

**A critical examination of the role of the South African evangelical
church in the African Renaissance**

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*The opinions expressed in this dissertation do not necessarily reflect the views of the
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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Anna-Marie Lockard

November 2012

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the key role of the South African evangelical church in the African Renaissance movement. A paradigm for assessing this role was taken from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The hermeneutic of a socio-rhetorical interpretation of chapters two through four was used to identify ways whereby the first century church engaged with its culture without losing its unique identity.

The origins and objectives of the African Renaissance have been carefully considered, particularly within the South African context. A critical examination of the ideology of the movement was examined in order to determine the feasibility of the church engaging with the movement's philosophy and objectives.

Although several scholars maintain that the African Renaissance has objectives within the political, socio-economic, and cultural arenas, few scholars suggest the role of faith and the church in their goals. Therefore, this research presents biblical strategies whereby the South African evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance as a bold and innovative witness.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The African Renaissance is a key concept discussed amongst politicians, journalists and scholars in South Africa, today (Ajulu 2001; Asante 2006; Cheru 2003; De Gruchy 2005; Hayman 2003; Mboup 2008; Molefi 2007; Udogu 2007; Wa Thiong'o 2009). "The current use in South Africa of the "African Renaissance" concept dates back to 1994, after the first democratic elections, but it was only after May 1996 in the wake of the famous "I am an African" speech by Thabo Mbeki that it entered public discourse" (Maloka 2000:2).

Moreover, varying opinions regarding the origins, viability and value of the movement, have captured the imagination of many throughout the continent. The concept is a source of inspiration for many in South Africa who are searching for identity and purpose during the transition to a state of democracy. Although the concept is often difficult to define, a few scholars (Okumu 2002; Thiong'o 2009) offer a working definition which will be considered for the purpose of this research.

In a quest for elevated identity amongst all people groups, the concept of the rebirth of a nation offers hope in achieving increased global recognition in all sectors of society. At an individual level, renaissance perceived as a rebirth, rediscovery, renewed commitment and achievement, usually begins with a fresh sense of personal identity, which leads to a sense of well-being.

Renaissance, then, according to Okumu (2009:20) must begin with a fresh sense of the purpose and meaning of life as the basis of cultural identity which leads to a sense of well-being. Okumu (2009) further concludes that this “dynamic also operates at the level of society leading to renewed motivation and achievements in arts and culture, science and technology, and commerce and politics” (20). Nevertheless, Udogu (2007) highlights the importance of human dignity when he speaks of the need “of the restoration of the dignity of the peoples of Africa itself” (154). Similarly, Okumu (2002) speaks of a rebirth in Africa to elevate the image of the continent from dependency to self-empowerment.

Four key questions emerge in this discourse: What is the African Renaissance all about? To what extent is it capable of achieving political and economic regeneration? Who will lead the African Renaissance? And importantly, is there a place for the South African evangelical church in the African Renaissance? These queries form the basis of this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: First, to examine the historical roots of the African Renaissance in order to identify its purpose, aims and objectives, which comprise its ideology. Next, to determine the reason(s) for the felt need of an African Renaissance. Why the clarion call for an African revival? Moreover, what particularly does the concept mean? What is a concise definition of an ‘African Renaissance’? Quite apart from the definitional complexity, reducing the concept so that it becomes meaningful has been a formidable challenge for academics and politicians alike (Uzodike and Whetho 2008:2). “With such a complex subject as the African Renaissance,” contends Okumu (2002), “it is a daunting task to give a simple and yet comprehensive definition in one sentence...nevertheless, we must define what we mean by an African Renaissance.

1.2 Defining “development” in the African Renaissance ideology

The term “development” is often solely used to denote concern with economic growth in a country. However, Okumu (2002) quotes Streeten who cautions that “development should not be measured in terms of aggregate growth rates, but also in terms of jobs, justice and the elimination of poverty” (16). Since the term is closely associated with the ideology of the African Renaissance, it is important that the term be fully elucidated.

Okumu (2002) offers a comprehensive definition of the term “development” by defining the following eight factors, which he believes, should comprise meaningful “development”:

...we can define “development” as the process of a country moving towards greater inclusion, health, opportunity, justice, freedom, fairness, forgiveness and cultural expression (13).

“Inclusion” is a key component of development, according to Okumu (2002). This includes “political, economic, and social inclusion. The goal in society should be to ensure that every person in the population can participate fully in political, economic, and social life...” (13,14). Okumu further defines “health” as not just the absence of disease, but should be understood in the positive sense of well-being in body, mind, and spirit and with sound nutritional status...adequate health facilities in rural areas” (14).

“Opportunity includes access to education for everyone in society...opportunity to healthcare...primary education...opportunity to work...opportunity to participate in political and economic decisions...” (14). “Justice” would be assessed not only by the objectivity and freedom of operation of the courts, but whether the justice systems

succeeds in building relationships..."Freedom" includes freedom from fear, oppression, discrimination, hunger, and malnutrition...freedom for cultural expression...to understand the wider trends affecting local, national, and global society" (15).

"Fairness would be measured not just in terms of differentials in wealth and income between individuals or sections of society, but in the distribution of property and in access to jobs in both the public and private sectors" (15). Okumu (2002) furthermore highlights the important aspect of forgiveness: "Forgiveness occurs when a person stops repeating the story of the hurt and releases the other party from the perception of guilt for their part in the offence" (15).

Finally, Okumu concludes that "development" also considers "cultural expression" – as the word "renaissance" reminds us – is the way a society demonstrates its beliefs and values through literature, music, art, and drama, which contributes to moulding its unique identity....one of the cardinal principles of the African Renaissance is to promote African culture"(15).

Thus, Okumu posits that the wider concept of "development" in the context of the African Renaissance, should be viewed in the context of improving all aspects of society for the well-being of the African people. To concisely define the African Renaissance as a movement would be to conclude that it seeks (through "development") to aid the continent in finding its own "solutions to its political, economic and social difficulties" (Maloka 2000:36).

At this juncture, this research will examine key components in determining the roots of the ideology of the African Renaissance.

1.3 African Renaissance in Historical Perspective

Any discourse on the concept of an African Renaissance must begin with a brief historical background on its origins as a concept. Where did the concept originate? What factors spurred its momentum? Why the felt need for an African Renaissance? What is the purpose and aim of an African rebirth? What are the core ideologies of the movement? What are the theological challenges to the African Renaissance? What challenges face the implementation of a regeneration of Africa? Answers to these questions are pivotal to the understanding of the evangelical church engaging with the African Renaissance.

“Renaissance” is derived from the Latin word *renascor* which means “to be born again (Okumu 2002). In the European context, the concept was primarily concerned with culture (Okumu 2002:18) Other scholars (e.g Van Niekerk) agree the African Renaissance is a concept borrowed from the European Renaissance and refers to “the period of cultural and intellectual achievement that followed the era of late scholasticism ” (1999:70). Generally the European Renaissance is understood to be the re-birth or revival of the languages and literatures of Greece and Rome. Often it is referred to as the re-awakening.

‘Renaissance’ is a comprehensive name for a great intellectual movement. The movement includes a very marked change in attitude of mind and ideal of life (LeBeau and Gordon 2004:226). However, Okumu (2002) contends “many sceptics have questioned comparing the concept and meaning of the African Renaissance with that of the European historical process, contending that a society ruled by a corrupt and immoral leadership is not conducive to the emergence of men and women of intellectual curiosity as arose during the European Renaissance...a sceptical Western world is asking whether we in Africa realize the preconditions that are necessary for us to achieve an

African Renaissance” (20). Whereas the European Renaissance aimed at setting people free, the aim of the African Renaissance is advancing self-development as well as pride in one’s identity and restoring self-dignity (LeBeau and Gordon 2002:227). Although essentially different from its European counterpart the African Renaissance could, according to LeBeau and Gordon, accomplish important achievements in the further development of Africa.

Maloka (2000) contends “The African Renaissance should be viewed within the framework of the long history for the “reawakening” of the continent, and must be based on the historical and cultural heritage of Africa”(3).

The African Renaissance concept, according to Boloka (1999), Okumu (2002), and Thiong’o (2009) has been linked to Thabo Mbeki who articulated it as a means to Africa’s empowerment (Okumu 2002). This thought stems from a significant characteristic of the post-apartheid era in the new South African democracy; the desire of the nation to redeem itself from its painful past of apartheid and colonial heritage. Thus, Boloka (1999) believes that most of the South African nation seeks new identities that will demonstrate a positivity and significance to the global community.

1.4 Africa’s Regeneration: The early quest

Looking further back in 20th century African history, Ajulu (2001) posits that the idea of an African rebirth began with the founding of the first Pan African Congress in London in 1900. Other analysts concur, such as Mamdani (1998). More recently, Lotter (2007) also maintains an earlier quest for the regeneration of a more prosperous and productive Africa. This quest was envisioned in 1906 by Pixley ka Izaka Seme when he spoke at Columbia University in New York, USA:

The brighter day is rising upon Africa... Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period. The African people...possess a common fundamental sentiment which is everywhere manifest, crystallizing itself into one common controlling idea...The regeneration of Africa means that a new and unique civilization is soon to be added to the world (quoted by Lotter 2007:3).

We may conclude that the African Renaissance remains a rather vague concept “partly because of the conflation of the different meanings and usages of the term” (Maloka 2000:2). Perhaps Maloka (2000) provides a more thought-provoking and concise definition of the concept of the African Renaissance when he writes:

...what about the “renaissance” as a metaphor for a representation of a desired future? The “African Renaissance” as opposed to its European counterpart, is not a celebration of an accomplished past, but an aspiration, and in some ways even an apocalyptic vision. The ‘renaissance’ as a metaphorical prediction into the future assumes that, given certain minimum objective conditions and subjective factors, the future can be predicted with certainty (10).

This research has demonstrated from various scholars a critical intellectual base from which to conceptualise the renaissance. At this juncture, we will turn to examining the key reasons for pursuing a quest for an African Renaissance.

1.5 In pursuit of an African Renaissance

Central to this discourse are salient questions: Why the felt need for an African Renaissance? What factors prompted the quest for a rebirth of Africa? Both Matthews (2002) and Czegledy (2008) give cogent answers to these probing questions.

The renaissance concept rekindles hope in the hearts of Africans who have long hoped that Africa could be reborn, but have since been disappointed (Matthews 2002). Czegledy (2008) equally concurs that “the African Renaissance foregrounds the prospects of indigenous empowerment and cultural re-appropriation” (305). For example, Africans today believe that the beginning of their rebirth must lie in their own rediscovery of the African soil captured in the great works of creativity represented by the pyramids of Egypt, the ruins of Carthage and Zimbabwe, the rock paintings of the San, and the artistry of African masks and unique stone sculptures (Lotter 2007). Thus, many Africans seek to restore their cultural identity.

Yet, Louw (2002), argues that the plea for an African Renaissance is an attempt from politicians to exploit the notion of an African spirituality; to advocate for social change and transformation; a philosophical endeavour to empower Africans to shift from deprivation and suffering to recognition (identity) and significance (dignity).

This primary key concept - alluding to the possibility of gaining identity and dignity, spur many South Africans to garner support for an African Renaissance based on a promised and heightened level of human self-worth and recognition. The search for significance is a legitimate human quest; however, more so for Africa due to its history of disadvantage under colonialism.

Although the idea of a rebirth of Africa began in the 20th century, currently, the African Renaissance concept has been associated with the political ideas of former South African president, Thabo Mbeki. A broad definition of the concept is used by Mbeki who calls for an African political renewal and economic regeneration (Ajulu 2001). At this juncture, several salient questions emerge:

Which catalysts were responsible for spawning a regeneration of Africa? To what extent is South Africa capable of achieving political and economic regeneration? Who will lead the African Renaissance? Importantly, what is the role of the South African evangelical church in the African Renaissance?

1.6 Catalysts for ushering in an African Revival

Both Lotter (2007:4) and Ajulu (2001) explore several potential catalysts responsible for ushering in an African revival: Signs of an African continental revival first began with the independence of Ghana in 1957. When Ghana gained independence from Britain, other African leaders began to believe that indigenous democratic leadership was plausible. By the end of the 1960s most of the colonies of Britain and France had obtained their independence (Blake 2005). Further hope soared during the collapse of the socialist states in 1989. This powerful political ploy spurred many oppressed African nations to dare believe in the possibility of their own political freedom one day. Lastly, the end of the Cold War between Washington and Moscow, and the resurgence of more open and political / economic renewal in Africa spurred further hope for a regeneration of Africa.

Maloka (2000:3) quotes Vusi Maviembela who describes the African Renaissance as the “third moment” in Africa’s post-colonial history. (Africa’s “first moment” was de-colonisation; her “second moment” was

the 1990s democratic upsurge). “In 1997, Mbeki’s political advisor, Vusi Mavimbela, published an article in ...the *Sunday Independent* newspaper, in which he described the African Renaissance as Africa’s third moment... thus the debate entered the public discourse and generated hope and enthusiasm among the people” (3).

Following the first South African democratic elections in 1994, the use of the term “African Renaissance” became popular in the wake of Thabo Mbeki’s “I am an African” speech in May 1996. Upon addressing a group of business leaders in April 1997 in Virginia, USA, Mbeki, used the occasion to unveil selected key elements of the African Renaissance: (1) He discussed the need for a social and political democratization. (2) Mbeki proposed an on-going need for economic regeneration. (3) Finally, he proposed the improvement of Africa’s geo-political world affairs (Maloka 2000:2).

Less optimistic than Mbeki, Louw (2002), views the plea for an African Renaissance as an attempt by politicians to expound on the notion of an African spirituality to advocate for social change/transformation; a philosophical ploy to empower Africans to shift from deprivation and suffering to recognition (identity) and significance (dignity). Certainly Africa needs its own identity and significance restored; but in what ways can the African Renaissance amicably achieve these goals? How will the regeneration of Africa meet people’s need for the quest for meaning? Importantly, in what ways might the evangelical church engage in the theological quest for the purpose and meaning of life?

Apart from the importance of gaining a clear understanding of the post-colonial political catalysts which sparked the current African Renaissance revival, there is a need to investigate more closely the comprehensive aims and objectives of the African Renaissance in order to elicit a greater understanding of its deeper core ideologies.

1.7 Purpose and aims of an African Renaissance

According to several analysts (Mboup 2008; Udogu 2007; and Thiong'o 2009), the basic purpose of an African Renaissance is *Pax Africana* (African solutions for African problems). Pan-Africanism is the social/political idea of social connectedness (Louw 2002). Pan-Africanism, according to Mboup (2008), can be viewed as "the operative tool or doctrine for African Renaissance. As a doctrine it can be defined as the expression of the historical conscience and political position of oppressed African masses and people of African descent worldwide; rooted in a common historical experience – common origins, history, cultural affinities, and common aspirations" (108).

The central aim of the African Renaissance, according to Louw (2002) is to determine the social and cultural destiny of the African continent in the 21st century.

Furthermore, according to Mboup (2008) the African Renaissance is "aimed at creating conditions for the rebirth of the continent as an independent pole of initiative and decision-making, in the scientific, technological, economic and political domains" (108).

However, Okumu (2002) places less emphasis on the political realm and greater emphasis on cultural expression when he asserts: "One of the cardinal principles of the African Renaissance," is to promote African culture" (15). Okumu sees cultural expression as a key component in improving the lives of men and women in Africa.

Okumu posits: "The domestication of the Renaissance...will require its social diffusion, its incorporation into everyday practices, and its effects on...material culture and mentalities...in Africa, we plan to utilise universities, churches...and other available networks" to further the African Renaissance (18). Since Okumu is one of few scholars

who acknowledge the role of the church in the African Renaissance, his scholarly work is tantamount to this research.

Mboup (2008) and Cheru (2003) both view the aim of the African Renaissance to be an essentially economic drive to increase Africa's productivity and competitiveness, requiring social and political transformations.

To summarise succinctly the aims and objectives of the African Renaissance, one must conclude, firstly, that it is currently more of a concept than a movement. Its major conceptual thrust is for continental renewal, and reconstruction and reawakening based on several factors: (1) economic recovery; (2) political democracy for all of Africa; (3) rejection of neo-colonialism between Africa and stronger world economic powers; and (4) indigenous empowerment: the mobilisation of Africans to reclaim, improve, and direct Africa's social and cultural destiny in the 21st century.

Notably absent is the role of religion in the African Renaissance. Amongst the majority of scholars, there appears to be an absence of the important role that religion has to play in the African Renaissance. This key issue will be further expounded upon in another chapter. At this juncture, I will turn to the discussion of additional stakeholders in and deeper core components of the African Renaissance ideology.

1.8 Additional Stakeholders in the African Renaissance

Maloka (2000) notes that the ANC (African National Congress) is a key role player in ushering in a re-birth of Africa. In addition to Thabo Mbeki's principles for South Africa's reawakening, Maloka (2000) unveils the Africa National Congress's (ANC) more ambitiously stated key elements of the African Renaissance, as it impacts the continent in:

The ANC's Developing Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy document of 1997: (1) the recovery of the African continent as a whole; (2) the establishment of political democracy on the continent; (3) the need to break neo-colonial relations between Africa and the world's economic power; (4) the mobilisation of the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands thus preventing the continent from being seen as a place for the attainment of the geo-political and strategic interests of the world's most powerful countries; (5) the need for fast development of people-driven and people-centered economic growth and development aimed at meeting the basic needs of the people (2000:3).

"Thus, the ANC declared the year 2000 the Dawn of the African Century, and identified the realisation of the African Renaissance as one of its five strategic tasks (Maloka 2000:2).

1.9 A Critique of the African Renaissance Ideology

Amongst the vast amount of literature on the African Renaissance during the past ten years, there are dissimilar perspectives on the core ideology of the movement.

For instance, the African Renaissance ideology differs in context depending on the nature of the social forces driving the movement. The contested terrain appears to be between three social forces (Ajulu 2001:33): the globalists, the Pan Africanists and the culturalists. The following analysts, Maseko and Vale (1998) and Maloka (2000) provide keen insights into the three major ideologies of the movement:

1.9.1 Globalist Ideology

The globalist perspective is associated with Thabo Mbeki and the ANC (African National Congress). Emphasis is on the need for political and economic renewal in the continent and for the transformation of the world political and economic order. In the globalist sense, “African Renaissance” is part of a broader anti-imperialist movement. According to Udogu (2007), in the political sphere, the African Renaissance has begun. “The globalist perspective,” according to Maloka (2001),” has a modernist connotation which suggests that the “African Renaissance” involves “catching up” with Europe at the economic and technological level through Western Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)”(2001:7).

The economic strategy for empowering the African Renaissance is due in large part to the formation of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development). NEPAD’s central focus is on African leadership and ownership for the development of the continent (Mboup 2008:97). However, some intellectuals, such as Alexander (2003) have criticized NEPAD’s orientations and its underlying economic philosophy which, he contends, appears to be less centered on African people’s aspirations and best interests and more centered on empowering African leadership for the continent.

1.9.2 Pan-Africanist Ideology

The Pan-Africanist takes the broader Pan-African tradition to embody a political, economic, social and cultural movement that seeks to span the political divisions of the African continent. Thus, to the Pan-Africanist, the African Renaissance is viewed as a late 20th century variant of that ideology (Maloka 2001:4). Moreover, Ajulu (2001:33) argues that the dangers of the Africanist interpretation “lie in its narrow

exclusivist emphasis...it runs the risk of getting lost in the morass of ancestral heritage without producing anything new.”

1.9.3 Culturalists ideology

Culture, as defined by Mboup (2008:110) includes all ideas, knowledge and know-how; the whole of the institutional, scientific, technological, and political instrumentalities by which groups organise their relations to the environment. It encompasses the process of production and reproduction of the group's social life; economic activity; architecture; educational and health systems; principles and models of institutional and political organisation.

Africa, according to Diagne is home to a history of knowledge as old as the world ‘and one whose singularity should be stressed not in terms of racial phenomenon...but rather as a purely cultural and historical one’(1981:90). The thrust is for the renewal of African intellectual and cultural inventiveness and creativity, in a context where the harnessing of scientific knowledge and of information and technology perform a key role in the wealth of nations as well as in the balance of powers worldwide (Mboup 2008:108). Moreover, the brain drain of African intellectuals (migration of well-educated people from Africa to the developed world: scientists, academics, medical professionals, technologists) pose complex challenges in all spheres of society. Over the course of the past twenty years, this mass exit has had dire economic implications for South Africa (Britz 2006). The African Renaissance, as proposed by Okumu (2002), should be about celebrating “Africa’s cultural glory”:

Social inclusion, hospitality, and generous sharing are some of the cultural traits that Africa must retain. I believe Africa’s greatest strength lies in the way it

handles many aspects of personal relationships. Africa's strengths still lies in those areas where the wealthy West is weakest (7).

Okumu (2002) contends for some positive aspects of African culture which may be used to further strengthen the leadership development of the African Renaissance. As a core ideology, celebrating “Africa’s cultural glory” may well enhance the movement. To more fully grasp the significance and central concept of the African Renaissance’s culturalistic ideology, I will turn to its key component: the African concept of *ubuntu*.

1.9.4 *Ubuntu*

The Zulu version of a traditional African aphorism (*ubuntu*) is translated as: “a person is a person through other persons” (Louw n.d.:1). It’s essential concept means “humanity, “humanness”, or even “humaneness.” The 1997 South African Governmental White Paper on Social Welfare officially recognises *Ubuntu* as:

The principle of caring for each other’s well-being...and a spirit of mutual support...each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual’s humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being (<http://www.gov.za/whitepaper/index.html>).

Although the concept articulates important values such as respect, human dignity, and compassion, the *ubuntu* desire for consensus also

has a potential dark side in that it may often demand an oppressive conformity and loyalty to the group. For instance, failure to conform will be met with harsh punitive measures (Mbigi & Maree 1995:58). However, true *ubuntu* promotes an honest appreciation of differences and an authentic respect for human, individual, and minority rights (Louw [2010]).

The concept of *ubuntu* is part and parcel of Africa's cultural heritage. Although it presents as an ethical ideal and encouraging examples clearly do exist, there is still room for its full realisation. Amidst calls for an African Renaissance, true *ubuntu* calls on Africans to be true to themselves; for a liberation of Africans from the practice of colonization whether of Africans or by Africans (Louw n.d:8).

Furthermore, the culturalistic perspective, informed by ethno-philosophy, views the African Renaissance as a movement for a return to African 'roots.' This perspective appears to be most dominant in the popular discourse within the public sphere today. Never-the-less, Ndebele (1998) offers a caveat, whereas, he posits that the call for black roots has less effect on suffering people than the provision of water and sanitation, electricity, telephones, houses, clinics, transport, schools and jobs. Similarly, the former president of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings, noted: "A starving human being has little interest in the democratic process, unless it also brings with it the fulfilment of his or her basic material needs" (quoted in Udogu 2007:4).

The previous discussion has clarified the current discourse on the three major ideologies of the African Renaissance: globalists, Pan Africanist, and culturalists. Those who view the hopes of an African rebirth from a globalist perspective will call for a political and economic renewal for the transformation of a global economic order and a world-wide political order. Others who garner hope for an African Renaissance take a

Pan-Africanist view which embodies a political, economic, social and cultural perspective. Their underlying aims are to bring polity unity to the African states. Lastly, from a culturalistic ideology, the regeneration of Africa is a clarion call to return to African roots in order to retain traditional African practices and beliefs which are inextricably linked to African socialization.

1.9.5 Theological Challenges for the African Renaissance

Although the varying perspectives on the African Renaissance gives an indication as to the core thrusts of the movement, glaringly lacking in the core ideology of the movement is theological understanding. For example, in what ways will the African Renaissance address the people's quest for the meaning of life and well-being? In what key ways will its leaders change Africa's basic experience of human dignity, basic needs, and quest for spirituality? In what ways will AR leaders improve the quality of life for all people in South Africa? Can the AR address the suffering people and improve their economic and spiritual disposition? If so, how will they demonstrate and facilitate these desperate needs? It appears that these are features of the AR that remain very vague.

This leads to sobering theological questions to ponder: How are the globalists, the Pan Africanists, or the culturalists planning to meet the basic human needs of the people? How will their ideology address poverty and suffering? Lack of leadership development? Educational needs? Importantly, humankind's quest for spiritual meaning and purpose? In what ways will the African Renaissance give meaningful purpose and identity, lasting dignity and improved self-worth to people? Importantly, in what ways might the African Renaissance engage with the evangelical church?

1.10 Challenges for the evangelical church

Each of the three perspectives on the ideology of the African Renaissance poses particular theological challenges for the evangelical church. For instance, the globalists propose that political and economic renewal will usher in a more stable and hopeful South Africa; the Pan-Africanists posit a core political agenda to span the many political divisions in African countries. Furthermore, culturalists contend that most Africans are strongly convinced that the African Renaissance will assist them in returning to their African roots. Each of these ideologies lack theological understanding and pose both theological and ontological queries for the church.

In consideration of the African Renaissance's economic agenda, political agenda and cultural agenda, particularly - an anthropological query arises at this juncture: 'Is the African Renaissance movement inclusive of all South Africans? Who determines who is "African"? These salient questions will be addressed more fully within a subsequent chapter.

1.11 The Church as a prophetic community

Central to this research is the key research problem: In what ways can the evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity? It is to this topic that I now briefly turn.

Is there a place for the evangelical church to engage in the African Renaissance? South African Christian scholar, John De Gruchy (1997) convincingly contends that "the Christian church dare not applaud the African Renaissance from the side-lines; rather, the church should participate in the renewal of Africa" (477). Further warning, however, that as "a prophetic community, the church must test the vision of the African Renaissance, especially its implementation, against the more

radical vision of the reign of God with its insistence on compassion, justice, and the sanctity of life”(477).

Equally supporting the role of the church in the African Renaissance is Louw (2002) who posits that “the church should adopt a new mind-set and participate in the African renaissance by becoming more pastoral and take “social, structural, and communal issues into consideration when designing a practical theological ecclesiology” (2002:85).

A sobering caveat to the church is added by Banda and Senokoane in the context of the repression taking place today in Zimbabwe:

Christian leaders who have sacralised their leaders... contribute to the repressive regime. To promote democracy and good governance, the church must shift her paradigm to be inclusive of the full counsel of Scripture. By desacralizing human authority, the Church will empower the Christian community to hold church and political leaders accountable... this is necessary if the African Renaissance’s quest for human legitimacy is to be realized (2009:1).

Banda and Senokoane (2009) emphasise the value of the Christian church engaging with the African renaissance for social change, but on the provision that the church takes a strong stand against the sacralisation of human authority whereby leaders are worshiped due to their position. The absence of a Christian rejection of a cruel regime may lead to heinous dictatorships whereby, Christians fail to stand against the atrocities due to a culturally-bound loyalty to their leader(s). Equally acknowledging the important role of spirituality in the African Renaissance, Mboup reminds us that spirituality has always played a

central role in African people's history, life, and cultural ethos. He cites the growing sector of Africans who are seeking to find refuge in religious societies. Thus, Mboup believes the church can play an interactive and engaging role in strengthening an African Renaissance (2008:101).

1.11.1 Mobilising the church for transformation

The value of engaging the church for transformation is given by Creff (2004), who notes a significant spiritual event that transpired on May 4, 2004:

The largest prayer meeting in history was held across the continent of Africa. The Christian church in South Africa held its fourth prayer concert, thus laying a spiritual foundation of the African Renaissance. On that day an estimated 30 million people gathered in 1200 stadiums in fifty-three nations of Africa to pray for the needs of the continent. The seven focused areas of prayer included: HIV/AIDS, crime, violence, racism, sexism, poverty and unemployment, and the breakdown of families. The mass mobilization of committed Christians, serve to illustrate one essential role the church can play to support the transformation in Africa for the good of all people (4).

Reportedly, the largest concert of prayer in the history of Africa, serves as an outstanding 21st century example of the church mobilized for transformation.

1.12 Needs posed by African Renaissance leaders

Thabo Mbeki (1999) cited the main challenge or weakness in the development of an effective African Renaissance lies in the lack of ethical leadership and human resource development. Other African Renaissance scholars concur: Becker 2004; Mbeki 2004; Cliffe 2004; Creff 2004; deGruchy 2005; Cheru 2003; Mboup 2008.

These two vital components for strengthening an African Renaissance will be fully discussed in a subsequent chapter in order to demonstrate ways in which the evangelical church may engage with these needs.

1.13 Who will lead the African Renaissance?

Currently, there are various discourses on who, particularly, will lead an African Renaissance. The following scholars propose the discourse: Maloka (2001) proposes the question of what process will lead to a viable African Renaissance? He contends that if it is described as a historical phenomenon, then it will emerge through concerted planning by the elite, bureaucrats, peasants, farmers, and business people. Furthermore, Mavimbela (1998 _) argues for a programme of action:

Without an integrated programme of action to build upon minimum factors, the dream of the renaissance will forever be deferred or remain a romantic idealist concept.

From the context that great movements require great leaders, Okumu (2002) recommends incorporating pragmatic measures:

If an African Renaissance is to be successful, we must not just engage in euphoric rhetoric, but put into action pragmatic measures on a long-term basis that

will enable us to achieve practical results...any great idea or movement requires a god-father to push it, popularize it and place it on the international economic political agenda (155).

Furthermore, ethical leadership and human resource development are the key challenges to ushering in an African Renaissance. Despite these challenges, Maloka (2001), believes that South Africa will be “a leading contender in inculcating the idea into the bloodstream of African socio-cultural and political life, currently” (11). From the context of developing human resources and ethical leadership, how might the evangelical church in South Africa play a vital role? This key concept will be more fully explored within a subsequent chapter of this research.

1.14 The African Renaissance: Need for an Alliance of Forces

“What is clear from the robust analysis of the African Renaissance is that the project outlined requires an alliance of political forces, one in which there is a strong national interest superseding narrow self-interests and with a deep sense of commitment to the public good” (Ajulu 2001:39). Thabo Mbeki in his Gallagher Estate speech in Johannesburg, South Africa, of August 1998, pointed to an alliance of class forces for Africa’s regeneration:

Surely there must be politicians and business people, youth and women activists, religious leaders, artists and professionals from Cape Town to Cairo, from Madagascar to Cape Verde, who are sufficiently enraged by Africa’s condition in the world to join the mass crusade for Africa's renewal? (Quoted in Ajulu 2001:39).

I posit that Mbeki is to be commended for his emphasis on wanting to garner an alliance of class forces, particularly in regards to religious leaders. His preceding statement indicates a desire to embrace and engage the church for transformation.

The question to ponder is: In what ways is South Africa engaging support for an alliance of youth and women activists, religious leaders, artists and professionals from the global village? “Fruitful alliances will not be formed nor battles won in a day,” contends Ajulu (2001:41). “But with persistence and commitment, the coming decade may present us with a much more optimistic picture than the past” (41).

For the South African evangelical church, Mbeki offers a clarion call for engagement in the renewal of South Africa. In what ways will the church seize the opportunity to transform society for the good of all people and to the glory of God?

1.15 Summary

This chapter has provided a robust overview and articulation of some of the dominant perspectives of the African Renaissance: its history and development; its impact upon and rise in South Africa; its purpose and goals. Discourse on the core ideology from three perspectives: globalists, Pan Africanists, and culturalists were discussed. Key catalysts for ushering in an African re-birth was elucidated.

Importantly, the challenges of and opportunities for the church to form an alliance of forces with the African Renaissance, were posed.

1.16 Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this study is to critically examine ways in which the South African evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity.

1.17 Value of the Study

The value of the study has both theological and practical implications. Theologically, the African Renaissance is a topic highly debated in global theological circles today. This stems primarily from the fact that Africa has always intrigued westerners with regards to its multi-cultural diversity, high HIV/AIDS rate, poverty, and natural and human resources; more specific debates include: *'How has the Church engaged with these important issues?'* Similarly, the same is being debated regarding the African Renaissance. Although the recent rise of the African Renaissance movement has many theologians raising concerns as to the viability and ideology of the movement, few scholarly studies have expounded on the Church's role in becoming agents of change for an improved South African society. For example, scholars such as Maloka (2000); Okumu (2002) Mbeki (2004) LeBeau & Gordon (2002); Odogu (2007) debate the various ideologies of the African Renaissance, but fail to consider the theological challenges to the movement. This study will make a solid theological contribution to these concerns by critically examining the role of the South African evangelical church in the movement.

The current state of research in the field of the African Renaissance has been proposed by: Boesak (2005); Kete (2006; Butler, et al. (2011); Botman (2008); Britz(2006); Czegledy (2008); Ilo, et al (2011); Mali (2011) Lotter (2007); Maje (2012); Molefi (2007; Mboup (2008) Mulligan (2010), Nkesiga (2005); Udogu (2007); Udogu (2007; Uzodike

(2008); Walker (2010); Thiong'o Nwa (2009); and Zenawi (2012). Several of these scholars have debated the viability of an African Renaissance. Others have lauded an African revival. Whereas most of them have examined the goals and objectives of the movement, only Boesak (2005), Czegledy (2008) and Nkesiga (2005) have given a place for the evangelical church to engage with the movement. Arguably, Boesak (2005) speaks of the church in general terms but it is uncertain if he includes the evangelical church in his discourse. Boesak comes from a reformed tradition and has been hypercritical of "conservative theological groups" (2005:93). Therefore, this research will make an original contribution to the field of the African Renaissance by examining its ideology, goals, and objectives in order to determine whether or not the evangelical church may engage with the movement without losing its unique identity.

From a practical perspective, solving the main problem will assist cross-cultural ministry workers in key ways. First, to determine whether or not there is a solid theological basis for the South African evangelical church to form an alliance of forces with the African Renaissance. Next, this research will assist the evangelical church in gaining a greater understanding of its role in aligning with the African Renaissance movement.

The distinctive of this research is from the perspective of the conservative evangelical church. For the purpose of this research, the definition of the term 'evangelical' is:

The term "evangelical" comes from the Greek word *euangelion* meaning "the good news" or the "gospel."

The evangelical faith focuses on the “good news” of salvation brought to sinners in Jesus Christ. There are four identifying characteristics of evangelicalism:

- *Conversionism*: the belief that lives need to be transformed through a “born-again” experience and a life-long process of following Jesus.
- *Activism*: the expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts.
- *Biblicism*: a high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority.
- *Crucicentrism*: a stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity. These distinctives define us, not political, social, or cultural trends. The core convictions are on the triune God, the Bible, faith in Jesus, salvation, evangelism, and discipleship (Evangelical {2012}).

Evangelicals take the Bible seriously and believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. While other faith traditions are respected and may seek to engage in the African Renaissance, the unique contribution of this research will focus on the evangelical church in South Africa, particularly.

1.18 Design and Methodology

Key to this study is to conduct a multi-dimensional hermeneutic of Acts chapters 2-4 in order to determine, from this purview, the identity and purpose of the 21st century evangelical church. The research will be conducted through a socio-rhetorical critical analysis. This method of

interpretation, as proposed by Robbins (1999), is a “qualitative research method used to analyse ancient texts in order to carefully investigate the written and spoken messages unveiling the author (s’) meaning and intent. A socio-rhetorical interpretation is an interpretative analytic which provides multi-dimensional approach to texts guided by a multi-dimensional hermeneutic” (1).

1.19 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to critically examine the role of the South African evangelical church in the African Renaissance. Importantly, in what effective ways can the church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity? Herein lays the rationale for selecting the Acts of the Apostles for theological reflection. Before one can identify ways in which the church can effectively and positively engage with the African Renaissance, one must first clarify the purpose of the church in the 21st century; what should be the church’s identity in modern society? What is the expressed purpose of the church today? To what extent is the church responsible for engaging with its culture for transformation without losing its unique identity?

To further this theological discourse, chapter two will examine the New Testament book of Acts chapters 2-4 through a socio-rhetorical exegetical study, to demonstrate ways in which the nascent church expressed its purpose and identity.

Chapter 2

The Church's Identity and Purpose - According to The Acts of the Apostles

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to enter into theological discourse on the purpose and identity of the early Church according to Acts chapters two through four. These chapters were selected for socio-rhetorical exegetical study because they outline the mission of the Church and the complexities of the social, cultural, and political barriers that it faced. Similarly, today's 21st century South African evangelical church faces challenges to its sacred purpose. Importantly, the church must examine potential ways whereby it may engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity. The purpose and identity of the church will be given considerable attention through a socio-rhetorical analysis of the sacred text.

2.1.1 Background of the Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles is a literary tapestry that weaves together different narrative strands of the church's mission to the end of the earth. The purpose is so that the church may have an inspired history of the spread of Christianity during the three decades following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:23-24). Importantly, it is in Acts that the ascension of Jesus is narrated. This climactic event for the church brings about the descent of the Holy Spirit. Luke narrates "the birth and mission of the Church and gives careful attention to the role of the Holy Spirit" in empowering the church to accomplish its mission to the world (Scholz 2009:131).

Whereas, there are four Gospels of the life of Christ, there is only one book in the New Testament that traces the expansion of the early church. Therefore, Acts has been identified as the pivotal book of the New Testament (Lockman 1987:1247). Acts concerns itself primarily with the ministry of certain key followers of Christ. This fact points to an important question: What spurred these early faith-followers to stand strong against their changing society? I maintain, that from the sacred texts of the Acts of the Apostles, readers may glean from and infuse important insights into the purpose of the 21st century church.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in Acts is the distinguishing mark of the New Testament church (Green 2011). Luke mentions the Holy Spirit fifty-seven times in the Book of Acts (Green 2011) and keenly acknowledges that it was the power of the Holy Spirit that sparked the New Testament church:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Furthermore, throughout church history, the “Spirit of the Lord” was foundational for guiding leaders (Reese 1966). The day of Pentecost was the beginning of the disciples’ transformation from followers to leaders. Throughout Acts, Luke is attentive to the important role of the Holy Spirit in empowering Christ’s followers (Acts 1:1-5).

Moreover, Acts demonstrates that early Christianity was spread by God-centered, courageous and inspired leaders. This is seen in Acts 2:1-40, when on the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly raised his voice and declared that the supernatural events were prophesied by the prophet

Joel. Further evidence of Peter and John's courage is seen again in Acts 4:1-12, where upon their arrest, Peter, without fear addressed the "rulers and elders of the people" (Acts 4:8). These New Testament leaders have informed today's Church on ways in which "we must respond in Christian mission to the realities of our own generation" within the context of the "unchanging nature of God's Word and the changing realities of our world" (Smith 2011).

A question to ponder: How might the example of these early church leaders inform the life of the Church today? From the early believers' non-negotiable standard of faith we see the characteristic mark of a genuine Christian community: a community of faith that exists to offer hope to the world (Varughese 2005). "The community in Acts was characterized by a close-knit fellowship. The communal nature of the movement must have strengthened the believers during times of persecution and doubt as they sought to be obedient to the gospel" (Varughese 2005:175). However, the nascent believers were not immune to political tensions as recorded in Acts 4:13, 21. Nevertheless, the church's identity remained theologically strong.

Gaining a solid theological basis for the identity of the early Church will provide a clearer understanding of the purpose of the 21st century Church. The question is, to what extent is the South African evangelical church responsible for engaging in Christian mission with its diverse culture for positive transformation – today? This research will demonstrate, by reference to Acts chapters 2-4, that the church's response today should not be to offer the gospel with apology, but to do so with confidence and boldness for us too, are presenting the words of hope and eternal life to lost humanity.

2.2 *Authorship of Acts*

Irenaeus and the Muratorian Canon testify to the Lucan authorship in Acts in the western church (Reese 1966:xxii). Among several biblical scholars (Cassidy 1987; Reese 1966; Lockman 1987; Varguhese 2005; Metzger 2003, and Keck 2002) there is a solid consensus pointing to Luke. Importantly, Luke reflects a keen consciousness of the Roman Empire into which early Christianity spread (Lockman 1987). According to Lockman (1987) Luke's historical accuracy in using the proper terminology for the various Roman officials throughout his book is recognised as a mark of scholarly research or firsthand knowledge. Consequently, Lockman posits that the author is regarded as an accurate historian and wherever archaeological and literary data is available, the book of Acts has been vindicated as a reliable record. Acts has been identified as the pivotal book of the New Testament for the ministry of the followers of Christ (Lockman 1987).

Furthermore, Acts provides the readers with a profound understanding of the nature and mission of the church. According to Witherington (1998:21), "Luke is writing a continuous narrative about the growth and development of a remarkable historical phenomenon, early Christianity, which he believed was the result of divinely initiated social change". Witherington further posits that "the manner in which Luke writes this narrative is from a theological point of view, for Luke believes that it is God, and God's salvation plan, that is the engine that drives and connects the various facets of his account" (21).

The one dominant character in the book of Acts, is God – in the person of the Holy Spirit who guides and directs the words and deeds of the main protagonists in the narrative (Witherington 1998, Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31). Witherington further asserts that Luke is not as concerned about the political or military history of the larger culture, but about the social

and religious history of a particular group or subculture within the Empire. Luke believes it is a group which can and will continue to have a growing and broader impact, for they proclaim a universal Saviour and salvation (Witherington 1998:31).

Moreover, Irenaeus and the Muratorian Canon testify to the Lucan authorship in Acts in the western church (Reese 1966:xxii). It is generally concluded that the work was written from Rome in the late 70s or early 80s A.D. (Varughese 2005).

2.3 Purpose of the Acts of the Apostles

Luke's purpose for writing the book of Acts can be understood from a triad of theological messages: First, the primary emphasis is the activity of the Holy Spirit which empowered the nascent believers to exhibit a non-negotiable standard of faith. Next, Luke demonstrates that the community of faith was effective in offering hope to the world.

Finally, it is evident throughout the Acts of the Apostles, that the early faith-followers boldly proclaimed the gospel without apology. Thus, we see the boldness of the early church which offered a Holy Spirit-driven and hope-inspired gospel of Jesus Christ for all humankind.

Moreover, from Luke's narrative, we importantly discover the purpose and identity of the early church. It is from this biblical narrative that the 21st century church may glean from and model the church's true purpose. It was the Holy Spirit that gave birth to the identity of the church. "The descent of the Holy Spirit on 120 people at Pentecost represents the birth of the Christian church (Acts 2). This event is the shift from the age of Jesus to the age of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The great rushing wind in Acts 2:1-4 evokes the sweeping spirit of God in creation (Gen 1:1) "(Varughese 2005:172).

The Pentecost event demonstrates people praising God in “all the languages of the geographical areas in the ancient Near East (Acts 2:9-11). These believers at Pentecost proclaimed the gospel to the known world, an event that could be understood as the beginning of the global mission of early Christianity” (Varughese 2005:172).

Luke stresses the vital role of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that is the means and the person who empowers the disciples in Acts for teaching, preaching, and healing. He leads and guides the disciples as He did Jesus in the Gospel (Acts 1:2, 16; 2:4, 13; 4:13). “Luke reiterates throughout Acts that without the coming of the Holy Spirit, there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions, and no world-wide Christian movement” (Varughese 2005:178). Luke’s purpose, therefore, according to Varughese, is to encourage his readers to ponder this fact very carefully.

Luke, in Acts 2:21 concludes that the universalization of the gospel will embrace all ethnic diversity of all people up and down the social scale – including the oppressed and the oppressor (Witherington 1998):

V 21 and it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name
of the Lord shall be saved (NASB).

Luke further demonstrates concern for both the physical and spiritual welfare of humankind: the whole gospel must be proclaimed to the whole person in the whole world (Witherington 1996).

Luke provided early Christianity with a sense of definition, identity, and legitimization – as D. Aune so aptly states these truths (in Witherington 1996):

Christianity needed *definition* because during the first generation of its existence, it exhibited a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices, sometimes manifest in splinter groups making exclusive claims...Christianity needed *identity* because unlike other Mediterranean religions, it had ceased to remain tied to a particular ethnic group. Christianity needed *legitimization* because no religious movement...could be credible unless it was rooted in antiquity (76).

“Luke provided legitimization by demonstrating the Jewish origin of Christianity by emphasising the divine providence which was reflected in every aspect of the development and expansion of the early church” (Witherington 1996:76). Furthermore, Luke informs the 21st century church about the true character of the early Spirit-led church when it was at its best, despite its despisers and detractors (Witherington 1996). Given the turbulent history of the early church, conflict and persecution have much to teach today’s church about the importance of living life in the Spirit.

In Acts chapter two, the Holy Spirit was critical in forming the vision for the church and supplying it with vital skills for service (Green 2011). Similarly, today, this empowerment for leadership is needed when the church faces hardship and persecution (Green 2011). The purpose of this chapter is to enter into theological discourse on the purpose and identity of the early Church according to Acts chapters two through four. These chapters were selected for socio-rhetorical exegetical study because they outline the mission of the Church and the complexities of the socio-cultural, political, and religious barriers that it faced. Similarly, today’s 21st century South African evangelical church faces challenges to its sacred purpose. Nevertheless, today’s church

should meet the challenge by defining effective ways it may engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity.

2.4 Socio-Rhetorical analysis of Acts 2-4

Pertinent to the purpose of this study is to conduct a multi-dimensional hermeneutic of Acts chapters 2-4 in order to determine, from this purview, the identity and purpose of the 21st century church. The research in this chapter will be conducted through a socio-rhetorical critical exegetic analysis. This method of interpretation, as proposed by Robbins (1999) is a qualitative research method: "A socio-rhetorical interpretation is an interpretative analytic which provides a multi-dimensional approach to texts guided by a multi-dimensional hermeneutic" (Robbins 1999:1). Robbins further posits that "it is an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live. The approach invites detailed attention to the text itself" (1). "In addition, it moves interactively into the world of the people who wrote the texts and into our present world" (Robbins 1996:2).

"A socio-rhetorical approach, therefore, examines the text as a strategic statement in a situation characterized by "webs of significance" containing an intermingling of social, cultural, religious, and literary traditions and conventions in the Mediterranean world" (Robbins 1984:6): The goal of socio-rhetorical interpretation is to bring skills we use on a daily basis into an environment of interpretation that is both intricately sensitive to detail and perceptively attentive to large fields of meanings in the world in which we live. Analysis and interpretation of the social and cultural texture of a text, explore the range of

social orientation and locations in the discourse and manner in which it relates these orientations and locations to one another (6).

As proposed by Robbins (1984) “socio-rhetorical criticism approaches a text through a method that enables the interpreter to bring multiple textures of the text into view. Specific to this study includes the exploration of Acts 2-4 through two hermeneutical textures: sacred texture of a text, and social and cultural texture” (7).

2.4.1 Sacred texture of a text

First, the passages in Acts 2-4 will be explored through a *sacred texture* (Robbins 1996) in order to address the relation between humans and the third person of the God-head – the Holy Spirit: An explanation of a *sacred texture*, according to Robbins, follows:

To explore a sacred text is to examine the nature of God and God's actions and revelation. Describing the nature of God is the first step toward analysing and interpreting the sacred texture of a text. Defining the nature of God is of supreme importance for two reasons: First, understanding God's omnipotence and omniscience enables readers of sacred text to more clearly comprehend the divine intent for the purpose of the body of Christ. Second, defining God's actions within the sacred text, enables readers to revere and accept the sovereignty of God at work in human lives (120).

Another dimension of sacred texture is the transmission of benefit from the divine to humans as a result of events, rituals, or practices

(Robbins 1996:127). Divine powers can transform human lives, if individuals act in obedience to the directives of the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter two begins with the miraculous and divine impact the Holy Spirit had upon the founding of the early church. In the context of religious commitment, it is the influence and power of the Holy Spirit upon human lives that transforms the human spirit.

The book of Acts further demonstrates ways in which the Holy Spirit influences humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. For example, in Acts 2:4 on the day of Pentecost, many believers were together in one place and were filled with the Holy Spirit which caused them to speak in other languages. Acts 4:8 recounts Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit” boldly proclaiming a message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is clear that the apostles had a commitment to the will of God that motivated them to do right and honourable things, even though they faced imminent physical dangers, including death. Their commitment to the will of God expressed itself in offering benefits to others even in circumstances that threatened their reputation or lives.

In Acts chapter two, the Holy Spirit was critical in forming the vision for the church and supplying it with vital skills for service (Green 2011). Similarly, today, this empowerment for leadership is needed when the church faces hardship and persecution (Green 2011).

2.4.2 Nurturing religious community

Exploring the sacred texture of Acts 2-4 draws us to an examination of the formation and nurturing of religious community. In the realm of *ecclesiology*, (Εκκλησιολογία) human commitment focuses on the assembly of people (*ecclesia*) (Εκκλησία του δήμου) called out to worship God and enact obedience to Him (Translatum [2011]). Ecclesiology

(Εκκλησιολογία) is concerned with the nature of community into which people are called by God (Translatum [2011]) “The three-fold issues of ecclesiology include (1) the relation of community to God, (2) the relation of the members of the community to one another, (3) and the commitment of people in the community to people outside it” (Robbins 1996:126). Acts 2:44-46 demonstrates that the Christian community had unswerving commitments to God, to people inside the community, and to people outside the community. This important concept of a caring community of faith, lends itself as a paradigm for today’s 21st century church. This fledgling nascent community boldly demonstrates their willingness to engage their communities for positive spiritual transformation

2.4.3 Social and cultural texture

The second socio-rhetorical interpretation will examine Acts 2-4 from a “*social and cultural texture* in order to give the reader a clearer understanding of sacred texts as they relate to living a committed religious life even in the midst of a hostile environment” (Green 2011:6). This hermeneutical interpretation will assist in determining the capacity of the text to support social reform, withdrawal, or opposition to norms. For example, how does Acts 2-4 evoke cultural perceptions of dominance or exclusion? Importantly, what are the early church’s perceptions about resources for life and well-being? Service and humility? Opposition to injustice? Rejection of violence to persons? Stance toward political authorities? These queries form the basis for the hermeneutic of Acts chapters 2-4.

Specifically, we should ask, what can the 21st century church conclude about the purpose and identify of the early church to engage with its culture for positive transformation? If the post-modern culture cannot be changed, how is it possible for the church to live a committed

Christian life within the culture without participating in evil? Human commitment is not an individual matter, rather it is a matter of participating with others in activities that nurture and fulfil commitment to God's ways – in and outside the community of believers (Robbins 1996). Similarly, and specific to this research is the question: In what ways can the South African evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity?

By applying a *social and cultural texture* analysis to Acts 2-4, this research will demonstrate how we these theological and cultural insights may be applied to the modern evangelical church in South African society. At this juncture, we will examine the sacred text of Acts 2-4.

2.5 Exploring the sacred text: A Socio-rhetorical interpretation of Acts 2-4

The outline of Acts chapter two suggests that repetitive forms are the important vehicle for portraying a qualitative progression in identifying the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The author begins by proclaiming the Holy Spirit's role in the mission of the church. Luke boldly posits that the Holy Spirit was critical in two arenas: (1) in forming the vision for the church and (2) for divinely equipping leaders for service (Acts 2:1-8).

The formal structure of Acts 2 emerges from stylistic traits within the Lukan narrative. In basic composition form, "repetitive forms occur when three people, things, or phrases occur in a series separated by the conjunction *kai* "and" (Robbins 1984:20). Acts chapter 2 gives twelve examples of this phenomenon:

- 2:3 and there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
- 2:4 and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.
- 2:6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language (NASB).
- 2:12 and they continued in amazement and great perplexity....
- 2:17 ...'and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams'....
- 2:33 Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear (NASB).
- 2:38...repent and let each one of you be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 2:39 For the promise of the Holy Spirit is to and for you and your children, and to and for all that are far away, to and for as many as the Lord God invites and bids to come to Himself.
- 2:42 and they devoted themselves constantly to the instruction and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread, and prayers.

In chapter 2 verse 38, repetitive form is arranged to make the theological point more emphatic:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (NASB).

Luke's preceding narrative indicates that once the apostles began to give testimony, they did so with great conviction and bold proclamation as evidenced in Acts 2:39:

For the promise of the Holy Spirit is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.

Interestingly, Williams (1990) notes that in the preceding verse a wonderment of grace is ever so apparent: That the promise of salvation was being made "to the very people who invoked Christ's blood upon themselves and their children" (54).

In the verses of 2:42 and 2:47 Luke notes the believers' "dedication to prayer and states that those who were converted on Pentecost remained faithful to the prayers" (Cassidy 1988:23). The references to prayer in the early chapter of Acts also testify to the disciple's appreciation of God's sovereignty (23). "The vitality of the church was a measure of the reality of their prayers" (Williams 1990:60).

The last three stylistic repetitive narrative forms are demonstrated in Acts 2:44-47:

- 2:44 And all who believed and trusted in and relied upon Jesus Christ were united....

- 2:46 they partook of their food with gladness and simplicity and generous hearts.
- 2:47 praising God, and having favour with all people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved (NASV).

The three preceding verses indicate that their fellowship was marked by joy sincere hearts, and single mindedness; a condition in which deeds and thoughts alike are controlled by one motive...a desire to please God (Williams 1990:61).

These passages further indicate that the identity of the early church was marked by Holy-Spirit led leaders who were God-centered, courageous, and divinely inspired. Their example informs the life of the 21st century church.

The assertions of Luke's narrative encompass the universality of the work of the Holy Spirit; that the promise is universal in scope and given to any culture, race, or language. This key concept highlights one main purpose of the early church: a community of faith that offered hope to the world, regardless of race, gender, or socio-political status. Furthermore, Cassidy (1988) wisely concurs that the early disciples adopted a "social and political stance in carrying forward as witnesses of Jesus" (21).

Luke's narrative is descriptive of the Christ-followers and demonstrates that they were extremely conscious of God's sovereign power. Additionally, Luke reports the many examples and occasions of prayer, demonstrating the greatness and power of God. For example, in Acts 2, the culmination of the dynamics of early Christ-followers reaches the apex of theological debate in verses 46-47:

- Vs. 46 and day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.
- Vs. 47 ...praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved (NASB).

The three-step progression in the preceding final narrative provides a transition from the earlier discourse on the identity, power and person of the Holy Spirit - to the culmination of the benefits to and actions of Christ-followers who are fully led and directed by the Holy Spirit.

The speeches in Acts 2:14-36; 38, 39, are typical responses to theological challenges, sometimes made by those who mock and sometimes made by those who are ignorant of truth but earnest to find it. The speeches of Acts centre on God and evidence shared is based on experience and sacred Hebrew texts. Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28, 32 predicts the important outpouring of the Holy Spirit in shaping the church's mission and identity (NIBC 1990:69):

- V 28 And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy...
- V 32 And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered (Joel 2:28,32).

Both Joel and Luke's emphasis on the sovereignty of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, acknowledge the greatness and power that is

available to those who offer the gospel without apology. For the 21st century church to be effective in its mission, it too, must exhibit a non-negotiable faith.

Let's turn our attention to further explore the sacred text and structure of Acts 3-4.

2.5.1 Exploring the sacred text and structure of Acts 3-4

Within the interpretation of this narrative we discover that a series of progressive events occur in repetitive units of action. The first event occurs in Acts 3:1-26. In this narrative, Luke demonstrates how the early followers took a considerable amount of their attention and ministry in showing concern for the sick and needy (Cassidy 1988:24).

- 3:1 Now Peter and John were going to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.
- 3.2. And a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple (NASB).
- 3.3. And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.
- 3:6-7 I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you; In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene - Walk! And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened (NASB).

- 3:9 and all the people saw him walking and praising God.
- 3:12 But, when Peter saw this, he replied to the people....

In examining the preceding sacred text of Acts 3:6-9, we see clearly ways in which Peter seized the opportunity to emphasise the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although the man sought help for his physical condition, Peter first offered something far more valuable: healing in the Name of Jesus. This passage clearly highlights that the early followers of Christ, conduits of God's power, offered the gospel without apology and with bold proclamation. Furthermore, the preceding sacred text provides a clear understanding that "God initiates mission by acting in powerful and public ways" (New Interpreter's Bible 2002:74). Similarly, this calls the 21st century evangelical church to a bold public witness.

Luke further demonstrates in chapter three, an interest in direct speech that is not readily paralleled in ancient literature. Witherington (1998) attributes this to the follower's passion to preach the Word of God. "Rhetoricians stress that for a communication to be persuasive, it must not only appeal to the intellect but tug at the heartstrings as well, including an appeal to the deeper and more powerful emotions, and Luke knows how to accomplish this rhetorical aim" (Witherington 1998:176). "Early Christianity is about the movement and progress of the word and of the Spirit" (Witherington 1998:189). Moreover, today's church may gain valuable insights by recalling its true purpose and identity: to proclaim the Truth of the gospel in a contending culture.

A further demonstration of the sacred text is found in 3:12, whereby Peter and the other apostles makes it clear from the outset that they are not to be treated as "divine men" even though miracles occur through them; rather the awe of the crowd is to be redirected toward

God. The message communicated to the crowds was that what the apostles accomplished was only done through the power of the one true God (Witherington 1998:179).

Conclusively, from Luke's preceding narrative we learn that he demonstrates "substantial continuity between Jesus's approach and that of the Jerusalem community with respect to such areas of the sovereignty of God, prayer, and ministry to the sick..." (Cassidy 1988:24). These passages bear witness to the power available to the apostles, a power that no council could stop or stifle (Witherington 1998:198). Similarly, today's church may learn from the nascent followers of Christ, to establish its true identity as a formidable power for positive change in its public sphere of influence.

Luke's narrative in Acts 4 continues with several major themes: the internal life of the early faith-followers, their prayer and power, the community of goods, and ways in which they responded to persecution.

4:1 and as they were speaking to the people, the priests
and the captain of the temple guard, and the
Sadducees came upon them.

The narrative progresses to the next event whereby the angry religious leaders had Peter and John arrested:

4:3 and they laid hands on them, and put them in jail
until the next day....

The results of that preaching event are clear in verse 4:

But many of those who had heard the message believed;
and the number of the men came to about five thousand
(NASB).

The third event in chapter 4 begins in verse 5:

And it came about on the next day that their rulers and
elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem.

Verse 23 identifies another change in scenes when the two Christ-followers are released:

And when they had been released, they went to
their own companions, and reported all that the chief
priests and the elders had said to them.

At this juncture, Cassidy (1988), notes a key analysis of 4:23: “The reason why the apostles go unpunished, is not due to the council’s devotion to the law, which might have constrained them; their repeated threats and their desire to teach them a lesson...are frustrated “because of the people,” all of whom are praising God. The contrasting responses drawn here are between the Jerusalem rulers and the “people” of whom they are fearful”(91). We see a clear picture of deep division between the people and their religious rulers, which make it politically difficult for the rulers to lead (91).

Packer (1966) notes a brilliant picture of contrast in the preceding passage of Acts 4:34: “What could be more idyllic than the whole body of believers...united in heart and soul? There was no selfishness, no poverty”(42).

The church was carrying out the mission of Jesus. The preceding sacred text demonstrates that it was now a “time of renewal through prayer and the Spirit inspired them afresh”(Packer 1966:41).

Acts chapter four culminates with the basic actions of the early Christ-followers who became empowered by the Holy Spirit: First, they began to speak the Word of God with boldness, freedom, and courage. They were of one heart and soul and shared their earthly possessions. Finally, they spoke their testimonies with strength, ability, and power available to them through grace. Their characteristic mark was kindness which exuded the love of Christ. Clearly, the disciples offered a charismatic leadership in a different key from that sounded by other community leaders in Jerusalem. The disciples mediated God’s power in stating that they “must obey God rather than human authority” (5:29).

Luke demonstrates convincingly, that the primitive church engaged with its current culture for positive transformation, by distributing its resources to those in need, and uniting in their efforts to proclaim their faith in God’s Truth and righteousness. Similarly today, the church must maintain the courage of its biblical convictions in order to see positive transformation (NIB 1990:101).

Importantly, we may conclude, that in exploring the preceding *sacred text* of Acts 2-4, the repetitive form in the three-step progressions provide the vehicle for exhibiting the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the founding of the early church.

2.5.2 Social and cultural texture

The second socio-rhetorical interpretation will examine Acts 2-4 from a social and cultural texture in order to determine the capacity of the text to demonstrate socio-cultural issues. This periscope will examine

cultural perceptions of dominance, difference, or exclusion, and resources for life and well-being. The social and cultural nature of the text will be examined: What kind of a social and cultural person would anyone be who lives in the “world” of a particular text? (Robbins 1996:71). Moreover, what kinds of culture did early Christianity nurture and maintain in the first century Mediterranean world? Specific to this research is the question: In what ways can the 21st century evangelical church learn to identify its socio-cultural purpose from the early church believers?

The following queries as posited by Robbins (1996:91) and Cassidy (1988) will guide this interpretation from Acts 2-4: (1) How does social topics in the text reveal the religious responses to the world? Do they indicate how the world could be changed? (2) If the world cannot be changed does the text indicate how the church can live in it without participating in evil? (3) What are the final categories from Acts 2-4 which show the priorities in the text's discourse among topics like: What constitutes being humble servants? When is it appropriate to oppose injustice and corruption? What should be our attitudes toward violence against persons? Toward political authority? Importantly, what kind of Christian culture does the text have the potential to nurture in modern society? These queries form the basis of the hermeneutic for Acts 2-4.

2.5.3 Social and cultural texture of Acts 2-4.

The early Christians lived in a world that is foreign to our 21st century society. Therefore, becoming familiar with social and cultural meanings is an important step in interpreting the text in the context of first-century Mediterranean society and culture. The two major areas of social and cultural texture that will be pursued in this chapter are: (1) Specific social topics in narrative speech, particularly, thaumaturgical discourse.

Thaumaturgical discourse is concerned with specific topics of faith, courage, and amazement at the possibilities and extent of God's power" (Robbins 1996:92). This narrative demonstrates that the early faith-followers maintained an unparalleled bold faith despite hostile socio-cultural and political factors.

Acts 2: 1-3 begins with a strong thaumaturgical discourse that highlights the supernatural events that occurred on the day of Pentecost:

- V.2. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- V 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.. The thaumaturgical discourse continues in verses 6, 7, 43 by expressing the specific topic of amazement at what God is able to perform:
- V6. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and was bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language.
- V 7 And they were amazed and marvelled...
- V 12 And they continued in amazement...
- V 13 And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe

Luke, in Acts chapter three, identifies two thaumaturgical discourses in verses 10, and 11 which notes Peter healing the crippled man outside the temple gate:

- V 10 ...and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate....
- V 11 ...all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement (NASB).

It is in verse 12, when Peter sees the reaction of the crowd that he decides to speak to them because he feels compelled to interpret what has just occurred:

V 12 ...”Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?

In the preceding verse 12, it is “Peter’s intention that he and the apostles are not to be seen as “divine men” even though miracles occur through them” (Witherington 1998:179).

Acts chapter four further demonstrates how thaumaturgical narrative speech is used to reveal the religious responses to the world in its discourse:

- V 13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated men, they marvelled, and began to recognize that they had been with Jesus.
- V 21 ...because they were all glorifying God for what had happened.

Luke displays and highlights an interest in direct speech narrative that is not readily paralleled in other ancient literature, according to Witherington (1998). It is, however, through Peter’s direct speech that

action is prompted on the part of his hearers. The reason for this preoccupation is not difficult to understand because the progress and preaching of the Good News is the very subject of the book of Acts.

Chapter four begins with the arrival of the Jewish authorities “while peter and John were speaking (v 1): the authorities were the priests, captain of the temple, and the Sadducees. Their presence signals that the issue of power and authority is about to be raised (Witherington 1998:189).

The response by the religious leaders begins in 4:7:

And when they had placed them in the centre they began to inquire, “By what power or in what name, have you done this?” (NASB).

In verse 16, the religious leaders demonstrated an additional query: Saying, “What shall we to do with these men?”...The strategy in this portion of sacred text, signals the issue of power and authority, but also signals an enquiry into what types of power and authority is currently being exhibited by these “unlearned” men known as the Christ-followers (Robbins 1999). The religious and political leaders could not deny the noteworthy miracles that had taken place which was “apparent to all who live in Jerusalem...” (Acts 4:16).

2.5.4 The Church as humble servants

With reference to the qualities of service and humility within the lives of the followers of Christ, it is significant...that Luke does *not* portray the apostles or any of the other members ever striving after greatness” (Cassidy 1988:31). Rather, Luke describes the apostles’ stance as that of humble servants. In opposition to the cultural norm of their day,

the apostles welcomed women, Samaritans, and Gentiles into the church as full disciples:

For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself (Acts 2:39 NASB).

Cassidy (1988) notes that in “terms of service and humility it is noteworthy that within Acts, Luke never shows the apostles seeking to be “great” and actually reports instances in which they distanced themselves from honours and acclaim. In one instance Luke shows the apostles rejoicing in the fact that they had been found worthy to suffer “dishonour” for the name of Jesus” (31).

Luke in Acts 4:24-31 recounts the attitudes of the apostles as one that always pointed to the power and resurrection of Jesus Christ and not to their own limited human abilities. The apostles “prayerfully referred to themselves as God’s *douloi* (“servants”) and asked God’s blessing to speak with boldness” (32).

The text of Acts 2-4 makes it clear that it was under the direction of divine providence that faith and righteousness was reflected in every aspect of their lives. Faith, truth, righteousness, and the Word of God were key components in the church igniting the Mediterranean world for positive transformation.

2.5.6 The Church opposing injustice and corruption

Luke’s narrative in Acts 2:22-23 notes the apostle’s opposition to the “Men of Israel” who were responsible for the death of Christ. Peter boldly indicts his audience of those assembled. Nevertheless, Peter, in Acts 3:17, affirms that his hearers acted in ignorance: And now

brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also (NASB).

However, Peter again reiterates in Acts 4:10, and places entire responsibility for the death of Christ upon those presently listening to his speech. Peter's self-assurance made an impression upon the Sanhedrin when Peter responded in Acts 4:20:

For we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard (NASB).

"In narrative context this command must surely refer to their prophetic vocation, issued by the risen Jesus, who is 'to speak about what we have seen and heard.' The subtext of this epilogue, however, includes a political criticism of the council's ability to lead Israel: Its members are unable to speak for God because they are unable to understand the proclamation of God's word" (New Interpreter's Bible 2002:91). Finally, we see that Luke's narrative recounts the steadfastness of the apostles in the face of severe persecution: their service and humility is noteworthy (Cassidy 1988).

2.5.7 The Church rejecting violence

Luke provides a clear and unmistakable narrative on the issue of the early Christians' stance on violence against persons. In describing the internal life of Christ's followers, Luke depicts a largely "strife-free and harmonious community. Such harmony is highlighted in Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-35. In these sacred texts, Luke reports that the disciples were so united that they "practiced a community of goods" (Cassidy 1988:36).

Furthermore, Luke notes the amount of violence directed from outside the community of believers in Acts 4:1-3:

- V 1 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them,
- V 2 And being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.
- V 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening (NASB).

Luke gives particular and important attention to a key focus: although increasingly “violent measures were adopted by the high priest and the Sanhedrin in response to the disciples’ activities” (Cassidy 1988:37) it is significant that, “in recounting the harsh treatment they suffered, Luke does not indicate that the disciples undertook any retaliatory actions or even allowed themselves to harbour vengeful attitudes. Within the book of Acts, Luke never portrays the disciples possessing or utilizing swords or any other instruments of violence (38). On the contrary, the apostles’ response to their hostile treatment was to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer such dishonour” (Cassidy 1988:37). Wisely, Luke draws the reader’s attention to the issue of the faith-followers honouring the core teaching of Jesus in following His way of peace when living in a conflicting socio-politico culture.

2.5.8 The Church’s socio-politico posture

Luke’s narrative gives particular attention to the issue of the disciple’s political stance: he notes importantly that there was never a dichotomy

regarding their political and social stance. Rather, as Cassidy (1988) notes, the community of believers “occurred in the midst of, and in the context of, their on-going social patterns” (39). Luke notes in Acts 4:1, 5, 6 the roles of the Sanhedrin’s activities, the priests and the captain of the temple...and the rulers and elders and scribes. He also notes that Annas continued in the office of high priest (v6).

In regarding the role and authority of the Sanhedrin, which held considerable political sway, Luke importantly notes in Acts 4 the courageous and faith-filled response of Peter and John at the conclusion of their trial:

- V 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.
- V 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge.
- V 20 for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.

It is clear that the disciples explicitly refused to follow the orders of the Sanhedrin. Although a political conflict exists: obey the political leaders or obey God. Their refusal to obey is based on their principle of obedience to God. Their strong conviction drives them toward doing what they know they must do: proceed with what is right in the sight of God. “This was the message the apostles were commissioned to proclaim and no amount of official majesty could restrain them” (Packer 1966:39).

The early believer's characteristic boldness demonstrates their allegiance to God and Christ. Cassidy (1988) notes this important feature of "boldness" in Acts 2:29 RSV):

The Greek word used here (2:29) is *parresia*, a term whose primary meaning is "boldness," especially boldness in political and ethical contexts (45).

Luke provides today's church with a model of bold proclamation when faced with great dangers from political authorities. In Acts 4:29, Luke provides us with an example of a prayerful witness in the face of dangers:

And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants thy word with all boldness (RSV).

2.5.9 The Church's posture on the poor and needy

Cassidy notes a startling discovery regarding the absence of the Greek word for "the poor" (ἡ κακή) in Acts. Although Jesus referred to "the poor" nine times in the gospels, Luke does not use the term throughout Acts (24). Nevertheless, Luke's reference to the sharing component of the early church is made in Acts 4:34: "for there was not a needy person among them." Cassidy further notes that "Luke's exact meaning in this passage arises from his use of the term *endeos*. Strictly speaking this word has the meaning of "in want" or "in need" (24). This demonstrates that Luke wished to indicate that "no members of the Jerusalem community were living in circumstances of economic want" (24).

This similar view is also demonstrated in the New Interpreter's Bible (2002): "More critically, Luke insinuates God's grace upon the

community's social life so that "there was not a needy person among them."

The practice of landowners selling their property and giving the proceeds over to the apostles for redistribution embodies sociology of divine grace" (97). Clearly, Acts 4:34 indicates that the early followers of Christ were a close-knit fellowship who met the needs of their community. Their example informs the life of today's church.

For the 21st century church to continue to prevail and proclaim the gospel that brings peace to humanity, the church will need to implement a strong identity and defence of the truth of God's Word. For followers of Christ, the true Church must walk in truth.

Varguhese (2005) expounds further theologically on the concept of *walking in truth*:

The understanding of the Christian life in terms of the "walk" is emphasized in Acts 2-4. In Rabbinic Jewish thought the Hebraic understanding of halakah was a typical metaphor for the life one leads, including the expected behaviour flowing out from what one believes. The Greek term *peripateo* embodies the same metaphor and can be well translated "live the life" in verbal form or "lifestyle" in noun form (261).

The early Christ-followers in Acts, demonstrated through their lived-faith, that the Church could be instrumental in impacting society for good. Despite fierce socio-political opposition from hostile forces within their culture, the early Christians boldly declared the mission of the church. It was during these political tensions that the early church maintained its identity. Their strong and bold identity of faith, unity,

righteousness, and reconciliation, served as positive forces for witnessing to the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives and transform communities.

2.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a hermeneutical analysis of the sacred text, and socio-cultural texture analysis of Acts chapters 2-4. The purpose was two-fold: First, to determine from the taxonomy of sacred text, the work of the divine through the power of the Holy Spirit. The text demonstrated that it was the Holy Spirit that empowered the early believers for passionate service. Next, the purpose and identity of the early church was examined to determine the strength of the church to face socio-cultural issues of: persecution, injustice, and poverty.

The following key components demonstrate precisely how the early believers made their purpose and identity known: (1) They demonstrated a non-negotiable standard of faith; (2) As a community of faith, they offer hope to today's world; (3) They offered the gospel without apology. They exalted Christ in the face of severe persecution; (5) They were God-inspired and Holy Spirit-led courageous leaders; (6) They demonstrated a close-knit community of fellowship with commonalities; (7) During political tensions, the church's identity remained strong; (8) They were ever conscious of God's power at work in their lives; (9) Their community had an unswerving commitment to God and people both in the community and outside the community; (10) They were committed to the will of God in a hostile environment; (11) Their response to persecution was prayer – not revenge.

Furthermore, in their male-dominated and racist society, the apostles welcomed women, Samaritans, and Gentiles into the full fellowship of the Church. During severe persecution, they held steadfast. Lessons

from the early church have the capacity to nurture faith, Truth, and righteousness in modern society.

From the nascent church community, today's church may learn from the many complex social, cultural, and political issues they faced: divided loyalties (Acts 2:37), multi-cultural controversies (Acts 4:16), and questions of leadership and authority (Acts 2:7-8). Moreover, Varughese (2005) wisely posits that in the midst of these difficult challenges that threatened the existence of this fledgling community of faith, we find those who maintained a unity of faith in a complex and hostile society. The ultimate message of the Acts of the Apostles is unmistakable: Do what is right in the sight of God.

Finally, the call of Acts 2-4 is a call for the 21st century church to let its identity be known through Christian virtues of unity, humility, faith, righteousness, and reconciliation. Service and humility, opposition to injustice, and rejection of violence to persons, were hallmarks of the early Christ-followers. "This non-negotiable standard of faith is the characteristic mark of a genuine Christian community. And this Christian community exists to offer hope to the world" (Varughese 2005:353).

This chapter has established the biblical identity and purpose of the church. At this juncture, the discourse will proceed to chapter three by critically analysing the ideology of the African Renaissance. According to sociologists, ideologies have different roles to play in any society and in any form of social order – including the spirituality of a community. Berger and Luckmann's (1967) *sociology of knowledge* paradigm will be used in order to evaluate the movement's core ideology (s). For example: ethics and morality, cultural dominance, socio-political, and ecclesiology are issues that will be considered. Identifying the ideology (s) of the African Renaissance is crucial to the

understanding of whether or not the church may engage with the movement for a continental revival.

Chapter 3

A Critique of the Ideology of the African Renaissance

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to redress the previous query by critiquing the ideology of the African Renaissance in order to determine whether the evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance. This chapter will address these issues through a sociology of knowledge typology (Berger and Luckman 1966). It is germane to this research to first critique the ideology of the African Renaissance in order to demonstrate the different roles that ideology plays in various forms of social order - including the spirituality of a community.

3.1.1 Defining an ideology

Due to the various and broad definitions of the term “ideology” by scholars, for the purpose of this study, a working definition of the term will be used from the *Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms* (2012) which states: “Ideology is the biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes of a person or a group; a systematic or a generally known perspective from which a text is written, read, or interpreted.” Broader definitions of an *ideology* differ greatly amongst scholars (Boudon, Aron and Shils 1989; Berger and Luckman 1966, Merton 1996) and experiences of the phenomenon are based on a wide variety of principles. Boudon (1989:19) quotes Raymond Aron and Shils:

Political ideologies always combine more or less...factual propositions and value judgments. They express an

outlook on the world and a will towards the future. They do not fall directly under the choice of true or false...the

ultimate philosophy and the hierarchy of preferences
invite discussion rather than proof or refutation (Aron).

“Ideological activity is closer to that of the prophet or religious reformer than that of the scholar” (Boudon 1989:21). Boudon believes that ideologies are a natural ingredient of social life; they start not in spite of, but because of human rationality.

From a further religious/missiological perspective, Luzbetak (2002) posits the following definition of an *ideology* which is used interchangeably with *world view*:

Ideology...includes socially standardized beliefs about the universe and man's place in it; conceptions about the sources of illness and other sorts of danger, attitudes belonging, allegiance, and identification; sentiments about persons, objects, places and times; and, finally, values concerning what to do and what not to do (265).

Sometimes the term *ideology* refers to a “cultural belief system, particularly one that entails systematic distortion or masking of the true nature of social, political, and economic relations; for example, that of a Nazi ideology. We can further speak for example of “sets of closely related ideas, beliefs, and attitudes of a practical political, economic or social nature, ie: capitalism, Marxism, socialism (Luzbetak 2002: 265).

Berger (1967:123,124) views an *ideology* from an interest of power:

When a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to a concrete power interest, it may be called an ideology.

3.1.2 *Criteria for an ideology*

Frequently, an *ideology* is taken on by a group because of specific theoretical elements that are conducive to its interests. Ideologies are distinct from other belief systems in the way they meet eight criteria and are distinguished by the following eight key components: 1) The explicit nature of their formulation; 2) their wish to rally people to a particular positive or normative belief; 3) their desire to be distinct from other belief systems past or present; 4) their rejection of innovation; 5) the intolerant nature of their precepts; 6) the affective way they are promulgated; 7) the adherence they demand; 8) their association with institutions responsible for reinforcing and putting into effect their belief systems in question.

Once the *ideology* is decided upon by the group in question, it is modified in accordance with the interest it must now legitimate. There may be large elements in an ideology that bear no particular relationship to the legitimated interests, but that are vigorously affirmed by the “carrier” group simply because it has committed itself to the *ideology*. In practice this may lead power holders to support their ideological experts in theoretical squabbles that are quite irrelevant to their interests (Berger 1967:123,124).

Ideology, as defined by Robbins (1996:110) concerns people’s relationship to other people – particularly the discourse of people. The term “Ideology” according to Robbins “represents the points where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them.” Davis (1975:14) offers his definition of ideology: “an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions, and values” that reflects “the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history.”

Before the evangelical church may seek to engage in discourse with the African Renaissance, the church must seek to clearly understand its ideology. Questions to ponder are: From which ideological paradigm has

the African Renaissance drawn from? What are the key elements of their ideology? Is the Renaissance ideology simply a perpetuation of an existing ideology or is it a new contending ideology? This chapter will further expound on these salient issues.

3.2 *Sociology of knowledge paradigm*

For the purpose of this research a *sociology of knowledge* paradigm will be used to critique the ideology of the African Renaissance. The *sociology of knowledge* has become a positive method for the study of various facets of human thought (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Berger defines the *sociology of knowledge* as follows:

...understanding human reality as socially constructed reality....society determines the presence but not the nature of ideas. The sociology of knowledge is the procedure by which the socio-historical selection of the ideational contents is to be studied... (9).

Furthermore, Berger and Luckmann (1967) maintain the role of knowledge in society by analysing objectivation, institutionalisation, and legitimation as applicable to the problems of the theory of social action and institutions, and the sociology of religion. They further contend that the sociology of religion has essential contributions to make to sociological theory. For Berger, it is clear that the *sociology of knowledge* without the sociology of religion is impossible. He posits that religion requires a religious community; to live in a religious world requires affiliation with that community.

Luzbetak (2002) concurs with Berger and Luckmann (1967) that religion legitimizes the social “and sometimes the moral” order of the particular society. He clarifies the statement “and sometimes the moral” because

while Christianity regards God as ultimate norm of right and wrong and teaches that “None of those who cry out, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of God but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21), some religions do not consider morality as an aspect of religion. Religion provides psychological support to the society in times of frustration, failure, disaster, perplexity, crisis and despair by instilling hope and courage and providing a sense of security in the believer (Luzbetak 2002:264).

Merton (1996) further comments on the nature of ideologies:

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously indeed but with a false consciousness. His real motives impelling him remain unknown to him; hence he imagines false or apparent motives (205).

Ways by which these ideas develop, proposed by Merton, is demonstrated through the *sociology of knowledge* paradigm which follows below:

1. *Social bases*: social position, group structures (university, academic, political parties; historical situation, ethnic affiliation, power structure, social processes (competition, conflict).
2. *Cultural bases*: values, ethos, climate of opinion, type of culture, culture mentality.
3. *Ethical/moral/religious bases*: moral beliefs, ideologies, religious beliefs, social norms.
4. *Symbolic or meaningful relations*: harmony, unity, compatibility, identity of meaning.

5. *Ambiguous terms to designate relations:* reflection, correspondence, close connection with.
6. *Manifest and latent functions:* to maintain power, promote stability, orientation, divert criticism, deflect hostility, provide reassurance, and coordinate social relationships.
7. *Historicist theories* (confined to particular societies or cultures).

Thus, we may conclude from the paradigm above, that the development of ideas is a complex sociological process. Ideologies form from complex ideas. For example, an individual is born into an objective social structure within which he encounters significant people who are in charge of his/her socialization. This primary social base forms the individual's cultural and ethical/moral basis. Symbolic or meaningful relations materialize and ideologies emerge through social change.

Merton (1996:241) posits that in "times of great social change, precipitated by acute social conflict and attended by much cultural disorganization - the perspectives provided by the various *sociologies of knowledge* bear directly upon problems agitating the society." As a result, social change erupts through a variety of social movements. They formulate their solidarity and intensify total allegiance to their members. The movements are principally formed on the basis of ascribed rather than acquired status (Merton 1996:243).

3.3 Spheres of ideology within the African Renaissance

We may conclude, for the purpose of this research, that an *ideology* that best serves a society is based on a wide variety of principles such as: moral and religious beliefs, and socio-economic and political policies all serve to instil values that reflects and protects the needs and interests of

all people within that society. At this conjecture, this research will critique the ideology of the African Renaissance from a four-part typology: 1) principles of the ecclesiology of the African Renaissance; 2) the ethics and morality of the African Renaissance; 3) the ethnocentrism of the African Renaissance; 4) and its socio-economic and political ideology.

3.4 Ecclesiology of the African Renaissance

Luzbetak (2002) posits that when a society is faced with a crisis, it is religion that enables humans to transcend themselves. He defines “religion” as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people, in a culturally approved relationship with supernatural beings of powers, struggle with ultimate problems of human life.

The difference between Christianity and other religions lies in its unique Christian content. He further contends that the main difference between religion and an *ideology* or world view is that whereas religion always deals with the sacred and eternal, world view or *ideology* often does not consider the sacred (264).

Most cultures formulate and nurture a religious community. Human commitment is not simply an individual matter but a matter of participating with others in activities that nurture and fulfil commitment to divine ways. The community itself has commitments to people in the world outside. Thus, religious community includes commitments to God, to people inside the community, and to people outside the community (Robbins 1996:127-128).

It is only within the religious community, the *ecclesia*, that a religious conversion can be effectively maintained. For example, Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-6) sought out the Christian community after his “Damascus experience.” This is where the religious community comes in; it provides

the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could remain Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognised him as such and confirmed the “new being” in which he now located this identity. Therefore, religion requires a religious community, and to live in a religious world requires affiliation with that community (Berger and Luckmann 1966:158).

Common sense knowledge is the knowledge we share with others in the normal routines of everyday life. Compared to the realities of everyday life, other realities appear as finite provinces of meaning through transitions. For example, religious experience may be rich in producing transformation by a turning away of attention from the reality of everyday life (Berger and Luckmann 1966:25). Through religious experience a radical change takes place. Thus, religion uses symbols to span spheres of reality; they are located in one reality, but refer to another, despite the maximal detachment from the present reality. They are of great importance for functioning in everyday life (Berger and Luckmann 1966:40).

Within the *sociology of knowledge* there are standards of role performance accessible to most members of society. All institutionalised conduct involves roles. Thus, roles share in the controlling character of institutionalization. The roles represent the institutional order. Historically, roles that symbolically represent the total institutional order have been located in political and religious institutions (Berger and Luckmann 1966:76).

De Gruchy (1997:477) discusses the essential issue of a “Christian witness at a time of African Renaissance.” He proposes the following:

Just as the ecumenical church played an important role in the struggle for the liberation and in some instances functioned as the midwife of democratic transition, so it is now called to participate in the renewal of Africa. In doing so, the church has, as always, the complementary roles of priest and prophet.

As priestly community its unique contribution will be the moral, cultural, and spiritual transformation of the continent... without this, the heralded renaissance will remain a dream alongside the many political plans which litter the past. As a prophetic community, the church must continuously test the vision of the African renaissance, and especially its implantation, against the more radical vision of the reign of God with its insistence on justice, compassion, and the humanization of life. If the church is to fulfil its calling and make a difference it dare not become the lackey of the politicians and their programs (477).

Within the context of South African society, De Gruchy contends that the nurturing and growth of the Christian faith community and witness subsequently becomes the responsibility and task of African Christians and churches. According to De Gruchy, there needs to be “a coherence of faith and purpose, a shared vision of and solidarity in a witness to the reign of God, a common commitment to evangelism, and the transformation of unjust social orders. “The church must maintain a mutual striving to ensure that Christianity overcomes its colonial past and becomes truly indigenous” (478).

At this conjecture, a question begs an answer: *Within the ideology of the African Renaissance, is there a place for the recognition of a religious community (particularly the evangelical church) to engage for positive transformation?* The following discourse will address this salient question. Okumu (2002) is one of few scholars who recognize the important role of the church in the African Renaissance:

The role of the churches and religious leaders is crucial; the church is by far the largest organization in Africa's civil society (261).

Okumu's scholarly work with emphasis on the important role of the church in the African Renaissance, is therefore, paramount to this research.

Amongst the current African Renaissance leaders: globalists, culturalists, Pan Africans, and ANC, there scant mention of this likelihood. Former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, gives a placid call for the church (as one of many alliances of forces) to effectively assist in ushering in a mass crusade for Africa's renewal (Ajulu 2010).

While some African Renaissance leaders may have low expectations for the church to effectively impact society, research according to Luzbetak (2002) indicates that a "Christian witness to the reign of God has potential for the radical and spiritual transformation of a society. Religion provides socially acceptable answers to mysteries that the human mind longs to solve but that are beyond human experience" (263). These questions concern the origin and destiny of humankind and the reasons for suffering, death, and evil in our world.

3.5 Ethics and morality of the African Renaissance

Closely related to the issue of ecclesiology of the African Renaissance is the components of ethics and morality in its ideology. Robbins(1996) defines ethics as the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. In the context of religious commitment, the special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God.

Biblical ethics promote the acceptance of responsibilities that offer benefits to others; affirming the importance and life of people who are otherwise excluded from the benefits of society. Acts 2:44 demonstrates this truth:

And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

We learn from the above biblical role performance that in the common stock of knowledge there are standards of role performance that should be accessible to all members of a society. The roles represent the institutional order. For example, to engage in judging is to represent the role of the judge. Roles make it possible for institutions to exist. Such roles are of great strategic importance in a society, since they represent not only an institution, but the integration of all institutions in a meaningful world. By virtue of the role he/she plays the individual is inducted into specific areas of socially objectivated knowledge in the sense of the knowledge of norms and values relating to ethics and morality (Berger and Luckmann 1966:76).

The analysis of roles is of particular importance to the *sociology of knowledge* because it reveals the mediations between social roots of

particular religious world views (Berger and Luckmann 1966:79). Men of knowledge do not orient themselves exclusively toward their data nor toward the total society, but to special segments of that society with their special demands, criteria of validity, of significant knowledge, of pertinent problems, and so forth (Merton 1996:221).

Within the African Renaissance, the role of human rights appears to be its moral standard as proposed by Maloka (2000):

...the pursuit of an African Renaissance will be different from the earlier European renaissance as well as from developments in the rest of the world in the coming century. There is one driving force that could...be at the epicentre of a universal quest for progress in the 21st century: the universalization human rights...the yardstick by which we measure human progress (91).

By making human rights the moral standard of the African Renaissance, Africanists would not only establish criteria for the behaviour of African states but also enable them to assume a vanguard role in the progress of a more caring world society.

The place of morality and ethics in a Renaissance state is a question addressed by Marcus Ramogale (1998), a Professor at the University of Venda. Basing his analysis on the South African experience, he argues:

The psycho-cultural dimension for this is the factor that determines the ability of society to manage the transformation process. South Africa's short post-apartheid history demonstrates through many sad examples that the masses in this country are not yet

ready to participate effectively in a new order, nor are the able to benefit from the responsiveness of the new government to the needs its people. The political leaders on the side of the masses are to blame for this because in prioritizing the country's politics and economics, they virtually suggested that psychic and cultural issues among the oppressed were unproblematic and therefore outside the purview of the transformation process (quoted in Maloka 2000:88).

What was necessary, they believed, was the creation of a legitimate political and economic kingdom, and then all of South Africa's social ills would disappear. We now know that this was an error of judgment. There is one principle that is common to most belief systems: the notion of excellence. It is an ideal that reflects a deep human yearning for what is beautiful, orderly, and durable...the human spirit always asserts itself by creating hunger for goodness. The notion of an African Renaissance is an expression of that need. The concept of the African Renaissance implies a quest for excellence in moral, educational, political, and economic matters.

The challenge that faces the advocates of an African revival is how to effect attitudinal and moral transformation throughout the continent" (Maloka 2000:89). We may conclude that a moral calculus must be carefully considered.

Berger (1974) strongly advocates the employment of a moral calculus in the assessment of social change by carefully assessing the human costs of social change brought about by political ideologies that fail to consider the sacred value of human life. Berger (1974:163) urges the avoidance of human suffering in development policies and to weigh the kinds of human costs that exact a quest for alternative possibilities to social change.

These salient issues must preoccupy The African Renaissance's ideology regarding the mitigation of human suffering in the course of socio-political changes. The African Renaissance can be credited for stimulating a respect for indigenous tradition and a bias against mindless transplantation of Western institutions within their continent. African cultural traits are worthy of preservation and continuation.

These include such aspects as interpersonal relations as social inclusion, hospitality, and generous sharing. African culture nurtures attentive and perceptive listening to others. Social acceptance is not based on wealth, but on the basis of relationships to others. Individuals together support their extended family, avoiding the extremes of dependency and paternalism (Okumu 2002:7-8).

In view of the positive aspects of African culture, is the African Renaissance remaining true to its roots? Is it seeking innovative solutions to societal problems that are grounded in moral and ethical principles? Is the movement capable of combining a commitment to human values with cool intelligence, moral engagement, openness of mind and compassion - with competence?

3.6 Cultural dominance and the African Renaissance

Another key issue in the African Renaissance is the cultural perception of dominance. Does the African Renaissance ideology embrace all people groups in its ontological schemata? Several leading South African women (Msimang 2000; Edwards 2000; Pandor, Bardill, Hoppers, Mangena...all contributors to Edwards 2000) discuss ways in which the Renaissance fails to take gender into account, and the implications this has for the potential of the Renaissance to impact African women's lives.

Msimang (2000) asserts the following:

African Renaissance is an ideology/movement that cannot hope to reflect on or transform relations if it does not use a gender lens. Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance offers a vast, numbing silence when it comes to analyses of gender oppression (73).

Other South African women are responding to the absence of a gendered discourse in discussions around the African Renaissance. For instance, Rita Edwards, (2000) director of Women on Farms in the Eastern Cape in 2000, states:

Presently a gender dynamic has been missing from the debate. The process has been driven by males, many of whom are making the call for a return to traditional values and customs. However, some of these are oppressive to women and we have not heard a repudiation of them (84).

Edwards believes that while the African Renaissance means different things to men and women, it particularly means different things to poor women: She argues:

To many African women, it could mean an end to abusive relationships which lead to HIV/AIDS decimating them. Concerns such as women's lack of independent access to land and lack of land rights within polygamous marriages as well as genital mutilation may be some of the concerns of women (84).

Naledi Pandor was the National Council of Provinces chairperson in 2000. She offers a similar view that gender is not always consciously articulated by those speaking of the Renaissance. She believes strongly that the gender dynamic needs to be asserted more vigorously. Pandor posits that there is an urgent need for focused discussions on gender and the Renaissance. Values, practices and identities that continue to exclude and oppress women need attention (Edwards et al 2000:85).

Nozipho January-Bardill, in 2000 ran a consultancy that worked with senior managers in strategic approaches to institutional transformation. She concurs that current discussions are gendered in favour of men; women simply do not feature in the Renaissance discourse. She retorts:

What kind of governance, leadership, institutions and people do we need to develop to achieve our Renaissance goals? (Edwards et al. 86).

Catherine Hoppers, was the coordinator of Indigenous Knowledge Systems at the Human Sciences Research Council in 2000, offers a similar perspective:

The agenda for the African Renaissance from a gender perspective implies a struggle for a reinterpretation of women's roles, a reconstruction of women's identity, and the re-definition of women's potentials in contemporary times. Set against the framework of an African perspective, all of these have implications for the way 'gender' is or has been understood in Africa (Edwards et al. 2000:87).

Oshadi Manteno, PhD, was a consultant in 2000 for Umtapo Centre in gender development. She concurs with Hoppers that the current debates around the Renaissance seem to embrace a "Eurocentric view of human

and social development.” She believes that there is a specific, narrowly defined ‘gender dynamic’ to the current Renaissance discourse:

It should be clear... that the desire to eradicate gender without taking into consideration all other social categories that form a relationship with gender, places the most down-trodden women who are a majority in African countries – in the struggle of middle and upper class women. This is true of the Renaissance perspective as it is currently articulated (Edwards et al. 2000:89).

Mangena (2000) admits that because people do not naturally perceive things in a similar manner, the African Renaissance will mean different things to African men and women.

Turning from gender issues to culture, Alexander (2003) identifies another leadership blind spot in the African Renaissance in regards to the concept of culture: He contends the following: “Culture” in the narrower sense of creative, artistic and intellectual endeavour hardly features in the NEPAD analysis. In fact...of the 204 main paragraphs of the Document, only two refer directly to the importance and function of culture (sic) as a necessary part of the dream of an African Renaissance (Raji-Oyelade 2002:4).

Merton (1996) offers a more basic but broader concept of culture than does Raji-Oyelad. According to Merton (1996) a basic concept which serves to differentiate generalisations about the thought and knowledge of an entire society or culture is that of the “audience” or “public” or “the social circle.” Merton further contends:

Men of knowledge do not orient themselves exclusively toward their data nor toward the total society, but to special segments of that society with their special

demands, criteria of validity, of significant knowledge, or pertinent problems, and so on (221).

Merton, concludes that culture is therefore, not static but ever changing.

3.7 Resources for life and well being

In the paradigm of the *sociology of knowledge* there are social bases where ideas develop. These include: social position, group structures, ethnic affiliation, power structure and social processes of competition and conflict (Merton 1996:208).

It is critical at this conjecture to further analyse the African Renaissance's ideology pertaining to the proposed resources for life and well-being of all South Africans. An example of this concern is expressed by Allan Boesak (2005). In "discerning the signs of the times" he expresses consternation over the lack of resources for life and well-being that continues to presently haunt South Africa; his sobering comments follow below:

The gap between the rich and poor is now larger than it has ever been...South African is now the country with the largest inequalities in the world. In 2008, economists tell us, the richest 20% - that is, the new non-racial elite – received 74% of the total income of the country, while the poorest, no less than 53% of the population, had access to only 6 to 8%. According to other major studies, control of the economy and economic resources is in the hands of 10% of the population; the poorest of the poor receive only 40% of the educational resources. The economic and human development status of South Africa has seriously declined over the last years, from 85th place in 1990 to 129th out of 182 countries in 2007. That means it is now at

the same level as it was in the 1960s. Millions are still living in informal settlements. Too many children are not attending school, 38% of our children suffer from stunted growth, at least 23% from malnutrition. Only 12% of those living with HIV/AIDS receive ARV drugs. These utterly grim statistics speak volumes about our situation. It also raises the question why South African theology has been reluctant to engage this reality (14).

Boesak suggests that while the gap between the rich and poor in South Africa is great, greater still is the consciousness gap. He brings into his discourse the element of theological challenges to the African Renaissance. (These challenges will be proposed and analysed further in chapter four of this dissertation).

The social issue of AIDS, as proposed by Alexander (2003), requires much more thought that should be integrated into the critical analysis of the African renaissance:

The social and economic predictions are dire - Authors are prepared to go beyond predicting a definite lowering of the rate of economic growth and potential but all agreed that the social and psychological impact of the pandemic will endure for many decades to come. Whatever happens, there can be no doubt that the failure to treat AIDS is one of the most urgent threats to the long-term stability of South Africa (30).

In what meaningful ways will the African Renaissance address this complex social stigma? Udogu (2007:156) contends: "We must take decisive steps to challenge the spread of HIV/AIDS, of which Africa accounts for two-thirds of the world total of those infected. Our

government has taken the necessary decisions ...to confront this scourge.”

When discussing important issues which affect the future of Africa, according to Okumu (2002) “HIV/AIDS is arguably one of the most, if not the most, important of all of them at this juncture in our history.” He contends: “The way we in Africa treat this subject will influence the success or failure of the idea of the African Renaissance. (Furthermore) the African Renaissance movement will be greatly affected if we in Africa do not take particular care to understand what causes AIDS and how to combat it” (126-127).

The challenge for treating disease in Africa is complex due to the nature of the term ‘disease’ in African languages. Therefore, it is important to define what ‘disease’ means in the African context.

In traditional African health care ‘disease’ encompasses more than somatic symptoms. For example, the general lack of a clear distinction between illness of the body and social misfortunes, demands that when looking at prevention, the wider conceptualisation of disease in Africa has to be considered (LeBeau and Gordon 2002:80). In many African cultures (Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana) among women, the processes of pregnancy, childbirth and menstruation are deeply associated with taboos; many of which are strict adherence to food taboos. When to abstain from sexual relationships impact both men and women’s concepts of disease (LeBeau and Gordon 2002:81). As a result, inoculations against disease and the use of anti-retro-viral drugs to combat AIDS is often viewed with suspicion and shunned for use.

These are complex challenges that the African Renaissance will face when trying to combat malnutrition and the AIDS pandemic. The methods of disease prevention according to African traditional medicine may seem irrational from a biomedical point of view, yet they form an important part of the diverse African heritage. It is a complexity that the West has not sufficiently considered when criticising South Africa's AIDS policy and awareness campaigns. Importantly, in what plausible ways will the African Renaissance address the critical social issue of the AIDS pandemic, particularly

3.8 *Ethnocentrism and the AR: Africa for Africans*

'Ethnocentrism' is the technical name for the view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rate with reference to it (Merton 1996:248). A further succinct sociological definition of ethnocentrism according to Landis (2001:466) is: "A type of prejudice that maintains that one's own culture's ways are right and other cultures' ways, if different, are wrong." Often, the ethnocentric person says that the familiar is good and the unfamiliar or foreign is bad.

For example, an ethnocentric person in the United States might maintain that democracy is the only way of government; and generally they (USA) are doing other cultures a favour when they go in and Americanize them (Landis 2001:78).

On the other hand, *ethnocentrism* may lead to greater group solidarity and loyalty. To a certain degree, *ethnocentrism* may be essential for the survival of a culture. Often, the effects of *ethnocentrism* are complicated: As we reinforce our belief in the goodness of our own ways, we make unfair and often derogatory judgments about the beliefs of others (Landis 2001:79). Let's further examine the tenets of *ethnocentrism* in the African Renaissance.

Sibusiso (2004) uses the term “Afrocentricity” to posit the importance of the African Renaissance to “revive self-esteem amongst Africans and renew African consciousness through the notion of this ideal”(1). This concept of elevating the self-esteem of Africans emerges from the sense of powerlessness and hopelessness that was felt by many Africans during the years of oppression under apartheid. Therefore, a revival of African traditions is something that the formerly oppressed peoples find very attractive.

Another very key element of the African Renaissance, according to Maloka (2000) is that it must be people-driven and people-centered in its economic growth and a mobilisation of the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands (23). In Berger’s remarkable book, *Pyramids of Sacrifice*, he concurs with Maloka:

If there is any proposition that today dominates the Third World, at least among politicians and intellectuals, is that there is little hope for Third World countries to emerge from poverty unless they free themselves from their present state of dependency on the rich countries (Berger 1974:217).

The question we pose at this conjecture is: Does the ideology of the African Renaissance pose an ‘insider doctrine’? Within the context of social change there is a long-standing problem in the *sociology of knowledge*: the problem of patterned differentials among social groups and strata in access of knowledge known as Insider and Outsider doctrine. The Insider doctrine can be more succinctly defined as “you have to be one in order to understand one” (Merton 1996:246). Merton continues his discourse that the doctrine holds that one has privileged access to knowledge, or is excluded from it, by virtue of group membership or social position.

In short, the Insider doctrine posits that the Outsider has an incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, culture, and societies. The argument holds that, as a matter of social epistemology, only black historians can truly understand black history, only black ethnologists can understand black culture. Generalizing the specific claim, it would appear that if only black scholars can understand blacks, then only white scholars can understand whites. It would then seem to follow that only women can understand women – and men, men.

From this research we may conclude that the Insider doctrine posits that one has privileged access to knowledge, or is excluded from it, by virtue of group membership or social position. According to Merton (1996) and the *sociology of knowledge* typology, the Insider doctrine holds that the Outsider has an incapacity to understand alien groups. One must ponder: Is the “Insider” doctrine one of an ethnocentric position, ie: African solutions to African problems?

3.9 Who is an African?

In reference to the African Renaissance, there has been similar debate regarding the Insider/Outsider doctrine that poses ontological challenges. For example, many scholars (Britz 2006; Cliffe 2004; Hayman 2003; Louw 2002; Matthews 2002; Nehusi 2004) pose the salient question: What does it mean to be an ‘African?’ This probing question has been convincingly argued by Maloka (2000):

The problem which needs to be re-evaluated is that of ethnicity. The idea of categorising Africans in terms of tribes and ethnic groupings was a colonial invention, if not a political ideology... There are African scholars who

argue that ethnicity is inherent to African people and that African politicians use it as a tool to achieve and control political power. If ethnicity is a political resource tool for African politicians, one would expect African politicians to bear the moral responsibility of ending it (63).

Culturalists too, have raised the ontological question: 'What is and what does it mean to be an African?' Culturalists belong to a branch of African philosophy known as ethnophilosophy. This is a branch of thought understood as a system of collective thought, spontaneous, implicit, inalterable, to which all members of a given society would adhere (Maloka 2000:6). According to Maloka, ethnophilosophy with its notion of "collective philosophy" not only fails to recognise individuals as a factor in African societies, but also suffers from treating African cultures as a homogenous whole. Prah (1999) succinctly addresses this salient question of ontology:

Africans are people whose origins, cultures, and history derive from the African continent (Maloka 2000:6).

Further discourse on the topic continues with Dr. Nehusi who was the director of the Africa Studies Centre at the University of London, UK; he further postulates Nkrumah and Tosh in answering the question, "Who is an African?"

All people of Afrikan descent, irrespective of whether they live on the continent of Africa or in North or South America or the Caribbean are Africans and belong to the African nation. – Kwame Nkrumah.

Don't matter where you come from as long as you're a Black man you're an Afrikan – Peter Tosh

Dr. Nehusi (2004) further probes the deeper and more comprehensive issues of ontology:

A proper definition of any people must relate them to the ancestral land, their culture and their history. An Afrikan is therefore a person who shares with others a common geographical origin and ownership of, and spiritual attachment to their ancestral land known as the continent of Afrika, certain physical characteristics, a common history, a common set of cultural values and consequently a common worldview, a common heritage and common economic, political and social interests. These core characteristics, which amount to a specific identity, set Afrikans apart from other peoples, and ought to determine the interests they pursue (Nehusi 2004:19). This important question of 'Who is an Afrikan' has been effectively answered by people who are not Afrikans, and who never had, and still do not have the interests of Afrikans at heart (24).

Alexander's (2003:16) argument supports Nkrumah's broader definition that an African is "any person of good faith, of any race (faith or religious belief) or colour who has chosen to live in Africa."

Nkrumah as an Insider of the African Renaissance is one of few scholars who embrace a wider ontological definition of the quintessential and salient question: 'Who is an African?'

Perhaps Zappen-Thomson (in LeBeau and Gordon 2002) sums it more objectively as she concurs with Nkrumah along similar ontological views. She asserts that the most significant idea is that the recognition of and pride in what is African, without restricting this pride to that which is Black,

should demonstrate that the African Renaissance should encompass much more than Black consciousness (227). This objective view mandates that the African Renaissance engage with all people groups - born on the African continent for Africa's positive renewal.

Alan Boesak (2005) is silent on his personal definition of who is truly 'African.' However, he quotes Thabo Mbeki:

Without equivocation, that to be a true African is to be a rebel in the cause of the African Renaissance (42).

Neither Boesak (2005) or Mbeki provide a definitive explanation for inclusivity of any race or faith of people.

3.10 Ideology of Political/Economical power of the African Renaissance

Another key element of the African Renaissance includes the economic recovery of the African continent. Integrated economic development in the region with a fostering of interdependence between countries, provides a broader international context to its ideology. The African Renaissance desires the establishment of democracy on the continent – while taking into consideration Africa-specific conditions (Maloka 2000:23).

In addition, the African Renaissance wants to ensure close political cooperation with progressive forces on the continent to define a common agenda for Africa (24). To achieve this agenda, the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) and the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) have been awarded crucial roles in realising the objectives of the African Renaissance. Key issues facing the African Renaissance are to: 1) reposition the OAU to play an important economic role in African affairs; 2) co-ordination by the OAU of all African regional economic integration initiatives; 3) enabling the OAU to effectively intervene in promoting democracy, justice and human

rights, whilst at the same time not undermining the OAU Charter, which protects the national sovereignty of countries; 4) re-defining the role of the NAM and repositioning it in the present international situation (Maloka 2000:24).

In May of 1991, the CSSDCA conference (Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa) published the results of this conference in the *Kampala Document*. At the conference the delegates moved to the core of Africa's crisis: its lack of security, good governance and meaningful development. The *Kampala Document's* prognosis of Africa's ills serve as a useful summary of the challenges facing the African Renaissance:

The Kampala Declaration defined security in holistic terms: "it embraces all aspects of society including economic, political and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life" (Maloka 2000:26).

The guiding principles of stability as adherence to the rule of law; popular participation in government; respect for fundamental freedoms; transparency in policy-making; and the separation of church and state. Fundamental principles of development were described as: development based on self-reliance for self-sustaining economic growth; physical and economic integration of the continent is essential for Africa's survival and prospects for socio-economic transformation and competitiveness.

The conference addressed a number of key development issues: human resources, capacity building, economic transformation, resource mobilisation, self-sufficiency in food, energy development, infrastructure, population and the environment, science and technology, and women in development (Maloka 2000:28).

It is most unfortunate that most of these declarations have never been implemented, largely due to a lack of political will from Africa's leaders (Maloka 2000:30).

The economic objectives of the African Renaissance, according to Udogu (2007:155) must result in the elimination of poverty, the establishment of modern multi-sector economies, and the growth of Africa's share of world economic activity. He concludes by affirming that "The African Renaissance in all its parts, can only succeed if its aims and objectives are defined by the Africans themselves, if its programs are designed by ourselves and if we take responsibility for the success or failure of our policies" (156).

The African Renaissance and International Co-Operation Fund Act attests to the following: "At its core, African Renaissance is an economic and social development agenda for Africa. In order to achieve social and economic regeneration and development of the continent, the preeminent issue of poverty alleviation through sustained people-centered development, must be...pursued, so as to provide quality of life for all Africa and her people" (<http://www.dfa.gov.za>. Feb 13, 2004). Mali (2011) concurs: "Decades after the formation of the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) there are still many challenges, as Africa groans under the burden of poor or weak governance, pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS...there is hence a need for socio-economic, cultural and political re-birth...(1).

Udogu (2007) argues that in the political sphere, the African Renaissance has begun. He outlines the following political imperatives of the African Renaissance:

Our history demands that we do everything in our power
to defend the gains that have already been achieved, to

encourage all other countries on our continent to move in the same direction according to which the people shall govern, and to enhance the capacity of the OAU to act as an effective instrument for peace and the promotion of human and people's rights, to which it is committed (154).

The African Union (AU) was officially inaugurated in Durban, South Africa on July 9, 2002. The framework of the AU is similar to that of the EU (European Union). It also attempts to address the shortcomings in Africa's past political and economic programs. With plans to move the country forward politically and economically, the AU launched an ambitious scheme entitled the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with the following objectives: creating peace, security and stability and democratic governance. Udogu (2007) questions the establishment of NEPAD for one basic reason:

African governments have never lacked adequate policies for solving region's problems. The difficulties in the realisation of the outcomes of these superb regimes have been that of adequate implementation (28).

There are those sceptics, according to Okumu (2002) "who continue to question the significance and strategy of the African Renaissance. Sceptics have pointed out that the presently developed and industrialized West took many centuries to achieve their current level of status, therefore, Africa cannot hope to do any better; but the leaders of an African Renaissance are not saying that Africa will achieve its economic development instantly...only that it certainly will not take 400 years!" (257).

Never-the-less, what is meant by "*development*" from the context of the ideology of the African Renaissance? With such a complex subject of the

African Renaissance, it is a daunting task to give a simple yet comprehensive definition of the term '*development*' yet a deeper definition is imperative in the understanding of the African Renaissance ideology.

According to Okumu (2002), prior to the 1970s, *development* was generally viewed as a purely economic phenomenon; scant attention was given to problems of poverty, unemployment, and income distribution. By the early 1990s, the World Bank summarised a broader view of what was involved in '*development*' in the following areas:

The challenge of development... is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world's poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes...It encompasses...better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom and a richer cultural life (Okumu 2002).

Within the African Renaissance ideology, the word "development" holds important significance. For instance, Okumu (2002) comprehensively defines 'development' as "the process of a country moving towards greater inclusion, health, opportunity, justice, freedom, fairness, forgiveness, and cultural expression" (13). This deeper meaning for 'development' implies greater responsibility toward improving all areas of life and well-being for all people.

In considering the life, well-being and renewal of Africa, how does the African Renaissance differ from other ideologies or the earlier European Renaissance? Consider the following nine key elements:

1. With its quest for the universalization of human rights, Africanists would establish criteria for the behaviour and good governance of

African states. Human rights is the driving force behind the African Renaissance;

2. The African Renaissance stimulates a respect for indigenous tradition. Africans are seeking innovative solutions to African problems;
3. The African Renaissance must address the complex issue of HIV/AIDS. The success or failure of a renewal of Africa rests on the issue of reducing HIV/AIDS on the continent;
4. A key element of the African Renaissance is that it strives to be people-driven in its economic growth by mobilising the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands;
5. The African Renaissance espouses an Insider Doctrine whereby one has privileged access to knowledge or is excluded from it by virtue of group membership or social position, ie: only blacks can understand blacks; only whites can understand whites; only women can understand women, etc.
6. The African Renaissance seeks economic recovery and social development of the continent whereby its economic objective must result in the elimination of poverty, better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, a cleaner environment;
7. It seeks democracy on the continent by considering Afro-specific conditions;
8. It seeks political alignment with the OAU (Organization of African Unity) and NAM (Non-aligned Movement);

9. Finally, the African Renaissance differs from earlier European renaissance as it addresses Africa's core crisis: its lack of security, good governance and meaningful economic development.

3.11 Summary

This chapter critically assessed the key elements of the ideology of the African Renaissance. Providing a clear and concise definition of its ideology is complex due to eclectic components which are derived from three social forces: the globalists, the Pan Africanists and the culturalists. In its socio-political and economic ideology, the African Renaissance is a perpetuation of the late 20th century variant of Pan-Africanist ideology which seeks to span the political divisions of the African continent. The African Renaissance espouses key aspects of the globalists' ideology and the ANC. In the globalist sense, the African Renaissance is part of a broader anti-imperialist movement.

The African Renaissance's economic strategy closely aligns itself with the ideology of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) which seeks to empower African leadership for the continent (Maloka 2001).

Finally, the African Renaissance embraces the culturalists' ideology by celebrating Africa's cultural glory through the concept of *ubuntu*, which implies that people are people through other people. *Ubuntu* acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being (Okumu 2002).

From Boudon's (1989) criteria for defining an ideology, we may conclude that the African Renaissance adheres to four key elements: 1) All three social forces of the African Renaissance wish to rally people to a particular belief (ie: the regeneration of the African continent); 2) There is a desire to be distinct from other belief systems (ie: the West); 3) They seek

adherence to their ideology (ie: the development of the *African Renaissance Institute*) 4) In adherence to the globalists' ideology, the African Renaissance seeks to partner with institutions for reinforcing and putting into effect their belief systems (ie: ANC, NEPAD).

This research concludes that the African Renaissance as an ideology is one that reflects a political and socio-economic development agenda for the regeneration of Africa. Clearly, the moral standard of the African Renaissance is the universalization of human rights (Edwards, et. al 2000).

This chapter has examined the key elements of the ideology of the African Renaissance from a typology of four perspectives: 1) the ecclesiology of the African Renaissance; 2) ethics and morality of the African Renaissance; 3) Ethnocentrism and ontology of the African Renaissance; 4) and finally, the socio-economic/political ideology of the African Renaissance.

As this research has examined the ecclesiology of the African Renaissance, it must conclude that there is scant mention of the need for the AR to engage with the evangelical church. Former South African president, Thabo Mbeki in his speech "I Am an African" (Ajulu 2001) makes conciliatory mention of an alliance of class forces for Africa's regeneration, by noting the need for "religious leaders" to join forces with the African Renaissance (Ajulu 2001). However, a concise plan to engage the evangelical church in its process has not been forthcoming.

Overall, the above contentions and debates on the viability of the African Renaissance and its quest for political and socio-economic renewal are very sound on paper. However, sobering questions remain: What effective strategies will leaders implement to carry out the locus of policy and development initiatives in collective measures for a rapid economic

and political recovery of Africa? Importantly, will the African Renaissance engage the evangelical church in this process?

Chapter four will examine the theological challenges of the African Renaissance from a biblical and theological perspective in order to determine whether or not the evangelical church may warrant engagement with the ideology of the African Renaissance.

Chapter 4

Biblical and Theological Challenges to the African Renaissance

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the biblical and theological challenges for the African Renaissance. This research will demonstrate that the African Renaissance faces four biblical and theological challenges: (1) ontological and anthropological challenges, (2) moral and ethical challenges, (3) ecclesiastical and faith issues, (4) divisiveness issues: ethnic and religious. In its quest for political and economic renewal, how will the movement consider the foundations of Scripture (Acts 2:45; 4:34) for maintaining the common good of all South Africans? For good governance without corruption? For the training of ethical and moral leaders? Importantly, in what meaningful ways can the African Renaissance address the suffering people and improve their economic and spiritual condition? How, then, might the movement, in light of its quest for political, social, and economic renewal, tackle these salient theological issues? These questions are the focus of the discussion in this section.

4.2 Theological challenges for the African Renaissance

Cheru (2003) posits that theological understanding is lacking in the African Renaissance. He maintains that the movement has not sufficiently addressed the critical ontological issues of the quest for the meaning of life, identity, and recognition. Louw (2002:7) also queries

ontological issues within the African Renaissance when he poses the following theological questions: How will the African Renaissance

change Africa's basic experience of human dignity and needs? How will the movement address the people's quest for meaning? In what ways will the African Renaissance improve the quality of life for all South Africans? Will the movement engage the moral and spiritual influence of the evangelical church upon African society? In what ways can the African Renaissance relate to the deepest concerns of men and women about the meaning of their lives and their ultimate destiny?

The movement lacks ontological understanding relating to their responsibility to humankind as a whole. How does the movement evaluate what is right and good for all people? These salient issues have not been sufficiently addressed in the literature of the African Renaissance from 1994-2012.

4.2.1 The African Renaissance and anthropological issues

In man's quest for meaning and in reference to Christian spirituality, particularly, the underlying assumption is that the functionality of the "human soul" is closely connected to the human quest for meaning. With reference to "human soul" our basic presupposition is that with "soul" (*nefesh*) or "heart" (*kardia*) is meant as a qualitative understanding of human life, emanating from spiritual awareness of the presence of God (Louw 2010:78). Louw (2010) aptly points out that there is a link between the human quest for meaning and the spiritual realm of life.

LeBeau and Gordon (2002) contends that the African Renaissance universalises African identities which point toward a single African culture. Furthermore, they refer to Thabo Mbeki who equally believes the movement should call for further cultural involvement in:

.. the rediscovery of Africa's creative past to recapture the people's cultures to encourage artistic creativity and restore popular involvement in both accessing and advancing science and technology (Mbeki 1999).

Mbeki believes that only through a rediscovery of the greatness of that which is African (i.e., promotion of African pride) can the people of Africa succeed in "building a humane and prosperous society" (Makgoba 1999:xix-xx).

To develop and maintain a humane and prosperous society, Mbeki does not warrant the talents of the multi-cultural diversity of South Africa to achieve such social and economic advances. However, in the development of a just society, Britz, et al (2006) aptly points out four pillars of a knowledge society: (1) ICTs and connectivity; (2) usable content; (3) infrastructure and deliverability; and (4) human intellectual capability.

For the purpose of this research, we will examine the fourth pillar of a knowledge and just society: human intellectual capability:

"The development of human capital represents one of the most important factors that facilitate development and economic growth." It is through human capital that people may live and work productively. Therefore, Britz (2006) maintains that the most valuable aspect of a just society is its intellectual capital; such a society must invest in its people. Although there is a strong political will and commitment by most African leaders to make Africa a knowledge and just society, "it is not only a matter of rediscovering Africa's historical roots and cultural values before colonialism, but also of turning

those values and abilities into competitive advantages and ensuring that African can take its place along with world of nations as a knowledge and just society.”

Moreover, Britz (2006) further offers this caveat:

But this rather simple notion of the rebirth of the continent needs to be translated into a coherent plan of action and practical implementation. Apart from the political will there needs to be action plans and imagination to give content to the African Renaissance (9).

Britz (2006) argues that the most valuable asset of a just society is its intellectual capital and that societies, to be able to become knowledge and just societies, must invest in its people. This raises further intriguing questions:

To what extent will the African Renaissance movement implement action plans in recognising the need for developing a human intellectual capital across all population groups in order to build a just society?

To what extent will the African Renaissance offer hope for a more just society? Scholars Cheru (2003) and Louw (2002) concur that these salient theological questions remain vague on the African Renaissance agenda.

4.2.2 The moral and ethical challenges to the African Renaissance

The second theological challenge for the African Renaissance is the moral challenge. Class identity politics often supports corruption and

immorality - all in the name of political consolidation. "Class-identity politics says that if you happen to be a person of a particular class or culture or economic status, then it is already predictable what you are going to believe. When moral relativism puts on the face of being absolutely true, then ironically it proves itself to be neither true nor absolute. The incarnation is dismissed as a myth. The atoning work of God on the cross becomes lost in situational ethics. Tolerance of evil becomes a virtue" (Oden 2007:116).

The tolerance of evil, crime, and corruption poses a serious theological challenge for the African Renaissance: Class-identity politics becomes supportive of corruption, immorality, and political consolidation.

This tolerance threatens a "theological sterile division between ecclesiology and Christology, religion and social development, and faith and life" (Ilo, Ogbonnaya, and Ojacor 2011:172). In calling civil authorities to biblical accountability, both Robinson and Wall (2006) offers this reminder to faith communities:

Members of communities of faith (like Jesus) need to remind them of their legitimate responsibilities and call them to exercise their responsibilities for the common good of all. Here in the book of Acts, we find useful guidance for today's church in today's world. The gospels (Mt 21:23-24; 23:13-36; Mk 7:6-13; Mk 11:15-18; Jn 10:22-38) note that Jesus often confronted ruling authorities and called them to account for their actions (256).

In calling the African Renaissance leaders to moral accountability for their actions, the church remains true to its biblical mandate to reject evil and corruption. An example from the early church found in Acts 3:17, 4:8, 4:34, demonstrates that the apostles exhibited a non-negotiable faith when confronted by unjust leaders. The courageous faith of the apostles informs the church today to follow their example.

This brings the discourse to the next theological challenge: The African Renaissance lacks a moral obligation in connecting God's grace with the observation of the needs of the poor. In light of the enormous suffering endured today by many South Africans, how will the African Renaissance identify the root cause of suffering, hunger, and poverty? Boesak (2005) questions why South African leaders have been reluctant to address the following grim statistics which show a glaring dichotomy between the rich and the poor:

Reportedly, South Africa has the largest inequalities in the world. In 2008, the richest 20% (non-racial elite) received 74% of the total income of the country. The poorest 53% of the population had access to only 6-8% of South Africa's total income. Control of the economy and economic resources is controlled by 0% of the population. South Africa ranked 129 out of 182 countries in economic and human development status in 2007 – The same rank it was in the 1960s under apartheid (14).

The preceding sobering statistics inform the question: Will the African Renaissance look to the evangelical church for answers to these moral challenges? Our Christian faith, according to Scripture, informs us that Jesus went about all the cities and villages curing diseases and healing victims of suffering (Mt 4:23; Lk 9:11). By His example, Jesus calls us

to show compassion to those who suffer. Compassion is a fundamental imperative and basic theme of the Christian tradition (Ilo, et al. 2011). Furthermore, from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, we discover how the early church dealt with members who were needy (ενδεής). For example, Luke infers in Acts 4:34-35, that those persons who were in need were soon provided for. There was apparently a social obligation where the early Christians felt a compassion to respond to the needs of the poor.

Moreover, compassion means that we not only respond to the effects of suffering, but that we deal with its root causes. If we contend that suffering is often manmade and linked with structural sin or evil, then compassion should lead us to undertake some socio-economic and politico-moral concerns and actions, in compassionate solidarity with those who suffer. Importantly, the African Renaissance in collaboration with the South African evangelical church could become more involved in the formulation of social policies, in order to foster structural change – a matter of justice which will substantially reduce the need for exercising charity. The matter of justice is a key biblical issue in the book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 3:17,19):

And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also (v 17). Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (v 19).

The preceding two verses indicate that while God may have overlooked times of human ignorance, at this time, he commands all people to exercise justice (Witherington 1998). Verse 19 above calls for a not just a turning from sin (μετάνοια), but for a turning to God and His fair and just ways.

The African Renaissance faces a sobering biblical challenge regarding its ethical practices: How will they stem existing selfish attitudes and lifestyles which often lead to unsustainable development? How will the movement address the effects of human suffering to stem the root cause? How will they address the effects of economic decline, political instability, and human insecurity? A major root cause of insecurity in Africa, according to Ilo et. al (2011) is “the unequal distribution of power and resources between groups that are divided by ethnicity, religion, or language. On one hand it breeds dissatisfaction on the part of the excluded; on the other hand, it increases the incentive of the beneficiaries to hold to political power indefinitely” (44,45). Ilo argues convincingly that “any true sustainable and integral development must first attend to the concerns of these divisions.

Presently, in attending to the concerns of these divisions, the African Renaissance lacks a cohesive plan for stemming selfish attitudes and lifestyles. The movement’s recourse is to follow Romans 2:15 which suggests that a common moral law is written on the hearts of all humankind. A universal common moral law makes international communication, commerce, and justice possible (Geisler 1989:126). Romans 1:20 provides a basis for divine justice in that all people are “without excuse” (Geisler 126):

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse (NASB).

The above research has demonstrated that the African Renaissance movement lacks a moral and ethical obligation in connecting God's grace with the needs of the poor and underserved population. In addition, the movement lacks a clearly defined plan for stemming current selfish attitudes and lifestyles. A salient question to ponder at this conjecture is: How will the African Renaissance engage the evangelical church for positive transformation?

4.2.3 The ethical challenge to the African Renaissance

"Ethics deals with what is morally right and wrong. Numerous theories have been proposed concerning what is meant by a morally good action (Machiavelli; Protagoras; Moore; Bentham, and Mill), however, the evangelical view as the basis for moral decisions is proposed and will be considered for the purpose of this research" (Geisler 1989:123).

"Evangelicals recognize two spheres of God's revelation: general and special. The former is revealed in nature, the latter in Scripture" (Geisler 1989:123).

Geisler (1989) proposes the following regarding the nature of natural revelation:

God knew that not all people would have access to the truths of Scripture at all times, so he inscribed a law upon their hearts. Paul wrote, "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the (written) law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness...(Rom 2:14-15 RSV).

Some have described this knowledge of the law as “innate” or as a “natural inclination”(Geisler 1989:123). Moreover, some non-Christians admit to the universality of moral law. Immanuel Kant called it a categorical imperative: willing for all people what we desire to be done to ourselves. For example, willing that we should treat others as an end, not as a means to an end. Some of the great moral creeds of humankind’s civilizations give testimony to the general revelation of God in the striking resemblance of their basic ethical principles (noted by C.S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man*) (Geisler 1989:123).

True moral law, then, can be derived from our expectations – not from our actions. For instance, who truly believes that murder, rape, cruelty to children, or forced starvation is morally right? Without a universal moral law common to all people, there would be no grounds for meaningful and moral communication. For example, international commerce would not be possible without mutually accepted moral principles (Geisler 1989:124).

4.2.4 Ecclesiastical challenge to the African Renaissance

The African Renaissance faces a further theological challenge: In what ways will the movement offer an ecclesiology of an abundant life for all people? In what meaningful ways can it become an oasis of renewed hope? Hope has not always been the strength of Africa; rather Africa is a continent remembered more for her persistent crises (Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe) than for her inner riches and strengths. What needs to happen theologically for this perception to change from a crisis-mode Africa to a stabilised and productive Africa?

According to Oden (2007) “the early African Christian heritage had a huge subliminal impact on all Christian history, and indeed world history. But this has not been consciously recognized...”(82). Historically, the Church offers greater energies for social transformation and distributive justice. “Christianity functions with an organic understanding of justice mediated through historic communities. Hence, it is more fitting to the political reality of Africa than the recent secular models of hyper tolerance. As contemporary Africa rediscovers classical Christian Africa, a more prudent basis is being recognized on which to seek justice and love mercy” (114).

The church, through faith-nurtured networks offers human concern that cannot be delivered through any politically-motivated networks. Early Christian acts of charity based in caring communities grasped this simple biblical point: There is a world of difference between gospel and law (115).

The Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2-4) informs today’s church on key issues of charity and the example of a community of faith that offers hope to the world.

How might the African Renaissance evaluate its mission among the evangelical church who embrace and celebrate its Christian faith? What positive imprint will the African Renaissance leave on the lives and societies in South Africa? How will the African Renaissance be the salt and light Jesus Christ envisions people to be? The early faith community in the New Testament book of Acts offers theologically sound answers to these probing questions. For example, the lived faith of the early Church in Acts 2-4, was intimately linked to the lives of the early Christians; it also shaped their personal and group history. “The evidence of the Word made flesh is an on-going testimony attested to

in the Church in all that she has and all that she is, including the Word that is written in Scripture” (Ilo, Ogbonnay, and Ojacor 2011:3).

The contemporary Christian community is also the keeper of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit teaches the faithful, to the extent that they are able to read Scripture closely with their hearts shaped by the rule of faith and charity. The rule of faith is the confession that faithful men/women learn from following the Word of God. The rule of charity is the life of the believer communicating the love of God through the love of neighbour by acts of mercy, generosity, and gentleness (Oden 2007:128).

What we may glean from the early Christians is that they gave testimony to a living Person in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-24; 4:10; 4:33) whose teachings is able to transform people and societies for the good of all. The early Christian faith community in Acts 2:42, 47a offers key insights into the crucial role of the church in the transformation of society:

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (v 42). praising God, and having favoured with all the people...(v 47a).

Luke's reference in Acts 2:47 that the community enjoyed "favour" [*charis*] with all the people, points toward God's favour: And [God's] great grace [*charis*] was upon them all (v 33). The effective power of God's grace "upon" the assembly of believers enables it to produce those behaviours in the public sphere that cultivate good will and interest (i.e. civic favour) among outsiders. God's grace functions more as a positive influence upon the entire community to move believers in

God's direction (Robinson and Wall 2006:74). Faith communities demonstrate biblical integrity, ethical leadership, and compassion for the marginalised of our world. According to Acts 2-4, regular biblical teachings, communal sharing, and concerted prayer, were key elements that significantly contributed to the unity and well-being of their community life.

At this conjecture, a theological query emerges: What sound resources will the African Renaissance use to enhance its agenda for political, social, and economic regeneration of the African community? Will there be a call for religious leaders to engage with the African Renaissance?

Former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, offers a rather nominal call to "religious leaders" to engage in an alliance of class forces with the African Renaissance:

Surely, there must be politicians and business people, youth and women activists, religious leaders, artists, and professionals from Cape to Cairo.... who are sufficiently enraged by Africa's condition in the world to want to join the mass crusade for Africa's renewal (Mbeki 1998).

Moreover, several other African Renaissance scholars (Asante 2006; Udogu 2007; Kagwanja 2008; Mboup 2008; Peires 2009; Gigaba 2011; Mali 2011; and Zenawi 2012) give scant or nil attention to the important role of the church in the African Renaissance. On the other hand, Ilo (2011) gives remarkable attention to the essential role of the church in Africa to usher in revival:

“Religion in general and Christianity in particular, can contribute to the regeneration of humanity through salvation in Christ. The content of salvation positively entails the remission of sins, the removal of evil, freedom and new life for the children of God, and the hope for eternal life. This is fully possible only through the transforming power and presence of Christ in African culture and life” (Ilo 2011:97).

Religions across the boundaries of African states can help to provide the intercultural and inter-ethnic dimension in positive terms (97). Ilo (2011) further contends that “there can be no transformation of any society, and no emergence of a culture of hope, without the integration of a religious component into the whole reality” (96).

Jesus describes Christians as the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16). Jesus implies that His followers (the church) must be examples of purity: holding high the standards of life, such as honesty, conscientiousness, morality, diligence in work, etc. Conscientious in speech, in conduct, and even in thought...the Christian, just as salt of the earth was used as a preservative, must keep the earth from corruption. The church as the salt of the earth must promote good over evil; she must by example of her life, keep corruption at bay in all facets of human life. It is only by rising to the challenge of this image as working for the salvation of humankind that the Church can truly be seen as the salt of the earth. This implies mediating in the socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural life of the people (Ilo 2011:66-67).

Therefore, the lack of attention to the role of the church by the African Renaissance, raises a serious ecclesiology issue of concern.

4.2.5 Theological understanding of faith and the African Renaissance agenda

A demonstration of Christian faith is often lacking in the African Renaissance agenda. Ilo, Ogbonnaya, and Ojacor (2011) raise probing questions and offer key suggestions on how the Christian faith may address the African Renaissance agenda. They offer compelling reminders that African cultural values possess a character of their own and may be used to enhance faith communities. For instance, the three scholars offer a valid basis for constructing vigorous Christian communities in Africa:

Every generation of Christians must reach into their cultural and historical conditions, inner resources, and the inexhaustible gift of the Christian faith, in order to discover for themselves what the Spirit is saying for the re-creation of the human spirit of that generation. Every generation must be accountable to the Lord and to the men and women of their times... (xii).

Ilo et.al (2011) wisely summons the African Renaissance to incorporate cultural and historical conditions into the gift of their Christian faith.

A practical ecclesiology for the African Renaissance must include accountability to God, the church, and each other. He calls the movement to recognise the role of Christian ethics and compassion in the wider public debate of sustainable and integral development in Africa – especially in attending to the divisions of ethnicity and religion. He further proposes that the African Renaissance engage theology to inform the political, social, and economic concerns of the renewal of Africa. Ilo et al. (2011) further invites the African Renaissance agenda to embrace Christian ethics in leadership development and human

resources. Admittedly, the African Renaissance leaders recognise the need for ethical leadership and transparency:

In truth, African leaders must govern by example by first implementing their development projects within the context of transparency and accountability. Should the principle of transparency and accountability become the norm, African leaders might find support not only from the international community, but also from African professionals and entrepreneurs in the continent and Disapora (Udogu 2007:139).

Further, Udogu (2007) contends appropriately that “the production of patriotic and unselfish leaders capable of providing the fundamental needs of Africans is imperative in the new millennium and the envisioned “new Africa”...(31). To define the critical role of leaders, Udogu, quoting MacGregor Burns, contends:

Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purpose mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers. This is done to realize the goals and objectives mutually held by both leaders and followers (2007:31).

History bears witness that ethical leadership is lacking in Africa. The practice of good governance and the emergence of superior ethical leadership are important components for economic, political, and social development: three core pillars of the African Renaissance. Although African cultural values are strong, and may be used to enhance faith communities, the movement lacks a practical ecclesiology in

recognising the role of Christian ethics and compassion to inform its multi-faceted agenda.

4.2.6 Poverty reduction and human dignity

Important notions of human dignity are to be found in both classical antiquity (Stoicism) and biblical scripture (Genesis). In the modern era, the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant in the 20th century appears to provide support for a belief in the equal dignity of all human beings (Pellegrino et al. 2009:15). Al-Rodhan (2009___), categorises nine human dignity needs: (1) reason; (2) security; (3) human rights; (4) accountability; (5) transparency; (6) justice; (7) opportunity; (8) innovation; and (9) inclusiveness. He contends that the sustainable history of a country is propelled by good governance that balances human nature and human dignity (3).

“A shared notion of human dignity from the biblical account of man in Genesis as “made in the image of God” (Pellegrino, et al. 2009:9) infers a central theological basis that humankind possesses an inherent and inalienable dignity. This implies that all human beings share in this God-given dignity. Dignity in this sense would give ethical guidance in answering the question of what we owe to our fellow human beings (9). Seeing human beings as created in the image of God means, valuing others in a way a loving God would value them (9).

The African Renaissance appears to lack the notion of human dignity for all people. For example, although the African Renaissance aligns itself with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) introduced in October 2001 by African heads of states as an “African solution to African problems,” unfortunately, most of these reconstruction models failed to sustain growth and reduce poverty in

Africa. Some of their economic policies, such as SAPs (Structural Adjustment Programs) were described as “cures that are worse than the disease” (Ilo, et. al. 2011:40).

“Structural adjustment refers to the set of conditions and measures imposed on developing countries by the Bretton Woods institution and individual donor countries, as a basis for their receiving institutional funding...this has been characterised by reduction of state spending on social services, devaluation of currencies...it is now generally acknowledged that these policies have realised little success in fostering economic growth...on the contrary the intervention has led to economic stagnation, widespread poverty...(Ajulu 2001:29). Often, due to ethnic and religious division, policies are not always successful in fostering economic growth and development.

However, Ilo (2011) identifies the important role of the Church “as one hermeneutical tool” for engaging the preceding queries “aimed at providing spiritual, compassionate, and ethical imperatives in overcoming ethnic division, selfish attitudes and lifestyles which has led to unsustainable development” in Africa (45).

4.2.7 Internal and external witness: The Role of God's grace in community

A biblical theology that is true to people's struggles for a meaningful life, cannot overlook the preceding sobering concerns. The New Testament book of Acts, demonstrates a relationship between God's grace and a community's practice. For example, Luke, in Acts 4:31, reminds the reader that the internal witness is centred on its sharing of material goods, even as its external witness is centred in the proclamation of God's Word. Both are concrete expressions of God's grace and attract favourable responses from “the people” (Robinson

and Wall 2006:71). More than any other activity, the community's care of its poorest members lends support to its bold claim that God resides in its common life through the power of the Holy Spirit (Robinson and Wall 2006:71). The relationship between God's grace and a community's practice is foundational for the growth and development of a civil society.

Moreover, Luke insinuates God's grace into the community's sociology so that "there was not a needy person among them" (Acts 4:34). The practice of landowners selling their properties and giving the proceeds over to the apostles for distribution among the poor embodies a sociology of divine grace (Robinson and Wall 2006:74).

4.2.8 Theological challenge of divisiveness and ethical leadership

The issue of disunity in the African Renaissance is a serious theological challenge that threatens ethical leadership and economic development in Africa. Okumu (2002) contends the following regarding the crisis of leadership in Africa:

The problem with some African leaders is that they will always blame everyone else, including God, for this chaotic state of affairs instead of themselves or their corrupt government (69). If a leader's mind is not informed through training, education, and experience, he will suffer from a debilitating inferiority complex that he, then attempts to over-come by acquisition of power and wealth. African leaders are notorious for rewarding those who are loyal to them, as a father would and punishing those who disagree with them (72,73). It has been necessary to elucidate this point....because if we want the African

Renaissance to succeed, Africa cannot be led by such people (77).

Okumu (2002) understands that African leadership has been inept and one of the main causes of corruption on the continent. He proposes solutions: Okumu (2002:93) sees the essential requirement for leaders of the African Renaissance to “exercise self-control, leaders whose souls and actions are governed by reason...if we are incapable of reasoning for ourselves, then others must do it for us. If the course of our lives is determined by our irrational impulses, the result can only be misery, the like of which we are witnessing in Africa today.” Ilo, et. al (2011) concurs with Okumu on the crisis of African leadership today:

Africa has a chronic cancer of corruption, economic mismanagement, and bigotry. African leaders loot their countries' wealth with impunity, bleeding their own kin to death, impoverishing their countries and perpetuating corruption. Independent Africa has witnessed more incidence of human rights corruption, in-justice, and oppression than it did in colonial times. Many political leaders own lands and assets wrongly, or take social positions to enrich themselves (89).

Communal sharing and Christian unity is never merely a verbal sentiment or heartfelt ideal; it is a social practice that meets real needs wherever they are found – there is no thought of pay back; sharing is a spiritual convention that one is obliged to do out of love for a merciful God (Robinson and Wall 2006:72). Leadership is much more than simply managing resources.

The Scriptures inform the church to endure with integrity (Acts 20). In order to lead (not the same as occupying a leadership position) one

has to be grounded in something deeper than a political popularity poll; rather, ethical leaders are those grounded in something deeper than themselves and not of this present age. To lead with integrity, sometimes leaders have to challenge their followers through a covenantal understanding of leadership (Geisler 1989:239).

In his argument concerning the leadership crisis in South Africa, Boesak (2005) offers sobering discourse for consideration. He cites the causes of corruption due to leaders who hunger more for power and wealth than for honesty and compassion toward the misfortunate (33-34). He also chides leaders who seek access to power in order to corrupt the political order for personal gain (41). As a case in point, Boesak notes the inability of the South African police to fight gangsterism, failure of the justice system, and strains in the National Defence Force as examples of inept leadership. What he adamantly proposes is to inject a spiritual quality into politics. Through the spirituality of politics, he believes, the ills of the country will be lessened.

That there is a leadership crisis in Africa, cannot be disputed. However, Boesak is unclear on the type of 'spirituality' that he proposes to infuse into the political arena of South Africa, particularly. Is this 'spirituality' one based on the truth of the Word of God? Or is it a spirituality derived from liberation theology? These are concerns relevant to the focus of this research.

Geisler (1989:240) posits several key elements to covenantal leadership: First, leadership is a life shaped in accord with promises made. The apostle Paul is an example of fidelity in his leadership (Acts 20:11). Paul was faithful to his calling and charge; he was void of coveting silver and gold of others (Acts 20:33). He exemplified willing work and service and care for the weak in the community of shared

goods. Ethical leadership is not dominating or disempowering people or organisations. But true leaders point the way to the future and mobilise people to take on their toughest problems and challenges.

Leadership will be deepened when leaders become aware of its covenantal nature: that leaders are in covenant with the communities they serve. These covenantal understandings of leadership serve as a reminder that it is not about the leaders...rather it should be about the needs that are evident in communities. Only then will leaders' lives be characterised by fidelity. Although political groups have legitimate responsibilities in communities, the church's role is to call them to exercise those responsibilities with integrity and for the common good (254).

4.3 Summary of theological challenges to the African Renaissance

The preceding research has demonstrated ways in which the African Renaissance lacks a practical ecclesiology. Four salient theological challenges were discussed: (1) Ontological issues; (2) moral and ethical issues; (3) ecclesiastical issues; and (4) divisiveness issues. These challenges demonstrate a lack of theological understanding within the ideology of the African Renaissance. Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated through scripture that as followers of Christ lived out the teachings of Christ, they witnessed the powerful transformation of their communities and their socio-political, and economic conditions (Acts 2:41-47; 4:12-37).

Therefore, a sobering question for the African Renaissance leaders remains: Will their leaders avail themselves the biblical resources from Acts 4, and today's evangelical church, as tools for the transformation of 21st century African society? At this conjecture we will turn to the key purpose of this research: In what ways might the South African

evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity? Chapter five will address this key issue through the proposal of a practical theological ecclesiology.

Chapter 5:

A Practical Theological Ecclesiology: The Church engaging with the African Renaissance

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to address the key research question of this dissertation: *In what practical ways can the South African evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity?* This chapter will first define and examine the biblical characteristics which comprise the church's "unique identity". In what ways does the church differ from NGOs (non-government organisations)? Although the contending culture often plays a key role in shaping society, the church, as a prophetic, voice can be fundamental in shaping policies. Next, I will demonstrate ways in which the church might play a role in effectively engaging the culture of the African Renaissance movement.

Wade (2009) uses the phrase "engaging our culture" (3) to imply that the church should embrace cultural involvement to enrich the lives of others and point them to the hope that is found in Christ alone. "The term "culture" is the label anthropologists give to the complex structuring of customs and the assumptions that underlie them in terms of how people govern their lives. Every society has its own cultural way of life" (Kraft 2003:31). Kraft posits that there are "more than 6,000 cultures in the world" (36). However, "some customs, no matter how sacred they may be to the people, may not be sacred to God. Often, the gospel contradicts society and worldview" (36). Kraft (2003)

believes: “The key to the power of the gospel for transforming culture is an unwavering commitment to the Word of God” (36).

Culture is complex and leaves a legacy of the past. South Africa maintains more than eleven different cultures. For the church to find ways to engage the culture of the African Renaissance it must form a coalition of forces working together for the common good of all people. This has theological meaning for the church as it seeks ways to solidify a relationship with the African Renaissance movement, for positive transformation. Several scholars, (Botman 2008; Castle [2012]; Harris 2012; Rah 2009; Wade 2009) advocate the key role of the church in social movements, politics, and good governance. These queries form the basis of the discourse in this chapter.

5.2 Engaging the culture: A caveat to the church

Rah (2009) offers a caveat to the church in allowing itself to be identified by its surrounding culture or social movements. He aptly reminds the 21st century evangelical church that it faces a grave danger in losing its identity: that of allowing itself to be defined by an influence other than Scripture. Rah calls this threat the “captivity of the church” (21). In this mode, the church eases into and reflects the surrounding culture, (known as accommodating and assimilating) rather than modelling biblical culture. As a result, the church becomes “culturally captive”. Rah (2009:21) uses the phrase “captivity of the church” to emphasise the danger of the church being defined by an influence other than Scripture.

Rah (2009) proposes a consideration of two theologies: the theology of celebration and the theology of suffering. “The theology of celebration emerges out of a context of affluence and abundance.

Because there is abundance, the world is viewed as good and accommodating. God takes on the role of a nurturer and caretaker.

One might extend the theological implications of Rah's "theology of celebration." For example, a Theology of Celebration workshop was held on November 9-11, 2010 in New York City, where pastors, church leaders, scholars, scientists and informed laypersons met to discuss several theological themes relating to science and historical Christianity (<http://biologos.org>). According to the conference, a "theology of celebration" is more about "exploring the implications of modern science with the Christian faith" (Biologos <http://biologos.org>). Rah (2009) contends: "a theology of suffering emerges out of the context of scarcity and oppression. The focus is on the need for survival. The world is considered to be evil and hostile. Life is precarious and there is a need for a deliverer. God takes on the image of warrior and conqueror" (153).

Fighting injustice becomes the central priority for those who live in a theology of suffering" (153). Lewis (1947) contends that "A false theology of suffering is built on the hypothesis that the meritorious suffering of Jesus, though necessary for the redemption of God's people, is not complete – there is additional merit that can be added to it by the suffering of the saints" (3). One may conclude, therefore, that the evangelical church must avoid a false theology of suffering.

Rah (2009) posits the danger of the church becoming "culturally captive" is that it will reflect its surrounding dominant culture such as individualism, consumerism, and racism, while excluding scriptural mandates. For example, the rugged individualism of Americans has many negative sides and impacts theology. Whereas the church is often more likely to reflect individualism of Western theology than the value of community found in Scripture (Anderson [2012]).

Unfortunately the individualism that has shaped American society has been imported to countries such as South Africa and has impacted consumerism. Consumerism often affects the way in which one measures success. The Church, however, should be measuring success by the standards of Scripture (Anderson 3).

Cultural captivity is spread to the corners of the world through globalisation. Globalisation, according to Rah (2009) means that “one nation’s values and mind-set predominate” (18). Thomas Friedman boldly asserts that “culturally speaking, globalization is largely,the spread of Americanization – from Big Macs to IMacs to Starbucks and McDonalds (Anderson 3). The church’s challenge, therefore, in the 21st century is to be aware of cultural captivity and heed the scriptural mandate to “see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception” (Colossians 2:8).

Missiologist, Charles Kraft (2003) equally warns against the dangers of cultural captivity:

Jesus is our model here... He lived within the cultural structuring around Him and according to most of the worldview structures underlying that culture. There were, to be sure, differences in some of the things He assumed, differences that came from His kingdom perspectives. But the main thing that differed about Jesus was His commitment to live within those structures in total faithfulness to God (359).

Kraft (2003) concludes that Jesus seldom opposed any of the cultural structures; rather, “He loved when society would have allowed him to hate; He forgave when society would have allowed Him to curse. He refused to be captive to society “(359).

Pearcey and Johnson (2005) hold similar views on the dangers of the church becoming culturally captive. They call the church to avoid relegating religion to the strictly private realm of faith and feeling by participating in ways to redeem the whole of culture. They believe the church has a significant role to play in the public realm of politics and law, yet warns the church against allowing itself to become captive to its surrounding culture and social movements.

Clapp (1996) posits that the church, as a culture in a post-Christian society, often feels increasingly powerless to change society. He believes there is a solution to this dilemma:

The solution is not to capitulate the way things are. Nor is it to retrench our heritage as a peculiar people... Within the larger pluralistic world we need to...live the story and not just restate it (1).

The Church is called to consider the important theological implications of maintaining its unique identity in the world. The Church's model to accomplish its God-called task, is scriptural directives from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Robinson and Wall (2006:280) subscribe to the Church's task when they write: "At the very centre of Acts, the early church faces its most formative crisis as it works out what the gospel means and what it means to be church in the face of two very different and sometimes hostile cultures and worlds. Acts offers powerful counsel to the church today as it faces similar issues of cultural differences and diversity" (280).

5.3 Role of the church in the public sphere

The focus of the remainder of this chapter is to demonstrate ways in which the South African evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity. In order to demonstrate this objective, the important role of religion in the public sphere will first be discussed by several scholars (Banda 2009; Butler 2011; West 2011; Habermas 2011; Czegledy 2008; ILo 2011; Oden 2007; and Uzodike 2008). In addition, the role of the church in engaging its culture will be examined through the Acts of the Apostles chapters two through four.

The debate about the important role of the church in the public sphere has been intensified in various spheres in the last decade. For example, in the closing service of the 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Wasserloos-Strunk (2009) contended for the critically important role of the church in society:

Amid cosmic disorder and the world-wide imperial systems, this is a call, a warning that we may never leave our post as true witnesses of the risen Christ – the living Lord. We shall never have a simple or comfortable relation with empires, but a relation which measures the work of empires by a standard of self-sacrifice given by the cross (4).

West (Butler, et al. 2011) equally contends a call to recognise the power of religion in the public arena. He posits that this power “emanates from distinctive religious traditions that serve as reservoirs of cultural memory as well as compendiums of utopian yearnings” (11). West further believes that religious perspectives can offer several imperatives: (1) distinctive moral visions, (2) compasses to track

human misery and despair in our world, (3) and an empathetic and imaginative power that confronts hegemonic powers (11). West's paradigm of religious perspectives forms the following biblical basis for religious involvement in the public sphere:

The biblical basis for a distinctive moral vision in the public arena is demonstrated in Acts 4:19:

But Peter and John answered and said to them:
"Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have heard."

First, scripture informs a biblical world view that guides humankind to track human misery and despair in our world. A biblical example is demonstrated in Acts chapter 3:1-10 which highlights the misery endured by a man who was born lame. He was carried down to the gate of the temple each morning where he begged alms from those who entered the temple. The moral compass (imparted by the Holy Spirit) of Peter and John enabled them to show compassion on the man. In the New Testament religious arena, the early Christians demonstrated an ethics in inter-relatedness – relationships were not motivated by self-interest or profit.

I posit that similarly, in the 21st century church, there needs to be a paradigm shift in ethical relations between the church and civil society. Maloka (2000) cautions the following regarding the dangers of self-interest and the importance of a moral vision:

But the socio-economic theory of self-interest cannot bring about the common good...the African Renaissance should imply a moral and political renaissance (64).

According to Maloka (2000) a moral compass to track human despair and suffering in Africa, appears to be lacking on the agenda of the African renaissance:

The challenge that faces the advocates of an African revival is how to effect attitudinal and moral transformation throughout the continent. African politicians need to be concerned about this rather than about votes or popularity (89).

The scriptures form the foundation for a distinctive moral vision in society. Unless civil society follows the imperatives of scriptural guidelines for socio-economic and political transformation, self-interest will always be the order of the day.

A third distinctive religious perspective which demonstrates the power of religion in the public sphere is found in Acts 4:11-26. The writer, Luke, notes Peter's confident ability and courage to confront the hegemonic powers of the men of Israel. In his second sermon, Peter confronted the ruling leaders of Israel with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ; His life, death, and resurrection recorded in Acts 2:22-25:

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with Miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know - (v22). This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by hands of godless men and put Him to death (v 23). And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony

of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power (v 24).

Furthermore, the worried response by the Jewish authorities to Peter's boldness is evidenced in Acts 4: 13, 14, 17,18:

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marvelling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus (v 13). And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply (v 14). "But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name" (v 17). And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus (v 18).

Peter and John's unabashed response to the ruling authorities is recorded in Acts 4:19-20:

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; (v 19). for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" (v 20).

Clearly, according to Acts 4, religious perspectives offer two crucial imperatives in the public sphere: a distinctive moral vision, and empathetic and imaginative powers that confidently confront hegemonic powers.

Furthermore, the important issue of the place of the church in the public sphere is shared by Habermas (Butler 2011) a current and prominent social and political theorist. He shares similar views as West (Butler 2011) when he contends that “religion should be given central attention...the question as to the relation of human beings to God and how God intervenes in the temporal world, and how religious authority should relate to politics – are all queries for discourse (119).”

Habermas’ attention to the concept of religion in the public sphere is supported by biblical truths in Acts chapter 4. The question of how humankind should relate to God is demonstrated in Acts 4:12:

“And there is no salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (v 12).

Humankind’s salvation through faith in Christ, provides powerful personal transformation to live ethical and moral lives. Such lives impact communities for the good of all people. Each of the New Testament twelve disciples of Christ, were examples of those who lived out their faith in a hostile culture.

Rauschenbusch (Butler et al. 2011) who equally argues for the important role of a lived faith in the public arena, offers the following caveat:

Whoever uncouples the religious and the social life has not understood Jesus. Whoever sets any bounds for the reconstructive power of the religious life over the social relations and institutions of men, to that extent denies the faith of the Master (121).

Uzodike (2008) equally argues convincingly that religious networks have served as powerful forces for social mobilisation. He posits: “Given the positive nature of many religious networks over the citizens of Africa, many state leaders have used faith-based organisations for policy implementation (i.e., HIV/AIDS advocacy) in national development agendas”(197). Uzodike sees positive possibilities for integrating religious networks into the African Renaissance agenda.

Bhulungu et, al (2007) recognises the place of the church in the public sphere when he contends the following:

In southern Africa during the colonial period, care of the sick had been a major ‘corporal work of mercy’ of the churches. With the advent of HIV/AIDS, particularly in rural areas... this tradition has continued. Church-based health care providers ...through its network of hospital and clinics serve the largest number of HIV/AIDS in the country outside state institutions. Many help facilitate new projects... where to find donors. (455).

However, Bhulungu (2007) also contends that the “most important role of the church is perhaps in challenging prejudices” regarding the social stigma of HIV/AIDS crisis.

Bhulungu (2007:456) wisely cites Ndungane (2003:61) who maintains that the people need to “respect...the ancient wisdom of the Church about monogamy as being crucial for our survival” – although, he asserts, “the Church’s message is often ignored”.

5.3.1 The church in accountability for abuse of power

Banda (2009) believes that the church, in order to promote democracy and good governance, has the potential to follow the full counsel of Scripture by holding corrupt leaders responsible for their abuse of power. “This is necessary if the African Renaissance’s quest for African human legitimacy is to be realised” (207).

Regarding the place of the church in the future of South Africa, Czegledy (2008) equally asserts that the church can act as agents of social change by promoting Christianity in both the religious and social arenas; where church members become influential role models within the wider society . Czegledy explains:

..religious belief is about changing society as much as about saving it, and that this is achieved by one becoming a leader in society... in order to use one’s position for both individual inspiration and collective evangelism (287).

From Czegledy (2008), we may conclude that one important role of the church is to equip leaders to engage with society for positive transformation. What happens in faith-nurtured religious networks is the offer of human concern that cannot be delivered through any impersonal social network. When socio-government programs seek ways of personalising their services, they are likely to borrow from moral and religious traditions to achieve their goals. “Early African Christian acts of charity based in caring communities grasped this simple biblical premise: There is a world of difference between gospel and law” (Oden 2007:114).

Moreover, the church offers human concern that cannot be delivered through impersonal social networking; the church offers compassion for the outcasts, the poor, the marginalised and the forgotten ones of society. Basic human concern can determine how institutions react to the needs of society. For example, according to Oden (2007) “when egalitarian government programs begin to seek ways of personalizing their services, they are likely to be found borrowing from moral and religious traditions in order to reach that higher plateau of empathic care”(114).

Oden wisely acknowledges that the church, more than any other institution, is able to compassionately address the needs of society. This call to address human concern according to Matthew 25:44-45, is the call of Christ to the church today and always.

Perhaps the most striking and relevant discourse concerning this salient issue comes from Boesak (2005). He writes extensively on the role of the church in the African Renaissance. However, his book begins with a tirade against the church for silencing its voice after the 1994 elections in South Africa. Prior to 1994, he contends, the church had a major voice against the apartheid regime. In fact, it was the church that was instrumental in ushering in a peaceful transition from apartheid to the new majority government.

Boesak, calls on the church to rise up and make its voice known against the current corruption in leadership. He argues against Mbeki, who before his departure as president, inferred that the church should not challenge government, but rather seek its place on the side-lines of political activity (166). Mbeki sees the church's role as one of a volunteer, non-political supportive role to government (166). However, Boesak adamantly contends that it is precisely the unique responsibility

of the church to inform the government on initiatives to formulate and implement policies (162).

I concur with Boesak and I have argued similarly in this research, that the church does have a key role to play in maintaining oversight in order to ensure ethical leaders. God has not called the church to sit on the side-lines as a mute presence; rather God has called the church to make its unique presence known in the community.

The preceding scholars have demonstrated that the church has a unique and powerful role to play in its contending culture. Although often ignored or met with resistance, the church remains a positive force for radical transformation through its unswerving witness of faith and compassion. This truth is evident in Acts 2-4.

The African Renaissance as a secular movement, lacks a biblical model for seeking its objectives of socio-economic, and political regeneration in Africa. Therefore, in the appropriation of the movement by the evangelical church, this issue needs to be rectified. This is the issue we seek to engage, biblically.

5.4 The Church's unique identity: Acts 2-4

The passion and purpose of the early church was to impact its surrounding culture with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The early church worked passionately to engage its culture for positive transformation. For example, Peter's Pentecost speech in Acts 2:14-36, provides an early account of the passion and purpose of the early church. Peter's question posed in his sermon in Acts 2:37, elicited a response from his hearers: 'What do we do now?' It is also a question for the 21st century evangelical church to seriously ponder: In what ways must today's church respond to its call in Acts 2-4?

The Church of Jesus Christ has never been without political tensions and controversial social movements. For the 21st century evangelical church to continue to prevail and to proclaim the gospel that brings peace to humanity, the church will need to implement a strong identity and defence through the following: the proclamation of Truth, a visible righteousness, a lived faith, salvation for all, and belief in the Word of God. For followers of Christ, the true church must walk in God's Truth.

The understanding of the Christian life in terms of the "walk" is emphasised in Acts 2. In Rabbinic Jewish thought the Hebraic understanding of *halakah* was a typical metaphor for the life one leads, including the expected behaviour flowing out from what one believes. The Greek term *peripateo* embodies the same metaphor and can be well translated "live the life" in verbal form or "lifestyle in noun form (Varguhese 2005:261).

Varguhese (2005) emphasises the impact of the early Christians' "walk" as a powerful witness in society. For the purpose of this research, however, I wish to emphasise, that I am not referring to the "way" (*ha-derech*) but rather to the notion of the importance of discipleship or being a disciple (*mathetes*) in the context of "devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching"(Acts 2:42) which is present in the Hebraic understanding of the word . This clarification lends important theological understanding to ways in which the church may play a key role in leadership development for the African Renaissance.

5.5 The church's witness of discipleship

First century early Church leaders, in the midst of tense attitudes toward cultural practices, called for a unity of faith and life through discipleship. Discipleship enabled early Christians to model moral and ethical practices. Herrick [2012] defines the Greek term *maqthv* as

referring to any “student” or “pupil” who were devoted followers of a great religious leader...”(1). The Greeks used the term *maqhthy* to refer to a “learner...” (2).

Herrick [2012] provides historical evidence that “personal discipleship was carried on among the Greeks and the Jews. Though the term “disciple” was used in different ways in the literature of that period, there are examples of discipleship referring to people committed to following a great leader, emulating his life and passing on his teachings. In these cases, discipleship meant much more than just the transfer of information...it meant imitating the teacher’s life, inculcating his values, and reproducing his teachings” (3).

Ilo (2011), similarly identifies the important role of the Church “as one hermeneutical tool aimed at providing spiritual, compassionate, and ethical imperatives in overcoming selfish attitudes and lifestyles” (45). As the church seeks to disciple biblically-trained ethical leaders for community involvement, selfishness will lessen and good ethical leaders will work toward an improved society.

For the 21st century church, the call of the Word of God is a call for the Church to disciple leaders. Dynamic discipleship ensures moral and ethical leaders who demonstrate unity, humility, and peace. The evangelical church can play a key role in training ethical leaders for the African Renaissance movement.

5.6 The Church’s witness of faith

Jenkins (2006) offers a compelling perspective on the issue of the church’s witness of faith when he contends: “although social and cultural circumstances help determine one’s religious outlook, “for the foreseeable future...the fastest growing segment of Christianity

worldwide will share certain approaches to biblical authority...In modern Africa...whether we are interested in politics...or in wider social concerns – the Bible provides a critical guide to worldly matters much as it did in Europe in 1600 and the USA in 1850” (15-16).

The church’s witness of faith is demonstrated in the early Christian community of Acts 1:5-8. Here the nascent believers witnessed to the word and deeds of Christ. Their witness of faith was able to sustain the faith community in its difficult journey of implanting their faith in a complex and hard-line religious and political milieu. Furthermore, the early Church’s witness of faith (Acts 4:1-22) was able to topple the structures of sin and injustice and trouble the oppressive powers that exploited the people. Thus, the New Testament faith-community demonstrated a new and better way of living (Ilo, et al. 2011:9).

In actively engaging the faith of the church with its surrounding culture, Smith (2011:) cites the theme from the *Cape Town Commitment*:

“The Cape Town Commitment is a document reflecting the proceedings of the Third International Congress on World Evangelization held in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2010 (1). The CTC is rooted in the conviction that we must respond in Christian mission to the realities of our own generation. The on-going mission of the church must take seriously both the unchanging nature of God's Word and the changing realities of our world" (4).

Smith (2011) acknowledges the essential role of the church in the public sphere by noting one of the six congress themes: “Bearing witness to the truth of Christ in a pluralistic, globalized world. We

must...actively engage the public arenas of government, business, and academia with biblical, Christian truth" (4).

From the preceding research we discover foundational truths from the ancient church in Acts; the church, through their lives demonstrated that it could be instrumental in impacting society for good. In the midst of questionable cultural practices, the church resisted cultural captivity and early leaders called for unity of faith and life. The call of the Word of God remains the same today: live a life of faith before all mankind.

5.7 The Church's witness of revival

Before the church can witness an African revival (in the context of a re-birth of Africa) it must maintain a visible presence in the political sphere on all levels of government. However, according to Buhlungu (2007) "Christians and South Africans as a whole, have withdrawn significantly from politics (ie: electoral voting, membership of parties, etc.) apparently validating the claim made by some churches that the way to salvation lies through faith and membership of the church. Often churches have drawn even further from the public sphere... most of all the majority of churches (particularly AICs: African Initiated Churches, and Evangelical-Pentecostals) eschew 'politics' to focus on worship, personal ethics and healing."

Importantly, he further postulates that "although many churches have not sought to engage with politics, the church as an institution has not lost favour within the public arena". He contends: "As in many countries the church is still the most trusted institution in South Africa – more than the ANC government, police or the business community"(462). Other scholars, although they concur with Buhlungu on the weakness of the church to engage in the current political arena, offer other reasons for this reluctance. For example, Boesak (2005)

speaks extensively of the role of the church in the struggle to gain freedom. He posits that it was the church that “led, guided, and inspired our people in the struggle” (2005:133). The role of the church prior to 1994 was a prophetic one that challenged corrupt leaders. However, Boesak contends that the church today has become silent and its witness pales in light of its previous strength. He notes the early history of colonial South Africa and ways that the early English missionaries sought to speak against racism from a biblical basis. The silence of the church in this area is well-noted.

Bhulungu (2007:465) compellingly demonstrates that the majority of South African churches have “tried to adjust to a new, more secular...more equal and just democratic political culture” however, “the dialectic between continuity and change, between the kingdom’s advance and its obstruction, is called salvation history; a history lived out in the secular world and manifested not simply in the church but in all human progress. Herein lays the clue and the impetus to many of the churches’ continued engagement with the new South Africa” and its desire for a renaissance.

Garner (2000) cites research which demonstrates that “religion has been accorded little power as a source of social change...however, an awareness of the potential influence of religion has grown” (34). Based on research done in a variety of churches in a South African township, he argues that they held a great capacity to effect social change.

I contend that if the churches hold a great capacity to effect social change, then their power to usher in change comes not from political sources, but from a great and higher source: the spirituality of the churches empowered by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The preceding research has concluded that the evangelical church in South Africa, as a trusted institution, has a key role to play in maintaining a political presence in the public arena. By engaging the culture through spirituality, the church becomes a bastion for revival.

5.8 The church's witness for cultural engagement

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate ways in which the South African evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity. Wade (2009) postulates a typology of five strategies in assessing the posture of the church in engaging a contending culture. Each strategy will be examined to consider the feasibility of the South African evangelical church engaging with the African Renaissance:

1. Condemn without action: The church could condemn the ideology and objectives of the African Renaissance movement without recommending a Christian course of action to monitor the movement's objectives.
2. Critique without action: The church could simply critically examine the tenets, objectives, and leadership abilities of the movement – yet fail to recommend a biblical strategy in overcoming the movement's many theological challenges.
3. Critique with action: The church could posture to carefully critique the socio-political, and economic objectives of the movement by defining ways to reach a judicious balance for the good of all people.
4. Copy, accommodate, and assimilate: The church could “engage” the African Renaissance movement by

compromisingly accommodating their objectives through unrestrained political support.

5. Cultivate and mobilise the church to action: “The church and the African Renaissance together could agree to strive for the common good of all people. The church and the movement agree on certain bounds for political manoeuvres, ruling out patterns such as ethnic and religious persecution. The church and the African Renaissance agree in judicious balance; interests of all workers, farmers and industrialists, and actions of central and local government” (Udogu 2007:59).

In carefully considering the preceding five strategies, the following questions come to mind: Should the church condemn the African Renaissance without taking responsible action? Is it biblical to critique the African Renaissance without implementing practical action? Will it further improve society if the church indiscriminately accommodates and assimilates the ideology of the African Renaissance? Let us carefully consider each of these queries.

The first four preceding strategies are postures which many non-Christians employ. “The difference is the values which determine how they are employed. All of our condemning, critiquing, copying, and consuming are to be governed by scriptural norms” (Wade 2009:2).

Wade (2009) gives a sober call for Christians to remember the importance of witnessing and living out their faith beyond their churches:

I wonder what we Christians are known for in the world outside our churches. Are we known as critics, consumers, copiers, condemners of culture?... Why

aren't we known as cultivators - people who tend and nourish what is best in human culture... Why aren't we known as creators – people who dare to think and do something that has never been thought or done before, something that makes the world more welcoming and thrilling and beautiful? (3).

Wade (2009) further posits that an important strategy the church often overlooks is that of cultivating and mobilising. “Using the metaphor of gardening, cultivating involves creating and nurturing. The gardener looks at what is there – landscape, sunlight, etc.- and considers what can be grown. Cultivation then takes place. Similarly, engaging with a contending culture requires the church to cultivate and mobilise to action within the boundaries of scriptural mandates. Christian theology found in Genesis 1:26-29; and Genesis 2, informs us that because we are created in the image of God we should care about the health and well-being of all” (4).

5.9 The church mobilised to act

The 21st century church is often known to relegate religion to the strictly private realm of faith and feelings. As a result, the church is sometimes viewed as sterile and powerless to change society. Robinson and Wall (2006) however, believe otherwise and address this sobering issue from a biblical perspective:

What is the proper and faithful posture of the church relative to governing authorities and civil powers? Is it to isolate ourselves, to exist in a world apart? Not according to the Acts of the Apostles. Acts suggest we are to be like Peter and Paul; prophets like Jesus who call the governing authorities to a responsive use of

their powers. In this the church is to be, as Jesus tells His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount “light to the world and salt to the earth” (Matthew 5:13-14) (259).

South Africa, during the 1980s, serves as an example of transformative ways the church mobilised its forces against a contending culture. For instance, South African theologian, Alan Boesak (2005) notes this important mobilisation in his book, *The Tenderness of Conscience*. Boesak notes that in similar fashion of the New Testament apostles, many of the South African churches played a key role in mobilising their forces (through concerts of prayer) in bringing an end to apartheid.

Although many church leaders faced persecution over engaging the church with the contending culture, they continued to mobilise the church to effective action. Boesak, rightly expresses his unease over the issue of the South African churches not being duly credited (by politicians and secular writers) for having played a key role in ushering in apartheid’s end. Boesak recognises and illustrates the influence the church has in mobilising its forces to effect change in a contending culture. The dismantling of apartheid is a global example of the effectiveness of the church to make its voice heard.

Crocker (2005) equally challenges Christians to “do the work of the church instead of church work” (168) by going beyond the walls of the church to apply God’s Truth. He highlights the positive results of mobilising the church:

As the church finds ways to engage in the community...relationships are established, credibility is restored, and God's reputation is enhanced. The result

is people making a connection to the grace of God (168).

The church is a dynamic institution which is very close to the heart of God. The church was brought with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Christ never meant for the church to be static and self-contained. Several preceding scholars have demonstrated that the posture of the church should be a call to resist isolation, mobilise its forces, act responsibly and ethically, and call the governing authorities to a responsible use of their powers.

5.9.1 The church's role in politics

The church's role in the political realm is an issue that has been heavily debated. Pros and cons of this debate stem as far back as the Crusades and continue to post-modernity. Many world democracies seek to separate Church and State affairs. Harris [2012], however, is a proponent of the church becoming involved in political decision-making. He defines "church" as being both the individual and the corporate body. He further defines "politics" as meaning "all activities relating to governing, guiding or building civil society" (1).

Harris further believes that the church often has struggled with involvement in socio-politico-economic issues. He cites Old and New Testament leaders who addressed the political structures of their time (Daniel, Amos, John the Baptist and Jesus). He boldly posits the following:

Participation in politics does not detract from spirituality; in fact, a spirituality that is unrelated to politics is questionable (1).

Harris probes the salient issue even further as he identifies the key role the church plays in the political realm: that of its prophetic ministry. By “prophetic” he posits that it means “speaking into policy, structure, or issues in the name of God and Christ, or on behalf of humanity in general or a community in particular...” (1).

In this capacity, he views the role of the church as one that engages with the government on justice, corruption, leadership, economic debt, housing, education, health care, and safety and security policy. Furthermore, the church has a responsibility to either accept or reject governmental policies and promises; clearly opposing wrong doing and corruption. Harris [2012] makes it reasonably clear that the church’s role in politics is an essential one - not an optional one. “Principled leaders guide a nation into responsible action ...and responsible action honours principle”(1). Harris concludes:

And what is the role of the church? We have to speak and act. We have to engage government on moral terms...the church, as an institution, needs to have competent lobbyists within government. Structures to inform and be informed about issues of the day. The church’s role in politics is to be there visibly in the context of political polity formulation. The church has to be prophetic, speaking for God. The church has to herald ethical values that enrich a nation. The church has to be bold and upright, constructive and innovative. The church has to be “salt and light” in what is so often a corrupt environment...(4).

It is from these arguments that Harris [2012] makes it reasonably clear that the church should be mobilised to become involved in the political

realm. In this capacity, the church's role becomes an ethical one. Hanson (2004), however, candidly cautions that religion in politics can be both good and bad: "Political and religious leaders have separate and autonomous vocations, but in the 21st century their successes and their failures depend upon each other" (3). While Hanson takes a more cautious approach to religion in the public sphere, Harris makes a convincing argument that the church's role is one of boldness with integrity.

Moreover, Botman (2008) reflects on the role and contribution of the church to good governance. He particularly addresses this issue within the South African context. He concludes that "As churches, our most important contribution remains that we live out our true identity – that we are part of God's new creation that have overcome ethnic, cultural, language, etc. divides. Botman makes a very striking argument here that is key to this research: he notes particularly, as this research has proposed, that the church must remain true to its unique identity: that the church is God's creation and therefore is ordained of God to make its mission known in all realms of society. This mission includes calling governing authorities to responsible action.

Harris (2012) offers a lucid definition of "church" and "politics" which infer the church's responsibility in good governance and policy-making. He cites Old and New Testament models who also addressed political structures of their time. He calls the church to be bold, upright, and salt and light in a dark world. Hanson (2004) recognises the differences between church and civil society leader's perspectives on politics; however, he proposes that the church has a key role to play in the political realm of a society. Botman (2008) concludes that the "global agenda of the church was always directed at influencing the public agenda" (3).

I further contend that the 21st century church must resist isolation, mobilise its forces, and act responsibly and ethically. Without losing its unique identity, the church is called to make bold, constructive, and innovative contributions to ensuring good governance for the well-being of all people.

Through the preceding discourse, it has become apparently clear that the church is called to engage in policy-making through good governance via the avenue of political involvement. Although the choices and outcomes may be complex, the church must maintain its biblical role in order to effect positive change for the welfare of its society. God calls the church to engage this task with boldness and confidence.

5.10 The church engaging with the African Renaissance

This research proposes four ways in which the evangelical South African church may be mobilised to engage with the African Renaissance: (1) the church and the African Renaissance strive for moral regeneration “for the common good of all people through campaigns/education to reduce the HIV/AIDS rate and examine the root cause of poverty, justice, welfare, security”; (2) the church and the African Renaissance “agree on certain bounds for political manoeuvres, ruling out ethnic and religious persecution”; (3) the church and the African Renaissance “agree on judicial balance: interests of workers, farmers, industrialists, and actions of central and local government”; (4) the church and the African Renaissance work together for “human resources and leadership development” (Udogu 2007:59). These four key concepts will be further expounded below.

5.10.1 The church and moral regeneration

The church and the African Renaissance movement should strive together for the moral regeneration and the common good of all people. Historically, the church has always been a tool for bringing about positive change: “Following the end of apartheid in 1994, the church set out on a new mission: that of reconciliation to heal the open wounds of apartheid. The churches had always called for reconciliation...the complex political and theological meanings of reconciliation that were generated by the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) were different from any cheap reconciliation of the past. Although a secular commission, the church played a considerable role in the actual conduct of the TRC in bringing about the common good of all” (Buhlungu et al (2007:453-454). Boesak (2005) concurs that the TRC was more about “healing” the nation although the spirituality of the issue was down-played by Mbeki and even Mandela (178).

Boesak insists that South Africa recognise that reconciliation is not new; it was always embedded in the struggle; reconciliation was not a new process waiting to be initiated; rather it was the central focus of the struggle for the majority of South Africans. Yet, Boesak still argues that South Africa is rated by the United Nations Agency as “among the ten most unequal societies”(202). The moral regeneration that Boesak calls for is clearly linked to the “rights of the poor...and a conduct measured by political and economic policies that guarantee justice driven by compassion” (204).

I maintain that Boesak has been a harsh critic of the TRC because of his perceived lack of spirituality in the process. He views the TRC as a political ploy that lacked any meaningful reconciliation based on biblical standards of loving one’s neighbour. However, the TRC

received global recognition for its efforts to usher in forgiveness and nation-building for the welfare of all South Africans. Certainly the nation is in dire need of a moral regeneration at this juncture in history; a moral awakening that cannot be found in political ploys, but rather a moral revival through the church's bold witness through the gospel teachings of Christ.

Never-the-less, a salient moral issue continues to loom larger on the horizon; that of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This current pandemic should serve as a wake-up call to African leaders regarding the need for an integrated plan between both civil and church leaders who strive for the common good of all people.

In striving together for the good of all people, the church and the African Renaissance movement should consider the important role of the church in challenging HIV/AIDS prejudices. For instance, social stigmas is one of the greatest problems fuelling HIV/AIDS: stigmas of fear, shame, ignorance and denial of facts further complicate the pandemic. Bhulungu (2007) maintains that a " dialogue about sex in South Africa that takes into account the widespread reality of gender violence is urgently needed." Churches need to redress the critical issue of moral purity among the unmarried and fidelity among those married. "Moral transformation should seriously be considered for the role it would play in eradicating moral deficiencies among public leadership and indeed in the prevention of HIV/AIDS" (Nkesiga 2005:85).

"Diseases such as HIV/AIDS have left many previously able-bodied sections of the population either sick or dead. This leaves the elderly and the younger without anyone to till the land. This situation is going to persist, since HIV/AIDS epidemic has not abated. The effects of the pandemic will affect politico-economic development" (Nkesiga 110, 86)

a key concept in the African Renaissance. The impact of HIV/AIDS on politico-economic development will be affected in several ways: “depravity within leadership has continued to cause waste of financial resources. Unspent and unavailable HIV/AIDS funds is a worrying issue; moral deterioration...continues to cause an erosion of traditional moral values...illness and death from HIV/AIDS has affected productivity in the nation” (Nkesiga 2005:91).

Sadly, “most of the government information on the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign is, by policy, supposed to be moral-value free” (Nkesiga 2005:106). However, “the church and Christian teachings can play, and are playing, a role in moral transformation in Africa” (Nkesiga 2005:123). Herein lays an opportunity for the African Renaissance to engage with the church to effect a moral regeneration for the common welfare of all people.

Meiring (2003), professor of the science of religion and missiology at the University of Pretoria, notes the important role of the church in the moral regeneration of South African society:

South Africa is a thoroughly religious country with the vast majority of its citizens belonging to Christian churches...The call to personal communal and ethical behaviour is part and parcel of each of these religions. It therefore goes without saying that the faith communities and religious institutions are to play a major role in rebuilding the moral fibre of the country (1228).

Meiring (2003) posits that “the church is still regarded as the most trusted institution in society, according to a national survey in 2000 by the *Human Sciences Research Council* – asking respondents to rate

their trust in a number of institutions, among them the Church...it was found that 78% of respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and 69% of respondents in the Western and Northern Cape trusted the Church above all. All population groups were in agreement: the churches were the institutions to be trusted the most" (1229). The preceding survey clearly indicates that the authority of the church has a key role to play in society. Yet, a question emerges from this discourse: How will the churches use their trusted authority?

Meiring (2003) contends: "This leaves the church with an enormous challenge: Will the churches in different denominations in South Africa, use the trust that has been invested in them wisely?" (1229). Importantly, will the churches engage with the African Renaissance to provide the moral regeneration so desperately needed in the country?

In calling for communities to reclaim the spirit of *Ubuntu*...MEC Maloyi, as a current representative of the Premier and the Provincial government, also called the church to lead the moral regeneration to defeat wickedness...(Maje 2012). Maloyi soberly contends:

Satan has declared war on the people of South Africa, North West Province and Coligny and it is high time that the church woke up to this reality...(1).

There is a clarion call from both African Renaissance leaders and civil society leaders to engage the church in moral regeneration. Meiring (2003) concurs that multiple role players are essential in restoring moral regeneration to the country:

Fortunately we are not alone in our quest for moral regeneration. We have numerous partners from many spheres of society. There are a

number of “seedbeds of civic virtue” that may be used to restore our national morality, to repaint South Africa in all the colours of the rainbow. Allow the families, the local communities, the faith communities, the voluntary organisations, the educationalists... to take up the brushes – and see the colours return (1238).

The place of morality in a Renaissance is a sensitive question posed by church leaders, educators, and politicians. “The challenge that faces the advocates of an African revival is how to effect attitudinal and moral transformation throughout the continent...” (Maloka 2000:89).

Herein lays the key role of the church: awareness through education and spiritual direction to promote effective and lasting moral regeneration.

South African Deputy Minister of Education, Smangaliso Mkhathshwa (2000) wrote a synopsis of the issues proposed in the Moral Regeneration Workshops I & II: Reportedly, the commission acknowledged the important role of the religious sector in the following areas:

- Teaching and developing a culture of responsibility
- Training family: youth, children toward problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Questioning any “morally baseless faith” (1).

Mkhathshwa (2000) noted with concern that up until the first workshop for moral regeneration, no serious action had been taken by either

politicians or churches. He also noted that “everybody wants to be in a position of power; yet not everyone is conscientious about the duty to instil good values and morals in our society. There seems to be a lack of concerted and co-ordinated action from most religious leaders in promoting the struggle against immoral behaviour” (2). Given these sobering concerns, I believe God is calling the church to make a concerted effort to teach and develop a culture of responsibility – beginning with children and youth. If a moral regeneration is to be achieved – it will be achieved through the posture of the church accepting the biblical responsibility to provide spiritual direction for moral transformation.

This research has demonstrated that there is a clarion call from both African Renaissance leaders and civil society leaders to engage the church for the moral transformation of its culture – for the common good of all people. Yet, another equally important social issue needs serious attention by the church: which is, the process of poverty reduction.

5.10.2 The church and poverty reduction

One proposed objective of the African Renaissance is to reduce poverty in Africa. Recognising this ever-present and increased dilemma, however, does not ensure its success. Handley (et al 2009) acknowledges this pressing issue:

The problem of poverty and how to reduce it remains the most pressing dilemma in the international development debate. Two questions emerge: Why is Sub-Sahara (SSA) the poorest region in the world and what can be done to deliver sustainable economic growth? Before embarking on answers to these questions, we must

discuss a working definition of the term 'poverty' since it is not an easy concept to define. A range of definitions exist, influenced by different disciplinary approaches and ideologies. The dominant Western definition since World War II has defined poverty in monetary terms, using levels of income or consumption to measure poverty (1).

Handley (et al. 2009) provides a more holistic working definition of poverty as "a sense of helplessness, dependence and lack of opportunities and material resources, self-confidence, and self-respect on the part of the poor" (1). Moreover, Okumu (2002) estimates that "45% of Africans today live in poverty - dying of hunger and disease" (69). The problem of poverty reduction remains a challenge to the renewal of Africa.

Mulligan (2010) examines the issue of HIV/AIDS impact on poverty and the need to consider the greater injustices associated with the pandemic. For instance, Mulligan posits that the social teaching of the church can provide a fuller framework of analysis. A critical examination of the church's core teachings are applicable to the concrete social and economic realities that exacerbate poverty reduction. Clearly, the church has a definite role to play in poverty reduction. However, since poverty is multi-faceted and its causes are complex, simple solutions are not forthcoming, either from governments or NGOs. Nevertheless, let us examine several areas that consistently drive poverty.

5.10.3 Natural Drivers of poverty.

In addition to Africa's HIV/AIDS pandemic, and its need for a moral regeneration, it faces the devastating results of widespread poverty.

While many Africans will agree that their continent is rich in natural resources, why then, is Africa today viewed by many as the poorest country on earth? What key factors, contribute to current African poverty? There are several compounding causes of poverty.

First, “natural disasters through flooding and droughts are a main contributing factor. The results have been widespread famines in Ethiopia, central Africa and Mozambique in the 20th and 21st centuries” (Nkesiga 2005). Heavy flooding often results in harvest failure which is a key risk for rural households. Crop failure in turn “affects the wider rural economy as well as national well-being and stability” (Handley (2009:2). However, apart from natural disasters, there are two other broad categories which contribute to poverty: (1) socio-economic factors, and (2) political-economic factors.

5.10.4 Socio-economic drivers of poverty

Okumu (2002) posits that greed, corruption, unemployment, crime, and leadership failure, has been cited as additional root causes of poverty (69). Nkesiga (2005) equally sites leadership challenges when he refers to the famines in the 20th and 21st centuries, which “demonstrated that leadership in these countries have no contingency plans apart from waiting for the international world to intervene...this becomes a leadership challenge” (Nkesiga 2005:108). Thus, we may conclude that poor governance 1. often is a root cause of poverty.

Africa’s violent conflicts have caused Intense debates to emerge around this salient and unresolved issue. For example, Handley (2009) notes that there is “a strong association between high levels of conflict and multidimensional poverty. He notes that between 1997 and 2006, nearly 40% of low human-development states globally were found to be affected by armed conflict. This is significant because

African countries are prone to conflict. In 2006, Africa, with 13% of the global population had 40% of the world's violent conflicts... Violent conflict has impact on "long-term poverty, resulting in the absence of men and an increase in the proportion of disabled and elderly" (3). Spoor (2004) also examines the intense debate about the relationship between globalisation, poverty, and the emergence of violent conflicts. Both Deng (1991) and Spoor (2004) cite violent conflicts as the cause of scarce resources and displacement of entire African communities.

Handley (2009) believes that "Sudden or prolonged ill health (ie., HIV/AIDS) often drives poverty and results in a downward spiral of asset losses and impoverishment as people are forced to abandon productive activities. The relationship between ill health and poverty is complex: illness can cause poverty and poverty can contribute to poor health" (3). Drimie (2003) equally contends that the HIV/AIDS epidemic deepens poverty in South Africa. His article in the *Development of Southern Africa*, summarises the implications for poverty reduction.

Handley (et al. 2000) notes that other key drivers of poverty include "inequality and exclusion. The gap between the rich and the poor contribute to poverty in a range of dimensions...inequalities in income, asset ownership are typically a result of political forces that enable powerful groups to protect their wealth" (4). Aliber (2003) concurs with Handley and notes the impact of chronic poverty on the unemployment crisis. Tladi (2006) particularly notes the link between HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Governance refers to the rules and processes that regulate the public realm, where state, societal, and economic actors interact to make decisions. Therefore, governance goes beyond a focus on government to include the relations between state and society, with a

focus on how decisions are made and not just on the resulting actions (Handley et al, 2009:6).

5.10.5 Political-economy drivers of poverty

“Certain aspects of Africa’s political systems tend to hinder transformation change and poverty-reduction efforts. This is because deep social forces create power relations...decisions that affect development are often made by informal networks of influential people. Public bureaucracies...are subject to tests of loyalty rather than appointed and retained on merit. In such an environment it is difficult for the voices of the poor to be heard. The poor are able to achieve short-term gains from this system by supporting a patron who shares some of his wealth. The abuse of public office for private gain is often the norm; bribery, kick-backs, escaping taxes, embezzlement of government funds, misuse of government property are seen frequently. A moral economy of corruption exists in much of sub-Sahara Africa” (Handley (et al. 2009:8) all of which hinder poverty-reduction.

Handley (et al. 2009) recommends a human rights approach to poverty reduction:

A human rights approach to poverty reduction expresses the needs and interests of the poor in terms of their rights. Anti-poverty strategies that demand transparent budgetary and other governmental processes are consistent with the right to information... A human rights approach places the voices and experiences of the poor at the heart of policy and programming (9).

Scholars such as, Aliber (2003); Drimie (2003); Handley (2009); and Tladi (2006), have noted several socio-economic and political-economic issues as key drivers of poverty: natural disasters; prolonged illness from HIV/AIDS particularly; inequality and exclusion; abuse of public offices; violent conflicts and wars, and ethno-religious persecution. Consequently, I propose a human rights approach to poverty reduction that will ensure the well-being of all people. As the church, called to be salt and light in a dark world, takes its role in the development of ethical human resources and training of ethical leaders -positive change is possible. Nevertheless, the challenges for the church engaging with the African Renaissance are multi-faceted. These will be carefully considered at this juncture.

5.11 Ethnic and religious boundaries

Before the church may engage with the African Renaissance, there must be discourse on the issue of ethnic and religious persecution. “Ethnic diversity and religious polarisation influences the way politics and conflict takes place. While religion has become a mechanism to overcome established patronage networks, it has also led to the establishment of new networks with political elites exploiting religious differences and exacerbating conflict. These cleavages are especially manipulated politically during elections, times of constitutional reviews, and census taking” (Handley et al. 2009:53).

Ashforth (2005) cites an important issue regarding spiritual insecurity. This phenomenon develops in the lives of many South Africans who live with a widespread fear of witchcraft. Ashforth maintains that this fear creates a pervasive sense of insecurity among citizens and a public policy problem for government. If a government refuses to punish occult violence, it will become alienated from the perceived needs of its people. The challenge for the evangelical church is to

partner with African Renaissance leaders who may believe and practice occult violence.

Sigmon (1998) cites that out of Africa's population of one billion, approximately 48% claim to be Christian, 40% Muslim, and about ten percent claim ethnic and tribal religions (1). His cited research concludes that Africa as a whole must be a very religious people; issues of religious liberty are vital to social, political, and economic stability. However, there are particular predominant forces which drive religious and ethnic persecution, according to Sigmon (1998:1).

For instance, religious and ethnic persecution in Africa generally come from two sources: (1) militant Muslim activity and (2) ethnic and economic forces. Sigmon (1998) posits that in sub-Saharan Africa, persecution often results "more from political than religious forces"(1).

The first century churches of the ancient world also faced religious and ethnic persecution (Acts 2-4). However, through their bold witness of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, they were able to overcome the political forces of their day and usher in a new morality based on love and forgiveness.

Buhlungu (2007), further warns: "withdrawal of churches from the political arena is complex. Christians and South Africans as a whole, have withdrawn significantly from politics. Local churches in all denominations have become less 'political', not least because their individual members are either non-aligned or are members of different parties...the majority of churches eschew politics" (459). In light of this research, the church and the African Renaissance should agree on certain bounds for political manoeuvres – ruling out patterns of ethnic and religious persecution.

Bhulungu (2007) offers strategies for the church to engage in the South African political arena using policies set forth by the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) founded in 1993. Bhulungu reports the ACDP, “openly and explicitly campaigns on a conservative ticket to create a faith-based state.” The founder, Rev. Kenneth Meshoe, believed that a “Christian political party was essential to promote the interests of Christians and create an explicitly Christian state. Many ACDP public office holders – MPs, city and town councillors – are hardworking, dedicated politicians faithfully participating in the procedures of government” (460). In modern secular liberal democracies, such as South Africa, religious groups may influence political agendas. Regarding the African Renaissance, the church and the movement should agree on establishing a political coalition that addresses the needs of all people. How? In what ways? Let us consider this important query.

“A political coalition is a temporary alliance of political groups formed in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in some joint activity. The building of coalitions involves a process in which different parties come together to form a partnership collectively in pursuit of a common objective” (Bhulungu 2007:78). This process could include the mobilisation of resources. The church and the African Renaissance could agree on human resource development for ethical leadership. “Coalition agreements can thus be seen as policy co-ordination devices that effectively co-ordinate the different ideas, cultures and functioning of the different parties” (81). However, all these recommendations will take considerable political manoeuvring in engaging the church with the African Renaissance.

5.12 Striving for judicial balance

The church and the African Renaissance must agree on judicial balance; interests of workers, farmers, and industrialists, including actions of central and local government (Udogu 2007:59). Moreover, local government administrations lack effective management structures in governance. For example, in July 2004, “violent protests erupted in Diepsloot in Johannesburg. About 3,000 protestors marched through the streets, demanding that councillors be sacked for sub-standard services provided. In September, 2004 in Harrismith, violent protests took place for similar reasons. Protests continued to be widespread through 90% of the 136 municipalities. “There is an incipient autocratic governmental style, at municipal and national level, which is unresponsive to the deep frustration and anger experienced by communities” (Bhulungu 200: 68,75). These facts point to the need for other actors (ie: the church) to assist in capacity building. “Technical assistance, mentoring, policy-making guidance and management inputs are now more urgently required than ever” (76).

Church leaders and African Renaissance leaders must clearly articulate and communicate an ethical judicial vision and mission that will resonate in ethical human resource management, development, and planning.

5.13 Human resource and leadership development

The lack of human resource and leadership development is a major issue of concern for several African Renaissance scholars (Maloka 2000, Britz 2007, Cheru 2003, Okumu 2002, Udogu 2007). The African Renaissance Institute’s executive board has identified human resource development as its first priority. Professor Frederick G. Harbison of Princeton University, USA writes:

Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations... Clearly, a country which is unable to develop skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything (Harbison 1973:3).

Cheru (2003) gives his main argument about the deficits of the African Renaissance regarding responsible leadership: There is “the need to decolonize the African mind set and improve the quality and responsibility of leaders...essential for Africa’s development is solid governance through strong institutions and the mobilisation of civil society movements” (481).

“The development of human capital represents one of the most important factors that facilitate development and economic growth. Human capital represents that property that allows people to live and work productively. One can therefore state the most valuable asset of a knowledge society is its intellectual capital. Such a society must invest in its people” (Britz 2007:16).

The church and the African Renaissance should work together for human resources and leadership development. The revival of Africa “may be consolidated in Africa and more successful if the process is carefully monitored and managed by those who believe in good governance, and under the watchful eye of highly committed civil society organisations” (Udogu 2007:59). At this conjecture, it is important to elucidate what is meant by a “civil society” since several African Renaissance apologists refer to this term.

Udogu (2007) defines a “civil society” as: “that political space or universe that is distinct from government and that government is but one of the several institutions coexisting in a pluralistic social fabric

(39). Okumu (2002) offers a more concise definition of 'civil society' in this context: "We define civil society in Africa as citizens' organisations outside government that interact and relate on the basis of social values and the culture of the society for the sustenance of good governance and the promotion of economic growth and social development"(92).

Okumu (2002) further posits that the benefits of 'civil society' organisations lie in promoting "mass action as a means of rejecting any unwanted non-democratic behaviour" (92). He concludes that both NGOs and civil society play important roles in the wider social, political, and economic organisations (58).

The church has a role to play in four important areas of any civil society: (1) checking corruption and abuses of power; (2) encouraging political participation; (3) citizen and leadership education; and (4) promoting and supporting economic reform. A political case in point is the formation of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) in 1993. The founder, Rev. Kenneth Meshoe, believed that a "Christian political party was essential to promote the interests of Christians and create an explicitly Christian state...in 1994 it sent two Members of Parliament (MPs) to the National Assembly. By 2004 it had six MPs" (Bhulungu 2007:460). Governance based on biblical Christian values is the hallmark of the ACDP. The strength of the church, as a powerful force for positive transformation in society, is demonstrated when it seeks to engage with civil society and its contending culture.

5.14 Summary

This chapter addressed the key research question: *In what ways might the South African evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity?* First, the unique role of

the church in the public sphere was examined by several scholars Banda (2009); Butler et al. (2011); Czegledy (2008); Ilo (2011); Oden (2007); and Uzodike (2008). Their research indicates that religious networks have always served as powerful forces for social mobilisation and ethical accountability as they take their respected place in civil society.

Rah (2009), nevertheless, offered a caveat to the church: in allowing itself to be identified by its surrounding culture or social movements, the church faces a grave danger in losing its identity: that of allowing itself to be defined by an influence other than Scripture. Rah calls this threat the “captivity of the church” whereby it eases into and reflects the surrounding culture through accommodating and assimilating rather than modelling biblical culture. Rah (2009:21) uses the phrase “captivity of the church” to emphasise the danger of the church being defined by an influence other than Scripture.

Next, the role of the church according to Acts chapters 2-4 was closely examined. This research has demonstrated that the book of the Acts of the Apostles provides four clear guidelines in determining a biblical basis for: (1) the church’s mission; (2) the church’s unique identity in the world; (3) the church’s distinctive moral vision; and (4) the church’s witness of faith.

Finally, I proposed that the posture of the church in engaging with the African Renaissance lies in the following key areas: (1) cultivate and mobilise the church for transformative action in moral regeneration; (2) engage the church in poverty reduction in addressing socio-economic-political factors; (3) mobilise and engage the church to check corruption and power abuse; (4) engage the church for political participation; (5) engage the church in developing ethical leaders; (6) engage the church to promote economic reform; (7) engage the church in holding African

Renaissance leaders responsible for ethnic and religious boundaries and judicial balance.

The book of Acts calls us to be God's Church and Christ's witnesses in a chaotic world. The church is called to responsibility and equipped for it in times of social transition. The early Christian leaders of Acts 2-4 reminds the 21st church that the church is not called to exist as another social program; rather the church exists to be sent out into the world as witnesses of what God has done, can do, and is doing to transform lives. In so doing, the church fulfils its calling to be the Church of Jesus Christ.

This research will conclude with chapter six which will offer a summary of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6

Summary and Recommendations

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this research was to critically examine the role of the evangelical church in the African Renaissance. In considering the role of the church in civil society, several key scholars/theologians (e.g. Boesak 2005; Czegledy 2008; DeGruchy 2005; Louw 2002) have examined the potential of the church to impact society for positive transformation. These authors addressed two critical issues for careful attention: that of a moral crisis and a leadership crisis. Boesak's most current book, *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics* (2005), critiques former South African president, Thabo Mbeki for not giving a moral imagination to the role of the churches in the African Renaissance. While Mbeki is highly credited for upholding the dream of Africa's rebirth, he fails to indicate practical ways whereby the church may assist in rebuilding society.

Boesak (2005) believes the weakness of the church to engage with the current theological, political, and economic realities in South Africa today, stem in large part from Euro-American thinking and interpretation of traditional Christian theology. He further posits three recommendations for the churches to gain credibility:

First, the churches must engage in "hard political and economic analysis by staying informed on the manifestations of globalisation and

its impact and the world and the communities where we live, work, and worship” (2005:19). These realities impact the life of the church. He

further posits that the church must resist “the insistence on our powerlessness” (19). His quote refers to South Africa’s apartheid years when the non-white population felt disadvantaged and powerless to effect change. He sees the prophetic witness of the church today as silent and calls for the church to re-claim its strong voice that was so apparent during apartheid (106).

It is from this argument, of which I agree, that he reminds the church that much of the leadership opposing apartheid was from leaders and ministers within Christian churches (117). Furthermore, Boesak concurs with Teffo, that a moral and leadership crisis pose major stumbling blocks to an African revival:

Where lies the anchor of this African Renaissance? It lies in the moral renewal through African values (Teffo in Boesak 2005:2).

Boesak (2005) continues to expound on the issue of moral leadership that was so apparent during apartheid: “awesome resilience of its people, their strength in struggle, their persistence in faith and hope...(33). Importantly, he notes that this moral leadership was “South Africa’s greatest gift to the world”(34). I concur with Boesak that a leadership crisis currently exists in the country which has produced economic recklessness, lawlessness, and injustice. Boesak often refers to the Black Power movement of the USA in the 1960s. He compares the struggle of African-Americans to apartheid.

However, his critique of the failure of the Black Power movement to usher in positive change for black Americans, is contrasted with the positive results of South Africans whose moral leadership ushered in a peaceful co-existence with all races. He notes, “Apartheid was dismantled through the extraordinary “moral courage of our people.

What captivated the world was our spiritual strength” (70). I concur with Boesak that there can be no “renaissance without a moral re-awakening” (70).

For South Africa to lead an African revival will require the “moral courage to infuse politics with spiritual power” (64). Herein is the thesis of Boesak’s book (2005); he coins the phrase “spirituality of politics.”

Boesak's work would have been strengthened, if he had infused his discourse with more scriptural support. The phrase could be interpreted in a variety of contexts. For example, it fits a segment of Liberation theology, which in my opinion, lacks sufficient biblical support.

Never the less, I believe, as this dissertation has demonstrated, that there is an essential role for the church to engage in the political arena. However, we must caution against ‘spiritualising politics.’ Can the church, rather, maintain its bold identity as a prophetic witness and overseer within the political structure of government? My concern is if we ‘spiritualise politics’ perhaps the bold witness of the church will be undermined to a degree. Moreover, how can one ‘spiritualise’ unjust and unbiblical policies and development?

Boesak needs to more clearly define his term “spiritualise politics.” The term can be taken in a variety of contexts which may not include a clearly biblical basis. For example, there is the spirituality of the New Age Movement which does not have a basis in the spirituality of the Bible. There is the “spirituality” of other non-biblical religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.

Never the less, I concur with Boesak when he posits that the extraordinary moral courage of South Africa’s people has been lost and must be regained.

Boesak notes wisely, and I concur:

It is not enough for government to call upon the church to create a moral climate ...while at the same time denying the church the critical space for prophetic watchfulness...it is tragic that the church expects the government to give it that space. If the church does not claim that space, it will never be given (128).

Boesak, once again strongly argues for the role of the church in creating a moral climate within the political sphere. However, he places responsibility on the church to be bold in its assertion to claim its rightful place in the political arena. While Boesak infers that it is the responsibility of the church to inform government on unjust policies, etc., he does not foresee government allowing a critical partnership with the church. Rather, he believes the government expects the church to *support* government initiatives to formulate and implement policies (162). At this juncture, Boesak wisely makes the important distinction between the government acknowledging the key role of the church in an African revival versus the government insisting on the church being compliant to all government mandates.

A case in point is made when Boesak cites former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, who is adamant that the church's role is not to challenge government or the leadership of the ANC (163). In Boesak's opinion, and I concur, this places the role of the church on the side lines of political activity in the new South African democracy. Furthermore, the ANC restricts the role of the church to mobilising and implementing directives from "above" (sic). "Above" inferring ANC leadership. Thus, the church is seen as a volunteer in a non-political support role. While Boesak does not always support his research with

biblical examples, he does offer the following biblical stance on the key role of the church:

The church is the bearer of the Kingdom of God...It is given its mandate not from society in general... The church receives its mandate from God Whom it owes its highest responsibility and deepest loyalty. The Lordship of Jesus Christ remains central in our thinking... ultimately sovereignty belongs only to God. For the church to publicly speak on behalf of the poor, the silenced and the dejected...is a biblical mandate. The church dare not ignore or forget... We learned our commitment to justice and the poor not from Marx or Lenin, but from the Torah, the prophets, and Jesus of Nazareth (2005:166).

Citing reasons for the church's silence in South Africa, Boesak, posits that since the struggle for liberation in South Africa is past, the church feels there is no longer a need for its voice in the public sphere. Therefore, the church will revert to its perceived calling; confrontation is no longer necessary; let others do what is necessary to strengthen our young democracy; the church is weary of opposition politics and retreats to the safety of their sanctuaries.

Although these arguments may sound reasonable, Boesak cautions the church to resist the urge to silence its voice in the political arena (156). Now, more than ever, he argues, the church's voice must be heard.

There is a dichotomy between Boesak's previous discourse that the government is not seeking to engage with the church, and with his statement on page 157: "The fact that the new government has heeded

the church and is taking human rights seriously is reason for gratitude... This is one example where Boesak's work often appears contradictory.

I disagree with his statement regarding his perceived lack of action from the church on the "burning issues in South Africa today" (155). He contends that there has been "no significant church or ecumenical action regarding some of the most burning issues in South Africa today"(155). He cites the following issues: (1) poverty; (2) manufacturing and sales of arms; (3) growing gap between rich and poor; (4) creation of a new, wealthy black elite; (5) the absence of a human rights agenda in South Africa's foreign policy".

The *Cape Town Commitment (CTC)* in 2010, followed Boesak's book, and warrants serious attention at this juncture:

The CTC is rooted in the conviction that: We must respond in Christian mission to the realities of our own generation. The on-going mission of the church must take seriously both the unchanging nature of God's Word and the changing realities of our world. The CTC remains within the Lausanne call of the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world and is framed in the language of love for the whole gospel, the whole church, and the whole world. The commitment has two parts: a confession of faith and a call to action (Smith 2011:1).

Often Boesak is hypercritical of "conservative theological groups" (sic) which he contends was largely silent during the years of South Africa's struggle against apartheid. Never the less, the *Cape Town*

Commitment offers a clarion call to the church to make its presence known and sound its voice for the well-being of all people.

Certainly, Boesak is wise in calling the 21st church to witness in a changing and complex world: to reject human injustice, and seek compassion (73). He further calls the church to make “radical demands for justice, peace, and liberation of God’s people” and proclaim “God’s passion for justice and God’s anger against injustice”...(91). Never the less, admittedly, Boesak is recalling the church to tenets of liberation theology, of which I cannot concur. In liberation theology “radical demands” is more often a call to civil disobedience.

While Boesak offers arguable discourse on reasons for the lack of discernment from the churches, he lapses into scathing political arguments which support liberation theology. While Boesak calls the church to prophetic faithfulness and civic responsibility, he disappointingly denigrates “conservative theological interest groups” (93) and “conservative theology” (99). I contend that Boesak speaks for the “Christian faith” as instrumental during the “struggle” to end apartheid, but denigrates “conservative theologians.” His unfair criticism is erroneous because there were many conservative theologians who indeed opposed apartheid (ie: Maluleka, Dayhoff, Zanner, Calhoun, Thomas, and Zurcher and others).

I also disagree with Boesak’s assertion that the “centrality of religious faith being denied by South African historiography” (106). In fact, several African scholars have argued for the importance of religious faith in the public sphere: (ie: Okumu 2002; Ilo, Ojacor, Ogonnaya (2011); DeGruchy 2005; Udogu 2007; Uzodike 2008; Louw 2002; Banda 2009). Thus, I contend, that Boesak’s observations may be largely but not entirely true.

Perhaps the most striking discourse on ways the churches may engage with aspects of socio-economic and moral regeneration comes from Andre' Czegledy (2008). He notes the racial unity of His People's Church in Johannesburg as one of racial unity and tolerance. The issue of social influence is central to the mission of HPC. "Church leaders actively exhort members to bring about social and cultural change by promoting Christianity in both religious and secular arenas, partly by way of members becoming influential role models within wider society" (2008:287). HPC emphasises influential leadership. The church's original mission statement was:

"Saving the lost; Loving the saved; Releasing leaders"
(2008:287).

The slogan combines the idea of personal responsibility to bring the lost to Christ, extend compassion, and engage in social leadership within secular society. At a Real Life Conference in 2008 at His People's Church, Carl Stauffer spoke on 'government'. He reminded his listeners that God had not called him *into* politics but rather God called him to *engage* with politics (Czegledy 2008:303). Stauffer raises a very valid point here: that churches have a key role to play in participating in the political arena. Churches, in training moral leaders, can impact the surrounding contending cultures.

Czegledy equally highlights the importance of the church being morally responsible for raising up moral leaders for community service. The church's social influence should never be underestimated in ushering in an improved society.

Another distinguished South African scholar, John DeGruchy, more than a decade ago, addressed the moral and leadership crisis in Africa by calling Christians to live in "hope of God's transformation of the

whole of reality” (1997:477). He strongly proposes the public witness of the church by developing an empowering spirituality. I believe that an empowering spirituality is only possible through the witness of the Scriptures in lifestyles that reflect biblical principles. I further concur with DeGruchy that the South African church’s unique contribution will be the moral and spiritual transformation of its society.

Louw (2010) elaborates on the importance of the African term “Ubuntu” (1). By understanding the true sense of this cultural belief, one begins to comprehend the complexity of South African multi-cultural society. These cultural beliefs impact leadership styles in Africa. For example, Louw (2010) defines a traditional African aphorism of the Zulu version of *Ubuntu* as : “a person is a person through other persons” (1). It is the principal of caring for each other’s well-being through his/her relationship with others. This can be explored through a variety of contexts, i.e., relation, politics, gender, globalisation, etc. It acknowledges “both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being” (1).

Equally important is the point that Louw makes regarding the dark side of *Ubuntu*: it often demands an oppressive conformity and loyalty to the group; failure to conform will be met with harsh punitive measures. This group loyalty has often led to oppression and corruption by some African leaders, such as Mugabe in Zimbabwe. It must be understood that the cultural concept of *Ubuntu*, often prevents many good people from disobeying oppressive and dictatorial leaders in many African states, including South Africa. I believe Louw makes a very significant point at this conjecture: it has been widely debated in theological circles as to the reasons for which many Africans blindly adhere to corrupt leadership. Certainly Louw brings this discourse to light and consideration when he examines the deeper meaning of *Ubuntu*:

Adhering to this concept, out of fear, causes many good people to conform to corrupt leaders.

The second critical issue whereby the church should give careful attention is in the area of African leadership failures. Corruption in many African states has become one of today's most pressing global and ethical problems according to the scholarly research of Rotberg 2004; Gray and McPherson 2001; Everett and Asrahaman 2006.

Glaring leadership failures in the African states of the DRC, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe have been globally highlighted by the news media. Rotberg (2004) posits that "90% of sub-Saharan African nations have experienced despotic rule in the last three decades – such leaders use power as an end in itself. Leadership failures impact infrastructure, the economy, unemployment, escalation of crime...much-needed public funds have flowed into hidden bank accounts" (14).

According to Gray and McPherson 2000; and Everett and Asrahaman 2006, African leadership failures have been attributed to an increase in corruption and moral laxity. A question begs an answer at this conjecture: What are the causes of such glaring leadership failures?

Boon (2007) attributes leadership failure to several causes.: First, to the breakdown in communication between different cultural groups; next he posits that when the "power elite feels totally free of the law, the corruption and abuse of power will easily follow" (3). Speaking from a South African context, particularly, he explores cross-cultural attitudes and philosophies that are unique to Africa. For example, what is often viewed by the West as moral laxity is sometimes viewed in Africa as the "African way" by indigenous African philosophers" (5).

Everett and Asrahaman (2006) both maintain that good leadership is a significant factor in enhancing economic growth of a country. They conclude that the way forward is to develop anti-corruption fields through moral dispositions. Both scholars indicate the importance of moral leadership as a pre-requisite to corruption prevention. As this research has previously indicated in preceding chapters, herein lies an important role of the evangelical church in South Africa: to train and mentor moral leaders for community service.

I maintain that the resources of the church be given utmost importance in assisting in the moral reorientation and ethical leadership of the African Renaissance movement. One of the resources of the church is for leaders to teach and model good governance. Botman (2008) also maintains the role of the church in providing good governance. The global agenda of the church should be directed at influencing the public arena which include social movements, as well as political institutions (3). Botman posits that the churches in South Africa should engage and challenge political parties for economic reform and social justice. In order to achieve these goals, the church should develop new leadership and capacity in forming partnerships with all sectors of society such as state, churches, business, and civic groups (6).

However, the church working in partnership with the state is not without risks, according to Botman, former president of the South African Council of Churches. He offers this caveat: in the past churches have been used by politicians who have had their own agendas: the history of apartheid and its theological roots is a case in point (7). The church and state must find a commonality. The state should accept the role and contribution of partners from other sectors. The state should stop trying to be all things to all people and coordinate to set priorities to address social and historic imbalances. At the same time, the state should avoid trying to control every project (8).

Botman (2008) notes that in June 2004, President Mbeki addressed the conference of the South African Council of Churches in Johannesburg.. Botman as president of the SACC posed this salient question: “How can we move beyond being a watchdog...to become real partners in development?”

Mbeki later addressed the query by stating: “The centre of our struggle is against poverty and underdevelopment...what are the churches going to do practically?” (Botman 2008:8). The challenge for South African church leaders is to establish clear and practical strategies for addressing the two looming giants of abject poverty and underdevelopment; in this capacity, I believe, the church has a vital role to play. Furthermore, in order for the South African evangelical church to impact the transformation of its people and society, it should first consider its role in assuaging the moral and leadership crisis that currently exists.

A survey in this study, noted by Buhlungu (2007) indicates that the Church is still the most trusted institution in South Africa. This positive factor is important in understanding the influence the church may exert in the realisation of Africa’s rebirth and moral renewal. Discourse was presented by Nkesiga (2005) regarding those aspects that are critical to a moral rebirth: a fundamental belief in the God of the Bible and His precepts for moral living. It was noted particularly by Nkesiga (2005) that, God cannot be forced to the periphery of moral discourse.

In addition, I discussed the importance of recovering the concept of community or the Zulu version of *Ubuntu*: understanding the importance of humankind’s ethical responsibility to honour the dignity of one another. Africans have historically been known to value and

respect community, whereas the Western cultural concept of individualism is shunned in most African cultures. Scholars maintain that the greatest strength of the African people lie in its cultural concept of *Ubuntu*. It's essential concept means "humanity" and projects the image of caring for one another's well-being (Louw nd 1). Clearly, this important concept should be given careful consideration by the evangelical church. Similarly, as Christ calls his followers to love one another, *Ubuntu* infers caring for one another's wellbeing.

Nonetheless, the evangelical church, in considering an alliance with the African Renaissance, should ensure that its unique identity is not lost in cultural captivity. The concept of 'cultural captivity' posed by Anderson [2011], infers that the church should resist being influenced toward assimilation into its surrounding secular culture; the danger of which, is that the church could weaken its biblical influence in moral and ethical standards.

This section of the summary identified two major weaknesses in South African society: a moral crisis and a leadership crisis. DeGruchy (2005) calls the church to live in the hope of God's transforming power. Boesak (2005) concurred with DeGruchy that a moral and leadership crisis equally exist. Louw (2010) identified several reasons for such a crisis. All three scholars call the church to renew her rightful place and voice in the public arena.

At this juncture, let us briefly summarise the African Renaissance in historical perspective.

6.2 African Renaissance in historical perspective

Next, to achieve the purpose of this research, I conducted a thorough critique of the African Renaissance including its history, development,

and ideology. In chapter one, I examined the historical background and early roots of the African Renaissance from four key perspectives: its ideology; ecclesiology; ontology; and its biblical and theological challenges.

Lotter (2007) and Ajulu (2001) both traced the early roots of an African continental rebirth with the independence of the small African country of Ghana in 1957. In 1989, with the collapse of the socialist states, hope for Africa's renewal began to shine more brightly. According to Ajulu (2001) these political ploys were the inspiration to other struggling African nations to persevere toward their own independence.

Within the South African context, specifically, the concept of an African Renaissance gained prominence through former president Thabo Mbeki's speech, *I am an African*, in 1994 (Mbeki 1994). Mbeki (1994) articulated the concept as a means to Africa's empowerment, particularly through globalisation.

In analysing its historical developments, a key question emerged: What spawned the need for an African rebirth in South Africa, particularly? Scholars (Matthews 2002 and Czegledy 2008) both address this query. They concur that the concept of Africa's renewal was born out of a hope that it would spur indigenous empowerment and cultural re-appropriation: The concept of *Pax Africana* (Louw 2002) is a key factor of the movement. The phrase connotes the ability of Africans to solve their own problems (African solutions for African problems) without Western interference.

6.3 Ideologies of the African Renaissance

Next, I examined the ideology of the movement. Understanding the roots of its ideology was a critical factor in determining whether or not

the evangelical church may engage with the African Renaissance. Ajulu (2001:33) noted particularly that the movement's ideology differs in context depending on the nature of three social forces which drive the movement: the globalists, the Pan Africanists, and the culturalists. Vale and Maseko (1998) and Maloka (2000) provide keen insights into the these three major ideologies.

Globalists associate clearly with Thabo Mbeki and the African National Congress (ANC). Their ideology is politically and economically-driven toward economic empowerment through globalisation (Maloka 2000).

The Pan Africanists imparts a broader ideology to embody a political, economic, social and cultural movement that seeks to span the political divisions of the African continent. Ajulu (2001) argues that the dangers of the Africanist interpretation "lie in its narrow exclusivist emphasis...it runs the risk of getting lost in the morass of ancestral heritage without producing anything new" (33).

The third ideology of the African Renaissance is that of the culturalists. This idea seeks to encompass the reproduction of the group's entire social life. The thrust of the culturalist's ideology is for the renewal of African intellectual and cultural inventiveness (Mboup 2008; Okumu 2002). The central concept of the culturalists' ideology lies in adherence to the African concept of *Ubuntu* which is the principal of caring for one another's well-being (Louw n.d.:1).

6.3.1 *Components of an ideology*

To scholarly assess the important components of an ideology, I used Berger's (1966) *sociology of knowledge* typology. Through this I was able to determine the various roles that an ideology plays in various forms of a social order – including the spirituality of a community. I

discovered numerous broad definitions of the term “ideology” from scholars such as: Boudon, Aaron and Shils 1989, Berger 1967, Merton 1996, Luzbetak 2002, and Robbins 1996. Therefore, for the purpose of this study I used a working definition of the term from the *Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms* [2012] which states: “Ideology is the biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes of a person or a group; a systematic of generally known perspective from which a text is written, read, or interpreted.” I concluded that an ideology that best serves a society is based on a wide variety of principles, such as socio-cultural and moral and religious beliefs.

Therefore, specifically, from Berger’s *sociology of knowledge* paradigm I critiqued the African Renaissance’s ideology from a four-part typology including its ecclesiology, ethics/morality, ethnocentrism and its socio-economic-political ideology. This typology will be briefly recapitulated below.

6.3.2 *Ecclesiology of the African Renaissance*

Most cultures formulate and nurture a religious community. Robbins (1996) noted importantly that religious community includes commitments to God, to people inside the community, and to people outside the community (127-128). Furthermore, Luzbetak (2002) wisely notes that when a society is faced with a crisis, it is religion that enables humans to transcend themselves (264).

At this conjecture, I posed a query: Are African Renaissance leaders calling for the church to engage with their movement? Whereas, I noted several scholars (Okumu 2006, Luzbetak 2002) who champion the role of the church in engaging with the African Renaissance, I found scant research from African leaders themselves who call for the church to partner with the movement. For instance, Mbeki gives a

placid call for the church to assist in ushering in an African Renaissance (Ajulu 2010, Botman 2008). Moreover, I was unable to locate current research by African Renaissance leaders who are seeking the assistance of the church to further their agenda.

6.3.3 *Ethics and morality of the African Renaissance*

Next, I evaluated the ethics/morality of the African Renaissance from the same *sociology of knowledge* typology (Berger 1966). In the context of religious commitment, special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God. Biblical ethics ensures the acceptance of responsibilities that offer benefits to others; affirming the importance and life of people who are otherwise excluded from the benefits of society. The analysis of roles is of particular importance to the *sociology of knowledge* because it can reveal the mediations between social roots of particular world views. In the arena of the African Renaissance, for example, the role of human rights appears to be its moral standard (Maloka 2000):

There is one driving force that could...be at the epicentre of a universal quest for progress in the 21st century: the universalization of human rights...(91).

Okumu (2002) notes that African cultures give careful attention to nurture and perceptive listening to others. Social acceptance is not based on wealth – but rather on the basis of relationship to others. Individuals support their extended family and well-being. Yet, when these concepts are carefully considered in view of the ideology of the African Renaissance, there appears to be discrepancies. Several queries for reflection include: In view of the positive aspects of African cultures, is the African Renaissance remaining true to its cultural roots? Is it seeking innovative solutions to societal problems which are

grounded in moral and ethical principles? Currently, the movement lacks a clearly defined commitment to human values with moral engagement.

Boesak (2005) quotes Lesibo Teffo, professor of philosophy at the University of the North in South Africa, regarding his perceived strength of the African Renaissance:

Where is the anchor of this African Renaissance?...It lies in the moral renewal through African values. Politics and economics have a role to play. However, without a moral conscience, society is soulless (2).

Research by Boesak 2005; Botman 2008; Nkesiga 2005; DeGruchy 2005; Okumu 2002, all demonstrate a call for a moral dimension of an African revival. The church, according to Botman (2008) “is challenged to defend its true identity as “new creation” amongst and against popular political ideologies...it is important more than ever before, for the church to have a clearer sense of its own identity and its own agenda” (11).

The roots for developing a moral conscience lie in biblical truth. A moral conscience develops from the contribution of the Christian church: belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is the church who offers a prophetic voice to the much needed moral regeneration of South Africa.

6.3.4 Ethnocentrism ideology of the African Renaissance

The term *ethnocentrism* has particular significance in the ideology of the African Renaissance. Landis (2001) defines the sociological term of

'ethnocentrism' as "A type of prejudice that maintains that one's own culture's ways are right and other cultures' ways, if different, are wrong" (466). While being ethnocentric may lend greater group solidarity and loyalty, at the same time it can promote loyalty even in the face of unjust dictatorial leaders. A case in point at this conjecture is Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Ethnocentrism has led to ethnic violence in countries such as Uganda (Okumu 2002:222).

The debate on the idea regarding insider/outsider doctrine was given attention by scholars Britz 2006, Cliffe 2004, Hayman 2003, Louw 2002, Matthews 2002, Nehusi 2004. This discourse raises ontological issues of categorising African leaders in terms of tribes and ethnic groupings. This ideology poses serious threats to the political and economic stability of many African nations (Maloka 2000, Nehusi 2004). If an African is a person who shares with others a common geographical origin and ownership of, and spiritual attachment to their ancestral land known as the continent of Africa, then the African Renaissance should include members of all races, including whites, blacks, coloureds, and Asians.

However, few Renaissance leaders, apart from Nkrumah, embrace the wider ontological definition of 'Who is an African?' Nkrumah's broader definition of an 'African' is: "any person of good faith, of any race (faith or religious belief) or colour who has chosen to live in Africa" (Alexander 2003:16).

I maintain that Renaissance leaders should recognise what is African without restricting this pride to that which is black. Certainly, the African Renaissance, in order to serve all people groups, should demonstrate much more than black consciousness. This research has demonstrated that the Acts of the Apostles informs us that God is just and does not discriminate (Acts 2:21).

6.3.5 *Socio-eco-politico ideology of an African Renaissance*

The economic recovery of the continent of Africa is a key element in the African Renaissance agenda. Research by Maloka (2002) has indicated that the Renaissance leaders desire the establishment of democracy across the continent. Renaissance culturalists, furthermore, strongly support globalisation to usher in economic stability. Never-the-less, in May of 1991, the CSSDCA (Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa) highlighted the core of Africa's crisis: lack of security, good governance, and meaningful economic development. Renaissance leaders such as Mbeki, are strong proponents of globalisation to cure Africa's crisis (Maloka 2000).

This research highlighted the importance of Africans themselves defining the aims and objectives of the African Renaissance – without western interference (Udogu 2007). Udogu (2007:156) believes an effective strategy is possible if Africans take responsibility for the success or failure of their policies.

Furthermore, this thesis demonstrated that the core of the African Renaissance lies in the economic and social development agenda for Africa (Mali 2011). While these key components are noteworthy and urgently needed, I maintain that the movement lacks one key component: that of a moral imagination that allows for the role of the churches in rebuilding society.

This similar concern has been noted by Alan Boesak in His recent book: *The Tenderness of Conscious: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics*, 2005. Additionally, the role of the churches in good governance has been noted by Botman (2008.) Unlike Boesak, however, Botman emphasises that although the church reserves the

right to criticise government, it should do so from “the heart of the Christian identity” (1). The difference is that Boesak’s critique of government is often scathing. While calling for a religious voice in politics, Boesak’s voice is more accusatory than Christ-like. Nevertheless, it is the book of Acts which informs today’s church that the church is to remain strong during political tensions and commit to the will of God in a hostile environment (Acts 4:13, 21).

The results of the preceding research indicates that the African Renaissance differs from other ideologies in several key areas: Pertaining to the issue of human rights, the movement seeks the universalization of human rights. Regarding the deep cultural issue of respect for indigenous tradition, it was noted that Africans seek innovative solutions to African problems. For instance, it was made abundantly clear that the movement strives to be people-driven in its economic growth by mobilising the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands.

The research noted specifically that the success or failure of a rebirth of Africa rests on two critical issues: seeking innovative and effective ways of reducing HIV/AIDS and poverty. Although economic objectives seek poverty reduction, improved and accessible education, higher standards of health and nutrition, and a cleaner environment, the blueprint for implementation of the objectives has not been forthcoming. Handley, Higgins and Sharma (2009) clearly elucidates how poor governance sustains poverty and makes it “difficult to generate pro-growth (1).

Finally, this research concludes that the ideology of the African Renaissance is complex due to eclectic elements which derive from three social forces within the movement: the globalists, the Pan Africanists, and the culturalists’ ideology. However, all three social

forces rally to three key elements: (1) the regeneration of the African continent; (2) the desire to be distinct from other belief systems (ie the West); (3) adherence to their ideology; partnering with institutions (ie. ANC, NEPAD) for reinforcing and putting into effect their ideology. The ideology of the African Renaissance is one that reflects a political and socio-economic development agenda for the regeneration of Africa.

6.4 Goals and objectives of the African Renaissance

Research by Okumu 2002, has demonstrated that there are three basic aims and objectives of the African Renaissance: (1) to work toward economic recovery; (2) to establish political stability through democracy; and (3) to further social development. The avenue and mechanisms for accomplishing these goals lie in indigenous empowerment, according to some Renaissance leaders such as Mbeki (Ajulu 2001; Maloka 2001).

This research considered the economic crisis currently facing South Africa (Boesak 2008). Since 1994, the economy has reached an unprecedented unemployment and AIDS rate. Currently, there is no indication that the African Renaissance as a concrete strategy for ushering in economic reform to address this current crisis. Furthermore, if the movement's strategy is to utilise indigenous empowerment, then they should consider the role of all people and civic groups, including the spiritual community. Without the engagement of the South African evangelical church community, the movement will continue to lack moral and ethical leaders for good governance and political stability.

This thesis has concluded that in reviewing the economic, political, and cultural agenda of the African Renaissance, a clear theological understanding of the role of the church is lacking. Nevertheless,

several scholars , (Banda and Senokoane 2009; Nkesiga 2005; Okumu 2002; DeGruchy 2005) proposed the importance of the church engaging with the African Renaissance for social and moral change.

6.5 Purpose and identity of the church

The purpose and identity of the church was defined through a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Acts 2-4. The hermeneutic examined the sacred texture of the text, and social and cultural texture analysis. As a result, a socio-cultural taxonomy of seven pivotal items emerged for theological reflection. Conclusively, the study demonstrated that the early first century church, under the direction of divine providence and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, endured heavy oppression and socio-political persecution. However, faith, righteousness, salvation, and the Word of God were key components in their identity. Similarly, today's 21st century evangelical church should hold to the same biblical model to achieve its purpose.

6.6 Biblical and Theological Challenges to the African Renaissance

Chapter four analysed the biblical and theological challenges for the African Renaissance. The research demonstrates that the African Renaissance faces four biblical and theological challenges: (1) ontological and anthropological challenges; (2) moral and ethical challenges; (3) ecclesiastical and faith issues; (4) divisiveness issues: both ethnic and religious.

Research in the area of ontological challenges contends that the African Renaissance universalises African identities toward a single African culture (LeBeau and Gordon 2002). Thabo Mbeki concurs in promoting African pride but does not call for a multi-cultural South Africa to achieve the goals and objectives of the African Renaissance

(Britz 2006). The research identified diverse opinions on what constitutes “an African.” Is it someone of a certain skin colour, only? Lotter (2007) refers to Mbeki’s “I Am an African” speech in 1996 to contend for the title of ‘who is an African.’ Mbeki contends that to be truly ‘African’ one must participate in the African Renaissance: “That to be a true African is to be a rebel in the cause of the African Renaissance”(Boesak 2005:42).

Dr. Nehusi (2004), served as the director of the Africa Studies Centre at the University of London in the UK. I believe, he offers the most arguable comprehensive discourse on the issue:

An Afrikan is a person who shares with others a common geographical origin and ownership of, and spiritual attachment to their ancestral land known as the continent of Afrika. A proper definition of a people must be clear about who they are as well as about whom they are not. Some Afrikans believe that anyone who lives in the continent of Afrika is an Afrikan. Nothing could be further from the truth. Arabs and Europeans have established themselves in Afrika with much physical and cultural violence...There is a wide-spread tendency to over emphasise this nationality to the exclusion of identity. The answer to the problem is a redefinition of ‘Afrikan’ by Afrikans to place more emphasis upon similarities and commonalities or origin, values, history, heritage, and interests (22).

If Renaissance leaders adhere to Nehusi’s definition of an ‘African’, then there is clear reference to the basis of skin colour. This raises a

serious ontological issue for the African Renaissance: Does the prospects of an African revival include a place for all people groups?

Moreover, this research has identified several moral and ethical challenges to the African Renaissance. For example, it was noted that class identity politics (CIP) can be attributed to corruption and immorality. This concept presupposes one to a particular class, culture, or socio-economic status (Oden 2007). The tolerance of evil, crime, and corruption then pose a serious theological challenge for the African Renaissance: Through class identity politics, one becomes supportive of corruption, immorality, and political consolidation.

I contend that the church has a key role to play in calling African Renaissance leaders to moral accountability for their actions. The church's biblical mandate is to reject evil and corruption in civil society.

The moral obligation to reject suffering and poverty lies heavily at the forefront of South Africa. Christian compassion means that civil society includes the church, who should respond to these moral challenges. Moreover, research indicates that the African Renaissance lacks a clear strategy for stemming selfish attitudes and lifestyles (Ilo, et al. 2011).

The third theological challenge to the African Renaissance lies in the area of ecclesiology. Research has indicated that the movement lacks a strategic plan to provide an abundant life for all people (Oden 2007). It is the contemporary Christian community that is the keeper of the Word of God. The offer of a full and abundant life is only found through a faith community.

This thesis has indicated that religions across the boundaries of African states can help to provide the intercultural and inter-ethnic

dimension in positive terms. A society cannot be transformed without a religious culture of hope (Ilo 2011). It was noted that very few scholars writing on the African Renaissance gave any (or scant) attention to the role of the church in civil society (Asante 2006; Udogu 2007; Kagwanja 2008; Mboup 2008; Peires 2009; Gigaba 2011; Mali 2011; Zenaqi 2012).

Thus, the lack of attention to the role of the church in the African Renaissance, raises serious ecclesiology issues of concern.

This research addressed the fourth theological challenge to the African Renaissance: ethnic and religious divisions. Handley, et al. (2009) notes that in 2006 Africa had over 40% of the world's violent conflicts with eleven countries being directly affected. Conflicts have generated more than 3 million African refugees (3). This study indicates that divisiveness issues emerge from a crisis of leadership (e.g. Okumu 2002; Ilo 2011). Chronic corruption, economic mismanagement, human rights violations, injustice, and oppression have all been cited as a result of poor governance in leadership (e.g. Ilo 2011, Okumu 2002).

Udogu (2007) a professor of political science at Appalachian State University, noted importantly a major concern: "although African leaders have written extensively on how to move Africa forward, they lack efficacy in implementing their goals and objectives" (139). He also notes that governments have been unsuccessful in fully carrying out their plans. In many cases, five or ten year plans seldom survive after the first six months (139).

Transparency and accountability are essential to good governance; without which corruption ensues; a case in point are the countries of: Egypt, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Uganda, and Gabon.

Udogu (2007) believes that the hope for an African revival lies in the development of new and dedicated leaders:

If there is one lesson to be learned by lawmakers, it is that the way forward for Africa's renewal is... highly mountainous. It would take a new and dedicated cadre of leaders to climb over these steep mountains and valleys in the continent's struggle for its transformation (16).

This research demonstrates that a crisis in leadership results in ethnic and religious violence as well as corruption and poor governance. Herein, we see a key role that the church may play: the development of ethical and moral leaders.

6.7. The Church engaging with the African Renaissance

Chapter five addressed the key research question of this dissertation: *In what practical ways can the South African evangelical church engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity?* The focus of this chapter was to address key questions such as: What does it mean for the church to “engage” with the African Renaissance movement? How does one define the “unique identity” of the church? In what ways must the church guard against “cultural captivity”? What is the defined role of the church in the public sphere? What possible strategies might the evangelical church employ when engaging with the African Renaissance movement? These queries formed the basis of the discourse in chapter five. The conclusion to these queries are stated below.

6.7.1 The church engaging culture

Key terms such as, “engaging our culture” and “culture” was elucidated in order to gain a clearer understanding of the role and posture of the church. Engaging a culture implies that the church should embrace cultural involvement to enrich the lives of others and point them to the hope in Christ.

Although the gospel of Christ often contradicts society and worldviews; nevertheless, the key to the power of the Church to transform culture is through an unwavering commitment to the Word of God.

Research indicates that the church’s role in transforming a culture begins in the public arena. Several scholars (Banda 2009; Butler, et al 2011; Czegledy 2008; Ilo 2011; Oden 2007; Uzokike 2008) examines this key role. Their research indicates that religious networks have always served as powerful forces for social mobilisation and ethical accountability as they take their respected place in civil society. Rah (2009) however, offered a caveat to the church in guarding against being influenced by its surrounding culture. This is known as the “captivity of the church.” In this mode, the church reflects the surrounding culture and risks losing its unique identity. The church is cautioned against being defined by any influence other than Scripture.

6.7.2 Unique identity of the church

Next, the role of the church according to Acts chapters 2-4 was closely examined. The hermeneutic demonstrated that the New Testament book of Acts provides clear guidelines in determining the church’s mission and unique identity in the world: that of sustaining a distinctive moral vision, and maintaining the church’s witness of faith in a contending culture.

The South African evangelical church should remain true to its biblical mandate (provided by the Cape Town Commitment (2010) “to worship and glorify God, loving all peoples and valuing ethnic diversity. This includes: actively engaging the public arenas of government, business, and academia with biblical, Christian truth; and Bringing Christ’s truth and peace to bear on racism and ethnic diversity” (Smith 2011).

6.7.3 Strategies for the church engaging with the African Renaissance

The basis of this research was to determine ways in which the South African evangelical church might engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity. This study demonstrated that the posture of the church in engaging with the African Renaissance lies in the following key areas: (1) cultivate and mobilise the church for transformative action in moral regeneration; (2) engage the church in poverty reduction in addressing socio-economic-political factors; (3) mobilise and engage the church to check corruption and power abuse; (4) engage the church for political participation; (5) engage the church in developing ethical leaders; (6) engage the church to promote economic reform; (7) engage the church in holding African Renaissance leaders responsible for ethnic and religious boundaries and judicial balance.

While several scholars’ discourse have included recommendations for moving South Africa forward with socio-economic, and political discourse (e.g. Ajulu 2001; Okumu 2002; Udogu 2007; Msimang 2000) they have overlooked the important role of the church in the revival of Africa. This thesis, however, has demonstrated essential strategies that the church may use when engaging with the African Renaissance. In addition to the above key roles, the book of the Acts of the Apostles calls us to be God’s Church and Christ’s witnesses in a chaotic world.

Furthermore, the church is called to responsibility and must be equipped for it in times of social transition. The early Christian leaders of Acts 2-4 reminds the 21st church that it is not called to exist as another social program; rather the church exists to be sent out into the world as witnesses of what God has done, can do, and is doing to transform lives. In so doing, the church fulfils its calling to be a church triumphant in persecution; engaged in contending cultures, transformational in the public sphere, and faith-witnesses of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Boesak (2005) calls the church to witness in a changing and complex world by rejecting human injustice and seeking compassion (73). Boesak sees a key role of the church as proclaiming God's prophetic anger against injustice:

For God has put in their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdoms to the beast, until the until the words of God will be fulfilled (Rev. 17:17) (Boesak 2005:92).

Boesak (2005) wisely calls the church to find its voice once again and to resist being silent. He offers four sobering caveats to the church if it remains silent: (1) the state will underestimate its limitations and lapse into greed and corruption; (2) the state will fail to acknowledge the role of faith and spirituality in moral regeneration; (3) the state will elevate its leaders to a god-like status; (4) the state will deprive the powerless and voiceless (169).

While I concur with Boesak that the church is called to be the "voice of the voiceless" (169), the church's mandates do not end there; rather the church must demonstrate its utter dependence on God – not on regimes, policies, or politics. From the Acts of the Apostles, chapters

two through four, we have learned that they were ever conscious of God's sovereign power. Their example informs the 21st century church of Jesus Christ.

6.8 Overcoming the challenges

This study has concluded that the African Renaissance is a concept that African people and nations may overcome the current socio-economic, and political challenges facing the continent (e.g. Ajulu 2001; Boloka 1999; Gigaba 2011; Mboup 2008; Molefi 2007; Lotter 2007; Okumu 2002). Several scholars posit diverse opinions on ways to achieve socio-eco-political stability in Africa, particularly (e.g. Ilo & Ojacor 2011; Boesak 2008; DeGruchy 2005; Cliffe 2004; Lorenzo 2003).

Scholarly research by Lorenzo (2003) proposes a human development capacity to stem the current socio-economic challenges in South Africa. She speaks convincingly of developing ways to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of women, particularly, as a means to social and economic development. Lorenzo (2003) returns to the essence of interdependence of *Ubuntu* and renewing spirituality through development programs which foster communal caring for the well-being of others.

On the other hand, Botman's (2008) research proposes the issue of good governance and the role of the churches for ushering in socio-economic stability, particularly. Botman speaks from his position as the past president of the South African Council of Churches, and is one of few scholars who acknowledge the important role of the church in the African Renaissance. He maintains the role and contribution of the church toward good governance. He clarifies and defines the word "church" as referring to various levels of what it means to be the

“church.” For example, the “church” can refer to the institutional structures, while at the same time referring to individuals in terms of its members or congregations. The term “church” can also refer to global forums such as the World Council of Churches. Thus, Botman (2008) posits that the witness and activities of the “church” should operate on both a local and international level (3). While Botman (2008) is to be commended for clarification of the term “church,” for the purpose of this research I have used the term to specifically refer to the evangelical church of South Africa. However, I concur with Botman that the term may be used synonymously in referring to both individuals and institutions.

To ensure socio-economic stability, Botman (2008) proposes the lowering of taxes and the reduction of spending for the purchase of weapons. To achieve this proposal, he posits the role of the church to engage and challenge political parties, parliamentary hearings, and government representatives in assuring priority spending (4). Churches are expected to challenge political and economic decisions from the perspective of social justice. He contends that the South African church today should become a credible partner on three areas of discourse: (1) national issues; (2) regional issues (Africa); (3) and global issues. His solution for fulfilling this challenge is for the church to “develop new leadership and capacity” (5).

Another South African scholar, Alan Boesak (2005:13) blames neo-liberal capitalism for the economic gap that exists between the rich and poor in South Africa and goes on a tirade of existing disparities which currently exist post-1994. In his newest work, *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics* (2005), Boesak maintains that the church should demonstrate spiritual power and infuse politics with spirituality as it did in the face of apartheid in the 20th century. He further encourages the church to make its

prophetic voice heard in the area of socio-economic and human rights disparities (64). Boesak soberingly reminds his readers that the unfortunate era of South African history during the apartheid years, was not fought with weapons of destruction – but rather through the moral courage and spiritual strength of her people of faith. Boesak (2008) offers a sober challenge to the South African church:

The church knows the might of the powers that rule this world, but the church is called by a Higher Power (99).
God waits...for the church to speak (92).

Similarly today, South Africa's people of faith, should rally for the moral and ethical accountability of African Renaissance leaders. I concur with Boesak that our Christian faith calls us to witness for a moral revival. This research has indicated that the scriptures in Acts 2-4 call leaders to accountability.

6.9 Goals of the African Renaissance

This study has identified the following goals and objectives of the African Renaissance: the movement, as a whole, seeks to achieve cultural, scientific, economic renewal, and political stability. Okumu 2002 demonstrated that “one of the cardinal principles of the African Renaissance is to promote African culture”; thereby, giving a re-birth of African cultural identity through music, art, and literature (15).

Furthermore, several scholars proposed hypothetical solutions to the looming current issues of economic and political instability. For example, Boesak (2005) proposes a politics “infused with compassion”(24) to offer hope to the homeless AIDS victims; to reduce tension between government and AIDS activist groups; lessen

government spending on the Arms trade and increase strategies for socio-economic development.

While Boesak offers a brilliant treatise in his tirade of enumerating the current socio-economic ills of South Africa, he offers fewer practical strategies for eliminating poverty - except to recommend fighting poverty with sustainable economic development.

On the other hand, Wa Thiong'o (2009) demonstrates a primary concern over the political and economic recovery of Africa. He cites the politico-economic issue as the major thrust of the African Renaissance, which in his opinion, has always been enshrined in Pan Africanism. Its success lie in its ability to retain the vision of Pan Africanism ¹.

1. Pan Africanism was initially an anti-slavery movement amongst black people of Africa in the late 19th century. However, its aims have evolved through the decades. Today, it is seen more as a cultural and social philosophy than the politically-driven movement of the past (Adi and Sherwood 2003).

Reflecting on the goals of the African Renaissance, former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, expounded on the looming issue of the "brain drain" and its effect on the cultural, scientific, and eco-politico spheres. The mass exit of South African intelligentsia since 1994 has had a profound effect on the country. His strategy proposes an increase in the educational sphere to stem the tidal wave of the "brain drain" exit. Moreover, LeBeau and Gordon (2002) believe that in order to prevent a further "brain drain" it will take all people working together: "If an African Renaissance proves itself to be the 'true' liberation that rejoices in diversity, it will be necessary for all the peoples of Africa, regardless of their race or colour to strive for the restoration of the dignity of all concerned..."(234). From this research, we learn that a coalition of civic society, including the church, is essential in achieving the stated objectives of the African Renaissance.

In meeting the goals and objectives of the movement, several researchers proposed an alliance of forces, including the church (e.g. Boesak 2005; DeGruchy 2005; Butler, et al 2011; Ilo, et al 2011). Ilo et al.(2011), particularly emphasise a three-fold role of the church: “to recognise, to reflect and to respond. The church should be sensitive and alert in recognising the ills of society and critically reflect on them in light of the church’s role as salt to the earth and light to the world.” In addition, “the church should be committed to actions that effectively respond to these ills in a manner that ensures the development of the African people”...(57).

Ilo (2011) is the only scholar I found who refers to the biblical reference of Acts 4:44-45; this passage views a key role of the church: to be in community. The ancient church formed a community of believers that were united in heart and mind. They were inspired to impact their world for Christ through a living faith. The early church considered loyalty to the community very important (54). Ilo notes importantly, that the New Testament sense of community provides for a more inclusive association; it collapses the wall of distinction between race, tribe, and clan and adopts a classless community approach.

The critical role of the church must be one that rises above the unwholesome value system of secular society to demonstrate a biblical model of moral and ethical purity. The grace to carry out this mandate should come from the gospel as the normative basis of ethical formation (Ilo 2011:58).

Ilo is one of few scholars who calls the Church to accountability and transparency:

For the church in Africa to be a microcosm which can serve as the concrete model of what a fully inclusive

community might look like and as a catalyst, within the conditions of current political and economic realities, for actions intended to bring that community into existence, it must be accountable and transparent in all it does...(59).

Although Ilo (2011) provides a clear identity for the role of the church in civil society, he reminds the church that it has not always been flawless as a community. The caveat he offers is noteworthy for the 21st century evangelical church.

DeGruchy (2005) notes a more practical strategy for the church engaging with the African Renaissance: he identifies the church's role as one in which moral and ethical leaders may be trained for positions of political involvement and policy-making for good governance. This would ensure ethical policy-making at each level of government.

Professor W.A.J. Okumu (2002) is one of Africa's foremost development experts and internationally renowned mediator on peace. Writing on the history and significance of the African Renaissance, he posits the importance of the church becoming a key player by rejecting corruption, developing the concept of vocation where a job is seen as a calling from God, and promoting a strong work ethic (261). He cites the main reason that prevents Africa from achieving economic growth and political stability: a leadership crisis due to widespread corruption (223). Okumu sees a plurality of faiths, ie: Christianity, Islam, and "other religious ideological belief systems" (261) as driving forces to support an African revival. A caveat to Okumu's proposal is that opposing biblical views may impact political decisions and create religious polarity rather than cohesion.

Although Okumu recommends the role of religious plurality in the African Renaissance, he is, in my opinion, the most comprehensive scholar on the history and significance of the African Renaissance. His research is scholarly and provocative. Other scholars have written on various aspects of the movement, but few have proposed strategies for solving the glaring challenges of Africa; whereas, Okumu demonstrates clear and practical strategies for gaining economic and political stability to enhance the well-being of all people.

Whereas other scholars (Udogu 2007; Maloka 2000) speak of Africa's "development" in a narrower scope, Okumu (2002) gives a clear definition of the term:

...we can define "development" as the process of a country moving towards greater inclusion, health, opportunity, justice, freedom, fairness, forgiveness, and cultural expression (13). Okumu, views "inclusion" more comprehensively by referring to "political, economic, and social inclusion"(13).

6.10 Summary

The preceding research has shown that many scholars have written discourse on the African Renaissance from various perspectives. For example, Okumu (2002) wrote comprehensively on the history, significance, and strategy of the African Renaissance. Maloka and LeRoux (2000); Botman (2008); Boesak (2005); DeGruchy (2005) and Okumu (2005), importantly noted the challenges facing the AR and concluded that the core of Africa's crisis is multi-faceted and lacking in the following areas: lack of security and good governance, lack of meaningful economic development, and lack of attention to the poor and needy.

Furthermore, Udogu (2007), a veteran scholar of African studies, wrote a scholarly work on the AR with reference to the political, social, and economic challenges with a proposal to the way forward to ensure peaceful coexistence on the continent. In the spiritual arena, DeGruchy (2005) has made an invaluable contribution in combining solid theological and historical scholarship with commitment to the role and witness of the Church in South Africa. Boesak's work in 2005, offers a clarion call for a religious voice in the political arena of South Africa and offers a paradigm for leadership which he calls "shepherd servanthood"(224) modelled by Christ Himself.

Moreover, Ilo, Ogbonnaya and Ojacor (2011) offers a work that provides keen insights into the mission and identity of the Church in Africa. They share thoughts on the importance of de-Westernizing African Christianity in order to re-envision abundant life for God's people in the African continent. While they discuss the political and economic objectives of the African Renaissance, they also offer discourse on the social and moral objectives which include the abolition of militarism in governance and the elimination of corruption and abuse of power. The authors posit that "religion in general, and Christianity in particular, can contribute to the regeneration of humanity through the discipline of sacrifice and self-denial...religions cross the boundaries in African states and can help provide the intercultural and inter-ethnic dimension of this new society of Africa. The Church is...a model...of this new society proclaimed by the African renaissance" (ILO, et al. 2011:97).

6.11 Acts 2-4: The Church's Purpose and Identity

Nevertheless, a central component to this research has been a socio-rhetorical exegetical study of the Acts of the Apostles, chapters two through four. The sacred text was examined to demonstrate the

sovereignty of God to move in divine ways. The socio and cultural texture was explored in order to identify ways in which the early church responded to the issue of poverty and community care; opposition to injustice and corruption, and ways in which they faced persecution in a hostile society. Through this exegetical study, the purpose and mission of the church was modelled for the 21st century church. The following four key issues on the purpose and identity of the early church, emerged from this study:

1. The purpose of the early church was to exhibit a non-negotiable standard of faith. They offered the gospel without apology. As a community of faith, they exalted Christ in the face of persecution. Their response to persecution was prayer – not revenge. They were ever conscious of God's sovereign power and never sought to exalt themselves (Acts 2:14-40; 4:3-20).
2. The identity of the early church in Acts 2-4, was known as Holy-Spirit led and God-centred with courageous leaders (Acts 2:1-40; Acts 4:8; Acts 4:1-12).
3. They identified themselves as a close-knit fellowship with commonalities. They maintained an unswerving commitment to God and people in the community as well as those outside their community (Acts 2:42-45).
4. They were committed to the will of God in a hostile environment. During political tensions, the church remained strong (Acts 4:13,21).

The mission and identity of the early Christ-followers informs the 21st century church: While maintaining a distinct moral vision, they demonstrated the witness of an unswerving biblical faith.

6.12 Role of the Church in the African Renaissance

Moreover, while many of the scholars have made invaluable contributions relating to the Church's mission in a general context, this thesis has made a unique and original contribution to the discourse by proposing key strategies whereby the *evangelical* church in South Africa, particularly, might engage with the African Renaissance without losing its unique identity.

The term 'evangelical' was defined as:

- **Conversionism:** the belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a life-long process of following Jesus.
- **Activism:** the expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts.
- **Biblicism:** a high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority.
- **Crucicentrism:** a stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity (NAE[2012]).

This research has demonstrated that the church has the following key roles to play when engaging with the African Renaissance movement: that of maintaining a distinct moral vision and witness of a biblical faith; to assist in the moral regeneration of its society; to check corruption and power abuse; to develop ethical leaders for political participation; to assist in developing strategies for poverty reduction through self-empowerment programmes. The church should resist isolationism and act responsibly and ethically. Following the example of the early first

century church, the South African evangelical church should witness with boldness, be constructive and innovative, while making positive contributions toward overseeing good governance and ensuring the human dignity of all people. The church is the one institution that is God-called to stand up for the human rights of all people.

When considering the human rights of individuals, the Church of Jesus Christ is the only institution qualified to define the purpose and meaning of life. This research demonstrates that Renaissance leaders have been lax in identifying the purpose and meaning of life. As a result, much of Africa continues to wallow in AIDS, abject poverty, and corruption – in large part because there is little or no regard for the meaning and sanctity of human life.

In summary, this research demonstrates that the very basis of the church's mission and identity is found in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The early church faced a contending culture with an unswerving faith and reliance on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The nascent believers were led of the Holy Spirit to achieve the impossible and the improbable. Their mission and identity informs the 21st century church. However, "God waits for the church to speak" (Boesak 2005:92).

6.13 Recommendations for future research

In considering future research, I propose the development of an Evangelical Alliance Forum. The purpose of the Forum (EAF) would be to monitor the efforts and objectives of the African Renaissance toward the moral regeneration of South Africa. This Forum would play a role in recommending policy development and good governance.

6.13.1 The formation of a Forum (ECPF)

The evangelical churches of South Africa to call a Forum (*Evangelical Churches Policy Forum*) of ten to twelve evangelical pastors and/ or Christian higher education academic leaders. These individuals must be committed Christian leaders whose passion is to see the moral and spiritual regeneration of their country. The Forum would gather quarterly at a central location or communicate via conference calls (ie Skype). The purpose of the ECPF would be to voice recommended policies for good governance.

This Forum would be represented by the president / vice president of the ECPF and would meet with the African Renaissance Institute (ARI) which is currently headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana periodically. During those meetings, the ECPF representative (s) would present the recommendations of the Forum in order to oversee policy development and good governance within the African Renaissance.

The ECPF should appoint another representative from the Forum to stay abreast of current policy developments/objectives within the African Renaissance. The ECPF representative would conduct annual literature reviews of scholarly works, ie: books, articles, via internet searches (Google Scholar, etc.) on the African Renaissance. This review would be presented to the ECPF at its quarterly meetings for consideration.

6.13.2 A proposed mission statement of the ECPF Mission Statement of the ECPF:

The mission of the ECPF is to develop and promote ethical and moral leaders for good governance in South Africa in order to facilitate the moral and spiritual regeneration of the country.

In concluding this research, I maintain, that the church, as a civil society organisation, and a most trusted institution, has a vital role to play in transforming and nurturing society for the well-being of all its citizens. In developing an empowering spirituality, the church can maintain its public witness for positive transformation. May the South African evangelical church and her leaders, rise to its calling to be salt and light in a complex world. "God waits for the Church to speak". (Boesak 2005:92)

Appendix I: Definition of Socio-Rhetorical Terms

(3)

gnostic-manipulationist: one of seven types of social rhetoric, or in terms of socio-rhetorical criticism a [specific social topic](#), the gnostic-manipulationist response seeks only a transformed set of relationships - a transformed method of coping with evil. Whereas the foregoing orientations reject the goals of society as well as the institutionalized means of attaining them and the existing facilities by which people might be saved, the gnostic-manipulationist rejects only the means and the facilities. Salvation is possible in the world and evil may be overcome if people learn the right means, improved techniques, to deal with their problems.

intertexture: Intertexture is a "text's representation of, reference to, and use of phenomena in the 'world' outside the text being interpreted." This world includes other texts ([oral-scribal intertexture](#)) other cultures ([cultural intertexture](#)) social roles institutions, codes and relationships ([social intertexture](#)) and historical events or places ([historical intertexture](#)).

recitation: A form of [oral-scribal intertexture](#), it is the transmission of speech or narrative, either from oral or written tradition, in exact or different words from which the person has received them. There are many kinds of recitation: 1) replication of exact words of another written text, 2) replication of exact words with one or more differences, 3) omission of words in such a manner that the word-string has the force of a proverb, [maxim](#), or authoritative judgment, 4) recitation of a saying using words different from the authoritative source, 5) recitation that uses some of the narrative words in the biblical text plus a saying from the text, 6) recitation of a narrative in substantially one's own words, 7)

recitation that summarizes a span of text that includes various episodes.

sacred texture: Sacred texture is a texture that is intertwined with each of the other four textures (*inner*, *inter*, *social/cultural*, and *ideological*), and refers to the manner which a text communicates insights into the relationship between the human and the divine. This texture includes aspects concerning *deity*, *holy persons*, *spirit beings*, *divine history*, *human redemption*, *human commitment*, *religious community* (e.g. *ecclesiology*), and *ethics*.

social and cultural texture: The social and cultural texture of a text refers to the social and cultural nature of a text as a text. A text is part of society and culture by the way it views the world (*specific social topics*), by sharing in the general social and cultural attitudes, norms, and modes of interaction which are known by everyone in a society (*common social and cultural topics*) and by establishing itself vis-à-vis the dominant cultural system (*final cultural categories*) as either sharing in its attitudes, values, and dispositions at some level (*dominant* and *subcultural rhetoric*) or by rejecting these attitudes, values, and dispositions (*counterculture*, *contra culture*, and *liminal culture rhetoric*).

Thaumaturgical: Thaumaturgical discourse in narrative speech is concerned with specific topics of faith, courage, and amazement at the possibilities and extent of God's power.

(3) *Dictionary of Socio-rhetorical terms*. Online Dictionary .Accessed from <http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/index.cfm>, 11/09/11.

Appendix II: A critical intellectual base from which to conceptualise the African Renaissance

Scholar	Debate
Maloka 2000	African Renaissance should be viewed as an historical and cultural heritage in Africa.
Botha (in Maloka 2000)	Investigates how the African Renaissance is used by Thabo Mbeki and the African National Congress (ANC). Argues that the African Renaissance can no longer be seen as an only option for Africa's leaders, but a survival imperative (21).
Boesak (2005)	Without spirituality a search for an African renaissance is futile (2). Gives serious attention to the role of faith in post-apartheid South Africa. Boesak brings Christian theology to bear on the ideology of the movement.
Murobe (in Maloka 2000)	Considers the ethical ramifications of globalization. Argues that the neo-liberal ideology is unsustainable and unsuitable for an African Renaissance. Places the African Renaissance within the discourse of Afro-pessimism. He calls for a revival of <i>Ubuntu</i> and regional, political, and economic integration (31)

LeBeau Gordon (2002)	&	“The African Renaissance is a call for justice and equality, as a call for the recognition of what is African. The AR seems to be a deliberate movement. The aim of the African Renaissance is advancing self-development as well as pride in one’s identity and restoring self-dignity” (227).
Ramogale <i>(in Maloka 2002)</i>		He posits: “The challenges that faces the advocates of an African revival, is how to effect attitudinal and moral transformation throughout the continent. African politicians need to be concerned about this rather than about votes and popularity” (89).

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