AN EVANGELICAL CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MISSION PRAXIS IN AFRICA: AN INDIGENOUS SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE (1950 - 2005)

by

ANDRIES RAMOHLAKORE TSEHLE

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PREFACE

I declare that this thesis, *Title of Thesis in full,* is my own work and that all the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed:_____

Date: _____

SUMMARY

The gospel of Jesus has been widely and joyfully received by many indigenous South Africans. Yet there is without doubt a huge need for most indigenous South Africans to hear the gospel and apply it in a manner congruent to their context-specific issues. To this very day, many scholars are still seeking to apply the objective Word of God within their subjective cross-cultural mission contexts. Hence it is the subject of this thesis to discover the theological journey travelled by many concerned African theologians and clergymen who strived to contextualized the eternal gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in their dynamic contexts.

For example, theologies such as the Black Liberation Theology, African Indigenous Theology, and Contextual Theology emerged out of concern from the indigenous South African Christians who longed for a God who directly speaks to them at their point of need without the trimmings of Western cultural and contextual paraphernalia. But these theological attempts to contextualize the gospel have been marked by many difficulties, complexities and dangers. Therefore, this thesis seeks to systematically make sense of the question of contextualization of the gospel as it relates to the indigenous South Africans (i.e. from 1950 to 2005).

The view taken by this thesis is that it is both necessary and possible to contextualize the gospel among the indigenous South Africans (or any indigenous groups of people around the world) without betraying the eternal Word of Truth. Thus, this is an attempt to formulate a sound, Biblically based, evangelical contextual mission praxis in Africa from an indigenous South African's view.

Abbreviations

1. ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for the Foreign Missions)

2. AICs (African Indigenous Churches)

3. ATRs (African Traditional Religions)

4. CESA (Church of England in South Africa)

5. EWISA Document (Evangelical Witness of South Africa Document)

6. ICT (Institute of Contextual Theology)

7. KD (Kairos Document)

8. LXX (The Septuagint)

9. NKJV (New King James Version)

10. TEF (Theological Education Fund)

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CHAPTER 1

AN EVANGELICAL CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MISSION PRAXIS IN AFRICA: AN INDIGENOUS SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE (1950 - 2005)

1.1. Background

The focus of my proposal is to discover (through literature review) the missiological approach which the evangelical church in Africa, specifically in South Africa, has been using since 1950 into the 21st Century; and its impact or lack of it on the souls of the indigenous African men and women. The motivation of this thesis is based on my conviction that the *karios moment* has arrived for the indigenous Africans to take their rightful place in the global Body of Christ. In his article, Andrew F. Walls presents an extensive argument about the future of Christian theology and ethics.[1] He is of the opinion that the recession of Christianity in western countries implies that Africans, Asians and Latin Americans will be *the representatives* of the Christian norm and mainstream in the 21st and 22nd Centuries.[2] I do concur with Walls' opinion based on the premise that as an African, or an indigenous South African, I observed in awe as the African Anglicans were making a collective moral stand against the decision of their North American counterparts to ordain a gay bishop in 2004. This made an impression on my mind. It made me to see Africans taking a leadership stand in preserving and presenting the evangelical faith with integrity. Thus, as a Christian who is mission conscious, I believe that the future of the evangelical church in Africa, especially in South Africa, lies in the hands of Africans themselves. This is not an attempt to exclude foreigners; rather it is an attempt to empower the indigenous Africans to participate meaningfully towards shaping the future of the evangelical church in Africa and the rest of the world.

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[1] Walls, A F (2001). Christian Scholarship in Africa in the Twenty-first Century. *Journal of African Christian Thought,* 4 (2): 44-52

[2] Ibid., 47

1.2. Theoretical Framework

It is my understanding that Sub-Saharan Africa owes its knowledge and encounter of the gospel to western missionaries who laboured tirelessly to Christianize so-called "dark" Africa. But most of these missionaries were too paternalistic to oversee the process of indigenization in Africa. Their continual hold of power through Westernized models of institutional denominational structures has ensured that Africans had no meaningful say in the shaping of a possible future of its churches, and this hold of power is still a reality in some churches. For example, the Church of England in South Africa - CESA - (of which I am one of its ministers) has a long history of being a *settler church* that upheld the status quo of the Apartheid regime in South Africa by maintaining a so-called "a-political stand[3]." As a result, CESA has failed (even in the post-Apartheid era) to be indigenous, contextual, or incarnational in South Africa. It also failed to take the role of its African members seriously thus failing to be a meaningful partner with those who seek to see the gospel being deepened in the consciousness and praxis of Christian beliefs by Africans.

Yet, things are not hopeless! There has been a growing number of theological scholars[4] in Africa who sought to contextualize Christian theology after their countries experienced political emancipation from their European colonizers. Many of these African theological scholars have sought to address the need for a contextualized theology by constructing what came to be known as African Theology/ African Christian Theologies. The quest came as a result of Africans acknowledging that a "hermeneutical gap" (Buthelezi in Daneel and Kritzinger, 1989:22) emanated from their encounter with Jesus of Nazareth as presented from a Western perspective. The Western perspective was seen as inadequate to liberate the African person holistically from all forms of bondage. Pato (in De Gruchy, 1994:154) held the opinion that European theology failed to respectfully and creatively enter into a meaningful dialogue

[3] For CESA, to be “a-political” meant a passive participation in the politics of the Apartheid era.

[4] Daneel and Kritzinger (in a UNISA Reader for MSB301-F: MISSION AS LIBERATION, 1989) list some articles written by key African theologians such as Desmond M. Tutu, E. W. Fashole-Luke, Manas Buthelezi, John S. Mbiti, Gabriel M. Setiloane, etc.

with African indigenous customs, cultures, religions and traditions. As a result, he concluded that European theology was too statement-oriented, speculative, elitist and individualistic to be effective to Africans in their own worldview. Even though I agree[5] with Pato's assertions, I think that *we must not throw out the baby with the bath water*. In our quest to bridge the hermeneutical gap caused by European theology we need to appreciate the contributions of Western theology in the mutual up-building of Christ's universal Church. In my opinion, contextualization should not be viewed as a way to cut the umbilical cord with the West. Rather, it should be seen as a means to provide a much more down-to-earth (or contextually relevant) approach to mission praxis, without losing continuity with the global Body of Christ.

In the context of South Africa, Liberation theology and Black theology have worked hand-in-hand toward a theology that both affirms the humanity of Africans and seeks to offer solutions to contextual challenges. So African, Liberation and Black theologies serve as a background to my quest in the search toward a holistic, incarnational and contextual evangelical missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa (i.e., from an indigenous South African perspective). I would like to clarify in advance that I don't espouse Liberation, Black or African theologies, rather I respect their pioneering efforts in trying to contextualize theology in Africa. Thus, I believe they are worth investigating and so I intend to critically engage in a vigorous dialogue with them, that is, from a Reformed Evangelical perspective.

I chose to emphasize the biblical critique of Liberation, Black or African theologies because of my personal convictions (i.e. I am a "born again", Bible believing, Reformed Evangelical who believes that the Bible is the absolute objective measuring stick of matters concerning faith and its practice). Thus, I espouse the Reformed tradition of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Thomas Cranmer. And I also espouse the evangelical spirit of great preachers such as George Whitefield, John Wesley, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon and Billy Graham. Hence, in this thesis I will attempt to reflect on

[5] My agreement with Pato's assertions is based on my personal experience in CESA

the evangelical faith from the perspective of a “born-again” indigenous South African.

1.3. Research Aim

The proposal is aimed at discovering the implications of an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa from an indigenous South African perspective (1950 - 2005). The purpose of this research is a *critical analysis*[6] of existing scholarship on the question of major contextual themes in the Evangelical, African and Black theological scholarship (i.e., in relation to mission praxis in Africa from an indigenous South African perspective between 1950 and 2005). The period between 1950 and 2005 comes against the background of the establishment of the apartheid policies of the Republic of South Africa under the rule of D. F. Malan from 1948. This prompted the revolutionary anti-apartheid African National Congress movement to draft a Freedom Charter in Soweto in the 1950s. Furthermore, most indigenous South African theologians and churchmen joined the struggle against the repressive apartheid rule during the 1950s. Hence, most of the indigenous South African Evangelical, African and Black Liberation theological discourses on the question of contextualization took centre stage from the 1950s onwards. As a result, I have chosen this period a barometer for this thesis.

1.4. Problem

My research problem is to seek to discover for myself and for the benefit of the Kingdom of God (or the Church of Jesus Christ) how Evangelical theology has been related to the African context, especially the indigenous South African context, between 1950 and 2005. This will require me to understand the meaning of being contextual, holistic and incarnational in the community minded context of the indigenous South Africans. Thus, I will need to interact

[6] My expedition will involve a vigorous engagement with both the views of the proponents of Contextual Missiology and those who have opposing views.

with African and Black theology, including African Traditional Religions and African Independent Churches, in order to have a much *broader and an intimate interaction* with the key developments of the evangelical contextual mission praxis in Africa.

1.5. Objectives

My objective is to systematically analyze the pillars of Evangelical theology and African/Black theology and the role they played in the construction of a contextual missiological approach in Africa from an indigenous South African perspective between 1950 and 2005. Thus, I want to discover some key things about my research thesis:

1.5.1. The key indigenous African evangelical scholars who have been contextualizing their evangelistic mission in Africa, especially from an indigenous South African perspective between 1950 and 2005.

1.5.2. The content and substance of their findings.

1.5.3. The reasons behind their research and their subsequent findings.

1.5.4. The contextual background to their research and its implications for my research.

1.5.5. The methodologies employed in their research.

1.5.6. The implications of my findings in the way I should approach mission praxis in the multi-cultural African context from an indigenous South African perspective.

1.6. Design and Methodology

I have opted to utilize literature review (or *scholarship review*[7]) as my research design and methodology because of three major reasons. For instance, the question of contextual theology is a "buzz" word in the field of Practical Theology and Missiology. This makes it possible for me to get hold of a reasonably substantial quantity of literature on the topic of contextual missiology. Secondly, the indigenous African evangelical scholars have been

[7] Johann Mouton argues for the use of scholarship review based on the fact that the researcher is more interested in what other scholars have already dealt with in terms of his/her subject matter. See Mouton, J (2001). How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies: *A South African Guide and Resource Book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers

vigorously interacting with their various African contexts in order to seek to address the hermeneutical gap that Western theology has left as a legacy of theologizing in Africa. Lastly, African independence from colonial rule (including Apartheid rule, that is, in the case of South Africa) has been marked by a neo-revolution called the *African Renaissance*. This neo-revolution has become a great motivation for the revival of African Traditional Religions (ATRs). Hence, I trust that the huge pile of information available on ATRs will truly be helpful to this research. This critical analysis of the existing scholarship for the last 56 years (i.e., from 1950 to 2005) will include a review of

1.6.1. African Church Historical Discussions on Contextualization (see Chapter 4)
1.6.2. Evangelical Church Historical Discussions on Contextualization, especially in relation to native Africans (see Chapter 2)
1.6.3. Biblical Hermeneutics of Key Related Passages (see Chapter 3)
1.6.4. Dogmatics – a case study of the evangelical contextualization of Christology from an indigenous African perspective (see Chapter 5)

I have chosen to critique D J Hesselgrave, D J Bosch, and the compiled reader by M L Daneel and J N J Kritzinger because these scholars or their anthologies represent the broad spectrum of theological thinking among those who seek to contextualize the gospel cross-culturally, especially in relation to the indigenous African people.[8] Firstly, Hesselgrave's book represents a plethora of the views of Western evangelicals on the question of contextualization. Secondly, Bosch's contextualization approach is holistic, biblical, historical, and involves a multi-denominational theological dialogue on the question of contextualization. Lastly, the compiled reader by Daneel and Kritzenger represents the views of the indigenous African scholars who engaged the question of contextualization from an indigenous African worldviews and the socio-economic and political background of the indigenous Africans. Consequently, these three books give a concrete

[8] See Section 1.9. for the list of books written (by Hesselgrave and Bosch) and compiled (by Daneel and Kritzinger)

scholarly background for a critical analysis of contextualization from different angles as it relates to the indigenous people of South Africa.

1.7. Definitions of Key Terms

1.7.1. Contextualization

Hesselgrave (in Witmer, 1986:15) defines contextualization as "the process whereby representatives of a religious faith adapt the forms and content of that faith in such a way as to communicate and (usually) commend it to the minds and hearts of a new generation within their own changing culture or to people with other cultural backgrounds." And similarly, Taber (in Witmer, 1986:15) is of the opinion that contextualization is "a process…by which a message which is initially alien takes on a shape more congenial to the total receptor context." Even though I agree with Taber and Hesselgrave's definitions of contextualization, I think that there is a need to incorporate the transformative character of the gospel in these definitions. I am of the opinion that we need to go beyond commending the gospel to people's hearts and minds. I think that proper biblical contextualization should be defined as *a transformative process by which the gospel message is holistically commended to the hearts and minds of its receptor's immediate cultural or cross-cultural context, "in the cultural language of a local community, as displayed through the incarnate Christ*[9]". Thus, in the context of the receptor's worldview, gospel contextualization should be proclaimed "without compromise and without offence[10]."

1.7.2. Inculturation

Inculturation was popularized by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990). He defined inculturation as, "The intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in

[9] Pidcock, R 2005. The City On A Hill – A Call for Biblical Contextualization. Online Article: http://www.sharperiron.org/showthread.php?t=1356&highlight=Contextualization, Accessed: 2007-01-09

[10] see Robertson in Pidcock, 2005:3

Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures[11]". His assessment was later espoused by men like Ernest Munachi Ezeoqu. Ezeoqu (1997:8) is of the view that "inculturation is the conviction of faith that the Word of God transcends the cultures in which it has found expression and has the capability of being spread in other cultures, in such a way as to be able to reach all human beings in the cultural context in which they live." As a result he concludes that inculturation is a logical endeavour to develop "an African expression of the gospel which will at the same time be fully evangelical and fully African" (1997:8). Inculturation is therefore a dialogue between the gospel and its recipient's culture, resulting with the recipient being authentically transformed by the gospel in a culturally relevant manner.

1.7.3. Incarnation

Gailyn Van Rheenen (2006: 3) views incarnation in terms of God enabling "divinity to embody humanity." He further argues that Jesus' incarnation points to our incarnation as the Body of Christ. In fact, the apostle John[12] firmly proclaimed that Jesus Christ is God's Word in the flesh. Evidently, Jesus views his church's mission in relation to his commission from the Father (see John 17:18; cf. 1Cor. 9:19-23). Therefore it is my understanding that true Christian mission should be practiced within the framework of Christ's incarnation.

1.7.4. Indigenous South African perspective

South Africa is a true multi-cultural global village. South African citizens are people of Asian, European, Middle Eastern and African descent. And since the national democratic elections of 1994, South Africans are trying to forge a common identity as a "rainbow nation." South Africa has eleven official languages and nine of them are indigenous. Therefore the context of the

[11] See Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990). Electronic edition: (http://www.answers.com/topic/inculturation, 2007-02-16

[12] John 1:14; cf. Philippians 2:5-11; cf. Ross, C 2005. Educating for contextual mission in the light of recent events. Online article: http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/page.cfm?ID=80, 2006–06–15)

indigenous people remains one of the greatest challenges to the mainline Reformed Evangelical mission praxis in our post-modern time.

1.7.5. Indigenization

This term was used in the context of indigenous churches seeking some independence from their paternal Western missionary churches. This was viewed by Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn in terms of foreign missionaries abdicating their paternalistic rule over the new church plants that are "self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating[13]." Paul G. Hiebert (1989:1) held the opinion that indigenization "refers to making the Gospel understood in the language and thought forms of the local people and to efforts to make the church autonomous in its organization." Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, I opt to adopt Hiebert's definition because of its comprehensive nature. It covers both the nature of evangelism and church government in the context of a new church plant.

1.8. Hypothesis

It is the opinion of the researcher that this study will show that contextualization is a biblically, Christologically grounded concept which evangelicals anywhere in the world can utilize to minister incarnationally both in a cross-cultural context in their local environment and elsewhere in the world. Therefore the researcher thinks that this study will illustrate that contextualization is not a betrayal of authentic evangelicalism (nor is it an unworthy risk towards syncretism). Rather, the researcher holds the view that this research will uncover creative ways of doing missions effectively in a manner that is culturally relevant without compromising "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude v.3 [NKJV]). Consequently, the implication of this research is towards adding value, not only to African mission praxis, but also to the evangelical Western mission praxis among the indigenous Africans.

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[13] Hiebert, P G 1989 "Indigenization." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.* Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia. Online article: http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/I54ME.html, 2007-02-16

1.9. Overview[14]

1.9.1. Chapter 1 of this thesis momentarily looks at the following introductory objectives:

1.9.1.1. Background/Rationale
1.9.1.2. Preliminary Scholarship Review
1.9.1.3. Research Problem/Questions
1.9.1.4. Research Aim (s) and Objectives
1.9.1.5. Research Design and Methodology
1.9.1.6. Definitions of Key Terms
1.9.1.7. Hypothesis

1.9.2. In Chapter 2 the researcher will seek to demarcate the relevant scholarship which he has covered, such as

1.9.2.1. Western Evangelical Scholarship
1.9.2.2. African Christian Scholarship
1.9.2.3. African Traditional Religious Scholarship
1.9.2.4. Black/Liberation Theological Scholarship

The researcher will seek to comprehensively summarize the historical background on the debate about contextualization and its necessity for the future of Christian missions among the indigenous people of Africa. This summary will help maintain the logical coherence of this study.

1.9.3. As for Chapter 3, proper and relevant biblical exegesis and hermeneutics of key related passages will be applied in order to establish the biblical basis of contextualized missiological praxis in Africa (or anywhere in the world where cross-cultural mission work is done). I will use relevant, preferably, recent biblical hermeneutical tools to establish the biblical basis of my thesis. I will consult three scholarly works, referenced:

[14] The chapter divisions are mainly informed by the Manual of Research Methodology: RES5200. Johannesburg: South African Theological Seminary.

1.9.3.1. Hesselgrave, D J 1991. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication (2nd ed)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House

1.9.3.2. Bosch, D J 1991. *Transforming Mission – Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books: New York

1.9.3.3. Daneel, M L and Kritzinger, J N J (compiled) 1989. *Mission as Liberation: Third World Theologies (Reader for MSB301-F)*. Pretoria: UNISA

1.9.4. Chapter 4 will focus on the theological formulation of an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa. The case study of Christology from an indigenous African worldview will serve the purpose of analyzing the theological formulation of Contextual Missiology in concrete terms (i.e., in relation to Africa from an indigenous South African perspective).

1.9.5. In Chapter 5, a reflective summary of the entire thesis will help the researcher to be able to define an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa. He will be able to substantiate or disprove his own hypothesis. The conclusion will show the logical coherence, implications and recommendations of the study. Thus the researcher will briefly outline the content of his thesis; the reason/aim of his thesis; his research methodology; and the value/impact of the thesis to the contemporary culture of mission praxis in Africa.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

Let me first start by acknowledging the fact that there is limited information available on the *history* of contextual theology, both on the electronic and the literary media. The reason being that contextual theology as an academic discipline is still a most recent and contentious[15] practical theological methodology in the global church. The ecumenical movement's Theological Education Fund only publicly adopted the term contextualization in 1972.[16] Yet there are many vibrant discourses among scholars concerning contextual theology and various theological periodicals deals with related topics. So let us look at this topic as it unfolds historically, particularly in relation to missions among the indigenous people of South Africa.

2.1. PATERNALISM

In order to properly grasp the paternalism that characterized the western "mission-churches" in South Africa, we need to have some understanding of the state of the Western church during the Age of Reason (1648 – 1789).[17] This era overlap with the Age of Exploration and Economic Advance (1415 – 1763).[18] Consequently these eras were marked by the exaltation of human reason; Western imperialism, superiority and colonization of foreign lands.

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[15] Note that the contentions concerning contextual theology revolve around the question of meaning and application, rather than necessity.
[16] Fleming, Bruce C.E. 1980. Contextualization of Theology: An Evangelical Assessment. Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library
[17] Shelley, B.L. 1995 (1982). Church History in Plain Language: Updated 2nd Edition. Dallas, Tex.: Word Publishing. 309 – 350
[18] Mervin Perry (1988: 345) locates the Age of Exploration and Economic Advance from the Portuguese's capture of Ceuta in 1415 to the Treaty of Paris which turned France's North American empire over to Britain in 1763.

2.1.1. The Church in the Age of Exploration and Economic Advance (1415 – 1763)

The Renaissance inspired European passion for inquiry and knowledge of Latin and Greek literature known as *the classics*. As a result, this era marked the beginning of humanism and subsequently the Reformation.[19] The Renaissance boasts names such as Dante Alighieri, Petrarch of Florence, the Dei Medici family, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Montaigne, Cervantes, Gutenberg, Desiderius Erasmus, Rembrandt, Copernicus, Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Thomas More, and later William Shakespeare, who lived in the Elizabethan era.[20] Undoubtedly, all these men have made enduring contributions toward European and global civilizations. Their tireless quest for knowledge and inquiry instigated "the development of many valuable inventions without which discoveries and conquests would have been impossible" (Hughes and Pullen in Boyce, 1969:21).

It was during this era of Western exploration and economic advance that the likes of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, the Anglicans and the Anabaptists gave birth to the Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was a movement that brought a paradigm shift of power from the clergy to the lay people. The authority of the Bible (i.e. *Sola Scriptura*) was propagated over-and-against the authority of the Church and its established traditions. The use of Latin as a homiletical tool was replaced by the translation and the hermeneutics of the Bible in the language of the lay people, for example, the Scriptures were translated into German, French and English. In addition, the invention of the printing press ensured that the ordinary people could read, appreciate and apply God's Word in their culturally relevant mother tongue. This promoted the spread of literacy among lay people in Europe, and it eventually contributed towards the spread of missions in foreign lands.

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[19] Most pioneers of the Renaissance from Petrarch to Thomas More laid a solid foundation for the spread of the Reformation in Europe. See, Seiferth, MS. "The Renaissance". 1996. Online article: http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/renaissanceinfo.htm, 27-02-2009

[20] Ibid, 1

The spread of the gospel was filled with many perils. Many people suffered from lethal tropical diseases in Africa, and some died for their conviction in the Great Commission.[21] Missionaries were courageous and self-sacrificial in their evangelistic commitment.[22] Their pioneering work for the Lord was very hard and many died without ever seeing the fruits of their labour. These faithful missionaries were not only faced with the task of bringing the gospel to a foreign culture or the constant threat of lethal diseases and wild creatures. But they were also faced with their uncooperative countrymen who valued their economic interests above the eternal salvation of native Africans. Like good spiritual parents, they did their level best to preserve and present the full counsel of God without any hint of syncretistic tendencies. Therefore, most of these missionaries and their successors felt justified in their prolonged paternalistic leadership, both theologically and structurally.

The Age of Exploration and Economic Advance (1415 – 1763) exposed Europe to the rest of the world, its sumptuous resources and its diverse inhabitants. Thus European discoveries, conquests and colonization of foreign lands gave the Westerners an economic and political urge to govern their colonies. The Europeans became paternalistic toward their foreign subjects. Mervin Perry is of the opinion that the Age of Exploration set in motion the European "control of much of the globe" (1988:345). Perry's opinion is of course based on the economic analysis and implications of the colonization of foreign lands. Yet the reality was that this economic and political clout subsequently gave the Western missionaries an unequal advantage on the church leadership and Biblical scholarship of their "mission-churches" in foreign lands. The mission-churches survived by being at the mercy of their Parent/Mother Church. This socio-economic, political and religious dependence, especially in the context of South Africa, paralyzed[23] the African

[21] Matthew 28:16-20

[22] For more details on the heroism of missionaries under strenuous circumstances, see Ruth A. Tucker 1983. From Jerusalem to Arian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House

[23] This spiritual paralysis became a fertile soil for the rise of African Independent Churches in South Africa. Bishop Adjai "Samuel" Crowther of Nigeria is a good example of a crippled African leader who was so much "alienated from his roots" that he remarked during his bishopric consecration: "I am now a black Englishman" (Newby, 2004:8; cf. Saayman, W A and Kritzinger, J N J (eds). 1990.

indigenous Christian leaders from being masters of their own destinies, and subsequently this led to the paradoxical establishment of the African Independent Churches and the African Indigenous Churches. African indigenous Christian leaders were not considered to be credible theologians unless they parroted the Western theologian's answers to questions that were mainly pertinent to Westerners.[24] On the other hand, novice African mission church-plants needed mature supervision and nurturing from their parent church until they could interdependently stand as authentic Christian indigenous churches.

2.1.2. The Church in the Age of Reason (1648 – 1789)

The Age of Reason comes against the background of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the counter-Reformation. The Renaissance speaks of the resurgence of the Greco-Roman civilization, arts and culture embodied in their classical literature. Sultan is of the opinion that the Renaissance's spirit of inquiry encouraged men to be independent thinkers and ardent critics of the church, who dared "to revolt against the authority of the church" (2006:1). People preferred human reason over and against church dogma. It was during this era that Deism and dualism rose into prominence in western societies. John Locke and Voltaire became the pioneers of the notion of a so-called "watchmaker God" who ran the world like a machine.[25] The watchmaker God left this "perfect" world to run itself like a clock. Thus, there is no need for outside interferences such as special revelations and miracles.

The church responded to these intellectual discourses by focusing their energies on spreading the gospel, both in Europe and in foreign lands, with vigour and conviction. This resulted in the so-called "Great Awakenings."

Mission in Creative Dialogue: A dialogue with David Bosch. Pretoria: SA Missiological Society, 168-180).

[24] For example, the question of God's existence, evolution and "the Big Bang" is not, and was not, more important for almost all the indigenous Africans as it is to the Westerners. Most Africans are more interested in knowing who God is and what He can do for them, because they already believe in His existence.

[25] This theory was based on Sir Isaac Newton's thesis that the universe was a smooth-running machine; see Shelley, B.L. 1995 (1982). Church History in Plain Language. 314 - 316

Even so, dualism was to have a lasting effect on the consciousness of western people more than they could have hoped for. It is the prognosis of the researcher that this separation of the sacred from the secular coupled with the Western Christian civilization superiority complex over pagan foreign lands led to a staunch paternalistic approach to missions.[26]

Deism resulted in dualism. Moreover, dualism alienated true spirituality from socio-economic and political activism. Religion was relegated to the realm of the individual's privacy. Consequently, from a non-bourgeois perspective, dualism is an "abomination" that justifies the oppression of the vulnerable, the economic violation of the unsuspecting, the marginalization of the enslaved and the social apathy of conservative evangelicals in Third World countries. For example, a dualistic missionary will be content to preach God's saving grace to an abused menial worker without advocating for his human rights because those rights fall in the carnal realm of secularism.

Western Christian civilization superiority complex over pagan foreign lands reached its fully-fledged prominence in society during the times of David Livingstone. A well-meaning Livingstone propagated the promotion of "commerce, Western civilisation and Christianity" as a new missiological praxis and methodology, thus elevating the West above the so-called "superstitious native savages." Francis X. Hezel's analysis of mission work in the Caroline-Marshall Islands shed some light on the indigenous people's view of a missionary as someone "who pursues single-mindedly his goal of 'converting the heathen …uprooting superstitions', and preaching a new and better way of life to a people who are in his eyes at best 'children,' at worst 'savages'" (1978:1). He concludes by observing that the natives, consequently, view the Christian missionary as an "unwitting perpetrator of cultural genocide among the very people he professes to help" (1978:1).

In conclusion, paternalism was initially a necessary transition of gospel transmission to foreign lands and cultures. However, its protraction delayed

[26] I have to admit that this prognosis is biased by my presupposition of a holistic approach to mission praxis.

the process of healthy indigenization. Consequently, the indigenization process itself unwittingly became a tool of "colonial manipulation…on the part of the missionaries" (Smalley in Winter and Hawthorne 1981:497).

2.2. INDIGENIZATION

Indigenization in Africa can be properly understood against the historical background of Western imperialism and paternalism. Paul G. Hiebert (1989:3) rightly observed, "The concept of indigenization itself was the product of a particular period in mission history when missionaries went from the West to other lands." On the one hand, the local mission churches were theologically, economically and structurally indebted to their parent Western churches. On the other hand, the parent churches held on to power even though it was no longer necessary. As a result, the African indigenous evangelical Christians sought to structurally establish themselves as independent and self-sufficient church organizations. The indigenization of theology was, therefore, a later phenomenon.

2.2.1. *Indigenization as a quest for structural independence and self-sufficiency*

Paul G. Hiebert is of the view that the 16th century modern Roman Catholic pioneer missionaries called the Jesuits, deliberately "spoke of the need for accommodating Christianity to the Chinese and Indian cultures" (1989:1). Likewise, Hiebert uses the Jesuits' example, including that of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther and the Anabaptists, in order to show that indigenization focused initially on a culturally relevant propagation of the gospel.[27] Structural concerns only gained considerable attention during the pinnacle of Western imperialism in the 19th century. Hiebert further indicates that Protestant missionaries, including Mennonites, were ever more associated with the interests of European colonizers and "a Western sense of superiority justified

[27] Hiebert, P G 1989. "Indigenization." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.* Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Online article: http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/I54ME.html 16-02-2007

by the theory of cultural evolution" (1989:1). Nevertheless, Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn showed their dissatisfaction with this over-inflated Western egotism that created an unhealthy prolonged dependence of young churches on mission agencies, and alienated them from their indigenous roots.[28]

Anderson and Venn promoted the indigenization methodology of "self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation" of young churches. This methodology was seen a way forward for young indigenous churches to reach their quest for structural independence and self-sufficiency. But Anderson and Venn were not able to persuade their compatriot European missionaries to "turn control of new churches over to native leadership as soon as possible" (in Hiebert, 1989:2). For this reason, the process of indigenization was very slow and only "few national leaders were ordained as pastors and bishops, and finances for the Western-styled educational and medical institutions came largely from outside" (:2). In the long run, indigenization was internationally advanced by the native patriotism that emerged as a result of the disintegration of Western imperialism.

The gradual development of indigenization was, at the outset, exclusively structural in form. Most mission churches opted to give the natives a basic systematic Biblical training. And these students of the Bible were then enlisted in the ministry as deacons, pastors, missionaries and, eventually district bishops. What happened on the islands of Ponape and Kusaie in 1852, under the American Board of Commissioners for the Foreign Missions (ABCFM), serves as a good example of indigenization by pioneer missionaries. Francis X. Hezel (1978:2) noted that, "By the early 1870s the training school on Ponape was already preparing native teachers, deacons and pastors, several of whom would be the first to bring Christianity to Truk and the Mortlocks within the next few years." In view of that, the mission work in the Marshalls, under some Hawaiian teachers, was able to survive when the ABCFM missionaries were removed from Ebon.[29] The suggestion is that structural

[28] ibid., 1

[29] Hezel, F X 1978. "Indigenization as a Missionary Goal in the Caroline-Marshall Islands." In Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania, ed. by James Boutilier et al (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 251-73. Online article:

independence and self-sufficiency for native churches contributed to their enduring survival. That is why the Boxer rebellion of 1900 in China was unable to completely annihilate the Christian witness in the Far East.

In his analysis of "self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation" of young churches, W.A. Smalley argues that these three "selfs" are misunderstood.[30] He is of the view that an indigenous self-governance is not possible when foreign missionaries continue to exert their "governing influence upon the upper level of society…by the direct action of missionaries or by the action of church leaders who were trained in foreign patterns of government."[31] In addition, Smalley claims that foreign missionaries contravene the notion of self-support by insisting on subsidizing native churches.[32] He further adds that self-propagation may not work because "it may be precisely the foreignness of the church which is the source of attraction to unbelievers."[33]

It is the opinion of the researcher that Smalley's introspective critique makes sense that Western theological indoctrination cannot construct an unpolluted *bona fide* indigenous African Christianity. Only the indigenous people can holistically indigenize the gospel into their cross-cultural context. However, we all need to remember that a healthy discipled congregation is the one which is willing to have cross-fertilization with the global church, and that definitely includes Western missionary churches.

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http://www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/historical/frames/indmissfr.htm 16 -02-2007

[30] See William A. Smalley's article on "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church" in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. 1981. *Perspectives on the Christian Movement: A Reader*. Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library. 494-502

[31] Ibid., 495

[32] Ibid., 495 - 496

[33] ibid., 497

2.2.2. Indigenization as a hermeneutical theological phenomenon

The structural revolution of the indigenizers was not sufficient. So they felt the need to also indigenize the content of the gospel. Hezel (1978:1) is of the opinion that for the past decade, "a 'native church' has been understood to mean a church whose religious content as well as its formal structures are rooted in the local community." Therefore, he views indigenization as a "process of fashioning a church in which the cultural traditions of the people are the clash from which religious symbols, ritual, and preaching are fashioned" (:1). This view of indigenization as a hermeneutical theological phenomenon seems to be far more controversial than that of indigenization as a quest for structural independence and self-sufficiency. It raises a fear of syncretistic tendencies in Biblical hermeneutics and homiletics. However, Hezel thinks that this view of indigenization will actually deepen the native church's theology and its praxis without the paternalism of Western church planters.[34]

The translation of the Bible into the *lingua franca* of the locals massively contributed toward the indigenization of theology. Listening to the proclamation of the gospel in your own local tongue meant that you could hear the supra-cultural word of God being locally incarnated in a relevant and transformative manner. Hence, you will respond like the God-fearing Jews from the Diaspora, who asked in utter astonishment, "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language...we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Acts 2:7-11 (NIV).

Fashole-Luke (in Daneel and Kritzinger, 1989:2) suggests an inevitable link between "West African culture and the Christian faith" because of the translation of the Bible into "the vernacular languages of West Africa." He quotes four witnesses in order to demonstrate his argument for the theological indigenization of the Christian faith.[35] His first witness is Pope Paul's 1969 encouragement of the African bishops in Uganda to have an African

[34] ibid., 1

Christianity that will be the cultural and linguistic expression of the one true Faith. The second witness is Trevor Beetham, the former Africa Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society in London. Beetham (in Daneel and Kritzinger, 1989:5) believes that if we are to universally recognize God's one true unalterable Word throughout all generations, "it must be incarnate in the life of every people" and "in this sense, there is a need for an African liturgy and an African theology." His third witness is his former teacher and colleague, Harry Sawyerr who argues for "the rigorous pursuit of systematic theology, based on a philosophical appraisal of the thought-forms of the African people."[36] Sawyerr speaks of a *Theologia Africana* that avoids syncretism and hollowness in the indigenization of theology and makes African Christians to feel welcomed in the one true Faith.[37]

Lastly, Fashole-Luke uses the 1965 Ibadan Consultation of African theologians that spoke of God's general revelation in African pre-Christian heritage. The Consultation stated that, "We recognize the radical quality of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ; and yet it is because of this revelation we can discern what is truly of God in our pre-Christian heritage: this knowledge of God is not totally discontinuous with our people's previous traditional knowledge."[38] However, I would like to raise a serious point of caution against the Christianization of our indigenous pre-Christian heritage. It is my opinion that this pre-Christian heritage should not be our primary source of hermeneutics because it will make us vulnerable to subtle syncretism. The Bible should always be our yardstick.

2.3. INCULTURATION

Pierre Charles was the first Christian missiologist to introduce the anthropological term of *en*culturation into missions, "but it was J. Masson who first coined the phrase *Catholicisme inculture* ('inculturated Catholicism') in

[35] E.W. Fashole-Luke, in Daneel, M L and Kritzinger, J N J (compiled) 1989. *Mission as Liberation: Third World Theologies (Reader for MSB301-F)*. Pretoria: UNISA (pp4-5)

[36] Ibid., 5
[37] Ibid., 5
[38] Ibid., 6

1962."[39] In his book, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Aylward Shorter has observed that inculturation achieved prevalence in the 1970's through "the efforts of African bishops and theologians who saw in it an ally against the consequences of cultural alienation and a guarantee of a genuinely African Christianity."[40] This cultural alienation, which Aylward mentioned, came because of the pretext of Western colonial superiority. Their cultural domination of non-Christian people was eventually not appreciated and embraced by learned Third-World converts. Consequently, many Third-World Christian scholars unapologetically worked towards the inculturization of the gospel into their native contexts. In support of this, Bosch (1991:452) used two Catholic primary sources to prove the point that the Christian faith in Africa must be "rethought, reformulated and lived anew in each human culture (Memorandum 1982:465), and this must be done in a vital way, in depth and right to the cultures' roots (Evangelii Nuntiandi 20)." In that case, we will seek to briefly analyse the *double movement* of inculturation.[41]

2.3.1. Inculturation of Christianity

Bosch (1991:454) explains this trend of the inculturation of Christianity by suggesting that an authentic Evangelical message should also take into account "the meaning systems already present in the context." This implies that a truly inculturated Christianity is a contextually informed Good News. To the dismay of the self-proclaimed superior Western theologians, Third World cultures are hereby called upon to *critically inform* the authentic sound Biblical hermeneutics and homiletics. Pope Paul VI and John Paul II were the first Roman Catholic leaders to sanction the inculturation of Christianity. And they were followed by the evangelical Christians who executed their crucial consultation on the gospel and culture. The 1978 Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization substantially supported the consultation that resulted in the well-known Willowbank Report.

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[39] Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books

[40] Shorter, A. 1988. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. London: Geoffrey Chapman

[41] Bosch (1991:454) argues that, "Inculturation suggests a *double movement*:: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture."

The Willowbank Report adopted Eugene Nida and Charles Kraft's "'dynamic equivalence' model of inculturation" (Bosch, 1991:452). Pragmatically, Kraft argues that the focal point of biblical writers was *communication*.[42]They longed for their writings to be understood, and not to be unintelligibly revered. Therefore, according to Kraft, faithful translation involves clear explanatory efforts that are employed "in order to make sure that the message originally phrased in the words and idioms of the source language is faithfully phrased in the functionally equivalent words and idioms of the receptor language." [43] Thus, all preachers should always seek to communicate the gospel in a comprehensible manner.

At the end of the day, biblical writers were not merely writing for their Jewish audience. They were also writing for the ends of the earth.[44] Hence the gospel is expected to be transmitted in a culturally equivalent and relevant way. This, then, is the reason why most evangelicals have opted for the Dynamic Equivalence model of inculturation. However, Bosch is also quick to point out the fact that the inculturation of Christianity had more than one model.[45] Subsequently it is in the best interest of its receptors that the one true gospel is transmitted through a variety of culturally relevant models of inculturation.

2.3.2. Christianization of Culture

According to Shorter (1988:5), culture is "a transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a pattern capable of development and change, and belongs to the concept of humanness itself." His definition of culture helps us

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[42] Kraft, C.H. 1994. Christianity in Culture: A study in Dynamic Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 271

[43] ibid., 272; cf. Kraft, C H 1983. *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. Nashville: Abingdon Press

[44] Acts 1:8; 2:38-39; cf. Bate, S C 2000. From Missioned to Missioning: The emergence of the New churches in the 20th century" *Grace and Truth* 17, 1:38-49. Online article: http://home.worldonline.co.za/~20058871/Missiology.htm, 2006–06–15

[45] Bosch (1991:453) is of the opinion that "several current inculturation patterns…include the anthropological, praxis, synthetic, and semiotic models" which shows that "inculturation does not mean the same to everybody." For example, the whole book of Michael Cassidy (i.e. Cassidy, M. 1989. *The Passing Summer: a South African pilgrimage in the politics of love*. Kent, UK: Hodder and Stoughton) is a socio-political approach to the Christianization of culture in South Africa.

to understand the process of the Christianization of culture. The gospel in this movement of inculturation is meant to Christianize the dynamic culturally conveyed pattern of meanings that is symbolically personified in the notion of personhood.[46] As a result, missionaries are constantly endeavouring to incarnate the Evangel into their cross-cultural mission contexts, with the knowledge that culture is open to improvement and modification. But, this improvement and modification needs to be gradual and eventually owned by the receptor culture in order to effectually cement the Christianization of their culture.

The idea of inculturation as an issue between the "kernel" and the "husk" (i.e., between "content" and "form") was conventionally the most acknowledged principle in the West. Nonetheless, Bosch has observed that the Christianization of culture transcends this distinction. In effect, he is of the opinion that, "A more appropriate metaphor may therefore be that of the flowering of a seed implanted into the soil of a particular culture" (1991:454). Anything else will eventually lead to an unsustainable, meaningless, shallow and unproductive Christianization process. Likewise, Bishop Sigqibo Dwane is very cynical against the Judaistic Christian approach of Western missionaries, who assumed that to be truly Christian indigenous South Africans and Africans in general, had to "adopt Christianity with all its Western trimmings, lock, stock and barrel" (1989:29;cf Acts 15:1). He really believes that, "Christianity must have a truly African character if it is to remain in Africa, and be the religion of Africa" (1989:29). In the final analysis, it is worth citing that Dwane (1989:36) argues that, "The entire African environment has to be opened to the light of Christ, and not allowed to remain underground as an alternative to the gospel." Bosch, who argued that the comprehensive realism of culture calls for an all-encompassing inculturation, endorses this holistic approach to inculturation.[47]

In conclusion, there are two fundamental challenges to the process of inculturation, which are its limitations and its need to integrate the

[46] Shorter, A. 1988. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 5
[47] Bosch (1991:455) expresses his opinion in contrast to those who say that "the reign of God makes use only of 'certain elements of human culture and cultures'."

interculturation process. Firstly, the dominating Western cultural heritage is capable of limiting Western missionaries from realizing that all cultures, including their own, need to be holistically and constructively transformed by the dynamic power of the gospel. Nonetheless, finally, the Third World recipients of the gospel should also seek to learn from other cultures that are going through their own processes of inculturation. This interaction of theologies needs to construct "the model of 'unity within reconciled diversity'" (Meyer in Bosch, 1991:457). This will add a qualitative dimension to the Christianization of any culture anywhere in the world.

2.4. CONTEXTUALIZATION

From the failure of paternalism, to the struggles of indigenization, and the limitations of inculturation came the development of contextualization. Hesselgrave (1989:27) reckons that "contextualization, culture and theology all have a simultaneous beginning." Hence, contextualization of the gospel is as ancient as the inception of its proclamation. For example, the Judaizers' challenge to the Jerusalem Church in Acts 15:1-5 led to the assembling of the Council of Apostles and Elders (Acts 15:6-29) that sought to address the cross-cultural dilemmas of a new Gentile mission church. However, the term "contextualization" only gained substantial public currency in the 1970s.

2.4.1. Historical Background

According to Guthrie, "Contextualization has been a hallmark of modern missionary movement…from William Carey's translations of Hindu classics in India, to Hudson Taylor's decision to 'go native' in China, to Bruce Olson's determination to become a member of the Motilone Indian tribe" (2000:128). Nonetheless, the Theological Education Fund (TEF) eventually popularized the use of the term *contextualization*. TEF was first launched as an initiative of "the International Missionary Council (IMC) at its Ghana assembly in 1957 – 58" (Hesselgrave and Rommen, 1989:28). The result of this consultation was the eventual publication of the "reform" mandate, namely, *Ministry in Context:*

The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970 - 77) which was initiated after the "advance" mandate and the "re-think" mandate (1965 - 70).[48] The 1969 resolution of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism (DWME) to implement the "reform" mandate resulted in the 1972 public endorsement of *contextualization*.[49]

The indigenous South African Desmond Tutu was one of the associate directors of TEF's "reform" mandate. These associate directors of TEF's "reform" mandate were commissioned "to help the churches to reform the training for the Christian ministry (including the ordained ministry and other forms of Christian leadership in church and world) by providing selective and temporary assistance and consultative services to institutions for theological education and other centres of training" (Hesselgrave and Rommen, 1989:30). This mandate was meant to inculcate a *culture-specific* approach to theological training and orthopraxis. It presupposed a crisis in contemporary gospel proclamation and empathy. This crisis is a symptom of a perceived widening gap between Western Greco-Roman intellectual elitism and the right practise of the Christian faith.[50] That is why Bosch is of the opinion that Third-World theologies have the potential to become "a force of renewal in the West as we grope toward a Missiology of Western culture" (1995:36). He thinks that Third-World theologies' apparent success "in bridging the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, so widespread in Western theologies," is a result of several Third-World Christians' realization "that they live in a missionary situation, in the fullest sense of the word" (1995:36).[51] This missionary

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[48] The *re-think* mandate was established by TEF in conjunction with IMC's new consent as a Division of World Mission and Evangelism (DWME) in the World Council of Churches (WCC). Thereafter, the DWME approved TEF's third mandate of "reform" which became instrumental in the public introduction of *contextualization* (see Hesselgrave and Rommen 1991:28).

[49] Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization,* 28; Witmer, TB 1986 *Contextualization of Theology: A New Sophism?* Bala Cynwyd, PA: Theodore D. Witmer, 7

[50] Bosch, D. J. 1995. *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Theology (CMMC)*. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International (USA); Leominster: Gracewing(UK), 36

[51] Bosch (1995:36) surmise that, "Perhaps this is so…because the poles between which those theologies [i.e. Third-World theologies] move are not those of belief and unbelief or theism and atheism, but rather those of life and death or God (of life) and idols (of death) (Mette in Bosch 1990:426)."

situation demands a constant transformation of the receptor-culture and a cross-culturally relevant transmission of the Good News.

We need to note that as early as the late 1970s there were already some formidable sceptical theologians. For example, evangelical theologians such as Bruce C. E. Fleming and James O. Buswell III opposed the espousal of contextualization by conservative evangelicals.[52] They argued against what they perceived as TEF's liberal presumptions and its potential exposure to disorder. Thus, Fleming proposed *context-indigenization*, while Buswell recommended *indigenization*.[53] Nevertheless, history tells us that the term *contextualization* became the most preferred one, even by established conservative evangelicals.[54]

We should acknowledge two critical facts concerning contextualization of the Christian faith in South Africa, that is, culture-specific theologizing is as ancient as the missionary enterprise itself, and secondly, Western mission encounter with traditional African religious practices demanded a contextualized theology.[55] In the context of South Africa, contextualization gained public currency after the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976. The Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) was established in September 1981 under the leadership of "Simon Maimela, Bonganjalo Goba, Dominee E. Tema, Charles Villa-Vicencio, Francois Bill, Mrs. Motumi, Cedric Mayson and Albert Nolan" (Speckman and Kaufmann, 2001:20). This ICT list of leaders included the Rev. Frank Chikane, the Rev. Dr. Alan Boesak and the honourable Beyers Naude. The ICT's *Kairos Document* (KD) which was publicized in September 28, 1985, caused South African churches to do some

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[52] Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 30

[53] Ibid., 33

[54] See Eden, M and Wells, D F (eds.), 1991. *The Gospel in the Modern World: A tribute to John Stott*. Leicester, England; Illinois, USA: Inter-Varsity Press; Hesselgrave, D J and Rommen, E 1989. *Contextualization: Meaning, Methods & Models.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company; Witmer, T B 1986 *Contextualization of Theology: A New Sophism?* Bala Cynwyd, PA: Theodore B. Witmer; McGavran, D A 1983. *Contemporary Evangelical Theology of Mission*. Grand Rapids, USA; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House

[55] cf. Mulago, V 1991. *Traditional African Religion and Christianity: African Traditional Religions in contemporary society*. New York: Paragon House

introspection. The results varied from church to church. Many mainline institutionalized churches failed to heed the prophetic call of the KD. They failed to discern the signs of the time.[56] As a result, the church missed the opportunity to lead the new South Africa into a reconciled, harmonious and holistically just society. To make matters worse, KD's follow up of the Evangelical Witness of South Africa Document (i.e. EWISA Document – dated June 1986) by the Concerned Evangelicals failed to awaken the mainline institutionalized churches from their slumber and amnesia.[57]

The indigenous South African Bonganjalo Goba was one of ICT's pioneering leaders. Goba's journal article (i.e. *Doing Theology in South Africa: A Black Christian Perspective – An invitation to the Church to be relevant*) gives us some helpful insights into how black/indigenous people worked toward a contextualized theology in the era of apartheid in South Africa. Goba highlights seven key factors in Black Theological reflection, which is, its nature, its context, its praxis, its quest for change, its theology of the oppressed, its need for an ecumenical praxis and its theological pedagogy.[58]
For example, concerning

(a) its nature – he says that black critical theological reflection should expose the contradictions caused by racial segregation, and meaningfully contribute "to the creation of a just social order in which all the people of South African can participate" (1980:25)

(b) its context – he is of the opinion that the historic subjugation and dehumanization of black people, under the brutal Apartheid policies, should inform black critical theological reflection

[56] Speckman and Kaufmann, *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology,* 39
[57] Christopher A. Lund (1988:75) thinks that the contrast between KD and EWISA Document is that, "Kairos is plainly humanistic, EWISA is Biblical in emphasizing God as the primary agent of change, and change must be 'compatible with the gospel'."
[58] Goba, *Doing Theology in South Africa: A Black Christian Perspective,* 25 – 35; cf. for more independent African theological praxis see Fiedler, K., Gundani, P and Mijoga, H 1998. Theology Cooked in an African Pot (ATISCA Bulletin, nos. 5 and 6, 1996/7). Limbe, Malawi: Assemblies of God Press

(c) its praxis – he suggests that critical reflection in the process of emancipation requires both black and white Christians "to be involved in the actual transformation of political structures" (:28)

(d) its quest for change – he argues that the goal of black theological reflection is to urge both black and white Christians to find a sound Biblical theological justification for their critical participation "in the process of transformation informed by faith, especially by a faith grappling with the political context" (:29)

(e) its theology of the oppressed – he is of the opinion that black critical theological reflection should be unambiguously biased toward the historically subjugated and dehumanized black people. The oppressed blacks need both the spiritual and the political emancipation that is "grounded in the liberating spirit of God in Jesus Christ" (:33)

(f) its need for an ecumenical praxis – Goba (1980:33) strongly believes that "a black Christian communal praxis as part of our theological enterprise implies a commitment to a common faith and unity that challenges the theological separatism or Apartheid of the Western church, one which has been historically imposed upon us by the missionary movement." He calls for a unified black church to confront the oppressive contextual ideologies that undermines communal struggle for freedom.

(g) its theological pedagogy – he contends that black people need to pursue theological training that expresses a vision of their liberty, "a theological counter-ethos" [59] against the Apartheid regime, and a pragmatic solution of concrete contextual challenges.

Goba has been able to highlight the fact that black theological reflection was cooked in the African pot of black communal struggle for freedom. His hypothesis grounds Christian theology on the concrete contextual confrontation of black Christian communal praxis against the historical subjugation and dehumanization of black people by the Apartheid regime. This gives me the impression that his main concern is geared toward the emphasis of structural-collective evil, over and against the individual need for salvation. Yet this emphasis of black Christian communal praxis against

[59] Ibid., 35

structural-collective evil serves as a remedial to a narrow Western individualized form of gospel proclamation. According to Rauschenbusch, "Other things being equal, a solidaristic religious experience is more distinctively Christian than an individualistic religious experience" (1997:108).

2.4.2. Theological Background

Theologians have used several ways in order to decipher twentieth (and twenty-first) century's attempts to comprehend and announce *the one true gospel* in a culturally relevant manner. Ukpong categorized the contextualization of the gospel into two models, that is, "the indigenization model and the socio-economic model" (in Bosch, 1991:421). The indigenization model is further categorized into inculturation or translation, while the socio-economic model is classified into a politically developmental theology or a revolutionary theology.[60] Further more, Bevans speaks of six models of the contextualization of the gospel, namely, the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the synthetic model, transcendental model and the countercultural model.[61] According to Witmer, the Inerrantists' models consist of translation, application/praxis, culture specific/agenda and decontextualization.[62] Finally, Hesselgrave and Rommen suggest "a three-culture model" (1989:200) of Biblical culture, Modern culture and Target culture (adapted from Eugene A. Nida's 1960 "Message and Mission"). This three-culture model demonstrates that "the biblical message came in language and concepts meaningful to sources (prophets, apostles, and Bible authors) and receptors (their hearers and readers) in the Hebrew and Greco-Roman cultures of Bible times" (1989:200). Thus, the contextualization process of the Biblical Text can be categorized into revelation, explanation and relevance.

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[60] See Ukpong in Bosch, 1991:421

[61] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 9 – 15

[62] Theodore B. Witmer 1986. *CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THEOLOGY: A Study of the Relationship between Theology and Culture* (Master of Theology Thesis). Talbot School of Theology, Biola University: Theodore B. Witmer. 20-24

Bevans suggests that contextualization came because of three main external factors and five key internal factors.[63] The external factors are as follows,

(a) The Western Enlightenment scientific disbelief of the supernatural, such as witchcraft, angels, demons and miraculous healings, does not blend well with some non-western indigenous cultures.

(b) The perceived oppression of traditional Western theological approaches, such as, extreme individualization of salvation, "assumption of male superiority," and cultural insensitivity. These perceived oppression resulted in the escalation of theologies such as, Black Theology, Liberation Theology, Feminine Theology, Contextual Theology, etc.

(c) The post-colonial restoration of confidence towards the local cultural values has instilled a "new consciousness of independence and self-worth" through cautious" efforts at contextual theologizing" (2003:11).

All these external factors fully reflect some of the key reasons that motivated many indigenous South African theologians to formulate contextual theologies, such as, Black Theology, Liberation Theology, and African Indigenous Theologies. These theologies were an attempt to deal with the socio-economic struggles and religious aspirations of the non-bourgeois indigenous South Africans. Whether they achieved their goal for existence, without betraying the immortal Word of God, it's a matter that deserves some substantial empirical research.

Bevans views the internal factors that influenced the necessity of vigorous contextualization as follows,

(a) The gospel is authentically incarnational. It is this incarnational nature of Christianity that "unmistakably demonstrates God's intention to make himself known from within the human situation" (2003:12).

(b) Bevans (2003:12) speaks of "the sacramental nature of reality" that unpacks the sacred revelation of God's active and loving presence in "culture, human experience, and history."

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[63] Bevans, S B 2003. *Models of Contextual Theology*: Revised and expanded edition (faith and Culture series). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books

(c) The paradigm shift in traditional comprehension of *objective divine truth* is now expressed in the interpersonal concept of God's self-disclosure in the contemporary concrete situations. Revelation is not viewed as static, but dynamic.

(d) The catholic nature of Christianity demands that "the church perseveres in the whole gospel and strives to live and flourish in every part of the world and in every cultural context" and it should simultaneously, champion and safeguard "the local, the particular" (:14).

(e) The dynamic Trinitarian nature of God speaks of a "relational community of persons, whose very nature it is to be present and active in the world, calling it and persuading it toward the fullness of relationship that Christian tradition calls salvation" (:15).

Christ's incarnation is the ultimate model of relevant culture-specific mission praxis. The incarnational nature of the gospel speaks of God's self-insertion into our contemporary concrete situations. But I would like to disagree with Bevans' departure from the comprehension of God's Word as *the absolute objective Truth,* of which our human culture, experience, and history should be judged. Our human cultures and experiences are very subjective and relative thus unreliable. Nevertheless, God's Word is flawless (Proverbs 30:5-6), eternal (1 Peter 1:23-25), and objectively true (John 17:17). This Word is "the faith that was once entrusted to the saints" (Jude v.3). Moreover, the apostle Paul told Timothy not to alter his teachings (cf. Gal. 1:8-9) but to hand them over "to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

It is, nonetheless, in the nature of gospel proclamation to apply *God's universally objective truth* in a culturally relevant manner. In the same way, Byang Kato is quoted saying, "Since the gospel message is inspired but the mode of its expression is not, contextualization of the modes of expression is not only right but necessary" (in Witmer 1986:21). Hence Guthrie (2000:129) suggests that "the message must be tailored or contextualized in such a way as to remain faithful to the biblical text while understandable in and relevant to the receptor's context." A contextualized universally objective gospel truth

should find its home not only in the global Body of Christ, but also in a particular local Christian experience. For this reason, the relational community of the Trinity will be greatly welcomed in the cultural communal experience of any indigenous South African because of the concept of *ubuntu*.[64]

CONCLUSION

This chapter sets a historical and theological background to the subject of contextualization. It illustrates to us how the process of mission praxis in the Third-World, especially in South Africa, unfolded in the course of history. It all began with European missionaries heeding Christ's Great Commission (cf. Matthew 28:18-20) during the time of Western colonial expansion. Missionaries embraced a paternalistic model of cross-cultural missions. In fact in the beginning paternalism was as a necessary church planting tool for pioneer missionaries. But most of these pioneer missionaries failed to realize that they needed to allow the process of indigenization to take root among their mission churches. Some missionaries who tried to indigenize failed to generate bona fide indigenized mission churches because they inadvertently promoted Western paternalistic models of cross-cultural missions. As a result, many African Independent Churches and African Initiated Churches emerged and established themselves as spokespersons for those mission churches who felt a need to establish themselves apart from Western mission influences. Yet these indigenized churches were susceptible to subtle, and sometimes solemn, syncretistic practises.

The apparent failure of Western pioneer missionaries to indigenize African mission churches led to the inculturation of the gospel. Inculturation was seen as a solution towards the creation of culture-specific mission praxis. Yet inculturation itself was limited by its localized and internalized mission praxis processes. Consequently, missiologists suggested the concept of

[64] Ubuntu/botho means, "I am because you are". In Africa, nobody is an island. Therefore the spirit of *ubuntu* can be summed up as follows, "Your humanity finds its significance in communal interdependence with my humanity." Hence, Setiloane endorses *ubuntu* and cautions the communal natives from internalizing and appropriating individualistic Western image of them, namely, that they are the unbridled savages who need to be colonized, civilized and Christianized (2000:11).

interculturation. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:388) argued that in order for inculturation to be effective it should be "strongly *ecclesial* in that it honours the values and customs of the local church, and yet it is open for correction by other local churches and available to enter into critical conversation with these churches." The bottom line is that, mutual cross-fertilization of the West and its Third-World Christian brethren is inevitable if the church is to "reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Sadly, the contextual challenges of the Apartheid legacy in South Africa affected the church across racial lines. Many 'white' privileged churches refused to identify with the plight of their 'black' counterparts in their struggles against an oppressive and dehumanizing regime. As a result, black Christians and their sympathizers worked towards a theology that critically engaged with their context of oppression.[65] Therefore, Contextualization in South Africa took the shape of Black Theology and Liberation Theology. Nevertheless, these theologies were not purely evangelical; in fact, they leaned more towards some form of a syncretized liberal theology. They over-emphasized the social aspects of the gospel at the pragmatic expense of the spiritual emancipation of lost souls. In their quest for holism, they sacrificed the individual's need for a personal encounter with God's redemptive grace. Yet these theologies served as a corrective to the extreme individualism and dualism of a Westernized church in South Africa. They remind us that authentic gospel ministry should always be soundly Biblical, balanced and holistic. Our personal salvation is realistically and holistically intertwined with the liberation of the entire creation of God (Romans 8:18 -25).

[65] The launching of the Institute for Contextual Theology by both 'black' and 'white' theologians is an excellent example of a unified struggle against the oppressive Apartheid system that undermined the credibility of Christ's gospel (Speckman and Kaufmann 2001:20).

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY

INTRODUCTION

The Bible has a lot to say about God communicating His will to humanity in a contextually applicable method. God speaks in the language, forms and categories that are familiar to His audience. He wants to be intelligently understood and holistically obeyed. He wants His Word to find a home in the hearts and minds of His audience, that is, in a culturally transformative way (cf. Tinker 2001:65-100). God is neither for, nor against or in the culture itself. Rather God is constantly changing our cultures to conform to His Word, not vice versa (cf. Rom. 12:2). In this chapter, I will seek to apply relevant biblical exegesis and hermeneutics of key related passages, in order to establish the biblical basis of contextualized missiological praxis in Africa (or anywhere in the world where cross-cultural mission work is done). I will use relevant, preferably, recent biblical hermeneutical tools to establish the biblical basis of my thesis. I will consult several scholarly works, with the following three referenced books constituting my main sources:

(a) Hesselgrave, D J 1991. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication (2nd ed)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House

(b) Bosch, D J 1991. *Transforming Mission – Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books: New York

(c) Daneel, M L and Kritzinger, J N J (compiled) 1989. *Mission as Liberation: Third World Theologies (Reader for MSB301-F)*. Pretoria: UNISA

Therefore, I would like to briefly analyze how Hesselgrave, Bosch, Daneel and Kritzinger formulated their biblical basis for communicating Christ cross-

culturally. Moreover, I will conclude by interacting with the concept of God in an African traditional context.

3.1. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE'S MISSIOLOGY

3.1.1. Communication and Mission

The most complex missionary problem in a cross-cultural context is *communication*. A financially resourced, local church supported missionary will discover that crossing the language and cultural barrier is a very complex and time-consuming inevitable exercise. As a result, Hesselgrave opts for a more comprehensive view of the missionary task. He is of the opinion that most definitions of our missionary task are narrow and often run "the risk of reductionism" (1991:24). Nevertheless, he advocates for the adoption of the word *communication* as an all-inclusive and coherent concept of our missionary task.

Communication as a basic human characteristic should be properly understood within the context of man as God's image bearer. However, Babel (Gen. 11:1-10) serves as a clear indication of humanity's failure to use its gift of communication to worship the only true God, i.e. YHWH. This created a historic miscommunication betwixt God and man, including between man and man. Thus in Christ God has restored these broken relationships (see Acts 2; Eph. 2:11ff.). Nonetheless, we know that our present experiences teach us that we actually live in the "now and not yet" experience. Gordon Fee (2003 [1996]:50) is of the opinion that, "The first Christians believed that the fulfillment of God's Old Testament covenant promises had begun with the work of Christ and their experience of the promised Holy Spirit". Therefore, the Pentecost story in Acts chapter two "indicates with the realism that is peculiar to the Bible the fact that humanity, since this event of Pentecost, remains pending between fall and redemption, Babel and Pentecost, because

of our own attitude of lack of faith" (Kraemer in Hesselgrave, 1991:29). Even the great philosophers and orators such as Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero and Quintilian grasped *the need* for proper communication between human beings, and left a legacy of rhetoric to the church at large. Moreover, we know that God has restored proper communication through Christ our Lord, of which Christians must reflect in their mission praxis.

Hesselgrave shows how western linguists have adapted Aristotle's model of communication, namely, "the relationship to three points of reference: the speaker, the speech and the audience" (1991:40). Linguists have adopted the model of source/speaker, encoded communication, message/speech, decoded communication and respondent/audience.[66] He preempts the complexities of cross-cultural communication of an encoded gospel message to our contemporary audiences who need to decode this one eternally true message of the cross in a culturally relevant way. Moreover, Hesselgrave (:43) rightly points to the fact that the speaker/source/missionary answers to a higher SOURCE, namely, God – who is the *Primary* source in the communication of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 2Timothy 2:2). Therefore, the missionary (e.g. the apostle Paul) is a *tertiary source* who communicates the message of the *Primary source* (i.e. God) to the respondents (e.g. Timothy, Titus, etc) who become the *secondary sources* of this Evangel.

The challenge of communication resides in the *meaning* of the message communicated. In fact, the meaning of meaning has been a hotly contested debate from the days of Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, the Epicureans, etc.[67] For example, Plato (see Plato "The Republic", translated by H.D.P Lee in 1955: 231-286) argued that "authentic reality" exists only in a "realm of appearances", which in turn was contested by Aristotle's view that "things in the invisible world are analogous to things in the visible world" (in Hesselgrave 1991:56; cf. Aristotle in Ackrill 1963: 62-65). Moreover, Thomas Aquinas and William of Occam differed on universals and absolutes. While Aquinas

[66] Hesselgrave, 1991:41-53

[67] Echecrates' discourse with Phaedo demonstrates critical questions about the meaning of meaning (Radice and Baldick 1959 [1954]:99-183)

insisted on providing a sound logical proof for God's existence, William of Occam insisted that Aquinas' conclusions were mere rational expediencies. He applied what came to be known as **"**Occam's razor"[68] by proposing to mete out expressions focusing on existential experiences (Geisler 1983 [1980]:178). Furthermore, the "scientific method" of Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton believed in the reliability of God's natural creation order.[69] However, their successors disregarded anything that could not be empirically tested and proved. In addition, the post-modern linguists, semantics and neo-rhetoricians profusely argue, almost unanimously, against the "existence of absolutes and ultimate meaning" (Hesselgrave 1991:57).[70]

Charles Kraft classifies the meaning of meaning in three categories. Firstly, he points to those who place meaning in a careful observation of the external world (1983: 179-184). Kraft concurs with those who say that, "What a given custom means is determinable only from an observation of its functions and uses within its specific cultural context" (1994: 65). Secondly, there are those who place meaning in the interpersonal communication of signs and symbols (Kraft 1983: 115-119; cf. Hesselgrave 1991:60). Thirdly, he points to those who say that meaning is "affixed or even fashioned" in the psyche of its receptors (cf. Kraft 1983: 179; Hesselgrave 1991: 60).

What then is the Bible's response to the question of meaning? In God's order of things, meaning is both *inherent* and *imputed*. For example, King David saw the glory of the Lord in the created world (Psalm 19:1-4). Hence, the Apostle Paul cautioned those who deliberately disregarded the evident/inherent display of God's invisible attributes in creation (Romans 1:18-20). So if meaning can be discovered in creation, this makes the imparted meaning of Jesus' commitment to the fulfillment of the Law even more pertinent (Matthew 5:17-18). Consequently, Scriptural emphasis is on "the

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[68] The principle of Occam's razor was, "The simplest explanation is preferred" (Geisler and Feinberg 1983 [1980):183).

[69] See the scientific theory of Newtonian Particle System in Ronald N. Giere 1979. Understanding Scientific Reasoning. 2nd ed. New York, USA: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp 78-85

[70] Hudgins presents a much similar view as Hesselgrave on the topic of absolutes and meaning (2008:2)

clear and consistent *content* of general revelation in creation and of special revelation in the Bible, not on the prerogative of humanity to interpret it as we think best" (Hesselgrave 1991:65). It is against this background of "a unified universe and epistemology" that Bible-believing Christians are of the opinion that human beings as God's creation are "capable of knowing God" through the dynamic action of "God's grace in revelation and regeneration."[71] In fact, Africans categorically believe in the existence of God - who has obviously displayed His divine qualities in creation.

The pivotal question at this juncture is in relation to the reasons behind missionary communication. In order to comprehend Hesselgrave's reasons behind missionary communication, we need to briefly look at the New Testament case for persuasion and some insights from communication theory. The Great Commission (i.e. Matthew 28:19-20) emphasizes the deployment of missionaries into all nations to disciple them by baptizing and teaching them to obey God's will. The apostles Peter and Paul serve as a good example of disciple-makers. They urged, reminded, proclaimed, confounded, defended and proved that Jesus of Nazareth was YHWH's Messiah (1Pet. 2:11; 5:1; 2Pet. 1:12; Acts 9:20-29; Acts 26). Hence, the missionary as God's ambassador tirelessly persuades and implores people to "be reconciled to God" (2Cor. 5:11-20). Hesselgrave (1991:85) rightly points to the indispensable effective work of the Holy Spirit as "the divine 'hidden persuader'" who acts through the missionary to teach, convict and convert the repentant sinner. In addition, I believe that we can learn that our fundamental rationale for communicating the gospel is to effect holistic transformation for the sake of God's glory and the comprehensive human welfare. We know that Paul's Christ-centered message and preaching to the Corinthians "were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1Corinthians 2:4). Nevertheless, Paul's intention was not to promote an irrational (or illogical) methodology of gospel proclamation. Hence, Paul used persuasion for the sake of Christ (2Cor. 5:11-21). Therefore, our rhetoric is not intended for public amusement; rather it is communicated with the intention to lead people to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[71] Hesselgrave 1991:69-70

3.1.2. Communication and Culture

To penetrate cultural-barriers is not simplistic. Hence, Oliver suggests that "multiple rhetorics" should replace old rhetoric that "generally assumed its applicability to all people and situations" (in Hesselgrave 1991:97). Multi-rhetoric way of thinking utilizes "cultural anthropology, social psychology, and general linguists" in order to discover *what* and *how* people "think and formulate their ideas" (:98). It is my opinion that pioneer Western missionaries generally botched on this issue. They failed to realize that a culturally pre-packaged "Western-adorned" gospel application could not fit within indigenous African worldviews. This was like King Saul urging David to be adorned with Saul's tunic and armour. However, David had to take them off because he was not accustomed to them (1Sam. 17:37-39). Hence, we need to labour hard in comprehending cultural complexities of our mission field. For that reason, Hesselgrave urges us to be *eclectic*[72] in our understanding of culture.

There are two primary hermeneutical assumptions, namely, supracultural[73] validity and cross-cultural communication. On the one hand, the gospel is supraculturally unchanged in its categorical/nonnegotiable validity (e.g. "sacrificial death of Christ, faith, repentance, and conversion" are obligatory for justification by grace [Rommen in Hesselgrave 1991:110; cf. Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989: 224-226]). While on the other hand, I think that the gospel can be supraculturally validated by implied, explicit or logical expressions of our new life in Christ. In addition, cross-cultural communication of the gospel can bridge the cultural gaps "so that the missionary can understand the biblical text and communicate its intended meanings to people of another culture, and so that converted and properly instructed persons in that culture can repeat this process" (Hesselgrave 1991:110-111). However, Thiselton

[72] Our approach should reflect an informational, experiential, balanced and non-technical use of all cultural disciplines that will have a crucial impact on our gospel communication in a cross-cultural context (see Hesselgrave 1991:106).
[73] See Morris, A 2004. A Review: "Christianity in Culture" by Charles H. Kraft. Online article: http://www.staidenlindesfarne.org/, 2008-08-11

gives the reader's response more credit than the biblical text. He propagates a shift from accounting for the meaning of meaning from "'text alone' to the role of the reader" (1992:494). Nevertheless, I would like to concur with Hesselgrave's hermeneutical assumptions because it is my humble understanding that the content of the gospel is nonnegotiable; while the application of "the whole council of God" can be culturally negotiated. Thus, cross-cultural communication of the gospel will have more "latitude of correctness" in its application, if it hermeneutically addresses the user/author's intended meaning of the text "within the bounds of the public [or generally accepted] meaning" (:111).

We need to note that there is a real tension that exists between Christ and our human cultures.[74]The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) calls us to communicate the gospel to all nations and teach them a Christ-centered worldview and lifestyle. Thus, Christ should be correctly viewed as the champion of cultural transformation, not its indiscriminate destroyer. In addition, missionaries must not only possess a high view of the Scriptures but they need to also acknowledge the reality of cultural relativism. We must therefore avoid the propensity "to judge other cultures on the basis of one's own culturally determined predispositions" (:123). Every culture should be dealt with within its own right. The transformative supracultural gospel of Christ needs to be concretely incarnated in every mission context. Therefore, the missionary will need to graciously and tirelessly labour by the Spirit's power to seek a heartfelt, unprompted, Scripture-based response to the message of the cross.

3.1.3. Worldviews

Hesselgrave adopts James Downs' definition of worldviews, that is, "Men living in coherent groups…define the world around them, deciding what is real and how to react to this reality" (1991:195). In addition, Hiebert depicts worldview as "the basic assumptions underlying culture" which provides

[74] See Kwame Bediako 2000, *Jesus in Africa*, pp 97-107; Diane Stinton 2004, *Jesus of Africa*, pp 221-249; John W. de Gruchy 1986, *Theology and Ministry in Context and Crisis*, pp 139-147

people “with a more or less coherent way of looking at the world” (1989 [1985]: 48). More or less Nurnberger (2007:8) agrees that a worldview is “a comprehensive understanding of reality” making it virtually difficult to transplant ancestral veneration “into another spirituality without changing the inserted term and the structure into which it is inserted”. However, Bediako and Idowu suggest the necessity and validity of implicit continuity between Christian gospel heritage and pre-Christian African tradition.[75] They do not foresee any warranted conflict of interest between Christian gospel heritage and pre-Christian African tradition.[76] Nevertheless, I think that an uncritical acceptance and affirmation of African pre-Christian heritage would indeed change and dilute the content of our gospel proclamation. We must acknowledge critical continuity and necessary discontinuity in our contextualization process. Therefore, it is my view that indigenous African evangelical Christians need to confront African *tribal* worldviews with a biblical worldview, which offers a valid alternative worldview. This, I believe, will help us to have a meaningful impact among the indigenous people of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Sub-Saharan African worldviews are mainly characterized by a holistic worldview that “often (but not always) transcends the secular-sacred distinction that is so much part of the thinking of the West” (Hesselgrave 1991:222). Thus, Professor Bennie van der Walt’s discussion with his Potchefstroom University students on this subject is crucial. He discussed the differences between African and Western cultures. He then observed that Africans have “a more holistically oriented religious orientation… as against a dualistic view of religion in the West” (1999 [1997]: 100). It is my opinion that this Western dualistic worldview often, consciously or unconsciously, informs biblical hermeneutics and application among Western educated scholars. Hence, most of Western theologizing among indigenous Africans has not been able to constructively transform many Africans because it only engages on a surface level.

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[75] Bediako concurs with Idowu’s basic assumption that there is continuity between “the God of African tradition” and “the God of Christian proclamation and experience” (cf. 1992:270-293).
[76] Ibid., 270

Jahnheinz Jahn (Westerner) and John Mbiti (African) demonstrate the different views concerning what really characterizes Sub-Saharan African worldviews. Jahn thinks that Sub-Saharan African universe is viewed "as a network of interacting forces" (in Hesselgrave 1991:224; cf. Temples 1969 [1959]: 97-105). These forces are seen as hierarchical and anthropocentric. However, Mbiti's analysis of Sub-Saharan African worldviews is mainly (if not exclusively) anthropocentric.[77] He divides African ontology into God, spirits, man, animals and plants, and social life (cf. Mbiti 1999 [1969]: 58). Moreover, all these categories are consistently humanistic. Therefore, time is also viewed in relation to an anthropocentric ancestral past (cf. Mbiti 1999 [1969]: 24). The goal of ritualistic remembrance of the dead is to achieve a "collective immortality"[78] between the living and their deceased ancestors. This is what is commonly known as "ancestral worship". However, many African scholars will disagree with this commonly held view. They will preferably call it, "ancestral veneration or devotion", because they view the rituals of offering food and drink to ancestors as "symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance" (Hesselgrave 1991:226). Even the most influential Pentecostal evangelist Nicholas Bhengu of Entumeni in Zululand permitted Christian converts to generally venerate ancestors, but he forbade "praying to them as gods" (in Hollenweger 1972:130). Therefore, in my personal experience, I would like to concur with Hesselgrave that what is theoretically hailed as veneration, is practically practiced as worship.[79] Even Bediako (1995:95) acknowledges the fact that ancestral prominence in African cosmology "seem to create an ancestor cult" and obscures human relationship with the transcendent. I also believe that this form of worship is the single most important challenge that the church is faced with among indigenous Sub-Saharan Africans.

How then can we communicate the gospel to Sub-Saharan Africans? In the OT God explicitly and contemptuously challenged and condemned idol worship in any form or shape (Exodus 20:3-5; Isaiah 44:6-9). While in the NT Paul becomes a model of cross-cultural communication (cf. Acts 14:6-19; 17:16-34). Hesselgrave offers two essential pointers in relation to

[77] Mbiti 1999 [1969]: 48-51
[78] Ibid., 26
[79] Hesselgrave 1991: 227

contextualization. Firstly, the source of the missionary's message and power will be tested "in the context of a tribal worldview *power encounter*" (1991:231). Most indigenous African people are willing to commit their lives unreservedly to God, only if he can demonstrate the ability to defeat the power of evil, witches, hexes and ancestors. Secondly, the content of the message should be contextually relevant. It is my opinion that indigenous African Christians need to resolve through the help of the Holy Spirit to know nothing among Sub-Saharan Africans "except Jesus Christ and him crucified", so that their "faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1Cor. 2:2, 5).

3.2. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DAVID J. BOSCH'S MISSIOLOGY

Bosch's Missiology is poignantly embodied in his 1991 literary masterpiece, namely, "Transforming Mission – paradigm shifts in theology of mission (*abbreviated*, TM)." This book will serve as a guide in analyzing Bosch's biblical basis for communicating Christ cross-culturally. As a result, we will systematically seek to analyze this classic book, most specifically, its biblical basis for mission praxis. Hence, we will do this by critically analyzing Bosch's New Testament models of mission.[80] In conclusion, we will seek to answer the question about the relevance of Bosch's biblical hermeneutics on mission praxis among South African indigenous evangelical Christians.

3.2.1. The New Testament as a Missionary Text

Bosch begins his biblical basis for mission on the New Testament (NT) because he believes that the NT "witnesses to a fundamental shift when compared with the Old Testament (OT)" (1991:15). He is of the opinion that

[80] Bosch, D J 1991. *Transforming Mission – Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books: New York, pp ix – x

Jesus' parousia (Greek: □□□□□□□□– the coming) is a key paradigm in mission history. Jesus provides us with a mission focused paradigm shift, even though His mission was initially and contextually Jewish (Matt. 15:21-28). He maintains to have been "sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). In addition, Paul supports this historical event of the incarnate Christ as a natural outworking of YHWH's eternal redemptive plan for the world (Rom. 1:16).

One might inquire about the role of mission in the Old Testament. Fundamentally, isn't the OT a missionary Writ? In reality, the concept of mission was not explicitly encouraged among the OT covenant people of Israel. The OT gives no clear indication of God commissioning Israel "to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh" (Bosch 1991:17). On the contrary**,** the NT is seen as a missionary book that is based on the teachings of the OT. The God who acts in history (e.g. the Exodus) is a magnanimous God who reaches out to Israel and beyond. This is because in the final analysis, "if there is a 'missionary' in the Old Testament, it is God himself who will, as his eschatological deed *par excellence*, bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship him there together with his covenant people" (Bosch 1991:19; cf. Isaiah 2:5; 18:7; 19:23-25; 25:6-8; 40:5; 42:6; 45:14; chapter 47; 49:6; 51:5; Psalm 96:9). Therefore, it is my understanding that YHWH's old covenant aspirations find their decisive fulfillment in Christ Jesus – who is the ultimate seed of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Matt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:15-24).

The prophetic proclamations that display Israel-centeredness (Isaiah 45:14; 60:11) inadvertently resulted in Israel's prevailing negative "attitude against the nations" (Bosch 1991:19). Hence, Israel's deterioration during the era of the Roman Empire affirmed this negative attitude that led to Israel's expectation of the apocalyptic vision of the coming Messiah and the ensuing global domination by a restored Jewish nation (cf. Acts 1:6). Moreover, under the circumstances, Israel did not see the need for mission. They believed that God will somehow "without any involvement on the part of Israel, [divinely] save those Gentiles he had elected in advance" (Bosch 1991:20). As a result,

the Jews failed to see the immanent relevance of God's past salvific engagement with Israel. They saw these past salvific occasions as "sacred traditions which had to be preserved unchanged" (:20).

Jesus came against this OT background. Subsequently, between 1920s' and 1950s', Western intellectuals have tried to make sense of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth within this missiologically passive context. Form critics devastatingly performed a disfavor against the "Jesus of history" by their skeptical criticism of "the historical reliability of our gospels" (:21). However, redaction criticism helped us to discover that the historical Jesus is indeed the Christ of faith (cf. Evans 1996:170-202; McCutcheon 1999: 127-132; Bosch 1991:20). Consequently, many scholars began to generally focus their attention on the work of Christ. Indeed, the Incarnation of Jesus became almost as crucial as it was in the early Church era. The danger was the attempt to objectify the self-definitions/interpretations of our contemporary scholars. According to the Scriptures, only God's self-disclosure in/through Christ can objectively communicate the missiological significance of the incarnation (cf. John 1:1-18; 2Cor. 5:16-21).

Because the Christ of faith is the Jesus of history, we are thereby challenged to view the Lord within his Jewish historical context. Even Rabbi John Fischer is firm on the dangers of disassociating Jesus/Yeshua from his Jewish heritage. Fischer says, "If Christians leave the concrete realities of Jesus' life and of the history of Israel in favor of a mythic, universal, spiritual Jesus and an otherworldly kingdom of God, they deny their origins in Israel, their history, and the God who loved and protected Israel and the church" (2004:4). Nevertheless, Kwame Bediako contends for a more universal view of Jesus the Saviour of the whole world.[81] He does not dispute Jesus' Palestinian Jewish heritage. However, he is of the opinion that, "The meaning of who Jesus is, has to be more than the fact that he was a first century Palestinian Jew, … even more than just the Messiah in that context" (1999: 9). Indeed Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world (cf. John 3:16-21; Matthew 28:18-20;

[81] see Bediako, K 1999. Gospel and Culture: some insights for our time from the experience of the earliest Church. *Journal of African Christian Thought*. 2 (2): 9

Acts 1:8). Nonetheless, I think we must not underplay the significance of His ministry to Israel. Paul rightly reminds us that the gospel is “first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). Therefore we need to note that Jesus’ prophetic traditional context like that of John the Baptist (and the prophets of old) means that “his concern is the repentance and salvation of Israel” (Bosch 1991:26; cf. Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:54). Specifically, like all Israel’s prophets, including John the Baptist, Jesus’ main focus was initially to Israel’s faithful *remnant*. This remnant comprised Israel’s marginalized, oppressed and outcasts (cf. Luke 4:14-21; 7:20-22). I am of the opinion that this picture of Israel’s marginalized looks very much like South Africa’s disadvantaged indigenous communities. Hence, the future of middle class evangelical South African church lies with the believers’ gospel response to this challenge of the plight of the indigenous disadvantaged majority.

Jesus’ ministry transcends his main concern for Israel’s remnant. He was *inclusive* in his mission approach. His cutting-edge approach included “both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinners and the devout” (Bosch 1991:28). He taught his disciples the path of love, even love for one’s enemies (cf. Matthew 5:43-48). This kind of love is evangelistically invitational rather than coercive. The One greater than Jonah (i.e. Jesus of Nazareth - Matthew 12:40-41) laid a solid foundation for the unreserved inclusion of Gentiles in his mission (cf. John 4:19-26; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:6-8). Therefore, Bosch concludes that, “The ultimate basis for the earliest Christian mission lies in the messianic sending of Jesus” (1991:31). Jesus is YHWH’s ultimate Davidic king (2 Sam. 7:12-16; cf. Luke 1:31-33) who ushers in the Kingdom of God (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ - the reign of God in Greek) “by the finger of God” (Luke 11:20; cf. “by the Spirit of God” – Matt. 12:28). In addition, according to Bosch this kingdom is “politically (at least in the opinion of the Jewish establishment)” manifested in the inclusion of the poor, sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes to be “children of God’s kingdom” (1991:34).

Bosch appropriately sums up the centrality of Christ crucified as the inaugurator of the reign of God that fulfils the Torah by using Moltmann’s

deduction. Moltmann deduced that, “The place of life in the law is taken by fellowship with Christ in the following of the crucified one. The place of the self-preservation of the righteous from the world is taken by the mission of the believer in the world” (in Bosch 1991:35).[82] This has two essential implications for believers. Firstly, the manifestation of “the reign of God and not the Torah is for Jesus the decisive principle of action” (:35). For God’s reconciliatory love on the cross transcends the role of the law in the life of Israel (cf. Ephesians 2:11ff.). Secondly, God’s reconciliatory love reveals the fact that, “In Jesus’ ministry people matter more than rules and rituals” (:36). Moreover, this is clearly seen in Jesus’ compassionate treatment of the hungry and the sick on the Sabbath day (Matt. 12:1-14). Consequently, Jesus enlisted his disciples to his “fellowship of service to the world” (:39), because a follower is not greater than his leader (Matt. 10:24ff). All the followers of Jesus understood their ministry in the light of the *parousia* (i.e. the eschatological second coming of Jesus).

The early Christian witness was mainly localized within mainstream Judaism. But the AD 70 demolition of Jerusalem forced a process of permanent break between Judaism and the people of the Way. And following these events, together with earlier persecution (Acts 8:1-8), Christians began a rigorous evangelistic campaign among the Jewish territory that effectively extended itself to the Gentile territory of Antioch, where believers were first called Christians (see Acts 11:19-26). The Pharisaical *Eighteen Benedictions*[83] that condemned and virtually excommunicated Christians from the synagogues around AD 85 was unable to deter the Jesus movement from its core missiological praxis.

Bosch concludes by noting that the Christ-centered mission had a revolutionary edge which “manifested itself, *inter alia*, in the new relationships

[82] Chittom concurs with Bosch’s view of Moltman deduction (Chittom, T 2006. For the love of God (8): Why I love Jurgen Moltmann. Online Article: http://faith-theology.blogspot.com/, 2008-08-11)

[83] See W. H. C. Frend of the University of Glasgow (2008 [1983]:1ff; cf. Bosch notes that “the Pharisees at their new center at Jamnia, included a clause which anathematized both Christians (‘Nazarenes’) and heretics (*minim*) and excluded them from the synagogues” [1991:46]).

that came into being in the [Christian] community" (:48). Indeed, the gospel unites both Jews and Gentiles in harmonious relationship with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:11-22). The pagans of Carthage referred to Christians "as a 'third race', after the Romans and Greeks (the first race) and the Jews (the second)" (Tertullian in Bosch 1991:48). According to the Apostle Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Nevertheless, Bosch argues that the Christian movement had its own notable failures.[84] For example, the seven Asia Minor churches were not ideal models of a Christ-centered community (Revelation 2 - 3). Bosch notes three reasons why he believes that the early church failed.[85] First, he argues that Jesus never perceived himself as a pioneer of a new religion apart from Judaism. Second, the Jesus movement's progressive character was rendered ineffective by the conservative institutionalization of the Christian community. Third, the church was eventually unable to make the Jews to feel included due to some mitigating factors, such as AD 70 fall of Jerusalem and the ensuing AD 85 Pharisaical *Eighteen Benedictions.* Yet I will construe that these failures are not reason enough to totally despair because the institutionalized Jesus movement has the transformative Word of God that gives us hope in the unifying love of Christ.

3.2.2. Mission in the Apostolic Writ: Matthew, Luke-Acts and Pauline Literature

3.2.2.1. Mission in the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew focuses on encouraging a primarily Jewish church into a dynamic Christian mission work. The "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:16-20) is seen as the glue that holds everything together in Matthew's book. However, Bosch warns against using the great commission out of its biblical context. He is of the opinion that to properly understand Matthew 28:16-20, we have to interpret it "*against the background of Matthew's gospel as a*

[84] Ibid, 50
[85] Ibid, 50-52

whole" (Bosch 1991:57). Thus, Matthew ventures to pastorally nurture his primarily Jewish Christian community that was suffering from an identity crisis. This crisis was caused by their place in the established, mainstream Judaism. Consequently, Matthew is not only polemically countering rabbinic Old Testament assertions. However, he is also seeking to pastorally "convey self-confidence to a community facing a crisis of identity"; and to missiologically "embolden the community members toward seeing opportunities for witness and service around them" (:59). Hence, Tokunboh Adeyemo urges African churches to "learn to be more active in mission and cease to be merely passive receivers of the gospel" (2006:1105). I do concur with this confident assertion and I believe that Africans need to thoroughly prepare themselves for missions beyond their cultural comfort zones into champions of a multi-cultural, all-inclusive Evangel.

The Great Commission is to "all nations" (*panta ta ethne*) with unreserved inclusion of the Jews. Therefore, the stewardship of the reign of God is upon the church of Jesus Christ that is characterized by the unity of believers. In addition, the teaching and baptism of repentant sinners in Matthew 28:19-20 "appears to be the real content of disciple-making, and therefore of mission" (:65). Furthermore, Matthew points to the intimate relation between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. A true believer is the one who produces "fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8; 7:21). This fruit can be realized when the reign of God (*basileia tou Theou*) and His righteousness (*dikaiosyne*: justice) has full pre-eminence in the believer's life (Matt. 6:33). In other words, subscription to the Sermon on the Mount "gets its true binding force only through the exemplary life, sufferings, and death of the Nazarene who sealed its validity with his own blood" (Lapide in Bosch 1991:70). Hence, all who have been discipled by the exemplary Nazarene are called to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). In addition, this paradigm of missionary discipleship is very costly. Bosch concludes by emphasizing that, "If this attitude scares some would-be converts away from the church, so be it" (1991:82). We cannot afford to be casual about our gospel convictions (cf. Matt. 16:24-27). Christ calls us to go all out for the sake of God's Kingdom and His righteousness.

3.2.2.2. Mission in the Gospel of Luke and Acts

While Matthew's Gospel was primarily aimed at Jewish Christians, Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts were chiefly addressed to a Gentile audience. The critical distinction between Luke's Gospel and Acts is theologically related to the geographical significance of Jesus' ministry and that of the apostles. While Luke's Gospel focuses Jesus' ministry geographically within Israel and concludes with the Great Commission that is inclusive of *panta ta ethne* (24:45-49), the book of Acts begins with this Great Commission (1:6-8) and concludes with Paul's ministry in the heart of the Gentile context (i.e. Rome – Acts 28:11-31). Yet it is true that Luke had included Elijah's mission to Zarephath of Sidon in order to implicitly show that Gentile mission was not an afterthought in Jesus' mind. Therefore Bosch rightly points out that there can be little doubt that, "in Luke's mind, the Nazareth episode has a clearly Gentile mission orientation and serves to highlight this fundamental thrust of Jesus' entire ministry at his very first appearance in public" (Bosch 1991:89). And this Gentile mission orientation is fully confirmed in Christ's encounters with the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56; 10:25-37; 17:11-19). Nevertheless, the Great Commission is presented as a promise that will progressively be implemented to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16).

Even though Luke's book is an *all-inclusive* gospel (i.e. Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ) it nevertheless shows a healthy bias for the poor (cf. 1:53; 6:20-24; 14:13, 21), over and against the exploitative greed of the rich (12:21; 14:13f; 16:20; 18:9; cf. Relph 1998:102-112). Jesus wants the rich to show the fruit of repentance by choosing a lifestyle that is in keeping with the redemptive message of the Lord (see Zacchaeus in contrast to the rich young man – Luke 18:18-30; 19:1-9). Consequently, both the rich and poor are called to repent and believe the good news (Luke 3:3-18; Acts 2:36-39).

Bosch concludes Luke's missionary paradigm by highlighting eight essential lessons:

First, Luke' pneumatology points to his belief that Christ's second coming was not immediate (Acts 1:8-11) even though a sense of urgency still needed to be maintained (Luke 17:20-37). So believers had to commit to mission under the empowering of the Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8).

Second, Luke's apparent "*correlation of the Jewish and Gentile mission*" shows that there is "no break in the history of salvation" (:115). The impartial God (Acts 10:38) has proved in his treatment of Cornelius that out of the Jews and the Gentiles he has formed one true "Israel of God" (cf. Acts 15:6-11).

Third, believers are "witnesses of these things [that God has achieved through Christ's death and resurrection]" (Luke 24:48 – addition mine).

Fourth, this redemptive gospel demands a response of faith, repentance and godly living from all of us (Acts 2:36-40).

Fifth, Bosch (:117) quotes Scheffler saying that, "For Luke, salvation actually had six dimensions: economic, social, political, physical, psychological, and spiritual". Indeed, Christ's model of salvation is very much holistic in its essence. But the writer of this thesis finds the order of Scheffler's priority to be deficient of Christ's "inside-out" model of salvation. Jesus' model of discipleship always prioritizes one's soul above, but not against, our felt needs (cf. Luke 9:23-25).

Sixth, as peace-makers, we ought to preach "the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Jesus and Stephen are perfect role models of this missionary paradigm of non-violent resistance to evil (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

Seventh, Luke's view of the church as a *new community* of both Jews and Gentiles points to the realization of our unison fellowship in the Spirit (Acts 15:6-11).

Eighth, suffering and difficulties are integral parts of gospel proclamation. Jesus suffered on our behalf (Lk. 24:27), and we ought to be cross-bearers/witnesses/martyrs for his gospel (Acts 1:8; 7:1-8:8).

In conclusion, Luke's missionary paradigm is very much holistic and comprehensive in its scope. In addition, this missionary paradigm properly contextualized within the indigenous, traditional, and contemporary African context, will transformatively penetrate into the African-soul and gradually produce a sound evangelical African Christianity.

3.2.2.3. Mission in Paul's Letters

Bosch chose to restrict his analysis of Paul's mission praxis only to seven widely accepted Pauline letters that is, "Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, without however prejudging the issue of the possible Pauline authorship of the other six letters attributed to Paul" (:123). We need to note that Bosch's opinion in this matter is contrary to widely accepted Reformed evangelical view that implicitly embraces the authorship of Paul to all "of the other six letters attributed to Paul". Nevertheless, Bosch's contribution on Pauline Missiology in relation to Paul's "invitation to join the eschatological community" (:123) is invaluable. He rightly points out the fact that Paul's mission does not simply flow from his theology, "but rather his theology is a missionary theology" (:124).

Scholars like Stendahl believe that Paul's conversion was solely in relation to his *call* as an apostle to the Gentiles (in Riddlebarger 2008:10; cf. Bosch 1991:125; Galatians 1:13-17). They held on to the *alternation* opinion of salvation in Paul's case. They saw no actual break between Paul and his Jewish values. Nevertheless, Paul described his encounter with Christ in terms of *conversion* and *transformation* (2Cor. 3:12-18; Philippians 3:2-9). Thus, according to Bosch, this radical encounter with Jesus was not only life altering for Paul, but it also meant that "salvation in Christ is now to be offered to the Gentile world" (:127; Gal. 1:16; 2:8-9). However, we must never forget that Paul's Gentile ministry did not turn him into anti-Judaism or anti-Jewish

Christianity (Romans 11:1-32). His opposition was toward a blatant distortion of the Gospel by the Judaizers (Gal.1:6-10; 5:1-12). Nevertheless, Paul believed, preached, and practiced a Christ-centered unity in his ministry (Gal. 3:26-28).

Paul's missionary approach was to centralize his ministry in certain strategic Metropolises (e.g. Corinth [where he stayed for one and a half years] and Ephesus [there he stayed for 2 to 3 years]). His global vision for missions was launched from several strategic Roman cities (Romans 15:18-20). In addition, the Apostle Paul was a team worker who valued the contributions of his gospel colleagues (Priscilla and Aquila, Sosthenes, Timothy and Titus, Silvanus/Silas, Barnabas, Epaphroditus, etc.). Conscious of his apostolic calling and its ensuing responsibilities, Paul led by example (1Cor. 9:24-27; 11:1; 1Thess. 1:6).

Paul viewed the future in the light of the triumph of God. He believed in the *apocalyptic* traditions of the prophets of old. Paul had a hopeful view of the end times which spoke of God's vindication, global missions, and the impending consummation of Christ's Kingdom. Thus, justification by faith should be understood in eschatological terms. Our salvation is existentially "a now-and-not yet" experience. In Bosch's view, "Our Christian life in this world thus involves an inescapable tension, oscillating between joy and agony" (:145).

Interestingly, Paul's immanent mission to the Gentiles is a manifestation of God's gracious way of saving Israel (Rom. 11:11-12, 22-32). So Paul clearly believed that mission to the Gentiles does not thwart God's promises to Israel, except rather "that God still intends to save Israel, but in a round-about way – via the mission to the Gentiles" (Bosch 1991:145). Therefore, Paul's apocalyptic announcement of the eschatological inauguration of Christ's rule becomes a gospel motif for Christian ethics. All, both Jews and Gentiles, are invited through Christ's sacrificial death to become family members of the eschatological community (2Cor. 5:11-6:2).

Paul's missionary paradigm should not be seen or used as a tool to promote anti-Semitism. Paul was a Jew through and through (Rom. 11:1). He was even willing to be eternally damned for the sake of his beloved people of Israel (Rom. 9:1-5). Nevertheless, most Jews rejected Paul and his message of Christ as the one who abrogated the law by becoming both "the 'end' and the 'goal' of the Law; … the substitution for the Law, and the Law's original intention" (Bosch 1991:158; cf. Rom. 10:1-4). Hence, by abrogating the Law Christ replaced Israel's exclusiveness through the all-inclusive eschatological community (Rom. 11:25-32). Indeed, Christ's death on the cross "destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law and its regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two [i.e. Jews and Gentiles], thus making peace" (Eph. 2:14-15; addition mine). Not even the stubborn disbelief of many Jews will cause God to revoke his promises to Israel because "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). Bosch concludes by adopting Sanders' view that Paul's dilemma can best be "asserted than explained: salvation is by faith; God's promise to Israel is irrevocable" (1991:160). In retrospect, I agree with this assertion that we must continue to keep this seemingly "conflicting conviction" in tension because God, "The deliverer", has covenanted with the Jews that "all Israel shall be saved" when he takes away their sins (Rom. 11:26-27).

Bosch is of the opinion that in Paul's thinking, "The 'righteousness of God' (cf. Rom. 3:21-31) is to be interpreted as a gift to the community, not to the individual…for the individual believer does not exist in isolation" (1991:166). This will resonate well with commonly held indigenous African values of "ubuntu"[86] (i.e. in the Zulu language they say "*umuntu umuntu nga bantu*" [my personhood finds its essential expression communally, not individually] – paraphrase). Hence, Western individualistic interpretation of *dikaiosyne tou Theou* (the righteousness from/of God) will not have a lasting and enduring impact among indigenous Africans who value themselves communally; rather than individually. This communal hermeneutic should translate to a vigorous eschatological communal homiletics. This means that the Great Commission

[86] The concept of "ubuntu" is like that of charity. While charity begins at home, so is ubuntu. But ubuntu includes showing charity to those of your tribe, nationality and even to foreigners. Thus "ubuntu" is an all inclusive praxis that is based on our common humanity.

becomes the responsibility of the whole church of Jesus Christ, rather than just the individually gifted evangelists.

Bosch concludes his New Testament analysis by briefly looking at its multidimensional mission characteristics:

First, *the incarnation* should not be relegated to Western bourgeois churches that are sympathetic to Docetism, which is of the opinion that "Jesus' humanness is only a veil hiding his humanity" (:513). The Jesus of history is always and forever the Christ of faith. Hence, Bosch argues against the idealistic view of Western bourgeois churches that refuse to take sides because they believe that the church should offer "home for masters as well as slaves, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed" (:513). He insists that God is biased towards the poor and the marginalized. Therefore, we need to be in solidarity with victims in order to maintain gospel integrity and relevance among the marginalized. However, I like to caution that in our justified quest to bring eternal hope to the poor and the marginalized, we must remember that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female…." (Gal. 3:28).[87]

Second, *the cross* of Jesus has been unfairly divorced from his life. Christianity without the cross is a non-entity. In Koyama's words, "Without the cross, Christianity would be a religion of cheap grace" (in Bosch 1991:513; cf. McGrath 1987:37, 147). Indeed, all who are saved through the message of the cross (cf. 1Cor. 1:18; Edwards and Stott 1988:107-168) are called to daily carry their own crosses (Luke 9:23-26; cf. Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die" (in Domenech 2005:2). This is our missiological task both as cross-bearers and God's ambassadors of the message of reconciliation. This reconciliation is between God and man,

[87] See Washington and Kenrein extensive comments on this subject (Washington, R and Kenrein, Glen 1993. *Breaking Down Walls: A model for reconciliation in an age of racial strife*. Chicago: Moody Press, 198-199)

including between man and man, oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and victim (2Cor. 5:16-21).

Third, *the resurrection* is central to the apostolic preaching of the gospel. The promises of God have already found their "full reality in Christ, before they are fully realized in human history; in Christ eternity has entered time, life has conquered death" (1982 Memorandum in Bosch 1991:514). Without the resurrection of Jesus, "your faith in Christ is futile; you are still in your sins" (1Cor. 15:17). Thus the value and power of our preaching is embodied in the fact of the risen Lord (2Cor. 15:14; cf. Eph. 1:17-20).

Fourth, *the ascension* speaks of Christ's exaltation and enthronement as King of God's Kingdom. As a result, Bosch thinks that while we wait for the consummation of Christ's Kingdom, we must not "opt out of civil society and set up little Christian islands" (:515). Opting out of social activities will be tantamount to subscribing to "a truncated and disjunctive understanding of God's workings" (:515-516). Therefore, ascension does not make us so heavenly minded that we become earthly useless. Indeed, it is my opinion that the Church in Africa, without a socially active Christ-centered gospel proclamation, will lose its cutting edge effectiveness and credibility.

Fifth, *the Pentecost* speaks of the missiological Spirit-filled witness of God's distinct eschatological *koinonia* (communal fellowship). This eschatological community is challenged by the Spirit during the Holy Communion that "each time we celebrate it, we are invited to share our bread with the hungry" (:517, paraphrase). Sharing your meal with a neighbour is very important among indigenous South Africans. Consequently, a truly Christ-centered, Spirit-filled community is the one that loves both "with actions and in truth" (1John 3:18; cf. Eden and Wells 1991:175-257).

Sixth, *the Parousia* must not be unfairly treated as a mere "waiting room for eternity" (:517). Our future hope of the second coming must transform both our personal lives and public lives. We are to Christo-centrically engage with our present world in the light of the coming Kingdom. We must not disengage

ourselves from the world for the sake of our holistic missiological mandate (cf. John 17:14-18).

In conclusion, Bosch has been able to put the biblical missiological paradigm in proper perspective. It is very clear to me that God's missiological mandate can only be reached through the Jew-Gentile eschatological community that holistically preaches and practices the whole council of God in a culturally relevant approach.

3.3. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF M. L. DANEEL AND J. N. J. KRITZINGER'S MISSIOLOGY

Daneel and Kritzinger's reader to missiological students at the University of South Africa represents vibrant indigenous Sub-Saharan African discourses on the subject of contextualization. I have cautiously opted to only analyze articles that have direct relevance on mission praxis for indigenous South Africans.

3.3.1. The quest for an African Christian Theology by E. W. Fashole-Luke

3.3.1.1. Meaningful African theologies

What are the challenges that underlie the need of African theologizing even though the church in Africa is obviously (and rapidly) growing? Mbiti (in Daneel and Kritzenger 1989:2) reckons, "The Church in Africa is a Church without a theology and a Church without a theological concern". Indeed most indigenous churches are more concerned about numerical growth than theological maturity. Consequently, in the South African context, I think that there are some indigenous Africans who settle for minimum undergraduate studies that are mainly geared toward empowering so-called "white" middle-class Christians for their largely Western context-specific concerns.

Another key reason for Africans' failure to engage meaningfully with their context is entrenched in "the fact that western missionaries came from theological backgrounds where aspects of discontinuity between Christianity and every culture were stressed to the exclusion of the aspects of continuity with local cultures" (:3). I do concur with this outlook based on the fact that we are instructed not to conform to worldly standard (i.e., "discontinuity"); rather we must be cerebrally transformed so that we might discern God's self-disclosure in nature (i.e., "continuity") and man's destructive distortions of general revelation (Romans 1:18-25). Yet most of African theologies that emerged from the times of national independence from colonial powers suffered from extremism. This extremism comprised uncritical acceptance of African traditional religions (e.g., African Initiated Churches – i.e. Zion Christian Church of Bishop E. Lekganyane), reactionary liberation movement of Black theology (e.g. Archbishop Desmond Tutu; cf. Kato 1985:47), etc. Most of these theologies used context as their point of departure in their theologizing. Nevertheless, I would like to argue that a truly sound and balanced Christian hermeneutic is Word-based. Therefore, God's Word should always be our foundation and yardstick both in matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

3.3.1.2. The nature of the quest: to "translate" the one Faith

The translation of the one true Faith in a local dialect and thought forms is essential for the establishment of a truly African Christianity.[88] Thus, the one eternally consistent Word of God needs to be utilized by every generation in such a way that it can be universally recognized while it is incarnated in a culturally relevant manner. Sawyerr believes that this eternally consistent Word of God must be used sensibly to investigate "the content of traditional religious thought-forms with a view to erecting bridgeheads by which the Christian gospel could be effectively transmitted to the African people" (in Daneel and Kritzenger 1989 :4).[89] Sawyerr suggests that the subject of

[88] Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:4

[89] Muzorewa (1991:100-136) concurs with Sawyerr (in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:4) that bridgeheads between the Bible and the African culture are both possible and necessary.

community in an African context needs to be examined in order to assist in establishing a context-specific application of the gospel in Africa.[90] In addition, the 1965 Ibadan Consultation of African theologies proposed that we need to study the rich African religious heritage. This study is meant to help us to "recognize the radical quality of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ; and yet it is because of this revelation we can discern what is truly of God in our pre-Christian heritage" (:5). So these African theologians argued against those critics who claimed that African traditional religious heritage is discontinuous with the above-mentioned knowledge of God.[91]

Nonetheless, the critics are not completely out of order because an uncritical appraisal of a fallen human culture is open to gross syncretistic tendencies. In addition, we need to remember that our African pre-Christian heritage cannot be equated to the nation of Israel. Africans are Gentiles just like Romans, Greeks, Germans, Japanese, Australians, etc. As a result, African pre-Christian heritage can be rightly understood within the framework of the so-called "uncircumcised" that were "excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise" (Ephesians 2:11-12).[92] But this so-called "uncircumcised" were later "circumcised" in their hearts through faith in Jesus (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; Eph. 2:13).

3.3.1.3. The Development of African Christian theologies

Fashole-Luke notes that the primacy of Scripture is undisputed in gospel contextualization in Africa.[93] The dispute is mainly concerning the role of the OT and the process of contextualizing it. Hence, Fashole-Luke's argument that the complete use of both OT and NT needs to be utilized in the development of African theologies.[94] In addition, the Scriptural authorship of God and man is not underplayed in African contextual theologies. Consequently, Fashole-Luke urges African theologians to be competent

[90] Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:4
[91] Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:5
[92] See Motyer's helpful comments concerning our uncircumcised hearts (1985:125).
[93] Ibid., 6
[94] Ibid., 6

scholars who master "biblical languages, as well as the social, political and cultural conditions of the biblical period" (:6). This competence should be complemented with competence in a well researched holistic analysis of the missionary's cross-cultural local context (i.e. socio-political, historical, religious, and intellectual content of the local context). Finally, this local context-specific theologizing should be "subjected to the critical scrutiny of Christian theologies from other parts of the world" (:8). In reality, the local church does not exist in isolation from the rest of the Body of Christ. Any acceptable theological contextualization should be done in relation to the Church past, present and future.

3.3.2. Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa by Manas Buthelezi

3.3.2.1. "Ethnographical" Approach

Buthelezi believes that the indigenous nature of the Church's gospel ministry presupposes "its mission in the world" (in Daneel and Kritzenger 1989:21). This gospel proclamation to indigenous people of Africa should be communicated in a culturally engaging manner. Both the socio-political and linguistic apparatus of indigenous Africans need to be exploited in order to bridge a hypothetical "hermeneutical gap" (:22). This so-called "hermeneutical gap" is purportedly based on the white man's assumed cultural superiority which he paternalistically imposes on his communication of the gospel to the indigenous people of Africa. Hence, Junod suggests that, alternatively, our effectiveness in cross-cultural missions in Africa would necessitate "the study of the 'African soul' (i.e., African institutions and customs – both past and present) as well as its fears and longings" (in Daneel and Kritzenger 1989:22).[95] So Buthelezi (:24) believes that this form of empathetic appraisal of the "African soul" would help us to "arrive at a hermeneutical principle by means of which one can translate the 'Christian gospel' into a form congenial to the 'African mind'". I would like to both agree and disagree with Buthelezi's assertion. On the one hand I do agree that the

[95] Bediako is very assertive about the significance of studying the 'African soul' for the purpose of effective cross-cultural communication (2000:85-95)

application of the eternally unchangeable Word of God needs to be "congenial to the 'African mind'" if we were to evangelize and disciple Africans effectively. On the other hand, I would like to disagree with Buthelezi based on the premise that our hermeneutical principle is Scripture-based rather than context-based. Scripture judges and affirms our local contexts rather than the other way around.

3.3.2.2. "Anthropological" Approach

This approach's main focus is not the African worldview *per se*; rather it is the African person himself who is the object of contextualization. So Buthelezi is of the opinion that the ethnographical approach's weakness is its exclusive focus on the "epistemological entities, of fixed impersonal data – things 'out there', the body of categories for interpreting the universe" (:32). It is my opinion that this has the adverse connotation of exploiting African cultural and traditional ideologies and philosophies at the expense of constructive engagement with the African people themselves. An anthropological approach seeks to engage Africans at a personal rather than abstract level.

By implication this anthropological approach's "point of departure for the evolution of indigenous theology is not the manipulation of objectivized *res indigenae*, but the Africans' initiative in the context of their present existential situation" (:33). This will take a painful but life-giving liberation of the African mind from the colonial past and its present psychological impact. Therefore Buthelezi thinks that failure to emancipate Africans from the dehumanizing past contradicts the concept of indigenization. He is of the opinion that, "Indigenous theology without freedom of thought is a contradiction in terms; freedom of thought without access to the material means of participating in the wholeness of life is like capacity without content" (:33). Buthelezi, in my view, is right in urging Africans to emancipate themselves from past, present and future psychological prisons that have the potential to render them useless and irrelevant to their generation. But I would even go further and claim that Africans can only find their true holistic emancipation through the

transformative and dynamic power of the written Word of God (cf. Roman 12:1-2; 2Cor. 3:17-18).

3.4. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF GOD COMMUNICATED CROSS-CULTURALLY IN AFRICA

Africans are very religious people. They undoubtedly and implicitly take it for granted that God exists and He is the almighty creator of the entire universe. Most African indigenous folks believe that their deceased ancestors mediate between them and God. Consequently, Christianity is most amenable to those who believe in African traditional religions. Yet, paradoxically, Christ is sometimes viewed as irrelevant by those who feel that he is not part of their kinship, clan or tribe. Hence, it is significant to learn how to communicate the Kingdom of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob among African ancestral venerators. I will briefly elaborate on the biblical challenges in communicating Christ/God cross-culturally. Here is an important quote from the prophet Isaiah:

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"and servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am He.
Before me no god was formed,
nor will there be one after me.
I, even I, am the LORD,
And apart from me there is no saviour.
I have revealed and saved and proclaimed
- I, and not some foreign god among you.
You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"that I am God.
Yes, and from ancient days I am He.
No one can deliver out of my hand.
When I act, who can reverse it?"

Isaiah 43:10-13

The Bible is very clear on the uniqueness of YHWH. He is truly a jealous God who will not share His glory with anyone or anything in heaven and on earth (Exodus 20:1-6). He revealed His "eternal power and divine nature" (Rom. 1:20) in creation. So God's general self-disclosure in nature and creation leaves us without excuse "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Nevertheless He covenanted with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (cf. gen. 17; Exod. 3:13-15). He chose the Israelites to be the witnesses of His majestic uniqueness (Isa. 43:10-13). However, Israel failed YHWH. Nevertheless, YHWH's purposes will never fail (Isa. 46:8-10). As a result, His majestic glory was ultimately revealed to the entire world through Christ Jesus (cf. John 1:18; 14:6-7; 17:3-4). It is against this background of God's special self-disclosure in Christ that we now turn to Africa as an object of God's love through "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1Cor. 2:2).

The idea of God in African traditional religion and customs is most often clouded by superstitious beliefs and practices. Nyamiti (in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:41; cf. Mbiti 1986:115) rightly points to the fact that, "African superstition…pervades the whole religious attitude, it manifests itself most intensively in moments of crisis – at birth, puberty, marriage, illness, death or other misfortunes". These crucial events draw people closer to the supernatural. But most people don't seek God's help; rather they seek the aid of traditional healers or so-called "witch doctors" (cf. Imasogie 1993: 57). Moreover, these spiritual leaders have a tendency of blaming witchcraft, evil spells, evil spirits (called "thokolosi" – in Sesotho), evil neighbours or jealous family members. For example, the story of the witch of Endor (1Samuel 28) might be interpreted by those who superstitiously embrace divination and spiritism as a biblical example of the fact that God sanctions *real contact with the dead*. They might think that the witch of Endor was a credible medium who could mediate between the living and the dead. Accordingly, they see the ghost of Samuel as a sign that YHWH validates the practice of the spiritists (i.e., Sangomas – in Nguni dialect). But this is a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of God's act of warning to King Saul.

This story of the witch of Endor was a unique, once-off event, never to be repeated. Firstly, we need to remember that Samuel's appearance from the dead was not a blessing to King Saul; rather, Samuel[96] confirmed God's judgment upon rebellious Saul and the Israelites (1Sam. 28:16-19). Thus, the story of the witch of Endor contradicts all global indigenous traditional religious beliefs that are strongly characterized by consulting the dead for direction, illumination, spiritual cleansing and general blessings. Secondly, God absolutely detests anyone "who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead" (Deuteronomy 18:10-11).[97] Hence, initially, Saul himself was also well known for destroying the work of mediums and spiritists (1Sam. 28:9).

Another negative factor in African traditional religious beliefs is its excessive tendency of "one-sided anthropocentrism and this-worldliness" (Nyamiti in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:42).[98] The "one-sided anthropocentrism and this-worldliness" in African spirituality is based on the humanistic pragmatic functionality of African traditional believes. These beliefs are centered on the holistic earthly welfare of individuals, families, clans and tribes. The supernatural beings (i.e., the ancestors) are consulted, venerated and welcomed for the benefit of believers in this world. Hence, because of "this-worldliness" that characterizes African religious experience, Nyamiti

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[96] Some evangelical Christians argue that "Samuel's ghost" was just a deceptive evil apparition, a delusion which God sovereignly permitted in order to warn Saul (cf. Henry 1996 [1991]:432). While some theologians choose to ignore the issues surrounding necromancy (see Douglas, J D, Hillyer, N, Bruce, F F, Guthrie, D et al. (eds). 1992 [1962]. *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd ed.). Leicester, UK; Illinois, USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 319)

[97] Stinton shows how some African theologians embrace syncretism in order to formulate their versions of Christology (Stinton, D B 2004. *Jesus of Africa: Voices of contemporary African Christology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 112-142; cf. Carson, D A, France, R T, Motyer, J A and Wenham, G J (eds.) 1994 [1953]. *New Bible Dictionary*. 21st Century Edition. Leicester, UK; Illinois, USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 503-505)

[98] Kapolyo is of the view that African traditional religious beliefs are humanistic (Kapolyo, J M 2005. *The Human Condition: Christian perspectives through African eyes*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 116-142)

concludes that, “The cult of ancestors and other cosmic realities tends to overshadow divine worship” which mainly views God as transcended, therefore remote and blasé (1989:43; cf. Nurnberger 2007: 133). Indeed, indigenous South Africans are well known for treating God with awe because he is perceived to be a mysterious and remote being. As a result, most people prefer to communicate with their ancestors (i.e., *amadlozi* in isiZulu) because they are familiar with them. In fact, a missionary Dr Callaway was told by an informant that, “In the process of time we have come to worship *amadlozi* only because we knew not what to say about uNkulunkulu… we seek for ourselves the amadlozi, that we may not always be thinking about uNkulunkulu, saying, ‘uNkulunkulu has left us,’ or ‘What has he done for us?’” (Smith, ed. 1966 [1950]:134).

But on the other hand there are positive themes in African traditional religious context, such as, African names and qualities of God. For example, the Nguni name of God as UVELINGQAKI refers to “The First One who came [before] anything appeared” (Setiloane in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:50 [*addition mine*]; cf. Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3).[99] Indeed, the Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, beside Him there is no God (see Isaiah 44:6; cf. Rev. 22:13). However, it is a well known fact among indigenous South Africans that missionaries preferred to use UNKULUNKULU (i.e. the Greatest One/Majestic One/God Most High) because they felt that the use of UVELINGQAKI will confuse people. They thought that the indigenous folks would not be able to differentiate between Scriptural implications and presupposed African traditional religious connotations of the use of UVELINGQAKI. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that a scripturally based emphasis on the priority of “The First One - UVELINGQAKI” in an indigenous African context/community will indeed be revolutionary and counter-cultural – i.e., the indigenous Africans are pragmatically one-sided anthropocentric and this-worldliness; while the gospel is holistically Christ-centered (Colossians 1:15-20; 2:6—15; cf. Kato 1975:177). Christ-centeredness urges us to “throw

[99] Chidester confirms the fact that the indigenous South Africans had a concept of God as the First-Cause (Chidester, D. 1996. *Savage Systems: Colonialism and comparative religion in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 118ff)

off everything [in our African cultures and customs] that hinders and the sin [of syncretism] that easily entangles" so that we can "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author [or originator] and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1b-2; addition mine).

CONCLUSION

We have seen how Hesselgrave has helped us to put gospel communication in its proper perspective. He has shown us the need to be biblically sound, culturally relevant and comprehensively holistic in our quest to evangelize cross-culturally. His biblical hermeneutical methodology is very much eclectic. While on the one hand he acknowledges the centrality of the Bible in cross-cultural communication; on the other hand he suggests vigorous use of other socio-political and context-specific resources, such as, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, etc., etc. However, Bosch specifically focused on the New Testament model of the eschatological community. His biblical hermeneutical methodology focused on the all-inclusive nature of the Body of Christ. This theme of community is crucial to African people. Therefore, Africans need to constructively exploit the subject of community from a Christological point of view. Both Fashole-Luke and Buthelezi used an indigenous theologizing that utilizes local contextual resources such as the role of God and ancestors in an African setting, and its implication for missiological context-specific theologizing.[100] But it appears to me that indigenization of theology in Africa is still at the level of experimentation; rather than a well developed evangelical contextualization of the gospel. More still needs to be researched and thoroughly scrutinized, especially the subject of Christology.

God has immaculately and immutably revealed Himself in Christ Jesus (cf. Matthew 11:27; John 1:18; 2Cor. 5:17-21). Christ Jesus does not only transcend the role of ancestors in the African traditional setting; He is uniquely the only one who is qualified to mediate between God and man (cf. Acts 4:12;

[100] See Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:10, 30-38

1Timothy 2:5-6). He completely nullifies the work of ancestors, “inyangas/sangomas – traditional healers/so-called “witch doctors” and spiritists/mediums in an indigenous traditional African context (cf. John 14:6). Therefore, in conclusion, I would like to point to the realization that the Bible has a lot to offer to the African mind, and African evangelicals can constructively contribute to the church at large, especially on the subject of Christology.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION OF AN EVANGELICAL CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Chapter four will focus on the theological formulation of an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa. The case study of Christology from an indigenous African worldview will serve the purpose of analyzing the theological formulation of Contextual Missiology in concrete terms (i.e., in relation to Africa from an indigenous South African perspective).

I will critically look through the main theological sources that are currently, from 1950 and beyond, under the intense scrutiny of theological indigenizers in Africa. And I will seek to formulate an indigenous South African approach that is congenial with biblical historical evangelical convictions. My aim is to work toward a bona fide evangelical missiological approach that will constructively contribute toward a holistic transformation of indigenous Africans, especially South Africans. Therefore, the case study of Christology will be vital for understanding the supreme transformative role of Christ in traditional and post-Apartheid South Africa. Hence, in conclusion, I would like to summarise this chapter by working towards what I like to call “Evangelical African Christianity”.

4.1. HISTORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF AFRICAN THEOLOGIES

Since the time of European missionary explosion during the 18th century, the gospel’s encounter with African traditional religions has been marked by suspicion and diplomatic congeniality. This mixed feeling still characterizes African interaction with the Christian faith. As a result, most Africans,

especially from the 1950s, have been seeking to reconcile the so-called "white-man's God" with the African experience of colonization, demonization and marginalization. It is a well known fact among indigenous African Christians that Western theologizing has failed to convert the "African-soul" in its wholeness (cf. Stinton 2004:4). Consequently, indigenous African Christians sought to decolonize the gospel and contextualize it in a culturally relevant way. The end result was conceptualized in what came to be known as African Theologies and Black Liberation Theology.

4.1.1. AFRICAN THEOLOGY

African Theology as a discipline concedes the need for rigorous dialogue between the Christian faith and African traditional religious beliefs. It is an attempt to reconcile African indigenous religious heritage with authentic biblical Christianity. In fact, Professor John S. Pobee (1986:49) believes that theological educators in Africa should consider the fact that God's Word took the European contextual form "to save Europeans in…and not out of their context. So, too, the same divine eternal Word can and will, despite the follies of men, save African societies in their contexts and not out of their context". Pobee's assessment is widely accepted among well known African scholars such as Mbiti, Bujo, Nyamiti, Mugambi, Ngewa, Boesak, Setiloane, Bediako, Tutu, etc. For example, Setiloane argues that European Theology is biased by its Western cultural and socio-political situation which is eventually imposed on African Christians, consequently creating a schizophrenic dilemma for Africans.[101] Africans are supposed to implement gospel directives from both their contextual perspective and Western contextual missionary heritage. This dilemma has been resolved by some through absolute rejection of anything Western. For instance, Setiloane (2000:44) mentions the point that even Western civilized liberal theologians were unprepared to encounter "the emergence of an African thinking which would reject Western understandings and insights while claiming to be fully Christian". But I would like to agree with Shorter's critical analysis of the "White Church", whereby he cautions that "Western Christianity can be allowed to be a catalyst" provided

[101] Setiloane, G M 2000. African Theology: an introduction. Cape Town: Lux Verbi, pp 45-46

that “it should not be an instrument of political, economic or cultural domination” (1977:22). I think that Africans have the right to apply God’s Word in a culturally relevant manner without being dictated to by their Western counterparts. Yet it is also my belief that Africans cannot do theology in isolation because Africans are eternally part of the global Body of Christ which rightly includes believing Westerners.

Most African theologians use the Bible and context as their point of departure for their theological discourses. Pobee insists on an African theological paradigm that is authentically biblical, contextually African and universally relevant.[102] In his inaugural address to a consultation of the Missiological Lutheran Theological College held at Maphumulo in Zululand in September 1972, Dr. Hans-Jurgen Becken made a few crucial observations about African Theology. He observed that the Lord does not call Africans to become miniature reflections of Europeans, the same as “He did not expect Hellenes to undergo Jewish circumcision when accepting them into His church” (1973:6). Becken further deduced that God rather prefers the gospel to profoundly saturate “the spiritual and holistic African worldview by his influential presence” (:6). This total emancipation of the African from within his context as a whole is what indigenous African Christian gospel contextualization is all about. Hence, Becken (:6) concludes that a holistically transformed African will “read the Bible with his own eyes, listen to the Word of God with his own ears, ponder over it with his own brain, respond to it with his own mouth and words”. While it is indispensably true that indigenous Africans need to read, listen and respond to God’s eternal Word in their own culturally relevant way; it is my opinion that Africans need to also open themselves to constructive criticism of the universal Church. I believe that an authentic African Christian Theology is not a closed system that cannot learn from other theologies, such as Western Reformed Evangelical Theology.

In his overview of African Theology, Ngindu Mushete (in Gibellini 1994:13) speaks of three main currents of theology in Africa, to be precise, he mentions “mission, African and black theology”. Even though Christianity has been long

[102] Pobee & Hallencreutz 1986:19; cf. Pobee in Parrat 1997 [1987]: 24-25; Becken 1973:4

established in Africa, especially North Africa, the history of *gospel proclamation* to indigenous South Africans can be traced reasonably from the advent of missionaries between the 17th and 19th centuries, and beyond. Those who brought the gospel were almost solely concerned with "a theology of the salvation of souls" (Mushete in Gibellini 1994:13). The saving of souls was viewed in contrast to church planting. In fact, I once heard a story told by Dr. John Newby, a former Church History lecturer at George Whitefield College in Cape Town. Newby once told a story of how Afrikaner masters deprived their slave workers who became Christians from being baptized because they did not want to be seen as equals to their servants. In addition, slave masters did not want to baptize their slaves because "a profession of Christianity at baptism was a passport to freedom and acceptance into European society" (Elphick and Shell in Elphick and Giliomee 1979:119). Even church affiliation was intentionally separated across racial and socio-economic lines. Nevertheless, this theology of soul saving was later, in the 1920s, complemented with what came to be known as "the theology of the implanting of the church" among Roman Catholics (Mushete in Gibellini 1994:14). But Mushete argues against the European church models which were unfairly imposed on the indigenous converts. He says that the European model left Christian communities "deprived of initiative, creativity, and originality, praying with borrowed words and thinking by proxy, via Rome, Paris, London, and other capitals of Europe" (:16). To make matters worse, Bujo (1992:42) explains how "African converts were required to turn their backs on the whole of their tradition and the whole of their culture" in order to be accepted as genuine Christians. This seemingly innocent act of Western missionaries became a key catalyst for the inception of what came to be known as African Theology – the theology that holistically embraces and critical engages with African worldview from a biblical standpoint. Hence, according to Mbiti Christianity that is authentically African is the one "with its roots deeply established in the history and traditions of those who profess it…" (1969:231). In the South African context, this experience of indigenization took the form of what is known as Black Theology.

4.1.2. BLACK THEOLOGY

The context of Black Theology in South Africa is both the socio-economic and political condition of "Black" natives, "Coloured" and Indian communities. Most leading black theologians were inspired by the sufferings of their people during the establishment of repressive laws, such as "the 1913 Land Act" (Kretzschmar 1986:7). Boesak speaks of how these tyrannical, demoralizing laws found their full expression in the "dehumanization that is structured into the system of apartheid" (1986 [1984]:2). This experience of black people prior to 1994's first democratic elections in South Africa informs the general context of pioneer black liberation theologians. Kretzschmar mentions several key indigenous African leaders who played a foundational role in the establishment of a black theological movement (i.e. P.Q. Vundla – key member of a Christian Moral Rearmament movement, D.D.T. Jabavu – Fort Hare University Professor who became leader of the All-Africa Convention, Chief Albert Luthuli – a Methodist lay preacher who became a Zulu chief and an ANC national leader, Bishop Alphaeus Zulu – a Christian political activist who became the first black Anglican bishop in South Africa, and Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews – Fort Hare lecturer and Secretary of the World Council of Churches' African section).[103] I think these leaders represent the aspiration of black people to be liberated from the ideological bondage of Eurocentric imperial political and religious structures.

This kind of theologizing seeks to advocate for the socio-political rights of the black marginalized people from a biblical point of view. Redemption is not solely seen from an individualistic perspective; rather, it is also viewed as liberation from structural sins of repressive regimes. Cone and Wilmore observed that whereas the main concern of African Theology is the Africanization of the Christian faith; the main axis of Black Theology is the complete liberation of black people.[104] Bishop Sigqibo Dwane makes some interesting propositions for a theology of black liberation. He begins his discourse by sharply distinguishing between black power and liberation

[103] Kretzschmar 1986:3-12

[104] Cone, J H & Wilmore, G S 1993 [1979]. Black Theology: a documentary history volume one: 1966-1979. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, p377

theology.[105] Dwane views black power as "a philosophy of secular origin, whereas liberation theology is squarely rooted in scripture" (1989:56). For Dwane, black liberation theology is a Bible-based, God-centred methodology which illuminates the fact that, "God does not luxuriate in His eternal bliss, but reaches out to man and to the world" (:57). Additionally, Bonganjalo Goba is of the same opinion with Dwane's assertion that the only way Christians in South Africa can achieve theological relevance is when God's people "engage in the process of liberation in the world" (1988:46). Goba emphasises the importance of biblical contextual praxis during our theological deliberations.[106] Nevertheless, Dwane does not attempt to equate liberation theology with the one true eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, he believes that black liberation theology is just "the handmaiden of the evangellion" (1989:57). Therefore it seems to me that Dwane interprets liberation theology as the result of applying the gospel in the context of oppression; rather than the eternal gospel itself. Hence, I think that Black Theology as a "hermeneutical praxis" [107] in the context of South Africa will be phased out if it does not redefine its main crux apart from the known enemies of slavery, colonisation and apartheid.

Professor James H. Cone points to some key components and sources of black liberation theology. First, he mentions five components of black liberation theology (i.e. Liberation as the gospel essence; black theology as a liberation theology; black theology as a theology of the oppressed black community; black liberation theology as a survival theology; and black liberation theology as a language of devotion).[108] Cone is right in speaking of God as the Great Liberator of His people.[109] Both the liberation of Israel from Egypt and the world from sin's power and curse have very strong undertones of God as the Liberator of Israel and the whole world. Therefore, black theology can be rightly called a theology of liberation if it revolves around God liberating black people from their oppressive regimes. Yet I would like to

[105] Dwane 1989:56
[106] Goba 1988:45
[107] Ibid., 6-10; cf. Cone 1996 [1986]:35
[108] Cone 1986:1-20
[109] Ibid., 3

argue against Cone's extreme conclusion that theology is only truly Christian if it arises "from the oppressed community" (1996 [1986]:5). Even though I concede that God has an unambiguous bias for the poor (cf. Luke 4:18-19) but I do believe that the gospel is for every living sinner, meaning: the master and the slave, the oppressor and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, the slave and the free have all fallen short of God's glory (cf. Rom. 3:23-24; Gal. 3:28). Furthermore, Cone mentions six sources of black liberation theology (i.e. Black experience of humiliation and suffering; black history of slavery, colonisation and apartheid; black cultural expressions of dehumanization and blackness; God's revelation in the experiences of the black community; black liberation theology as a Scripture-based theology; and Christian tradition relevant to black liberation theology).[110] Cone is swift to point to the fact that "the numerical order of the discussion is not in order of importance" (1996 [1986]:29). The most important thing about black liberation theology is its uncompromising determination to transform the dehumanizing experiences of the black community from a biblical point of view. As a matter of fact, black theologians who suffered under apartheid are very sceptical about "white theologies which unashamedly gave tacit support to the privileged status of white people in relation to the people of colour" (Maimela in Gibellini 1994:191; cf. Cone 1969: 5).

4.2. REVELATION IN AFRICAN THEOLOGIES

Revelation in African theologies is a crucial issue because it informs the basis of belief among the African black communities. In order to establish how the so-called black Africans should understand biblical revelation, we need to reflect on how black African theologians understood the question of revelation and what significant role the Bible plays in African communal experience.

[110] Ibid., 23-35

4.2.1. AFRICAN ENCOUNTER OF BIBLICAL REVELATION

The story of the Ethiopian eunuch's encounter with Christ is crucial because it tells us of an indigenous African reading the scroll of Isaiah 53 on his way back from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 8:26-40). He serves as one of the earliest Africans who encountered Christ through reading the Scripture and getting an effective explanation from the itinerant evangelist Philip. His is a story of an African whose spiritual eyes were opened in order to see the glory of "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). We know that "according to tradition, the first translation of the Bible took place in Africa, when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek in Alexandria in the third century B.C." (Mbiti 1986:22). The Septuagint (LXX) became the key instrument of the early church's evangelical witness throughout the Roman Empire.

Mbiti insists that theological reflection in the life of the African Church should always be governed by the whole Scriptural revelation.[111] He views pre-Christian African tradition as a God-given preparation for the proclamation of the message of the whole Bible.[112] But Byang Kato is very cynical of this notion that "presupposes the validity of God's direct revelation to the worshipper of African religions" (1975:54). Nonetheless, according to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Africans are more amenable to the whole Bible, especially the Old Testament, because there are some cultural parallels between biblical revelation and the African experience of the divine.[113] For instance, because of God's transcendence, Tutu views the mediatory intercessory role of the ancestors/living dead in African society as a good biblical parallel of an OT Israelite considering himself "singularly blessed if he lived to a ripe old age and was then gathered up to his fathers" (in Becken 1973:44). In deed, when I was very young I remember how in the township of Ikageng in Potchefstroom we were taught to respect elders because it was considered to be a privilege to be an elderly person and the dead were revered as those who have *arrived in their place of honour and exaltation*. For example, I will concede that respect for the elders is still necessary to this

[111] Mbiti 1986:33-40
[112] Mbiti 1992:267-293
[113] see Tutu in Becken 1973:43-45

day. But, I think that African believers must not confuse respect for the living elders and remembering the deceased loved ones with the worship of God. There is truly one mediator of the new covenant between God and men, and that is, the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5-6). Therefore, in my opinion, I think that African encounter with OT revelation has been open to abuse because of some so-called similarities of the OT with the African culture. I think that Kraft's "dynamic equivalence"[114]should not be confused with cultural assimilation, meaning: there is a tendency among African indigenizers to conform the Christian faith to the standard of African Traditional Religion. I believe that this syncretistic praxis reflects a catastrophic weakness in African primal understanding of God's eternal revelation.

4.2.2. THE ROLE OF REVELATION IN AFRICAN THEOLOGIES

Throughout this thesis I have been able to indicate that most African theologizers unequivocally insist on the centrality of the Bible in the formulation of their respective African or black theologies. For example, John Mbiti contributed the whole article on the "Bible in African Culture" in Gibellini's "Paths of African Theology". In this article Mbiti makes a few crucial observations. First, he observed that since the time of the Septuagint, "the Bible has continued to be read in Africa, and by 1990 was available in some 600 African languages, which account for 30 percent of the worldwide translations" (1994:27). This observation is crucial when it is understood against the background of massive illiteracy, or minimum literacy among many indigenous Africans. Many Africans can now hear God speak heavenly mysteries in their own valued mother tongues (cf. Acts 2:5-11). This experience has the potential to add enormous value in the spiritual lives of diligent indigenous African followers of Christ. Furthermore, Mbiti urges that both written and oral biblical traditions should be harnessed in order to reach out to both the literate and illiterate African believers.[115] So, this means that, Christians have to emphasise the main thrust of the Bible which needs to be

[114] Kraft 1981:291-312
[115] Mbiti in Gibellini 1994:31

understood and appropriated by both the literate and illiterate African indigenous receptors of the gospel.

The role of revelation in African Theologies is also to shape African Christianity.[116] In my opinion, Mbiti is right when he points out the fact that reading or hearing God's Word in your mother tongue would not automatically enrich your spiritual life.[117] I believe that only through the enabling anointing of the Holy Ghost can we read, understand, and apply God's Word appropriately and effectively in our lives. Therefore, the thesis of Kwame Bediako (1995:59-74) on "the value of vernacular heritage in African Christianity" becomes really crucial for us in understanding the role of revelation in African Theologies. Bediako is of the opinion that the extent of a post-missionary African church's "ability to offer an adequate interpretation of reality and a satisfying intellectual framework for African life" depends on the viability of the "heritage of Christian tradition in its indigenous language" (1995:61). For that reason, Bediako insists that people from local contexts must intimately participate in the translation of the Bible in their own vernacular.[118] Thus he concludes by acknowledging the benefits of vernacular translations which he considers as both bridge builders for gospel preachers and holistic transformative tools for the locals.[119] On the one hand, the role of revelation in African Theologies seems to be central; yet on the other hand, African traditional religious and socio-political experience seems to play a key role in the formulation of African Theologies. This pre-eminent role of African traditional religious and socio-political experience in the formulation of African Theologies seems syncretistic to me. In fact, Gehman (1989: 272) says that, "Syncretism …is about taking something which is incompatible and irreconcilable from one culture or religion and trying to incorporate that into the other religion". Hence, it is my belief that African Theology is open to gross *syncretism* because in practice context governs the Bible, and not vice versa, as we are supposed to believe.

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[116] Mbiti 1986:41
[117] Ibid., 41
[118] Bediako 1995:62
[119] Ibid., 62

4.3. THE CASE STUDY OF CHRISTOLOGY FROM AN INDIGENOUS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Christ is central to God's redemptive plan. The subject of soteriology (i.e. salvation story) is a key biblical theological theme which is christologically based from the book of Genesis to Revelation. This redemption story assumes the background of a world in need of saving (Rom. 3:23-26). Hence, YHWH as a missionary God chose to send Jesus the Messiah to be the Saviour of the whole world (John 3:16-18). And eventually, Jesus commissioned his disciples to the whole world as witnesses of his saving work (Matthew 28:18-19; Acts 1:8). Consequently, some Western missionaries responded to this Great Commission by witnessing for Christ in Africa. The result of their labour was seen in the establishment of so-called "mission churches". In addition, many indigenous African converts did the ground work of furthering the cause of the gospel in their local contexts. And that resulted in the astronomical expansion of the African church which is still continuing to show phenomenal growth to this day. Therefore, I would like to ask these two essential questions: Firstly, how did the people understand the meaning of Christ from an indigenous African, especially South African perspective? Secondly, what kind of churches emerged from such a Christological message?

4.3.1. THE MEANING OF CHRISTOLOGY IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

Jesus Christ is the single most important person in Christianity. He is the hub of our Christian faith. In fact, Olowala believes that, "Christianity is Christ and we must examine his life if we are to understand our faith" (in Ngewa, Shaw & Tienou 1998:155). And this strong sentiment is echoed by McGrath in his book called "A passion for truth: the intellectual coherence of evangelicalism". He believes that, Evangelical Theology is first and foremost "concerned with the identity and significance of Jesus Christ, affirming and acknowledging the *particularity* of his cross and resurrection, rejecting any temptation to lapse into generalities" (McGrath 1996:50). Therefore it is my deduction from this

dialogue that any African theological discourse that does not centralize Christology is not truly Christian. I think that true Christianity is not only Bible based but it is also Christocentric because the Bible is itself a bona fide Christological primary source (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). Therefore I would like to focus on four essential Christological themes from an African perspective, that is, Christ as an Ancestor, Christ as the Greatest Healer, Christ as the Ultimate Sacrifice, and Christ as the Liberator of the oppressed.

Benezet Bujo, in my opinion, typifies an ideal indigenous African theologian. My research has shown me that most African theologians like Bujo, believe that Ancestral veneration is an acceptable point of departure in the construction of a so-called authentic African Christology. Bujo is of the view that African ancestral veneration is a viable contextual way of speaking about Jesus relevantly.[120] He urges African theological thinkers to embrace Jesus as the "'Ancestor Par Excellence', that is …'Proto-Ancestor'" (1992:72). This form of thinking is thoroughly embraced by Kwame Bediako. Bediako uses the mediation role of Jesus as a hermeneutical principle for Africanizing Jesus as "our Elder Brother who shared in our *African* experience in every respect, except our sin and alienation from God" (2000:26). Meanwhile, Professor Pobee was thinking the same thing as Bediako when he asked, "Why should an Akan relate to Jesus of Nazareth, who does not belong to his clan, family, tribe, and nation?" (1979:81). Thus Bediako, who read Pobee's comment, chose to respond to Pobee by insisting that if we regard Jesus as both Proto-Ancestor and Elder Brother it will result in people being saved "from the terrors and fears that they experience in their traditional worldview" (2000:23). Accordingly, I think this inclusion of Jesus as an African communal member is geared towards healing the apparent rift that has been caused by Western presentation of Jesus as a foreigner who wants to impose his will on already established African communal structures. But it is my view that Jesus is not necessarily interested in replacing the role of African deceased elders in order

[120] Bujo 1992:72; cf. see the conceptualization of Jesus from an African existential viewpoint in Donders, J G 1986. *Non-bourgeois Theology: An African Experience of Jesus*. Markynoll, NY: Orbis Books

for Him to be relevant in Africa. Rather, Jesus is God's unique mediator because He originates from God in a way that is eternally supreme above men and angels (Hebrews 1:1-3:6). According to Sung Wook Chung (2005:103), "Jesus genuinely and uniquely makes God known because He alone *is* God as He presents Himself to us amidst all the frailty of our human existence." Therefore, in my opinion, the Lord Jesus Christ is not an intruder in the indigenous African worldview; He is, in actual fact, UVELINGQAKI/Umvelingqaki[121], that is "The First One who came [before] anything appeared" (Setiloane in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:50 [*addition mine*]; cf. Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3). As the Alpha and Omega, Jesus has an undisputed eternal place in our lives because "by Him all things [including Africans and Westerners] were created…and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17; Acts 17:26-28, addition mine). Thus "*in Christ"* both the Africans and the Europeans will find rest for their souls because "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28; cf. Tinker 2001:70).

African traditional environment is *always* concerned about the holistic wellbeing of the community. Among Southern African Bantu groups, good health is generally associated with ancestral or divine blessing, while ill-health is associated with punishment or curse. People who perform all the necessary *rites of passage* are considered blessed by God and their clan or family ancestors. Whereas, those people who do not have *ubuntu* (self-respect and respect for others) and are detractors from generally accepted traditional norms will be considered to be under a dark cloud of an ancestral curse and punishment. And these 'cursed' people are vulnerable to the evil supernatural onslaught of jealous neighbours or family witches.[122] Usually, the family will call a *sangoma* (i.e. traditional healer/doctor) to give an ancestral direction and a spiritual holistic healing. The most interesting fact according to Ngada and Mofokeng, both African Indigenous Church (AIC) bishops, is that, "Many millions of Africans joined our churches because they found healing there"

[121] It is vital to note that the term Unvelingqaki is a contested term that refers to God. Some people prefer the exclusive use of Unkulunkulu in reference to God because it refers to his greatness (see Vilakazi, Mthethwa & Mpanza 1986:12)
[122] Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:31

(2001:32). Nganda and Mofokeng view healing as a holistic phenomenon that includes physical, spiritual, societal, and relational healing, meaning, God can even heal man's broken relationship with their deceased ancestors.[123] In my opinion, the will of God for holistic individual and societal health should be seen within the paradigm of the consummation of His Kingdom. Jesus as the great Physician has come to cure the world's deadliest sickness, more devastating than HIV/AIDS, that is, the *sin* that alienates man from God. Therefore I disagree with Ngada and Mofekeng's syncretistic assertions about God's holistic healing of a broken society. Yet, I think that this context of healing serves as a background to which the Christian faith has an opportunity to present Jesus as the One greater than the local sangomas. In fact, African theologians see Jesus Christ as the Ultimate Supreme Healer. Cece Kolie contributed an article on "Jesus as Healer" in Schreiter's "Faces of Jesus in Africa". In this article, Kolie sees a symbolism of healing in the crucifixion of Jesus.[124] Kolie speaks of how the message of the cross can be perceived as, "a scandal to the Jews, madness to the Greeks - and sickness to the Africans" (in Schreiter 1992:145). This view of Christ as a "sickness to the Africans" is influenced by the Africans' view that "the presence of someone ill in the family is a scandal" (1992:145). Therefore, the 'sickness' of Jesus' death must have been caused by someone or something for a specific reason. In this case Kolie views the human sin that causes death as the cause and reason behind Jesus' death which brings cure for both sin and death respectively.[125] In addition, Professor Veli-Matti Karkkainen believes that, "in contrast to the healers both of Jesus' time and in the African context, Christ was the 'wounded healer' who became a healer through the pain and suffering of the cross" (2003:253). Thus, I concur with both Kolie and Karkkainen that the deadly impact of sin among the human race can be cured through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

The topic of Christ's sacrificial death has a great significance among the South African indigenous people because of their belief in what I call, a "rescue-theology" of the sacrificial system. For example, the presence of a

[123] Ibid., 32
[124] Colie in Schreiter 1992:144
[125] Ibid., 145-149

curse (i.e., bad luck: *senyama* in Sesotho) constitutes a problem that can only be removed or resolved through appeasing (or propitiating) the ancestors through a sacrificial ceremonial cleansing. During this cleansing ceremony "a particular herb is eaten or African beer is brewed and drunk or a goat is slaughtered" (Ngada and Mofekeng 2001:45). This ceremonial act of worship is meant to cleanse the culprit or the victim of *senyama* in order to re-establish equilibrium and harmony in the immediate family or clan. According to Mbiti, "The making of sacrifices and offerings…is also an act and occasion of making and renewing contact between God and man, the spirits and man, i.e. the spiritual and the physical worlds" (1969:59). It is this renewal of relationships that interests Bediako. He is of the opinion that, "The action of Jesus Christ, himself divine and sinless, in taking on human nature so as to willingly lay down his life for all humanity, fulfils perfectly the end that all sacrifices seek to achieve (Hebrews 9:12)" (2000:28). Thus Bediako views Jesus as the Ultimate Sacrifice who supersedes the role African indigenous sacrificial ceremonial cleansing played in the African traditional societal structures. He believes that, "No number of animal or other victims offered at any number of shrines can equal the one, perfect sacrifice made by Jesus Christ of himself for all time and for all people everywhere" (:29). Jesus' substitutionary death becomes God's gracious act of identifying with sinners on the cross. In the Apostle Paul's words: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In addition, Dunn argues that, "Jesus, the sinless one, became wholly one with the sinner/Adam, so that those who become one with the risen Christ, the last Adam ('in him'), might share in the righteousness of God, that is, fulfil the intention of God in creating man in the first place" (1989 [1980]:112). Consequently, Bediako speaks strongly against the continuation of African sacrificial ceremonial cleansing. He thinks that, "To reject the worth of the achievement of Jesus Christ on the grounds of race, ethnicity, and cultural tradition, is to act against better knowledge, distort religious truth, and walk into a blind alley, in the words of Hebrews, to court 'the fearful prospect of judgement and the fierce fire which will destroy those who oppose God' (10:27)" (2000:29). It is my observation that syncretistic concoction of Christ's atoning death with African sacrificial ceremonial cleansing is not only

practiced by many indigenous African Christians, but it is also validated by many African theological thinkers.[126]

GH Muzorewa's intensive study in African Theology has shown him that, "The majority of African theologians and nationalists have the view that 'holistic freedom is an important ingredient'" (1991:151). Therefore, Christology in the African context has always had a redemptive paradigm. People who live under the oppressive rule of tyrannical regimes, such as, the former apartheid government of South Africa, tend to view Jesus as their Liberator. Still the oppressed Jews of Jesus' times were longing for a messiah who would deliver/liberate them from the might of the Roman Empire. As a result, there was an emergence of the revolutionary movement known as the Zealots. But Jesus Christ himself never attempted to inaugurate the Kingdom of God by forceful means. Even so, according to NT Wright (1996:607), "Jesus, therefore, appears to have believed that victory in the real messianic battle would consist in dying at the hands of the Romans, dying the death of the rebel on behalf of the rebels." Jesus' rebellious death was a spiritual revolution with societal implications. So Professor Robert E. Hood's words are even more meaningful for indigenous South Africans, that is, "Jesus Christ as Liberator also affects structures and social forces in South Africa and other such oppressive societies" (1990:178). Hence, the appearance of Black Theology marked an era of the Messiah who identified with the plight of the oppressed black people. I think that the structural enslavement of black people by the apartheid regime necessitated the liberation of the marginalized black folks. For this reason, "In all events, salvation in Jesus Christ is liberation from every form of slavery" (Ela in Gibellini 1994:142). In my view, Christology as a holistic salvific event liberates us from both our personal/private and public/societal bondages. Jesus liberates us from personal behavioural depravity, and from the evil power of witchcraft and hexes. In other words, "The Christ-Event, the act of salvation or redemption of the human race by Christ, can be described in terms of liberty, the happiness of every human person, the breaking of every kind of chain that binds

[126] Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:45

humanity – in a word, human emancipation (cf. Luke 4:18-19; Gal. 5:1)" (Magesa in Schreiter 1992:153).

4.3.2. THE IMPACT OF CHRISTOLOGY IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

African traditional encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ in South Africa resulted in the unprecedented, astronomical emergence of African Independent Churches, African Initiated Churches in the form of Zionist Apostolic churches and Zionist Pentecostalism. The Zionist Pentecostalism was different from the African indigenized churches because of its American Pentecostal Evangelical roots. The preaching of the message of the cross among indigenous South Africans yielded a great harvest of churches that sought to contextualize the gospel in the total African communal experience. I am of the opinion that the African Initiated Churches in the form of the Zionist Apostolic churches constitute a major form of a thoroughly indigenized church. Therefore, Zionism is a helpful example of the impact of an African indigenized Christology.

Coincidently, the "'AmaZioni' (Zionist churches)" emerged during the spread of the Pentecostal movement a period just after the Second Anglo Boer War.[127] Roy estimates that at least "more than ten million South Africans belong to Pentecostal or Zionist type churches" (2000:101). This estimation is crucial, even though it is outdated, because it highlights the general influence in which African indigenized Christology has on both the spiritual and social lives of African Zionist Pentecostal followers in the South African context. Anderson observed that "the emergence of African Pentecostalism was the spiritual hunger that needed to be assuaged in a truly African expression of Christianity" (2000:30). It is my understanding that this hunger to be a truly African Christian still drives the spread of the Zionist movement in South Africa. Most indigenous people feel left out in the context of mainline Christianity. They feel that they cannot express their bona fide Africanness. They feel that their cultural traditional practises are unfairly squashed, suffocated and marginalised by Westernised believers. The Zionist movement

[127] Roy, K 2000, *Zion City RSA*, p98

has become a home for those disgruntled followers. In fact, Vilakazi, Mthethwa and Mpanza are of the opinion that this disgruntlement against Western imposed values was the main reason for the establishment of the Separatist Church movement, that is, the Shembe Church.[128] And this view is supported by both Ngada and Mofokeng. They give a record of how the first black Methodist breakaway pastor, that is, Rev. Nehemiah Tile, accused white people of "imposing Western culture on Africans and of trying to destroy the values which were the pillars of African existence" (2001:4). My analysis of an Africanized Christian experience has shown me that Christological contextualization among South Africans, and Africans in general, emerged out of a reactionary hermeneutical praxis. This reactionary attitude against Western missionary imposition of their Eurocentric cultural biases became a key paradigm for African indigenizers in their quest towards an authentically African Christianity. My critique of this reactionary methodology is its tendency of sliding towards unguarded extremism in their indulgence of the indigenous African traditional religions. There is a tendency among African theologians of uncritically accepting and adapting the Christian faith to the African traditional religion. I think that this attitude of being 'unequally yoked' with humanistic traditional religions and customs is contrary to the transformative character of the gospel as embodied in the eternal gospel of the incarnate Christ.

The Zionist/Apostolic churches have some similar characteristics across the board which reveal the impact of an Africanized Christology in South Africa. For example, essential African Christological themes, such as, Christ and the ancestors, Christ and holistic healing, and Christ and conversion/salvation characterize fundamental concerns of most indigenized African churches. African communal traditional conceptualization is more pragmatic than the Western individualistic abstract intellectualism. In fact, I think that Africans prefer to speak of Christ in concrete terms as 'God in action'; rather than conceptualize Him as an abstract Logos in a theoretical laboratory of linguists and philosophers. Jesus Christ is always viewed as the Lord/Chief of the

[128] Vilakazi, A, Mthethwa, B & Mpanza, M 1986. Shembe:the revitalization of African Society. Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, p19

African traditional religious landscape. According to Hennie Pretorius, who has given a positive appraisal of the Zionists in the Cape Flats, "In the African context, including that of the Xhosa, one would have to widen the scope and affirm that spirituality is in addition to God, likewise concerned with communion with spirits – in particular the ancestral spirits" (2004:306). In my opinion, this assessment of the Zionist/Apostolic churches in South Africa distinctly reveals the apparent syncretistic form of Christianity that is practiced by those who view Christ as *Idlozi lamadlozi*, that is, the Ancestor of ancestors. This African Christological concept of Proto-Ancestor which is promoted by Benezet Bujo and Kwame Bediako characterizes the prevailing belief in the *continuity* that allegedly exists between African traditional religion and the Christian faith.[129] In addition, Christ's role as the Healer is received with mixed feelings among African Initiated Churches. On the one hand, some believe that Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit has complete power to heal the sick.[130] On the other hand, some AIC members believe that both Jesus and *sangomas* (traditional healers) have a role to play in the holistic healing of the communities.[131] Finally, the relationship between the Africanized Christology and soteriology in the Zionist/African Pentecostal movement is a very comprehensive existential concept. According to Anderson, "Soteriology in Africa…must be oriented to the whole of life's problems as experienced by people in their villages and cities" (2000:258). Rev. Nicholas Bhengu of the Assemblies of God is a good example of a successful black minister who preached a holistically transformative gospel among the indigenous African folks in East London.[132] He touched both their personal need for salvation and their social need for a liberated lifestyle.[133] Hence, Anderson views this transformative message as a gospel that gives "some hope of deliverance and protection from evil in all its present forms, including evil spirits and sorcery, misfortune, natural disasters, disease, poverty and socio-economic deprivation and oppression" (2000:258). I think that Anderson has been able

[129] Bediako, K, 1992, Theology and Identity, pp312-322
[130] Maboea, S I 2002. The influence of life-giving power in the African Traditional Religion and the Zionist Churches in Soweto: a comparative study. Pretoria: UNISA/CB Powell Bible Centre, p68
[131] Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:32-38
[132] Millard, J A 2002 [1998]. Malihambe: let the Word spread. Pretoria: UNISA Press, p6
[133] Ibid.

to articulate the aspirations of both African and Black Theologies in relation to the question of Christology and soteriology. On the one hand, advocates of African Theology aspire for salvation from the oppressive evil spiritual forces that bring misfortune on both the communities and the general environment in which they co-exist. While, on the other hand, proponents of Black Theology long for a holistic liberation from all the sources of evil that socio-economically oppress the poor and the marginalized.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how indigenous African Christians sought to decolonize the gospel and contextualize it in a culturally relevant way. And the end results of their efforts were conceptualized in what came to be known as African Theology and Black Liberation Theology. On the one hand, African Theology is a quest of the indigenous African Christians to establish an authentic African Christianity that embraces African traditional religious "pre-Christian heritage as Praeparatio Evangelica" (Bediako 1992:312). While on the other hand, Black Theology emerged out of the context of Western imperial oppressive regimes, especially the former South African apartheid regime. In both these theologies, the Bible is allegedly theoretically central, while my observation has shown me that context is practically the kernel that governs these indigenization theological methodologies. Even though I am very sceptical about the priorities of these African indigenization theological methodologies; in fact, I do empathize with the historical background that informs their reactionary articulation of their contextualized Christian beliefs. It seems to me that we are all slaves of our times, that is, we are unable to fully escape the biases of our immediate generations. Therefore, in my quest to establish a truly unpolluted authentic Evangelical African Christianity, I believe that there is a need to institute concrete parameters of sound biblical contextualization. I believe that the role of the Bible should indisputably be established as of prime importance. The Bible should be the *ultimate objective barometer* in judging the direction of an authentically contextualized biblical Christianity. In other words, African traditional and contemporary

context should be a hermeneutical slave of the biblical truth, and not vice versa. Thus I think that contextualization should be viewed as a context-specific *application* of the transformative eternal gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that is, the Incarnate God-Man. In addition to the primary role of the Bible, I believe that the role of the Holy Spirit is essential for us to reach true effectiveness in our cross-cultural gospel communication. I think we must contextualize God's Word under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit because he is the true 'hidden author' of the Bible (cf. Eph. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

In summing up, I have also attempted to draw a realistic picture of African Christology and its apparent impact upon the church in South Africa. I have shown how most African theologians believe that Ancestral veneration is an acceptable point of departure in their construction of a so-called authentic African Christology. I have also uncovered the fact that Bujo's idea of Christ as "'Ancestor Par Excellence', that is …'Proto-Ancestor'" (1992:72), as far as I am concerned, is contrary to the mediatory role of Christ as stipulated in the Bible (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5-6). I believe that the particularity of Christ's uniqueness as the sole mediator of the new covenant should not be reduced to the household role of a deceased ancestor. As I have already indicated, I think Jesus is not necessarily interested in replacing the role of African deceased elders in order for him to be relevant in Africa. Rather, Jesus is God's unique mediator because he originates from God in a way that is eternally supreme above men and angels (Hebrews 1:1-3:6). Therefore, I believe that an emerging African Evangelical Theology should communicate Christ in a way that is true to the biblical witness. I believe that this communication should take into consideration the fact that Jesus is far better than the entire deceased ancestors put together. In fact, Christ has not come to desecrate the fond memories of our deceased loved ones nor to destroy our love or respect for our elders while they are still alive (Exodus 20:12). Rather, he has come to ensure that we are truly reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:17-19).

Even though Jesus is not the destroyer but the transformer of culture; it is obvious to me that he might sometimes uproot believers from destructive

family ties for the sake of the gospel (Luke 12:49-53). This counter-cultural paradigm shift is an unambiguous cost of discipleship which applies to people of all cultural backgrounds. In addition, I believe that Africans need to know that Jesus Christ is the Lord/Chief (Inkosi) over everyone and everything, and this includes the so-called Ancestral intimidations (*ulaka lwabaphansi*), witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*), angry ghosts (*izipoki*), evil spirits (*imimoya emibi or otikoloshe*), haunting dreams (*amaphupho amabi*), and a person under an evil spell (umkhovu). Indeed, if Jesus cannot successfully overcome these things that are known to be the common enemies of Africans from their indigenous traditional worldview; he could not qualify to be fully trusted by Africans without some reservations. Failure to engage this sphere of tradional landscape accounts for the apparent failure of the mainline Evangelical churches from ridding African believers from syncretistic practices. African Evangelical Christianity will always have a power-encounter with these spiritual forces. Therefore, we need to use the language and symbols that Africans can identify with. For example, I believe that African believers need to present Christ as *uMnqobi* (the Victorious One who defeated sin, Satan, demons, illnesses, etc. on the cross of Calvary). Jesus can also be symbolically presented as *uGandaganda ogingqa umbuso kaSathane* (i.e. the Great Bulldozer who toppled Satan's kingdom) and as well as *iNsimbi edl'ezinye* (i.e. the Gospel that ingests other religions). I am of the opinion that these symbols of Jesus will appropriately appeal to the subconscious mind of the indigenous Africans who live in fear of the might of their ancestors. Thus, an effective Christocentric soteriology will always need to focus on the fact that the one who is in us is "greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 3:4).

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ENTIRE THESIS

Introduction

In conclusion, I think that a reflective summary of the entire thesis will help towards defining an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis in Africa. I also think that this chapter will be able to substantiate my hypothesis. Thus, in this concluding chapter I will seek to show the logical coherence, implications and recommendations of the study. In addition, I will briefly outline the content of this thesis; the reason/aim of this thesis; and the value/impact of the thesis to the contemporary culture of mission praxis in Africa.

5.1. THE HISTORY OF CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

5.1.1. PATERNALISM

When Western missionaries, with an imperialist superior complex, first came to Africa during the Age of Exploration and Economic Advance (1415 – 1763)[134] they faced many perils in their quest to spread the gospel in the Third-World countries. Yet due to God's grace and perseverance, many foreign missionaries successfully laboured for the Lord among the many indigenous people of South Africa. Nevertheless, most missionaries were unable to rise above their ingrained paternalism. African indigenous Christian leaders were not considered credible theologians unless they parroted the Western theologian's answers to questions that were mainly pertinent to Westerners.[135] On the other hand, novice African mission church-plants

[134] The Age of Exploration and Economic Advance coincided with the Age of Reason (1648 – 1789), which in turn coincided with the Reformation and the "Great Awakenings" in North America through men such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

[135] For example, the question of God's existence, evolution and "the Big Bang" is not, and was not, more important for almost all the indigenous Africans as it is to the Westerners. Most Africans are more interested in knowing who God is and what He can do for them, because

needed mature supervision and nurturing from their parent church until they could interdependently stand as authentic Christian indigenous churches. Hence, paternalism was initially a necessary paradigm shift of gospel communication to foreign lands and cultures. However, its protraction delayed the process of healthy indigenization. Consequently, the indigenization process itself unwittingly became a tool of "colonial manipulation…on the part of the missionaries" (Smalley in Winter and Hawthorne 1981:497). Yet, in reflection, I think that most colonial historians were very kind in their treatment of Western missionary "heroes", whereas most indigenous South Africans seem to remember this missionary history with much disdain. For this reason, indigenization became the natural outflow of failed paternalism.

5.1.2. INDIGENIZATION

Indigenization as a quest for structural independence and self-sufficiency only gained considerable attention during the pinnacle of Western imperialism in the 19th century. Hiebert is of the opinion that Protestant missionaries, including Mennonites, were even more associated with the interests of European colonizers and "a Western sense of superiority justified by the theory of cultural evolution" (1989:1). However, Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn were dissatisfied with the over-inflated Western egotism that created an unwholesome protracted reliance of young churches on mission agencies, and estranged them from their indigenous roots.[136] Hence, Anderson and Venn strenuously encouraged the indigenization methodology of "self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation" of young churches. Nevertheless, in my opinion W.A. Smalley's introspective critique makes sense that Western theological indoctrination cannot construct an unpolluted *bona fide* indigenous African Christianity.[137] Only the indigenous people can holistically indigenize the gospel into their cross-cultural context. However, I

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they already believe in His existence.

[136] Hiebert, Paul G. "Indigenization." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.* 1989. Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Retrieved 16 February 2007 http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/I54ME.html

[137] See William A. Smalley's article on "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church" in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. 1981. Perspectives on the Christian Movement: A Reader. Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library. 494-502

have observed that we all need to remember that a healthy discipled congregation is one which is willing to have cross-fertilization with the global church, and that definitely includes Western missionary churches.

On the one hand, the indigenization of structures was crucial for the establishment of a self-sufficient, self-governing and self-propagating indigenous church. While on the other hand, I think that it was equally important for missionaries to connect meaningfully and theologically with the indigenous socio-cultural environment. Hezel (1978:1) views indigenization as a "process of fashioning a church in which the cultural traditions of the people are the clash from which religious symbols, ritual, and preaching are fashioned". As a result, I think that this view of indigenization as a hermeneutical theological phenomenon seems to be far more controversial than that of indigenization as a quest for structural independence and self-sufficiency. It raises a fear of syncretistic tendencies in Biblical hermeneutics and homiletics. However, I still believe that a sound biblically based, contextually relevant application of the gospel is pertinent for the complete transformation of the African person to occur. For example, I believe that the translation of the Bible in the lingua franca of the indigenous South Africans has become crucial for dogma, hermeneutics, homiletics and praxis because it takes into cognizance the challenge of the 'African soul'. Nevertheless, failure to properly indigenize the gospel resulted in a quest for the inculturation of Christianity and the Christianization of culture.

5.1.3. INCULTURATION

Communication of the gospel dictates the fact that biblical writers longed for their writings to be understood, and not to be unintelligibly revered. Thus, those who were seeking to achieve a truly inculturated Christianity were, in fact, seeking to work towards a contextually informed Good News. Hence, Bosch (1991:454) suggests that an authentic Evangelical message should also take into account "the meaning systems already present in the context." In fact, most Evangelicals opted for the use of "dynamic equivalence" in order to communicate Christ cross-culturally. Therefore, according to Professor

Charles Kraft, faithful translation involves clear explanatory efforts that are employed "in order to make sure that the message originally phrased in the words and idioms of the source language is faithfully phrased in the functionally equivalent words and idioms of the receptor language."[138] In addition, biblical writers were not merely writing for their Jewish audience. They were also writing for the ends of the earth.[139] Hence the gospel is expected to be transmitted in a culturally equivalent and relevant way. Accordingly, all preachers should always seek to communicate the gospel in a comprehensible manner.

Christianization of culture is about "the flowering of a seed implanted into the soil of a particular culture" (Bosch 1991:454). Here the unalterable content of the eternal gospel flourishes in a transformative way within the socio-cultural environment of the indigenous people of a particular culture. Accordingly, missionaries are constantly endeavouring to incarnate the Evangel into their cross-cultural mission contexts, with the knowledge that culture is open to improvement and modification. Nevertheless, this improvement and modification needs to be gradual and eventually owned by the receptor culture in order to effectually cement the Christianization of their culture.

5.1.4. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Historically, the Theological Education Fund (TEF) pioneered the movement of contextualization, as we know it, in 1972. Its mandate was to inculcate a *culture-specific* approach to theological training and orthopraxis. Consequently, in the South Africa context, contextualization gained public currency after the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976. As a result, the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) was established in September 1981. Moreover, subsequently, ICT publicized the *Kairos Document* (KD) in September 28, 1985, that caused South African churches to do some introspection. Nonetheless, the failure of the church to heed the prophetic call of the KD led to the Evangelical Witness of South Africa Document (i.e. EWISA Document –

[138] Kraft, C.H. 1994. Christianity in Culture: A study in Dynamic Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 272
[139] Acts 1:8; 2:38-39

dated June 1986) by the Concerned Evangelicals which also failed to awaken the mainline institutionalized churches from their slumber and amnesia.[140] On the other hand, evangelical theologians such as Bruce C. E. Fleming and James O. Buswell III opposed the espousal of contextualization by conservative evangelicals.[141] They argued against what they perceived as TEF's liberal presuppositions and its probable exposure to disorder. Hence, Fleming proposed *context-indigenization*, while Buswell recommended *indigenization.*[142] Nevertheless, history tells us that the term *contextualization* became the most preferred one, even by established conservative evangelicals.[143]

Patrick Kalilombe believes that African thinkers rebelled against Western theology because "Christian evangelization was based on the same assumptions as colonialism: a rejection of the African personality and the need to impose Western civilization on Africans" (1999:149). Moreover, this rebellion manifested itself through the establishment of contextual theologies, such as, African Indigenous Theology and Black Liberation Theology. Therefore, in summary, the contextual challenges of the Apartheid legacy in South Africa affected the church across racial lines between 'white' privileged churches and their 'black' counterparts who were oppressed and dehumanized by the apartheid regime. Hence, contextualization in South Africa took the shape of Black Theology and Liberation Theology. Nevertheless, these theologies were not purely evangelical; in fact, they leaned more towards some form of a syncretized social gospel of liberal theology that pragmatically neglected the call for personal salvation. In their quest for holism, they sacrificed the individual's need for a personal encounter with God's redemptive grace. Yet, I think that these theologies served as a corrective to the extreme individualism and dualism of a Westernized church in South Africa. They remind us that authentic gospel ministry should always

[140] Christopher A. Lund (1988:75) thinks that the contrast between KD and EWISA Document is that, "Kairos is plainly humanistic, EWISA is Biblical in emphasizing God as the primary agent of change, and change must be 'compatible with the gospel'."

[141] Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 30

[142] Ibid., 33

[143] See Eden, M and Wells, D F (eds.) 1991. The Gospel in the Modern World: A tribute to John Stott. Leicester, England; Illinois, USA: Inter-Varsity Press

be soundly Biblical, balanced and holistic. Our personal salvation is realistically and holistically intertwined with the liberation of the entire creation of God (Romans 8:18 -25).

5.2. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY

5.2.1. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A COMPARISON OF DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE'S MISSIOLOGY

Communication is a very essential ingredient for spreading the gospel cross-culturally. Hence, in order to engage meaningfully, cross-cultural missionaries will inevitably need to acquire some profound skills of communication. Hesselgrave suggests an eclectic use of communication tools utilized by theologians, rhetoricians, neo-rhetoricians, post-modern linguists, semantics and philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, Aquinas, Schaeffer, Korzybski, etc...[144] Yet I believe that the general wisdom of Western philosophers and orators lacks the redemptive power of the gospel (1Cor. 1:18-24). In fact, Jesus Christ is the sole greatest restorer of sound communication between God and man, and between man and man (Acts 2; Eph. 2:11ff.). Thus as God's redeemed people we need to learn that while on the one hand Paul's Christ-centered message and preaching to the Corinthians "were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1Corinthians 2:4). Nevertheless, on the other hand, Paul was not an irrational (or illogical) preacher. Rather, he used intelligent persuasion for the sake of Christ (2Cor. 5:11-21). Therefore, I believe that our rhetoric should not be for public amusement; rather we need to preach with the intention to lead people to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ within their context-specific worldviews.

[144] Hesselgrave 1991:56-57

Hiebert depicts a worldview as "the basic assumptions underlying culture" which provides people "with a more or less coherent way of looking at the world" (1989 [1985]: 48). Moreover, Nurnberger (2007:8) argues that a worldview is "a comprehensive understanding of reality" that makes it virtually difficult to transplant ancestral veneration "into another spirituality without changing the inserted term and the structure into which it is inserted". I believe that Nurnberger's definition of worldview critically and rightfully nullifies Bediako and Idowu's suggestion that the necessity and validity of implicit continuity between Christian gospel heritage and pre-Christian African tradition is crucial for the formation of a contextualized African Theology.[145] Therefore, I think that an uncritical acceptance and affirmation of African pre-Christian heritage would indeed change and dilute the content of our gospel proclamation. Hence, I believe that we must acknowledge critical continuity and necessary discontinuity in our contextualization process in order to offer a valid biblical alternative worldview that can meaningful impact the indigenous people of Sub-Saharan Africa.

5.2.2. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A COMPARISON OF DAVID J. BOSCH'S MISSIOLOGY

David Bosch begins his biblical basis for mission on the New Testament (NT) because he believes that the NT "witnesses to a fundamental shift when compared with the Old Testament (OT)" (1991:15). This is because the concept of mission was not explicitly encouraged among the OT covenant people of Israel. The OT gives no clear indication of God commissioning Israel "to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh" (Bosch 1991:17). Moreover, under the circumstances, Israel did not see the need for mission. They believed that God will somehow "without any involvement on the part of Israel, [divinely] save those Gentiles he had elected in advance" (Bosch 1991:20). As a result, the Jews failed to see the immanent relevance of God's past salvific engagement with Israel. They saw these past salvific occasions as "sacred

[145] Bediako concurs with Idowu's basic assumption that there is continuity between "the God of African tradition" and "the God of Christian proclamation and experience" (cf. 1992:270-293).

traditions which had to be preserved unchanged" (:20). Thus, Jesus came against this OT background. His parousia (Greek: □□□□□□□□– the coming) is a key paradigm in mission history that provides us with a mission focused paradigm shift, even though His mission was initially and contextually Jewish (Matt. 15:21-28). However, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) is a good example of the *all-inclusive* nature of God's Kingdom (Gk.: □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□ – the reign of God). For this reason, I believe that the Missionary God is commissioning us His servants to preach the message of reconciliation to all the nations of the world because Jesus' salvific task is both localized in His Jewish context and globalized through the missionary outreaches of his followers to the Gentile world (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 2Cor. 5:17-19). Hence, Tokunboh Adeyemo urges the African churches to "learn to be more active in mission and cease to be merely passive receivers of the gospel" (2006:1105). I do concur with Adeyemo's confident assertion and I believe that Africans need to thoroughly prepare themselves for missions beyond their cultural comfort zones into champions of a multi-cultural, all-inclusive Evangel.

5.2.3 BIBLICAL BASIS FOR COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY – A COMPARISON OF M. L. DANEEL AND J. N. J. KRITZINGER'S MISSIOLOGY

5.2.3.1. The quest for an African Christian Theology by E.W. Fashole-Luke

What motivates the need for African theologizing? Indeed, I have observed that most indigenous South African churches are more concerned about numerical growth than theological maturity. In addition, any attempt to contextualize the gospel without the pressure of being called a heretic was undermined by "the fact that western missionaries came from theological backgrounds where aspects of discontinuity between Christianity and every culture were stressed to the exclusion of the aspects of continuity with local cultures" (in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:3). As a result, proponents of African Theology pioneered African Initiated Churches (e.g. The Shembe Movement, Zion Christian Church, etc.). On the other hand, some Christian social activists, such as, Dr Allan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

established a reactionary liberation movement of Black theology. Most of these theologies used context as their point of departure in their theologizing. Nevertheless, I would like to argue that a truly sound and balanced Christian hermeneutic is Word-based. Therefore, God's Word should always be our foundation and yardstick both in matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Hence, competence in biblical linguistics and biblical socio-cultural research should be complemented with competence in a well researched holistic analysis of the missionary's cross-cultural local context (i.e. socio-political, historical, religious, and intellectual content of the local context). Finally, this local context-specific theologizing should be "subjected to the critical scrutiny of Christian theologies from other parts of the world" (:8). In reality, the local church does not exist in isolation from the rest of the Body of Christ. Any acceptable theological contextualization should be done in relation to the Church past, present and future.

5.2.3.2. Toward indigenous Theology in South Africa by Manas Buthelezi

In the "Ethnographical" approach, the communication of the gospel is geared towards every living human being because it is an all-inclusive message (Matt. 28:16-19). Thus, Buthelezi believes that both the socio-political and linguistic apparatus of indigenous Africans need to be exploited in order to bridge a hypothetical "hermeneutical gap" (:22). This so-called "hermeneutical gap" is purportedly based on the white man's assumed cultural superiority that he paternalistically imposed on his communication of the gospel to the indigenous people of Africa. He believes that empathetic appraisal of the "African soul" would help us to "arrive at a hermeneutical principle by means of which one can translate the 'Christian gospel' into a form congenial to the 'African mind'" (:24). In fact, I would like to both agree and disagree with Buthelezi's assertion. On the one hand I do agree that the *application* of the eternally unchangeable Word of God needs to be "congenial to the 'African mind'" if we were to evangelize and disciple Africans effectively. On the other hand, I would like to disagree with Buthelezi based on the premise that our hermeneutical principle is Scripture-based rather than

context-based. Thus, I believe that the Bible judges and affirms our local contexts rather than the other way around

In the “Anthropological” approach, the African person, rather than African worldviews, is the object of contextualization. Thus, the anthropological approach seeks to engage Africans at a personal rather than abstract level. By implication, “the Africans’ initiative in the context of their present existential situation” (:33) will seek to emancipate Africans from their dehumanizing past. Hence, Buthelezi is of the opinion that, “Indigenous theology without freedom of thought is a contradiction in terms; freedom of thought without access to the material means of participating in the wholeness of life is like capacity without content” (:33). Buthelezi, in my view, is right in urging Africans to emancipate themselves from past, present and future psychological prisons that has the potential to render them useless and irrelevant to their generation. But I would even go further and claim that Africans can only find their true holistic emancipation through the transformative and dynamic power of the written Word of God (cf. Roman 12:1-2; 2Cor. 3:17-18).

5.2.4 BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF GOD COMMUNICATED CROSS-CULTURALLY IN AFRICA

I think that Africans are incurably very religious people. They undoubtedly and implicitly take it for granted that God exists and He is the Almighty Creator of the entire universe (known as “the Creator of Heaven and Earth”, that is, UMDALI WEZULU NOMHLABA – in isiZulu). Most African indigenous folks believe that their deceased ancestors mediate between them and God. Consequently, Christianity is most amenable to those who believe in African traditional religions. Yet, paradoxically, Christ is sometimes viewed as irrelevant by those who feel that he is not part of their kinship, clan or tribe. Hence, it is important to learn how to communicate the Kingdom of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob among African ancestral venerators. For example, most people don’t seek God’s help in times of trouble; rather they seek the aid of traditional healers or so-called “witch doctors” (cf. Imasogie 1993: 57), or mediums, such as the story of King Saul and the witch of Endor (1Samuel

28). In fact, most often people seek the guidance and blessing of their deceased ancestors rather than the blessing and assistance of God because He is mainly viewed as "transcended, therefore remote and blasé" (Nyamiti in Daneel and Kritzinger 1989:43). On the other hand, some African names and qualities of God can contractively become positive bridge builders for the gospel in the African traditional religious context. For example, the Nguni name of God as UMVELINGQAKI (i.e. The First One who emerged before everything that exists) can be cautiously used to teach people about the Lord as the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, beside Him there is no God (see Isaiah 44:6; cf. Rev. 22:13). Christ-centeredness urges us to "throw off everything [in our African cultures and customs] that hinders and the sin [of syncretism] that easily entangles" so that we can "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author [or originator] and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1b-2; addition mine).

5.3. THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION OF AN EVANGELICAL CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH IN AFRICA

5.3.1. HISTORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF AFRICAN THEOLOGIES

African Theology seeks to reconcile African indigenous religious heritage with authentic biblical Christianity. The proponents of African Theology seek to decolonize Africans from a Westernized gospel heritage that their ancestors imbibed from some pioneer missionaries. For example, Setiloane argues that European Theology is biased by its Western cultural and socio-political situation, which is eventually imposed on African Christians, consequently creating a schizophrenic dilemma for Africans.[146] Africans are supposed to employ gospel directives from both their contextual standpoint and Western contextual missionary heritage. Moreover, some through absolute rejection of anything Western have resolved this dilemma. In fact, to make matters worse, Bujo (1992:42) explains how "African converts were required to turn their backs on the whole of their tradition and the whole of their culture" in order to

[146] Setiloane, G M 2000. African Theology: an introduction. Cape Town: Lux Verbi, pp 45-46

be accepted as genuine Christians. This seemingly innocent act of Western missionaries became a key catalyst for the establishment of African Theology. While in the South African context, this experience of indigenization took the form of what is known as Black Theology. Thus, I think that the challenge of both African and Black Theology for Africans can be resolved through a sound biblical contextualization of the gospel in the African context whereby both Westerners and Africans are viewed as equally lost and equally in need of God's saving grace through one Lord Jesus Christ. Yet while I think it is indispensably crucial for indigenous Africans to read, listen and respond to God's eternal Word in their own culturally relevant way. On the other hand, I believe that Africans need to also open themselves to the constructive criticism of the universal Church. I am completely convinced that an authentic African Christian Theology cannot afford to be a closed system that is unable to learn from other theologies, such as Western Reformed Evangelical Theology.

It is important to note that the dehumanizing socio-economic and political condition of "Black" natives, "Coloured" and Indian communities forms the context of Black Theology in South Africa. Furthermore, many indigenous African Christian leaders (e.g. Chief Albert Luthuli, Bishop Alphaeus Zulu, and Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews) represented the aspiration of black people to be liberated from the ideological bondage of Eurocentric imperial political and religious structures. These leaders, and many others, believed that redemption is both a personal encounter with God's saving grace, as well as liberation from the structural sins of the repressive regimes. In addition, Professor James H. Cone mentions five components of black liberation theology (i.e. Liberation as the gospel essence; black theology as a liberation theology; black theology as a theology of the oppressed black community; black liberation theology as a survival theology; and black liberation theology as a language of devotion).[147] I think that both the liberation of Israel from Egypt and the world from sin's power and curse have very strong undertones of God as the Liberator of Israel and the whole world. Therefore, I believe that Christian theology is a theology of liberation. Yet I would like to argue against

[147] Cone 1986:1-20

Cone's extreme conclusion that theology is only truly Christian if it arises "from the oppressed community" (1996 [1986]:5). Yes, I concede that God has an unambiguous bias for the poor (cf. Luke 4:18-19) but I do believe that the gospel is for every living sinner, meaning: the master and the slave, the oppressor and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, the slave and the free have all fallen short of God's glory (cf. Rom. 3:23-24; Gal. 3:28). What I have learned is that the most important thing about black liberation theology is its uncompromising determination to transform the dehumanizing experiences of the black community from a biblical point of view. Actually, black theologians who suffered under apartheid are very sceptical about "white theologies which unashamedly gave tacit support to the privileged status of white people in relation to the people of colour" (Maimela in Gibellini 1994:191). Hence, I think that evangelical indigenous South Africans have a rare opportunity of presenting the gospel as a genuine "message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-19).

5.3.2. REVELATION IN AFRICAN THEOLOGIES

The story of the Ethiopian eunuch's encounter with Christ is crucial because it points us to one of the earliest Africans who encountered Christ through reading the Scripture and getting an effective explanation from the itinerant evangelist Philip (cf. Acts 8:26-40). His is a story of an African whose spiritual eyes were opened in order to see the glory of "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). We know that the Septuagint (LXX), which was the first known translation of the Hebrew Bible into a Gentile language, became the key instrument of the early church's evangelical witness throughout the Hellenistic Roman Empire. Accordingly, John Mbiti believes that the proclamation of the message of the whole Bible should take into consideration the pre-Christian African tradition as a God-given preparation for the gospel in Africa.[148] Nevertheless, Byang Kato is very skeptical of the belief that "presupposes the validity of God's direct revelation to the worshipper of African religions" (1975:54). Nonetheless, according to Archbishop Tutu, Africans are more amenable to the whole Bible, especially the Old Testament, because there

[148] Mbiti 1992:267-293

are some cultural parallels between biblical revelation and the African experience of the divine.[149] Yet, in my opinion, I think that African encounter with OT revelation have been open to gross abuse because of some so-called similarities of the OT with the African culture. I think that Professor Kraft's "dynamic equivalence"[150] should not be confused with cultural assimilation, that is, there is a tendency among African theological indigenizers to conform the Christian faith to the standard of African Traditional Religion. Consequently, I believe that this syncretistic praxis reflects a tragic weakness in African primal understanding of God's eternal revelation.

The centrality of the Bible in the formulation of respective African or black theologies is clearly stated by Mbiti in his article, that is, "Bible in African Culture" in Gibellini's "Paths of African Theology". He observed that since the time of the Septuagint, "the Bible has continued to be read in Africa, and by 1990 was available in some 600 African languages, which account for 30 percent of the worldwide translations" (1994:27). Thus, I think that this observation seeks to encourage a mother tongue experience of God's Word to many indigenous Africans who come from a background of massive illiteracy, or minimum literacy (cf. Acts 2:5-11). Furthermore, I think that, African Christians have the responsibility to emphasize the main thrust of the Bible in their mother tongues so that they can help the literate and illiterate African indigenous fellow believers to understand and appropriate the gospel for themselves. On the other hand, I think that Mbiti is right when he points out the fact that reading or hearing God's Word in your mother tongue would not automatically enrich your spiritual life.[151] I believe that only through the enabling anointing of the Holy Spirit can we read, understand, and apply God's Word appropriately and effectively in our lives.

5.3.3. THE CASE STUDY OF CHRISTOLOGY FROM AN INDIGENOUS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

[149] see Tutu in Becken 1973:43-45
[150] Kraft 1981:291-312
[151] Mbiti 1986:41

I believe that in order to understand the meaning of Christology in an African context, we must first acknowledge the fact that Jesus Christ is eternally the undisputed focus of our Christian faith. In fact, McGrath believes that Evangelical Theology is primarily "concerned with the identity and significance of Jesus Christ, affirming and acknowledging the *particularity* of his cross and resurrection, rejecting any temptation to lapse into generalities" (1996:50). As a result, I think that any African theological discourse that does not centralize Christology is not truly Christian. I believe that true biblical Christianity is, therefore, Christocentric (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). Moreover, I have briefly looked at the theme of Christ as an Ancestor, Christ as the Greatest Healer, Christ as the Ultimate Sacrifice, and Christ as the Liberator of the oppressed in order to help me to understand something about the meaning of Christology in an African context.

Thus, I would like to conclude by expressing that my assessment of these Christological themes have greatly helped me to value the need for a well researched, comparative and contextually applied sound biblically based African indigenous evangelical theology. I have come to understand that Christ is indeed God's unique mediator of the new covenant who is eternally supreme above all people, all angles, all ancestors, and every created being. Hence, no one in the whole world, including the indigenous South Africans, can have a real relationship with the Father except through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). In addition, Christ as the Greatest Healer has healed us from the destructive sin by curing us through His sacrificial death and resurrection, which brings us eternal and holistic liberation from all forms of bondages.

In summing up, I would like to briefly analyze the impact of Christology in an African context. The quest for an Africanized understanding and application of the gospel yielded some real fruit during the unprecedented, astronomical emergence of the African Independent Churches, the African Initiated Churches in the form of the Zionist Apostolic churches and the Evangelical Zionist Pentecostals. However, the latter was far more true to the essence of the Christian faith than the former movements. In fact, the Evangelical African Pentecostals have become extremely skeptical against their African traditional

religious background, though without necessarily uprooting themselves completely from their cultural roots. Nevertheless, the African Independent Churches and the African Initiated Churches uncritically embraced most of their African traditional religious experiences. Yet, it is vital to note that the astronomical emergence of both these movements is mainly attributed to "the spiritual hunger that needed to be assuaged in a truly African expression of Christianity" (Anderson 2000:30). However, I think that there is a tendency among African theologians of uncritically accepting and adapting the Christian faith to the African traditional religion. I think that this attitude of being 'unequally yoked' with humanistic traditional religions and customs is contrary to the transformative character of the gospel as embodied in the eternal gospel of the incarnate Christ.

The Zionist/Apostolic churches have some similar characteristics concerning an Africanized Christology in South Africa. For example, many among African Initiated Churches have the syncretistic belief that Christ, as the Lord/Chief of the African traditional religious landscape is *Idlozi lamadlozi*, that is*,* the Ancestor of ancestors, while some differ on the issue of Christ and holistic healing. On the one hand, Maboea claims that some believe that Christ Jesus is the sole healer of the sick.[152] On the other hand, Ngada and Mofokeng indicate that some AIC members believe that both Jesus and *sangomas* (traditional healers) have a role to play in the holistic healing of the communities.[153] In addition, Anderson thinks that, "Soteriology in Africa…must be oriented to the whole of life's problems as experienced by people in their villages and cities" (2000:258). I believe that the holistic framework of African villagers and city dwellers needs a theological praxis that touches both their personal need for salvation and their social need for a liberated lifestyle.[154] On the one hand, advocates of African Theology aspire for salvation from the oppressive evil spiritual forces that bring misfortune on both the communities and the general environment in which they co-exist. While, on the other hand,

[152] Maboea, S I 2002. The influence of life-giving power in the African Traditional Religion and the Zionist Churches in Soweto: a comparative study. Pretoria: UNISA/CB Powell Bible Centre, p68
[153] Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:32-38
[154] Millard, J A 2002 [1998]. Malihambe: let the Word spread. Pretoria: UNISA Press, p6

proponents of Black Theology long for a holistic liberation from all the sources of evil that socio-economically oppresses the poor and the marginalized. Hence, I believe that all our aspiration for complete, holistic deliverance would be fully accomplished during the consummation of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, I do not think that we must abrogate our service to God by neglecting to reach out both to people's personal need for salvation and the socio-economical needs of the oppressed poor and the marginalized.

5.4. CONCLUSION

5.4.1. TOWARD AN EVANGELICAL DEFINITION OF A CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MISSION PRAXIS AMONG THE INDIGENOUS SOUTH AFRICANS

The history of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ by Europeans in the Third-world countries, especially in South Africa, forms a context-specific background for sound evangelical gospel contextualization. Whereas, context does not define the gospel, nonetheless it ought to inform its application. Thus, in my quest to formulate a definition that is true to my Reformed Evangelical tradition I would like to unapologetically circumvent some grave syncretistic tendencies. While, on the other hand, I think that there is a real need to affirm whatever is good in the indigenous African traditional cultures, to transform whatever is dynamically equivalent to the gospel and to discard whatever is Satanically contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit that inspired them (cf. Isaiah 8:20).

Firstly, I think that the African Traditional Religions (or ATRs) do not share the same roots with the Covenant people of God, that is, the Israelites. All Africans, just like all Europeans, share the same religious experience with all the Gentile nations. We were all "separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Hence, I believe that purported African traditional religious existential encounters with God cannot

be equated with God's covenantal relationship with His chosen people. On the other hand, the fact that Africans never had a real relationship with YHWH does not exclude the undisputed fact that God never left Africans without some light through His Majestic general revelation in creation (Romans 1:20). Thus, I think that the rich African indigenous traditional notions of UMDALI (The Creator God), SIMAKADE (The Rock of Ages) and UNKULUKULU (The Most High God) becomes necessary catalysts for sound biblical evangelical contextualization. These indigenous South African notions of God can be safely used to communicate the timeless truths of the Bible without fear of heresy or syncretism.

Secondly, I believe that we can safely use some ATR symbols and rituals as good examples of how the gospel is far more superior and effective above the illusive promises of the ancestral ritualistic worship system. For example, we can use the ritual of ancestral appeasing to demonstrate that Jesus Christ's sacrificial death is far superior because it propitiated God's justified wrath on our behalf. This demonstrates the fact that we prefer to fear God rather than men. We owe homage to God rather than to created human beings. We acknowledge that sin rather than hexes is far more deadly and damaging. Evidently, I do not believe that ATR is equivalent to the gospel but rather I think that ATR has some elements that can be used as healthy springboards for effective gospel communication. I do believe that God speak in tongues. What I mean is that God does not only seek to communicate the truth in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek or Latin but rather He speaks in everybody's mother tongue (Acts 2:1-11) because He actually wants "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim. 2:4).

Lastly, I think that the Christological theme of Christ's Lordship/Chieftaincy is very crucial in the formulation of a sound biblical evangelical gospel contextualization. The conviction that, "Jesus is Lord" is central if we are to achieve the total holistic surrender of the 'African soul'. African traditional religious worship centers on surrendering to the higher powers, that is, the living-dead/ancestors. Most ATR believers do not perform ceremonies in honour of God but rather they seek to appease and to thank their ancestors.

In fact, when the *sangoma* (i.e. traditional healer) performs the ceremony he/she will refer to the ancestors as *makhosi* (i.e. chiefs/lords) and the participants will respond by saying, "S*iyavuma*" (i.e. we agree/so be it/amen). The participants implicitly vow to listen and to obey these lords, that is, *makhosi/amadlozi*. Nevertheless, I believe that as Christians we have the opportunity to present Jesus Christ as the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Chief of chiefs. I believe that King Jesus is the only one who is worthy to receive unreserved attention and obedience. All our deceased loved ones are resting and waiting for the Judgment Day. However, Jesus Christ is alive and active in our daily affairs through His Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord over the fears of African traditional cosmic worldviews. Jesus does not dread what the indigenous South Africans dread. He is powerful over the illusive African mythological superstitious world. He is also powerful over the real world of demonic oppression, economic depression and social outcasts. As Lord, the Risen Christ will bring all Christian Africans to witness to the fact that through His death, He has "disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 2:15). Thus, I think that a definition of an evangelical contextual missiological approach to mission praxis among the indigenous South Africans needs to be biblically, evangelically and contextually centralized Christologically in the Lordship of Jesus as the King of God's Universal Kingdom.

5.4.2. THE REASON AND CONTEMPORARY IMPLICATION OF THIS THESIS

I believe that this thesis has been able to show that contextualization is a biblically, Christologically grounded concept which evangelicals anywhere in the world can utilize to minister incarnationally both in a cross-cultural context in their local environment and elsewhere in the world. Hence, I am convinced that my hypothesis for this study will illustrate that contextualization is not a betrayal of authentic evangelicalism (nor is it an unworthy risk towards syncretism) has been proved right. I think that I have been able to uncover some creative ways of doing missions effectively in a manner that is culturally relevant without compromising "the faith which was once for all delivered to

the saints" (Jude v.3 [NKJV]). Consequently, the implication of this research is to work towards adding some value, not only to African mission praxis, but also to the evangelical Western mission praxis among the indigenous Africans. I would like to believe that the value of this thesis lies in the fact that a sound biblically Reformed Evangelical contextualization among indigenous South Africans is not only necessary but also possible and potentially effective.

Lastly, I believe that a key implication for effective contextualization depends on our commitment to a sound context-specific *application* of the truth. This implies that contextualization focuses on the *application* of the truth that "was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude v.3 [NKJV]) not on the *invention* of new truths. The gospel truth will cause us to be truly reconciled to God and to each other. Yet, even though the Lord Jesus Christ unites us with God, and with one another, it is equally true to notice that God does not promote peace without justice nor unity at the expense of truth. [155] In fact, the gospel as a double-edged sword transforms us within our specific cultural context and uproots us from the deviant cultural strongholds that are contrary to the Word of Truth. Hence, I completely agree with Professor Paul G. Hiebert's stance against an uncritical contextualization that seeks to minimize "the 'foreignness' of the gospel … in the life of the converts" (1985:185). He is of the opinion that effective contextualization must relevantly confront both our personal and societal sins.[156] Therefore, the truth of the gospel must reign in our private and public praxis of the Christian faith.

5.4.3. THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is my opinion that the following recommendations serve as fundamental starting points for future research projects along the lines of my topic concerning the construction of an "Evangelical Contextual Missiological Approach to Mission Praxis from an Indigenous South African Perspective."

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[155] Kane, J H 1976. Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, p180
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5.4.3.1. Toward the construction of an African Evangelical Theology

I would like to recommend that it is possible to work towards a Bible-based contextually informed evangelical missiological approach to mission praxis among the indigenous South Africans. Thus, I concur with Gehman that the construction of an African Evangelical Theology "is more difficult than the demolition of liberal theology. But as evangelicals we must not be content with critical judgments. We must eagerly and energetically construct an evangelical theology for our African context" (1987:76). Moreover, I believe that this "evangelical theology for our African context" should be open to healthy criticism from the global Body of Christ in order to learn and add value to Christ's Holy Church.

5.4.3.2. Toward the establishment of local indigenous Bible schools

I would recommend that more African Bible believing and teaching evangelicals would need to be well trained in handling the Word of Truth so that they can in turn faithfully and effectively proclaim the gospel in their indigenous African context. In fact, I believe that we must encourage and support local initiatives of establishing Bible schools in the townships, inner cities or rural areas in order to practically encourage contextualization of the gospel. Hence, I believe that Professor Emeritus J.H. Kane is right when he cautions against the social uprooting of the indigenous students from their local environment. Kane says that this uprooting will cause the graduate to be "so accustomed to a semi-Western lifestyle that he [becomes] virtually incapacitated for the very work to which he was originally called" (1981:189; addition mine). I believe that the social embedding of African indigenous evangelical students from their local environment will be invaluable for the future establishment of a culture of incarnational ministries in the townships, inner cities and rural areas of South Africa. Hence, I think that Bible schools need to be established both in rural and urban contexts where indigenous people reside.

5.4.3.3. Toward the empowerment of the lay people

I think that proper and effective contextualization should involve the empowering of lay people in the churches around the townships, inner cities and rural areas of South Africa. I believe that the lay people need to have access into the theological resources that are available to their learned pastors. Therefore, I think that the indigenous learned pastors have the responsibility to translate and create sound biblical, systematic, hermeneutical, homilitical and sociological teaching tools for their students. In fact, I think that mother tongue theological training and resources are necessary requirements for the completion of a sound basic biblical training for lay leaders.

5.4.3.4. Toward a comparative study of African traditional religions and the Western Enlightenment scientific modernity

I would recommend that the construction of solid biblical evangelical missiological praxis among the indigenous South Africans should critically engage the schizophrenic worldviews of contemporary indigenous South Africans. What I mean about “the schizophrenic worldviews of contemporary indigenous South Africans” is that most post-Apartheid indigenous South Africans oscillate between belief in the ATRs and the Western Enlightenment scientific modernity. I think that most indigenous South Africans have not yet caught up with the popular post-modern thinking of contemporary Western influence. Nevertheless, I think that this so-called “schizophrenic worldviews of contemporary indigenous South Africans” should form our basic context-specific problem for the construction of an African Christian Evangelical Theology.

5.4.3.5. Toward a recommendation for a concerted theological emphasis in future indigenous based studies on the centrality of Christology

Finally, I believe that the subject of Christology should form the pillar of our African evangelical theological discourse. Christ Jesus should always be the center of our belief, our worship, our behaviour, and our service to God and

others. The context of African cosmology is the context of power encounters. Hence, Africans are always looking for someone or something greater than the powers that they fear. In fact, I believe that the gospel is a great exclusive alternative to the ATRs because greater is the Lord Jesus who is in us, Christians, than the terrifying power of the living dead/ancestors who are haunting the dreams of many lost indigenous South African souls. Consequently, I believe that you can never effectively speak about Jesus to the indigenous South Africans without acknowledging the obstacle of ancestral veneration/worship. The depth of ancestral veneration/worship in the psyche of many indigenous South Africans is undeniably the greatest hindrance for many people to surrender their all to the Lordship of Jesus Christ without any hint of syncretistic pollution. Therefore, I would strongly recommend that there is a real need for the implementation of a well-researched empirical study of the relationship of the Lordship of Jesus versus the tribal family hold on the psyche of many indigenous South Africans through the mediatory role of ancestral veneration/worship.

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