, is that there is a substantial Chinese population within South Africa.

He explains his personal experience with Chinese educational methodology in this way:

Some educationists believe that children should be given precise guidance in their developmental stages of learning, while others (such as those in the USA) believe that a child should be allowed to figure things out, more or less alone.

The theory behind the American methodology is that as long as the child is *shown exactly how to do something* - whether it be placing a key in a key slot, drawing a rooster or making amends for a misdeed - he is *less likely to figure things out himself*. They also believe that he is less likely to view life - as Americans do - as a series of situations in which he has to learn to think for himself, to solve problems on his own, and even to discover new problems for which creative solutions are required.

My experience with Chinese educationists has taught me to think differently. Their concept was the opposite to that discussed in the previous paragraph. The Chinese theory is that a child should be guided with extreme gentleness, in precisely the desired direction.

I came to realize that these Chinese teachers were not just shaping a child's performance in a random manner, but *in the best Chinese tradition*, they were 'ba zhe shou jiao' - 'teaching by holding his hand' - so much so that he would happily come back for more.

Suddenly I had an inspiration, and decided to experiment with Chinese children who had been educated in this manner. My suspicion was that they would be incapable of performing tasks for which they had not been previously trained.

I asked three 10-year-olds to draw my face. The assignment at first nonplussed my three 'guinea pigs', but soon they undertook it with gusto, and each produced a credible result. Not only did these children *adapt* remarkably well to the unexpected, but they also *enjoyed* the challenge (1989: 54).

There is some evidence in these findings to support the view that diligent, active guidance of children's education, does not detract from their ability to be 'actively assertive' in coping with the difficulties of life, and in problem-solving.

### 2.1.2.3. Discussion Of The Two Theories

The obvious question is "Which of these two theories is correct?" The Passive Compliance theory is more likely to apply in a situation where an individual has not had strong value systems applied to him directly through his or her immediate family. In this case, group and institutionalised pressures beyond the family would play a vital role in the formation of value systems. A young child who is orphaned would represent such a case.

Interestingly enough some sociological experts widen the definition of the term 'orphan' saying that there is a category of people in society who are not *biological* orphans, but *social* orphans. This category represents children (and adults) who have, for various reasons, chosen to *isolate themselves* from society, and in so doing have developed similar personality and behavioural patterns to those seen in biological orphans.

Beck, who is a sociologist, remarks:

While there are real-life orphans, and even more who are orphans through separation rather than death, many modern people have *made themselves into orphans* by disconnecting themselves from the specific cultures and loyalties that they learned when they began life (1999:27)

Addressing the question of the remarkably high divorce rate in South Africa, a journal reference is made in 'The Christian Century' to Apartheid as having been responsible for the 'forceful separation of families and communities into different geographical areas'.

The point is made that it was never the *popular choice* to become 'sociological orphans', but that nevertheless, the creation of vast numbers of sociological orphans was the result.

The effects of this on South African society were devastating to family structures and local communities. Marriages were practically dissolved through physical separation, and even though divorces were not necessarily legalized, the practicalities of 'divorce by separation' were the same for numerous families. This was therefore a form of Statutory Passive Compliance that was imposed on the people of South Africa (Ratner 2001:1).

Ratner continues to identify the problems and search for answers:

The economic controls that were in force during Apartheid had devastating effects on South Africans who were not, from the elite White groups. Large private corporations such as Anglo-America, De Beers, Sanlam, and others must share guilt in this regard. These financial injustices led to human rights abuses, and these corporations should carry legal responsibility, for much of the destabilisation of society and all the accompanying misery that ensued (2001:12).

High divorce rates in South Africa (and world wide) have led young people to perceive marriage in a negative light, believing that it is an institution foisted upon them from previous generations, that it is unlikely to succeed in the longer term, and that failure of marriage carries painful emotional, financial, and legal implications. For this reason many young couples are electing not to marry but simply to live together. While this arrangement may avoid some of the difficulties mentioned above, it lacks emotional, spiritual, and legal security. Furthermore children born out of wedlock are also subject to these same insecurities, and as a result become the victims of emotional instability and behavioural disorders. As these children become teenagers they begin to fill the 'security vacuum' in their lives by turning to alcohol and negative behaviour as a form of escapism (Kaufman, Stadler, & DeWet 2001 147).

White reports that South Africa is by no means alone with regard to sociological Passive Compliance, and similar difficulties among teenagers are becoming increasingly evident in Canada, Europe, and the United States of America.

This is a clear indication that a new generation of sociological orphans is emerging, who may, or may not, be biological orphans. Statistics in this regard are almost impossible to obtain because the definition of the term 'sociological orphan' remains vague. Most sociologists agree that true biological orphans form only a very small percentage of the world's 'orphans', while the vast majority of 'orphans' are now the sociological orphans with biological parents (White 2003:51).

From what has been discussed above, the conclusion that must logically be drawn is that *both* theories apply to the individual within society, but in *differing degrees*, depending on the presence and strength of the family unit, as well as any self-made social problems affecting the individual. The importance of this will be discussed further when dealing with the role of the Christian Church in society in chapter three.

### 2.1.3. SOCIAL COMPLIANCE

#### 2.1.3.1. Major Historical Forces

Major historical forces *requiring social compliance*, have been the 'Fall of Mankind' described in the third chapter of Genesis, the Ten Commandments of God issued to Moses, the Incarnation of God in the form of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, the written Word of God in the form of the 66 books comprising the Canon of Scripture, the establishment of the Christian Church, the Industrial Revolution, the establishment of the Hindu and Islamic faiths, the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther, Evolutionism, Communism, and Capitalism.

These have been the main factors in determining mass social compliance. The immense power of these forces has swept all before them during the course of human history, like giant Tsunami tidal waves. The greatest of all these forces of social compliance has been the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the subsequent mighty influence of the

Christian Church on this world, even resulting in the universal adoption of the Christian Calendar (Haigh 1993:279).

Other forces have also been operational, but these have tended to be of lesser consequence for society as a whole.

#### 2.1.4. SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

South Africa is referred to as the 'Rainbow Nation' for reason of having one of the world's most complex and heterogeneous populations. Murray remarks:

The pride so many South Africans express in their country, their flag, and their president inspired us to think that yes, the obstacles will be overcome and the Rainbow Nation will not forever resemble a rainbow whose parallel lines never meet, one colour always on top, and another on the bottom (1997:2).

There are eleven recognised languages spoken, and a population of about 50 million people, who are *diverse in culture and ethnicity*. For this reason the post-Apartheid, democratic South Africa, has been hailed internationally as a 'socio-political miracle', but one writer adds a note of caution by saying, 'South Africa needs an *economic miracle* to follow its political miracle, if its infant democracy is to survive' (Boyd & Keeton 2001:71)

No doubt this is true, and the miracle will only happen if South Africans work hard together and make it happen.

South Africa's goal of 'Unity in Diversity' is a highly desirable and commendable objective. The relevance of this goal will become apparent when the subject of the role of the Christian Church in South African society is discussed in depth in chapter three.



### 2.1.5. SOCIAL AUTHORITY

It is useful to realise that the Ten Commandments handed down to Moses were directed at *individuals*, and not at groups of people, institutions, or the nation of Israel.

The difficulty from a sociological point of view, is that it is *not humanly possible* to keep the Ten Commandments because of man's inherently sinful nature. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans writes:

**The Law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to bring the whole world into judgment before God. No one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what his Law commands. The more we know God's Law, the clearer it becomes that we are not obeying it. Yet now, God in his gracious kindness is able to declare us not guilty. He does this through Christ Jesus who liberates us by taking away our sins (Romans 3:19-24).**

From this statement from Scripture it becomes clear that any social reform that will be meaningful and lasting in South Africa, will need to be Christ-centred, and led by the Christian Church.

Jewish scholar, Borowitz, in his book entitled 'Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew', observes:

**How self-reliant we are, considering our propensity to do evil!  
This question lies behind my effort to think about revelation, about our knowing what God wants of us. I find considerable continuity between my experience of God, and what in a wondrously more exalted way, must have happened to the prophets (1991:266).**

It is rather sad that the author, while referring to man's 'propensity to do evil', to 'revelation', and to 'knowing what God wants of us', is apparently unaware of the marvellous plan of salvation referred to by the apostle Paul in the third chapter of his letter to the Roman church.

It is only by coming into a personal relationship with Christ, that we receive supernatural power from the Holy Spirit that causes us to love, and to keep, these commandments. The commandments apply universally as the Biblical standard for living, and were not intended for exclusive application to believers in God.

God's moral Law as given to Moses, did not *cause* mankind to sin. Human beings were sinful before the Law was given, and continued to be sinful afterwards. Had the Law never been given to mankind, the human race would still be sinful, in bondage, and spiritually lost. The fault is therefore not with the Law, but with a human tendency to do evil. The Law enables us to discover how very far short of God's moral standards we fall, and therefore helps us to understand the necessity for repentance, forgiveness, and a restored personal relationship with God.

Giving the Law to mankind was therefore gracious and merciful, because it paved the way for an understanding of righteousness and holiness, and an appreciation of our sinfulness and need of salvation.

The apostle Paul confirms this in his letter to the church at Rome as follows:

Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in God's sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (Romans 3: 20-21).

The Ten Commandments given to Moses, represent God's Moral Law. The apostle James describes the Word of God as 'the perfect law of liberty', thus adopting a very positive attitude towards the Word of God, and suggesting that it is helpful in pointing us to Christ for salvation (James 1:23-25).

## 2.2 THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DEFINED

If one is to appreciate the role of the Christian Church in society, and its value to individual people, a clear definition of the term 'Christian Church' is required.

The definition and nature of the Christian Church is discussed in a publication entitled 'The gods of Africa, or the God of the Bible?' The writer says, "In the New Testament, the meaning of 'Church' is derived from the Greek word 'ekklesia', meaning 'assembly' " (Nyirongo 1997:143).

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Topic Finder comments thus on the Church:

The local church refers to those believers who assemble together in any locality. Metaphors which describe the universal church are also applied to the local church (espoused; husbandry; pillar; temper together). The letters of the New Testament are invariably addressed to local churches or particular individuals (lady) connected with the local church and address local issues (government; rule), as well as give warnings (harlot; lukewarm). (Vine, W.E. 1996:64).

This statement again draws attention to the fact that the term 'Church' has to do with people who meet together in the name of Christ, and is not to do with buildings or organizations.

"Exploring Church History" gives a vivid account of the birth of the first Christian Church:

120 of Christ's followers had seen and talked with the Lord. They now gathered in an upper room and awaited, at His command, the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, (50 days after the crucifixion and 10 days after the ascension) they were rewarded. A sound as of a rushing wind filled the house, they were all filled with the Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. Peter began his powerful preaching, and over 3000 people were converted to Christ following a single sermon! Thus the Church was born (Vos 1994:163)

The early Church began to grow and spread, and thus it was that the apostle John made reference to the 'seven churches' as follows:

REVELATION 1:20

ιωαννης ταις επτα εκκλησιαις ταις εν τη ασια

INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**To the seven assemblies which are in Asia**

From this we conclude that any assembly of persons whose faith and trust is in Jesus Christ, irrespective of numbers, is regarded as a *local Christian church*.

The Christian Church is not a place of worship, neither is it a denomination. In its biblical context, the term 'Christian Church' refers to assemblies of Christian believers, and this is evidenced by expressions such as 'the church at Corinth', 'the saints at Ephesus', or 'the faithful brothers at Colosse'. It refers to a unique, and timeless community of people who have been *called out* from the kingdom of Satan, to Christ (Colossians 1:13).

Nyirongo refers to the Church with reference to Revelation 21: 27, as follows:

Another biblical reference to the Christian Church describes it as the universal and invisible body of true believers in Christ. This body includes those in the Old and New Testaments, who have already departed this earth to be with the Lord. In fact the true Church of Christ is home to all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (1997:143).

While the above is not a direct biblical quotation, it is nevertheless valid when one considers that it is the invisible bond of the Holy Spirit that unites Christian believers as the body of Christ, and the fact that Christian believers exist in every nation of the world. These two facts justify the truth and accuracy of the above reference.

The New Bible Dictionary defines the Christian Church as follows:

The Church of the first century derived its name from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which refers to an assembly of believers. It does not refer to a building, and neither does it refer to an organization or even part of an organization. The New Testament knew of only one ekklesia, and did not find it necessary to explain the relationship between the one and the many. This early Church was a heavenly or spiritual reality, and did not belong to the form of this world, but to the realm of the resurrection glory, where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God, as explained in the second chapter of Hebrews, verse 12 (1996: 228).

Once again we see the point made that the Church consists of individual believers who meet in the name of Christ.

The apostle Paul, writing to Christian believers in Corinth says:

**'Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it' (1 Corinthians 12: 27).**

Understanding the nature and character of the Christian Church is helpful in understanding its true role in society.

## **2.2.1. ORPHANS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

### **2.2.1.1 The Importance Of Family Structure In Determining Social Behaviour**

The importance of the family structure in determining human behavior can never be overemphasized. We have seen that the result of fragmentation of the family carries disastrous consequences for society. We have also briefly considered the concept of 'sociological orphans' who have biological parents, and their increasing numbers among the total orphan population of South Africa, and of the world. Finally we have established that the word 'orphan' in sociological terms *may also be applied to adults* in terms of their sociological behaviour, stemming from their childhood experiences.

### **2.2.1.2 The Role Of The Christian Church In Orphan Care**

This role of the Church in the care of *biological orphans* has never been more important in South African society than it is today. For this reason a detailed examination of this subject will be *undertaken in chapter 6*, in the form of a case report on an orphanage for children who have been abandoned, and test HIV positive on admission to this Christian care centre.

Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit is able to heal the wound that has been left by the disruption of families through divorce, the abuse of alcohol, drug addiction and numerous other social issues that have a disintegrating effect on society.

We are reminded once again of the words attributed to the great St. Augustine, who believed that within the soul of every man is a 'God-shaped space', that can only be filled by

coming into a personal relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. This is the only way that man can find peace and rest for his soul (O'Connell 1989:1).

### 2.2.1.3. Biblical Advice For Social Stability

The importance of *the family unit* will be discussed in detail in chapter four, as this is clearly of fundamental importance in the establishment of a stable and happy society.

It is *the question of faith* that I would like to raise at this point.

The ancient prophet Habakkuk taught Israel that they should learn to *live by faith in God*, and not pin their hopes on their spiritual heritage, or become complacent about their privileged national position in the sight of God as his chosen people. This was intended to be a command to all *individual* Israelites, and not merely a call for national or corporate cooperation, as can be seen from the context of the book (Habakkuk 2:4).

The advice of the New Testament also indicates that people should live by faith in God, and that by so doing will bring happiness, peace, security, and cohesion to society.

The apostle Paul, writing a letter to Philemon and the local Colossian church says:

**'I keep hearing of your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your love for all God's people. Your kindness has so often refreshed the hearts of God's people' (Philemon 4-5).**

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes this point further, with this observation:

**'A righteous person shall live by faith, and God has no pleasure in anyone who turns away. We are not like those who turn their backs on God and seal their own fate, for we have faith that assures our salvation' (Hebrews 10: 38-39).**

These verses confirm that the Creator's intention is that all men everywhere should turn to God and live by faith. This is the biblical teaching that would naturally lead to a more stable and happy society.

King David makes it clear that when any man or woman is in correct relationship with God, then his or her attitude towards the commandments of God changes radically. He gives personal testimony to this fact, declaring:

**You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings. Now that you have made me listen, I now understand. You don't require burnt offerings for sin offerings. Instead I take great joy in keeping your Commandments, O my God, for your law is written in my heart. I have told everyone about your justice and I have not been afraid to speak out. I have told everyone about your faithfulness and your saving power (Psalm 39: 6- 8).**

The Lord Jesus remarked:

**'It is his thought life that defiles a man; for from within, out of a man's heart, come evil thoughts' (Mark 7:20-21).**

This statement from the Lord of Society underlines the fact that *it is the mind of each individual* that is of fundamental importance within society. Hence the value of God's commandments when applied to the mind and heart.

## **2.3. EARLY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.3.1. THE EARLIEST FOREIGN EXPLORERS**

These explorers came to our great African continent by ship in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They came as explorers, as merchants, as opportunists, as adventurers. They came to plunder Africa's wealth, and sadly, in some cases, to exploit her people. They developed a thriving slave trade and colonized Africa. They also brought with them education, technology, healthcare

and other good things. But the Gospel of Christ was just as foreign to them as they were to Africa (Campbell 2003:5).

### 2.3.2. THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Historically, the earliest Christian influence can be dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and the arrival of Dutch settlers in the Cape. They founded the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), which was associated with the Dutch East India Company, in the 'Cape of Good Hope'.

The NGK remains the largest and most influential of the Afrikaner churches, is Dutch in origin, Calvinist in its theology, and conservative in its politics. The first indigenous people of colour that became Christians came from among the slave population of the Cape. These 'slave Christians' and their descendants became known as the 'Cape Coloured' community (Lawson 1993:2)

The term 'Cape Coloured' has a cultural and territorial content. It applies to those persons of mixed race who are born into, regard themselves as, and are accepted as members of the Cape Coloured group, which has its focus in the Western Cape (Farred, 2000:36).

Apart from these few converted Christians, spiritual darkness persisted in Africa, until by the grace of God, men like Robert Moffat and David Livingstone brought the Gospel of Christ to Southern Africa.

### 2.3.3. ROBERT MOFFAT (1795-1883)

Robert Moffatt was a Scottish pioneer missionary to South Africa for over 50 years. He established mission stations in Southern Africa, translated the Bible into the language of the 'Bechuanas', and wrote two missionary books on South Africa: '*Labours and Scenes in South Africa*' and '*Rivers of Water in a Dry Place*'.

His eldest daughter, Mary, married David Livingstone.



Barlow, writing on behalf of 'Worldwide Missions', remarks:

It seemed a small thing to some in a southern Scotland church, when a boy about four years old, from a home of poor but pious parents, knelt at an altar to pray. His decision to become a missionary to Africa was despised by the elders. Thank God, one unnamed person bothered to kneel in prayer beside 'Robbie', and thus gave the boy the courage and hope to fulfil his promise to serve God in Africa (1976, www).

While ministering in South Africa Moffat translated the New Testament into African languages in order to help Africans learn God's Word and live God's way. He not only translated the text, but he also obtained a press, and produced printed copies. He then assisted with literacy classes, and trained leaders who later became Bible teachers.

Moffat returned only once to his native Scotland, where he persuaded Livingstone to come to Africa instead of China. Robert Moffat died shortly after returning to South Africa. There awaited him 'a crown of righteousness' that no one would be able to take away (2 Timothy 4:8).

Barlow concludes by paying tribute to a great Christian leader:

Moffat had opened jungle villages to the Gospel, he had braved the dangers of African jungles, and withstood medicine men like Elijah had withstood the prophets of Baal at Carmel. He had preached, he had translated, he had instructed Africans to read, write, sing and farm. He had exalted Christ and magnified the ministry of a missionary. On August 9, 1883, he wound his watch with a trembling hand. 'For the last time,' he said. And it was so. The next morning the 88 year-old 'soldier of the Cross' was dead. 84 years of his life had been given to his Lord since that night, as a 4 year-old, he had come to Christ (1976. www).

#### 2.3.4. DAVID LIVINGSTONE

David Livingstone ministered in Africa for 30 years during the mid nineteenth century. He built mightily upon the foundation Moffat had so ably laid, and both these men made an enormous contribution to the establishment of Christianity in South Africa. These great Christian leaders left behind them rudimentary local churches. These rudimentary churches

grew, developed, and indeed shone for Christ, long after Moffat and Livingstone had completed their work and passed on to glory. The churches flourished in South Africa, and now also span the length and breadth of our beloved African Continent (Campbell 2003:5).

Seaver pays Livingstone an enormous compliment when he compares his life with that of the great apostle Paul:

Livingstone's life is no exception; it is rather a conspicuous example of a stark inexorable truth—the hope of the life to come, the hope of eternal glory. The verdict of the great apostle, whom he in many ways closely resembles, is borne out in his own experience: 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' (1957:629).

Without doubt, Moffat and Livingstone each contributed a lion's share in the laying down of the foundation on which was built the glorious Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Southern Africa.

Numerous other Protestant and Catholic missionaries played a part in the establishment of Christian churches, schools, and educational institutions in South Africa, and indeed these institutions are still very much part of modern South African society (Beck 2000:44).

## **24. THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH**

### **24.1. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY**

Traditional African community is claimed by some to *closely resemble the early Christian Church* in terms of its functions and interactions. Those who believe this, argue that the traditional African community is comparable to the Biblical standard for the Christian Church, and at most might require only minor adjustments to make it an ideal New Testament model society (Nyirongo 1997:139).

We need to establish the truth concerning this statement, as it carries wide implications regarding the role of the Christian Church in South Africa.

Shorter says that Ujamaa (bliss) is participating in the 'divine African community life', which demonstrates the same qualities of love, care, and concern that were shown by the Apostolic Church. According to him the African community is a replica of the 'community of spirit' demonstrated during the ministry of the early Christian Church (1978:122,144).

Other African communities have sought to discover the 'ideal' social experience in communal life. The most distinctive and committed attempt to introduce grassroots participation and economic restructuring was the Tanzanian experiment under Julius Nyerere. Nyerere saw this path as leading to the ultimate African community, where 'Ujaama' would be the common experience.

The experiment failed in the general community, but was apparently successful only within the precincts of the presidential palace, according to Motala who remarked:

The word 'Ujamaa' was the late Julius Nyerere's favourite word when addressing the masses of his own people. It was intended to engender a feeling of unity, cohesion, and belonging amongst the many different social groupings of the country (1994:151).

Shorter provides a glowing report on African communal life, and compares it to life described in the Apostolic Church, saying:

African traditional community involvement is materially Christian. It makes one think of the community involvement of the early Christians, and only needs extra grace and motivation to become the mystical Body of Christ (1978:122)

There is little doubt that 'extra grace' is needed in South African communities, but the question is whether or not this is *all that is needed* to achieve biblical Apostolic communal living? The suggestion that African communities in themselves, could, by further improvement, become the 'mystical Body of Christ' is unbiblical, and would be considered by many as heretical.

What Shorter seems to overlook is that the early Christian Church displayed not just an *improvement* in their society, but a *radical and personal transformation* of each new Christian

believer (2 Corinthians 5:17). The apostle Paul insists that the Christian faith radically changes society through the creation of 'new creatures' within that society through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Writing to the believers in Corinth he observes:

**Those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same any more, for the old life has gone, and the new life has begun. All this newness of life is from God, who has brought us back to himself through what Christ did. God has now given us the task of telling others this wonderful news. We urge you all, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).**

#### 2.4.2. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN COMMUNITY IS CENTRED ON ANCESTORS

Nyirongo offers an entirely different point of view regarding African communal life:

*The African Community Is Centred On The Ancestors, and not on the individual. It is the ancestors that provide stability to the community. God is acknowledged by most Africans, but is remote in their thinking, just as the tribal chief is remote and unapproachable to the ordinary member of society. The ancestors serve as mediators between the people and God (1997:141).*

#### 2.4.3. THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF IS THE ONLY MEDIATOR

Religion worldwide has tried to introduce various other mediators into worship, but the Scripture is clear that Jesus is the only acceptable mediator between man and God. This statement, while being true, is obviously offensive to other religions, who consider Christianity as being arrogant and exclusive. Nevertheless we must go according to the words of Jesus:

**'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me' (John 14: 6).**

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy was adamant:

**'There is only one God, and one mediator between God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus' (1 Timothy 2:5).**

There is therefore no biblical role that African ancestors can play in the Christian faith. Yet to do away with ancestral worship and mediation, is to question the entire tribal authority and belief system. It is also to incur the wrath of tribal chiefs, and risk expulsion from the community (Nyirongo 1997:141).

#### 2.4.4. SOUTH AFRICAN BISHOP DESMOND TUTU.

Bishop Tutu has, for many years, given the impression that he is not opposed to the introduction of African traditions into Christian worship. There is no harm in this provided that traditional practices are in conformity with New Testament teaching.

However, in his book 'Whither African Theology' the bishop makes this statement:

It is reassuring to know that we have a genuine knowledge of God, and that we have our own African ways of communion with deity. We can fashion new ways of speaking to God, in styles of worship consistent with our new faith. African religious experience should become the vehicle for conveying the Gospel verities in Africa (Tutu 1978:366).

While Tutu does not go as far as to say that he approves of ancestral mediation in worship, to the implication of the statement is obvious from the text, as there is no other rational explanation for his words.

Commenting on Tutu's views, Nyirongo responds:

Observe that when Tutu speaks of 'genuine knowledge of God', and 'our own ways of communion with deity', *he does not exclude* the lesser deities or intermediaries that are at the centre of African worship. The reason is because Tutu does not draw any distinction between African intermediaries, angels, or canonised saints acting as mediators in worship between man and God. I

would simply wish to point out that Tutu's position is in conflict with biblical teaching concerning worship. In true worship, neither angels, nor saints, nor ancestors qualify as mediators between man and God (1997:4).

Many experienced Christians who know the African churches well, will agree with Nyirongo's assessment, and the truth of the matter is that there remains confusion in the minds of many African Christians concerning the legitimacy of ancestral worship. This is due largely to a lack of solid biblical teaching.

#### 2.4.5. BISHOP LUCAS VINCENT SUPPORTS TUTU

Bishop Tutu's views were not new or revolutionary, and were in fact voiced by Bishop Vincent who was Bishop of Masasi, Zanzibar (1926-1944), many years earlier than Tutu's statement.

This is proof that such views were not limited to African theologians, who only emerged in the post-colonial era between 1926-1965. Bishop Vincent had this to say:

The more that African religion and its traditions become understood, the more it reveals the 'light that lightens every man that cometh into the world'. African religion may appear to be pagan from the outside, but if unveiled we discover divine truths that can be used as a new foundation for the Christian faith (Nyirongo 1997:4).

This statement, if taken at face value is blasphemous, in that it suggests that African religion and its traditions represent the *Light that lightens our world*. These words in Scripture apply *exclusively* to the Lord Jesus (John 1:1-9).

#### 2.4.6. African Tribal Customs Hinder Worship

African traditional practices, such as ancestral mediation, have confused local African churches concerning true biblical worship. This is largely due to the manner in which tribal systems operate. Traditions that have existed for hundreds of years are firmly established through the chiefs, and deviations from these time-honoured practices are not tolerated. Discipline is handed down from the chiefs and is severe at times. A new Christian who resists ancestral worship, risks being beaten or even expelled from the community for non-compliance with tradition, which is seen by the chiefs as a form of 'heresy' (Junod, 1962:39).

Nyirongo explains:

The African community is very hierarchical. A tribesman has to know not only where he fits into the whole maze of relationships. His position and code of conduct is determined entirely by the community and the chiefs, and has nothing to do with his relationship with God. As a result he is never allowed to develop his natural gifts or initiatives as an individual, and this may be the reason why African communities have remained static for centuries (1997:143).

#### 2.4.7. POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND TECHNICAL PROGRESS SLOW IN AFRICA

This draws our attention towards a *new problem* within African communities. Nyirongo attributes this to the principle of ultra- authoritarian dominance by tribal chiefs that destroys individual initiatives within the community.

Nyirongo's theory does seem to have some validity in so far as lack of infra-structural progress and national development are concerned, but there are other contributing factors that also need to be considered, such as widespread disease, overpopulation, poor education of the masses, and on-going communal poverty (Fagley, 1960:133).

#### 2.4.8. POOR GOVERNMENT AND FINANCIAL CONTROL

In a country such as Nigeria, where vast oil wealth is part of that country's natural heritage, there is nevertheless extreme poverty among the rural people. We could assume that this is partly because of tribal authorities suppressing individual initiatives, but one has to suspect that the money raised from the sale of oil, is not being allowed to benefit the masses. If that is the case, then this situation represents *the opposite* of the care for disadvantaged people shown in the Apostolic Christian Church. (Nyirongo 1997:154).

The same criticism must also be levelled at the South African Apartheid government, and at major South African financial conglomerates such as those controlling the mining industry. During a period of 50 years, their policies precluded any benefit to the poorest of the poor in terms of South Africa's natural wealth. Instead they regarded these resources as the exclusive preserve of a small White community.

#### 2.4.9. AFRICAN TRADITION AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT ODDS

There is a wide gap between the Christian Church and the African tribe in terms of both administration, planning, priorities, and also execution of tasks. In the case of the African tribe, the chiefs draw up its principles, while in the case of the Church they are perceived as being biblically based (Junod, 1962:57).

Traditional African culture is therefore not helpful to the tribal person who becomes a Christian. The truth is that the newly converted African Christian is required by God to undergo a complete transformation of his belief system, his thinking, and his conduct. He may also have to contend with enormous pressures applied to him from the hierarchy within the tribe to reject Biblical teaching, in favour of tribal authority. Only the supernatural power of the Spirit of God can enable him to follow a biblical life style (Nyirongo 1997:148).



## 2.5. APARTHEID— LEGACY OF RACISM AND HATRED

The story of South Africa's political life is quite extraordinary, and will be the subject of debate for many years to come. The Apartheid regime was infamous, and became the focal point of discussion at the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, international parliaments, and of course household discussions throughout the world.

Seidman summarizes this very aptly when referring to the Apartheid regime, saying:

For fifty years, it stood in the annals of social science as a monument to racial inequality. For decades, South Africa's unique status rested on the extreme character of Apartheid. It represented a conscious system of social engineering, gradually constructed following the Nationalist Party's election victory in 1948, and explicitly designed to maintain white supremacy (1999:28).

The effects on the nation were devastating, affecting mainly the black peoples, other minority groups who were classified as 'black', and the poorest of the poor.

### 2.5.1. THE EFFECT OF APARTHEID ON SOCIETY

#### 2.5.1.1. Legalised Apartheid

This meant that social segregation was extreme, irreversible, and all encompassing. Interracial sex or marriage was prohibited, and public facilities—from schools and libraries to parks and restaurants—were strictly divided along racial lines. Inequality was built into the system, and even the educational curricula used for students of different races reflected the State's official vision of white supremacy. Residential areas were completely segregated by law. Under the Group Areas Act, Blacks were moved to new townships far from the centres of cities and towns. The enforcement of this Act required individual black people to carry a 'Pass' certificate with them at all times, which had to be checked by police to ensure that they had not travelled to a forbidden area within society.

### 2.5.1.2 The Group Areas Act

Price gives a vivid summary of the South African social scene at the height of Apartheid, providing a gruesome picture of what can only be described as a living nightmare for the majority of South Africans:

For over two decades after 1948, the Group Areas Act played a role in a program designed by apartheid's architects to alter the racial demography of South Africa, so as to reduce the size of the African population in what was officially designated 'white South Africa.' The policy that restricted movement of non-white persons was termed 'Influx Control'. This programme had three basic components: (1) the Group Areas Act prohibition against Africans being present in South Africa's cities for more than seventy-two hours without official permission; (2) Labour Bureaus, which selected 'suitable labour', by matching African workers with specific jobs, and then granting them the required official permission to work for a specific employer and live in a designated urban township. (3) Strict enforcement of already existing 'Pass Laws' so as to ensure compliance with the seventy-two-hour provision of the Group Areas Act. By this means the government sought to remove from the South African heartland all but those Africans whose presence was economically necessary. The effort put into enforcement of influx control attests to the importance assigned to it by the governing group. In the 1966-75 decade prosecutions under laws restricting the movement of Africans numbered an extraordinary 5.8 million (1991: 20).

### 2.5.1.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHINESE POPULATION

The effects of these policies were by no means restricted to Black Africans (who comprised the majority of South Africa's population), but were also applied to other minority groups within South Africa, with equal vigour and ferocity. Singled out for humiliation was a community representing one of the oldest civilizations on earth, and whose kind and gentle people had the misfortune to be labelled 'black' by the Nationalist Government. This was the South African Chinese population.

A Christian member of this population has described the Apartheid years from his own personal point of view as follows:

After the National Party took power in 1948 a number of laws fundamental to the development of the Apartheid ideology were introduced. These laws eroded human rights and the free formation of the family among the Chinese. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, No. 55 of 1949 for example, made it a crime for 'Europeans' (whites) to marry 'non-Europeans' (non-whites). This law therefore prohibited Chinese from marrying 'Europeans' as Chinese were classified as 'non-Europeans'.

The law allowed non-Whites to intermarry amongst themselves, but a White person was not allowed to be a partner to a non-White. Marriages contracted between disallowed parties were null and void, except under special circumstances. This law resulted in mixed couples having to break up or to live together surreptitiously, always worried about being arrested. Children born of such liaisons were illegitimate.

One's racial classification determined a person's locality of residence, employment, educational opportunities, and even the sports and entertainment facilities available to the person. Race also determined to whom a person may be legitimately married.

Many of the present generation of parents, whose own parents may have been illiterate, were allowed to study at church schools. As could be expected, the children were exposed to Christianity and many of them were converted along with their parents.

In a 1986 survey to ascertain the religious affiliation of the Johannesburg Chinese community, it was found that 58,47% followed the Christian faith with 2,000 members in the Roman Catholic Church (47,61%) and 456 Protestant members in various denominations (10,85%).

The future of the Chinese family in South Africa is subject to a number of factors. The freedom of individuals to marry anyone of their choice and the greater acceptance of non-Chinese people (especially white Caucasians) as family friends has already created a positive trend, which is steadily developing (Song 1993:353).

This statement, no doubt represents the experience of other minority groups such as the South African Indians, during the Apartheid years.

## 2.6. THE PERSONAL EFFECTS

Those who fell foul of the Apartheid system were prohibited from owning property, restricted regarding a place of residence, and limited in terms of travel within the country. The following restrictions are noteworthy.

### 2.6.1. ECONOMIC EFFECTS

These were reflected in areas such as employment, and opportunities for self-improvement which were restricted by Apartheid. Only White Afrikaners were privileged in this regard. In addition, salaries for 'non-whites' were generally lower than those received by whites. Many whites (especially Christians) opposed the Apartheid regime vigorously, and protested against discrimination in the work place. However, the *relatively small number* of Christian voices that were opposed to the system, could be likened to 'voices crying in the wilderness', and had no noticeable effect nationally.

In the political forefront of this 'White' Christian opposition to the Apartheid regime were men such as Beyers Naude from the Dutch Reformed Church, Michael Cassidy of 'Africa Enterprise', and Catholic Archbishop Dennis Hurley.

It was, however, international pressure that finally brought the Apartheid regime to its knees.

### 2.6.2. POLITICAL EFFECTS

These were basically the disenfranchisement of the majority of the South African population. This ensured that they would not have the ability to effect any meaningful political change in their own country.

### 2.6.3. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS

The main effects included poorer schooling and tertiary education for the majority of the people of South Africa. This was due to the deliberate limitation of funding for 'black education', and the placement of 'black institutions' in geographic regions remote from 'White' institutions of learning, and away from other facilities that normally support educational institutions, such as stationers, shopping centres, transport, and maintenance facilities.

#### 2.6.4. HEALTH CARE EFFECTS

Although segregated along racial lines, speaking as a medical person, I believe that healthcare for the poorer peoples was nevertheless very good in certain respects, and this helped the government to avoid international pressure from the medical world. Even the poorest rural black people had access to any of the major State hospitals at no charge at all. Sophisticated treatments such as renal dialysis, costly hormonal treatments, chemotherapy, and even organ transplantation were available free of charge to the poor, while the more privileged whites had to pay towards equivalent treatment for themselves or their families. Hospitals were well equipped, well staffed, and well managed.

It is both interesting and rather depressing, to note that these same State hospitals in the post Apartheid South Africa are in a state of decay, neglect, and mismanagement. In my own view this cannot be attributed to the effects of Apartheid, but appears to be the result of poor administration and financial mismanagement.

##### 2.6.4.1. Primary Health Care Neglected

With a little more planning and effort from the government, development of primary health care in rural areas through a network of medical clinics could, to a large extent, have *prevented* much disease and suffering. Even a better availability of a measles vaccine for rural children would have saved many lives.

This point regarding prophylaxis in medical care, is made by Smit in her article 'The Impact of Labour Migration on African Families in South Africa', in which she comments:

*The erosion of family relationships under such conditions was substantial, and the effects of migratory labour on healthcare very detrimental, contributing to a high incidence of disease, especially Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (1997:533).*

## 2.7. NEW PRESIDENT, NEW NATION, NEW ERA

### 2.7.1. PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA ASSUMED OFFICE IN 1994

When Mandela was officially inaugurated as the new President of South Africa, that was historically, the end of Apartheid. The new South Africa under President Nelson Mandela's leadership was born. A traumatic chapter that had lasted 50 years in South Africa's history had closed. In Mandela's first speech following his release from 27 years in prison, Eades reminds us of the emotion of the moment:

I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy, and freedom for all. I stand here before you not as a prophet, but as your humble servant. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands. Today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognize that Apartheid has finally come to an end. It has been ended by our own collective and decisive mass action, in order to build peace and security in this, our land (1999:169).

### 2.7.2. CREDIT GIVEN TO NEW DEMOCRACY

Some years later, there is transparency in government and a sincere desire to raise the living standards of all the people, especially those who were at the bottom of the pile during the Apartheid years. Praising the new South Africa, Seidman says:

South Africa is not just another developing country. It now stands out from the rest in its *visibility*, and in the *legitimacy* of its current reform efforts. Since 1994 South Africa has offered a remarkably visible and transparent example of restructuring its laws and its society (1999:29).

## 2.8. THE EFFECTS OF APARTHEID ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### 2.8.1. 'CHRISTIAN CHURCH'

The term 'Christian church' is used here deliberately, so as to distinguish it from the broader and un-Biblical concepts that tend to arise from within and from without Christendom. The Christian Church is defined earlier in this chapter under section 2.2.

### 2.8.2. PHYSICAL SEPARATION OF CHRISTIANS

Physical separation of Christians was achieved by the apartheid regime through the implementation of the 'Group Areas Act'. This carried serious practical implications for believers in terms of communication and cooperation in the work of the Gospel.

### 2.8.3. SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EFFECTS

Official government policy tragically resulted in the tensions that produced estrangement of the white and black churches, and considerable uneasiness between believers. Black Christians no doubt had difficulty accepting their white counterparts without a degree of hesitation, even though most White Christians who took the trouble to travel into rural areas and mix with black believers, had never supported the Apartheid regime. Understandably, the appearance of a white skin in their midst, aroused feelings of anxiety and mistrust that still exist today, and will take some years to dissipate.

### 2.8.4. IRONY AMIDST TRAGEDY

The irony amidst tragedy is the fact that is that the Dutch Reformed Church was very active in Christian missions in South Africa, as well as in neighbouring Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia (Makhulu 2001: 273).

The author was personally involved as a volunteer medical missionary with the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe during the Apartheid years

This involvement in mission work produced a strange tension, in that while these churches, mission schools, and hospitals provided enormous social and medical relief to the poorest rural black communities, they were nevertheless seen by many as the 'missionary arm' of the oppressor, simply because the Dutch Reformed Church was closely affiliated with the ruling white Afrikaner National Party. (Naude 1985:163).

### 2.8.5. FINANCIAL DEPRIVATION

Financial difficulties affected mainly the black churches, and these were the churches that required the most financial support. These churches found life very difficult in terms of not being able to pay a Pastor, and not having the resources for spiritual growth, such as Christian literature, and Bible teachers. A lack of support from the wealthier white Christian churches was due to at least two factors:

**LONG DISTANCES** had to be travelled between churches, and this meant little physical contact, and therefore less interest in the affairs of other churches. It was a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

**FEAR AMONGST MANY WHITE CHRISTIANS** that a closer association with poor Black churches would represent a 'bottomless pit' of financial demands from those churches, and that was a disturbing consideration.

It is true to say that in any society, churches are generally regarded by the poor as being 'free service facilities', in the sense of being charitable organisations that are there to help supply the needs of the poor within society (Cobley 1990:17).

Furthermore, while the New Testament teaches that Christians should provide for their own local congregations, they must also consider the needs of those further afield. The apostle John confirmed this:



'If anyone has enough money to live well, and sees his brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can the love of God be in that person?' (1John 3:17).

## 2.8.6. EDUCATIONAL DEPRIVATION

Educational deprivation included shortages in the 'resources' mentioned in 2.8.3. include the necessary supplies of Bibles and Bible commentaries in African languages, other Christian literature, and academic training for Christian ministry. Bibles are available in various languages but the cost is prohibitive in the poorest rural churches. An additional problem is illiteracy among many poor churches in rural areas.

Christian educational centres such as Trinity Academy in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, are doing a sterling job by offering biblical studies to Black leaders and trainee pastors, from all over Africa. Trinity Academy commenced its ministry in 1985 and is linked to the University of Zululand Faculty of Theology.

Trinity Academy education is fully sponsored by predominantly 'White' churches, and is thus free to those participating. 95% of the students are 'Black', and all the current teachers are 'White'. The teaching staff is voluntary, and is unpaid.

The Psalmist said that God's Word was his source of light and guidance through life, and thus implied that without the Word to study, that he would be left in spiritual darkness and lostness. He wrote thus:

**Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path, and I will obey your wonderful Laws. I will never turn from your commandments, and will keep your principles to the end of my life. I hate those who are uncommitted to you, but my choice is clear—I will obey all the commands of my God (Psalm 119:105-115).**

Reflecting on the words of this Psalm, one realises the immense problems that a church faces if there is no Bible and no teacher. In South Africa there was also the difficulty of illiteracy in many rural churches. The lack of Christian education in black churches was evident from the toddler age, right through to elderly black Christians, who showed little spiritual growth during the Apartheid years (Hlatshwayo 2000:2).

The cultural aspects of Christian society require brief comment at this point. When people from diverse cultural backgrounds become Christians they are required to live their lives in conformity with New Testament teaching. There is no need however, for traditional customs to be discontinued, *provided that these customs are not unbiblical*. In fact it is a joy and delight to witness multicultural Christian gatherings, where Christ alone is a unifying force, and the obvious cultural differences lend richness and expression to such gatherings. It provides a timely reminder that God's heaven will be the home of believers from every nation in the world.

Having said this however, it should also be noted that the lack of Christian education and instruction in the Word of God has allowed unbiblical traditional African customs such as ancestral worship and polygamy to creep into Christian churches (Cole-Edwardes 2003 Personal Communication).

#### 2.8.7. AN UNBALANCED SPIRITUAL MINISTRY

A lack of balance in spiritual ministry in South African churches has been basically the result of non-compliance with the written Word of God. The balance of spiritual ministry evident in the Apostolic Christian Church was the result of personal obedience to the Word of God (Oden, 1964: 118).

Therefore, in the absence of such personal obedience one would expect the fine balance to be disturbed. This was a noticeable feature of black churches during the Apartheid era, especially those churches in isolated rural settings.

- **WORSHIP** was hindered by a belief in ancestral mediation.
- **SOCIAL CARE** was undermined by polygamy and promiscuity.
- **EVANGELISM** was hampered by a lack of personal holiness.
- **BIBLE TEACHING** was rendered virtually impossible in some Black churches by a lack of Bibles and a lack of Bible teachers (Cole-Edwardes, 2003. Personal Communication).

## 29. BALANCE OF SPIRITUAL MINISTRY DISRUPTED

The disruption of a balance in spiritual ministry in our churches has been caused by certain obvious and recurrent difficulties. Firstly there has been the problem with ancestral mediation in worship, which is clearly unbiblical and cannot possibly facilitate biblical worship. Secondly, the Apartheid regime has disrupted not only the fabric of our South African society over a period of 50 years, but in doing so has also contributed very significantly to the prevention as well as the disruption of biblical spiritual ministry within South African churches.

The early positive Christian influence of missionaries such as Moffat and Livingstone were harmed as a result. This represented a tragic chapter in the history of South Africa.

The possible role of the Christian Church in rebuilding South African society now requires some consideration, not only from a Christian perspective, but also from the point of view of those who reject the Christian Gospel.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

### OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN SOCIETY

#### 3.1 THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH BELONGS TO THE TRIUNE GOD

At the outset of this chapter it must be stated that the Christian Church *belongs to the Triune God*, namely God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This fact is made clear by the apostle John, who referring to Jesus as the 'Word' wrote:

**"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7).**

Therefore, any service rendered by the Christian Church within society is rendered in the name of, and on behalf of, the Triune God. The Christian Church cannot, by definition, play a role within society in any name other than that of the Triune God. To do so would be a breach of the first great commandment, which states, **"You shall have no other gods before me"** (Exodus 20:3).

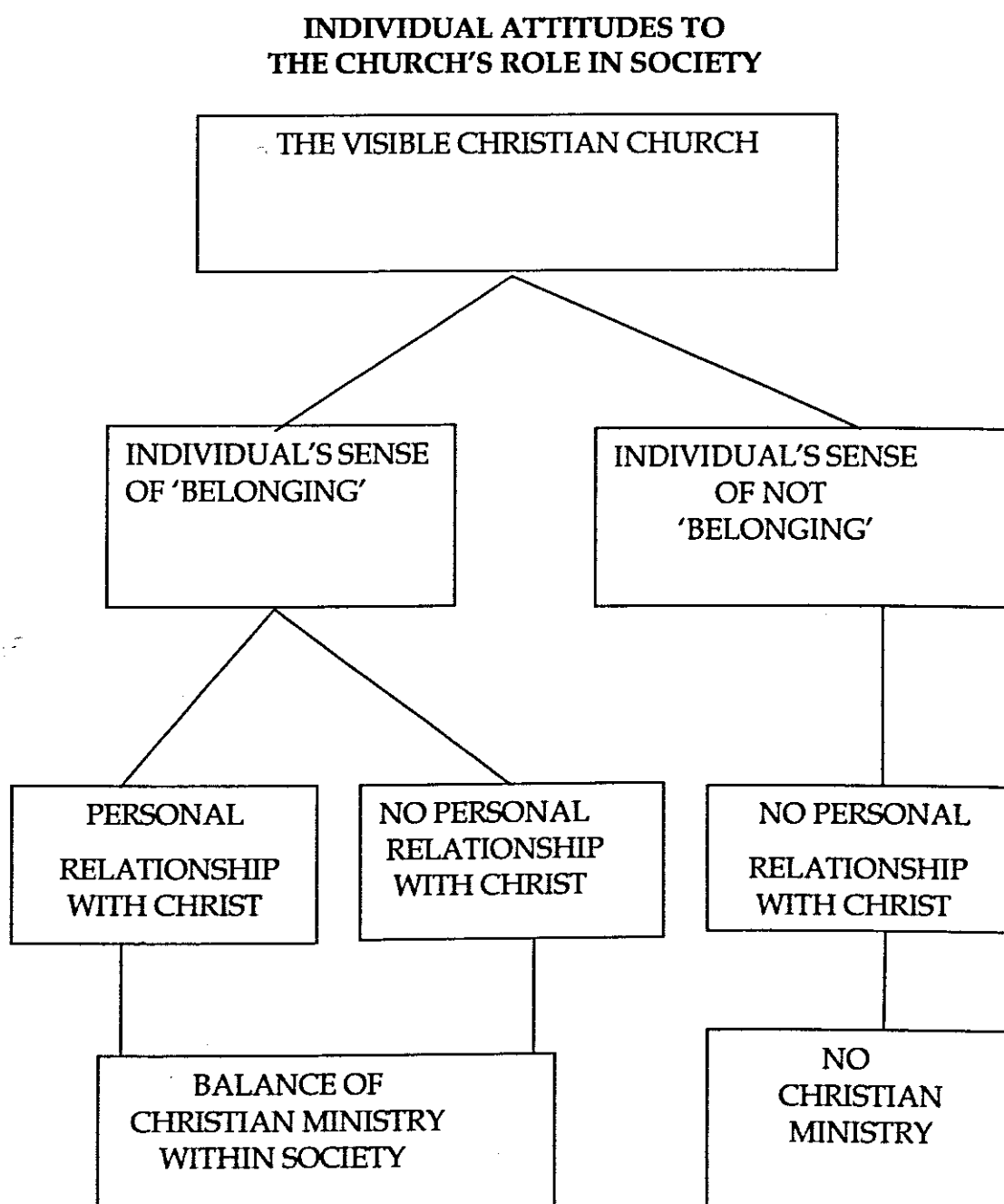
In the same way, no individual, group, or religious organisation, that *does not acknowledge the Triune God* as supreme in the universe, and supreme in the affairs of men, can be part of the ministry of the Christian Church, nor legitimately claim support for the role of the Christian Church in society. The Triune God and his Church are indivisible, and mankind cannot legitimately claim allegiance to one without the other.

The term 'Contemporary' is defined as that period of time that corresponds approximately with the lifetime of the author (Oxford Dictionary, 1998).

The term 'Visible Christian Church' refers to those who associate themselves the Church, and consider themselves to be Christian.

### 3.2. INDIVIDUAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

The figure that follows is a conceptualisation in broad principle, of some important factors that influence attitudes and beliefs regarding the role of the Christian Church in society.



### 3.3. INDIVIDUAL VARIANCE REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Figure 3.2. Indicates that each person is confronted with an important question in deciding his or her attitude towards the Christian Church, and its role within society.

The question is: **Do you have a personal sense of belonging to the Christian Church?**

The answer to this question is fundamentally important in deciding the individual's view of the role of the Church within society.

There are of course other factors that contribute towards an individual's view of the Church, such as *religious persuasion*, and *previous dealings with the Church* at events such as weddings, baptisms, dedication of infants and funerals.

Those who have a strong sense of belonging to the Christian Church and are part of the Body of Christ, have strong convictions about the *spiritual* role of the Church in society.

A 'sense of belonging' to the Church per se, is subjective, and may not be factual.

It is at this point that confusion may develop concerning the *identity* of Christ's Church, its true role within society, and particularly its *balance of spiritual ministry*.

#### 3.3.1. A 'SENSE OF BELONGING' TO THE CHURCH.

Those who have a strong sense of belonging to the Christian Church, and are sure of a personal relationship with Christ, are able to exercise a spiritual ministry in society.

A 'sense of belonging' to the Church is subjective, and may not be reliable. A 'sense of belonging' is *not necessarily synonymous* with having a personal relationship with Christ. It is precisely at this point that confusion may develop concerning the *identity* of Christ's Church, its true role within society, and particularly its *balance of spiritual ministry*.

Multitudes of people claim a sense of 'belonging' to the Christian Church. Their claims are often based on the fact that their children have been dedicated or baptised in the local

church, or because their teenagers have been confirmed. Even the fact that people were married in a Christian church might lead them to conclude that they do 'belong'.

The reality however, is that not all those who *claim* this 'belonging', *actually belong* to the Body of Christ. This is because many do not have a personal relationship with him.

### 3.3.2. A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

The New Testament indicates that having a personal knowledge of God is not only possible, but essential for a happy society and a secure future. Jesus said:

JOHN 10:14

εγω ειμι ο ποιμην ο καλος και γνωσκω τα εμα και γνωσκομαι υπο των εμων

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**I am the Shepherd (good) and I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine**

It is the assurance of a personal relationship with Christ that provides the Christian with a 'sense of belonging', not only to Christ, but also to his Church, and to the family of God in every tribe, tongue, and nation throughout the world.

The apostle Paul explained to believers in the church at Rome that they could ascertain whether or not they really belonged to Christ, by the presence of the Holy Spirit within them. Paul indicated that this was indeed the 'hallmark' of the true Christian, declaring:

## ROMANS 8:15-16

αυτο το πνευμα συμμαρτυρει τω πνευματι ημων οτι εσμεν τεκνα θεου

### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**(Itself) the Spirit bears witness with spirit (our) that we are children of God**

From the above, it is obvious that the attitude of any person towards the role of the Christian Church in society will be influenced by that person's own relationship with God through Christ.

### 3.3.3. CATEGORIES OF THEOLOGICAL BELIEF

(As defined in the "Dictionary of Theology" [www](http://www))

An individual's theological persuasion is very important in establishing the relevance or otherwise to that individual, of the role of the Christian Church in society. The following four categories of religious persuasion enable us to assess in a logical manner, what the likely attitude of the individuals within each of these groups will be towards the Christian Church.

#### 3.3.3.1. Atheist

The atheist believes that there is no God.

#### 3.3.3.2. Deist

The deist accepts the existence of a god but denies that this god is interested in the world, or involved in the affairs of men.

#### 3.3.3.3. Agnostic

The *agnostic* declares that he is uncertain of the existence of a god.



### 3.3.3.4. Theist:

The theist believes in a god (monotheistic) or in many gods (polytheistic).

The Christian religion is monotheistic, but worships the Triune God of the Bible, who is described as being 'one in substance, yet three in Persons'. In this respect the Christian faith is unique, worshipping a Triune God whose absolute supremacy is rejected by all the other great world religions.

We shall now briefly consider these four main categories of religious or philosophical persuasion: Atheism, Deism, Agnosticism, and Theism. They will be examined according to their respective views concerning the role of the Christian Church in society.

## 3.4. THE CHURCH IS IRRELEVANT IN SOCIETY

There is a belief in many quarters that the Church has overstayed its welcome in society. One of the reasons for this philosophy is the poor understanding of the composition, teachings, and functions of the true Church within society.

### 3.4.1. WHERE DID GOD GO?

An article appeared in a recent 'Time Magazine' entitled 'Where did God go'? The following is an extract from the leading story:

Churches throughout Europe are half empty, and God cannot even get a mention in the new European Union Constitution. Traditional churches are now standing empty. Some are even being converted into museums, business premises, and in one case, a skateboard club for teenagers! The Archbishop of Brussels, Godfried Cardinal Danneels, seems to be at a loss to know how to reverse this situation and improve the image and usefulness of the Church in European society. He says that in his opinion the Church 'needs to get to understand modern culture and society', but he also warns that the Church should not try to attract more people by diluting its message (Time Magazine June 16, 2003: 20).

This is an indication of the confusion and despair concerning the present and future role of the Christian Church in society that has permeated many traditional churches in Europe. Quite apart from those who despair about the future role of the Church, there are also those who actively oppose the Christian Church.

### 3.4.2. ATHEISTIC BELIEF

Contemporary belief systems that adopt *a stance against God* have existed for centuries, as described by Brightman in his book 'A Philosophy of Religion' (1940:3).

The atheist denies the existence of the Triune God, and in doing so, declares the role of the Christian Church in society to be irrelevant. The atheist obviously does not have any 'sense of belonging' to the Church, and by definition is not supportive of the Church's ministry.

He is *not indifferent* towards God and the Church, as might be an agnostic, but instead takes a stance against God, despite the overwhelming evidence in nature and in science that a creator designed everything from sub-atomic level upwards, and supplied the immeasurable energy needed for creation of the universe. His denial of God is one of the reasons that he is referred to in Scripture as a 'fool'. The great King David, says, "Only fools say in their hearts 'there is no God'. They are corrupt and their actions are evil" (Psalm 14:1-2).

The atheist is basically *a gambler*. Applying his intelligence to the question of the origin of the created order, he is aware that the design and order in creation points overwhelmingly towards an intelligent creator as the source of all things. He knows that the odds are stacked massively against his theory of atheism, *yet he is willing to throw the dice and hope for the best*. This is the second reason why Scripture refers to the atheist as a 'fool'.

He may compensate for his *lack of atheistic conviction* by taking an assertive and often aggressive stance against God and the Christian Church.

My personal observation is that the atheist who *chooses to offer an explanation* for his 'faith' that God does not exist, often presents the argument that 'Because this world is imperfect, therefore a perfect being cannot exist, and if he is not perfect then he is not God'.

People who dislike the concept of God also commonly express this view.

The odd thing about such reasoning is that the atheist *realizes* that the world is not perfect. If this is the case, then *by what standard* does he measure perfection? Presumably he recognizes that he himself is not perfect, and that he is therefore looking beyond himself for a standard that is perfect. To whom, then, is he looking?

The obvious answer is that he is looking beyond mankind to a Superior Being. So he acknowledges in his own mind and thinking that God (as perfection) exists, and therefore it is illogical for him to be atheistic.

Psychiatrically speaking, a person cannot reject that which *his own mind acknowledges as fact and reality*. If so he would become confused and automatically qualify as being a paranoid schizophrenic (Mason, 2002:53).

There is therefore expert psychiatric opinion expressed, that atheistic belief is at best indicative of unsound reasoning, and at worst a symptom of a psychotic condition.

Alberts (South African scientist, and recipient of three honorary doctorates as well as the State President's Award) says:

The departure point for both the atheist and the believer is the same; both are acts of faith. One cannot prove or disprove that there is a God. It is a matter of belief. In the same way it cannot be proved or disproved that everything happened by chance. Once again it is a matter of sheer belief. To believe that everything that is required to bring the universe into being is a result of blind chance, demands tremendous faith (Alberts 1996:14)

Many famous personalities have been outspoken atheists, and some of these have had the courage to tell their stories with candid honesty.

Bertrand Russell of Cambridge University was one of the world's most talented mathematicians and philosophers; a man of great intellectual ability. He was a deep thinker

on every level, and was *an outspoken atheist*. Towards the end of his life he wrote these words in a private letter to a friend:

I stand on the shore of an ocean, crying to the night and to the emptiness. Sometimes a voice answers out of the darkness, but it is the voice of one drowning, and in a moment the silence returns. This world seems to me quite dreadful (Lloyd-Jones: 1969:14).

This illustrates that when a person removes God from life's equation, there can be no logical answers to creation, or to the reason for man's existence.

The atheist must conclude that the Christian Church has no role to play in society; but he must also conclude *that his own existence is meaningless*, that society has no logical reason to exist, and that his own life is a profound mystery.

Famous British novelist Aldous Huxley, author of 'Brave New World', made a frank and shocking admission about his own atheistic motivation:

I had motive for not wanting the world to have a meaning; I consequently assumed that it had none, and so I was able, without any difficulty, to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no God and no meaning in the world is not only concerned with pure metaphysics, he is also attempting to show that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wishes. For myself, the philosophy of atheism and meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation (McDowell 1997:11).

This seems to be the account of an atheist who in his latter years had the intellectual honesty to realise his mistakes, and the moral courage to publicise them.

My plea with those who base their atheism on the fact that our world is not perfect, is that if someone happens to love the music of Mozart, but then *listens to me play* one of Mozart's masterpieces, in all likelihood he would not be impressed with the music that I produce on my piano. He may even be bitterly disappointed with my skills as a pianist, and perhaps with justification; but would he be justified in refusing to believe that Mozart composed the music on the sheet from which I had played? Furthermore, would he demonstrate logical

thought if he went on to deny the relevance of Mozart's music, or the very existence of the man Mozart, simply because his music was poorly played by an amateur pianist? To do so would be intellectually dishonest, and morally unjustified. The role of the Church in society cannot be ignored on the basis of the frailties and sins of mortal men.

### 3.4.3. THE DEISTIC VIEW

As the deist denies that the creator has any *active interest in the affairs of men*, he is precluded from accepting any meaningful role for the Christian Church in society.

Albert Einstein was a deist. Alberts remarks thus concerning Einstein:

Einstein believed in a Supreme Being who masterminded creation, but the god Einstein believed in was not the Deity described in the Bible. His god was a scientific, amoral hypothesis, and not a personal God who is interested in earth and its inhabitants. As a result, Einstein never felt it was necessary for him to make contact with God. So he resolved his 'God-problem' in that way. Einstein could never understand why mortal men should be required to make choices with regard to the immortal Supreme Being. This did not make sense to him, and so he simply withdrew and became a fascinated spectator (1996:77).

It seems sad that a great scientist who probably possessed the 'brain of the century', did not come to the logical conclusion that if God took so much trouble to create a perfect planet for human existence, and then made man in his own image and placed him there, that he surely would desire to keep in contact with those he loved. That is the only conclusion that fits the facts.

### 3.4.4. THEISTIC VIEWS THAT DENY THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHURCH

Monotheistic or polytheistic belief that rejects the supremacy of the Triune God, also denies the relevance of the Christian Church in society.

The only theistic view that *supports* a vital role for the Christian Church in society is one that accepts the supremacy and uniqueness of the Triune God.

### 3.5. THE CHURCH HAS A LIMITED ROLE IN SOCIETY

It is likely that the majority of South Africans accept that the Christian Church has at least a limited role to play in society. This view is probably a reflection of the general apathy toward the Church that has emerged in many countries throughout the modern world. Four interesting philosophies, or theologies, that *deliberately* limit the role of the Christian Church within society, are now discussed.

#### 3.5.1. THE AGNOSTIC VIEW

The agnostic is uncertain about the existence of a god, and therefore does not characterise him, nor expect to have a direct relationship with him. While such a view is understandable, and might even be seen as a view that reflects genuine honesty and humility, it does not stand up to logical analysis, as we shall see later in this chapter.

Clearly, the person who does not know whether or not the Triune God of the Christian Church exists, is clearly not able to offer anything more than a token acknowledgement of the Church and its role in society. The agnostic may choose to disregard the role of the Church in society, or he may acknowledge a limited role in certain situations. This will be discussed later in this chapter under the heading of 'Situational Ethics'.

The agnostic, unlike the atheist, *is not willing to gamble*. He is much more cautious when it comes to playing dice. He also knows the overwhelming argument for God in cosmology and in teleology, but perhaps does not like the concept of having to answer to the Creator. He will not gamble against overwhelming odds by declaring himself to be an atheist, but instead is content to live in a state of 'theological limbo'.

##### 3.5.1.1. Flint's Despair

Over 100 years ago an agnostic wrote the following paragraph, summing up the insecurity of a person who lives in constant disappointment as truth evades him, finally leaving him like a drowning man to clutch at straws.

Because truth is of essential and supreme significance to us, it is of vast importance that we *should not doubt nor despair* either of its existence or of its attainability. Wherever truth is, and is to be found, it is obviously a great misfortune not to be hopeful of finding it—not to be able to go forth to the search and conquest of it with good courage. *To distrust and despair of truth* is the sure way to miss the truth we might otherwise reach, together with all the good that is dependent on that truth (Flint, 1903:27).

The answer to the Flint's despair is as close as the nearest Bible.

### 3.5.1.2 Jesus Christ Has The Answer

Jesus Christ provided mankind with that very truth, when he said in John 14:6.

λεγει αυτω ο ιησους εγω ειμι η οδος και η αληθεια και ουδεις ερχεται προς τον πατερα ει μη δι εμου

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

Says to him (Jesus), I am the Way and the Truth and the Life no one comes to the Father but by me.

It is difficult to imagine a clearer statement of truth than this, yet the tragedy of agnosticism is that truth that has been set forth in the light, is disregarded in favour of vain searching in darkness! If agnosticism qualifies for theological classification, it must surely be called a theology of uncertainty, despair, and hopelessness.

There are probably many more agnostics in South African society than there are atheists, and the same may be true for most nations in our world.

Agnosticism is the calculated reaction of many intelligent yet unbelieving people, as it has no need to declare war on God (as in the case of the atheist) by denying his existence, and 'keeps the door open' for God at some later stage of life.

The agnostic obviously has no personal communication experience with the Triune God of the Christian Church. He remains unconvinced that God has communicated with man. He concludes that if God exists, a mysterious gulf separates him from mortal man. For this reason, it is neither a reasonable nor logical for him to accept that the Christian Church has a vital role to play in society.

*The agnostic* (perhaps unwittingly) uses the psychological ploy of 'avoidance', by accepting a position of uncertainty regarding God. Like the atheist, he is ignorant of Scripture, and faulty in his logic. He has nothing to explain the purpose of life, and *lives in a theological vacuum*. Like the atheist, he has no credible explanation for the *purpose* of the created order (to which he is a reluctant witness) and he must also conclude that life is nothing more than a charade.

What the agnostic fails to realise, however, is that God himself has revealed himself to man through *the created order*, through the *Bible*, and finally through *Jesus Christ*. So while the agnostic insists that he is unable to communicate with God, he ignores the fact that *God has communicated with all men in triplicate!*

### 3.5.1.3. Jesus Christ, The Light Of The World

Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle John went a step further, writing these words:

1 JOHN 1:1-2

και η ζωη εφανερωθη και εωρακαμεν και μαρτυρουμεν και  
απαγγελλομεν υμιν την ζωην την αιωνιον ητις ην προς τον πατερα και εφανερωθη  
ημιν

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**Life was manifested and we have seen and bear witness and report to you the Life  
(eternal) who was with the Father and was manifested to us**



John explained with great passion that the One who existed from the beginning was the One he had *heard and seen*. He saw him with his own eyes and *touched him with his own hands*. This was indeed Jesus Christ, the Word of Life!

#### 3.5.1.4. Mankind Commanded To Turn To God

Luke makes it clear that *in times past* God overlooked the ignorance of unbelieving men, that in the post-Christian era, repentance and faith in Christ is essential. He wrote:

ACTS 17:30

θεος τα νυν παραγγελλει τοις ανθρωποις πασιν πανταχου μετανοειν

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLITERATION

**God now charges men (all) everywhere to repent**

There is no neutral path for mankind in Scripture. The pathway of *avoidance* taken by the agnostic is in reality *a choice to reject* Jesus Christ.

#### 3.5.1.5. Mankind To Serve God Whole-Heartedly

Miller, in his article entitled 'Atheists, Agnostics, and Alcoholics' says, 'It is important to differentiate between individuals who affirm *no* belief in God (atheists) and those who have 'some level of belief' but vacillate in their convictions (2002:1).

According to the title of his book, he cannot be referring to atheists as having 'some level of belief', neither is he referring to alcoholics, as they are used merely as a pun to complete the 3 A's in the title of the book. He must, therefore, be referring to agnostics as having 'some level of belief', in the sense that they are not sure what they believe about God.

Scripture does not applaud agnosticism, nor does it support indecision, faithless attitudes, or those who profess various 'levels of belief' in the Triune God. So in terms of biblical requirements, it is difficult to accept the validity of Miller's request to provide theological recognition to those with fluctuating levels of belief.

Joshua, the great prophet of God and leader of ancient Israel, firmly rejected such indecision, and commanded God's ancient people thus:

**So honour the Lord God and serve him wholeheartedly. If you are unwilling to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve; but as for me, and my family, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:14-16).**

In addition, the Lord Jesus himself called for total commitment, saying that those who choose to follow their own pathway through life will ultimately lose their souls. He made a promise however to those whose lives are given over to him, as follows:

**MATTHEW 16:25**

ος δ αν απολεση την ψυχην αυτου ενεκεν εμου ευρησει αυτην

**INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION**

**But whoever may lose his life on account of me shall find it**

Jesus explained that if any man wanted to follow him, he would have to put aside selfish ambition and shoulder his cross in obedience to the Master.

### **3.5.4. ISOLATIONIST THEOLOGY**

We refer here to a philosophy or theology whereby *Christians* who have a true 'sense of belonging' to the Church of Jesus Christ, and who also undoubtedly have a personal

relationship with Jesus Christ, nevertheless believe that it is necessary *to isolate themselves* from society.

Some hold to interpretations of Scripture that cause them to withdraw from contact with any part of society beyond their own local church.

Interestingly enough, such a fellowship seems to attract people who have become weary of the 'compromising and anaemic teaching' of other churches, and are looking for direction and authority in their lives.

### 3.5.2.1. The Exclusive Brethren

This is the name given to a Christian sect that, under the leadership of Irishman John Nelson Darby (1800-82) formed an exclusive and completely isolated fellowship that they attempted to justify on biblical grounds.

In 1827 Darby left a curate's post in Wicklow, Ireland, and formed congregations on the Continent, in Switzerland, France, and Germany. Between 1859 and 1874, Darby paid a number of visits to the United States and Canada.

His followers, especially those on the Continent, came to be called 'Darbyites' or 'Exclusive Brethren', and justified their isolationist position by quoting the apostle Paul's words, in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:14-17.

**'Do not join up with those who are unbelievers; come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord'.**

Their quotation from Paul's letter to the Corinthian believers, in support of their own isolationist practices, represents an example of faulty hermeneutical practice. The Scripture the apostle was quoting, had come from the ancient Jewish prophets (such as recorded in Isaiah 52:11) and addressed the people of Israel, warning them to avoid social and religious interactions with pagan nations who worshipped idols.

'Exclusive Brethren' separate themselves from all other Christians, as well as from society as a whole. They have so separated themselves from the mainstream of society, that they have lost their 'Charity Status' as a church under British law (Brock 1984:30). A very sad indictment on the Christian Church!

While they *are concerned about evangelism* of non-Christians and pray for their conversion to Christ, the only way in which they are able to meet non-Christians, is if these unbelievers happen to attend an 'exclusive' church service. This is highly unlikely, as 'outsiders' feel very uncomfortable at such gatherings.

The Exclusive Brethren are not alone in the practice of 'Isolation Theology' and there are other Christians that separate themselves from others for ethnic, religious and cultural reasons (Volf 1992:230).

Paul's words were never intended to be an instruction for the New Testament Church of Christ to refrain from social inter-action within society.

In fact the reverse is true, because Jesus instructed his own followers saying:

**'You are the salt of the earth, but what good is salt if it has lost its flavour? Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father' (Matthew 5:13-16).**

Christians who practice isolation cause their ministry to become *self-limiting*, especially with regard to evangelism. This in turn results in an imbalance in their total ministry. (Dawn 1999:1)

### **3.5.2.2. Afrikaner Covenant Theology**

- A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Covenant Theology has its origins in the Old Testament, where God made a covenant with Abraham on behalf of his chosen people, Israel. Scripture confirms that God spoke to Abraham when he was 99 years old saying:

**‘This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations’ (Genesis 17: 4 ).**

This ancient covenant was therefore a solemn promise that God made with Israel, through Abraham. The promise was specific and exclusive, and there is no reason to believe that this covenant was intended to benefit any other nation on earth.

The original covenant was made exclusively with Israel, and based on the Mosaic Law and on circumcision.

In considering Covenant Theology in the 21st century, we find adequate biblical evidence confirming the existence of the covenant with Israel, but also a ‘new’ covenant that has been established through the blood, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This new covenant reaches out to men and woman everywhere who will turn in repentance and faith to Christ. Included are Christians of every tribe, tongue, and nation on earth.

#### 3.5.2.2.1. A Disputed Covenant.....The ‘Chosen Of Africa’

The world was stunned when a young, white, Afrikaner nation (whose founder member was Jan Van Riebeck of the Dutch East India Company) began to settle on the southern-most tip of Africa 350 years ago, convinced that the Abrahamic covenant was exclusively theirs! They believed they were God’s chosen race in Africa.

The white Afrikaner nation in South Africa, under the banner of the Dutch Reformed Church, believed and taught that their nation was special to God in Africa’, and enjoyed an *exclusive* covenant relationship with him (Patterson, 1957:177).

There can be little doubt as to the sincerity of this belief, and in fact most Afrikaners were willing to die if necessary in defence of this doctrine. There can also be little doubt that the Afrikaner Christians did not appreciate that their theology placed them in a category of those who *limited the role of the Christian Church in society*.

Of course there were people who disagreed strongly with Afrikaner Covenant Theology, pointing out the tenuous position of this teaching in relation to Scripture.

Naude refers to the book '*No Chosen People*' by Du Toit:

Afrikaners believe that they are a chosen people of God, and that whites have a divine right to rule according to God's will. For decades, spiritual and political leaders told Afrikaners that Scripture could justify Apartheid. They were told that racial separation and white Afrikaner supremacy was God's will for South Africa. There was very little, if any support for this doctrine outside of South Africa, while on the other hand a chorus of dissent arose around the globe, until it became a deafening roar in the ears of the Afrikaner nation (1985:77).

A favourite passage of Scripture that Afrikaners often quoted at their religious and social gatherings is taken from the writings of the prophet Isaiah, who said:

**I the Lord have called you to demonstrate my righteousness. I will guard and support you, for I have given my own people the personal confirmation of my covenant with them (Isaiah 42:6).**

The Scripture clearly referred to the nation of Israel and yet was somehow interpreted as being God's promise to the white Afrikaner in Africa.

Claims made upon one or other form of covenant relationship with God did not end with ancient Israel, and the ideology became popular with other theologians and religious groups long before it was 'adopted' by the white Afrikaner in South Africa (Van Til, 2001:639).

### 3.5.2.3. A 'Communal Faith'

Afrikaner theology was very much a communal concept, and individuality did not go much further than infant baptism and 'confirmation' of faith for teenagers. The church hierarchy was very powerful, and the will of the spiritual leaders became the will of the people (Villa-Vicencio 1983:81).

The history of the white Afrikaner in South Africa is that of a rural farming community of Dutch descent, hard working, independent, determined, and practising a Christian Calvinistic faith. The typical Afrikaner had a '*sense of belonging*' to the Church, especially in a communal sense, and confessed to a *personal relationship* with Christ.

### 3.5.2.4. A Covenant Based On Ethnicity

Beck reminds us of a serious doctrinal error that crept in to Afrikaner theology:

'By the mid 1920s Afrikaners had begun to speak 'Afrikaans', a language developed from their native Dutch, and had a Bible translated into Afrikaans. Afrikaner farmers were a people of the Old Testament. Each morning the 'patriarch' gathered all his family, servants, and slaves to hear him read from the Bible and to pray. He taught them that the Afrikaners were God's chosen people, and that Africans were the children of Ham, blocking the way to the Promised Land' (2000:37).

This was a theology based on an erroneous view of Covenant Theology, and in which race or nationality became the criterion for a covenantal relationship with God.

Chidester, says:

Jonathan Gerstner has analysed the role of 19<sup>th</sup> century Dutch Reformed Covenant Theology in the formation of the Afrikaner group identity, and discovered that their theological dogma eventually resulted in 'modifications to Scripture' that one commentator called the 'Apartheid Bible' (Tobler & Wratten 1997:194).

In fact, the so-called 'Apartheid Bible' was written by Professor J.A. Loubser of the Department of Theology, University of Zululand, and was not a '*modification of Scripture*' in support of Apartheid, but rather a *critique of the Apartheid* regime, that ruled South Africa for 50 years (Loubser 1986).

### 3.5.2.5. Karl Barth

Afrikaner theologians would no doubt justify their covenant theology by referring to men such as Karl Barth, who was one of the world's best-known Protestant theologians, wrote many books, and influenced the Church strongly during the years 1911-1921. He was a serious student of the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

Barth is best remembered for his efforts in promoting the idea that God's ancient covenant with Israel was *not terminated or replaced* following the advent of Christ, but was simply *extended to the Gentiles* through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Covenant Theology is explained in the book 'The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology', where the author quotes Barth thus:

The Church is a summoning forth of God's people, the community of men of faith, created through Christ on the foundation of the Covenant between God and man, and awakened by the Holy Spirit (Johnson, 1997:138).

Barth remarked that without Covenant Theology, 'God would be a different, alien God'. He also lamented the state of the Christian Church in Europe during his own lifetime, and lamented the fact that human beings had "fallen away from their '*Zusammenhang*' or covenant destiny". He reminded the Church that the call to be the 'covenant partner of God' had never been revoked, but could only be actualised by 'the redeeming power of God's Spirit' (Johnson, 1997: 88).



Johnson reminds us that Barth's concept of Covenant Theology was indeed that the 'New Covenant' in Christ, was actually '*an extension of God's Old Covenant with ancient Israel*' (1997:123).

Barth confirms this view in his book 'Theology and the Church: Shorter Writings', in which he sees the old and new covenants as 'one dynamic divine action without beginning or end' (1962:298).

This definition makes no clear distinction between the old and new covenants, confirming his concept of a '*continuous covenant*', extending from the time of Abraham to the present and into the future.

### 3.5.2.6. The New Covenant In Christ

Covenant Theology must always be considered in its biblical context. Christ's new covenant is with individuals and not with nations. Commenting on the sincere yet erroneous theology of the Afrikaner nation, Villa-Vicencio says:

White Afrikaners are generally God-fearing people, and many of them enjoy a deep and personal relationship with God through Christ. However it must be emphasized that the covenant relationship they enjoy with God is not because of their national identity, but because of their individual faith and trust in Christ. (Villa-Vicencio, 1983:62).

Examining the subject of God's covenant with man in the New Testament, we discover that the original covenant that God made with his ancient people Israel remains, but there is now a new covenant in Christ that embraces all men of all nations, who through faith in Christ become his people. The writer to the Hebrews explains this when he wrote:

Our High Priest has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who served under the old laws, for he is the One who guarantees for us *a better covenant* with God, based on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. When God speaks of the new covenant, it means *he has made the first one obsolete*. It is now out of date and set aside (Hebrews 8: 7,13).

From this we understand that a New Covenant became effective at that point in history, and that under this covenant *all the peoples and nations of the world became potential beneficiaries*, the only conditions being repentance from sin, and personal faith in Christ. This new covenantal relationship between man and God was described by the writer to the Hebrews as being a 'better covenant' than the old covenant that God has with Abraham (Hebrews 8: 6).

Understandably, Old Testament covenant theology could become a source of confusion in the post-Christian era, especially as a result of hermeneutical deficiencies among theologians and religious leaders.

### 3.5.2.7. Conclusion

Afrikaner Covenant Theology has considerable relevance to the subject of the role of the Christian Church in society, because it wrongly identifies a nation as having special divine privilege. Such a view automatically means the attempted 'exclusion' of other people of different nationality, ethnicity, or cultural backgrounds, from sharing in the new covenant in Christ. Such a belief results in a ministry to society that is unbalanced and unbiblical.

## 3.5.3. SITUATIONAL ETHICS AND THE CHURCH

Situational Ethics is a broad philosophy and applies to many situations in life. It has the effect of limiting the role of the Christian Church within society.

### 3.5.3.1. Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991)

Joseph Fletcher was the founder of this philosophy. He graduated from Berkeley Divinity School and was an Episcopal priest. According to Fletcher, Situation Ethics is a belief that in every situation *the individual* is responsible for reviewing 'the rules, norms and guidelines'

for action; he must then either implement, or set aside those rules, so that 'love is best served' (1967:12).

Fletcher defines four principles as defining Situational Ethics. These principles are set out below.

### 3.5.3.2 Four Principles Of Situational Ethics

PRAGMATISM	A practical success-oriented, action-oriented position. It focuses on what is right, what is good, what works.
RELATIVISM	In relativism, the understanding of truth varies based on the observers and the situation. Relativism must be relative to something and in the case of Situational Ethics all things are relative to Love.
POSITIVISM	A belief or faith is "posited" or declared, and is then supported by logic. This is demonstrated in Situational Ethics by positing a belief in God as Love (or a higher good) and then reasoning what is required in any situation to support that belief.
PERSONALISM	This is placing people (not principles) at the centre of consideration.

### 3.5.3.3 A Criticism Of Situational Ethics

If one sets aside New Testament authority, then these four principles have some natural appeal in decision-making. There are however numerous difficulties with Fletcher's philosophy, especially in terms of biblical principles and the Christian faith.

- **PRAGMATISM** according to Fletcher, is not only concerned with what is 'good and right', but also with what 'works'. This suggests that a course of action that may be biblically 'good and right' can only be implemented if the doer thinks it will 'work'.

Who is to say what works and what does not work in the context of serving others?

Pragmatism cannot be regarded as a biblical principle. God is said to be 'good', and he does not change. Jesus himself said:

**'Why ask me about what is good? Only God is good' (Matthew 19:17).**

Therefore true goodness cannot be a pragmatic principle.

- **RELATIVISM** in Situational Ethics makes truth *dependent on the observer*, as well as *on the situation*. This means that we have two variables working together, making the establishment of truth doubly difficult. Jesus said:

**'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (John 14:6).**

If Jesus Christ is the Truth, and if he is God, then truth must be absolute and cannot vary in any situation, but instead must conform to Christ and his Word.

- **POSITIVISM** in Situational Ethics is said to represent 'a belief in God as Love'. Actions are then supposed to conform to a person's understanding of 'love'. There are two major difficulties with Positivism from a Christian point of view.

Firstly, God is *also a God of justice*, and therefore if our actions are to be truly Christ-like, they need to reflect not only God's *love*, but also his *justice*.

King David says:

**'The Lord is known by his justice' (Psalm 9:16).**

Secondly, we are told that the actions of Positivism depend on the 'logic' or 'reason' of the doer. The Psalmist says:

**'Those who follow the Lord's precepts have wisdom and good understanding' (Psalm 111:10).**

'Logic and reason' that is *not in agreement with Scripture* cannot result in decisions that reflect God's love or his justice.

- **PERSONALISM** in Situational Ethics is said to *put people 'at the centre of consideration'* when making decisions. As people are the central consideration, then it follows that Christ cannot also be central to the decision-making. This means that we are now dealing with a philosophy that by its own admission, is homocentric, and cannot at the same time be Christocentric. Personalism sets aside biblical principles in favour of people.

This means that Fletcher is willing to sacrifice the principles of Scripture, in favour of human considerations. This undermines the very foundation and authority of the Christian Church.

- **LOVE** in Situational Ethics is also questionable, if presented as 'Christian' philosophy. God's love must logically transcend human love, and therefore the only true way to love a human being is with God's love. The only revelation of God's love is in Scripture, and therefore decisions affecting the lives of others must be *in accordance with Scripture*, and not in terms of our arbitrary interpretations of love.

- **MORALITY** in Situational Ethics is illustrated by Fletcher as follows:

An elderly lady accidentally drops \$50 on the street. The person walking behind her notices that she has dropped the money but decides not to tell her. Instead he picks up the money and begins a decision-making process concerning the money. He decides that there is a more needy person he knows who could benefit more from this money than the lady who had dropped it. He therefore concludes that if he is to act in love and in the best interests of humanity, then the \$50 should be given to this other person. In that situation he has made what he considers as an ethical decision, based on love, and on the best interests of all concerned (1967:134).

Fletcher presents this illustration as being 'basically Christian', and claims that it expresses 'the principles of love', and demonstrates how the best interests of society should be served (1967:135).

Closer examination reveals however, that the illustration is neither biblical nor Christian, and is therefore not in the best interests of society in terms of the Christian faith.

When God gave the Law to Moses, the eighth commandment said:

**'Do not steal' (Exodus 20: 15).**

In the illustration above, the person picking up the \$50 realised that it belonged to a particular person, but nevertheless decided not to return it to her, but to give it to someone else. Irrespective of who needed the money the most, this act clearly represented theft, and transgressed the eighth commandment of God's Moral Law.

Jesus Christ said:

**'Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 7: 12).**

In Fletcher's illustration, the person who dropped the \$50 was the 'neighbour' to the man following behind her, and who decided to take her money. By taking her money, he did not act towards her in terms of the teaching of Jesus, and neither did he do for her that which he would expect others to do for him.

Fletcher's Situational Ethics in the case of the illustration is therefore in conflict with the moral Law of God, and with the teaching of Christ.

#### **3.5.4. CONVENIENCE WITHOUT COMMITMENT**

The medical author of "Will the Hospital Replace the Church?" declares:

The British people have developed a false view of the Church. Some will attend church as a national tradition.... simply as something to do. They believe that the main function of the Church is to perform certain things for them such as christenings, weddings and funerals. They feel that it's good to have a church in the community to bolster moral behaviour, and to provide a tranquillising or therapeutic effect for people who attend services to escape the trials and stresses of life (Lloyd-Jones 1969:11).

His remarks are no doubt correct, but in fairness it must be said that most people who practise situational ethics, are not consciously trying to do so, and are not aware of the principles laid down by Fletcher. However, when called upon to make decisions regarding the role of the Christian Church in society, they automatically 'default' to practising Situational Ethics, in much the same way that a computer defaults to its set programmes.

### 3.5.5. CONCLUSIONS

Situational Ethics views the role of the Christian Church in society in terms of similar judgments to the ones exercised in the illustration we have considered. In other words the role of the Church will depend on each situation, and whether or not individuals are likely to benefit through contact with the Church.

In the event that someone has died, then the provision of facilities for a funeral service by a church would seem appropriate and useful. On the other hand, regular attendance at church to worship God would not necessarily be considered convenient or appropriate. In that situation the role of the Church would become unimportant.

Situational Ethics therefore considers the role of the Christian Church in society in terms of '*convenience without commitment*'. Such an idea reflects an entirely ambivalent attitude to the Church that would be expected of a pagan society. It probably represents the view of the majority of people in the world today.

### 3.6. THE CHURCH HAS A VITAL ROLE IN SOCIETY

There are two contemporary views that attach great importance and relevance to the role of the Christian Church in society. These are:

- THE APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH VIEW
- THE SOCIAL GOSPEL VIEW

Their reasons for attaching such importance to the role of the Church in society are very different, and are regarded by some as being at 'opposite theological poles'.

#### 3.6.1. THE APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The view that the Apostolic Christian Church had concerning its role in society is considered here as a 'contemporary' view, because millions of Christians in the 21st century continue to hold that view. Details concerning this view have been preserved in the Greek manuscripts, and are described in vivid detail in the Acts of the Apostles.

##### 3.6.1.1. A God Who Cares And Acts

Oscar Cullman makes an important practical observation concerning the role of the Church in society:

The Church as the Body of Christ was founded on faith in an exalted Christ who *still intervened in earthly events*. The first Christians expressed this deep conviction in their confession of faith, as *Kyriosjesus*, 'Jesus is Lord' (1959:195).

From this statement we notice that these early Christians firmly believed that '*God still intervened in earthly events*'. Their view of the Church therefore was one of genuine



expectancy. While they suffered persecution from a pagan society, they trusted God to intervene and cause them to be a positive influence for Christ within that society.

These believers were like 'exiles' in an alien society, but their faith in Christ and their love for mankind was powerful enough to drive them forward with the Gospel. They were strongly united and had a common purpose. They clung to the words of the apostles, and to each other, in a society that was threatening, unhelpful and ungodly.

### **3.6.1.2. Basis For Unity: The Message And The Mission**

Carrington, in his book 'The Early Christian Church', remarks:

There were two forces that constituted and maintained the unity of the church; and these two were really one. They were the Gospel and the Apostolate, or stated differently, *the message and the mission*. The gospel was never a message or theory existing in a vacuum; it was always embodied in men and propagated through men; and it boasted of a divine power called the Holy Spirit which flowed through the Church and worked wonders in society. It was spiritual ministry 'in flesh', as Ignatius once said. They had but one Gospel. The core of this Gospel was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1957:464).

Not only was the Apostolic Church united in purpose, but also strongly believed in the power of their Gospel, and demonstrated a commitment to take this Gospel into all of society.

### **3.6.1.3. The Gospel Of The Cross**

The apostle Paul explained the importance of focusing on the Gospel of Jesus, and retaining that focus. The apostle clearly had prophetic insight concerning false teachers who would infiltrate the Church and cause distortions to this precious Gospel. With this in mind he emphasized that the very foundation of the Gospel message was the cross of Jesus Christ, through which there was atonement for the sins of mankind and the possibility of reconciliation of man to God. His message was specific, saying there could be no other message or gospel. He wrote thus to the Corinthian church:

## 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-2

μη ιησουν χριστον και τουτον εσταυρωμενον

### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

#### **Except Jesus Christ and him crucified**

In other words, there could be no other gospel than the one Paul preached, which was centred on the cross of Christ and his resurrection.

#### **3.6.1.4. Individual Reconciliation To God**

Jesus Christ, his death, and resurrection, constituted the heart and focal point of Paul's Gospel. This was the original true Gospel of the Christian Church. It was basically a message of reconciliation, whereby sinful human beings were given the opportunity of being restored to a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It was a spiritual message, conveying the good news that personal salvation had become possible for all men, because of what Jesus had done when he died on the cross.

This Gospel message was of such importance to the Apostolic Church, that they would gladly have given their lives as martyrs in order to protect and preserve the integrity of that message.

#### **3.6.1.5. One Church, One Gospel, One Mission**

The great sadness of modern-day Christianity is that the original Gospel message has become blurred, and few individual Christians are willing to make personal sacrifices in defence of its original message.

The Apostolic believers viewed themselves as missionaries, with the entire league of nations as their mission field. This mission was to ensure that every living person heard this precious message of reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ.

Their mission was to be accomplished through individual believers, and they clearly had experienced the enabling supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives.

### **3.6.1.6. You Shall Receive Power**

This power was in accordance with the promise of their Lord, as Luke reminds us when quoting the words of Christ to his followers:

ACTS 1:8

αλλα ληψεσθε δυναμιν επελθοντος του αγιου πνευματος εφ υμας

INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**But you will receive power, having come (the Holy Spirit) upon you.**

In this way we realise that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the enormous spiritual power that ensued, provided the dynamic for the Apostolic Christian Church. It was this power that enabled ordinary citizens to witness fearlessly to Roman officials, Jewish religious leaders, and Greek philosophers concerning Christ the Lord.

### **3.6.1.7. Spiritual Power, Not Political Revolution**

The question of the Christian Church's role in socio-political issues is adequately addressed in a book entitled '*The Christian and the State in Revolutionary Times*', by Lloyd-Jones. He comments concerning the example of Christ himself to the socio-political problems of the first century under harsh Roman rule, when the practice of slavery was rife. He summarises the Lord's example as follows:

There are four general principles of New Testament sociology as practised by the early Church. The first principle we learn from the New Testament is that *Christianity is not a revolutionary religion*. Secondly, there is *no hint in Scripture that the practice of slavery, for instance, (which was rife at the time), was targeted for attack by the Church*. Of course this does not suggest that our Lord approved of slavery, but it does demonstrate his own practical approach to this particular social issue. Thirdly, there is *no call from Christ to his followers to rise up against the oppressive Roman Empire*. Fourthly, we see that *Jesus was concerned about the social needs of all the people* (1970:105).

The personal example of the Lord Jesus must surely set the tone for the conduct of the Christian Church in our modern times.

### 3.6.1.8. One Bible Forever

While there are those who say that a changing society requires change, adaptation, and relaxation of Scriptural principles, this is surely a dangerous option, because it leads to the logical conclusion that each different era in history requires a different Bible, or at least different interpretations of the Bible. Such a situation is untenable to Christians who believe in the divine authority of Scripture.

In spite of inequalities, differences in culture, and social variations, the Apostolic Christian Church had a belief that its role in society was vital, and its message and ministry essential for the welfare of all concerned.

The same view is expressed by many churches in the 21st century that have simply clung to the teaching of Christ and the apostles, thus transporting the apostolic teachings into today's world where they are still regarded as 'contemporary'.

### 3.7. THE SOCIAL GOSPEL VIEW

#### 3.7.1. BACKGROUND

There are many professing Christians who express the view that Paul's message of personal salvation through Christ was *only part* of that original Gospel, and that there is a much 'wider gospel' that caters for the 'whole man' and not only his soul. Some even maintain that the Gospel's *primary objective* is to alleviate human suffering and socio-political injustices. Simon is a case in point, who describes his 'gospel' this way:

*'The Christian Gospel works in the struggle for economic justice, human dignity, and political freedom'* (Simon 2002: 494) (My italics for emphasis).

The evangelical Christian community does not agree with Simon. The true Gospel remains unchanged from the time the Lord Jesus delivered it to the apostles, and its definition continues to be that which the apostle Paul delivered to the first century local churches, and is noted under heading 3.6.1.3 (1 Corinthians 1:1-2).

While it is true that the Christian faith embraces all aspects of humanity, and caters for the body as well as the soul, the message of the Gospel that was believed and taught by the Apostolic Christians, was simply a message of personal reconciliation to God.

Proponents of the Social Gospel consider that the Christian Church has a vital role to play within society. They see the existent infrastructure of churches and their ability to 'network' within society, as being very useful for the propagation of their message to mankind, which has become known in theological circles as the Social Gospel.

They have sought to extend this 'networking' of churches throughout the world, through the development of the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches.

The Social Gospel emerged as a typically American movement and its roots date back to the period 1865-1915. It has been defined by one of its leaders as 'the application of the teaching of Jesus and the total message of Christian celebration to society, economic life, and social

institutions'. The following points have been made in support of the origins of the Social Gospel:

- Followers of Christ had endeavoured to *apply* his teachings in every age of history.
- The Apostolic Church 'experimented' with a form of 'voluntary communism'.
- Martin Luther 'experimented with his own brand of Christianity in the Reformation'.
- American Civil Rights movements have also 'adapted the Christian gospel to suit the needs of American society, as in the case of the Social Gospel' (Hopkins, 1940:29).

Horace Bushnell is cited as the great pioneer of the Social Gospel, with men such as Washington Gladden and Stephen Colwell (a Philadelphia iron merchant) later taking over the reigns (Hopkins, 1940:46).

### 3.7.2. RAUSCHENBUSCH AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

In April 1917 Walter Rauschenbusch, a teacher of Church History, delivered a lecture before the annual convocation of the Yale School of Religion. The title of his lecture was 'A Theology for the Social Gospel'. More recently, another proponent of the Social Gospel referred to Rauschenbusch's lecture at Yale School of Religion, summarising part of the lecture as follows:

The new thing in the Social Gospel is the clarity and insistence with which it sets forth the necessity of redeeming the historical life of humanity. Its chief interest is concentrated on those manifestations of sin that lie beyond the individual. A salvation confined to the soul and its personal interests is an imperfect and only partly effective salvation. It is time to revise our thinking concerning so-called 'personal salvation' and 'regeneration'. Complete salvation is attained when we freely serve others. We must realise that all men are children of God and are redeemed by Christ (Gonce 1996:641).

### 3.7.3. MERCY EXPECTED WITHOUT JUSTICE!

In the light of this statement we note that his theology has *no place for repentance* from sin, and *dismisses personal salvation*. Instead 'salvation' is seen as something to be achieved through good deeds. How can there be forgiveness without true repentance? How can mercy operate without justice? Christ's death was a demonstration of the principle that mercy and justice must be in tandem.

In his statement the author apparently views redemption as a 'force for good' pitted against 'forces of evil'. The New Testament teaching regarding redemption is that it is complete, perfect, and freely available to all men who will place in their faith and trust in Christ. Redemption is not an ongoing process, but the result of faith in Christ. It is not a struggle between good and evil, but an everlasting and total victory over sin and evil.

The author is obviously entitled to his views, but it must be noted that they are unbiblical, and would be a source of major concern to all evangelical Christians.

His views are the antithesis of the Christian Gospel believed and taught by the Apostolic Christian Church, and confirmed by the apostle Paul as follows:

**For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and not the result of good works, so that no person can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).**

### 3.7.4. ONE SAVIOUR, ONE SACRIFICE

The apostle Paul clarifies this still further, adding:

## EPHESIANS 1:4-7

την απολυτρωσιν δια του αιματος αυτου

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**We have redemption through his blood**

This statement from the apostle confirms that those whose faith and trust is in Jesus, *already have* redemption. We do not need to struggle or strive to attain it. It is a fact confirmed in Scripture, and brings joy and peace of mind to the people of God.

The statement confirms that biblical redemption is undeserved, yet complete and everlasting.

## 3.7.5. CHRIST TRANSFORMS PEOPLE

Because Rauschenbusch demonstrates a somewhat cynical attitude towards the transformation of human society through the spiritual regeneration of individuals, it is necessary for us to remember the words of the apostle Paul when he wrote to the Church in Corinth explaining that those who become Christians become *new persons*. They are not the same anymore, for the old life has gone. A new life has begun:

(2 CORINTHIANS 5:17).

ωστε ει τις εν χριστω καινη κτισις τα αρχαια παρηλθεν ιδου γεγονεν καινα τα παντα

## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**So that if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation; the old things passed away – lo, (have become) new all things!**



### 3.7.6. SALVATION CANNOT BE EARNED

Sadly, Rauschenbusch apparently lacks personal experience of this glorious metamorphosis described by the apostle Paul. He also shows a lack of understanding regarding the Christian doctrine of salvation through grace, when he asks the following question from the point of view of his Social Gospel:

*Can personal forgiveness settle such accounts as some men run up with their fellowmen? Does Calvinism deal adequately with a man who appears before the judgment seat of Christ with \$50,000,000 in his bank account that has not been shared with others? Can such a man then plead a free pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice? (1917:120) (My italics for emphasis).*

The answer to Rauschenbusch's question is clearly 'Yes', provided the application for mercy is made during this lifetime, and not at the final judgment of mankind. The salvation that is available through faith in Christ is for all men irrespective of ethnicity, cultural background, financial status, or history of sin. The only condition is repentance from sin and a willingness to follow Christ. Salvation is not deserved by some and not by others. Sinners are not judged according to their works, but according to their relationship with Christ. The selfish hoarding of \$50 million dollars is not a worse sin than the sin of rejecting the pardon and salvation Christ offers.

### 3.7.7. SALVATION IS GOD'S UNMERITED FAVOUR TO MAN

The Apostolic Christian Church taught that salvation is only possible by the grace of God, and can never be earned or deserved by anyone. The rich are saved by grace, and so are the poor. This is confirmed in the words of the apostle Paul to the Church at Ephesus when he wrote:

**God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favour and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus. God saved you by his special favour when you believed. You cannot take any credit for this because it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:7-9).**

### 3.7.8. THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IS A COUNTERFEIT GOSPEL

The Social Gospel may be an attractive philosophy to a person who has not received the light of the Gospel of Christ, and may offer the hope of material change to those who live in abject poverty, or in social conditions that are inhumane, brutal, and disrespectful of human dignity. However, it is not the Gospel found in the pages of the New Testament, and neither is it an accurate reflection of the Gospel believed and taught by the Apostolic Christian Church. It is simply not a biblical philosophy.

### 3.7.9. CRITICISM OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL'S MINISTRY

#### Background Biblical Perspective

The apostle James stressed the importance of social *action*, rather than mere concern, when he wrote concerning the physical needs of *Christian believers*:

**"If a brother or sister is naked or destitute of daily food and one of you says to him, 'Depart in peace and be warmed and filled', but you do not give him the things he needs for his body, what good is that? So also, 'faith' without the appropriate action is useless" (James 2:16-17).**

The Lord Jesus re-emphasised this *duty towards other Christians*, when he told his own followers that any refusal on their part to help *fellow believers* who were in need, amounted to a refusal to serve him (Jesus), and that judgement would result. Speaking as he was leaving the temple in Jerusalem, he said:

**"I assure you, when you refuse to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you refuse to help me" (Matthew 25:45).**

Important as this is, social action *is not the Gospel* of the Apostolic Christian Church but is *the product of lives that have been changed by that Gospel*. Social concern does not save a person from sin, but salvation from sin results in social concern and appropriate action on behalf of others.

- The Social Gospel makes no insistence on repentance from sin, which is so clearly described in the Acts of the Apostles. It also discounts the Apostolic Church's belief in personal salvation. The Social Gospel places undue emphasis on socio-political activities, incorrectly naming these as *a means of salvation*.
- The ministry described in the Social Gospel, and subsequently transported and applied to socio-political issues in the form of Liberation Theology, *shows a marked imbalance when compared to the ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church*.

## **Worship**

Worship of God is equated to *human actions intended to impress God*, and personal holiness is not emphasised. This was clearly shown in the review of Brown's book in the first chapter of this dissertation.

## **Social And Political Issues**

The Social gospel gives these issues a disproportionately high emphasis.

## **Evangelism**

*Evangelism* is problematic in terms of the Social Gospel, because *personal salvation is rejected* in favour of achieving 'group salvation' through social justice, and political freedom.

## **Biblical Instruction**

Biblical teaching has a low priority in terms of the Social Gospel, because hermeneutical interpretations of Scripture based on existentialism have differed widely, and lacked authority. This is not conducive to serious scholarship.

On the other hand, the more disciplined hermeneutical practices of evangelical scholars, together with a reasoned ontological approach to Scripture, provide the opportunity for

fruitful and accurate interpretation of God's Word. In this way a balanced view of Scripture is established, where the written Word is in harmony with the natural reality and substance of our lives.

### 3.8. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

#### 3.8.1. DEFINING LIBERATION THEOLOGY

A summarised theological definition of Liberation Theology is provided by Brown in "Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide", as follows:

'Firstly, Liberation Theology is liberation from unjust social structures. Secondly it is liberation from the power of fate. Thirdly it is liberation from personal sin and guilt' (1993:67).

As with the Social Gospel, Liberation Theology believes that the Christian Church has a vital role to play in South African society, in terms of social and political objectives, which are identical to those of the Social Gospel.

This definition places Liberation Theology at odds with the Christian Gospel described earlier in this chapter. Of particular note is the fact that while *mention is made* of 'freedom from personal sin and guilt', Brown's book states this as the third and lowest priority, makes *no mention anywhere of repentance* from sin, and offers no explanation at all as to *how* this 'liberation from sin and guilt' is to be obtained in terms of Liberation Theology.

Furthermore, because Liberation Theologians frequently claim that *all men are in any case children of God*, it would seem superfluous to enquire about the need for individual freedom from sin.

### 3.8.2. THE COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPEDIA & LIBERATION THEOLOGY

A concise summary of Liberation Theology is found in the Columbia Encyclopaedia and reads as follows:

Liberation Theology is the child of the Social Gospel. The beliefs pertaining to the Social Gospel are retained, and merely adapted or translocated away from religious theology to the area of socio-politics. It represents the belief that the Christian Gospel demands 'a preferential option for the poor,' and that the church should be involved in the struggle for economic and political justice in the contemporary world – particularly in the Third World. (2000: 65).

Liberation Theology has come under some criticism since the 1980s, led by Pope John Paul 11, because of its support for *violent* political revolution and *Marxist* philosophies.

### 3.8.3. HEAL THE BODY WHILE THE SPIRIT DIES

Cook writes in support of Liberation Theology, in '*Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics*', as follows:

Our theology is about society, about changing society, transforming communities, changing conditions, structures and laws, and trying to find new orders of life, and new opportunities for mankind. If we create the right environment for people, then we will have shown them the love of Christ, the gospel in action. The gospel translates into housing, education, leisure, and culture. These are the key (1978:143).

This statement typifies the 'religious outer cloak' of the Social Gospel that translates into political Liberation Theology, is not the Gospel of Christ, but is a counterfeit gospel.

### 3.8.4. THE WRONG MEDICINE

If we use the analogy of medicines in today's world, the Social Gospel would represent a fake or degraded 'generic' product, which means that its ingredients are not the same as the original medicine. This is not to imply that all generic medicines are fraudulent. Indeed most are of a perfectly good standard. It is a fact however that when generics are *not manufactured under licence* of the parent company, there may not be adequate controls to ensure the quality of the product, and in such cases manufacturers may see an opportunity for huge financial gain, by omitting vital expensive ingredients. Such medicines might not only be ineffective, but might also be contaminated with illegal and harmful ingredients. Such is the spiritual danger of a 'contaminated gospel' that cannot heal, and may harm.

### 3.8.5. CONCLUSION

Liberation theologians have abandoned the original Gospel of the Apostolic Christian Church in favour of a 'new gospel' that has social and political objectives as its main concern. It sees the role of the Christian Church in South African society as being vitally important as a 'political and social service provider'.

## 3.9. A MODEL OF BALANCED CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

### 3.9.1. KNOWING CHRIST AND SERVING CHRIST

A person's understanding of the *true Gospel of Christ* is what ultimately determines *the focus and direction* of social and spiritual ministry within society. We have seen that the Apostolic Christian Church displayed a ministry within their society that was not only perfectly balanced, but was also powerful, and able to produce dramatic changes that were appreciated by all citizens.

### 3.9.2. THE BODY OF CHRIST

The analogy of the Christian Church as the 'Body' of Christ has great significance in terms of its ministry within society. This was explained by the apostle Paul when he wrote to the Corinthian church explaining this analogy as follows:

ROMANS 12:5

οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώμα ἐσμεν ἐν χριστῷ ὁ δὲ καθ' εἰς ἀλλήλων μέλη

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

Thus the many (one body we) are in Christ, and each one (of each other) members.

### 3.9.3. BALANCE DETERMINES FUNCTION

A human body cannot function without the amazing and complex balancing mechanism in the cochlear, found deep within the mastoid bone of the skull. This mechanism provides 3-Dimensional orientation, and retention of perfect balance, while the individual is performing complex physical manoeuvres. A body that is 'off balance' is uncontrollable, awkward, and impractical. A Christian ministry that is unbalanced is unattractive, unbiblical, and ineffective in terms of what is expected by the Lord of the Church.

### 3.9.4. BALANCE AND UNITY IN MINISTRY

The Apostolic Christian Church had a spiritual ministry within society that was balanced and in harmony. Worship of God provided a constant background to the other ministries, profound levels of social care were evident, and evangelisation of unbelievers was a natural process stemming from the social concern of these Christians. New converts to Christ were

introduced to structured biblical teaching, that provided them with spiritual food and enabled them to grow into strong and mature Christians.

- In the organogram that follows, the hand of the Triune God is seen to suspend and control the Christian Church as well as the whole of society. God the Son is in the Father, and the Church is in the Son. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to minister within society.
- The Organogram indicates the ideal balance of Christian ministry that is so needed in South Africa in the 21st century, if we are to experience a transformation of society, and return to biblical principles in the life of our nation.



## ORGANOGRAM DEMONSTRATING PERFECT BALANCE OF MINISTRY IN THE APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOCIETY



### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS ORGANOGRAM

- The apostle Paul confirms that it is the hand of God that suspends the entire universe, including our world with all its complex and heterogeneous societies, when he wrote as follows to the Christian believers in the Colossian church:

## COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

**Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all, and is supreme over all creation. Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we cannot see.....kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together.**

- The spiritual ministry of the Christian Church is controlled and directed by the hand of God.
- There are four distinctive arms of ministry within each local Christian church. These are Worship, Social action, Evangelism, and Bible teaching.
- There is a delicate and beautiful balance between the four arms of ministry.
- The bears represent local churches. They are part of greater society, and yet retain their distinctive and holy separation from involvement *with evil* in society.
- These local churches share in the total ministry of the universal Christian Church. Each is aware and mindful of the others, and complementing the others with a wonderful diversity of spiritual gifts.
- The Holy Spirit of God provides the supernatural and enabling power for the ministry of the Christian Church in society.

It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that the ministry of the Christian Church can display perfect balance and harmony, and it is then that South Africa can experience a metamorphosis into a stable, happy, crime-free, and prosperous society. Should this be achieved with the help of God it would make our 'Rainbow Nation' the envy of the world.

Society is made up of individuals, and individuals develop within families. The family unit is therefore of fundamental importance to the Church of Christ. Women are central to the family structure, and play a major role in nurturing children. In order to do this a woman

depends on the support of her husband. The loss of a husband is thus a devastating blow to married woman, especially if she is raising children.

In the next chapter we shall therefore consider the family unit, and the position of widows from the point of view of the Christian Church.

## CHAPTER 4

### FAMILY AND WIDOWS

### A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 4.1. THE FAMILY UNIT

If we are to gain an understanding of the family as an institution of God, we need to turn back to the ancient book of Genesis. Many evangelical scholars agree that it was Moses who actually put pen to paper in order to provide us with the historical record. We consider now an extract from the Genesis record:

**And the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him. So the Lord God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs, and closed up the place from which he had taken it. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and brought her to Adam. 'At last!' Adam exclaimed. 'She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman' because she was taken out of a man.' This explains why a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and so become united into one (Genesis 2: 18-24).**

Thus it was that the fundamental structure of the human family unit was decreed by God, and recorded by Moses, who also added:

**'So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them; and God told them to be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1: 27-28).**

Firstly we noted that man was made in the image of God, and therefore it is logical to believe that God would be the best source of wisdom and information as to how man's social structure ought to function.

Secondly we discover that God created two different sexes, and that these were designed to complement each other, and not to function apart, or in isolation.

Thirdly, it is clear that it was God's intention that children would be the 'by-product' of this union between one man and one woman. That was his plan for the human family.

The fact of marriage is confirmed in the Bible, and in the Old Testament marriage was regarded as completely normal, and there is no Hebrew word for 'bachelor'. The record of the creation of Eve (Genesis 2: 18-24) indicates the unique relationship of husband and wife, and serves as a picture of the relationship between God and his people (Jeremiah chapter 3) and between Christ and his Church (Ephesians 5: 22-23).

Monogamy is implicit in the story of Adam and Eve, since God created only one wife for Adam. Yet polygamy was adopted from the time of Lamech (Genesis 4: 19) and is not specifically forbidden in Scripture. It seems that God left it to man to discover by experience that God's original institution of monogamy was the proper relationship. It has been shown that polygamy brings trouble, and often results in sin, for example in the case of Abraham (Genesis chapter 21); Gideon (Judges 8: 29-9: 57); David (2 Samuel 11:18); Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8). Numerous other examples exist (The New Bible Dictionary, 1968: 788).

Biblical marriage customs centred around two major events. Firstly there was the betrothal of a couple to be married at which time the parents were often involved in the selection of a life-partner for their son or daughter. Gifts were exchanged as a promise that the couple were committed for life, and would then arrange the wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony was a major social occasion, with many guests invited as a public display of the marriage commitment. The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ himself attended such wedding ceremonies, proves that he identified himself with the proceedings and regarded them as the will of God (John chapter 2).

The Lord Jesus believed strongly in marriage, and when Jewish leaders tried to persuade him concerning the legitimacy of divorce under the law of Moses, Jesus answered:

**The Scriptures record that in the beginning 'God made them male and female', and this explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Since they are no**

**longer two, but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together (Matthew 19: 4- 6).**

Finally, the writer to the Hebrews was very specific concerning the marriage bond when he gave these instruction to Jewish converts to Christ:

**Give honour to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery (Hebrews 13:4).**

These examples from Scripture concerning marriage, do not to imply that all adult believers should be married, because Jesus himself was single by his own choice, the apostle Paul is considered by many scholars to have been a single person, and it seems likely that John the Baptist was single. The New Testament recognizes celibacy has been appropriate for specific purposes, and particularly those situations in ministry where single status might have distinct advantages (Matthew 14:10-12 & 1 Cor. 7:7-9).

So the Creator planned that human beings should marry with the opposite sex, set up stable and permanent 'one flesh' relationships, and have children who would complete the family unit. This family unit was intended by God to become the 'building block' of all societies, irrespective of creed, culture, ethnicity, or nationality. The same 'building block' was intended for the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, Kings and subjects.

The importance of this social 'building block' can never be overemphasized. It is the product that creates stable relationships among people, produces happy local communities, and ultimately determines the entire social fabric of a nation (Evans, 2001:16).

Sociologists have now realised that social progress proceeds not through relations of 'isolated atoms', but through the multiplication of 'organized cells', in exactly the way the human body develops from basic cells into the incredible complexity of anatomy and the awesome functions of these fully developed organs. In other words, a successful and stable society does not come into existence through the association of individuals, but through the successful perpetuation of 'building blocks' named family units (Becker, 1948:65).

## 4.2. CONCENTRIC CAPABILITY

The concept of 'Concentric Capability' is *my own term* to describe the widely accepted sociological development of people.

I would like to explain it in 'geometric' terms, as represented by a number of concentric circles, each one of which represents a developmental phase in the life of an individual.

Social institutions lie within one another like a series of concentric circles, with constantly extending radii. Each circle has 'responsibility' for the area within it.

Modern sociologists concur that learning and development are interwoven in a concentric relationship, with the family unit at the centre (Liben 1987: 217).

The diagram depicts the child as 'a sociological embryo' the centre point of the circles, beginning the earliest processes of socialisation and interpretation of experiences.

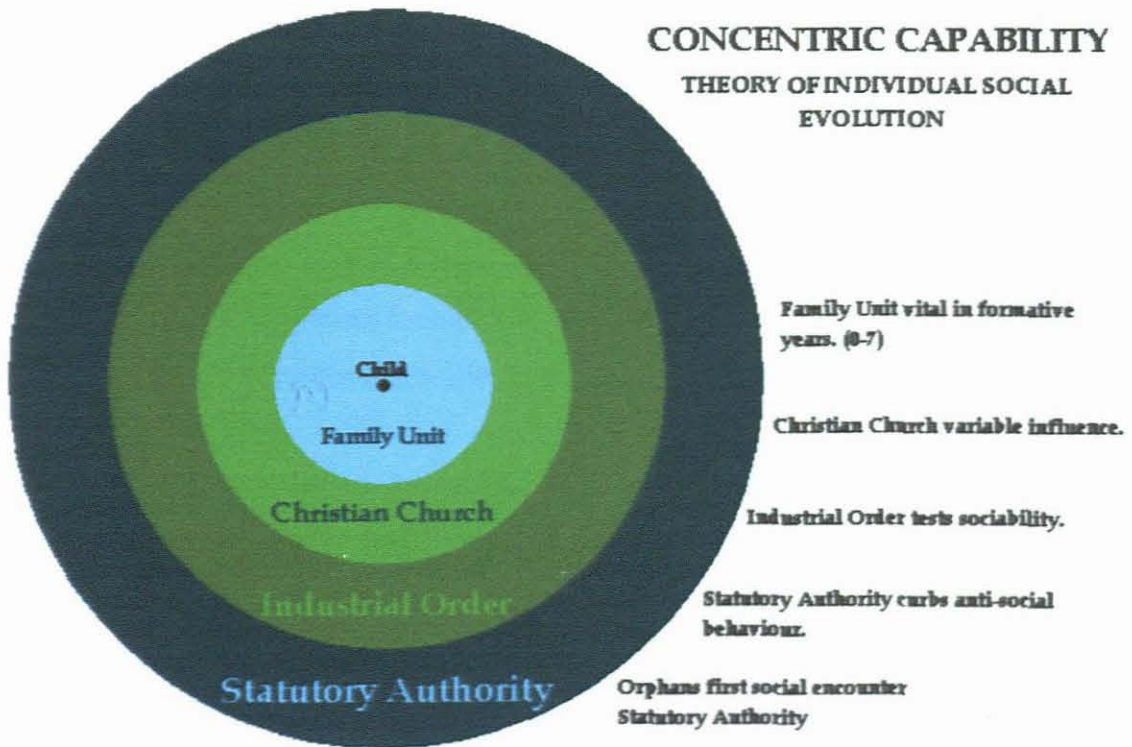
The further outwards he moves along the radii of these concentric circles, the more he will come into contact with differing areas of social life that will challenge him to adapt, if he wishes to succeed in the world that lies beyond the family

This ability to adapt to social and environmental change is what I call 'Concentric Capability' and which has been the focus of sociological research for over 100 years.

The diagram under the heading 'Concentric Capability' is entirely the work of the author, and represents the sociological development of an individual from infancy to adulthood. It *is based on sociological research* done by a number of different sociologists in different countries. Some sociological views will now be briefly considered within the framework of 'Concentric Capability'.

## 4.2.1.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL



## 4.2.2. CIRCLE OF THE FAMILY UNIT

The first circle has a radius that confines the individual within the family experience. These are the conditions of human birth and childhood of which he is part. The family creates the *most intimate experience of social relationships*, represented in the diagram as the inner circle.

Bristol was one of the earliest sociologists to identify the *importance of the environment* on social development. His writings have often described how peers and peer pressure influence the development of a child, especially between the ages of 8 to 18 years.

At the same time he points out that this does *not* necessarily indicate that parental views are replaced by the views of peers. The influence of peer pressure applies more in some areas of development than others (1915:1).



#### 4.2.3. CIRCLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The second concentric circle, beyond the family, could represent the Christian Church in societies where the Christian faith has become established, and where local churches have developed within communities.

Ashmore urges psychologists to pay more attention to the family unit, simply because most children grow up in families where they are influenced by fathers, mothers and siblings. He states that the *beliefs of parents* are very important input into the development and socialization of children, and also makes the point that religious education of children is normally the responsibility of parents. His research indicates that there are advantages in terms of social development, for children with some form of religious education. He does not, however, refer specifically to Christianity (1986:35).

It is within the 'circle' of the Church that an individual receives further instruction with regard to the moral Law of God, is introduced to Jesus Christ as a living person, and is encouraged to be a follower of the Lord. He or she is also offered instruction with regard to biblical standards for Christian living, and given a thorough preparation for the 'greater circles' beyond the Church.

#### 4.2.4. CIRCLE OF INDUSTRIAL ORDER

When the individual emerges from the circle representing the Christian Church, the next concentric circle he encounters is the circle of 'Industrial Order', which is when he takes up a job within society, begins to earn a living, and to socialize with people he has never met and whose moral and ethical codes may differ greatly from his own.

He will now be tested in terms of his working ethos, his ability to socialize with others, and his competitive preparedness for the Industrial Order. His preparation for this encounter took place within the inner circle of his family unit. He may also have received preparation for this from within the circle representing the Christian Church.

Studies in personnel and industrial psychology indicate that social adaptation to the working environment is easier for children who have come from a stable family

background, although it must also be pointed out that it is the duty of managers within industry to create an acceptable working environment for employees. Productivity and job satisfaction are directly related to the working environment and to the individual's adaptation to life beyond the family unit (Fleishman 1991:228).

#### 4.2.5. CIRCLE OF STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Having emerged from the circle of Industrial Order, the individual now comes into direct contact with structures of authority within the State, such as local, regional, and national government. In other words he now rubs shoulders with those who make the Law and those whose job is to enforce it. He is now faced by a myriad of rules and regulations decided by others, and which he is expected to obey as a good citizen.

He may not understand many of these regulations, and he may not wish to comply. Interestingly enough (and perhaps predictably) the individual's response in this situation is determined to a large extent by his learning experiences within his first 'inner circle' that was his family unit.

The publication 'Youth and Authority' describes how the family unit and religious background of a child has a profound influence on juvenile behaviour. The term 'masterless young' is used to describe the juvenile who has clearly 'stepped outside the well-marked boundaries' of the normative socializing process. These juveniles immediately draw attention from authorities, become the focus of magistrates, and contribute towards significant social problems (Griffiths 1996:352).

The individual's reaction to social norms and State laws is fundamentally important to society at large. Should he comply with these expectations he is considered a 'good citizen' and receives the approval of fellow citizens. On the other hand, should he disregard the norms and rules within his society, he comes into conflict with the Law, and meets with the disapproval of many fellow citizens.

It is the 'masterless young' within each community that often become adult criminals. This is reflected in social problems such as prostitution, abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and general fragmentation of the fabric of society.

In view of the above, it becomes clear that *the inner circle representing the family unit* is what determines the character, morality, reliability, cooperation, and contribution of each individual to greater society.

### 4.3. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE FAMILY

The concept of 'Concentric Capability' is important when considering the role of the Christian Church in South African society. If our Rainbow Nation is to experience a society that is stable, happy, economically productive, loving towards others, and secure from criminal activities, then we need to look towards the family unit as the only viable departure point.

If South Africa considers itself to be primarily a 'Christian' country, then biblical principles regarding the family unit must be upheld, preserved, and cherished. The more individuals experience the love, direction, and security of the Christian family, the better will become our society, and the stronger our nation (Murray, 1997:32).

Christian leaders, be they the heads of homes, heads of schools, heads of tertiary educational services, pastors, professionals, or heads of government, must by all means *promote and protect the family unit* as the 'building block' for the South African nation. The family unit has been proven through the centuries in many societies, in a diversity of peoples, and in many different religious situations.

Citizens should always remember that the concept of the family unit did not originate with man, *but with God himself*. It is the formula that God chose for successful living, and for the

establishment of a prosperous, integrated, happy, and secure society. The Christian Church must lead the way by promoting family values at every level of education in South Africa.

#### **4.4. FRAGMENTATION OF THE FAMILY UNIT**

##### **4.4.1. UNIVERSAL FORCES OF DISINTEGRATION**

We have shown that the family unit is the only 'building block' for a society that is safe, economically productive, socially integrated, and secure.

Ranging against the family unit are many forces within society that are opposed to order and stability, and in favour of disintegration of the norms and values that have formed the fabric of Christian society for thousands of years.

These forces of destruction originate in many different philosophies and organizations, but probably in the forefront of the campaign against the family unit, are the 'New Age' movements where man becomes his own god; Feminism in various forms, which deny men their God-given role as heads of their families; theologians who deny the authority of Scripture, and thus undermine biblical teaching regarding the family; Evolutionism that excludes God from his creation and rejects biblical authority concerning the family; Scientific Materialism that restricts belief to what can be shown in a laboratory; Humanism that believes man is a better sociologist than God; and most recently 'Postmodernism', that is really a disguised form of secular humanism, dressed in fancy academic garb guaranteed to confuse both students and professors alike.

##### **4.4.2. DEVALUATION OF MARRIAGE**

Marriage has become devalued by some, and is no longer regarded as a sacred pledge or contract between a man and woman, whereby a lifetime of sacrificial love is expected. A society that has become degenerate has also had negative effects on the institution of marriage. Divorce has become almost as common as marriage itself, and many couples go

into marriage with the idea that divorce is now an acceptable and easy way out, should the relationship produce any strains upon individuals (Smith, 1998:56).

By the same token many couples simply 'live together', deciding not to marry, and therefore avoiding what they see as the probability some day, of going through a legal divorce process that is costly and humiliating. Such couples regard marriage as a failed institution, no longer suitable for 21st century people. They no longer view marriage as an expression of organic social life, or as a witness of 'social continuity' established long ago by the Christian Church (Smith, 1998:152).

#### 4.4.3. WOMEN'S LIBERATION/FEMINISM

Feminism has become a powerful force in the 21st century, demonstrating rebellion against male authority, against the Church, and against Scripture. The effects on families have been considerable, and largely detrimental to children. In her book 'Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Doctrine: Narrative Analysis and Appraisal' the author makes the following statement:

Every woman who is working to improve the security and position of women within society is bringing about the end of God. All feminists are striving together to make our world less and less like the one described in the Bible (Greene-McCreight 2000:3).

While this point of view is probably more extreme than the view of the average feminist, it nevertheless draws attention to a movement that is becoming more vocal, and seemingly more determined to attack the Christian Church and the Bible.

Women have become increasingly independent, and many are opting to pursue careers rather than to be homemakers and having to care for children. This role of homemaker and mother is one that is approved by God, but is apparently no longer an attractive proposition to many young women, who see it as demeaning of their womanhood, and restrictive of their progress and careers (Baber, 1939:56).

In fairness, however, it must be noted that financial circumstances frequently *compel* mothers to work, as has been pointed out in a publication entitled 'America's Shame: Women and Children in Shelter and the Degradation of Family Roles', in which the author remarks:

Fewer families have the luxury of relying on only one provider for sustenance. As a result, in the last three decades women have been joining the workforce in large numbers. Most women have done so out of a sense of responsibility for their families, and not because they are disregarding their domestic roles (Arrighi 1997:3).

Small children are increasingly being cared for by grandparents, placed in crèches and play-schools, and their care and supervision is becoming the responsibility of the community, rather than that of the parents. The overall effect is the breakdown of the family unit, loss of parental authority as far as the child is concerned, lack of guidance and direction in the critical formative years of the child, and poor preparation of the child for successful social interaction *beyond* the family unit (Smith 1998:163).

## 4.5. MODERNISTIC THINKING

### 4.5.1. RELATIONSHIPS: ANYTHING GOES!

Modernistic thinking is increasingly challenging biblical views concerning marriage and the family unit. Concepts that appear to be well accepted today, may not be acceptable to tomorrow's generation. Accepted Christian values and norms in the Western world have become less secure, partly because the family unit has become weaker, and partly because there are many rivals for its influence, especially television and the Internet.

An American author reflects on the moral bankruptcy of the USA as follows:

There is a willingness to permit adults to do what they please with their personal lives.

Such tolerance ignores a harsh reality: what we do in our personal life is never without wider consequence. Every community is deeply involved in every human interaction. Marriage, family-life, and divorce—these involve personal choices, but those choices profoundly affect our common bond as a people (Wall 1998:1).

No one would argue that such moral decline is restricted to the USA. The mass media daily confirms the fact that moral decline and family breakdown is now a universal phenomenon.

While divorce has become part of the normal family cycle and is no longer regarded as tragic or deviant, it is now seen by many as providing the individuals concerned with an opportunity for a 'fresh start'. Children born to these disintegrating marriages are simply gathered up and distributed to grandparents, or others in the community that are willing to take care of them. Are modernistic world claims that marriage should not be regarded as a special or privileged institution; on the contrary, they maintain that we must 'catch up' with the diverse, pluralistic society in which we live. For example, they claim that same-sex marriages often involve far more sharing and better quality than do heterosexual relationships (Hohengarten 1994:1502).

Even animals, birds, and many other creatures in the lower orders of creation live in an organized family structure that they adhere to instinctively, in order to provide the stability needed for the survival of their young. It is sad therefore, that random sexual relationships, 'convenient' forms of morality, and divorce as an easy option out, are being practised by beings who have been made 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1: 27).

While it is apparent that those indulging in these aberrant relationships have no intention of altering their lifestyles, their actions will ultimately contribute to further social instability, and even the collapse of social order, because they are in conflict with the Word of God.

#### 4.6. A BIBLICAL VIEW OF MARRIAGE

The apostle Peter confirmed divine authority for the unique husband-wife relationship when he wrote a detailed description of how husbands and wives should regard one another, and live together in a way that is honouring to God:

**In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands; even those who refuse to accept the Gospel. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. In the same way, you husbands must give honour to your wives. Treat them with understanding as you live together. They may be weaker than you are, but they are your equal partners in God's gift of new life. If you do not treat them as you should, your prayers will not be heard (1 Peter 3:1-7).**

From these words it is obvious that the marriage relationship is ordained of God, is unique, and is not optional in terms of the God's Law.

The writer to the Hebrews also places high-value on marriage, and gives the following instruction to Jewish converts to Christianity:

**'Give honour to marriage and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery' (Hebrews 13: 4).**

The stability and success of the marriage relationship has been part of history for thousands of years, and is undeniably the only model that serves to produce real love, stability and security for a family and a community.

Witte adds to this biblical advice, by remarking:

**The love of wife and husband is among the strongest foretastes we have of Yahweh's love for his elect people, and of Christ's love for his Church. The sacrifices made for spouses and children, are among the best reflections we can offer of the perfect sacrifice of Golgotha. The marriage relationship also has specific 'spiritual' values, or ways of sustaining and strengthening believers in their faith (1996: 197).**



#### 4.6.1. AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF MARRIAGE

The traditional principles of many African tribal marriages are not in general agreement with biblical teaching. According to the book of Genesis, the result of a marriage union between a man and a woman is that they 'leave father and mother and become one flesh'. The text reads as follows:

**'This explains why man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, so that the two become united into one' (Genesis 2:24).**

This is a clear instruction to both parties within a marriage that their highest loyalty in terms of human relationships should be to one another. Parents, the extended family, and the tribe, should not override this loyalty.

The New Testament confirms this principle when the apostle Peter offers these instructions:

**Wives must accept the authority of their husbands even those who refuse to accept the Good News (Gospel of Christ). Husbands must give honour to their wives and treat them with understanding as they live together. She may be weaker than her husband, but she is an equal partner in God's gift of new life. If the husband does not treat her as he should, his prayers will not be heard (1 Peter: 3:1-7).**

African customs with regard to marriage differ in many respects throughout Africa, but according to Fortes there is one principle or tradition that is common to most African marriages, and this concerns the actual relationship between man and woman once they have been married. He states that while the family lineage on both sides is honoured and respected prior to the marriage, that afterwards the wife loses her previous status, and is regarded as a possession of the husband, thus having to forsake her previous independence and status in society. In practical terms this means that although her husband must be her highest priority, she is not necessarily his highest priority, and in many cases his immediate and extended family become more important to him than his bride. When one considers this in the light of the preceding Scriptures, it becomes clear that traditional African marriage

relationships are unbiblical. This is not to imply in any way that all African marriages are unbiblical, but only those that ignore the biblical instructions for a marriage relationship because of tribal customs. (Fortes 1962:2).

Having said this it must be noted that White Western marriages have an extremely poor track record, and are associated with a very high divorce rate. Men frequently become absorbed with priorities outside of the marriage relationship, with the result that many married women find themselves in a position similar to Black African women, in the sense that their husbands ignore them. The blame for this cannot be laid at the feet of tribalism. Indeed it would appear that marriage relationships throughout the world suffer from a lack of commitment, which in turn is the result of human selfishness. The solution to this problem is to be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which enables both partners in the marriage relationship to demonstrate the love of Christ to one another.

In the South African context, Nyirongo explains:

The African view of marriage is related to social status, and economic security is linked to the number of children produced. The concept of 'family' is far broader than the usually understood Western idea, and extends to any person distantly related to either the husband or the wife. Families do not always stay together, and children are frequently raised by grandparents in geographically distant locations (1997: 111,136).

The principle behind this African concept of 'economic security' is fully understandable in the context of poverty, and the absence of any 'retirement policy' such as is common in most developed nations. One can imagine the reaction of a White person with Western background, if his retirement savings policy became the subject of criticism by others in his community, or was categorised as being 'unhelpful to the community'! The African can rely only on his children to care for him in his old age, and in modern times even these children have become so detribalised and geographically mobile, that their continued support is not necessarily guaranteed.

#### 4.6.2. PROVEN BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE

As a result of soaring divorce rates across the world, many young people are coming to the conclusion that marriage is a failed institution, and that 'tying the knot' is unwise, and could lead to a great deal of expense in the event of a divorce. So it is that marriage, which is the building block of society in terms of biblical teaching, is being eroded in the 21st century. The benefits of marriage are seldom discussed, and for this reason it seems appropriate to briefly consider the scientific research of Lehrer, which provides us with the most up-to-date research done on marriage, and published in the year 2003. The conclusions extracted from her lengthy publication can be summarized as follows:

- Bodily health and fitness levels are generally superior in married people.
- Longevity is a feature of married people, rather than those that are single.
- Mental health is generally better in married people.
- Happiness and integration of personality is a more a feature of married people.
- The children of married people generally do better in life.
- Sexual satisfaction is generally higher in married couples than in single people.
- Financial security is considerably better in homes where the parents are married (2003:255).

While there are no doubt exceptions to the above, it is interesting to note the many different and proven advantages that married people have, and conversely the relative deficiencies of the unmarried state, particularly when considering children.

Perhaps it is also appropriate at this point to remind ourselves of wise advice provided thousands of years ago in Scripture. The book of Proverbs records these words:

**My son, pay attention to my wisdom and share your love only with your wife; for the Lord sees clearly what a person does, and examines every pathway he takes. An evil person will die and will be lost because of his incredible folly (Proverbs 5: 1-23).**

The only stable and effective building block of society is *the family unit*, which consists of marriage between one man and one woman, with children as natural additions. This principle is equally valid for South Africa as it is for the rest of the world.

Marriage is in institution of God, and is significant that the United Nations in 1948 recommended marriage and the family unit as the building blocks of society. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 16, 1948. U.N .Chronicles).

## **4.7. WIDOWS AND ORPHANS**

### **4.7.1. WIDOWS, ORPHANS, AND GOD**

At this point in the dissertation we note that widows and orphans have a special place in God's family, and God's family has a special responsibility towards them. Moses addressed this issue when speaking to the ancient people of Israel, and this will be discussed more fully in chapter 6.

### **4.7.2. WIDOWS AND SON OF GOD**

The Lord Jesus himself displayed great concern for widows, and as he watched people place their gifts in the temple, he noticed the meagre offering of a poor widow. He immediately spoke to those present:

**'I assure you that this poor widow has given more than all of you, for she has in fact given all that she has' (Mark 12: 43-44).**

Not only was Jesus aware of her status as a widow and her sacrificial generosity, but he was also concerned about her social and financial position.

The Lord Jesus witnessed a funeral procession that was taking place in a little village called Nain, where the only son of a widow was being buried. The event was also witnessed by the physician Luke, who recorded what he saw:

**When the Lord saw the widow his heart overflowed with compassion. 'Do not cry', he said, and then walking over to the coffin he reached out and touched it with his hand. While the onlookers gazed in wonder at the proceedings, Jesus called out, 'Young man, get up'. The dead boy immediately sat up and began to talk to those around him (Luke 7:11-15).**

Funerals were not unusual in the time of our Lord, but this particular ceremony touched his heart deeply because it involved the tragic loss of the only son of a widow. Jesus understood what it meant to her emotionally and financially. Her only emotional support in life had gone, and also her hope of financial support in her old age. Hence the great concern that was shown by the Lord, and of course, his wonderful grace and kindness in restoring the life of the widow's son.

Christ's concern for widows extended until his final hour on the cross, when looking down at his own mother as she watched him die, he commended her to his beloved disciple John with the words:

**'Woman, he is now your son'. Then turning towards John he said to him, 'She is now your mother'. From that time onwards John cared for her by taking her to his own home where he treated her as his mother (John 19: 26-27).**

#### **4.7.3. PRACTICAL CARING FOR WIDOWS**

The New Testament makes a distinction between Christian widows who are *members of a local church*, and widows in general, within greater society.

The early Christian Church at Jerusalem operated a special programme to meet the material needs of poor widows within the church. Luke explains:

**Believers who spoke Greek complained against those who spoke Hebrew, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food, so the apostles said, 'Look for seven men who are**

**filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of the widows' needs' (Acts 6:1-3).**

From this we see that although the early Church had the usual difficulties that any church has in applying 'fair administration', that it nevertheless took proper steps to rectify the deficiencies with regard to the needs of widows in the church.

It should also be noted that the committee of seven godly men was comprised of both Jews and Greeks. This is an indication of the love and non-racialism that was a hallmark of the Apostolic Christian Church.

#### **4.7.4. A WOMAN'S MINISTRY TO WIDOWS**

Luke describes an event when the apostle Peter raised a young woman named Dorcas to life, by the power of God. He says that while Peter stood inside the home where the dead girl lay, many widows stood beside him, showing him garments Dorcas had made to assist poor widows. Luke recalls the emotion of the moment:

**ACTS 9:39**

**και παρεστησαν αυτω πασαι αι χηραι κλαιουσαι**

#### **INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION**

**And stood by him all the widows weeping**

From this account it appears that Dorcas had a practical ministry in which she assisted poor widows with their needs such as clothing, and it also seems that there were many widows associated with the believers at Joppa. It would be logical to assume that Dorcas was not alone in this ministry to widows, and that other Christian women in the churches might have developed similar ministries.

#### 4.7.5. THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF 'WIDOW'

MacArthur says:

The Greek term for 'widow' means 'bereft' and conveys a sense of suffering loss or being left alone. The term does not tell us how a woman became a widow, and therefore in Scripture the cause is not limited to a husband's death. 'Widows indeed' is qualified by a Greek term that means 'desolate'. These widows therefore are single Christian women who are totally desolate, and without help from friends or family (1991:12).

In the Apostolic Church era, widows were in a very difficult position because there were few employment opportunities, and few, if any, social services provided by the State. It is quite clear from the example of the Apostolic Church that the burden of being a widow had to be shared between family, friends, and the Church (Krentz, 1996:45).

#### 4.7.6. WIDOWS AND THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The apostle James makes the Christian principle of caring for orphans and widows in the Apostolic era, crystal clear:

JAMES 1:27

θρησκεια καθαρα και αμικτος παρα τω θεω και πατρι αυτη εστιν επισκεπτεσθαι ορφανους και χηρας εν τη θλιψει αυτων ασπιλον εαυτον τηρειν απο του κοσμου

#### INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

**Religion (pure and undefiled) before God and the Father this is, to visit orphans and widows in their tribulation; unspotted (oneself to keep) from the world**

He links caring for widows and orphans with *a life of holiness*, undefiled by the sinful standards of society. This is a principle throughout Scripture, whereby God demands *personal obedience to his Word, before accepting our actions as being part of our worship of him.*

Three other important thoughts are embodied in this statement from James.

Firstly, the Christian religion must be practical. There is no point in having 'faith' unless this is translated into action.

Secondly, James encourages a proactive programme of Christian care in the local church, for by doing this, believers would set a fine example to the unbelieving society outside the local church. The Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy explains that 'unbelievers are those who refuse to care for their own widows, not even those living with them in their own households' (1 Timothy 5:8).

The apostle James declares, "**Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us**" (James 1:27).

We notice that James links his request to *care for orphans and widows* with the awful possibility of believers becoming *corrupted by the world's standards* of conduct. We have already been told by Paul that *unbelievers are not known as caring* for their widows and orphans (1 Timothy 5:8). Therefore, according to Paul's letter to Timothy, and also arising directly from James 1:27, it is quite clear that James implies two opposite forms of behaviour:

- Christian caring for widows and orphans, which he describes as being 'pure religion, and acceptable to God our Father'.
- Neglect of widows and orphans, which he describes as the result of 'worldly corruption'. He warns believers not to be corrupt in this way.

MacArthur comments that that secular unbelieving society is seldom concerned with orphans or widows. He suggests that the appeal from James that believers keep themselves '**unspotted from the world**' (James 1:27) is to avoid these selfish and ungodly attitudes of unbelievers towards widows and orphans, and to demonstrate that faith in Christ produces deeds of love and mercy towards those in need (1991:11).



Thirdly, the Greek term for 'visit', and which is often translated as 'take care of', has an even deeper meaning than that. It is the word επισκεπτεσθαι (Interlinear Greek-English New Testament), and conveys the meaning of '*close scrutiny*', '*attention to detail*', or '*painstaking care*'. In other words the Christian Church is to consider the detailed needs of its widows and orphans, carefully evaluate them, prioritise them, and then *act to implement the help that is needed*.

#### 4.7.7. WIDOWS AND CHURCH RESPONSIBILITY

From a Biblical perspective the Church of Christ should regard the support of widows as a God-given responsibility as well as a privilege. The Church must be committed to widows who genuinely need assistance, whatever the cost might be. Even widows who have some financial resources, should not be ignored by the Church, but offered love, encouragement, and support in every possible way.

The increasing collapse of family units in our South African society due to poverty, disease, and crime will result in an increase in the numbers of orphans and widows that need the care of the Christian Church. Some widows have several children (Interview Keyzer, A. Chairperson, Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre, 20/10/03).

The Church needs to discern which widows are in genuine need of financial support. It obviously cannot give indiscriminately to all widows, as this would be an economic impossibility. Godly leaders need to properly ascertain the needs of widows.

#### 4.7.8. WIDOWS QUALIFYING FOR CHURCH SUPPORT

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy concerning the many widows in Timothy's church, gave this advice:

**'The Church should care for any widow who has no one else to care for her' (1 Timothy 5:3).**

From this we understand that no person who was a genuine widow (destitute) was excluded from help, and church members had hearts of compassion, and then acted accordingly.

Some of the widows, while having definite needs, could manage with the help of their families, or were assisted by individuals within the local church who cared sufficiently to help them.

MacArthur, in his book 'Caring for Widows' makes the following important observations concerning the social position of widows in the 1<sup>st</sup> century:

In ancient times, and in the times of the early Christian Church, widows were in an especially difficult position because honourable employment for women was not readily available and neither were there any secular institutions to provide for these women. Perhaps some received help through family or friends while others would strive by some means to earn enough money to survive. Most widows lived in abject poverty, because widows seldom, if ever, received any inheritance from their husbands. Any such inheritance was passed on to sons of the deceased husband, while the widow was ignored. Church support was therefore in many cases, the only lifeline that widows had (1991:12,17).

Many single and poor women down through the ages, have been able to make a small living by baking or sewing for others, and there is every possibility that first century widows also made use of these options.

The apostle Paul however qualify the terms for the support of widows by the Church:

**'But if she has children or grandchildren, they must show godliness by taking care of her. This is something that pleases God very much' (1 Timothy 5:4).**

Paul placed the first responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the *immediate family*, and *only failing that*, the Church. He makes this clear when he remarks:

'But if relatives won't take care of their own widows, then they have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers' (1 Timothy 1:8).

#### 4.7.9. CHURCH LIST OF WIDOWS

The apostle then goes on to describe an official list of the names of widows within the local church, who qualified for regular and on-going support. These were a special category of widows. Paul explains:

A widow who is put on the list for permanent support must be a woman who is *at least 60 years old*, who has been *faithful to her husband* (if she had one), is well *respected by all* in the church, has *brought her own children up successfully* (if she had children), has been *kind to strangers*, has *served* other believers well, *helped* those who were in trouble, and always been ready to do *good* (1 Timothy 5:9-10; Italics inserted are my own).

At first glance these qualifications seem virtually unattainable to the ordinary woman, and in Catholic terms, could almost qualify a person for canonisation as a saint!

The obvious reason for such strict qualifications for placement of names on the official church list for permanent support was *a financial one*.

These New Testament churches were small and scattered, generally poor, under persecution, and many of the members were unemployed. Therefore Timothy was told to be cautious in the allocation of money that was viewed as belonging to the Lord (Guterman, 1951:16).

The suggested minimum age limit of 60 years was more likely an apostolic *guide* than a rule. Paul also advises the younger widows to re-marry, so as not to become a financial burden to the local church, but failure to re-marry would obviously not constitute disobedience to the Word of God. In the same way, a woman aged 59, who was deserving of help, would surely not be prohibited from receiving benefit from the Church.

MacArthur makes an interesting observation concerning the older widows:

We know that the early church had elders, deacons, and deaconesses (1 Timothy 3:1-13). Apparently a group of godly widows were also given official status as servants in the church. They were the older women in the church whose biblical qualifications (like the elders and deacons) were very specific. This implies that they were serving the church in some official capacity (1991:33).

It would seem to me, that Paul might have been more generous in the inclusion of names on the widows' list, had the churches been in a stronger financial position.

According to MacArthur, the apostle's reference to widows aged 60 years or older does not refer to widows *receiving church support*, but to widows listed as being *special ministers* to younger widows in the local church. He comments:

The issue of financial support stops at the end of verse 8, and the issue of qualifications begins in verse 9. Therefore verse 9 is not saying a widow has to be at least 60 years of age to receive financial support from the church. There is no age limit for that (1991:34).

With respect to the author, I find it hard to agree with his interpretation. It seems to me when reading the text of 1 Timothy 5:9, that these widows of 60 years or older were in fact listed as *receiving financial help* from the local church, on a special on-going basis.

#### **4.7.9.1. Widows Excluded From Church Support**

Excluded from any form of support from the local church were those widows who were *obviously not Christians*, and whose *life style* confirmed this. Paul says concerning them:

**'But the widow who lives only for pleasure is spiritually dead' (1 Timothy 5:6).**

The apostle saw no reason why such a person should receive financial support from the local church. It would appear that there might have been some ungodly widows associated with Timothy's church at the time that the apostle Paul addressed the issue of widows.

The Church of Christ is not obligated to supply all the social or material needs of widows and orphans *in the wider society*, and neither is this feasible from an economic point of view. However the Church is expected to show kindness and understanding to all people, to offer material help where possible, or facilitate help from others, as explained by the apostle Paul:

**'Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience' (Colossians 3:12).**

It is clear from the example of Jesus that Christians do well when they feed and clothe non-Christians, as Jesus did when he fed the thousands by miraculous means. The Church however, is not able to use similarly miraculous means to supply the needs of 'the masses', and is not commanded to do so.

The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that '*charity begins at home*' and that the primary responsibility of the Church is to those who comprise the Body of Christ; that is, other believers. They were to have 'all things in common' in the sense of really caring for one another, so as to be a witness to the unbelieving world that the Christian faith was not an empty set of religious beliefs, but held to the principles of love, sharing, caring and devotion to each other's needs (1 John 3:17).

The Church of Christ should act with compassion towards *all* those who have need, even supplying the needs of those *outside* the church as far as is possible.

The opportunity for the Christian Church to do this is right on our doorstep. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa is causing death and disease, ruining households, damaging the economy, and producing tens of thousands of orphans.

In the next chapter, we shall discuss this and consider the enormous challenge to the Christian Church to put faith to work.

## CHAPTER 5

### SOCIO-MEDICAL ASPECTS OF HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 5.1. A NATIONAL CATASTROPHE

South African society is being devastated by the AIDS epidemic, and particularly so in KwaZulu~Natal. Maternal deaths from AIDS have left a legacy of thousands of black children without mothers, and in many cases without fathers. Local communities are collapsing under the social and economic strain of caring for so many widows and orphans, and this poses an enormous challenge to the Christian Church. Local churches provide the only hope for many widows and orphans in KwaZulu~Natal.

#### 5.2. 'STATE OF THE NATION' WITH REGARD TO HIV/AIDS

Desmond Sampson, Editor of AIDS GUIDE 2003/4, has this to say in his editorial:

Despite a plethora of conferences, awareness campaigns, papers, and warnings, at least 5 million South Africans are currently HIV positive, and the number is growing like wildfire. Government is not taking the matter seriously enough, and big business concerns believe the myth that HIV/ AIDS is a 'black & poor' virus, and therefore do not develop strategies to combat the spread of HIV/ AIDS.

In terms of a report compiled by a University of Cape Town Actuary, by the year 2009 the number of AIDS deaths will exceed *the combined figure* for other causes of death.

The seriousness of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa can be judged by official statistics released with the kind cooperation of the Department of Health and many non-

governmental organizations in Pretoria in October 2003. The following statistics and observations were published in December 2003.

- South Africa is in the grip of a serious HIV/AIDS pandemic, and millions of Rands have been spent on conferences, symposia, and workshops during 2003. In spite of this the situation regarding the disease appears to be worsening.  
In 2002 we witnessed the launch of the Strategic Plan and the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC). This strategic plan has provided for a clear framework for addressing key issues of care and support, while maintaining a strong emphasis on prevention.
- The 2003/4 financial allocation for HIV/AIDS in the Health Department amounts to R668,688,000.00, and of this amount R333,556,000.00 is to be provided as a conditional grant to the 9 provinces in South Africa.  
Training of health workers has taken place in the last two years in a variety of areas, and 11,000 health workers have been trained in the management of opportunistic infections associated with HIV/AIDS.
- There is also increased participation in the fight against HIV/AIDS by other government departments. All national government departments and the majority of provincial departments provide basic HIV/AIDS related services to their staff.
- On December 31st 2003 approximately 600 medical facilities were offering specific antiviral medication for those suffering from HIV/AIDS. This includes the provision of Nevirapine to infected mothers and infants.
- One of the essential elements of the Strategic Plan is ensuring access to confidential and voluntary HIV counselling and testing. While this project is very new, there are already signs of benefit within communities.

- The new Medicines Control Act that came into effect in 2003 aims to address many of the barriers to accessing affordable drugs, including provision for low-cost importation of medicines.
- The Department of Health has entered into a partnership with the Danish government with regard to poverty alleviation. An estimated amount of R100 million has been donated over three years (commenced in August 2002) to undertake poverty alleviation programmes that are focusing on HIV/AIDS.
- The rapid appraisal of the HIV/AIDS situation was done countrywide during 2002 and 466 home/community-based care and support programmes were identified.
- The Department of Health has employed 'traditional healers' to insure that there is positive collaboration between the formal health sector and traditional healers.
- The King Commission has recommended that companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange report on their HIV/AIDS workplace policy programmes. This should benefit both employers and employees.
- Much has been achieved in the last two years, especially since the formulation of the National Integrated Plan (NIP) that has provided impetus for major intervention such as home-based care, voluntary HIV counselling and testing, and life-skills education in schools.

There is general agreement that the Strategic Plan is sound, and should receive the full support of all parties in the battle against this dreadful disease (AIDS GUIDE 2003/4).



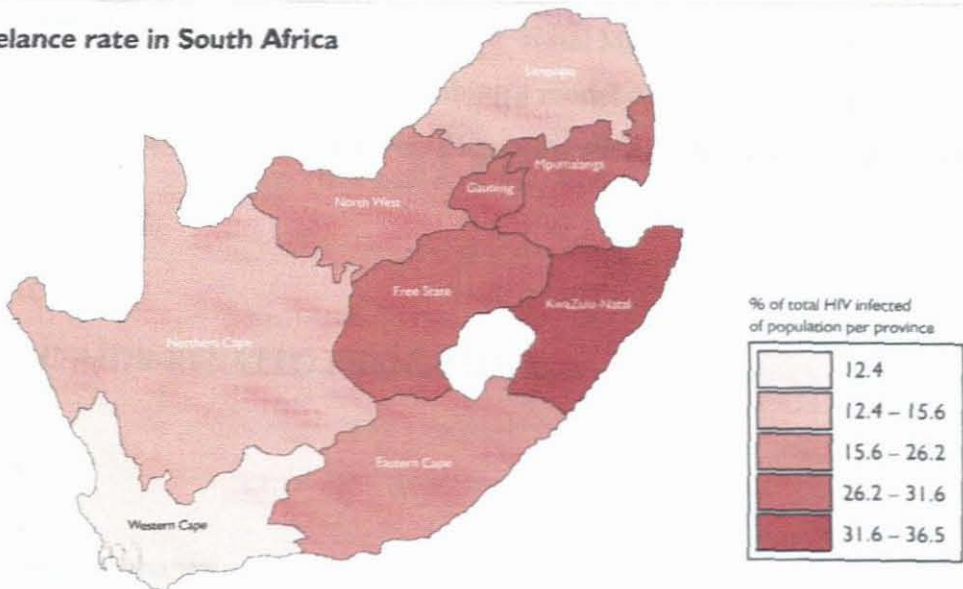
### **5.3 GEOGRAPHICAL STATISTICS FOR HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Of vital importance is the fact that HIV/AIDS has an uneven distribution within South Africa, and therefore efforts to curb the disease need to be concentrated in those areas that are worst affected.

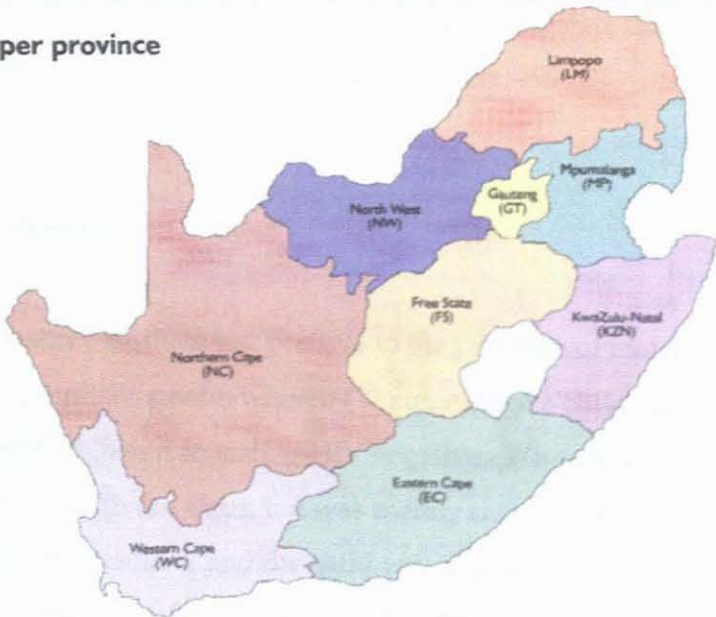
A number of predisposing factors have made South Africa particularly susceptible to this epidemic. These factors include previous disruption of community life caused by Apartheid, mobility of the working force which carries with it the HIV virus, a resistance towards the use of condoms, the low status of women in the community (which makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse), social norms that accept high numbers of sexual partners, and a general reluctance to change these things. In South Africa, where 53 percent of the population is under 25 years of age, teenage infections are increasing at an alarming rate (Abt Associates 2001:6).

# A HUMAN TRAGEDY UNFOLDS (AIDS GUIDE 2003/4)

HIV Prevalance rate in South Africa



HIV Statistics per province



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LM	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
HIV + births	11280	4366	10500	21430	8344	5748	746	5435	1364	69213
Infected by mother's milk	3304	1295	3123	6404	2480	1712	224	1611	443	20162
Total HIV infections	805879	487772	1449899	1745490	600713	518156	78426	582089	192948	6461372
Prevalence rate	11.3	16.7	16	18.4	11	16.5	12.9	15.1	4.2	14.2
AIDS sick mid-year	37011	31111	95521	128979	29108	39156	3628	35293	9307	409113
AIDS deaths over 2002	27125	19173	56414	82373	21306	24483	2397	22127	5904	262337
Total AIDS orphans	38322	20854	58100	120167	30498	36451	2672	24645	7133	338932

earn more than R4500 per month, and South Africa has no income-support system for those who have never previously been formally employed (Sherr, 1991:65).

The most severe impact of AIDS occurs at the household level, because it often results in disability and death quite soon after the diagnosis of AIDS has been made. AIDS affects adults aged 25–45 particularly severely, so people die in the years in which they should be exercising their greatest role as providers for children (Bayer, 2000:13).

## 5.5. ABT ASSOCIATES UPDATE ON HIV/AIDS 2001

(Sponsored By The Kaiser Foundation)

The following information has been made available through the generosity of the USA based Kaiser Foundation, in collaboration with Mrs Zanele Mbeki and other leading South Africans. The Kaiser Foundation has operated in South Africa since 1987. Statistics released in this report are *deliberately conservative*, and intended not to sensationalise what is already a very bleak picture (P4).

- DOMESTIC EFFECTS

Household spending increases for people with AIDS, and although health-care is virtually free, there are many other costs involved in *accessing care*, such as transport to a clinic or hospital. In addition, poor families will often visit private doctors or 'traditional healers' as they desperately clutch at straws on behalf of loved ones who are critically ill (P.6).

- PSYCHO-SOCIAL EFFECTS

Diagnosis and disclosure of HIV status, often results in stress for the individual concerned. In addition, the prospect of the death of a child or young adult is very traumatic for the household. Stress and depression can compromise function in all areas of life, including

school or job performance, family relationships, and capacity for child-care. These negative responses may include abuse of alcohol or drugs, while the situation can be worsened by social rejection, which may also compromise employment, housing, schooling, and child-care responsibilities (P.8).

- DEATH

The loss of the child, regardless of age, is generally the cause of the most acute grief. In addition, children are highly traumatized through the experience of watching their parents die. AIDS stigmatisation means that the sadness of bereavement is often not discussed with others, and there is little social or emotional support for the bereaved.

Single parents, older children, or the elderly, may be left to run households. Adults that might otherwise be able to earn a living through a job may instead be required to become full time carers for the dying. A family may become dependent on one person's meagre old age pension. Surviving family members, including children, may be forced into low paid work, or choose crime as a means of income. Others become prostitutes, and in that way perpetuate the HIV infection. (P.10).

- IMPACT ON WOMEN

Women are heavily affected by the AIDS epidemic. They are at greater risk of infection due to biological, social, and economic factors. Woman-headed households in South Africa tend to be poorer, with no financial reserves. Unemployment is far higher among women than it is among men. Violence against women is high in many African communities, with over 15% of women reporting physical violence against them. Traditionally, women are expected to provide care to the terminally ill, and female children in particular may be ordered to provide care, especially in single-parent households. (P.11).

- ORPHANS

Orphans are perhaps the most tragic and long-term legacy of the HIV/ AIDS epidemic. Caring for them is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa. By 2005 there are expected to be around one million orphans under the age of 15, and this figure could rise to 2 million by the year 2010 (P.11).

The majority of these orphans will be children over four years of age. Many will grow up as street children, or will become leaders of child-headed households in order not to be separated from siblings. Others will be brought up by grandparents with limited capacity to take on parenting responsibilities. All these children will have been traumatized by the illness and death of parents, and also by separation from the siblings. As they grow up they are at high risk of developing antisocial behaviour, and becoming less productive members of society. The negative consequences for society as a whole are profound (P.11).

- COPING MECHANISMS

In South Africa, traditional extended family and community coping mechanisms are likely to be weak in comparison to many other African countries. Apartheid has left a legacy of disrupted family and communal life. Rapid urbanization, and expectations that the State will provide health-care and other support, have weakened traditional coping mechanisms even further.

South Africa, unlike many affected countries, *does have* a formal welfare system including financial grants towards the foster care support of orphans. However, payments to foster parents are *insufficient to provide the necessities for the normal upkeep of a child in his or her normal environment*, and the system is open to abuse because it is difficult to monitor. The cost of fully institutionalised care, on the other hand, is prohibitively high.

Many South African provinces are actively exploring new models of care for orphans, mainly involving some form of community care. However, in most cases these remain at

the level of 'pilot' programmes, and have no capacity to provide proper care at a community level. (P.12).

- HIV/AIDS AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY

The epidemic primarily affects working age adults, and far exceeds any other threat to the South African economy. Although precise data on infection in the workforce is not yet available, it is anticipated by some that 50% of the adult workforce could be affected by HIV/AIDS by 2012.

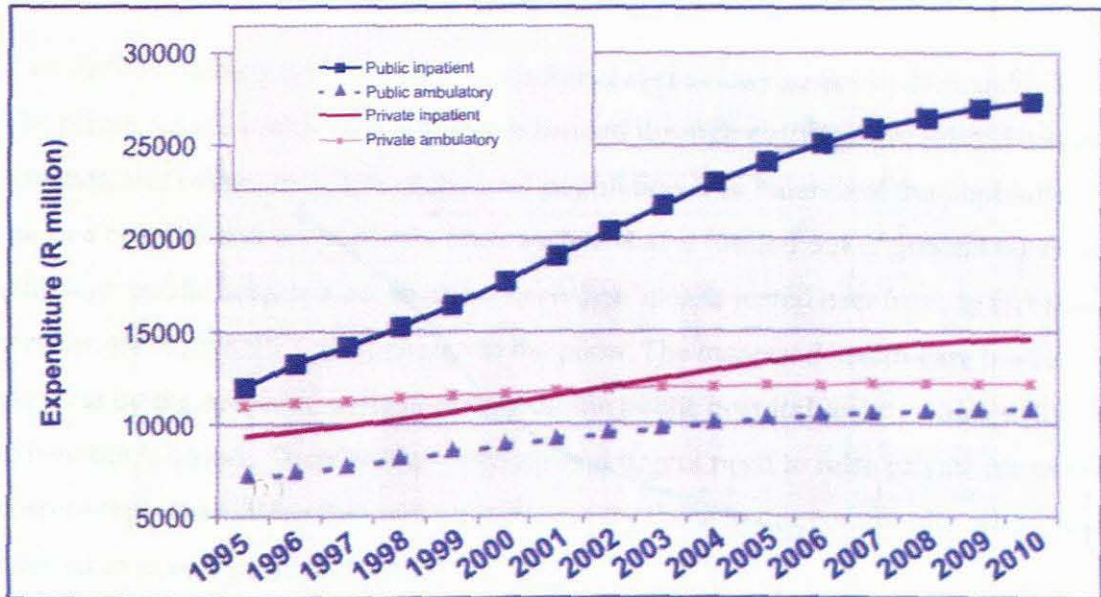
Direct costs to companies include costs of health-care and other employee benefits, but the most significant costs for most companies are likely to be indirect, in the form of absenteeism due to illness or funeral attendance, loss of skills, additional training and recruitment costs, and lower productivity. Over a period of time the costs to the nation's businesses of HIV/AIDS will be very substantial, and will have a negative effect on South Africa's international competitiveness. There will obviously be fewer numbers of people available to work within the South African economy. Economists refer to this as a reduction in 'human capital'.

Financial savings, be they personal or corporate, will be markedly reduced. This will result in reduced investment by individuals and companies, which will drive up the cost of capital in the form of interest rates (P.15).

## COST OF 'PRIVATE' AND 'PUBLIC' HEALTH CARE

(Abt Associates)

PROJECTED MEDICAL EXPENSES FOR AIDS PATIENTS



The importance of the above graph is the relatively low-cost of ambulatory health-care for HIV/ AIDS sufferers, compared with the extremely high cost of formal inpatient care in the form of hospitalisation.

From the graph it can be seen that the cost of *private* ambulatory care is represented as a plateau, and even shows a slight decline projected between 2004 and 2010.

Less expensive still is the cost of *public* ambulatory care, such as would be provided in small home-based care centres within the community. Even though these are normally situated in private homes in the community, they are regarded as public ambulatory services because they are funded completely by government.

In the following chapter we shall consider a model for the care of orphans that is *midway* between a private and public ambulatory care centre. Much of the finance required for this model has come from government, but there has also been very generous support from private business and industry, without which the service could not function.

The difference between private and public ambulatory care is not great, and for this reason the model discussed in the next chapter is considered to be financially acceptable in terms of the above graph. It should also be mentioned that although public ambulatory care is



marginally cheaper in terms of the graph, it also carries a much higher risk of financial mismanagement or fraud. For this reason it is believed that the model that we shall discuss in the next chapter is the preferred model for South Africa.

Two distinct funding and provision environments characterize South African health-care. The private sector health-care industry is funded through employment related insurance schemes, and covers only 20% of the total population. The balance of the population makes use of a hospital and primary care clinic system that is funded out of general tax revenue. Although public hospitals are required to charge 'means-tested user fees', in fact these services are essentially free of charge to the poor. The increased health-care burden imposed by the epidemic will fall mainly on the public hospital sector, which will be unable to bear the full load. There is thus a serious and urgent need to raise private funds for small hospice-type institutions that will provide care for those in our community who could be referred to as the 'poorest of the poor' (P.21).

- ANTI-VIRAL MEDICATION

The pursuit of an anti-AIDS vaccine remains a critical international goal, and significant funds have been made available for this purpose. Clinical trials for such a vaccine are presently underway, but it is unlikely that a vaccine will become available to poorer South Africans for many years to come. There is also the danger that concerted calls for an anti-retroviral drug, could take the focus away from *prevention*, particularly as there is already a prevailing pessimism in South Africa, and a belief that efforts at prevention have been unsuccessful (P.19).

- EDUCATION

The South African education sector already faces an enormous task in addressing the Apartheid legacy of inadequate education for most of the population. There is large investment in education, which in 1999 represented 22% of the total government budget, and 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



In 1995, 96% of appropriately aged children were enrolled in primary school. The position in secondary schools is far less encouraging, due to under enrolment, high failure rates, and early 'drop out' of many pupils, in search of jobs and income. This has had a negative impact on South African society, especially on young adults.

An immense concern is the high level of teenage pregnancy. A recent survey indicated that by the age of 18 years, 35% of teenage girls are pregnant, and some of these are not first time pregnancies. Another concern is the growing rate of sexual abuse and rape of schoolgirls by their own teachers. A report this year by Human Rights Watch documented many such cases (P.31).

## 5.6 SEEKING A SOLUTION

Many Christian leaders are of the opinion that many of the difficulties discussed above are related to a generalized moral decline in our country, and a forsaking of God and his Word. The HIV/AIDS situation magnifies difficulties within society, but cannot be held entirely responsible for spiritual and moral decline.

The Christian Church has a vital role to play in this regard, not only through Christian education, but also through changed lives, as people commit their lives to Jesus Christ. This is a role that is specific to the Church. It cannot, and should not, be left to the government to perform, because it requires not only the devotion and hard work of non governmental organisations (NGO's) and private individuals, but also the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

## 5.7. SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION CONTROL

Population control is a subject on its own, and lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is also a politically and racially sensitive subject that is seldom, if ever, addressed by government officials. Population control measures, if announced, would not draw votes at political elections! Therefore, a blind eye is turned towards the subject.

However, it is common knowledge that the African population has far outstripped its natural resources and water supplies. Economic stagnation, disease, ignorance and poverty are the result. The solution to the problem is both simple and complex. Adults should limit their families to 2 or 3 children. This would give far greater opportunity for education and health-care, as well as a more humane standard of living for all people.

Hollingsworth, a leading expert on the 'population explosion' is convinced that Humankind could conserve the planet's wondrously diverse resources, and that we humans could help build a future in which both natural splendour and human dignity would flourish. In his book 'Ending the Explosion' he makes an impassioned plea for an international response to the world's overpopulation, and also issues a warning that if this is not done the human race will 'self-destruct'. His main views are summarized in his closing remarks:

Overpopulation is intrinsically at war with the preciousness of every person, and yet amazingly enough neither the politicians nor those who are considered as Christian saints, are prepared to raise their voices in addressing the world's most pressing social need. We could help create a world that affords freedom and ample sustenance to every person, a world where the windows and doors of education are open to every child, a world where everyone can share in the dignity of work and play, a world where all creeds, races, tribes, and nationalities celebrate their differences and commonality as one human family. None of this will be easy, but all of it is possible. (1996:33).

How to achieve this is complex. Traditional African beliefs mitigate against successful population control. Poverty and ignorance do the same. Education holds the key, but only as the population becomes reduced, will funds be adequate.

## 5.8. RECOLONISATION OF SOUTH AFRICA?

Our inability to control the population explosion problem, together with the HIV/AIDS epidemic provides a classic 'chicken and egg' situation, and politically speaking the problem seems insoluble.

Ironically, nature may decide the issue on behalf of us all through the tragic means of HIV/AIDS, which could reduce Africa's population to levels lower than they were in pre-colonial times. This could provide opportunities for expansionism for countries such as China, where the threat of HIV/AIDS is not threatening the overall population (Friedman 1996:1).

Africa's natural resources and wide-open spaces might then seem tempting to those countries that see Africa as a priceless jewel for a colonial crown. This of course is merely speculation, and hopefully Christian influence in Africa will triumph.

## 5.9. FOSTER CARE, ADOPTION, & ORPHANAGES

In some provinces within South Africa children are being dumped on street corners, usually by a single parent who is terminally ill with HIV/AIDS. While such action appears morally unforgivable and socially unacceptable, it is a last desperate effort to provide some sort of future for a child that is unwanted in the community (Halket, 1998:1).

Black communities in KwaZulu-Natal have reached saturation point in terms of having to care for 'stray' orphans who have been deserted by parents and family. There is obviously a limit to the number of orphans that can receive foster care in the community, especially if those providing the care are also starving.

The Health Department has reported an alarming increase in child-headed households in KwaZulu-Natal. These new family types are attributed either to economic reasons, where the only remaining parent has gone to the city in search of work, or to the fact that the children are true biological orphans. These child-headed homes may be large, and sometimes as many as 10 children live together. The child-head of such a home may be no more than seven years old.

The children rapidly learn to become beggars, and migrate towards cities where they are highly visible on street corners and in alleyways. (Halket, 1998:2).

It is estimated by the Health Department that over 6 million small children within South Africa are living in homes without adult supervision, without a source of income, without adequate clothing, and without proper schooling. This generation is a 'time bomb' in terms of future crime and other social problems within South Africa. It is also estimated that about 55% of young women (ages 25–44) have left children behind in rural areas in order to seek employment in the cities. If one also takes into account the large numbers of young black women dying of HIV/ AIDS, then we must assume that we are on the path to a catastrophic situation (Halket, 1998:7).

#### 5.9.1. ALTERNATE CARE MODELS

Various alternatives have been considered as means of coping with AIDS orphans. These are referred to by sociologists as 'alternate care models'. When referring to 'alternate care', we mean care as defined in the Child Care Act, which refers to '*the placement or confinement of the child outside his or her family for some clear and agreed purpose*'. Such placement or confinement alters the legal status of the child, and with the exception of adoption, carries a funding obligation on the part of the State. (Halket, 1998:4).

Terminology is becoming confusing these days, because there are so many types of caring models mentioned in the literature. There is foster care, residential care, 'place of safety' care, kinship care, and professional foster care within the community. Perhaps we ought not to forget simple adoption (Ledderboge, 1996:128).

#### 5.9.2. ADOPTION

Adoption is a socially constructed practice, whose form and purpose has varied over time and in different cultures. Throughout recorded history, it has been seen as an acceptable way of incorporating new members into a family. Most societies are culturally mixed, and prospective adopters need to be formally approved as eligible parents. Socio-economic class

has been a critical factor in traditional adoption practice, resulting in a tendency to favour middle-class adopters at the expense of poor families (Bradley & Hawkins-Leon 2002: 433).

A major problem faced by South African adoption agencies, is the historically low rate of adoption of black children. This indicates that legal adoption of black children is unlikely to provide a practical solution for HIV/AIDS orphans. There is also a traditional resistance to the concept of black children being adopted into white families.

This does not mean that the door to adoption is closed, and there is still a limited place for legal adoption within South Africa (Triseliotis 1995:38).

### 5.9.3. A 'FAMILY EXPERIENCE'

Experts in African sociology agree that the best place to bring up African orphans is within a family-type situation in a familiar environment. Adoption and foster care are attempts to provide a 'family experience' for children, in cases where their biological families cannot do so.

### 5.9.4. FUTURE OPTIONS

Alternate-care models for children without parents cannot be used indefinitely. This is because a point will be reached where there are no more 'parents' available to care for children, and there will also be no vacancies remaining in children's homes.

Adoption can certainly be promoted, but realistically we cannot expect hundreds of prospective adopters to rush to the doors of State Welfare offering their services, when we have a state of general poverty in South Africa.

### 5.9.5. STATE SUBSIDIES

The only way in which people will be able to support extra children, will be through a system of State subsidies, as is practiced in other countries, such as the USA.

South Africa will obviously be limited regarding State funds to achieve this, but there is always the prospect of international financial support. (Pakati 1992: 37).

### 5.9.6. COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE

An important consideration regarding foster care and adoption in South Africa is that it must have *community acceptance* in order to be successful. In most African countries the entire local community shares responsibility for raising a child (Phillips 1953:123).

This African concept may turn out to the great advantage of South Africa's orphans, because physical parents will become available if sufficient finance is provided

It is encouraging to note that foster care within the community is already becoming a highly acceptable model. We should also recognise that community-based foster care is the model that will best meet the needs of children orphaned by HIV/ AIDS (Halket 1998:7).

### 5.9.7 COMMUNITY-BASED FOSTER CARE

South African sociologists are generally supportive of community-based foster care programmes because these are acceptable to the community, and are also able to deliver a basic, yet adequate 'family experience' for orphaned children.

The world is a frightening and confusing place for any orphan, but for AIDS orphans it must be doubly so. These children will have witnessed their own parents' suffering and death; they themselves are also suffering physically and emotionally, and there is no money available in the community for their basic needs. Many of their extended family members, and even some of their siblings may also have died (Meyer, 1996:3).

### 5.9.8. SIMULATING THE 'FAMILY UNIT'

The greatest need will be for a 'sense of belonging' to a family, and the knowledge that somebody cares about them. This is why community care in a familiar environment is vitally important. If we are to enhance the quality of life for these children, then some form of family-based care within their own community provides the best opportunity to do that (McKay, 1994:81).

### 5.9.9. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

It is for this reason that I have decided to conduct a field research project in which a community-based centre for AIDS orphans in the KwaZulu~Natal midlands will be the focus of attention, with a view to determining whether or not the ministry offered at this centre complies with the following criteria:

- Conforms to biblical guidelines for Christian ministry.
- Acceptable to the local African community.
- Provides quality care and a practical 'family experience' for orphans.
- Economically sustainable, as a South African model.

Christian involvement in combating the scourge of HIV/ AIDS in South Africa is to be commended and represents biblical social caring, thus harmonising with the ministry of social concern demonstrated by the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christian Church.

In the following chapter we shall examine in detail a specific and comprehensive Christian ministry to HIV/ AIDS orphans in KwaZulu~Natal.

## CHAPTER 6

### A MODEL ORPHANAGE IN KWAZULU~NATAL

#### A CASE STUDY

##### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4 it was noted that widows and orphans have a special place in the family of God, and are very close to the heart of God (4.7.1).

The Scriptures express strong views concerning orphans, and frequently link them to widows in terms of their common and urgent needs. Moses addressed the Israelites on the issue of orphans and widows as follows:

**'Cursed is anyone who is unjust to foreigners, orphans or widows' (Deuteronomy 27: 19).**

The Lord's instructions to Moses and to Israel are also recorded in the book of Exodus when he said to them:

**'Do not exploit widows or orphans. If you do, and they cry out to me, my anger will blaze forth against you and I will kill you with the sword. Even your own wives will become widows, and your own children will become orphans' (Exodus 22: 22-24).**

The prophet Isaiah echoed these sentiments:

**'Learn to do good, seek justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphaned, and fight for the rights of widows' (Isaiah 1: 17).**

These quotations from the Old Testament reveal a deep concern that God has for orphans and widows, and also a righteous indignation that he feels when they suffer injustices. It



was to the people of God that the prophets appealed, and the same principle still applies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for it is surely the Church that must rise up and do the will of God.

### 6.1.1. SOCIOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL ORPHANS

The orphanage in KwaZulu~Natal used for the case study, is a facility for *biological* orphans, whose parents are either missing, or have deserted the children. Before discussing these *biological orphans*, it is important to mention that sociologists also refer to 'sociological orphans'. We consider this briefly before presenting the case study on the care of biological orphans.

In the first chapter of this dissertation reference was made to a very important 21st century social phenomenon known as *the 'Sociological Orphans'*. This term refers to people who may have had biological parents, but who through neglect, and other negative circumstances during childhood, grew up to act and behave as if they had never experienced the love and warmth of a human family.

These 'sociological orphans' often manifest *more serious behavioural problems* than genuine 'biological orphans'. This is an indication that a family unit that *malfunctions* or becomes the subject of disintegration *might produce more serious effects on a child* than would be the case with a genuine 'biological orphan' that has never known a family experience (Dalby, 1985:15).

A child who is exposed to the devastating effects of a disintegrating family unit together with parental abuse (and possibly physical violence), will grow up to behave like a 'sociological orphan', displaying various degrees of antisocial behaviour that generally extend into adulthood (Glueck, 1940:88).

Should such a person get married, the psychological trauma and emotional 'baggage' associated with 'sociological orphans' will impact negatively on the marriage relationship. In this way a vicious cycle of negativity develops within society (Glueck, 1940:178).

Biological orphans do not have to contend with the strife and tensions that exist within a disintegrating family unit, and they are thus spared a degree of psychological, and possibly physical trauma.

### 6.1.2. PLANNING MODELS OF ORPHAN CARE

In chapter four we established that there is a limit within each community regarding the *number of foster homes that can be established in order to care for orphans*. There are also financial constraints in the poorer areas of South Africa, which make it impossible for ordinary black families to absorb the full burden of having to care for tens of thousands of AIDS orphans. For this reason it is essential to consider the social and economic viability of operating small orphanages at strategic points throughout South Africa.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit of God, we trust that God will help us achieve this task, providing us with sufficient finance and personnel.

## 6.2. METHODOLOGY

Methodology is based on personal observation, and interviews with the management of the Christian Care Centre. These interviews were conducted during the period July 20<sup>th</sup> - November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Mrs Anita Keyzer, who is the founder and pioneer of the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre (referred to hereafter as the 'Care Centre'), was interviewed initially, followed by interviews with Mr. Noel Wright, who is National Secretary and Treasurer for the Church of England in South Africa (CESA), who are now the legal owners of the Christian Care Centre. Mr Wright has assumed responsibility for the financial administration of the Christian Care Centre. He has kindly provided audited financial statements for the Care Centre, together with much of the information shown in the diagram titled 'Financial Panorama'. All figures and statistics appearing in this chapter are believed to be accurate representations of the relevant government departments, as at December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 (AIDS GUIDE 2003/4).

## 6.2.1 AIMS OF RESEARCH INTO THE CHRISTIAN CARE CENTRE

The research has four aims:

- a. To investigate *the structure* of the ministry.
- b. To test *the balance of spiritual ministry*, compared with that of the Apostolic Christian church.
- c. To Examine *financial viability* of the ministry
- d. To establish *the feasibility of replication* of this model elsewhere in South Africa.

## 6.3. GOZOLOLO

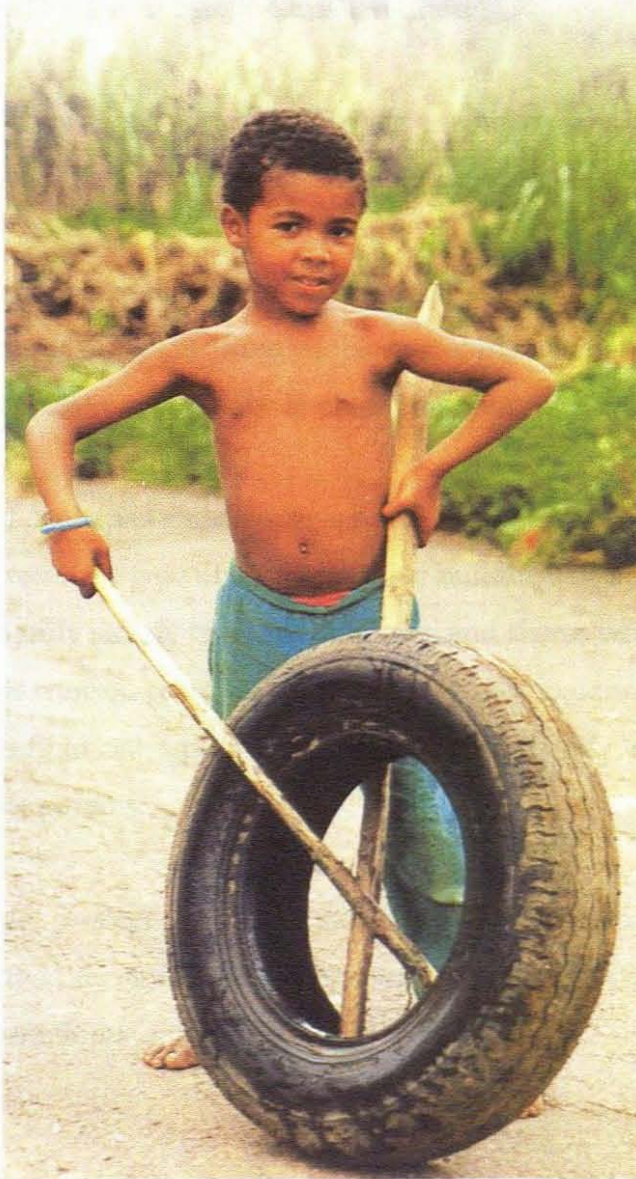
The Zulu word 'Gozololo' means 'stay-a-while', and the brochure also bears the slogan 'from the street to a home', which is indeed most appropriate when one considers what Gozololo is doing for orphans. It implies compassion, and doing for others what we would like them to do for us. It is therefore a word that embodies the instruction of the Lord Jesus when he said 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12: 31).

Educational programmes include 'Day Care Services' where homework classes for the children, are run. Counselling is given on the subject of HIV/AIDS, and 'Trauma Workshops' are organised. Nutritional services include meals prepared daily for the children at the centre. Parcels are made up for foster mothers.

Income-generating activities are taught, such as sewing, beadwork, grass weaving, and vegetable growing. Football and other games are also organised.

# Gozololo

*from the street to a home*



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**GIVE HIM A FUTURE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST**

The preceding photograph represents a typical orphan child, with no family, no support system for his life, no education, no medical care, and very little love.

Perhaps the surprising thing is these children still smile. This shows the amazing ability of the human mind and body to adapt to the worst that life can offer.

We begin by considering an African concept that closely approaches the social concern demonstrated by the Apostolic Christian Church.

The Gozololo concept began in 1997 when a woman named Mirriam Cele in KwaZulu~Natal registered the organization 'Gozololo' as a non-profit charity organization.

The Christian Church has the answers to many of these children's problems, and hence the tireless efforts of many Christian people to make contact with them, and introduce them to Christian education and a range of other vital aspects of child care.

Hundreds of orphaned children have been absorbed into families within their communities, where they receive a type of foster care. No buildings or infrastructure costs are necessary, and a community simply opens their homes, and shares what little they have with others. The Gozololo concept provides some sort of 'family experience' for these children and also helps deliver financial support and assistance with family leadership, to those who have become foster parents.

The 'Gozololo' concept of love and care for orphans, is shared by those who work so tirelessly at the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre, which is the subject of our attention during the remainder of this chapter.

#### 6.4. INTERVIEW (Mrs Anita Keyzer)

- THE VISION

**Question:** What was it that inspired you and your husband to embark on such an ambitious project, especially in view of the fact that you had no previous experience of this sort of work?

**Answer:** We realized the tremendous need for care of abandoned children born with HIV/AIDS, and their dreadful plight in society. It was in 1994 that our committee became very aware of the small babies and children who were being abandoned in various hospitals all over KwaZulu-Natal. These children were sitting six to a cot, they never saw the sun, or played on grass, or with normal children's toys; they just sat in their cots and rocked to and fro until they eventually died. More and more children were being abandoned on the roadside, in sugar cane fields, and even in dustbins around the province. The time had come where, with God's help, we simply had to do something about the situation. We prayed and asked God for guidance.

- MISSION STATEMENT

**Question:** How would you describe your Mission Statement?

**Answer:** The Care Centre is actively involved in many different ministries, including the Lily of the Valley Children's Home, and the Pre-school. Our Mission is to reflect the compassion of Jesus Christ in providing care, love, and support, to terminally ill children who have been abandoned, and to any other orphans that need our care. The Care Centre operates as a non-profit institution of a public and permanent nature, serving the community of KwaZulu-Natal.

- ACQUISITION OF LAND

**Question:** How did you manage to acquire this beautiful piece of real estate, which seems so ideally suited to this type of project?

**Answer:** My husband and I went in search of a property that would meet this special need. A few months later we purchased this 59-acre property in Eston. The property originally housed a very old two-bedroomed thatched cottage, and an old 300 square metre barn, which was a rabbit hatchery. The property was purchased entirely with our own private funds, and we never had any intention of making any financial profit from this venture.

- PERSONNEL

**Question:** Tell me something about the management and staff involved in this project?

**Answer:** We have an Executive Committee, of which my husband and I are co-Chairpersons, and we have a team of excellent advisers covering all the important departments of a project such as this.

Our committee is responsible for the selection and training of people who are employed here, and we make sure that very high standards are maintained.

Day-to-day routine for our staff includes nursing and medical care, attending funerals, purchasing groceries and clothing for the children, purchasing and maintaining furnishings, public relations, and fundraising.

There are also teachers involved with education programmes for the children, and the community. Our staff is recruited from the area of Mophela, which surrounds the Lily of the Valley Care Centre. People apply for jobs, and we select the person we believe is best suited to the vacancy.

We accept all new staff members on a three-month trial basis, after which he or she is asked to write a test set by management, in order to establish if that person has fully understood, and is capable of fulfilling, that job description.

All staff is required to sign an employment contract, which explains policy regarding employment and the procedures of warnings etc. It's not difficult to replace staff because over 60% of the local Mophela population is unemployed. In fact there are many applicants for jobs that we have to turn down. Our staff turnover is very low and many of the staff members have been here for over eight years. They seem very happy to be employed here and are keen to do their best, because their salaries are good and they realize that their services are vital for this community. My husband and I pay the staff salaries.

The Management, and more experienced house mothers, teach various duties and everyone working here is taught about AIDS and its ramifications in the community. For this purpose we also make use of a video in the Zulu language, and produced by the organisation 'Doctors for Life'.

- MODULAR CONCEPT

**Question:** The modular design of this orphanage is totally fascinating. It seems so different from anything that I have seen before both in terms of its structure, and the way that it operates. Please tell me more about this.

**Answer:** As we had to start somewhere, we made use of the existing barn which was here when we purchased the property, and my husband Kees, who is a builder, converted this into a large dormitory which housed the first 30 children, who arrived rather suddenly.

We were fully aware that the dormitory-style accommodation and caring model was not an ideal one, and had proved a failure in many parts of the world. We therefore made use of this merely as a stepping-stone, until we were able to establish what you see today.

The whole concept of orphan care is now family-based, and the idea is to provide a genuine family experience for these children. This can never be achieved with a dormitory-style design.

The fundamental problem that these children have is that they have lost their parents, and especially their mothers. Our challenge therefore is to *replace a mother figure* in their lives, and also to provide 'siblings' so that the children grow up as part of a family. It is the mother's responsibility to bond with these children as best she can, and to perform all the normal duties of a mother.

These families of seven people become united into one big happy community on this property, and we endeavour to create a community that seems natural, and includes such things as sporting and recreational facilities.

- EDUCATION

**Question:** Tell me about the educational facilities for these children?

**Answer:** We run parallel educational programmes, the first being general education at preschool level, and the second is specifically Christian education. We provide this for the children below 6 years of age, or until the older children attend a local school in the community.

All our children are taught Christian living standards by their house mothers, who are all Christians, and the children also attend Sunday school lessons at the pre-school every week. Our children are also taught to sing Christian songs at a very early age, because we have discovered that this is the best way of doing Christian education in small children.

The children that are fortunate enough to 'sero-convert' and not have HIV/AIDS



themselves, will remain with us at the Lily of the Valley Children's Home until they have completed their education at school and received some form of additional practical training. *Hopefully then, they will find a job after leaving here. Of course this practical training is variable from child to child.*

An Educational Trust has been established so that there will be funds for the children's further education or training, until they are ready to support themselves. The Department of Welfare will only help fund the children until they are 18 years old, so it is very important that the education fund is carefully planned and maintained in the longer term.

Remember that the Lily of the Valley Children's Home is the only 'home' that these children have ever known, so it is very important that these young people maintain their contact with their house mothers and siblings long after they leave this establishment.

- **HEALTHCARE**

**Question:** What are the general health care arrangements for these children?

**Answer:** The children are in the care of the house mothers who report any sign of illness to the Manager. At the Manager's discretion the child will then be taken to the doctor who will prescribe and supply the necessary medication, which is administered to the child by the house mother. Children are taken for vaccinations to the local clinic. When a child dies, the body is taken to the doctor for examination, and the death certificate is issued. The body is taken to the mortuary, where funeral arrangements are made. The Department of Welfare is advised of the death of the child, and this results in closure of that particular child's file.

- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM GOVERNMENT**

**Question:** Does the State offer any financial assistance to this project?

**Answer:** This children's home is recognized by the South African government as a registered welfare organization, and qualifies as such for financial assistance. The orphanage is presently registered to accommodate 55 children, and each of these children receives a grant of R1100 per month. In the event that we accept more than 55 children into the orphanage, the additional children will not be funded by the State. Our licence is renewable each year, and should we wish to increase the licensed number of children, we can make application for this annually.

The government is presently trying to minimize the number of children in children's homes in this country, as it is expensive. They would rather have the children living in the community, where a foster mother is paid a monthly grant of R500 to take care

of the child. In my view this is a helpful idea and will go a long way to eliminating poverty, and putting food on the table in homes where unemployment has left families with no means of support. It will also help to keep children together in cases where both parents have died. Such a scheme is, however, fraught with difficulties in successfully delivering the funds to each individual home, and is also open to fraud.

The orphanage facility that we have here is only for those children who have no hope of receiving care in a local community. We have been informed that in the second phase of our development during 2004, each house mother caring for six children will receive a foster care grant of R3000 per month (R500 per child). Any expenses over and above this will have to be raised by us.

I'm happy to say that the Welfare Department has been very supportive in providing housing at this orphanage. The Department of Housing gave sufficient finance for 10 houses to be built in the year 2000. I have recently signed another contract with the Department of Housing for a further R1.2 million for houses to be built during the period 2003/2004.

- **LIFE BEYOND THE ORPHANAGE (Noel Wright)**

**Question:** What has life in-store for these children when they leave here?

**Answer:** Apart from the immediate challenge of providing safety, food, clothing, medical care, and a family environment for the children, we are also determined to provide reasonable education for them, including high school. We are also establishing a Resource Centre with specialised computer training for the children, and we are developing various trade schools associated with the Care Centre. We are working closely with Edgewood Teacher Training College regarding our educational development programme. These additional skills should provide the children with hope and opportunity once they leave the orphanage.

We are determined that children keep contact with us when they leave here, because the only family they have known is our family, and we would like to offer them an ongoing counselling and advice service when they leave us. Yes indeed, there is life for them beyond the orphanage!

- **DREAMS (Noel Wright)**

**Question:** Do you have any special dreams for the future of this orphanage?

**Answer:** We don't have much time to dream around here! However I would say that our goal is to make this particular model function to its optimum capacity, and that means limiting the number of units, the number of children, and the number of staff. I believe that one reaches a point beyond which things do not run optimally, and it is that

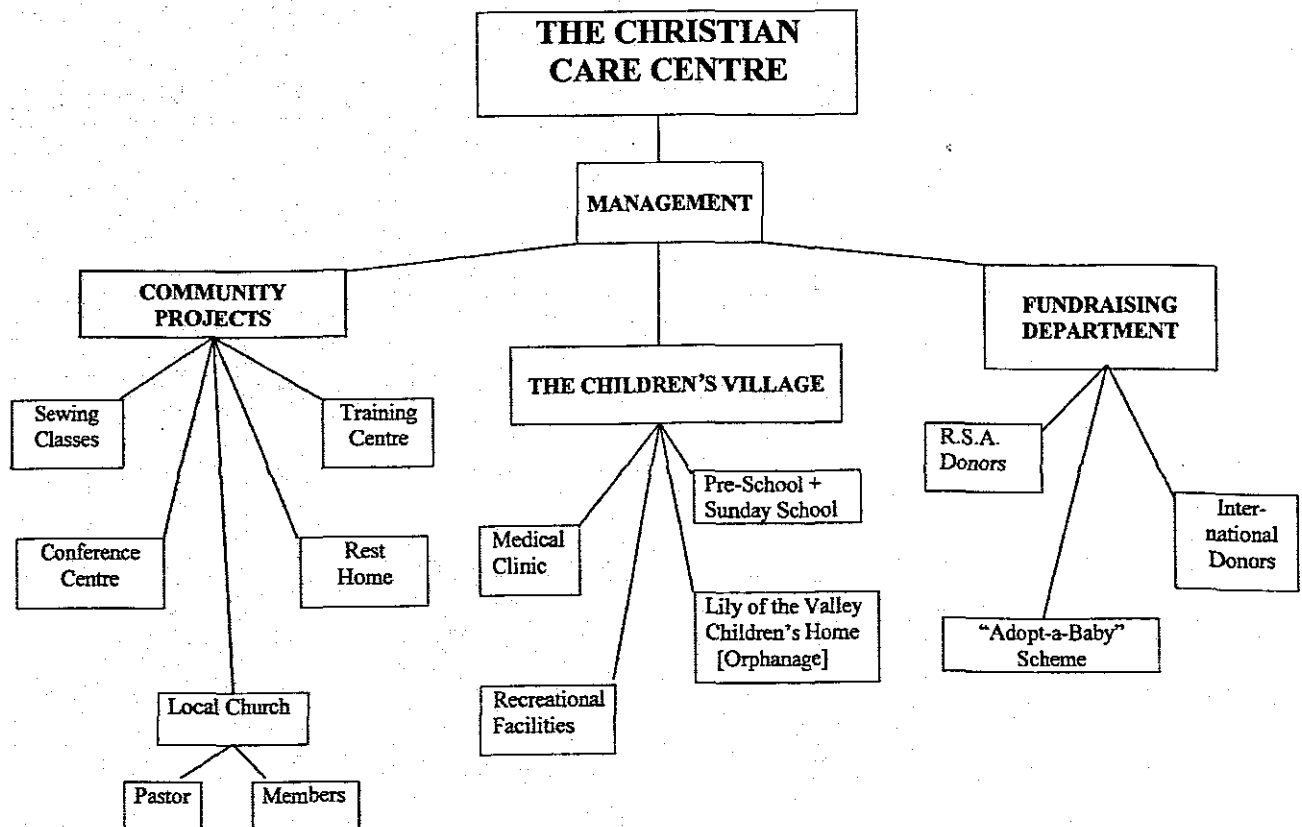
critical point for which we are searching. 23 homes will probably represent the critical limit, and our plan therefore is not to expand this facility beyond that, but to consider establishing replicas of this model elsewhere. From a Christian perspective, we are determined to present a balanced and biblical ministry to these children, and our ultimate spiritual objective is that each child should enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This, in our view, is life's primary objective. It remains true for every man, woman and child.

## 6.5. STRUCTURE OF MINISTRY

The Christian Care Centre embraces different aspects of ministry, and hopes to minister in a holistic way, so that the children's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs are met. This would simulate the teaching and experience of the Apostolic Christian Church.

### 6.5.1.

#### FLOW SHEET OF INTEGRATED MINISTRIES



The Management Committee is responsible for three integrated ministries, which are:

- Community Projects
- The Children's Village
- The Fundraising Department

### 6.5.2. THE BEGINNINGS OF A DREAM

The project began with the idea of establishing an orphanage based on Christian principles of ministry. It was then realised that far more complex and interrelated ministries would be required in order to deliver a holistic service, including education, recreational activities, biblical teaching, a medical clinic, musical development, and basic training in the manufacture of African articles for the tourist industry. In addition a church building would be needed, with a pastor in charge. Channels of communication would need to be established between the CCC and the local community.

### 6.5.3. COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Community projects are the lifeblood of the overall ministry.

The *Training Centre* is where members of the community are provided with free training in the care of people suffering from AIDS. This enables them to take care of members of their family or community, with constant assistance provided through their link with the Training Centre.

The *Sewing Centre* trains women in the community to sew in a proficient manner. This equips them to make a basic living by producing sewn goods for tourists, as well as for their own families, and members of the community.

The *Local Church* was built by Kees Keyzer, is staffed by a full-time pastor, and has about 100 members. This church provides a vital spiritual ministry to the local community and it is here that people gather to worship God. The community also uses the church for special

services such as weddings and funerals. One of the difficulties, however, is that because the members exist in poverty, there is little financial support for the pastor, and his income barely allows him to eat. Therefore his salary needs to be supplemented from other sources.

*The Conference Centre* is available for people who would like to escape the hectic life of the city, and venture out into the country to hold conferences in the quiet seclusion of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Most of the people using this facility are Christians from various church groups, although others are welcome to make use of the facility.

*The Rest Home* is intended mainly for the use of clergymen in need of rest and recuperation, who would like to spend a quiet weekend in the countryside.

#### 6.5.4. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Future projects are being developed that will be *income-generating* ministries such as hand-made African clothing, wood carvings, stone sculptures, and various other articles that will be sold to tourists. There will also be a commercial vegetable farm that will produce enough vegetables for the orphanage, and for members of the surrounding community.

#### 6.5.5. THE LILY OF THE VALLEY CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

This village belongs to the children, and is their own special community. The *Children's Village* is composed of 4 main facilities:

- *The Lily of the Valley Children's Home*- (detailed at the end of this chapter).
- *The Pre-School*- provides both regular and Christian education for children aged 2 to 6 years. After the age of 6, children who are physically well enough are encouraged to attend a government primary school, which is located close by.

Teachers at the *Pre School* have been carefully selected by Management, and have special skills in handling children who are ill or disabled.

- ***Sunday School-*** every Sunday, the children attend a *Sunday school* in the Pre School facility, where they are taught about God, and specifically about Jesus Christ and the way of personal salvation through him.
- ***The Choir-*** the school children also have a *Choir* which is well trained, and which obviously provides the children with much enjoyment. This choir is often invited to attend functions in churches and other places in KwaZulu~Natal. This is done at no charge, and in the hope that it will create further public awareness of the children, and encourage more support from people in the community.
- ***The Medical Clinic-*** is where children are attended to for various AIDS-related illnesses, and where the nurses are able to take care of their medical problems. Children who become very ill are transported to a local private doctor in the area, who has provided a wonderful and sympathetic service to these children for many years. The medical bills from the doctor have been minimal because of his kind disposition, and have been paid by Anita and Kees Keyzer out of their own private funds.
- ***Sport and Recreational*** facilities have been provided by the Keyzers for the use of the children. These form an invaluable part of the children's emotional, physical, and mental development. When one sees them using these facilities, it is difficult to believe that many of them are suffering from AIDS, and may only have a short while yet to live.



**RECREATION IS VITAL**

#### **6.5.6. THE LILY OF THE VALLEY CHILDREN'S HOME**



**TYPICAL MODULAR UNITS, EACH HOUSING SIX CHILDREN**

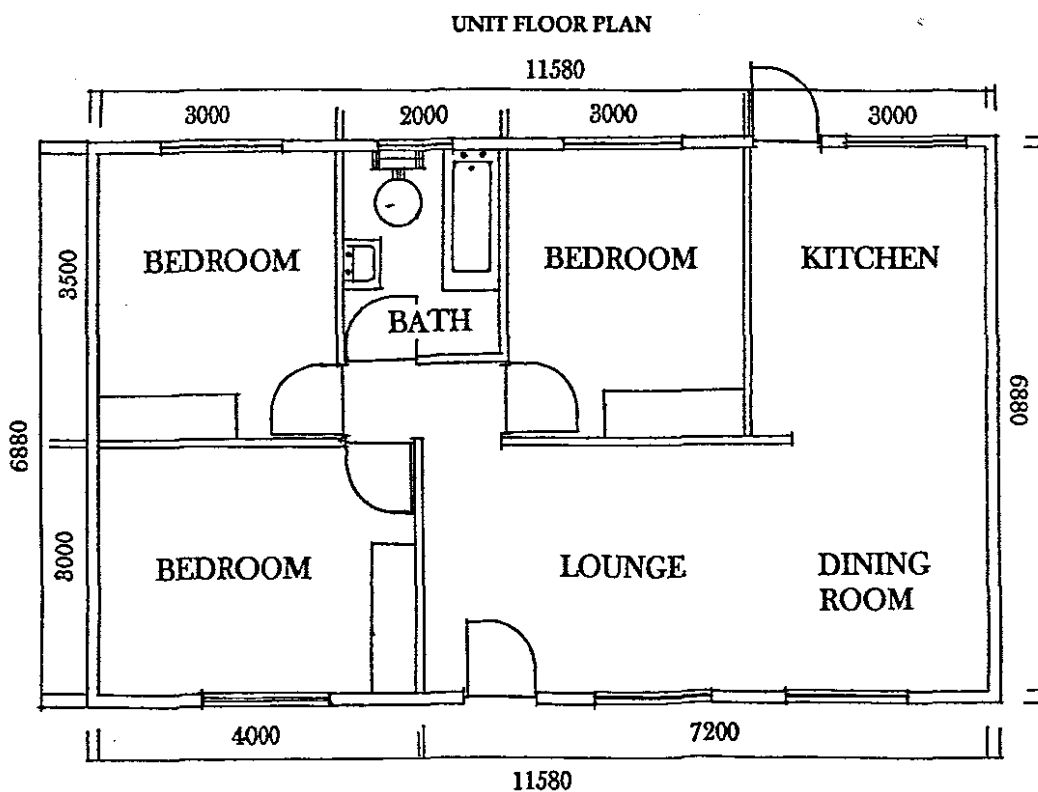
This is a highly organized and intimate family-style orphanage. The project was opened in 1995 and is a government-registered children's home, which could presently accommodate up to 65 children. The children are admitted from various child welfare organizations, with a court order from the Children's Court. It is a non-profit Christian institution of a public and permanent nature.

Every child placed in the orphanage tested positive for HIV antibodies on arrival, although some were not infected with the virus. This means that some children had passively acquired the antibodies from their infected mother, but were themselves, not infected with the virus. It has been discovered that about 50% of all the children admitted to the orphanage eventually 'sero- converted', and were thus able to continue to live a normal happy and healthy life.

A decision was made by management to move the healthy children from the old-fashioned dormitory style orphanage into a more intimate, healthy, family environment. Then it was decided to move *all the children* into the new modular facilities, in the belief that they all needed the same intimate family atmosphere. The only exceptions were those children who were critically ill, and required isolation during the final hours of their lives.

The aspects of this orphanage that are of fundamental importance are its physical design, and its human occupation. Both are tailor-made to provide a genuine 'family experience' for each child in the orphanage.

### 6.5.7. MODULAR FLOOR PLAN





The physical design of the modular unit is of paramount importance in facilitating a true family experience for each of the six child occupants. The plan shows 3 bedrooms, two of which accommodate the six children, while the housemother occupies the third. In addition there is a bathroom and toilet, and each bathroom contains a toilet, tumble drier, bath, and shower. There is also a very comfortable lounge, with a colour TV.

The kitchen and dining room are combined. The present cost (with furniture) of a single unit such as this is about R130, 000 (2004).

#### 6.5.8. TYPICAL MODULAR HOME



**SINGLE UNIT COSTS R130, 000 (2004)**

Each unit has a house mother, who looks after six children. She takes care of the children, does the cooking and cleaning, helps with homework, while also giving the comfort and affection that all children need in order to thrive.



**COMFORTABLE LIVING ROOM**

### 6.5.9. AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

Over the past four years 12 identical units have been built on the property, and by the end of 2004 there will be a total of 23 units. A decision has been taken not to exceed this ceiling because of government restrictions on the number of children permitted on the premises, and because the optimum functional capability will have been reached at 23 fully occupied units. The 23 units will accommodate 138 children. The present licence restricts the capacity to 55 children, but hopefully annual reassessments by government will gradually facilitate the eventual capacity goal of 138 children.

There is no reason however, why other similar facilities could not be established elsewhere, in KwaZulu-Natal, or even in other provinces.

Having personally visited the orphanage on several occasions, I have come to the conclusion that the best analogy one could use to describe the structure and function of the orphanage *is that of a honeycomb.*

While recognizing that any analogy has its limitations, it is difficult to imagine a more suitable analogy than that of a honeycomb that is packed with many different and useful activities, all combining ultimately for the single purpose of producing healthy young bees. When one considers that all this takes place in an environment that is sweet, pleasing to the bees, and also pleasing to man and the environment, the analogy pays a great tribute to the success of a truly remarkable Christian endeavour.

#### 6.5.9.1. Honeycomb Happiness Orphanage

The official name for the orphanage is the 'Lily of the Valley Children's Home', but I would like to take the liberty in this section, of referring to it as 'Honeycomb Happiness Orphanage' (HHO).

The modular unit not only provides an intimate family experience for each group of six children, but also affords them security and purpose in life. When considering all the units

operating simultaneously, they resemble the physical structure and function of a honeycomb.

The photograph on the following page provides a fascinating visual reminder of a honeycomb concept.

### 6.6. JUST LIKE BEES!

THIS FIGURE ILLUSTRATES THE 'HONEYCOMB' ANALOGY.



EACH CELL HAS SIX SIDES  
FEMALE WORKER BEES CARE FOR THE YOUNG  
THE QUEEN MOTIVATES THE WORKERS  
A SWEET COMMUNITY INDEED!

### 6.6.1. SWEETER THAN HONEY!

Worker bees happen to be female, and are loyal to the Queen Bee. The main function of the workers in a beehive is to take care of the young bees. In a beehive the young bees are helpless and are totally dependent on the female worker bees to see to all their needs. A similar function applies within HHO, where the house mothers are like the worker bees, and their job is to take care of the children.

In the beehive situation, the Queen bee does not rule the entire hive, but her function is rather that of providing motivation, encouragement, and direction to the worker bees. In the same way, I consider that Anita Keyzer could quite easily be considered the equivalent of the 'Queen Bee' at HHO, whose main function is the provision of motivation, encouragement, and direction to the housemothers.

### 6.6.2. TILL DEATH US DO PART

The allocation of children to a 'cell' at HHO is carefully planned and considered, and children who are dying of AIDS are not placed in the same cells as healthy children. There are occasions however, when the children themselves do not wish to be split up because of health problems, and request to stay in a cell together to the end. Their wishes are often granted, and so most of the children become accustomed to the sight of other children dying in close proximity. In most cases however, an effort is made to keep the very sick children together, so as to avoid unnecessary psychological trauma to the healthy children.

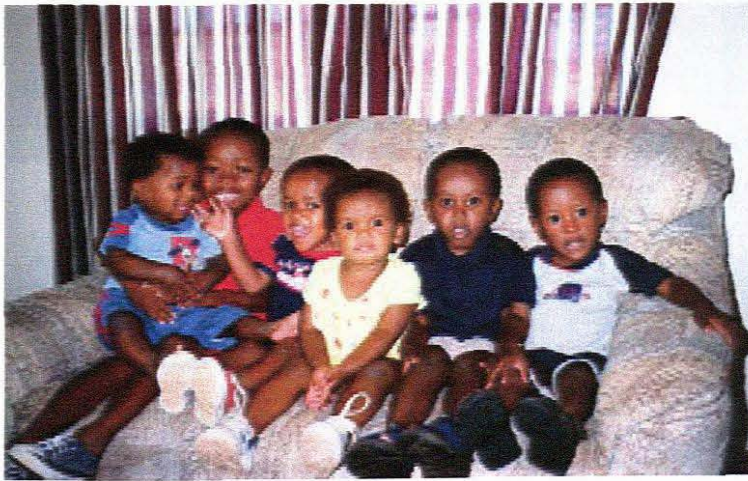
### 6.6.3. 'THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER' (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

Psychological counselling for grieving children at HHO is undertaken by the house mothers, and by dedicated nurses who work in association with the medical clinic. There are times when concerned members of the wider community (who may be distantly related



to one of the children), visit HHO in an attempt to bring comfort and consolation to children who have lost a sibling.

The wonderful thing that is so obvious to any visitor to HHO is that these children are happy. Even the children that are not well are in good spirits because they are being taken care of, and they are aware that there are those who love them and who will help them through the difficult times that lie ahead.



6.6.4. HAPPINESS IS BEING PART OF A FAMILY

#### 6.6.5. 'BE A JOYFUL MOTHER OF CHILDREN' (PSALM 113:9).

Another very special feature of HHO is the fact that the house mothers are all Zulu-speaking, and therefore able to communicate freely with the children, as in any normal family. Obviously HHO is not able to provide a *father figure* for the children. While this may seem a negative aspect when considered from the point of view of European culture, where a father figure is usually central to the family, it must be remembered that in African communities it is quite normal for children to be brought up by a mother or a 'granny' in a single parent home. This is often because the child's father has had to go to the city in order to find work. Therefore it is true to say that most black children today, even if they are not orphans, are raised by a female head of home.

#### 6.6.6. 'HOW GOOD TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY'! (PSALM 133:1).

The community spirit amongst the children testifies to their emotional stability, and is clearly evident in their contented and happy dispositions.



**6.6.6.1. TOGETHER WE WILL BE STRONG**

### 6.7. FUNDRAISING

#### 6.7.1. PRINCIPLES OF FUNDRAISING

Fund-raising is the life-support of the CCC, and the success of the ministry, as well as its possible replication elsewhere, is entirely dependent on adequate fund-raising. Experience thus far has shown that the Departments of Welfare and Housing have been generous and reliable, and this bodes well for the future. In addition, private individuals, non-governmental organizations, and local and international corporations, have shown much goodwill in giving generously towards this ministry. The Management Committee is of the opinion that such goodwill is likely to continue for at least the next 20 years.

### 6.7.2. THE TRUST FUND

It is precisely for this reason that the Lily of the Valley Trust Fund was established as a vehicle into which funds must be channelled before distribution, which is then done in an efficient, professional and audited manner. This concept is demonstrated in the diagram that follows.

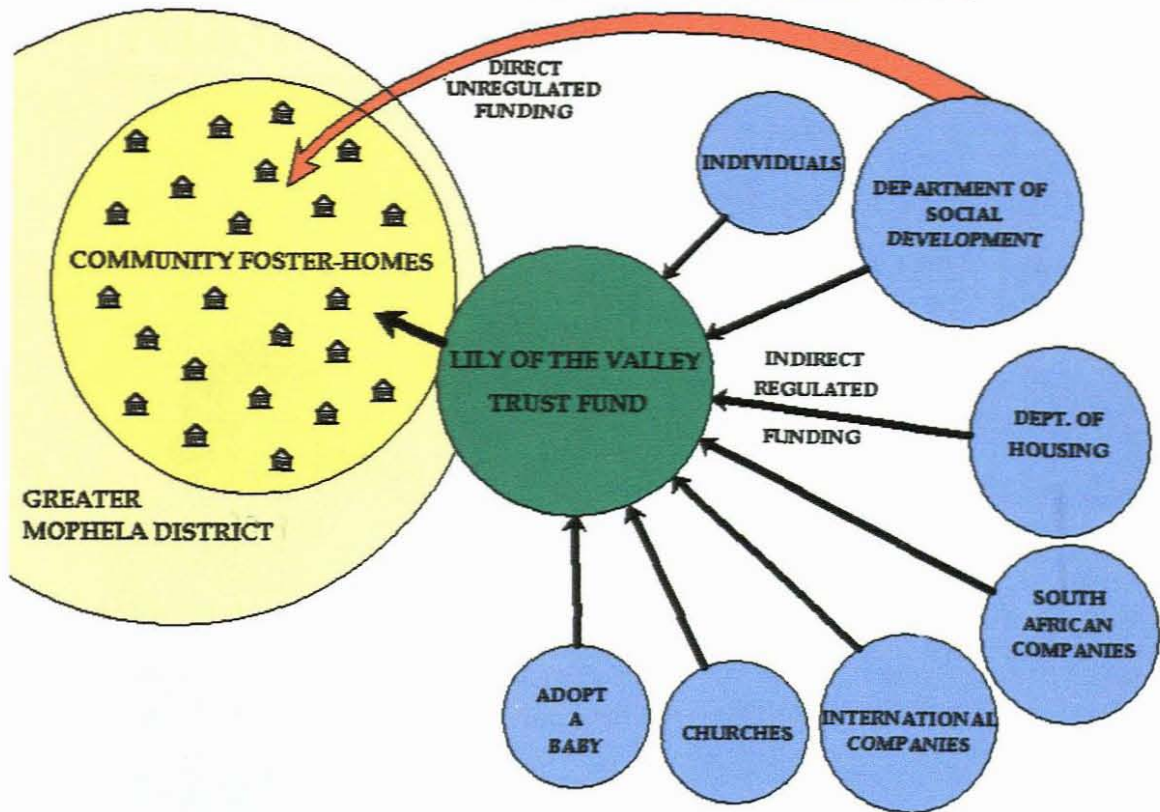
### 6.7.3. PANORAMA OF FUNDRAISING

The fundraising ministry is fairly complex, yet it is logical and well structured, and has proved successful over the past seven years. The easiest way to understand how the CCC achieves fundraising is by considering it in the form of a 'Panorama', which indicates not only the sources of the funds, but also two main methods of delivering the funds to the community.



6.7.4.

## FUNDRAISING PANORAMA



### NOTES:

- 23 modular units will be constructed within the greater Mophela district.

Fundraising is done both locally in South Africa and internationally. The majority of the total funds raised are from government, corporations and large businesses. It is they who have made this project viable, particularly with regard to the buildings and special facilities that are required for the children. Each home bears a brass plaque on the outer wall, on which is inscribed the name of the donor.

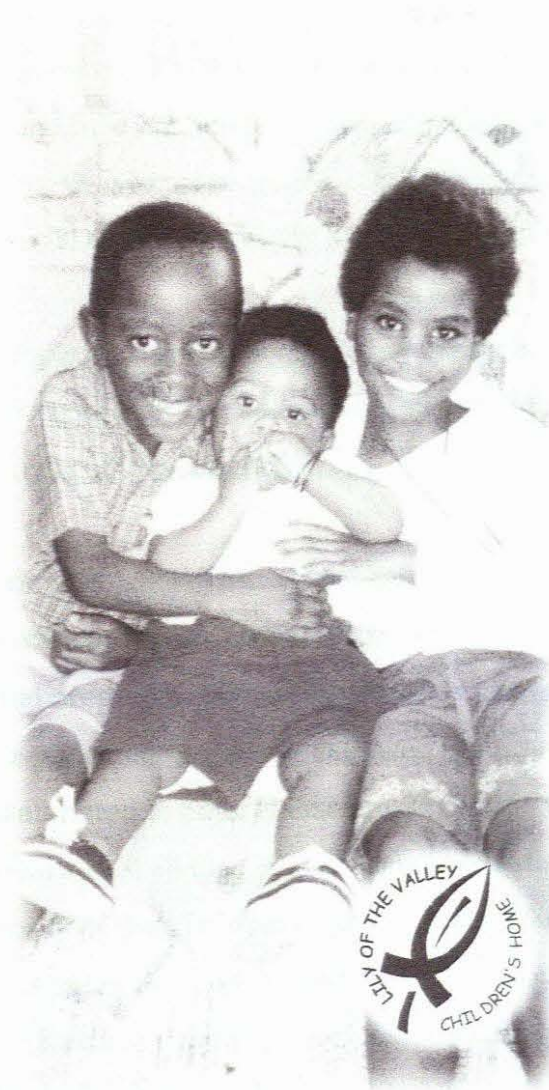
- Each unit is designed to accommodate six children and one house mother.
- The orphanage will therefore cater for 138 children when complete.
- Donor sources are clearly indicated.



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## "ADOPT"-A-BABY

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The public appeal of the Adopt-A- Baby scheme is obvious, and whereas people are sometimes reluctant to donate money for staff salaries or running expenses, they are enthusiastic about supporting an individual child in this way.

## ADOPT-A-BABY SCHEME

Worthy of special mention is a scheme whereby interested people in any part of the world are invited to 'Adopt-a-Baby', in the sense that they make a monthly payment to the Lily of the Valley Trust Fund, which goes towards the care of a particular child.

Those participating in the scheme are sent a photograph of the child, together with all the social and medical details of that particular child. They are also supplied with regular bulletins, which carry special news relating to that child, and are given regular updates on any special events that might occur in the child's life.

The people who are involved in the scheme are encouraged to continue to support the child for as long as possible, and preferably until the child is able to leave the orphanage and seek a job in the open market place.

*Preferential funding of individual children at the expense of other children is not permitted.*

Private donations are allocated to the child who has been 'adopted', if that child has any material need. All children receive the same material goods such as clothing and food, and an 'unsponsored' child is not allowed to suffer as a result, because any *surplus* of private funds allocated to other children, will then be used for the unsponsored child.

In January 2004 all the children were successfully 'adopted' through the kindness and generosity of the Christian churches in KwaZulu~Natal. *Multiple sponsorships of the same child* have not been permitted so far, but if government funding is reduced, and additional private funding required, multiple sponsorships for a child may need to be considered. This would not be done however, without fully informing donors.

Application forms are very well designed, and these are obtainable from the management at any time. The minimum amount of money needed to participate in the '*Adopt A Baby Scheme*' is R100 per month, but some donors offer between R250 and R500 monthly. Alternatively, they may opt to make an annual payment of R 6000.

Many local churches have viewed this scheme as an opportunity to become involved as the Church family in the support of 1 or 2 children, whom they also visit from time to time, and for whom they pray on a regular basis.

#### 6.7.6. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Delivery of funds to the community is obviously the key to the success of the entire operation. If funds are donated, but fail to reach the foster homes within the community, then the operation has failed. Safe delivery must be guaranteed, and audited.

This point became the focus of public attention following an article reported in the media in 2003, describing a scam involving the unlawful allocation of government funds to bogus 'foster parents' in KwaZulu-Natal.

It was found that people in rural communities were 'lending' children to others in order to illegally and falsely access child support grants from the government. In addition many applicants for foster care grants were using fictitious child birth certificates in their applications for grants.

As a result of inquiries, Mr. Eric Mlongo of the Department of Social Welfare is reported to have said his department was facing an overexpenditure of R1. 3 billion at the 31st December 2002.

He is also reported to have said that his department was aware that some government officials were working in cahoots with criminal elements and were using bogus 'birth certificates' to apply for child-grants. He added that some officials had been arrested.

The matter was heard by the Provincial Finance Portfolio Committee in the Pietermaritzburg Legislature (Daily News & Sunday Tribune, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2003).

The above illustration should serve as a warning to government departments that the only way to safeguard taxpayers' money is to channel government funding through the trust funds of registered social welfare organisations, such as the Care Centre, where the Board of Trustees oversees all finances and guarantees financial integrity.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCE**  
**SUMMARY OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

		<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Donations and Fundraising		488,645	462,661	787,237	173,991	401,340	665,393
Interest		48,620	28,547	29,056	25,610	137,510	91,126
Dept of Housing					1,009,511	332,318	4,060
Dept of Welfare		209,644	271,910	354,893	309,495	577,310	645,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>R</b>	<u>746,909</u>	<u>763,118</u>	<u>1,171,186</u>	<u>1,518,607</u>	<u>1,448,478</u>	<u>1,405,579</u>
Administration		33,052	29,673	22,552	24,715	29,966	32,784
Asset Purchases		107,907	64,199	114,119	33,188	151,688	168,851
Clothing			15,910	20,963	32,209	54,047	46,339
Conferences							
Education			80	1,204	371	720	1,116
Food		54,241	73,758	68,028	89,085	107,414	145,356
Fundraising Costs		1,390	2,786	75,042	4,498	80,893	103,309
Holidays/Sports/Recreation		131	1,147	469	551	735	983
Insurance		7,233	1,524	5,844	10,496	6,074	4,780
Maintenance		171,893	233,740	219,389	331,759	446,045	365,134
Medical		15,451	15,072	4,957	6,527	17,015	20,888
Municipal Costs		19,136	12,973	12,645	57,094	35,904	51,576
Other		5,456	2,318	500	210	16,267	27,095
Salaries		262,381	229,774	241,201	230,402	304,902	327,046
Staff Training			3,812				
Transport		19,308	15,919	22,952	50,419	26,692	33,380
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>R</b>	<u>697,579</u>	<u>702,685</u>	<u>809,865</u>	<u>871,524</u>	<u>1,278,362</u>	<u>1,328,637</u>
<b>Accumulated Fund:</b>							
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)		49,330	60,433	361,321	647,083	170,116	76,942
Previous Surplus b/f		113,828					
Transfer: Building Reserve		100,000		405,000	400,000	95,000	
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	<b>R</b>	<u>63,158</u>	<u>123,591</u>	<u>79,912</u>	<u>326,995</u>	<u>402,111</u>	<u>479,053</u>
		<u>Six Year</u>	<u>Six Year</u>				
		<u>Summary</u>	<u>Average</u>				
Donations and Fundraising		2,979,267	496,545				
Interest		360,469	60,078				

**\*The Above Financial Statement Supplied Courtesy Of Noel Wright**

This financial statement clearly demonstrates the professional accountability of the CCC, and also indicates the financial viability of the entire CCC ministry in 2003.

#### **6.7.7. DONOR CONFIDENCE**

Financial donors act in good faith, and expect professional accountability for their donations, and particularly so in the case of a Christian organization. Apart from tax benefits to donors, their main motivation in giving money is to bring help and relief to orphans in distress. It is obvious therefore that monies donated must be safely delivered to the house mothers, who in turn will make sure that the children are the ultimate beneficiaries. Delivery of funds to the community may be achieved in two ways:

#### **6.7.8. DANGERS OF ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS**

Direct, unregulated funding is the system whereby State Welfare officials deposit money directly into the bank accounts of Foster Parents in the local community, who then become responsible to ensure that this money is spent on the orphan children.

It does however have a considerable risk element because it is open to various forms of abuse, with a possibility that the children might be excluded as beneficiaries. Many such cases have occurred and have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

#### **6.7.9. STATE COOPERATION IN FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

Since the establishment of the CCC, the Department of Social Development has been very cooperative in channelling funds through the CCC Trust Fund. Furthermore the CCC has had all donated money audited on a monthly basis, and has accepted responsibility for safe

delivery of the funds to the foster homes, and also monitored the house mothers' spending so as to ensure that the final end-users are the orphans.

There is little doubt that professional accountability for donated funds is the key to successful fundraising, and this is an excellent reason for government and others to continue channelling donated funds into the Care Centre Trust Fund, where the integrity of the staff, and regular monthly auditing of all credits and debits is routine. In this way donors feel very comfortable with their association with the Lily of the Valley Care Centre.

## 6.8. REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

After many years of wonderful cooperation between the Christian Care Centre and Government concerning finances needed to support the children, the Management Committee of the Care Centre has been dismayed to learn that the Department of Social Development has indicated its intention to discontinue the long-standing monthly payments to the Care Centre Trust Fund of R1100.00 per child living within Children's Home.

Instead of this, they have indicated that organizations such as the Care Centre do not represent their ideal concept of child-care, and are also too costly to the State. They would prefer Black orphans to be absorbed into *private Black African homes in the community*, and will therefore be offering 'foster grant' payments of R500.00 per month to *any Black individual in the community* who is prepared to take an orphan child into his or her home. It would appear that the 'Lily of the Valley Children's Home' is not yet considered as an 'ideal Black community' in which government would like to place orphans.

While it is fully understandable that children feel more comfortable in their own ethnic communities, the environment at the Children's Home (orphanage) is ethnically tailored to their needs, as all the house mothers and nurses are Black, and most of the children are Black. It is also Management's long-term plan to eventually have Black African management structures in place at the Care Centre.

While the government has not totally withdrawn support for the Care Centre, this appears to represent a reversal of their previous commitment regard to orphan care, and will require the Care Centre to reassess its position in terms of fundraising and financial capability.

The government has indicated that they would be willing to consider house mothers working at the Care Centre as 'foster mothers', in the same way that other foster mothers in the community would receive recognition. The department therefore, would be willing to offer the Care Centre the same R500.00 per child, but has indicated that the money will be paid *directly to each foster mother*.

Such a policy is bound to reduce *financial accountability*, and will not *guarantee* that the children will be end-users of monies donated by government, as it will be impossible to monitor the *receipt of money* by legitimate foster parents, and impossible to check on the *spending* by each 'foster mother'. House mothers employed at the Care Centre have proved very reliable and honest in the past, and are also held accountable for every expenditure. Hopefully a sensible solution to this problem can be negotiated whereby state grants continue to be paid into the Care Centre Trust Fund, in the best interests of the children, as well as the State.

It costs the Care Centre exactly R1500.00 per month to maintain one child at the orphanage. Until now the government grant has been R 1100.00 per month per child, which meant that the Care Centre only had to raise a balance of R400.00 per month for each child. In terms of the new policy of the Department of Social Development, the Care Centre will only receive R500.00 per child, which means that the balance that now has to be raised through private donations will be R1000.00 per child per month. This will have negative effects on the orphanage.

The Care Centre will have to *employ additional staff* to do fundraising, and this will be costly in terms of salaries. The house mothers working in the orphanage will also have to assist with additional fundraising efforts, and this will *reduce the amount of quality time* that they can spend with the children. Child-care could therefore be negatively affected, which would be very sad, because quality care for these orphans lies at the heart of the entire project, and was the reason for the establishment of the Care Centre.

The Department of Social Development should also consider that this policy will no doubt be a disincentive to other South African organizations who may be considering the development of similar style orphanages in South Africa, because they will realize that such a project will now face a very difficult challenge in terms of fundraising and economic viability.

Donors may also receive a negative message if they perceive that government is withdrawing previously pledged financial support from privately owned orphanages.

According to my own thinking, there are at least two important reasons for this change of thinking by government, and these are as follows:

#### 6.8.1. FINANCIAL SAVINGS

The difference between the present contributions of R1100.00 per child, and the R500.00 per child that government now proposes as payment to 'foster parents', represents a theoretical saving to the government of R600.00 per child per month. This figure, when multiplied by the number of foster homes throughout South African that require help, would obviously amount to an enormous cost saving to the government.

There are, however, numerous potential dangers in a system such as this, because the vast majority of rural foster homes do not have bank accounts, access to financial institutions, or even ATM's. The practicalities therefore, of delivering the money to the foster parents are enormous, and if Welfare officials are to be given the task of hand-delivering money in the form of cash, the system becomes open to massive corruption and fraud.

It has already been pointed out in this chapter that many applications from people in the rural communities for foster care grants are fictitious and fraudulent, and this is cause for caution when considering the safe distribution of funds to the legitimate end users, who are the orphans. Hopefully government departments will consider this seriously.



If government chooses to follow this new policy, widespread fraud and corruption may lead to a situation that eventually becomes far more costly to themselves than is presently the case.

Mr. Wright has expressed concern about this proposed change of government policy, confirming that it could have a detrimental effect on the Care Centre and ultimately on the quality of child-care delivered at the orphanage.

However he remains optimistic about the future of the Care Centre, and believes that there is a place for both privately operated orphanages, and unregulated direct payments from government to foster parents in the communities. He says that the reality is that privately operated orphanages can never accommodate all the orphans needing care, and that government-sponsored, unregulated foster care in various community homes, is therefore better than no care at all.

#### 6.8.2. POLITICAL ADVANTAGE

The other possible reason for government instituting a form of direct delivery to each foster home in rural settings is that it gives government a *high and generous profile* with the local people, which is obviously a political advantage. It also sends a message to the people that government is determined that only Black communities will receive government recognition for raising Black children.

While this is understandable and completely normal in terms of political manoeuvring, wisdom will be needed before making a final decision. Should any further scams materialize in South Africa in connection with mismanagement of government funds intended for rural foster homes, the result might have a politically damaging backlash, which could be reflected in the national ballot box.

Therefore government should be encouraged to base their decisions regarding funding of orphanages that have developed through private initiative, on the following two criteria:

- The Best Long Term Interests Of The Children
- The Most Viable And Sustainable Economic Plan

### 6.8.3. ALARM BELLS RING IN 2004

A press report in January 2004 reads as follows:

A South African Indian couple in Pietermaritzburg who, out of the kindness of their hearts removed 34 homeless children from the streets to give the shelter, food and clothing in their private home and with their private funds. This couple made no application for foster care grants or any other financial assistance. They placed the children in schools and helped them with homework. The couple have two teenage children of their own. The Regional Director of the Department of Social Welfare, Mr. H.J.B. Dubazana, is reported to have presented them with two reasons why they had to get rid of these children. Firstly they were *not registered as a 'foster home'* for street children. Secondly he is also reported to have told this couple that *Black children must be cared for in the Black communities from which they come* (Sunday Tribune Herald, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2004).

The outcome of this case may have far reaching implications regarding 'private' attempts to care for orphaned children, particularly when people of various ethnic groups are asking to foster Black children.

### 6.8.4. A CALL FOR MUTUAL COOPERATION

All those interested in helping orphaned children should work together, expediting legal processes and encouraging private initiatives. The winners will be the children.

Mr. Wright expressed the view that with mutual understanding of the situation regarding orphan care, a more realistic financial compromise arrangement between government and the CCC could become a reality during 2004, with resultant benefit to the children, as well as to the greater Mophela community.

It must be borne in mind that the Care Centre was not only the visionary and pioneer of this orphanage, but has also been the driving force behind everything positive that has

happened in the greater Mophela district with regard to orphans. It must also be acknowledged that excellent co-operation between the Care Centre and government has existed from the beginning of the project in 1995. Any change in this balance of cooperation is likely to produce harmful effects on what has been a symbiotic and productive relationship. Most importantly, we have seen how 55 children have been saved from death, and provided with a loving family-type environment. Nobody would want this to change.

## 6.9. A BALANCE OF MINISTRY

We have examined the aims, structure, administrative aspects, and spiritual ministry that is currently being delivered to orphans under the auspices of the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Center in the greater Mophela district of the KwaZulu-Natal midlands.

### 6.9.1. WORSHIP

The biblical definition of worship is more concerned with *what we are* than with *what we do*. True worship is therefore the act of *giving ourselves* as individuals to God, without reserve, and *in full obedience to his Word*. It is not the outward ceremony of religious gatherings that constitutes true worship. However when individuals give themselves to God without reserve, then the *ceremonial aspects of their gatherings are also acceptable to God*, though the form of ceremony may differ from place to place. Scripture tells us about the worship of a very old man:

It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshipped God as he leaned upon his staff (Hebrews 11: 21).

Scripture also records that King David's 'ceremonial' worship was, on one occasion, entirely different from that of Jacob's, yet both ceremonial displays were equally acceptable to God, because the worshipers, in each case, were men whose lives were totally committed to God,

and subjected to his Word. The experience of King David is recorded in the book of Samuel as follows:

**Then David danced before the Lord with all his might, wearing a priestly tunic (2 Samuel 6: 14).**

When considering the ministry of worship at the Christian Care Center, our focus should therefore be on *the lives of those people who have been entrusted to do this work*. My own observation after many visits to the CCC, and many hours spent interviewing the Management, the house mothers, and even some of the children, is that the leadership at the CCC is both godly in terms of their personal lives, and obedient to the Word of God expressed in the work that they do. The total ministry undertaken at the CCC should therefore be seen as 'worship' acceptable to Almighty God.

#### 6.9.2. SOCIAL CONCERN

The entire project undertaken at the CCC is based on social concern, particularly for orphans who come from social backgrounds we would consider as the poorest of the poor in KwaZulu~Natal. It can therefore be stated with certainty that the work undertaken by the CCC, and the care and love offered to children within the orphanage conforms entirely to the biblical injunction of the apostle James, who instructed the Christian Church to take care of widows and orphans (James 1:27).

#### 6.9.3. EVANGELISM

Biblical evangelism is based on social concern and care for individuals. The joy and gladness on the faces of these children is testimony to the fact that they have begun to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ during their short stay at the HHO. In addition, their individual and collective witness to the community, and at various functions

they attend as a children's choir, is confirmation that evangelism of these children has been successfully achieved, and in so doing the ultimate mission of the CCC has been fulfilled.

#### 6.9.4. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

Those working at the CCC not only demonstrate great social concern for orphaned children, but also provide every child with regular Bible teaching, in both word and song concerning the Lord Jesus. As a result many of these children have responded to the Christian Gospel message, and have come to experience a personal relationship with Christ.

In the final chapter the balance of ministry offered at the Christian Care Centre will be compared with that demonstrated by the Apostolic Christian Church.

#### 6.9.5. CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE AIMS OF THIS CASE STUDY (6.2.1.)

**The Structure of Ministry** at the Care Centre has been discussed in detail, and found to be comprehensive, and efficiently administered. This has been detailed on The Flow Sheet of Integrated Ministries (6.5.1.), and discussed under the headings of Community Projects, the Children's Village, and the Fundraising Department.

**The Balance of Spiritual Ministry** demonstrated at the Christian Care Centre closely resembles that of the Apostolic Christian Church, as detailed in the Acts of the Apostles. The study included numerous interviews with Management, and many personal visits to the Care Centre. It was found that there was harmony between the ministries of worship, social care, evangelism, and biblical teaching.

**The Financial Viability of The Christian Care Center** was assessed on the 31st of December 2003, and an audited financial statement (issued by the Treasurer of the Care Center, Mr. Noel Wright) provides comparative figures for the years 1998-2003, and records a healthy accumulated surplus of funds on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 amounting to R 497, 053.00 (P. 205).

It must be pointed out, however, that government support for foster care of children at the Care Center is to be reduced by about 45% in 2004. This will have a serious effect on the viability of this ministry, unless additional funds can be raised from *private* individuals and organizations.

The ability to do this will depend on the skills of the staff in terms of fund-raising ability. At this stage, the Management Committee of the Care Center is confident that this money can be raised from private sources.

There is no doubt concerning the international *goodwill that exists* towards orphan care in South Africa, and the necessary funds are available. Dedicated professional fundraisers are needed to establish the important links between centres of care, and potential donors. This task is time-consuming and expensive, but when properly performed is productive (Interview, Mr Noel Wright, Treasurer).

**The Feasibility of Replication** of this Care Center in other parts of South Africa will depend on similar fund-raising expertise and management skills within each local management committee. It should not be assumed that success at the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre guarantees similar success elsewhere. The key to success lies in the dedication and commitment of the management and staff, and in particular their fundraising abilities.

The first step is the acquisition of suitable land, which must either be purchased with the help of generous people (as in the case of the Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre) or obtained through government donation. Locality is important, with a rural setting being preferred, but in close proximity to an established African community. The site must be within easy travel distance for visitors and potential donors who would like to visit the facilities, and meet the management, staff, and children.

The suitability of the modular design is beyond question, and has proven highly successful in providing the children with a genuine 'family experience'.

Financial challenges such as the recent reduction of government support for foster care, should not discourage those who are determined to replicate this model. Financial support from the Department of Housing is not affected, and therefore *financial capital required for building modular units* will be ongoing in the foreseeable future. The only real challenge lies

in raising sufficient foster care support, which will need to come from non-governmental sources.

Those interested in replicating this model are encouraged to obtain detailed information from Management, and to arrange a visit to the facilities.

Persons wishing to contact Mr. Noel Wright (Treasurer, and Chairman of the Care Centre) may do so by using the following contact details:

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Having concluded this case study, the time has come to evaluate the findings, and also to assess the validity of the hypothesis stated at the end of chapter 1.

This will be done in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 REVIEW**

*The Christian Church has been defined, and its role in South African society has been considered from three important and differing contemporary points of view, which are:*

- That the Christian Church has no role to play in society
- That the Christian Church has a limited role to play in society
- That the Christian Church has a vital role to play in society

It was concluded that the example set by the Apostolic Christian Church is vitally relevant to society in terms of *balanced* biblical ministry, and should be emulated in every chapter of history, including ours.

*The early Christian influence on South African society* made by men like Moffat and Livingstone, and the subsequent progress and development of the Christian faith in South Africa, was largely negated by the social, political, and spiritual devastation caused by the Apartheid regime during 50 painful years of South African history.

*Marriage, and the family unit* have been shown to be ordinances of God, vital to the stability and success of society, and therefore to be promoted and protected by all God-fearing people, whether they be ordinary citizens or Heads of State.

The subject of *family and widows* was examined from a biblical point of view, and the special role of the Christian Church in this regard, was identified.

The Christian Church in South Africa did not escape the *harmful effects of Apartheid*, with the resultant imbalance of ministry affecting many areas of society. Unbiblical African religious traditions such as *ancestral mediation in worship* have also resulted in serious imbalance in the ministry of many local churches.

The scourge of *HIV/AIDS* has caused *immeasurable damage* to the fabric of South African society, and has also had a negative effect on the balance of Christian ministry in local churches, due to the adverse socio-political and medical effects of HIV / AIDS.

The case study involving Christian ministry to *orphans in KwaZulu~Natal* was undertaken, and detailed results were presented. This ministry, conducted by Lily of the Valley Christian Care Centre, supplies a comprehensive Christian ministry in the Mophela district, and closely resembles the balanced ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church.



## 7.2. CARRYING A CANDLE FOR GOD

I recall a particularly moving experience in London, when attending a Christmas Eve celebration in the Royal Albert Hall, where thousands of Christians lit candles in a display of Christian unity. That unforgettable moment reminded me of the collective spiritual power of the great Church of the Living God, when together in prayerful unison, her tiny individual candles give out a blaze of holy light that is able to penetrate even the darkest places of this sin-sick world.

This is always an encouragement to me, and reminds me of the importance of the *local church* fellowship, where each believer's candle is re-kindled week by week, in preparation for ministry in the wider community.

I remember little else about that evening, but experienced a challenge from God concerning the role of his Church in South Africa. With a myriad candles burning, we can do it for our God.

## 7.3. THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS DISSERTATION

### 1. IN TERMS OF THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

The objective was to establish the biblical role of the Christian Church in South Africa. This was done using the ministry of the Apostolic Christian Church recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, as the chosen model.

### 11. IN TERMS OF THE CASE STUDY AT THE CHRISTIAN CARE CENTRE

THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO EXAMINE:

- The structure of the ministry
- The balance of ministry
- The financial viability

- The feasibility of replication of this model elsewhere in South Africa.

**All these objectives were achieved.**

## **7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. RECOGNISE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The demise of Apartheid in South Africa has opened the door to wonderful new opportunities in cross-cultural ministry. Every individual Christian believer, and the leaders of each Christian denomination, should be awake to this fact and use every available avenue to extend the Kingdom of God in South Africa.

### **11. ESTABLISH A BIBLICALLY BALANCED MINISTRY**

The ministry displayed by the Apostolic Christian Church was of great value to 1st century society because of the perfect balance between four main aspects of its ministry.

These were:

- Worship
- Social Care
- Evangelism
- Biblical instruction

If ministry in South Africa is to be truly successful, it should demonstrate this same balance.

## **7.5. ACTION PLAN**

### **1. BREAK WITH UNBIBLICAL TRADITIONS**

South African society has a long history of unbiblical practices such as Apartheid, idolatry, ancestral mediation in worship, polygamy, and witchcraft. Christians who are serious about serving God must break with such traditions.

## 11. BE BIBLE-CENTRED

The Apostolic Christian Church believed the Bible, taught the Bible, and practised its teachings. The Christian Church in South Africa must do likewise in order to effectively serve Christ.

## 111. BE UNITED IN LOVE

The early Christians described in the Acts of the Apostles were characterized by non-racialism, mutual love, and a willingness to care and share. The unity displayed by these believers must be emulated by South African Christians.

## 1V. EVALUATE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Every Christian has the capacity through the Holy Spirit to serve God through the use of spiritual gifts. It is the responsibility of Christian leaders to assist younger Christians in identifying and developing their gifts in order to build the Christian Church and evangelise unbelievers.

## V. BE PEOPLE OF PRAYER AND FAITH

Since the time of Abraham, faith has been the essence of the believer's life, while prayer has been the power. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated the truth of this in his own personal ministry, and the apostles confirmed it in their writings.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Prayer is both a privilege and discipline of the Christian life. South Africans who profess the name of Christ must practice prayer and faith.

**7.6. HYPOTHESIS REVISITED**

**‘THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA  
SHOULD MAINTAIN THE BALANCE BETWEEN SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES  
AS FOUND IN THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTOLIC ERA’**

**7.6.1. CONCLUSION**

**The review of the applicable literature, and the research done in the case study at the Lily of  
the Valley Christian Care Centre, validates this hypothesis.**

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