MISSIONALIA

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Missionalia

Contents

Editorial

Missiology is always in dialogue with various other theological and social scientific disciplines. This is a world-wide, global conversation. In future it will become critical for Missionalia to also provide an open platform for this kind of scholarly dialogue. We must grow wings for this challenge. Klippies Kritzinger, one of our previous editors, however always remind us to remain winged as well as rooted. We are rooted in and do our work from a specific African context, or at least, we are wrestling with questions that emerge from our continent. This new edition embody this identity.

In the first article entitled, "Charismatic Spirituality, Healing Evangelists and the Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone", Dr Joseph Bankura, bring two critically important perspectives for this dialogue together, namely Charismatic spirituality and healing. These remain vibrant themes within the African context, whether on the continent or in the diaspora. Relating this specifically to, what he calls, "the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, it becomes for him more than merely an academic exercise – his research and words becomes part of the healing work of the Holy Spirit. This kind of study is also reflected in the article from Prof Anthony Court, where in this instance, he relate the calling of the church to the state in the context of the genocide in Rwanda. As indicated in a previous edition of Missionalia (Nov 2015), our work as scholars need to be in relation to the public sphere. This article take this calling further. Then, we also publish two articles from a very successful conference, hosted by the University of the Freestate, on the relationship between Mission and Eschatology. The articles of Prof Pieter Verster and that of Prof Derrick Mashau and Themba Ngcobo grapples with this theme. One the one hand Verster relates it to the Biblical texts, while on the other hand Mashau and Ngcobo to the African worldview. These two perspectives are kept in dialogue and while for some, it might be seen as dated, we would still invite colleagues to continue this conversation between the Biblical and Contextual dimensions of the *Missio Dei*. It also need to be noted that Prof Mashau worked with Mr Ngcobo, as a doctoral student in Missiology, and we would want to highlight the fact that three of the articles come from emerging (younger) colleagues, i.e. the one of Mashau and Ngcobo, then also the articles from Suderman and Counted. We are indeed seeing a steady growth in excellent articles from our emerging cohort and it underlines Missionalia's commitment towards providing a platform for the development of new voices. The themes from Andrew Suderman and Victor Counted indeed set the tone for a key agenda.

Again, we are excited to present this edition to you and are looking forward in this year for more engagement and dialogue at the upcoming Joint Conference of theological and religion study societies, in Pretoria, hosted by the University of Pretoria, as well as the 14th Assembly of the International Association For Mission Studies (IAMS) to be held on 11 – 17 August 2016, in Seoul, South Korea. May God's Spirit continue to stir new questions and new conversations.

Prof RW (Reggie) Nel and Rev GJ (Cobus) van Wyngaard

Hope in the midst of Death

Charismatic Spirituality, Healing Evangelists and the Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone

Joseph Bosco Bangura[1]

Abstract

The Ebola crisis that crippled West Africa from December 2013 onwards is a water-shed moment in the medical history of those nations. Ebola profoundly impacted the regions inadequate healthcare, obstructed the potential for socioeconomic development, and challenged long held traditional and religious beliefs. As the tragedy deepened, the world could not stand idly by and observe poor post-war nations being overwhelmed by a colossal health catastrophe. By the time Ebola was contained, this obnoxious monster had taken an estimated 11,315 lives in the three worst affected countries. Even though medical connoisseurs were at the forefront of the battle, healing evangelists drawing inspiration from Scripture, African culture and Charismatic spirituality, also provided perspectives in the fight against Ebola. This article reviews the response of healing evangelists and discusses how the overall spirituality of Charismatic Movements inspired hope in the midst of death.

Keywords: Ebola, Sierra Leone, healing evangelists, faith leaders, disease, pestilence, healing, African Pentecostalism, Charismatic spirituality

1. Introduction

When the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) washed up on the shores of Sierra Leone in May 2014, little medical knowledge was available about the deadly nature of the virus. The country's hospitals were ill equipped and grossly unprepared to deal with any crisis, let alone the one to which the country was suddenly thrust. In a matter of days, the whole healthcare system simply collapsed, resulting in uncontrollable chains of transmission. As it became apparent that the crisis was a matter of life and death, the central government declared a state of national health emergency. Because healing is part of the perpetual quest for self-preservation, the nation went in search of any help it could find as it struggled to contain the virus. The government's eclectic approach is not surprising because in every human culture, interest in the restoration of healing and wellbeing when health fails is always a priority (Gaiser 2010:36). The nations teaming healing evangelists (discussed later in this

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study) along with other faith leaders were quick to argue that witchcraft and demonic forces were responsible for the Ebola outbreak. They went on to prescribe bathing with salt water, smearing imported holy water and anointing oil on one's body, participating in midnight prayer vigils and three days of fasting for national repentance as remedial measures that would rid the land of this Ebola scourge. Instead of getting better, the crisis grew worse. By December 2014, this previously unknown mythical monster had fully arisen from its cave to demand more human blood and sacrifice (Gibbs 2014). Borders were closed, foreign expatriates withdrew and multinational corporations shut down operations. Major airline companies announced the indefinite suspension of flights into and out of the affected countries. Sierra Leoneans were left at the mercy of a venomous virus whose lethal invincibility eludes the naked eye. And the rate of new infections and death in the belligerent hands of Ebola kept rising.

As indicated earlier, healing is a crucial aspect of every human culture. And Sierra Leone's culture is clearly no exception (De Rosny 2006:99). To make sense of the tragedy at the height of Ebola, the thoughts about health developed by healing evangelists drew attention to the connection between the Bible and local cultural context. In fact, the upsurge of Pentecostalism seems to have deepened awareness about the activities of Satan, demons and evil spirits and the need for healing and deliverance in African Christianity (Omenyo 2014:138, 145).Thus, this mystifying enemy who by now was leaving a trail of excruciatingly painful death and hopelessness, got the nation thinking about what actually went wrong. To what could we possibly attribute the cause of this national calamity that had outclassed the rebel war? Could it be that Ebola represents some sort of punishment from God for sin in the church and the terrible wrong doing in the land? How coherent is the African spiritual explanation that attributes Ebola to the work of evil spiritual forces who have angrily visited the land to collect their long overdue supply of blood and human sacrifices? How has Charismatic spirituality helped the churches deal with the crisis and cope with the impact of the outbreak? These questions were part of the broad interpretations peddled by healing evangelists and bought by a public whose paranoia about Ebola was now understandably beyond comprehension.

Against this background, the purpose of this article is to explore these questions and fill a gap in our understanding of the Charismatic Movement's approaches to outbreaks such as Ebola and the African need for healing. I probe these questions using four steps. First, the article provides an overview of the state of healthcare prior to Ebola, discussing its statistical toll on the nation and impact on the health of survivors. Second, I examine the cultural precedents that drives Sierra Leone's value system so that traditional causes to disease, ill health and death and the need to care for the sick and dying could be established. Further, it considers the chal-

lenges brought upon the cultural value of care for the sick and dying by Ebola. The third step articulates how healing evangelists use the biblical material to explain the causes of pestilence and strange diseases among God's covenant people. Fourth, the article examines Charismatic spirituality in the face Ebola, situating the underlying African spirituality that helped the churches deal biblically and contextually with emergencies and disasters. The article concludes with an evaluation of Charismatic hermeneutical and cultural interpretations of the Ebola crisis.

Finally, my use of the term Charismatic Movements (CMs) require definition. Broadly defined, CMs refer to two perspectives in which the baptism in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts were experienced. First, the term is used in reference to the revival movements that occurred in mainline denominations particularly in North America from the 1960s onwards. A second meaning refers to the development particularly in the non-western world of independent Charismatic churches, ministries and networks outside of classical Pentecostalism and historic missionary and mainline churches. In West Africa, this church development which began among university students in the 1970s and 1980s, has become the most vibrant form of Christianity on the African continent today (Kalu 2008:88-94; Lord 2005:2-3; Hollenweger 1997:1-2). As a polycentric phenomenon with different beginnings, Africa's newer CMs are constantly reinventing and reinvigorating their ministries. The movements are attracting the younger African urban élite and are reproducing themselves among African communities in Europe and North America (Anderson 2005:75). This article uses the second meaning of the term with localized examples drawn from Charismatic church contexts in Sierra Leone.

2. Ebola: the visit of an unwanted and overdue enemy

If we are to fully comprehend the mayhem brought upon Sierra Leone by Ebola, we must begin with a sense of where the country stood as far as poverty is concerned. Sierra Leone's poverty is a travesty of the abundant natural resources of this tiny West African country. With a population of six million, this country should be a bastion of bliss. Sierra Leone produces among the world's finest diamonds. In addition, there are plentiful deposits of iron ore, gold, bauxite and rutile. The land is fertile and suitable for agriculture with lush vegetation, forestry and fresh supply of water. The annual pattern of rainfall is adequately suited to support the raring of livestock and enhancing commercial agricultural activities. Fisheries and marine resources along the Atlantic coastline and the inland rivers are in great supply. There is even talk from a recently concluded geological survey that there is likely a huge off-shore oil deposit along the Atlantic coast. All of these natural resources would make Sierra Leone a paradise for its citizens. Unfortunately, its people are consistently classified among the poorest in the world. For instance, the 2014 Human Development Index

indicates that Sierra Leone ranked 177 out of 187 countries surveyed by the report. Life expectancy from birth is estimated at 45.8 years for women and 45.3 years for men. 72.7% of the population is living in what is described as multidimensional poverty. This means that very few citizens have access to quality education, health care and living standards. Gender inequality, poor reproductive health facilities and high maternal mortality rate makes Sierra Leone one of the worst countries to be born (HDR 2014:4). To compound these woes, Sierra Leone was torn apart by a horrendous rebel war that rampaged the nation throughout the 1990s. Sierra Leone only recently began rebuilding her democratic institutions when the Ebola outbreak occurred (Bangura 2015:29-32; Reno 1995).

West Africa's Ebola outbreak began in December 2013 after a five year old boy died of a strange ailment (now known to be Ebola) in Meliandou village, deep in the forest region of Guinea. His death ignited uncontrollable chains of transmission that went on to engulf his siblings, village and country. Given the porous borders in this region of West Africa, rigid cultural practices, coupled with the fragile systems of communication in these post-conflict countries, the disease quickly spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone. These conditions created a conducive environment for such a catastrophic outbreak, with the World Health Organization estimating that Ebola has claimed 11,3115 lives, 3589 of whom are Sierra Leoneans.[2] Until its recent arrival, Ebola was an unknown disease in this region of West Africa. Nevertheless, this outbreak became notorious because it is the deadliest ever outbreak to have occurred in countries with the poorest access to basic healthcare on the African continent. Featherstone (2015:20) adds that the outbreak also stands apart from previous outbreaks, because it was predominantly urban-based rather than rural in nature.

Ebola is a member of the *fivovidae* family of viruses that cause hemorrhagic fevers. The virus is named after a river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it was first identified in 1976. Although the scientific facts are as yet inconclusive, Ebola's reservoir is thought to be in several species of fruit bats found in the rain forest regions of Central and West Africa (Quammen 2014). As a viral illness, Ebola's initial symptoms can include sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain and sore throat. The patient's condition deteriorates rapidly, resulting in vomiting, diarrhoea, internal and external bleeding through the orifices, multiple organ failure and eventually death. Ebola easily spreads between humans by direct contact with infected blood, bodily fluids or organs, or indirectly through contact with con-

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[2] World Health Organization, 'Ebola Situation Report, 2 December 2015.' http://apps.who.int/ebola/ current-situation/ebola-situation-report-2-december-2015 (accessed 4 December 2015); National Ebola Response Centre, 'EVD Daily Ministry of Health and Sanitation Update.' http://nerc.sl/ (accessed 4 December 2015).

taminated environments (Curtis 2014; Oldstone 1998). A simple hand shake with an infected person, which many people consider a vital mode of social interaction, can signal death. When someone infested with Ebola dies, the corpse becomes highly contagious. Accordingly, health workers have to wear personal protective equipments while treating patients and safely burying the dead. The incubation period can last from two days to three weeks. Although there has been swift trial of promising vaccines, there is no known cure for Ebola and diagnosis is often difficult because some people are asymptomatic. Patients who recover from the disease are known to suffer from very debilitating post-Ebola symptoms like loss of eye sight, persistent headaches and joint pains, among others (Sprecher 2015). These survivors were also stigmatized because many fear that they might still spread Ebola in the community (Featherstone 2015:36).

Indeed, one would argue that the exponential spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone and the West African sub-region could be attributed to the weak health systems in the three worst affected countries. Other factors are the strong traditional beliefs of people, their mistrust of western medicine, the traditions of care for the sick, burial practices, and the intense movement of infected people within countries and borders. The trail of death, fear and hopelessness this monster left makes many argue that Ebola is an unwanted and overdue stranger. The outbreak of this disease has had a significant social, economic, cultural and religious impact on the nation such that it will certainly take many years to fully rebuild (Leach 2015:816). In fact, many people in the region now believe that the war years were far better, because, at least the rebels could be summoned to the table for peace talks. With Ebola's subtlety, people are much more exposed to the danger and risk of contracting the virus. In the midst of such despicable human suffering, people tend to turn to traditional African cultural practices in search of meaning.

3. African culture, disease and death

Disasters usually urge people to consult religious leaders as they search for meaning that makes sense amidst life's most complex happenings. The explanations they look for, tend to be either coherent with or enhance existing African traditional worldviews about disease, ill health and death. Because faith leaders are generally held in high esteem, they often play a very visible role in the business of daily life. Mobilizing and involving faith leaders who are members of the local community was identified as a major game changer in the fight against Ebola (Featherstone 2015:10). During the Ebola crisis, several interpretations were proffered by faith leaders as plausible explanations for the unfolding health catastrophe into which the nation was plunged. Even among the many healing evangelists, there was an urge to adopt interpretations that were informed by the cultural contexts of the

people caught up in the crisis. That being the case, one might ask: what is the perspective of Sierra Leone's African culture regarding outbreaks such as strange diseases and death?

To understand disease and death among Sierra Leone's cultures,[3] it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the centrality of the human person. Sierra Leone's traditions reserve a special place for the human person, who only fully assert their being in concert with other beings (Yambasu 2002:45; Conteh 2009:50). Further, the human being is considered a spiritual being whose life begins and ends with the Supreme Being. Human life finds meaning in the clan which embraces the living, the dead and the unborn. The life of the individual is not thought of in terms of separate existence, but as an important facet of the community (Sawyerr 1968:30). Thus, throughout the lifecycle (i.e. birth, puberty, marriage and death) rites of passage have to be carefully observed that prepare persons to meaningfully participate in and contribute to community cohesion. These sacred ceremonies convey the idea that human life is involved in a holistic journey which begins and ends with the Supreme Being who must be consulted throughout this journey (Conteh 2009:52).

Human flourishing is to be desired and pursued at all times by both individuals and the community. Any activity which brings misfortune and destroys the sacredness and centrality of the human person must be avoided at all costs. Laws and taboos which protect the individual and the community have been put in place (Harris and Sawyerr 1968:102-103). This provision opens up the possibility for the existence of witchcraft (Sawyerr and Parratt 1996:11-13; Wyse 1989:10). Witchcraft, which represents the manipulation of powers to cause havoc is the highest form of evil in society. Sawyerr (1968) sees witchcraft as 'representing the selfish desire that deprives another person of his power-force.' Finnegan (1965:119) notes that in Limba cosmology, witchcraft in effect represents the worst forms of anti-social behaviour. Witches, who can be male or female, are believed to use different forms (such as strange diseases and unexplainable death) to perpetuate mischief and evil in society. Thus, witchcraft is always blamed for the occurrence of

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[3] Although this section focuses specifically on the cultures of Sierra Leone, however to get a sense of how other African cultures deal with strange diseases and death, see among others: White, P., 2015. 'The Concept of Disease and Healthcare in African Traditional Religion in Ghana', HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 73, no. 3, Art. #2762, 7 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i32762; Eliade, M. 1987. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, transl. Willard R. Trask, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., San Diego, CA.; Westerlund, D. 2006. *African Indigenous Religions and Disease Causation*, Brill NV, Lieden; Sundermeier, T. 1998. *The Individual and the Community in African Traditional Religion*, LIT Verlag, Hamburg; Omonzejele, P. F. 2008. 'African Concepts of Health, Disease, and Treatment: An Ethical Inquiry', Explore 4, no. 2, 120-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2007.1.2.001; Magesa, L. 1997. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life.* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY.

unexplainable evil. As such, evil combined with witchcraft leads to the diminution of one's power-force (Sawyerr 1968:21).

Because of the pervasive nature that witchcraft and evil personify, every effort has to be taken to ensure that people who need to be protected from the diabolical activities perpetrated by witches and evil spirits receive that protection. This is usually done by wearing protective charms, amulets and by hanging some of these on the rooftops of their homes (Harris and Sawyerr 1968:75). Sometimes it is also done by drinking or rubbing on one's body concocted herbs called *manesi* by the Temne people (Conteh 2009:48). In all these cases, people have to consult sacred specialists who diagnose the cause of suffering or illness and prescribe curative measures that must be taken against the diabolic activities of witchcraft.

Even though great care is often taken to protect human life, people do fall sick and they eventually die (Conteh 2009:48). Such occasions prompt an intensification of human protection to ensure that the power-force of life that witchcraft and evil wants to destroy is enhanced. Good health suggests that the individual is living in harmony with the physical and spiritual world (Sawyerr 1968:17-19). When sickness strikes, healing is sought so that the destructive agent that has brought spiritual, personal and social disharmony is eliminated (Conteh 2009:56). Two questions show how serious healing is in culture. Firstly, illness and personal misfortune usually demand answers as to why this has happened. Sierra Leoneans believe that sicknesses are not mere occurrences, they indicate underlying spiritual mishaps. People fall sick because: (i) the ancestors have been offended and their desires abandoned by surviving relatives; (ii) clan taboos have been violated; or (iii) unscrupulous people have bewitched their siblings because they fear they are becoming more successful than them. Causes such as these bring misfortune on community life and obstruct human flourishing. Secondly, when the precise cause of illness has been found, people would resort to ways of healing. It is at this time that the services of sacred specialists are contracted to help ascertain the precise cause of illness and effect cure (Gittins 1987:180; Shaw 1997:859; Wyse 1989:10). The sacred specialists will engage in a process of divination that may last for a couple of days. The sick person will be told to offer sacrifices that appease ancestors and malevolent spirits and restore broken relationships among affected parties. Further, herbal medication will be prescribed at the completion of the process of divination. The sick person will be offered other forms of ritual purification in order to perfect healing and prevent the recurrence of any such illness in the future. This process of healing may also constitute herbal medicines that are used for curative and protective purposes (Conteh 2009:59).

Persons who die while undergoing healing rituals are to be given culturally appropriate burial rites. Traditionally, death does not end human life. Death is transi-

tory, possessing the power to usher persons from a state of physical existence to one that is spiritual. Even though the dead are believed to be spatially living in the abode of their graves, they continue to exist as real spiritual beings in the world of the living dead. Death and burial rites are events that can go on for days. Traditional death and burial rituals always require the full participation of the entire community. Because Sierra Leoneans are hugely loyal to their cultures, when Ebola arrived people were unwilling to part with cultural practices that allowed the safe passage of the dead to the world of the ancestors. These traditional practices soon became the linchpin that accelerated the spread of Ebola among the citizens. As Featherstone (2015:25) points out, the fact that many of the precautions needed to prevent the spread of Ebola conflicted with deeply rooted cultural practices, containing the virus became a huge impediment. This meant that faith leaders and healing evangelists were to be brought on board if the nation was to win the war against Ebola.

4. Healing evangelists on pestilence and strange diseases among God's covenant people

Even before the Ebola outbreak, access to basic healthcare was not readily available. As such, those who fall sick turn either to traditional healers or the newly established Charismatic faith healing centres that began appearing on the church scene in the 1990s. The formation of *Freetown Bible Training Centre* by Russ Tatro, and the use of this centre for the distribution of Charismatic doctrines such as health, wealth and power across the nation was a pivotal event in the development of the doctrine of divine healing. At *Freetown Bible Training Centre*, Tatro taught that the Christian life was a life engaged in power encounter. Believers are always at war with spiritual forces and evil in high place who are seeking to destroy life. In order for believers to continue to experience good health, spiritual power that causes misfortune, ill health and death must therefore change hands. Those who are born again are transported from a place where they are susceptible to demonic attacks, to a place that gives them spiritual and physical immunity (Bangura 2013:44-46). Faith healing centres were the places to go to acquire healing, deliverance and spiritual power. The latter became more attractive because these centres combined biblical and African traditional approaches to disease, healing and human wellbeing.

Charismatic healing evangelists are known to affirm that when Christians fall sick, it is their faith in Christ, rather than the medication they take, that brings healing. Faith healers defend their practice by referring to evidence drawn from their reading of the Scriptures. For instance, in his teaching on 'Redemption, Health and Healing,' Pastor Francis A. M. Mambu founder and general overseer of *Faith Healing Bible Church* attests:

Sickness in whatever form is of the devil. God calls it captivity (Job 42:10); Jesus calls it bondage (Luke 13:12 and 16); and the Holy Spirit calls it oppression (Acts 10:38). The victory of Jesus is our victory. He did nothing for himself. He conquered sin, Satan, disease and sickness on our behalf. He shares his victory with all who repent and believe on his name. He bore our infirmities, sicknesses and diseases so that we could claim full release and deliverance. (Mambu 2011:21).

Given this background, four premises underlie the assessment of healing evangelists about pestilence and strange diseases among God's covenant people. In what follows, I use Charismatic church leaders to illustrate how they employ the biblical material to understand the Ebola crisis.

The first of these is sin against God (Amos 3:2, Jeremiah 14:10, Ezekiel 18:4, Micah 2:3 and Romans 2:9). This view was popularized by the Charismatic revivalist preacher, Apostle Moses Kay, who is widely known for his monthly "Fire for Fire" crusades. As founder of *Battle Axe Ministries International* and chairman of the *Alliance of Full Gospel Ministers Sierra Leone*, Apostle Moses Kay regards sin as the primary causation of God's anger. For him, human suffering which can come in the form of strange diseases and pestilences, is invariably linked to human fault. Sin affects the believer's prayer life and prevents their prayers from being answered (Psalm 66:18, Deuteronomy 1:42; 1 Samuel 8:8 and James 4:4). Sin ambushes God's abundant supply of grace and the release of his blessings on the life of the born again child of God. This reading coheres with ancient Israel's understanding of the relationship which they saw existed between sin and human suffering. Gaiser (2010:9-10) reminds us that for ancient Israel, it was virtually impossible to exclude God's place as actor in the events of life.

Second, healing evangelists also regard rebellion against God's laws and servants as causes for pestilence and diseases among God's covenant people. This perspective was championed by Apostle Israel B. Momo, founder and general overseer of *Living Stone Evangelistic Ministries*. Apostle Momo represents the younger generation of Charismatic healing evangelists who merges biblical teaching with African culture, and is gaining a steady following in Sierra Leone. Using the account in Numbers 11, Apostle Momo argues that Israel's rebellion against God and Moses resulted in their death at the hands of serpents. In his view, Sierra Leoneans are at the mercy of the venomous claws of Ebola primarily because of their rebellion against God and his servants. Ebola, opines Apostle Momo, is the contemporary serpent whom God is using to call attention to the presence of sin and rebellion in the church and nation. In just the same way as Israel cried out to God in their distress, Sierra Leone must turn to God in sombre reflection, fasting and penitential prayer so that the land will be rid of Ebola (Joel 2:12-14).

Third, Satan and his legion of demonic forces also account for pestilence and diseases. Trumpeted by Apostle Emric Webber, founder and general overseer of

Cornerstone Ministries, (aka *The Rock Church*), he adopts a youthful approach to Charismatic urban church ministry. Presiding over a ministry that attracts a large number of the highly educated youth and urban elite, Apostle Webber's preaching resonates well with the religious sensibilities of the youth. From his reading of the gospels, Apostle Webber notes that Jesus had to confront human suffering that was sometimes caused by demonic forces and evil spirits. He believes that Bible passages such as Matthew 4:24; 8:16; Mark 1:32 and Luke 13:16 speak to this context. What he makes of passages such as these is that, they speak both of the demonic presence of sicknesses and need for divine power that expels demons and evil spirits. If demons can cause human suffering, then the superior person and power of the name of Jesus must be used to deliver and heal people. For Africa Pentecostals, notes Omenyo (2014:145-146), a more realistic way of helping Christians deal with deep seated spiritual fears is to rank Jesus Christ as higher in status and power, and able to heal and save.

Fourth, by way of last resort, healing evangelists cite divine providence as a cause for disease among God's covenant people. This viewpoint represents a somewhat different approach to the CM's healing ministry. This position is best represented by Apostle Mrs Dora Dumbuya, Sierra Leone's most noted Charismatic female church leader and founder of *Jesus Is Lord Ministries International*. Apostle Dumbuya who runs a weekly faith clinic where barren women, pregnant women and lactating mothers converge to receive their share of healing miracles, has been awarded prestigious national laurels for her astute contribution to the development of Christianity and human fraternity (Blyden 2006:1). In her teaching, Apostle Dumbuya believes that biblical stories like the man born blind (John (9:3), Lazarus (John 11:4) and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:8-9), point to God permitting certain painful and unfortunate events or even death to occur so that the full benefits of his glory may be made manifest among his people. Ebola, may perhaps be one of those tormenting ailments that God is using to declare his glory in the land. Reitsma (2012:167) refers to this approach as 'last option,' and suggests that Pentecostals (and I argue Charismatic healing evangelists also) only turn to it when all other options fail.

Although the perspectives represent what might be construed as moderate positions on Ebola found within the CM, the four reasons are consistent with the marks of Sierra Leone's Charismatic revivals. Charismatics are widely recognized for their unflinching emphasis of healing, miracles, demons and exorcism, prophecy and anointing with olive oil. By reading Scripture this way, healing evangelists desire to retrace the roots of biblical Christianity, and to apply biblical principles to the existing cultural and social problems of its members. The fact that healing evangelists appear to have taken time to study Scripture and identify key factors they believe are responsible for human suffering, one may see this as an indication of their attempt

at contextualization. These efforts show their concern for Holy Scripture and how the Bible speaks to the specific contexts of followers among whom they minister.

5. Healing evangelists and the Ebola crisis: interpretations, contexts and consequences

It is to be noted that the nuanced interpretations of the healing evangelists presented above about Ebola stem from their reading of Scripture and the local cultural contexts. This interpretation appears to have reinforced existing fears that were already circulating among a fearful public. In particular, faith leaders were quick to emphasize that Ebola was punishment for the evils of national political leaders and the excessive wrong carried out in the land (Featherstone 2015:23). To compound an already worrying situation, some even went further to declare that angry ancestral spirits whose wishes and desires were abandoned, and the obnoxious activities of witchcraft, demonic forces and evil spirits were responsible for the Ebola outbreak. Of course, because such interpretations clearly converged with traditional perceptions of strange diseases, they were easily accepted by the public.

Two implications in the fight against Ebola clearly emerge from their interpretations. Firstly, it was understood as lending support to the general sense of apathy and suspicion that there was a government attempt to cover up the crisis. Featherstone (2015:22) notes that some faith leaders denied the medical basis of Ebola. Many others even believed that medical and health personnel were actually spreading the very Ebola they claim to be fighting. Furthermore, there was an increase in cases of stigmatization. This was partly due to the perception that had developed where Ebola sufferers were themselves perceived as being punished for their involvement in witchcraft. Thus, people began to hide their sick, resisting all attempts to have them taken to isolation centres. Some even believed that because body parts were forcibly removed from Ebola patients, this explains why there was an increase in deaths. The effect was that communities decided to hide their sick and continue traditional burial practices so that their deceased relatives would be given appropriate traditional burial rites. The practice of hiding the sick and conducting secret burials led to increases in new infections and deaths, including medical practitioners, traditional healers, pastors, healing evangelists and other law enforcement agency officials (Featherstone 2015:22).

A second impact was the effect it had on the ministry activities of healing evangelists. We noticed that the healing ritual of laying on of hands was immediately suspended and the government ordered all faith healing centres closed. Anointing with consecrated items such as holy oil, holy water and anointed handkerchiefs were replaced with cell phone ministries. Healing evangelists resorted to praying for sick people over the phone. The sick were told to personally use consecrated

items on themselves after the cell phone prayers. Charismatic camp meetings, conferences, revivals and all night prayer meetings, that are a vital means of corporate worship, were banned. This was because the virus is known to spread easily among people who have close contact with each other. The roles of church ushers was expanded to include regular temperature checks with infrared thermometers. Even offerings were to be fumigated and ushers ordered to wear hand gloves before counting money. The traditional handshake that members shared at the end of the worship service was banned. Sitting too was much more spaced out to prevent body contact with people. The use of microphones during worship service was severely restricted. In some churches, those who were scheduled to take part in the worship service were asked to bring personal microphones to prevent the spread of Ebola in the congregation (Theresa, Christian and Nnadi 2014:73-74). With Ebola in town, the very nature of corporate worship was never the same again.

A major consequence of this theological reflection was the changing role of faith leaders throughout the Ebola crisis. In the months immediately after the outbreak, some faith leaders played key roles in perpetuating misinformation about the virus and promoting stigma (Featherstone 2015:22). However, as knowledge about containing Ebola expanded, government authorities, national and international health experts decided that it would be a prudent idea to include as many people as possible in the fight against the disease. It dawned upon all the parties concerned that there was more collaboration that had to be done if the eradication of Ebola was to be achieved. Faith leaders, traditional healers, healing evangelists have to be mobilized, trained and re-deployed to their home communities to help fight the virus. As this was done, the disease began to show signs of slowing down.

Evaluating the Charismatic response to the Ebola crisis

While the involvement of healing evangelists in the fight against Ebola certainly invites reflection, the scourge brings to the fore certain issues that have clear ramifications for understanding the role of faith leaders in times of national disasters. Three of these issues are worthy of further consideration.

First, as Ebola spread among the population, people succumbed to fear and their faith faltered. The arrival of Ebola and the conflicting messages about its causes, lack of cure and prevention sent shock waves across the spine of the nation. The heaviness and uncertainty that fear creates and the fact that Sierra Leoneans were initially left to deal with the tragedy all alone, increased the nation's sense of powerlessness in the face of a ferocious enemy. So, as Ebola raged on like wild fire in the savannah fields, the faith of many began to dissipate. Sierra Leoneans need no reminder that when they begin to see foreign expatriates withdrawing (yes, even missionaries!), major airlines cancelling flights into and out of the country, and land borders with neighbouring countries being closed, they know that things are

going to get bad. I mean really, really bad. History reminds us that this was exactly what happened in the 1990s when a barbaric and horrendous rebel war tore apart the country leaving innocent civilians scraping for a living as refugees in neighbouring countries. Sadly, with Ebola many felt that this was happening all over again. Unfortunately, this time the enemy is not one who can be summoned to the table for peace talks. What we have here is an enemy who is mercilessly lethal and deadly. Sierra Leoneans, both within and outside the church, succumbed to enormous levels of fear and their faith faltered in the face of the lethal and cold hands of Ebola. While it is reasonable that fear gripped the nation, however, the traditional interpretation seems to have exacerbated fear in the people. By construing the present crisis as emerging from a harbinger of demons and evil spirits, healing evangelists inadvertently compounded the fear of the populace against an unknown enemy and depleted whatever was left of their faith.

Second, where fear and faltering faith reigns, false prophecy is bound to also reign. Fear is the bedrock that breeds false prophecy. Fear about the obnoxious activities of mystical and supernatural powers is prevalent in the belief system of Sierra Leone. When natural events happen that beats imagination and defies any explanation, people are quick to consult seers, mediums and diviners whom they hope will give a spiritual or divine interpretation about what is amiss and prescribe remedial measures. Sadly, many Christians are inclined to listen to such voices from within the church that are claiming that Ebola is some sort of punishment from God for un-confessed sin and terrible wrong doing in the land. According to these teachers, this punishment includes ailments such as strange fevers (Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:22). The only cure involves pouring salt in boiling water and bathing with it (2 Kings 2:19-22). Some of the salt should also be sprinkled in and around dwelling homes to fend off this curse. Further, humanitarian aid in the form of anointed elements, such as olive oil, holy water, miracle handkerchiefs were also shipped to help the government fight-off Ebola. This misinformation was so prevalent that Christian and Muslim faith leaders formed actions groups against Ebola, such the *Christian Action Group* (CHRISTAG) and *Islam Action Group* (IS-LAG). Rev Daniel G. Sesay, vice moderator of CHRISTAG and senior superintendent minister at the *National Pentecostal Mission* had to participate with members of ISLAG in radio and television discussion programs to educate the public about the medical causes of Ebola. I must note that what false prophecy did was to deny the scientific facts about the origin and spread of Ebola. Ebola is a virus whose fatality rate is estimated at 90%. Because this vital piece of information was the missing link in the Charismatic equation of the crisis, false prophecy spread among the people.

And third, in situations of crisis such as the one visited upon Sierra Leone by Ebola, Bible interpretation suffers terribly in much the same way as the people who

live in that context. The view on Scripture taken by people experiencing suffering often reflects a search for meaning that brings back order to the chaos of life. They are tempted to read Bible passages that speak of comfort, hope, assurance, healing or even the total defeat of supernatural and spiritual forces who are responsible for human suffering. Sometimes, although many of the Scripture passages have a context that is substantially different from their experiences, they are nonetheless applied to such contexts. It is no wonder then that the Ebola conundrum led to a plethora of hermeneutical applications that claimed that the outbreak was a result of sin in the church and nation (Leviticus 23:16). Other interpreters blamed the scourge on the activities of demonic forces (Matthew 4:24; Matthew 8:16; Luke 8:2; Revelation 16:14), whose primary intention was to fulfil their yearly and insatiable want of human blood. And still others see Ebola as a visitation of judgement upon the activities of political leaders and that God is now using this situation to issue a wakeup call for the church (1 Corinthians 10:6). Because these interpretations were given by revered church leaders such as those discussed above, they were simply accepted without any attempt to subject them to critical biblical scrutiny.

Whereas such interpretations are an attempt to apply Scripture to the existential needs of believers, it is important to note that other factors were also involved in the continuing spread of Ebola. Sierra Leoneans need no reminder that many people are living under conditions of poor hygiene with inadequate or nonexistent health facilities. Even when there is an outbreak of seasonal diseases such as cholera that could easily be controlled where basic hygiene facilities exist, such diseases end up claiming the lives of many people before they are eventually brought under control. Although Ebola has no vaccine or cure, if appropriate resources such as routine health care facilities are put in place, the spread of Ebola could have been contained much earlier.

The church must learn to lead in times of unprecedented crisis and change. This leadership should include supplying a hermeneutically sound exposition of Scripture in the face of popular but faulty hermeneutics. It requires the church to harness the knowledge of health practitioners in the fight against Ebola. It calls on the leadership of the churches to adopt multi track approaches as the nation struggles to contain the deadly outbreak. Bible interpretation, health education and community sensitization are to be used to build up the church and strengthen the faith of Christians. This, in my view, is an area where the efforts of healing evangelists failed in the fight against Ebola. While their interpretations of the crisis were culturally appropriate, the same could not be said of its biblical and medical approach. It is no secret that the problems bedevilling the health sector were broader than Ebola. Addressing the spread of Ebola will require more than altering deeply entrenched

cultural beliefs. It requires the churches to apply biblical perspectives in the context of medical science so that cultural misgivings are effectively dealt with.

6. Conclusion

God calls believers in all generations living under different circumstances to consider their ways and draw near to him. What transpired in West Africa may be seen in the broad contexts of Jesus' end time narrative (Matthew 24:3-14). It seems clear that human suffering may happen so that subsequent generations can learn from the experiences and mistakes of previous generations (Psalm 102:18; Romans 4:23-24; 1 Corinthians 10:11). Ebola is an unfolding tragedy for Sierra Leone and West Africa. Many precious souls were lost to the disease. People are infected with or affected by Ebola. The nation's fragile economy will take years to rebuild. Social interaction particularly, the treasured culture of handshake and hug have been forever altered. However, as Charismatic healing evangelists have affirmed, new life will emerge out of this abyss of death and hopelessness. The People's faith in a God who does heal will grow stronger than ever before. And, through these painful experiences of people, God will be glorified. But the church is called to witness to human suffering in ways that are biblically conscientious as well as culturally appropriate. The Ebola crisis will soon end. The outstanding question that remains though is this, are the churches adequately prepared to deal with any such disasters should they occur in the future? One hopes that they are.

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Abode in heaven

Paul and life after death in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

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Abstract

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Paul uses different methods to explain his view on life after death. He uses the metaphors of a tent, a building, clothing and being at home with God. It is clear that Paul accepted that the future with God is certain and that he will receive a building from God in heaven even though he may die. There is life with God even before the final resurrection. A life of bliss is assured for those who believe in God. This has implications for missions, namely that the future with God is ascertained.

Keywords: Metaphors, Future with God, Tent, Building from God, Paul's theology, Intermediate state, Missiological implications

1. Introduction

The belief in life after death is a dominant theme in the New Testament, with many passages referring to it (refer to Matthew 7:21-23, 10:28, 11:22-24, 16:24-28, 19:28-30, 22:23-33, and especially 25:31-46, Mark 8:34-38, 13:13, 3:26, Luke 10:13-15, 12:33-34, 16:19-29, John 3:10-21, 5:24-29, 6:37-40, 11:23-25, 14:1-4, 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5). The New Testament gives some indication about life after death but in many instances it is still shrouded in mystery (refer to the texts above). According to these texts, Paul and the evangelists deemed life after death as something they attest to. They are of the opinion that it can be experienced in many ways. Before God who revealed Himself as the God of life they experienced life as real and not imaginary. God created the reality and they experienced life before Him. Jesus's parables refer to life after death (refer to Luke 12:35-48, 13:22-30, 16:19-29). In these parables and in his reference to the last days and the second coming of the Son of God, he refers to aspects thereof. Concerning the parables, it is made clear that there is life after death and that there is a distinction between people in the afterlife. The well-known parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) explains how Lazarus, as a poor man, had died and was taken into the bosom of Abraham where he enjoyed a feast and glory, while the rich man had to suffer, because he did not honour God and his neighbour. It is also mentioned that there

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will be a last judgement. According to this last judgement, some people will enter into glory while others will suffer (Matthew 25:31-46).

Paul, although not always in the same way, often refers to life after death. In the first and second letters to Corinthians he explains that the resurrection of Christ makes life with Him possible, even after death. In this regard 1 Corinthians 15 is of importance because the aspect of the resurrection is explained clearly. He explains that it is difficult to understand, but that it is like a grain that falls into the ground and later sprouts into quite a new existence. Death has been conquered and the resurrection of the body is a wonderful reality in the promise of God. Two Corinthians also refers to aspects of life after death. Paul's personal expectations are expanded by his explanation of his view on eternity. Two Corinthians 5:1-10 is a notoriously difficult passage/pericope, but also highly informative regarding the Christian belief of life after death and eschatology.

2. Background of 2 Corinthians
2.1 2 Corinthians as letter

Collins (2013:3-5) explains that the letters to the Corinthians are generally regarded as authentic Pauline letters (see also Harris 2005:1ff). Paul visited Corinth during his second missionary voyage somewhere around AD 50 (Acts 18:1-18). The letters, however, do not offer definite confirmation on the aspects referred to in Acts. It is well known that at least four letters were written. The first letter, then 1 Corinthians, a third letter, also known as the tearful or severe letter, followed by 2 Corinthians. The text of 2 Corinthians is well attested and parts are found on papyri as early as AD 200 (P 46). It is a long letter by ancient standards. It is a highly personal letter: "Paul, in fact reveals so much of himself in this letter that it can aptly be called the most personal of his letters" (Collins 2013:5). Some new issues are the reasons for the letter, such as to spare them another painful visit, to demonstrate his affection for the Corinthians, to put their obedience to his apostolicity to test and to make them aware of him as their spiritual father (Harris 2005:4). It is addressed to all the saints in Achaia, which means that a larger audience than just the Corinthians would read the letter (Omanson & Ellington 1993:11).

Paul dictated his letters to a scribe. He was an orator and evangelist. He used many rhetorical devices in his letter. Paul is in debate with his adversaries and readers and very often departs from prescribed letter-writing aspects, such as explained by Demetrius (Collins 2013:6). An abrupt transition in the way in which the letter is structured is sometimes regarded as unacceptable (Collins 2013:6-7).

The troublesome intruders in 2 Corinthians are regarded as Judaizers, although not the same as those in Galatians (Collins 2013:13). Harris regards them as protognostic in their views of denial of future bodily resurrection and their pride in

knowledge or gnosis after he discussed the possibility that they are Jewish Christian Gnostics. They were Judaizers from Palestine who infiltrated the church (Harris 2005:85). They proclaimed their assurance with power and might; Paul with humbleness and brokenness (Matera 2003:24). In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 Paul is aware of his own fragility, weakness and difficulties, but he does not succumbed to these, because he believes in the future life (Collins 2013:15). His mortality and the future which awaits him are described in many metaphors.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 the implications of life after death are explained. There are many views on this pericope and some (Barrett 1976:150ff, Harris 2005:365ff, Dunn 1998:487.ff.) regard it as a clear and visible statement of the fact that we will receive life after death, namely that our earthly life is like a tent broken down and destroyed, but that we will have life after death in the fullness of a building from God. Others (Pop 1971:138ff.), are of the opinion that it is all about the second coming of Christ and that not so much must be read into the explanation of the tent being pulled down, and the way in which the tent is pulled down, but that we must understand the second coming of Christ as bringing a whole new life with Him to us (see Pop 1971:138 to 141).

2.2 The macro context of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Paul's authentic letters deal with essential aspects of the Christian faith, reconciliation with God and salvation. It also deals with aspects of eschatology, death and life after death. Dunn (1998:26) is of the opinion that various engagements with Paul's theology is possible and that dialogue with the Apostle is necessary. Especially relevant is the fact that Paul has in mind the scheme of already and not yet (Dunn 1998:466). Something decisive has already happened but the work of God is not yet completed. The future holds the resurrection of the body as consummation of God's promises (Dunn 1998:488). In Christ the future is possible (Dunn 1998:493). Schnelle (2005:596) explains how Paul expects God trough his life-giving power to continue his relation with a person even after death. The Jesus Christ history continues even after death. God's love overcomes death (2005:597). The resurrection of the body is the culmination of this truth. (2005:596). Wright (2005:137) regards the Messianic renewal in Christ as essential for the understanding of Paul's eschatology: "We can the trace, in Paul's exposition of what God did in Jesus the Messiah, all the key elements of the Jewish eschatology, now reshaped around Jesus" (2005:142-143). According to Wright (2005:143) this obviously includes resurrection and the Messiaship and its immediate consequences, namely the arrival of God's kingdom. Future life in the body is possible in Christ. In Christ God makes life after death in the resurrection new. (2005:142-143).

Wright NT (2008:153) explains that Paul regards the resurrection of the dead as not debatable. The future is secured in the resurrection of the dead. This is also the

true aspect of life after death. The longing must therefore be not to go to heaven one day but to be resurrected in the new transformed body. Although he accepts that the dead in Christ are included in his salvation in what he accepts as an intermediate state, he regards the future as God's full and comprehensive renewal of the cosmos in the resurrection (Wright NT 2008:172)

Harris (2005:365ff.) explains that 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 is clearly related to 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 because it states that in the midst of affliction, perplexity and persecution, the hope of divine intervention is present; a hope of life after death. Paul is confident in the presence of death (Harris 2005:366). By walking in the realm of faith, Paul experiences the future possibility of new life in Christ (Harris 2005:366). In 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 Paul explains that the life of Christ is present even in the mortal flesh and that that the relation with God is possible even in this life because Jesus makes life with God possible,, but he then explains that it also has implications for the future life (Barrett 1976:143).

3. Themes in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

3.1 Semiotic implications of the metaphors

Paul uses metaphors abundantly such as those concerning the church in 1 Corinthians 12. The semiotic implications of these metaphors must be acknowledged. They affect the referred aspects, explain the suggested issue, and are interrelated. The criteria for identifying the metaphors are where Paul relates a certain issue to an image to explain it better. The metaphors relate to the issues at hand and Paul uses it to enhance the understanding thereof. Van der Watt (2000:6) gives full attention to the definition and nature of metaphors. He explains that some form of comparison is necessary but that two disparate meanings are linked. It is when some kind of identification and comparison is made possible and meaning is transferred: "To a certain extent the interpretation process is brought to a halt and thrown into 'reverse'". The reader is referred back to the semantic competence of the word to look for alternative possibilities of performance (2000:8).

Barrett (1976:150ff.) refers to quite a few important aspects. Turning to the text itself it is clear that Paul firstly refers to the fact that the tent in which he lives will be broken down and destroyed, but he explains that even if the tent is broken down and destroyed there will be a building from God, an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands. Barrett (1976:150) is of the opinion that Paul failed to understand the dualism of his adversaries, but that he explains the glory of his eschatology. In fact, Barrett (1976:150) is of the opinion that in both epistles Paul's real concern focuses on the way Christians are to live here and now. On the other hand, he also makes it very clear that the future life is a reality and that there will be a future in the abode in heaven, a house from heaven

that will be put on like new clothes. Paul uses different metaphors and images to explain his idea. First of all, the tent and then the abode in heaven, the eternal house in heaven made by God. He also uses the metaphor of clothes to explain that the subjects need to be clothed so that they will not be found naked. Barrett (1976:150) is of the opinion that it should not be regarded as a reference to the proximity of the feast of tabernacles.

One of the main questions is whether Paul uses the metaphors in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 as evidence of the resurrected body (Wright NT 2008:153) or the heavenly state of believers until the Parousia (Barrett 1976:151ff).

Referring to the metaphors, it is suggested that 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 explains the wonder of immediate life after death with Christ in heaven as an intermediate state until the Parousia.

3.1.1 Tent

The tent is insecure and impermanent. Barrett (1976:151) refers to the fact that it is a common picture of the earthly life (see also Wisdom 9:15). Bultmann (1985:131) refers extensively to the use of tent, or dwelling, or house, for our earthly existence in antiquity, frequently found in Hellenistic literature (see also Isaiah 38:12). The implication is that Paul makes use of a well-known metaphor in which the tent is usually regarded as the temporary abode of the soul. Barrett (1976:151) is also of the opinion that Paul wants to release the soul, or whatever the non-material part of man should be called, from all corporal containment. Thus, the tent is taken down in transformation at the end of the parousia of Christ when the person will be clothed, as stated by Paul, by the building from heaven. In the tent we groan; the tent is a place of affliction, but we long to put on the new building of God–our habitation which comes from heaven (Barrett 1976:152).

Paul refers to the time the tent is pulled down as the moment of death, according to Omanson and Ellington (1993:89). They also state that the present suffering leading to the dismantling of the tent is relevant in this regard.

Dunn (1998:489) explains the implications of this metaphor: "But its most obvious function is to express Paul's confidence (4.16) that the present process of wasting away ('outer nature') and renewal ('inner nature) will climax in the transformation into the resurrection body (4.17-5.4), of which the Spirit is already the first instalment and guarantee (5.5)."

3.1.2 Building

Paul explains his hope, especially in 2 Corinthians 5:5,6. He hopes that by putting on this new building from heaven, he will not be discovered to be naked. Harris (2005:375ff.) refers to different possibilities, namely a) present possession of the

spiritual body in 1. heaven, or 2. on earth in embryonic form, or b) future acqui-
sition of the spiritual body, 1. at death, a) in reality, or b) as an ideal possession
actualised at the parousia, or 2. at the parousia.

Harris is of the opinion that it only refers to those who will one day experience
the parousia (Harris 2005:383). Wolff (1989:103-104) is of the opinion that the
building from God is not the individual resurrected body. He refers to many view-
points, such as that it is the new aeon in heaven, the higher existence, the church,
or the eschatological church. He views it as the impersonal life in heaven.

The relation to the Hellenistic view on nakedness is very important, because it
is generally not regarded as unbecoming but Barrett (1976:154) refers to the fact
that some people see the soul as being naked and undesirable, while Philo (De
Virtutibus 76) shares the Greek view of the nakedness of the soul as a desirable
thing. Paul's view, however, was that nakedness has to be shunned. Paul does not
hold a positive view of the nakedness of the soul. For him, nakedness was some-
thing to abhor and avoid (2 Corinthians 5:3). Is the nakedness of the bodily exist-
ence sin? Is it the natural body? Is it body without Christ? Is it his understanding
of the Corinthianostic position? Barrett (1976:154ff) states that 2 Corinthians5:4
shows that we are burdened in the tent, because we groan. We groan for the full-
ness of the spirit, so that the spirit can fill us in order to experience the fullness
of the spirit, instead of groaning in fear of death. Barrett (1976:156) explains
that Paul is not in the ordinary sense afraid of death; he dreads death precisely
for the reason he proceeds to give–because he would be much happier to survive
until the parousia. He continues to explain this idea that means not to die, but
to be transformed immediately (1 Corinthians 15:51) by the substitution of the
spiritual for the natural body (1 Corinthians 15:44); to put on the new dwelling
over the old in the notion of the heavenly clothing and the heavenly body and
Paul's horror of nakedness. Paul wishes for the mortal to be swallowed up by the
glory of God–and this can be done through the Spirit. The Spirit gives this fullness
of the exchange so that he can experience it on the basis of faith and therefore he
is confident that God will give this fullness of life (See Dunn 1998:494) Schnelle
(2005:486) writes: "Pauline theology is profoundly stamped with the insight that
since Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, the Spirit of God is again at
work." (see 2 Cor 1:22;5:5 Rom 8:23). Wright (2005:145) is of the opinion that
Paul's eschatology is reimagined around the Spirit.

Collins (2013:105) refers to the fact that Paul uses the metaphor of the building
to emphasise that God alone produces the resurrected body. This house is, there-
fore, not made by hands, but a spiritual home made by God (Omanson & Ellington
1993:90).

3.1.3 Clothing

Pop (1971:138) explains that the metaphor of the tent is not about the end of life in our death, but rather the parousia, and that the tent will be exchanged for the heavenly abode at the parousia. When the parousia takes place, there will be a different new life. One will be clothed from above and will be changed so that the new life can be possible. This will happen at the end of life when the parousia takes place. Paul longs (2 Corinthians 5:6) for the time that he will no longer be in the tent, but in the glory of living in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8) after Christ has come to take all the troubles of this life away and he can enjoy the fullness of the glory of God. This longing of Paul is also very present in Philippians 1:23. The metaphor of the clothing by the heavenly body, as seen by the Apostle, is not only to cover the earthly body, but to absorb and transfigure it (Hughes 1962:168). Paul longs for the heavenly garment to experience the fullness of being clothed and not being naked. He polemicizes against the Gnostics (Bultmann 1985:138). Barnett (1988:99) understands the clothing as the moment Paul became a Christian and he was clothed in Christ and had the hope of eternal life; God supplies the new life.

3.1.4 At home with God

The fourth metaphor according to Barnett (1988:100) implies living by faith and not sight. Walking in faith is essential for the person awaiting heaven. Life in the spirit is living in the expectation of the realisation of the future.

4. Main implications

4.1 Paul's theology

Dunn (1998:487ff) explains that Paul's theology would be incomplete if it did not state that life is not a repeating cycle of birth and rebirth. The process of salvation would be incomplete if did not include the final vindication of the resurrection of the body. If the believer hoped only for this life on God he/she would be pitiable (1 Cor. 15:19). The obvious element of the hope in God is the resurrection of the body. Dunn (1998:488) writes: "The importance of that hope lay not the least in the fact that so many aspects of Paul's theology come together in it. It is the immediate consequence of cross and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), is integral to the gospel (15,12-19), and confirms that victory over death is central to the gospel (15.21-22,26,54-57). It resolves forever the tension between flesh and body (15.42-54) It completes God's purpose in creating humanity by renewing the image of God in resurrected humanity (15.45-49) it is the final outworking of the process of inner renewal and outward decay (2 Cor. 4.16-5.5)." This all was made possible by Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrected body is the one the new resurrected bodies will conform to. Christ is the firstborn and the prototype. Dunn has full

confidence that Paul expects life after death. In 1 Corinthians the emphasis is on the resurrected body. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 the emphasis is on the fact that life after death is explained by bringing down the tent and being found endowed by the building in heaven. In both instances Paul explains life after death.

Schreiner (2001:37) also emphasises that Paul had magnified God in Christ as his central position. He explains that Paul, as missionary, had a missionary focus. He explained the gospel in terms of his worldwide endeavour. He was a coherent thinker, and although not a dogmatician, his message was to proclaim the gospel of Christ in fullness. His missionary message had implications for the churches to which he conveyed his wonderful essential gospel. Paul's theology has the wonderful implication that life and death are in God's hand and that God creates the future with glory for those in Christ.

4.2 Paul's own death

Green (2002:48) is of the opinion that Paul affirms a profound continuity between life in this world and life everlasting with God. He says that the present humanity is frail, deteriorating and weak, but to share eternal life the bodies must be transformed. He proclaims the promise of transformation of the bodies into glorified bodies to his audience (2002:48). He is, therefore, of the opinion that, for Paul, death is near. However, the transition from the tent-like house to the house from God means that he will not be naked but clothed. The explanation of life after death is regarded in the realization that he may die before the parousia, something Paul earlier did not expect.

Danker (1968:553) states that Paul wishes to explain the hope for life after death as a new life with God. Although death is at work in Paul, the life of Jesus became apparent in his mortal body, therefore, consolation is present. The contrast is between the benefit that is the result from death and the sufferer's present situation. Paul experiences the groaning as being in proportion to the desire for the future blessing and that the body will be equipped for the future blessing. The body will be equipped for celestial existence (Danker 1968:554), therefore, it does not place him at a disadvantage (1968:555). Paul wants to explain that if he dies before the parousia, his authority as apostle will not be diminished. He seeks consolation in the fact that, though he may die, the future is ascertained in God (1968:556).

Collins (2013:105) also regards Paul's view on his own death as part of his discussion of the theme. He may still believe that he will be alive at the parousia, but also refers to his imminent death and the death of his readers in general. Therefore, he uses the metaphor of the tent.

Bultmann (1985:133) asks whether the tent's breaking down refers to Paul's own death or the parousia and he explains that death is clearly not regarded as

annihilation, but rather as wonderful new life, because a new garment/building is prepared. Paul expects the parousia soon and regards it as normal that one will see it (Bultmann 1985:138).

Matera (2003:118) is of the opinion that Paul shifted his thinking on the resurrection of the body from 1 Corinthians 15 because of the new situation of his own imminent death. Death has been conquered and Paul is of the opinion that he will be clothed by the heavenly body (Hughes 1962:171). Matera (2003:122) sees nakedness as referring to his death, but he will not be found naked because at death he will be clothed from heaven by the new body.

It is clear that Paul has the unconditional belief that he will experience full life with Christ after death (see Dunn 1998:487ff). He is clearly of the opinion that he will die soon, but that death will not be a disaster as he will receive a building in heaven–full life with God. He will experience total bliss because God gives life even after death.

4.3 Intermediate state

Pop (1971:152 ff.) refers to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection and he asks whether biblical material anticipates a waiting between death and the resurrection of the dead person, or whether the biblical material anticipates immediate resurrection (1971:152 ff). In the Old Testament, Sheol is originally explained as the abode after death, but in later eschatology resurrection of the body is expected. In the New Testament passages, such as the reference to the rich man and Lazarus, the words of exchange between Jesus and the murderer on the cross, and when Luke explains that the resurrection has not yet taken place since the rich man's brothers are still alive on earth, and Jesus' account, refer to the rich man in heaven who has not yet experienced the resurrection (Pop 1971:142 ff.). According to Pop, Paul also refers in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 to an intermediate state because we know that even though the earthly tent is dismantled, but we have the house of God until the resurrection (Pop 1971:141ff.). He is of the opinion that Paul's perspective is from an eschatology grounded in a Greek dualism, because the soul will flee the problems of the body (1971:147).

Hanhart (1969:446) refers to the fact that Culmann envisaged an intermediate state between the coming of Christ and the death of the person, and that the final resurrection will only take place at a later stage. He is, however, critical towards Culmann's views and is of the opinion that this viewof the intermediate state cannot be substantiate. Zorn (1989:97) accepts that many scholars say that there must be some kind of intermediate state between death and the resurrection. The question is whether Paul expects an intermediate state after death because of his views in 2 Corinthians 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Does he

have conflicting views? Zorn (1989:97) is of the opinion that Paul obviously is contrasting the house made with hands eternal in heaven with the present earthly tent-house. He is of the opinion that Paul is seriously considering the possibility that his death may take place before Christ's return. The interpretation is, thus, in favour of individual eschatology. A building not made with hands can only properly be a reference to the corporate solidarity with the church in Christ, but the building of God stresses the heavenly glory and permanence of the individual resurrected body as contrast with the present transition mortal bodies: "The fact that Paul is hoping for resurrection transformation during his lifetime so that it will not be necessary for him to experience the unclothed state of death and of being a naked spirit is confirmed by Paul's use of the verb 'to be clothed upon' *(ependusaslhai)* both in VSS. 2 and 4 (Zorn 1989:99). If the believer dies before the Lord returns he leaves his earthly tent-house, which is buried and remains in the grave until the parousia and emigrates to be with his Lord in the meantime, for to be absent from the body is to depart out of the body to be present and dwell in the presence of, or to be at home with the Lord" (Zorn 1989:102). In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 Paul expects that he will immediately experience life with God; in 1 Corinthians 15 he expects resurrection of the body.

Cranford (1976:95) refers to the real question of the intermediate state and he refers to the metaphorical nature of Paul's expression. He mentions three obstacles, namely the belief that 1 Corinthians 15 is clearly parallel to 2 Corinthians 5; secondly, that in 2 Corinthians 5 the Apostle speculates on the metaphysical details of the afterlife; and thirdly, the thought of Paul does not lend itself to a systematically neat theological package. He, however, explains that the moment death is derived from the 'in Christ' concept, the metaphors and judgements are seen as stressed. He writes: "Did Paul believe in an intermediate state? This interpretation answers affirmatively. But Paul was not concerned about metaphysical details. For him, death means the deepening of our union with Christ as we possess the heavenly home (vv. 1-2), put on this heavenly life (v. 2-4), and make our home in the true homeland with Christ (v. 8). This existence whatever its nature–body or spirit–is conscious union with Christ. That is the 'gain' of death (Phil. 1:21)." (Cranford 1976:100).

Osei-Bonsu (1986:81-82) asks whether 2 Corinthians 5 teaches the reception of the resurrected body at the moment of death. He differs from those who see Paul as receiving a spiritual new body at the moment of death by referring to firstly, the destruction of the earthly house or tent, which refers possibly to Paul's pre-parousia death, and secondly, that the building from God at death means the individual resurrected body, not the church as the body of Christ. He understands 2 Corinthians

5:6-9 as an intermediate state where the soul is disembodied from the body and it is an intermediate state between death and the resurrection.

Hanhart (1969:445-446) is of the opinion that Paul was a revered agnostic concerning the nature of life to come, but that he, nevertheless, fostered a radiant hope of life eternal with Christ. He is of the opinion that it is very clear that the death in Christ is the death with Christ and that when you die you are with Christ and you receive the fullness of life with Christ. He refers to the fact that Paul's age and experience of being in mortal danger could have influenced his view of death: "Paul's Pauline eschatology appears to have two poles. His hope is expressed both in terms of the parousia, or the resurrection of the dead, and in terms of the entrance into an eternal home upon death in order to live with Christ".

Dunn (1998:490) is of the opinion that all we need to note is that Paul envisaged an intermediate state. Beyond death and the parousia the process of salvation is still incomplete, which can only be resolved by the new body of the resurrection.

It must be accepted that Paul, indeed, had the idea of an intermediate state. He accepted that God will rule over his life and death. Even if he dies, he will be with God, although the resurrection has not yet taken place. He will receive a place in heaven, full of glory. This is made clear from his reference to the building and clothes in 2 Corinthians 5 but according to 1 Corinthians 15 the resurrection of the body will take place at the parousia. The way in which the metaphors are structured in 2 Corinthians 5 allows for an expectation of life with Christ immediately after death while waiting for the resurrection of the body. The implications are that the resurrection is still to come. The resurrection will be the final consummation of the glory that the believer had already received at death. He does not fear the intermediate state, but longs for the building in heaven. The future will also mean that he will experience the resurrection. There is, therefore, no uncertainty in his mind. The future is secured in Christ.

4.4 Challenge to the belief in heaven: symbolic future life?

Mackay (1991:162-165) explains that that the metaphors may be largely ornamental and that the reference to the tent and the abode in heaven is only superficial, or that it can be interpreted literally: "The essential difference in practice between these two approaches is this: ornamental metaphors just need to be translated into literal speech, in order to make clear the information intended; exploratory metaphors, on the other hand, like all literary works, need to be explored imaginatively, their hints, allusions and implications followed as far as they lead us. In order to practice that exploring we must do the following: (1) guess what the subject is that the particular symbol can most appropriately be taken to be a window onto; (2) discover as much as we can about the reality used

as a symbol, that is, what it was that the author was concretely imagining when using it; (3) look at the (mysterious) subject through the window of the (better-known) symbol, thereby taking in the glimpses, following the trails pointed out, making guesses." According to him, Paul refers to symbols as his earthly tent-house, as the wilderness tabernacle is destroyed, but the end of all earthly things at the parousia is a building from God, a house not made with hands, the symbol he devotes to glorious heavenly temple. His conclusion is, thus, that Paul's corporate language can be taken as intentional and his symbolism can be taken as revealing, and not simply as ornamental.

4.5 Universalistic eschatology?

Collins (2013:112-113) emphasises that Paul refers to well-known Hellenistic views, but that he also wishes to emphasise the full glory of the eschatological life with Christ. His own frailty is changed by die wonder of Christ's renewal. Bultmann (1985:145) is of the opinion that Paul's zeal to serve God is free from anxiety, because it does not fear death, but has a tacit longing for death. On judgement day the person will receive the full benefit of the heavenly house (Omanson & Ellington 1993:95). Although the glory after death is certain, it is not for all. Although Paul accepts the intrinsic value of the universalistic eschatology, he clearly sees the life in heaven as the life for the believer who receives the glory from God. It is for those with God. They will receive the fullness of glory.

5. Missiological implications

What are the missiological implications of Paul's view that the tent will be taken down and that future life of glory is possible?

First of all it gives the sense of the importance of mission. This life will pass. A future life with God is possible. This must be proclaimed in the present world. This does not mean that the present life is totally unimportant. Paul's reference to the life of the church in the present world explains that fully. But, life with God after the tent has been demolished will be full of glory. Therefore Bosch (1991:414) also writes: "*Evangelism offers people salvation as a present gift and with it assurance of eternal bliss.* People are, even without realizing it, desperately searching for a meaning to life and history; this impels them to look for a sign of hope amid the widespread fear of global catastrophe and meaninglessness." (it. Bosch).

Secondly the full glory of the resurrection means that the beauty of the gospel must be proclaimed. There can be no doubt that Paul regards the building and clothes of the future as beautiful because God supplies it. The gospel is full of the wonder of God. Mission is about the beautiful message of life with God.

Thirdly the gospel entails new life. Mission has to do with new life. Life is not dreadful for the believer because God makes life with Him possible. In this regard Bevans and Schroeder (2006:345) write: "Full humanity is achieved not only through economic security or political autonomy, but also and most fundamentally through the communion with God in Christ and transformation by the gospel. This is because, as Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals acknowledge, human beings are sinners and so are in need of a restoration of right relation with God as well as with other human beings of all of creation."

Fourthly there is hope possible in the new life. Because of God's intervention life can be good awaiting the glory after this life. Skreslet (2012:70-72) explains how salvation has to integrate horizontal and vertical elements. Salvation can therefore include aspects such as deliverance from danger, redemption from judgement and peace between enemies.

Fifthly the image of God can be restored in humans in the resurrection. Life after death has the implication that the full image of God in creation is restored. Schreiner (2001:466) writes: "An investigation of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 reveals no departure from standard Pauline teaching on the resurrection. Our present body is compared to an earthly house that is slowly becoming dilapidated and will eventually be torn down. Our future body, on the other hand, is heavenly and eternal, for it is from God himself".

Sixthly mission is proclaiming radically that even the suffering of this life has not the last word. God's comprehensive redemption includes new possibilities on political, economic, social and spiritual life (Wright CJH 2008:268-269) but also that suffering will be overcome in the full redemption in Christ.

Finally Harris (2005:402-403) is of the opinion that Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, although he did not despise mortal embodiment, eagerly awaited the future life with Christ and the end of the imperfections of earthly life.

6. Conclusion

Paul realizes that he will not live till the parousia. He believes that he will immediately be with Christ. He will experience full glory. Heaven is for real. Heaven is not a myth. Paul emphasises the fact that Christian eschatology is radically linked to the belief in heaven and that aspect should be proclaimed in the church of Christ.

This is essential for mission. The present day emphasis on this life alone does not take into account the glory of Paul's expectation. In mission, it is necessary to proclaim the fullness of the gospel of Christ's expectation of life after death and that the building from God is awaiting the believer. It should be recognised that Paul's explanation is essential for the hope and the comfort of the Christian. In mission, it is possible to spread the comfort of life after death to all. In 2 Corinthians 5:11-

21, Paul pleads that all will accept this gospel and be reconciled with God. Being reconciled with God they will also long to receive the building in heaven.

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Christian mission in creative tension with African worldview(s)

A post-colonial engagement regarding life after death and ancestry

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Abstract

Christian mission in African context, especially in the post-colonial era, can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to the fact that it co-exists with the African traditional religion(s). This article deals with the creative tension that exists between Christian mission and African worldview(s) in the area of life after death. In this article we presuppose more than a mere dialogue between ideas or individuals or denominations, but the encounter of different praxes. This article concludes that the dead in the worldviews are not dead; they continue to live in a different form and they continue to speak from the grave even though their praxes differ.

Keywords: Christian mission, African worldview, postcolonial, life, death, ancestry

1. Introduction

There is no dead-end to human life. The notion of life after death is embraced by many religious communities in the world. While we acknowledge this commonality among many religions in the world, we explore in a comparative way the encounter between the African and Christian worldviews notwithstanding different praxis that exists within these worldviews. We make use of the concept 'African worldview(s)' to define the primal understanding of how Africans have viewed their world (commonly referred to in the literature as African Traditional Religion(s)). This concept has evolved with time to a point that some African theologians prefer to use the concept 'African religion(s)'. In using the term 'Christian worldview(s)' we are aware of the distinction that exists between the biblical worldview(s) and the Western worldview(s) of Christian missionaries. We are also aware that the arrival of a Western contextualised version of the Christian faith in southern Africa more than 300 years ago has given rise to a wide variety of African Christian praxis, and one of the defining criteria by which these forms of Christian praxis can be distinguished

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is their approach to life after death, which is closely related to the question of the relation between ancestors.

In this article therefore we recognise that three (sets of) of worldviews have been encountering each other in this process: the biblical worldview(s), the Western worldview(s) of the Christian missionaries, and the African worldview(s) of the indigenous communities. It is not the aim in this article to define these worldviews narrowly; a more general approach has been adopted to highlight what is generally perceived and accepted as elements common to them all.

The common ground between the above-mentioned worldviews, with their divergent praxis, is that our dead are not dead. The dead in the African worldview(s) are referred to as the 'living dead' (see Nürnberger 2007:24; cf. Mashau 2009:118), while they are referred to as 'ancestors of faith' or the 'cloud of witnesses' in Christianity, for instance (Hebrews 12:1).

Even though there is this common understanding, the issue of life after death continues to intrigue humanity. Where have our dead gone? Can they still speak to us from the grave? If they do, in what ways do they communicate with the living? From time immemorial, African communities have also wrestled with these questions and have developed ideas, myths and rituals to deal with them. These questions remain relevant today in a generation where a substantial number of African Christians, when faced with crises, turn to their ancestors rather than to Christ as the first instance of appeal (Nürnberger 2007:68). Is this kind of practice an affirmation or a compromise or even negation of the gospel, Christ and Christianity in the African soil? Responses to this and other related questions raised above differ.

Missionaries, in the colonial era, branded the primal religion(s) as being backward and evil. Western missionaries marginalised virtually everything that had to do with the traditional African worldview. By so doing, Western missionaries failed to grasp the essence and dynamics of African culture; consequently, the deepest core of African culture remained untouched (Mashau and Frederiks 2008:115).

While the foregoing colonial narrative placed Christianity in an awkward position in its mission and dialogue with the adherents of the African traditional religion (ATR), the post-colonial engagement suggests the opposite. The resurgence of the ATR in the public sphere has opened a door for Christianity and the ATR to co-exist alongside each other, but also to engage in a more meaningful dialogue. Such dialogue is encouraged by Bosch (1991:595) in his understanding of "mission as witness to people of other living faiths". Kritzinger (2008) refers to this kind of dialogue as encounterology and this missiological paradigm guided our engagement in this research. Afeke and Verster (2004:59) concluded that it is critical to discuss this matter openly since it affects the lives of many Africans, Christians included.

This article is an attempt to open a door for further engagement as far as life after death is concerned within the above-mentioned worldviews. It seeks to answer the questions: How can Christian churches in mission, in their encounter with the adherents of ATR(s) or African Religion (AR) on the question of life after death and ancestry, tap into the indigenous knowledge system? In the light of commonalities and differences that exist between these worldviews, what constitutes a Christian message in such an engagement? In order to answer these questions, this article seeks to outline and address the following issues: (1) African worldview(s) on life after death and ancestry; (2) Christian worldview(s) on life after death and ancestry; (3) Encounterological reflection between the ATR(s) or AR(s) and Christianity; (4) Emerging voices; and (5) Implications for mission in the post-colonial engagement.

2. African worldview regarding life after death and ancestry

2.1 Holistic view of life

African indigenous knowledge systems (myths, idioms, riddles, music, superstitions, tales, art, dancing and poetry) relate to the Africans who grew up within the context and influence of the ATR(s) and worldview (see Mbiti 1991:24–33). Through mythological illustrations and art, the existence of the world and its inhabitants are explained. These shaped their understanding and view of time and life which according to the ATR are interwoven. The African worldview and time differ from the Western Biblical worldview, which is perhaps more lineal. The Biblical view suggests that there is a beginning and a future end of the earth; whereas most of the African narratives would seek rather to emphasise the existence of humanity and their well-being. African stories have never proposed or given any hint about the world coming to an end but emphasise the continuity and interconnectedness of life; hence Oborji (2002:22, 23) concluded: "Central motivation in traditional religion is the quest for life and its preservation". Therefore, concepts such as eschatology, judgement and retribution do not play any critical role in the African worldview. What adherents of ATR hope for in death is to join the ranks of the ancestors in the spirit-world (see Oborji 2002:23). Nürnberger (2007:25) asserts that "[t]he hope that one might have is that one will continue to be respected after one's demise, not to fall victim to fading memories, not to become a homeless spirit because of neglect funeral rites".

Life in the ATR is understood to be a shared experience between the living and the living dead; at the same time it is a priceless gift received from a Supreme Being. As much as *amadlozi* (ancestors) are well known to have dealings with human life, they are, however, not givers of life. They sustain and are being sustained through life. Their (spiritual) world and the (physical) world of the living are viewed as interconnected

and interdependent. It is believed that these two worlds constantly interact with each other. While still alive, one is expected to connect with the dead and when one dies and passes to the spiritual world, one is expected to maintain close bonds with the living. This understanding of time and life are interwoven and allows the living dead to reincarnate by possessing a newly born child in a particular family or during the spirit possession (*malombo)* ritual as in the case of the Vhavenda people (Mashau 2007:647) as and when there is need for such spirit possession. That particular child will carry the name of the one who possessed him or her. It is always a mystery why a living dead would reincarnate in the life of a newly born child, but this act is always believed to be vital for the clan; the child will even be respected by his or her parents.

The foregoing suggests that relationships play a vital role in the African world-view. They act as safeguards for both the clan and society. As long as there is peace, there is prosperity. These relations are measured by the unity and collaborations among the living and the interconnectedness of the living with the living dead. Mndende (2005:19) argues that, from conception to death, Africans are expected to have maintained these relationships. That will include participation in social gatherings and ritual performances. As a result, Africans perform different rituals at different occasions e.g. at the birth of a child, the giving of names, circumcision and other initiation ceremonies, marriage, funerals, harvest festivals, praying for rain and many others (Mbiti 1991:20). Rituals then act as a medium to bring these two worlds together, but also keeping the physical world intact as their relationships is repaired. It is interesting to note that when rituals are performed, women play a critical role as priestesses, just like the social and religious role played by *makhadzi* (aunt) among the Vhavenda people (see Mashau 2007:648).

As mentioned above, the spiritual and the physical worlds need each other. On the one hand the living need the living dead for life sustainability; and on the other hand the living dead require successors for them to be kept in memory, so that they are never forgotten. For ancestors live in the memories of the ones they leave behind; and those who are not remembered after death have met their ultimate end (Nyirongo 1997:72). *Amadlozi* depend on recognition by their offspring or descendants for their continued authority, identity, relevance and belonging (Nürnberger 2007:25). Therefore, male children become great acquisitions and treasure as they provide security to carry the clan name forward. In most cases, the more sons one has the better, even if it means that one should have more than one wife. Polygamy is then not the reflection of man's pleasure and greediness but a means of assurance that the surname life-line does not cease. Therefore Africans do look towards a secured future. It is from this background that we disagree with Nyirongo who argues that Africans cannot see the future beyond two years (Nyirongo 1997:89). Van Wyk (2006:709) concurs that there is enough evidence to support the view that Africans are future-oriented.

Offspring are a hope for the future and means for survival in the millions of years to come, since there is no end time.

2.2 Death and dying as remaining at home

Life and death do not stand in opposition to each other in the African worldview(s). Life after death is without the terror of the gnashing of teeth and blazing fire as proclaimed in Christianity for centuries. If someone has violated the morals and taboos of the community, his pain is expected to be immediate in the physical life through sickness, poverty, bad luck and even death, not in the hereafter (Nyirongo 1997:71). Evil and wickedness are expected to be addressed immediately, rather than their punishment being delayed, for anything that disturbs the physical world ultimately affects the spiritual world as well. Therefore both the living and the living dead would work together in dealing with broken taboos and witchcraft.

Africans therefore believe that there is not much distinction between the physical and the spiritual world. They believe that the dead can eat food (especially meat) and drink beer even though they are believed to be living in the invisible world (Nyirongo 1997:27). Even beyond the grave, the spiritual remains in contact with the physical to share existence and space; for the family is understood to consist of both the living and the dead (Nel 2007:233).

Nyirongo (1997) argues that the dead and the living share the same level of existence since the dead live more or less the same life as when they were living in the flesh. The living and the living dead can share meals, drinks and communications (through omens, dreams, disasters or even mediums). Though a spiritual world is distinguishable from a physical one since it is invisible, the two are identical (in having mountains, rivers, livestock, family and relatives) and very close to each other (Mbiti 1991:122). Therefore, an African would pour a bit of their beer on the ground as a token to *abaphansi* (those who lie under the ground) since the *abaphansi* are part of their existential reality.

However, death is never an act of kindness. If someone dies, there should be a "traceable" reason as a cause, namely one of the following: (1) an act of witchcraft, (2) death caused by evil spirits, (3) a curse for broken taboos, or (4) natural death for old individuals (Mbiti 1991:1187). Particular rituals should be performed to ensure that the deceased will be accepted by the family *amadlozi*. A funeral acts as a rite of passage in which the deceased is in transit from the communion of the living to a communion with *amadlozi*, thereby maintaining the bond between the living and the living dead (Nel 2007:233). After a period of a month, six months or a year, there is a ceremony of *umbuyiso/ukubuyisa* to bring the deceased back home; Motlhabi (2008:36) uses the term canonisation of the deceased with particular reference to the ceremony of *ukubuyisa*. Nel explains (2007:236):

> The rite of *ukubuyisa*, the bringing home of the deceased, affirms that the deceased, though dead, still belongs to, and is in communion with the family … The rite of *ukubuyisa*, while affirming the importance of belonging, also provides a process for dealing with the disruption of the family togetherness.

As much as relationships and family were important for the deceased in their physical life, even after death, they must live with family ancestors and also be part of the family structures of the living. In a house of the living, there is a place called *umsamu* (a place facing the door in a roundavel house) which is believed to be a dwelling placed for *amadlozi*. This is a place for consultations as *impepho* (incense) is burnt or even a chicken or goat is slaughtered. We can conclude in this instance that dying is also an act of remaining at home when rituals to bring back home the deceased are performed.

2.3 Amadlozi as the living dead

God is never approached directly since God is believed to be far away (Nyirongo 1997:53). Human beings do not appeal directly to God for help, but to deities (Mbiti 1991:30). It is generally believed that when people die they become *amadlozi* (Nyirongo 1997:52). Certain conditions like old age, having had children in your life time, and living a good life are necessary requirements for one to assume a status of *idlozi*. Amadlozi are believed to be more relevant to and identical with human mysteries of everyday life. In this state of being *idlozi* (singular form of *amadlozi*), an individual is assumed to have reached a more powerful state in which they can provide gifts for the descendants even without consulting God since they are self-sufficient (Mbiti 1991:51). However, death is not welcomed as a desirable goal, except perhaps for the very old person who has grown frail and tired of life (Nürnberger 2007:25).

According to Turaki (1999:175), ancestors act as both protectors and benefactors. He argues that sacrifices, prayers and worship are accorded to them for blessings and protection as descendants seek advice, guidance, good luck and information about what the future holds. Here the unity and strength in numbers is vital, since Africans would seek to offer sacrifices to as many *amadlozi* as possible for prayers to be heard (Nyirongo 1997:52).

Nyirongo (1997:52) argues that for someone to become a mediator at least three things should first have happened: (1) they should have been good people whilst in the flesh, (2) they should have received full funeral rites[3] and (3) they must have had a long life. With particular reference to *amadlozi*, the life that they continue to live after death

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3   Mbiti (1991:119) argues that there are many, complex and long rituals and ceremonies associated with death. In every African society people are very sensitive to what is done when there is a death in the family. These rites and ceremonies are performed with meticulous care to avoid causing any offence to the departed.

and the role that they play to influence the lives of the living, we can conclude that there is no dead-end to the dead – death and dying bring one to another state of life where the dead are very much active. We take up this point and expand on it in the next section.

2.4 Speaking from the grave

Africans believe that death is not the end of human life (Mbiti 1991:128). The living dead are believed to be able to communicate from the grave with the living in various ways, e.g. through omens, sickness, misfortunes and dreams. With regard to dreams, Kruger, Steyn and Lubbe (2005) argue that, though they can be caused by witchcraft or sorcery as well, they are normally considered to be channels of communication between the living and the living dead. It is therefore the role of an elderly person or even a diviner to interpret and explain that particular dream to a dreamer and discuss the implications thereafter. Dreams can be indications of approval or disproval by *amadlozi* and they may be portenders of fortune or misfortune to the descendants.

Fortunes and misfortunes are not in contrast with each other since through them both, the living dead can speak to their descendants with authority; because even good spirits can be responsible for evil against their own people when offended (Nyirongo 1997:52). Therefore, through rituals the living would seek to interact with *amadlozi* as means of thanksgiving, requests or peace-making.

3. Christian worldview(s) on life after death and ancestry

3.1 Holistic view of life

According to the Christian worldview, all of creation, including human life, came into being because of God's creative powers. It is asserted that "God's command-ing omnipotence, by which he makes all things to be what they are, is the same in the beginning of creation and in every moment of the history of creation" (Wolters 1990:12). The creation mandate to humanity, to give birth and fill the earth, should be seen as the continuation of God's creative powers; hence all of human life should be viewed as a gift of God, whether Christian or not. God who created all of life continues to provide and sustain it. Human life was ordered in such a way that persons would have lived forever, but according to the Christian worldview, death came into the world after the fall of man into sin. Death is said to have entered the world through the fall of Adam into sin (see Romans 5:12).

3.2 Death and dying as going home

Death is viewed and understood holistically from a Biblical perspective. A distinction is made, within the Christian worldview between physical death and spiritual death. This distinction is captured by Nyirongo (1997:78) as follows: "Physical death is the *separation of the body* or tent from the soul and spirit (1 Cor. 15:35-58). Spiritual

death is *man's inability to please God* and hence loss of fellowship with Him (Matt. 8:22; John 5:24-25)''. The physical death is experienced by all human beings (Christian and adherents of other living faiths), whilst the spiritual death is experienced by those who, out of sin, continue to disobey God. This is the kind of death described in Ephesians 2:1-3. The outcome of spiritual death is everlasting torment in hell or what is called "second death" (Nyirongo 1997:85; cf. Rev. 20:6, 13, 14; 21:8).

In defining physical death from a Christian perspective, Grudem (1994:816) says: "Death is a temporary cessation of bodily life and a separation of the soul from the body.'' Metaphorically, those who have passed on are said to be sleeping (Grudem 1994:819). Bavinck (1996:55) asserts that "the whole of Scripture proceeds from the idea that death is a total break with life on the side of the grave''. While the body of the deceased is buried and remains in the grave, the soul of those who die in Christ goes immediately into the presence of God (Grudem 1994:816). Therefore, life according to a Christian worldview and in line with the notion of eschatology can be categorised as life here and now and life hereafter.

Death, for those who believe in Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, is portrayed as a passage to their eternal home. Bavinck (1996:39) expresses this idea as follows: "Christ's death and resurrection is thus the restoration of life. For those who are in Christ, death is no longer the end but a passage into eternal life.'' Life in Christ, without doubt, brings hope in death and dying. This is captured in the followings words by Nyirongo (1997:78):

> But even though man lost the potential to be immortal, God provided him with hope. He promised to send His Son to pay for man's sin, so that anyone who believes in Him should not only conquer physical death but spiritual death as well. Though the Christian dies physically and is buried, this is not the end of his life. The eternal life he receives at conversion qualifies him to receive immortality at the resurrection.

It is this kind of understanding that gives birth to a theology of hope in the face of death and dying. It becomes clear to those who die in Christ that there is no dead-end in death. It should, however, be noted that it is not everyone agrees with this standpoint in Christianity; for instance, the Roman Catholic view of Purgatory is one such example. However, this view is not explored in this article. The following section deals with the cloud of witnesses (see Hebrews 12:1) as ancestors.

3.3 Cloud of witnesses as ancestors

Who are the "cloud of witnesses"? Are they the living dead as in the African worldview where ancestors are spoken of as the living dead? There are three distinct characteristics of the 'cloud of witnesses' as outlined in Hebrews 11 and 12: (1)

They are our ancestors of faith – those who have run the race and have now fulfilled their calling here on earth; (2) When they have passed on, they go home to be with the Lord but also join the spirits of those who have been made perfect (Hebrews 12:23); and (3) They become part of the communion of the saints. Faith in Christ connects the living and the dead. In his efforts to accommodate the practice of ancestral veneration in African Christianity, Mosothoane (1973:87) uses the concept of the communion around the Eucharist as one of the rites within the Roman Catholic Church to ensure continued communion between the living and the dead. He therefore encourages church members to participate in family rituals where ancestors are venerated as a way to continue their fellowship and honour the deceased (Mosothoane 1973:94).

While Mosothoane used the concept "communion of the saints" in this way, the Bible speaks about the "cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12:1 and reference is made to the departed faithful ancestors of faith (Kalengyo 2009:49), the ones with whom Mosothoane encourages direct fellowship in observing the rite of the Eucharist and ancestral veneration as noted above. Nürnberger (2007:88) concurs that "the 'cloud of witnesses' refers to a long list of historical figures that the author considers to be particularly outstanding examples of faith (Heb. 11)". In the next section, we reflect on how these heroes of faith speak from their graves.

3.4 Speaking from the grave

Can the dead speak from the grave? Traditionally the ancestors as "witnesses" in Hebrews were perceived to be playing a passive role, one of aloof participants as noted by Cromhout (2012:5); but now they are said to play a very active role, one upon which we reflect (Cromhout 2012:6). Christian understanding about this matter is summed up by Nyirongo (1997:86) as follows:

> When a Christian dies, *[s]he* goes to be with the Lord (not just part of him [her], Luke 16:19-31). The fact that his [her] physical body is in the grave does not make him [her] less of a person. While [s]he waits for the resurrection, [s]he is conscious of himself [herself] and God's care and presence (but has no contact with people on earth). At the resurrection [s]he receives a new body, free from decay, i.e. [s]he receives immortality as a gift. If there was no resurrection, the Christian would remain mortal and his [her] faith would be meaningless.

It is very clear from the foregoing that the death of a Christian does not bring him or her into a state of nothingness. A Christian continues to exist in the form and state that only God is able to comprehend. [S]he continues to exist but the living cannot have any direct *verbal communication* and *physical contact* with the deceased as

presupposed in the African worldview(s). Any direct contact with the living is not only discouraged but sinful (see 1 Samuel 27). In their research, "Christianisation of ancestor veneration within African traditional religions: An evaluation", Afeke and Verster (2004) came to the same conclusion.

The dead in Christ can only speak from the grave through their testimonies which were recorded whilst still alive; hence Hebrews 12:1 talks about "a great cloud of witnesses" and Hebrews 12:22-24 talks about communion with "spirits of righteous men made perfect". We get a better understanding of Hebrews 12 when we read it together with Hebrews 11 which gives a detailed account of those who walked by faith, whose testimonies still speak to us today. The following words sum it up: "By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead" (Hebrews 11:4). Their journey of faith becomes not only a testimony but an example for the living to follow or emulate.

The cloud of witnesses is without doubt an inspiration and encouragement for Christians who are still running their race and are faced with the struggles of life like sin that so easily entangles (Hebrews 12:1-2). It is asserted that "what they have been doing in faith *in the past* is a witness to us in our present afflictions. We have access to this witness not through dreams, ecstasy, divination or special revelations, but through perusing the historical records of the Scriptures" (Nürnberger 2007:88). It can be concluded that they become true and faithful witnesses as far as our journey of faith is concerned (see Kalengyo 2009:51). Their active presence and the role that they play stems from the fact that their testimonies are very much part of the recorded word of God which is alive and active (see Hebrews 4:12). In the next section, a reflection on the encounter between African Traditional Religion(s) and Christianity worldviews is made.

4. Encounterological reflections between ATR(s) and Christianity

This section is aimed at providing an encounterological reflection between the ATR(s) and Christian worldviews regarding life after death. Similarities and differences will be mapped out to lay the foundation for emerging voices and implications for Christian mission in a post-colonial encounter between ATR(s) and Christianity.

4.1 Death, dying and ancestry

Both ATR and Christianity affirm that there is no dead-end to life. While the dead within the ATR perspective are said to be the living dead or ancestors, they are said to be "a cloud of witnesses" in Christianity and can also be referred to be as the "living dead" as is done in the ATR. The concept of the community of saints as understood by the Roman Catholic Church even makes provision for further communion

between the living and the dead to a point of seeing Christ entering and engaging the world of ancestors. This view is evident in the theology of Charles Nyamiti who developed the ancestral Christology in his effort to Christianise African religious beliefs and cultures (Akper 2007:226). Nyamiti saw Christ as the Brother Ancestor (Nyamiti 1984). It also came into being in Mosothoane's (1973) theology whereby Christians are encouraged to participate in ancestral veneration.

4.2 Ancestors

All human beings have common ancestry in Adam and Eve, the first human beings created by God. Both worldviews embrace the concept of ancestors even though there is distinction in terms of the meaning attached to the term. The understanding of ancestors as blood relatives who are deceased is found in both worldviews, but Christianity takes a step further by defining ancestry in terms of faith – historical figures like the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12:1 are common ancestors to the Christian community. Historical figures like John Calvin, Martin Luther, David Bosch, and Steve Biko among others can therefore also be seen as ancestors who still speak through their recorded testimonies. Those who have run their race and have kept their faith should be respected by reading their testimonies and using them as encouragement in our journeys of faith.

4.3 Speaking from the grave

Within the ATR worldview the dead continue to speak and influence the life of the living through dreams. They sometimes express their unhappiness through sickness and natural calamities, whilst within Christianity the dead cannot speak or communicate directly. It is only recorded testimonies of their journeys of faith that speak to us from the grave. Their testimonies are as powerful as true and living witnesses in [the] public court[s]. We read their biographies in the Scriptures and are encouraged to pursue and persevere in our struggles of faith today as we follow their example. They continue to give counsel to the living today through their recorded testimonies in the living word of God.

4.4 Sin, death, and eschatology

There is agreement between religious communities that subscribe to the two worldviews that sin is the root cause of death; and therefore punishment is recourse for one's transgressions or sins. However, sin (such things as human pride, dishonesty, envy, lethargy among others) is more a matter of transgressions against the community (and applies to instances where one has been caught in the act of transgression) in the ATR, while it is more about doing or not doing what God requires in one's life (going against God's commandments) in Christianity.

No judgement is known in the African worldview even though punishment here and now should be meted out by seniors in the community or by ancestors who will do so by bringing misfortune to the offender. A Christian worldview, on the other hand, talks about punishment here and now as a corrective measure (Godly discipline); with God's judgement in hell as the final penalty for human transgressions or sins. Nyirongo (1997:86-87) captures this notion it as follows:

> When a man dies without Christ, his soul goes to hell (Rev. 21:8). Whilst waiting for the resurrection he is in torment, fully aware of himself, but cut off from God's love and fellowship. Like the Christian, he has no contact with people on earth. He does not have any further opportunity to repent. At the resurrection he receives a body fit for eternal torment in the lake of fire.

4.5 Ancestry and mediatorship

There is need for a mediator in both worldviews (ATR and Christianity). Ancestors, especially those who are perceived to be of high ranking, are said to qualify as mediators between man and God in the ATR, while in Christianity Christ is seen as the only mediator between man and God.

4.6 Eschatology

The concept of eschatology exists in both worldviews to a varying degree. Death and dying as "going home" is common to the two worldviews, but the meaning attached to them is different. While ATR understands going home in the literal sense (going home where one's umbilical cord is buried), Christianity talks about home as "to be in the presence of God after death" or "to be with the Lord" (see Philippians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5:8). Those who die far away from home, in the African worldview, are brought back home through rituals conducted like *ukubuyisa.* This allows the deceased to join the ranks of his ancestors in peace. Joining one's ancestors marks the beginning of a new life in the spiritual world. Christians, on the other hand, look forward to eternal home where they will receive eternal life. It is correctly asserted that: "Christian eschatology, then, moves in all three times: past, present and future. The reign of God has already come, is coming, and will come in fullness" (Bosch 1991:508).

4.7 Celebration of life

In both worldviews, life is celebrated and rituals are conducted. Ancestors are intermediaries and benefactors of such activities (rituals conducted to celebrate life) within the ATR, while Christianity seeks to benefit its adherents in all respects. The celebration of the death of Christ when celebrating the Holy Communion is one

such example. Jesus Christ's death is celebrated because it is the means through which Christians attain life in abundance.

5. Emerging voices

Children are not important in the two worldviews with regard to death, life after death and ancestry; a male child is appreciated in the ATR for selfish purposes (that of keeping the family name) whilst the Christian faith completely excludes children from fellowship except for those who administer infant baptism (whether it be in a way of creating the church for children within the church and or by not allowing them to participate in the Holy Communion). The position of children requires serious attention. The initiation to the life process within the ATR can be turned around and given a transformative meaning with the baptism and or confirmation of children in the life of the church at infancy. Children's lives should be dedicated to God and celebrated.

The role of women in the ATR, especially when they serve as priestess to officiate in ancestral ceremonies is something that the Christian worldview can learn from and be inspired to build a case for female pastors in the life of the church (this applies to those Christian churches which exclude women from office). This will require a serious transformative encounter with male-dominated structures without pitting the two genders against each other.

Commemoration and celebration of the contribution made by those who have gone ahead of us must form an integrative part of our interpretation and application of the concept "communion of the saints" without our revering or worshiping those saints. Storytelling can be used as an antidote to the deafening silence in African churches about the contribution that our own ancestors have made in their journeys of faith. We should learn to appreciate their testimonies, but not as a way to overshadow or replace the redemptive narrative of Jesus Christ. Our narratives should build on the work of faith that God has already accomplished for us. In this instance, we affirm that there is indeed no dead-end to life after death.

6. Implications for mission in a post-colonial engagement

The foregoing discussion has implications for post-colonial engagement between the ATR and Christianity in mission, namely:

*   The concept of ancestry within the ATR can no longer be branded as pagan; however, we need to engage critically the ATR in the area of ancestral veneration and worship.
*   "Ancestry" is a term that can easily be understood by Africans when efforts are made to explain their identity and role from a Biblical perspective. The com-

mon ancestry of all humanity in Adam can be used as a basis to point out to our common ancestry of Jesus Christ.

- Ancestors should therefore be acknowledged, respected and commemorated; but not worshipped because only God is worthy to be worshipped. Any worship, except for one directed to God, is idolatry.

- The gospel should have liberating power to the indigenous knowledge system regarding ancestry, especially when the incarnational approach to the encounter between ATR and Christianity is embraced.

- The concept of death and dying as going home, which is more common among adherents of ATR, should be used to explain the concept of going home to be with the Lord in Christianity.

- We need to use the concept of the communion of the saints in Christianity to enhance the concept of fellowship and celebration of life and the death of Christ as our mediator before God. Although ancestors are sometimes feared because they can cause calamities, saints are always positive intercessors and are never feared.

- The issue of sin and judgement should be brought into the equation in the Christian dialogue with the adherents of the ATR. The concept of embracing the here, the now and the hereafter is critical on this matter. But what is more critical is not only to bring in the horizontal dimension of sin (taboo); we also need to bring in the vertical dimension of sin wherein God receives central attention.

- The primacy of the Word of God in communication should receive due attention over communication through dreams, sickness and calamities which Ancestors do in the ATR.

- Opening of a direct line to God – access to the divine Presence, and the nearness of God to all of us – should be communicated.

7. Conclusion

Life after death is a reality for all in the praxis of both African and Christian communities. Death is viewed not as the end of life but as a passage to another form of life. For both worldviews, those who exist in the spiritual world share their existence with those who live in the physical world; that is *amadlozi* in African worldview and the cloud of witnesses in Christianity. Both religions share a mutual belief in the co-existence of the two worlds and agree that death is not the end. Therefore, in their encounter, it has become clear that Christianity and ATR(s) agree that there is life after death. This similarity does not take away distinctions between the two, since adherents of the ATR(s) believe that one dies and joins the spiritual world which is very much intertwined with the physical; while Christians believe that one dies to be with the Lord as they wait for the *eschaton,* or, in the Roman Catholic view, go to purgatory.

The concept of ancestry can be used in both Christianity and the ATR(s). For the latter, it refers to common ancestors in terms of blood relations, but for the former, it is used to refer to historical figures who were champions of faith. For ATR(s), the usage of the word "ancestry" denotes both the name and the concept. As a name, it points to the specific beings, the deceased; and as a concept, it denotes devotion and reverence to the deceased's family relatives. But in Christianity, being an ancestor does not imply any devotion or supremacy but points towards the person being a good example for other Christians.

Therefore, as much as there are distinctions between these two worldviews, they share some similarities. The belief in life beyond the grave and the notion that that life is everlasting is the common ground which missionaries could have searched to find, for there is no doubt that Christianity, in its mission, can still tap into the indigenous knowledge system as espoused by ATR(s). This is an important point because the ATR(s) in strong or diluted form still live within African Christianity. Contributions made by the ATR(s) may help in shaping both mission and missiology in the post-colonial era. The notion of life after death would help in making Christianity relevant to Africans by addressing their hopes and fears. In this case, the understanding of life after death can build on what already exists and at the same time it will allow space for a contextual African Christianity (and mission) which will always connect with its own past (or "depth" or "inside") and negotiate the continuing role and place given to (or received from) ancestors. We can therefore conclude that our dead are not dead.

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The Christian Churches, the State, and Genocide in Rwanda

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Abstract

The churches in Rwanda have exercised considerable political influence during both the colonial and post-colonial periods. Although formally autonomous institutions subordinate to the state, in actuality they have cultivated political influence through their religious teachings and secular role as the loci of material and social resources. However, there is at least one key factor, which has contributed to their fluctuating political influence within Rwanda. During the colonial period, the dominant Catholic Church functioned within a colonial regime of indirect rule, predicated on sustaining the political authority of a Tutsi-dominated Central Court presiding over the territories roughly contiguous with the present-day republic. This threefold division of power and authority acted as a brake upon the hegemonic ambitions of the Church, the royal house and the colonial administrators. Following the abolition of the monarchy in 1961, the structure of political power and authority of the state was fundamentally transformed, clearing the way for the emergence of a 'state church' whose political role in the two Hutu dominated post-colonial republics would have significant historical implications. In this essay, I argue that it was this structural transformation of the Rwandan polity - marking the shift from a trilateral to a dual relationship between state and Church -, which contributes to our understanding of how the Church became embroiled in the mass violence and genocide in the twentieth century Rwandan polity

Keywords: Christian Churches, Genocide, Rwanda

1. Introduction

The churches first gained a foothold in the Central Kingdom of Rwanda shortly after the advent of German indirect rule in 1898 when in February 1900 Catholic missionaries of the Society of Missionaries of our Lady of Africa, or 'White Fathers', arrived in the royal capital Nyanza seeking permission from the mwami or king to begin their work (Carney 2012a:82; Longman 2010:38-39). The arrival of Europeans coincided with the violent aftermath of the 1896 Rucunshu coup d'état, which marked the accession of King Yuhi Musinga, the undesignated suc-

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cessor to the last independent monarch of Rwanda, king Kigeri Rwabugiri (circa 1867-1895).

During the pre-colonial period, political power in the Rwandan Central Kingdom was exercised by what Linden describes as 'a military aristocracy' which presided over a 'chain of clientship relations checked on the one side by the monarchy, the king's men, and on the other by lineages and clans' effecting 'an internal tendency towards an equilibrium' (Linden 1977:ix). Des Forges similarly points to the existence of a complex web of clan and lineage ties and associations, which gradually coalesced around 'outstanding' leaders who were instrumental in the formation of the Rwandan state (Des Forges 1999: 31). However, both Des Forges and David Newbury challenge the notion that the social and political institutions of Rwanda's precolonial state were characterized by a tendency towards stability. As David Newbury notes, the idea that the Rwandan state possessed a system of checks and balances constitutive of a 'cohesive society' with 'clear, static and standardized administrative institutions' (D. Newbury 2011:xxv) belies the fact that both the composition and institutions of the kingdom were in a constant state of flux (Des Forges 1999:31).[2]

Thus although the emergence of the Rwandan kingdom as an increasingly powerful and sophisticated polity accelerated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the kingdom's expansionary drives, rather than heralding a 'centralization' of political power, was instead accompanied by internal rivalries at court 'that grew ever more ferocious over time, and because the kings were weak, they could not halt them' (Vansina 2004:163).

During the late precolonial period under the reign of Kigeli V Rwabugiri (1853-1895) there occurred a shift in political relations, which appeared to represent a centralization of power. However, as Vansina argues, this apparent concentration of power entailed a process of 'centralized anarchy' (Vansina 2004:194), which contributed towards the weakening of 'previously salient' group associations, such as lineage and clan (Longman 2010:36; see C. Newbury 1999:313).[3] The

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[2] Several contemporary scholars present a diametrically opposed interpretation. Thus, for example, Katongole contends that 'one could not find a more cohesive national unity than what existed in precolonial Rwanda' (Katongole 2005:71), a view shared by Gourevitch (Gourevitch 1998:47, see 73). The notion of a precolonial 'collective national identity' (Gourevitch 1998:57-58) appears curious given the fact that the concept of the 'nation' is a European construct. In any event, however one defines 'nation', Vansina argues that the 'linguistic and cultural unity of the country today did not exist in the seventeenth century and Rwanda is not a "natural" nation. ... Rwanda really became a nation in the twentieth century... Formerly, neither abundance nor order flourished in the country... The reasons for the elaboration of such erroneous propositions are evident. ... [T]here is the projection of a nostalgic utopia into the past, a past that contrasts with a painful present' (Vansina 2004:198, 199; see Freedman et al 2011:301-302).

[3] Vansina notes that 'clans are in fact phenomena that derive from the political arena' and were as such mutable since they represented 'alliances rather than descent groups' (Vansina 2004:34).

nature of this much-vaunted centralization… did not consist in the creation or extension of a homogenous network of royal administrators, in the imposition of a network of uniform territorial sub-divisions, or in a territorial homogenization with regard to tributes or corvées. Certainly Rwabugiri acquired personal power beyond that of his predecessors, but it mostly derived from the internecine struggles among the aristocrats. And, in the end, Rucunshu proved that the king had failed to subdue them. One must therefore conclude that Rwanda as a fully centralized state is a colonial creation (Vansina 2004:194-195).

In reality, therefore, the Central Court presided over a complex polity whose territorial expanse waxed and waned since it never wholly succeeded in subordinating peripheral territories in which it exercised varying degrees of power and authority over time (see e.g. Longman 2010:34). The consolidation of a clearly delineated territorial domain controlled by a central authority only began to emerge during the early years of German colonial overrule, a process, as we shall see, which coincided with the racialization of ethnic identities on the one hand, and the emergence of what I term a 'tripartite' relationship of contestation of power between the royal court, the German authorities and the churches, on the other hand.

2. Naming 'Ethnicity'

Longman argues that 'while the precise meaning of the terms "Hutu", "Tutsi", and "Twa" in precolonial Rwanda is a subject of considerable academic debate, most scholars agree that the terms did not refer to ethnic groups in the modern sense, as all three groups spoke the same language, shared common religious practices,[4] and lived interspersed throughout the region'[5] (Longman 2010:35). The use of the terms during the pre-colonial period nonetheless has a complex history. Catherine Newbury argues that prior to Rwabugiri's rule, there appeared to be three non-territorial ethnonyms: 'Twa', 'Hima', and 'Tutsi', which together 'established an opposition between the bulk of the population and smaller groups that did not farm. The terminology suggests that an agricultural way of life was perceived as the normal condition of the inhabitants, from whom one had to distinguish "different" people who practiced another way of life' (C. Newbury 1999: 313). The etymology of these ethnonyms is unknown. However, Vansina contends that the terms 'Hima' and 'Tutsi' likely only coexisted in certain territories (Rwanda, Burundi, Karagwe). In these territories, 'Tutsi' seems to have referred to a social class or political elite

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[4]   Carney refers to 'similar' religious traditions (see Carney 2012b:174).

[5]   Van Hoyweghen notes that it is essential to understand that despite these commonalities, Rwandan society has remained deeply fragmented throughout the twentieth century (Van Hoyweghen 1996:382).

among the herders and 'Hima' an inferior social class of 'Tutsi'. There is evidence that the term 'Hima' was abandoned in favour or 'Tutsi' following the establishment by Ndori of the Nyiginya dynasty in Central Rwanda during the seventeenth century (Vansina 2004:35, 36, 44).

Originally, 'Hutu' constituted a term of 'individual disparagement' (C. Newbury 1999:314) alluding to 'rural boorishness or loutish behavior used by the elite' (Vansina 2004, 134). During the seventeenth century the term was applied to all those who were in service to the court (Vansina 2004:134). The categories 'Tutsi' and 'Hutu' could nonetheless not be distinguished on purely occupational grounds since many Tutsi were cultivators and many Hutu owned cattle (Longman 2010:35). 'Tutsi' appears to have referred to a fraction within the group of herders who formed the political elite (Vansina 2004:134).

As a governing elite began to assert its perceived superiority over commoners,

> The word 'Tutsi', which apparently first described the status of an individual – became the term that referred to the elite group as a whole and the word 'Hutu' – meaning originally a subordinate or follower of a more powerful person – came to refer to the mass of the ordinary people (Des Forges 1999:32; see Vansina 2004:134-136; Longman 2010:35).

Vansina provides an account of three principal historical developments marking important shifts in the criteria defining Rwanda's three main population groups following the establishment of the kingdom.

During the rule of King Cyilima II Rujugira (1675-1708) in the late seventeenth century, it became customary to refer to any combatants in the army as Tutsi, a term that 'stood in opposition to *mutware*, "chief", as well as to "Hutu", meaning "noncombatant"', or those who were in service to the army. It was 'in this context that the first direct and *institutionalized* opposition between Hutu and Tutsi arose' (Vansina 2004:135). Since noncombatants happened to be largely drawn from lineages of farmers whereas the first company was always recruited from among the pages, the elite became accustomed to referring to all cultivators as 'Hutu' as opposed to 'Tutsi', who were now associated with herders, irrespective of their origins. As the kingdom grew and its armies multiplied this practice spread across the country.

During the mid-nineteenth century, King Mutara II Rwogera (1802-1858) introduced the distinction between chief of the long grass (herders) and chief of the land (cultivators), which further consolidated and institutionalized an occupational division between Tutsi herders and Hutu farmers (Vansina 2004:135). The chiefs were 'nominated at the level of territorial provinces' (Vansina 2004:132). With the expansion of the kingdom, this practice increasingly cut across previously salient

clientage, lineage and clan relationships. He notes, however, that it was only at the close of the nineteenth century that the ruling classes 'ended up labeling *all herders* "Tutsi" in implicit opposition to all subjects who were farmers' (Vansina 2004:37; emphasis added).

This practice emerged following Rwabugiri's accession in approximately 1870 following which the hated *uburetwa* was introduced, a form of forced labour prestation from which Tutsi were exempted. Increasingly exploitative relations of production 'aggravated' and 'poisoned' the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi:

> From this point on 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' would no longer designate a relative category with respect to class or occupation but became an absolute one (Vansina 2004:135, 136; see Pottier 2002:13; Longman 2010:35).[6]

The division between Hutu and Tutsi and the latter's growing status were amplified by Rwabugiri's relentless military campaigns. Widespread violence within the kingdom and 'new and more exploitative forms of land and cattle clientage' (Longman 2010:36; see Linden 1977:6) triggered several rebellions led by farmers (Vansina 2004:136), which resulted in a 'heightened awareness of ethnic differences' (C. Newbury 1988:51). Vansina characterizes Rwabugiri's rule as 'the unrelenting rise of a tide of terror that starts at court and engulfs the whole country, finally erupting into a social crisis that has now lasted for well over a century' (Vansina 2004:164).[7]

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[6] Pottier similarly argues that it was 'through uburetwa that social relations took on a strong ethnic character before the Europeans arrived' (Pottier 2002:13) whereas Carney suggests that during the late nineteenth century Hutu-Tutsi labels developed 'ideological overtones that were missing in earlier periods of Rwandan history' (Carney 2013:13).

[7] Vansina's interpretation of Rwabugiri's rule and its impact upon the transformation of social relations within the precolonial kingdom is widely regarded as authoritative. However numerous contemporary scholars contest his views. Ugirashebuja, for example, challenges the notion of an emergent 'ethnic' consciousness during the late pre-colonial period, arguing that the 'Catholic missionaries and colonizers never took into account the specific unity of the Hutu and the Tutsi peoples, their common pride which made them Rwandan, nor the fact that ninety percent of the Tutsis belonged to the masses of poor peasants' (Ugirashebuja 2004:49). It is of course true that many Tutsi were poor. However as Linden argues, 'the mass of poor Tutsi identified with the nobles and clung to their precarious superiority by despising and exploiting those of Hutu birth' (Linden 1977:227). In this sense, as Pottier argues, 'wealth, not race, was the basis of the ethnic distinction between Hutu and Tutsi' (Pottier 2002,14). Ugirashebuja, notably, does not define the term 'peoples', which appears to suggest some or other form of fixed or corporate group identification, an 'intrinsic' difference reiterated in statements such as 'each group of Rwandans certainly had its particular qualities', the 'merits' of which the colonisers failed to appreciate (Ugirashebuja 2004:50, 51). Jean-Paul Gouteux argues that the '"racialization" or "ethnicisation" of these communities is a modern, Western phenomenon. It results directly from the concept of the missionaries and colonizers, even if it was adopted by the natives, both Hutu and Tutsi' (Gouteux in Ugirashebuja 2004:49-50). Catherine Newbury's more nuanced account steers clear of essentialist categories. She argues that during the tumultuous period of Rwabugiri's rule, 'the consolidation of ethnic categories was shaped by political context. It is politics that makes ethnicity

3. Colonial Overrule: The Churches and the Royal Court

It was against this backdrop that King Yuhi V Musinga (1896-1931) acceded to the throne in 1896. The violent and contested nature of the accession was not exceptional. As David Newbury argues, carefully ordered royal successions were a myth and the transition to Musinga's rule followed in a long-standing pattern that

Diverged from the *ideological norms* of the kingdom. Such intense competition revealed the violence at the heart of the Court and shattered the image of a peaceful society unified by custom and law and united in a powerful social coherence (David Newbury 2011:xxiv, see xxv, xxxv-xxxvi; see Reyntjens 2010:28-29; emphasis added)

These circumstances, rather than the Court's ideological representations, faced the first colonial administrators, missionaries, and traders whose arrival was closely monitored by the Court. Although the initial objective of the small contingent of German administrators was limited to establishing Germany's territorial claims rather than instituting colonial rule (Des Forges 2011:24; Linden 1977:3), the German officer Captain Hans von Ramsay appeared at Court in March 1897 and 'proposed an alliance between the king and the colonial authorities that [the Queen Mother] Kajogera immediately accepted. Thus began the colonial era' (Vansina 2010:179).

The alliance marking the inception of German indirect rule had several principal features. Firstly, although the German authorities were far from passive overseers, they nonetheless adopted a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the royal court. A consequence of this policy was that the Rwandan state 'remained the coercive instrument of Tutsi rule' (Linden 1977:3; see C. Newbury 1999:297), which meant that the 'customary intrigues and violence' at Court persisted (Vansina 2004:179; see Linden 1977:43) until 'after the Belgian conquest in 1916' (Vansina 2004:164-165).

From the outset of colonial rule, the Catholic Church played a more ambiguous role since its activities were not restricted to the religious realm but overflowed into the secular political affairs of both the Royal Court and the colonial state, a feature of colonial indirect rule in Rwanda that would endure even after the abolition of the monarchy in 1961. For although the White Fathers did not initially pursue an overtly political agenda, their mission was defined by the belief of the order's founder,

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significant (or, indeed, insignificant), not ethnicity which invariably defines politics. The paradox is that ethnicity was simultaneously the product of politics and yet, at times, a powerful determinant of the shape of political culture'. She rejects what she terms an 'instrumentalist' view according to which 'ethnic identities are simply products of external machinations' or 'colonial intrusions', although it is clear that the notion of a collective corporate 'other' originates with the colonists (C. Newbury 1999:313).

Cardinal Charles Lavigerie,[8] that the conversion of the non-Christian commoners might best be achieved by focusing evangelistic efforts on the ruling elite (Longman 2010:39; see Linden 1977:3; Des Forges 2011:27). Towards this end,

> the key to winning the chiefs lay in taking their power seriously, making certain that they realized that Christian teaching would support their authority (Des Forges 2011:27).

The Church's policy of forging relations with indigenous political leaders thus complemented that of the colonial authorities, who regarded the ruling elite's internal authority as the keystone of their political strategy (Longman 2010:40). More particularly, this meant non-interference in the social and political prerogatives of the Central Court, such as ritual practices, the ritual authority of the king (Linden 1977:44), trade (Des Forges 2011:47), the appointment of chiefs, clientage relations, and the suppression of internal dissent. On the other hand, this policy entailed siding with the Central Court in its drive to consolidate its authority over formerly semi-autonomous as well as recently conquered but rebellious territories, notably the northern clanlands and Gisaka in the southeast.[9] The 'top-down vision of evangelization' thus positioned the Church 'as a close ally of the colonial state and the Tutsi-dominated royal court' (Carney 2012a:174).

The Court nevertheless viewed the missionaries with suspicion, engaging in ongoing intrigues to limit their impact on the Central Kingdom. The Court's interest in the missionaries was limited to secular learning, including teaching Musinga to read and write. Religious teachings were forbidden at Court, although they were permitted amongst Hutu and Twa commoners. This policy seems to have reflected the Court's awareness that 'full acceptance of the new faith might be inconsistent with complete loyalty to the mwami'. It also effectively, if temporarily, blocked the

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[8]   Cardinal Lavigerie founded the order in Algiers in 1868 and its unique 'missiological technique', which varied between territories as the order expanded into Central Africa, was based on the belief that evangelization could only succeed where it adapted itself to the ways of local peoples, without, however, compromising the practices of a Christian and priestly life. In particular, Lavigerie 'insisted on the patient courting of chiefs' (Linden 1977:29, 30).

[9]   As Des Forges notes, by the close of the nineteenth century, Rwabugiri 'governed the central regions closely through multiple hierarchies of competing officials who administered men, cattle, pasturage, and agricultural land. He exercised a looser kind of suzerainty over other areas, particularly on the periphery, which were dominated by powerful lineage groups... In addition, he tolerated the existence of several small states within the boundaries of Rwanda, usually because their rulers were thought to control rainfall, crop pests, or some other aspect of agricultural productivity important for Rwanda as a whole' (Des Forges 1999:32; see Longman 2010:34). However, during the early years of Musinga's rule, many of the territories either conquered or subordinated by his predecessor attempted to reassert their autonomy (Newbury 2011:xxxvi). It was only with the assistance of the German authorities that Musinga was able to overcome resistance.

strategy adopted by the Fathers of evangelizing members of the royal court (Des Forges 2011:29; see Linden 1977:32-33).

Since the royal court's resistance to the Father's religious teachings did not prevent the latter from fostering direct ties with the local chiefs, the full implications of these daily interactions between the Fathers and the commoners only gradually manifested themselves. At first, Musinga and his closest associates tried to block the evangelization of Tutsi by granting the Fathers sites for mission stations in the rebellious northwestern provinces of Bugoyi and in Gisaka. Refusing this offer, the Fathers secured a site on Mara hill in the south. Accompanied by the king's brother, Cyitatire, the missionaries were instead led to the site of Save hill within his domain, a densely populated area a mere twenty kilometers south of the capital of Nyanza. These were tactical concessions by both the Court and Cyitatire. The Court viewed the southern province of Bwanamukari as troublesome and inhospitable to outsiders whereas Cyitatire feared assassination and aided the missionaries by placing his Hutu subjects at their service to construct the first mission station. This 'was the first intimation of the Fathers' later role as powerful allies in court politics' (Linden 1977:33; see Des Forges 2011:28).

By the end of 1903 five mission stations in the Central Kingdom[10] had managed to gain the trust of Hutu commoners, rapidly expanding their ties to include trade and the provision of medicine and other social services. For their part, the Hutu began to view the Fathers as their protectors and surrogate patrons (Linden 1977:42; see Lemarchand 1978, 364), a development that alarmed the Court (Des Forges 2011:30; Linden 1977:43). For what this signified was the emergence of a 'flourishing and largely theocratic peasant Church [which] grew up around isolated mission stations'. Court policy itself now posed a threat to Tutsi domination since it led to 'the rise of the Hutu Church with an educated clergy and a separate clientship network' (Linden 1977:3; see Lemarchand 1978:364).

Despite these gains, the zealotry of the missionaries rapidly formed what Linden describes as a 'theocratic tyranny' (Linden 1977:38), which triggered a largely spontaneous countrywide uprising against the White Fathers in 1904 (Linden 1977:54). Although the Court did not instigate the uprising, it nonetheless demonstrated its ability to manipulate the unrest to its own advantage (Des Forges 2011:46).[11] Conversely, as the Fathers were increasingly drawn into the political affairs of the kingdom, the distinction between 'temporal and spiritual realms' (Lin-

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[10] Zaza (Nov. 1900), Nyundo (Apr. 1901), Rwaza (Nov. 1903), and Mibirizi (Dec. 1903) (Des Forges 2011, 46).

[11] Thus, for example, the Court took the opportunity to revenge itself on East African, Arab and Indian traders who were operating widely throughout the kingdom under the auspices of the German Protectorate in spite of the Court's prerogative in matters of trade (Des Forges 2011:47-48).

den 1977:38) became blurred, a development which had the potential to destabi-
lize the regime of indirect rule instituted by the German authorities.

A series of events now occurred which would prove to have a long-lasting impact
on the relationship between the Court, the White Fathers and the territory's colonial
rulers. Firstly, it was only with the aid of the German authorities that the White Fa-
thers were able to end the uprising. Secondly, however, since the missionaries far
outnumbered the Germans,[12] the German authorities were compelled to enlist the
support of the superiors of the Mission Society to curtail the activities of the Fathers.
Finally, in the face of the growing political influence of the White Fathers amongst
the commoners the German authorities moved to shore up the political authority
of the Central Court (Linden 1977:39, 41), thereby seeking to reassert their overall
control of the territory.

The outcome of the 1904 crisis

> was an unwritten *entente* between the court, the White Fathers and the Germans.
> Each party recognized that any lasting alliance between the other two could ren-
> der it impotent. Each was restrained by prudence, fear or formulated policy from
> too overt verbal or military attack on the other (Linden 1977:57; see Pottier
> 1989:430).[13]

This marked the emergence of a fragile and mutable tripartite relationship of di-
verse but intertwined interests and objectives that would - considerable turbulence
and recurrent crises notwithstanding - endure until the abolition of the monarchy
in 1961.

4. The Churches and Ethnicity

A key to understanding the pivotal role played by the Catholic missionaries in fram-
ing the system of colonial rule in Rwanda revolved around their part in propagating
the 'Hamitic vision of Rwandan society during the first decades of the twentieth
century' (Carneya 2012a:174). John Hanning Speke's so-called 'Hamitic hypoth-
esis' and the teachings of a range of 'minor evolutionary sociologists and physical
anthropologists' (Linden 1977:1; see Vansina 2004:138) purported to establish
a link between 'physical attributes' and 'mental capabilities' (Linden 1977:2; see
Buckley-Zistel 2009:35). In the Rwandan context, this ideological framework trans-
lated into an ethno-racial hierarchical distinction between 'Hamite' Tutsi, 'negroid'

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[12] In 1902, German forces numbered two officers and twenty-five askari (Linden 1977:50).

[13] The encounter between Europeans and Rwandans 'involved conflict and accommodation at many
      different levels and through different strategies. It meant a constant reassessment of the assumptions
      each group made about the other' (Lemarchand 1978:365).

Hutu, and 'pygmoid' Twa phenotypes according to which the Tutsi were regarded as the 'natural' leaders presiding over a Hutu and Twa racial underclass. Longman argues that although the missionaries did not 'invent' ethnicity in Rwanda, instead adopting 'existing social categories' and transforming their meaning (Longman 2010:44-45; see Vansina 2004:138; C. Newbury 1999:314), they did exercise a profound influence on the thinking of the small contingent of German administrators in Rwanda (Longman 2010:42; Longman and Rutagangwa 2006:134; Linden 1977:2, 165, 272) who relied on 'the missionaries to explain the local culture' (Linden 1977:52).

Moreover, this ideological schema overlapped in important ways with the teachings at the Central Court itself. For the ideology of Musinga's court was founded on the conviction of Tutsi social and political superiority, an idea which had congealed into a form of 'ethnic' consciousness during the final years of Rwabugiri's violent and divisive rule.[14] Accordingly, the interests of the royal court were served by colonial ideological assumptions, which were in turn reinforced by the Catholic clergy. Des Forges argues that this accord between the 'political consciousness' of Rwandans and Europeans (Linden 1977:2; see Longman 2010:59-60, Vansina 200:8-10; Buckley-Zistel 2009:35, 36; Van Hoyweghen 1996:380) manifested itself

> in a great and unsung collaborative enterprise over a period of decades, [during which] European and Rwandan intellectuals created a history of Rwanda that fit European assumptions and accorded with Tutsi interests (Des Forges 1995:4)

As Carney notes, 'colonial theorists developed their Tutsi paradigm from their experiences at the royal court' (Carney 2013:12), rather than imposing a ready-made, inflexible theoretical/ideological frame upon the kingdom.

The arrival of Protestant missionaries in the wake of the 1904 rebellion had the effect of consolidating this ideological accord (Longman 2010:41, 45). Since the new arrivals were viewed by the Catholic superiors - notably Vicar Jean- Joseph Hirth[15] and Vicar delegate Father Leon Classe[16] - as potential competitors at Court, and since they feared any German initiative to settle Protestant nationals to reinforce their claim to the territory, the missionaries were cautioned by superiors not to permit the Catholic Church to become too closely associated with Hutu (Longman 2010:46), a policy which institutionalized church support for the ruling elite.

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[14] Van Hoyweghen contests this interpretation, arguing that it was only during the late colonial period that 'social class... hardened into ethnicity' (Van Hoyweghen 1996:381). This interpretation is now widely rejected, as is the notion of pre-colonial Rwanda as a 'feudal state' composed of 'castes'.

[15] Apostolic vicar of the Catholic region known as Nyanza Meridional (Longman 2010:39).

[16] Vicar Apostolic since 1913.

Henceforth, the question of the political control of the state was bound to notions of 'ethnicity' and 'race' as the defining criteria of political rule, a principle that outlived colonial rule.[17]

The advent of Belgian rule in 1916/7 did not alter the imperative of maintaining cordial relations with the royal court, which remained a linchpin of indirect rule, despite the fact that the court was deprived of some of its power by the Belgian authorities (Des Forges 2011:135). Conversely, although the Belgian authorities were fellow Catholics, they were compelled to reign in several priests who 'once again took on significant secular authority that challenged the power of local chiefs, adjudicating disputes and seeking economic advantages for the Hutu Christian converts' (Longman 2010:49). This may have reflected a contradiction in Catholicism 'between the egalitarian ideology of Christian brotherhood and the centrality to salvation of a hierarchically organized institution through which Grace flowed from the top downwards' (Linden 1977:2). It nonetheless also represented a delicate challenge for the Belgian authorities, who recognized the important role played by the Fathers in securing colonial rule, but who also realized that the mission's two-fold objectives of ensuring 'the ascendancy of chiefs who supported the church' and furthering 'the cause of developing a [centralized] Christian government' (Longman 2010:50, 51) were not necessarily compatible.

This was to change following the conversion of the first Tutsi nobles in December 1917. The Catholic Church was now able to play a key role in helping to rid the kingdom of pockets of Hutu political power both in Central Rwanda as well as in newly occupied territories 'historically governed by Hutu kings'. These initiatives were complemented by a major administrative overhaul of the colony beginning in 1926, which rationalized the complex 'indigenous' system of chieftaincies. This policy removed remaining obstacles to Tutsi hegemony in Rwanda (Longman 2010:52). Moreover, in 1930 all inhabitants of Rwanda were issued with ethnic identity cards, an initiative accompanied by the codification of the principle of pat-

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[17] It should be noted that J.J. Carney, for example, presents a somewhat more nuanced account of Church schooling during this period, arguing that prior to the transition from German to Belgian indirect rule in the late 1910s, Hutu and Tutsi had been educated together and that it was only in the 1920s that the Vicar Apostolic, Léon Classe, introduced a 'two-tiered educational system' which segregated students by ethnic group'. Still, according to Carney, even this policy did not mean that "Classe's understanding of the Hutu-Tutsi demarcation [was] as clear-cut as later commentators sometimes make it appear. Classe rejected the notion of inherent Tutsi intellectual superiority and hinted at the complexity of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. 'I would say that the Tutsi are not, in general, more intelligent than the Hutu... Tutsi refers not to origin but to social condition'" (Carney 2012b:84-85, emphasis added). Carney's description of a more inclusive practice by the Church prior to Belgian rule would nonetheless not have altered the political equation from the point of view of the Court, which would still have had to contend with an early intervention that posed a challenge to the customary social relations within the kingdom by giving Hutu access to mission schools.

rilineality, which eliminated any possibility of social mobility between the groups (Longman 2010:65; see Hintjens 1999:249; Katongole 2005:72).

The Church benefited from these changes in several respects. Firstly, education, which was largely provided by mission schools, 'became the portal which gave access to political power' (Linden 1977:152 see 283). Secondly, the establishment of parallel patrimonial networks increased the political influence of the churches within the kingdom. Finally, 'numerous institutional and personal links between church and state' integrated the Church into 'existing structures of power' (Longman 1998:56, 57).

The conversion of Tutsi gained momentum throughout the 1920s, but it was only with deposition of Musinga in 1931 and the coronation of his catechumen son Mutara Rudahigwa that the final obstacle to the evangelization of Rwanda was removed (Linden 1977:152). This heralded a period of unprecedented accord between the churches, the royal court and the colonial authorities, the 'end of the young Hutu Church', and a 'corporate recognition that the source of power within the State had shifted away from the mwami' (Linden 1977:173). It also marked a period of increased rationalization of administrative structures and a rigid approach to political education and social policies, which only nominally reflected the complex realities of Rwanda's social stratification.

As the Catholic Church in particular grew into the role of a state Church, this 'state' was as much Tutsi as it was Belgian (Linden 1977:174). This was not to change for as long as the Belgians favoured the Tutsi, and together with the Church, artificially maintained the racial stratification of Rwandan society (Linden 1977:186) whilst downplaying or ignoring 'important divisions of class, region, lineage, clan, and political faction' (Longman 2010:58; see 168, 169).

Nonetheless, there was not a straightforward symmetry between the institutions and objectives of the Church and the secular colonial authorities during this period. As Longman argues, the missionaries typically engaged in political struggles by developing an independent network of clientage relationships, frequently in competition with the Central Court and the chieftancies, on the one hand, and the colonial authorities, on the other hand. In other words, as the source of independent material benefits, the churches were transformed into quasi-*political* institutions and 'centers of political contestation' (Longman 2001:170). The politicization of the churches would, in turn, embroil them in the political conflicts of the late-colonial period.

Following the Second World War, a new generation of missionaries arrived in Rwanda, which included a group of progressive clergy influenced by social democratic principles, forming the bedrock of 'social Catholicism'. Troubled by the poverty and degradation of the Hutu masses they helped to foster a new Hutu 'coun-

ter-elite', whose members would assume leading political offices following a peas-
ant uprising in 1959 (Linden 1977:222; see Longman 2001:169; Van Hoyweghen
1996:381; Carney 2012a:86, 92)[18] that drove Tutsi chiefs from power, heralding
the end of colonial rule as well as the abolition of the monarchy.[19] Carney qualifies
this account, arguing that the political allegiance of the Church hierarchy was frac-
tured and he contests the 'historical stereotypes' that 'portray the 1950s Catholic
Church as moving fully into the pro-Hutu camp' (Carney 2012a:89, see 92; see Van
Hoyweghen 1996:381). Still, shifting political terrain certainly influenced Church
allegiances and by the close of the decade the Hutu-Tutsi question 'would come to
dominate Rwandan ecclesial and state politics' (Carney 2012a:87, see 88).

5. The Churches in Post-Independence Rwanda

During the immediate post-independence period Hutu rapidly came to dominate
the hierarchies of state and church. The dramatic shift to Hutu domination was
nonetheless not the only important change. For the structure of political relations
in the Rwandan state was also fundamentally transformed during the transition to
independence.

Firstly, the abolition of the Tutsi monarchy ended the uneasy tripartite formation
of political power and authority in the Rwandan state, which had been the defining
feature of colonial indirect rule. With the elimination of the Central Court's ritu-
alistic and secular power and authority, the churches were able to cultivate more
direct ties with a nominally democratic and secular, Hutu ethno-nationalist central
state. However, the new Hutu political elite was largely drawn from the ranks of
the churches, many of who were recruited out of Catholic seminaries (Longman
1997:4). President Grégoire Kayibanda was himself a former editor of the influen-

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[18] Although neither the Church nor the Belgian administration envisaged changes during the post-war
period, a generation of new missionaries arrived in the 1940s who 'were born into a fast secularizing
Europe' (Linden 1977:222) and the 'burgeoning emancipation of the working class and the growth of
trade-unionism. Hence it felt it had a moral duty to speak out on social injustice. This view was oppo-
sed to the ideas of Classe, who saw society and structure as neutral and the individual as the safe-
guarder of morality. These two strands within Christianity have never been at equilibrium in the Rwan-
dese Catholic Church. While Hutu abbés found the support of an emancipating social Catholicism, the
Tutsi abbés on the other hand expressed anti-Belgian and anti-White Father feelings and developed a
nationalist discourse which was eventually turned against them' (Van Hoyweghen 1996:381).

[19] Longman asserts that a cynical interpretation of missionary support for revolution in the 1950s as
a 'calculated strategy' rather than as a commitment to social justice is not without merit (Longman
1997:4; see Lemarchand 1978:364). Whatever the exact role of the Church, or more accurately the
various factions within the Church, Hutu militias attacked Tutsi in mid-1959 and order was only resto-
red by+ Belgian military intervention in November of that year, which was accompanied by the repla-
cement of 'Tutsi political leaders with Hutu elites, helping to precipitate a longer-term ethno-political
revolution that culminated with the inauguration of the Hutu-dominated First Republic in July 1962'
(Carney 2012a:90).

tial Catholic newspaper *Kinyamateka* and personal secretary to Father Andre Perraudin (Longman 2010:70; see Van Hoyweghen 1996:381). As Carney argues, Kayibanda 'was the most prominent example of a seminarian turned journalist turned politician' (Carney 2012a:86).[20] Collaboration

> Between the church and the state existed at all levels of the hierarchy: hence often bishops were part of the prefecture council of development, the curies of the communal council of development, councils that prepared the programs of development in the country (Theunis in Longman 2001:77)

Moreover, by shifting their allegiance to the ascendant Hutu majority, the churches perpetuated their longstanding participation in 'ethnic politics' rather than 'challenging the central principles at the root of Rwanda's ethnic conflict' (Longman 2010:66; see C. Newbury 1999:297). Indeed, the consolidation of the revolution, which would not have been possible without the allegiance of the Catholic Church, took place 'in a climate of ethnic purification' in which thousands of Tutsi were killed (Van Hoyweghen 1996:382).

Secondly, however, despite the shift in the ethnic composition of the hierarchies of the churches, Tutsi still predominated in the local Protestant and Catholic parishes:

> This paradoxical attitude toward ethnicity produced a tension in the churches, since Hutu credited the churches… with supporting the Hutu accession to power… and yet the church that they encountered (their priests and teachers) was Tutsi (Longman 2001:171; see Van Hoyweghen 1996:382)

Thus whereas the political objectives or aspirations of the church converged with those of the state and a new dual institutional formation emerged, Tutsi remained embedded in a traditionally decentralized and quasi-autonomous institutional substratum.[21]

The confluence of religion and politics assumed even greater complexity in 1973 when Kayibanda fell out of favour with the churches following a series of attacks

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[20] Van Hoyweghen notes an additional important element in regard to Kayibanda's accession. Kayibanda drew his support from Hutu in the southern provinces, a factor which underscores the importance of region in the politics of Rwandan history, a rupture which was underscored by his successor's source of support in the historically more autonomous territories of the north (Van Hoyweghen 2012:382).

[21] Longman: the 'churches are loosely organized and decentralized institutions which can be exploited for diverse purposes… In the local community… churches represent an imposing presence, frequently offering more resources to distribute than the state' (Longman 2001:172). As such, local parishes are a 'major source of economic, social and political opportunity for people in the surrounding area' (Longman 2001:173) and the clergy reflected the fissions within society. The presence of the clergy thus frequently aggravated fissures within society.

on church schools and the lower ranks of the clergy, whose ethnic character re-
called the widespread anti-Tutsi violence between 1959 and 1965 (Van Hoyweghen
1996:382).[22] The ethnic composition of the lower clergy now came to the fore as
a complex challenge for the Church since it presented a direct threat to the politi-
cal interests and institutional stability of the Church. Hence, although the Catho-
lic Episcopal Conference 'eventually did issue a pastoral letter… condemning the
ethnic nature of the attacks' (Longman 2010:87), it stopped short of condemning
the specific targeting of Tutsi, despite the fact that the Church was directly affected
(Longman 1997:85, see 6, 87).

The formation of the Second Republic in 1973 led by President Juvinal Hab-
yarimana following a military coup was widely welcomed by Church leaders in
Rwanda. Habyarimana created a one-party state under the National Revolutionary
Movement for Development, MRND with membership compulsory for all citizens.
The state employed the conventional instruments of coercive force, ideological in-
doctrination and a nationwide system of patron-client ties to consolidate its power.
Habyarimana moved rapidly to ensure the allegiance of the churches to the new
regime. The Catholic Church responded by installing a loyal Hutu hierarchy and 'the
Catholic Church moved the seat of its archbishop… to Kigali in 1976 to facilitate
cooperation between the church and government' (Longman 2010:89). Church
leaders, too, cultivated their clientage networks. However, rather than pursuing the
past practice of maintaining relatively autonomous parallel tracks, Church and state
entered into a 'mutually reinforcing' relationship of power and authority, which
was in part based on personal links and cross-cutting institutional ties (Longman
2010:90 see 96) most especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This trend, which further closed the gap between the institutions, was a continu-
ation of the pattern that emerged following the abolition of the Tutsi monarchy in
1962. Ethnicity played a crucial role in the convergence of interests. For although
Habyarimana initially appeared to adopt a more accommodative policy towards the
Tutsi minority than did his predecessor, it soon became apparent that the linkage
between the patrimonial clientage networks of the Church and the state respectively
reflected a shared ethnic solidarity (Longman 2010:96), influenced by an emergent
strain of radical ethno-nationalism (Carney 2012a:96).

Conclusion

During the years leading up to the mass violence and genocide in 1994, the cordial
relations between the hierarchies of the Church and the state as well as the grow-

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[22] Hutu-Tutsi violence played out against the background of several regional factors, most notably the
1972 genocide in Burundi (Carney 2012a:95).

ing authoritarianism of the Habyarimana government were challenged on several fronts.

Firstly, Habyarimana had to contend with a resurgent civil society and a movement for democratization (Longman 1995b:474). Secondly, a faction emerged within the Church influenced by liberation theologies. This grouping was sympathetic to demands for the democratic transformation of the state. Finally, pressure within the Church arose for the reform of its patrimonial structures and its close ties to the state. It was at this juncture that the interests of the secular and Church hierarchies began to coalesce around the goal of maintaining the status quo at any price:

> Just as political leaders felt threatened by democratization and turned to ethnic violence as a means of reasserting their control, church leaders found their own power under threat and found a similar appeal in a policy that forcefully defended the established structures of power (Longman 2010:96; see Van Hoyweghen 1996:384, 390)

In other words, as pressure mounted in both Church and state to institute fundamental internal reforms as well as transform their historical relationship, both institutions embraced 'ethnic arguments as a means of regaining popular support' (Longman 2010:28; see Longman 2001:166). Longman links this development to the Church's subsequent role in the 1994 genocide, arguing that although the Church was not '*central to the planning of the genocide*' (Longman 2010:28, his emphasis) it helped to 'make the genocide possible by encouraging obedience to authority and making ethnic prejudice seem consistent with Christian teachings' (Longman 2010:28).

It is not my objective here to provide my own account of the complex factors contributing to the events leading up to the 1994 genocide. Rather, I would like to highlight the impact, which the end of colonial rule had on the historical relationship between the Church and 'the state'. As we have seen, during the colonial period a threefold relationship existed between the royal court, the Church and the German administration, each of which was restrained by an 'unwritten *entente*' that limited their common objective of exercising a dominant political role in the colonial state. In other words, for as long as the royal court existed, each institution was 'bound' to the other in a relationship of mutually reinforcing interests governed by a pragmatic understanding of the structural limitations upon the pursuit of self-interest. For during this period, 'the state' consisted of a combination of the royal court and chieftancies on the one hand, and the colonial administration on the other hand. During this period the Church played an important mediating role between the ambitions of the royal house and the colonial imperative of containing the power but also supporting the authority of the Tutsi court as a condition of colonial indirect rule.

With the abolition of the monarchy in 1962 and the ascendance of a Hutu dominated Church and nominally secular nation-state, the barriers to a more conventional alliance between religious and secular powers had been removed and the conflation of the notions of 'ethnicity' and 'nation' manifested itself in an ideology of radical ethno-nationalism that would play an important role in binding Church and state in the common cause of maintaining Hutu domination – at any cost.

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"Who'll be a witness for my Lord?"

Witnessing as an Ecclesiological and Missiological paradigm

Andrew G. Suderman[1]

Abstract

The Christian church's expansive zeal has often, throughout its history, walked hand-in-hand with the colonial pursuits of empires and nation-states. This cooperative approach between church and empire, which has been described as a Christendom or Constantinian paradigm, has not only implicated the church in the oppression and violent exploitation of people, but, because this paradigm has shaped the church's ecclesial and missiological imagination, such violent and oppressive tendencies are perpetuated. This paper will argue that, in order to break free from such an understanding, we need to reimagine how we understand our ecclesial being and missional purpose. In remembering what it means to be "witnesses" of Jesus Christ in the early church, an understanding which, because of the lifestyle it required, was intimately connected with the very real possibility of becoming a martyr, we are challenged by this alternative paradigm to reimagine our ecclesial being and missional purpose. This alternative imagination, based on a self-sacrificial paradigm of power, changes the very nature and "witness" of the church and its mission.

Key words: power, witness, Christendom, Constantinianism, John Howard Yoder, William Cavanaugh, martyrdom

1. Introduction

A well-known African American spiritual that arose during the time of slavery in the southern U.S. asks a very poignant question – "Who'll be a witness for my Lord?" Even in a subordinated social position in society, there remained an assumption that one could give witness to Jesus Christ; they could and would witness to Jesus Christ through their mouths and through their bodies. And this form of witnessing – through proclamation and bodily sacrifice – during the time of slavery in the U.S. demonstrates its similarity with the experience of the early church. The notion of "witness" or "witnessing" in the time of the early church progressed in becoming virtually synonymous with becoming a martyr. Although there was a distinction

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at first, it is not accidental that the word used to "testify" or "witness"—μαρτυς (*martus*)—eventually became the same word used for "martyr". Martyrdom, in other words, became a form of witnessing.

In the book of Acts, we see, as the book progresses, a growing connection between testifying and becoming a martyr because of what one testifies. Indeed, the book of Acts recounts the first act of a disciples' martyrdom—the killing of Stephen. And many more follow. Luke's promise that a disciple will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40) is fulfilled in Acts where the disciples, like their teacher, "both act and suffer for the truth of Christ in ways parallel to the action and suffering of Christ himself" (Willimon, 2010: 14).

But, these acts of martyrdom – acts that mimic the life of Jesus while also suffering the consequences of such a life – prove to be more than helpless victimization of those who witness to Jesus. Such acts are but the consequence of Jesus' followers embodying the alternative political agenda along with the different form of power that Jesus, in his life, demonstrated.

In this paper, I will seek to explore and demonstrate how Jesus' promise found in Acts 1:4-8, a promise of power to be witnesses of Jesus Christ, provides a basis for an alternative ecclesiological imagination, along with missiological implications that naturally follow, which challenges a Christendom based imagination and paradigm that has influenced the Christian church for much of its history. Jesus' promise provides a hint of a different type of power that forms the basis of this alternative paradigm; a form of power the disciples are meant to embody. It is a form of power that differs substantially from that of the empire, which is also, I will argue, the understanding of power that the church after Constantine has largely adopted. The promise of another form of power than that which the empire embraces – what I describe as an upside-down understanding of power – which the disciples receive through the Holy Spirit provides the ability for the church to respond to the all-too-apparent realities of violence, oppression, poverty, and inequality that exist in our society – traits that are common to the legacy of colonialism, in ways that pursue Kingdom of God traits – peace, justice, and reconciliation – whilst embodying such traits.

2. The Christendom paradigm

The year 312 CE proved to be a significant year for the life of the church as a new relationship emerged between it and the empire. This marked the end of the persecution Christians suffered at the hands of the Roman Empire. It also marked the beginning of a shift whereby Christianity was not only tolerated but in fact became the compulsory form of religious expression within the empire (386 CE). This shift was the birth of what would later be called Christendom – the intimate relationship between the church and the empire (or the church and state later on) in how they

would work together in making society "Christian." The interests of the church, in other words, became the interests of the empire, and the interests of the empire were intimately connected with that of the church.

The church welcomed this new relationship as a hope that had been fulfilled – the time of suffering and death because of their faith had come to an end. One can hardly blame the church at this time for welcoming the change. Christians during this time saw Constantine and his efforts to legalize the Christian faith as an answer to prayer. Eusebius, for example, could hardly find phrases that would depict sufficiently this new Christian Emperor, calling Constantine "almost another Christ," "the only true philosopher," and a "vessel of the divine Logos." Constantine also saw himself in a similar light – depicting himself as a 13th disciple and as a bishop of the bishops (Yoder et al, 2009: 58) – a bishop ordained by God to oversee whatever is outside the church.

All of this formed a new relationship between the church and the empire. This newly found relationship began to shape the imaginations with regards to the roles and functions of the church and the empire. And this served as the formational base of Christendom. Harry Huebner highlights several traits that emerged as a result of the empire's conversion (Huebner, 2012: 61-62).[2]

First, a distinction emerged between the "visible" and "invisible" church. Whereas the church was a visible body before Constantine as a socially and publicly constituted visible counter-body, after Constantine the true church, true in the sense that it was a community of the faithful and committed, no longer assumed to be visible. The "true church" was now found internally, in the hearts of men and women for God alone to see (Huebner, 2012: 61).[3]

Second, there was a separation between the social and the spiritual. Whereas for early Christians the church was itself a political body in that it addressed issues of economics, governance, power, and enemies, the new relationship between the church and the empire introduced a division of labour – the church dealt with the spiritual and individual, whereas the empire dealt with the physical and political (Huebner, 2012: 61).

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[2] Although Huebner's recent book is entitled as an "introduction", one should not be fooled by its title of its academic rigor, reliability, and comprehensive historical argument. One only needs to pick up and begin reading Huebner's book to recognize that it is no ordinary "introductory" textbook. I use Huebner in this instance as he gives a good description of the shift that took place pre and post Constantine (i.e., through the "Constantinian Shift").

[3] See also YODER, J. H. 1984. The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel, Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press. Yoder notes that, whereas before the Constantinian shift the church was in the minority, after the shift the whole Empire was now Christian. But the "true church" was still considered to be a minority, it was now simply hidden or invisible. Augustine, the major architect of the concept of the ecclesia invisibilis, believed that the true church was perhaps five percent of the visible one after Constantine (Yoder, 1984: 136).

Third, this ecclesiological shift resulted in a different way of understanding the way God governed the world. Instead of working through the church's faithful (pre-Constantinian understanding), God now worked through the emperor. The role of the devoutly religious was to focus on the inner spiritual health of their leaders and provide advice and advocacy so that their leaders to make wise social decisions. The church, in accepting the invitation to operate within the power structure of the Empire, became irrelevant in how the world moves forward; it no longer had a direct role in the process or an alternative process – political practice – that challenged the ways of the Empire. Its "political" function was replaced with a purely "religious" purpose (Huebner, 2012: 61). Charles Villa-Vicencio notes:

> The invitation by the Emperor Constantine in 312 CE to the church, hitherto persecuted and prevented from having any direct political influence, to operate from *within* the power structures of the state resulted in the church's capitulation to imperial demands. Constantine "achieved by kindness", it has been suggested, "what his predecessors had not been able to achieve by force" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 20).[4]

Fourth, a distinction between the "religious" and the "laity" emerged. In so far as one could speak about the visible church, it became associated with the church hierarchy (Huebner, 2012: 61). This dualism also introduced a distinct ethic between those who were "religious" from the "laity." John Howard Yoder, for example, notes how "[t]he definitions of the faith could thus no longer take the assembly of believers as its base. As a result, therefore, the eyes of those looking for the church had to turn to the clergy, especially to the episcopacy, and henceforth 'the church' meant the hierarchy more than the people" (Yoder, 1984: 136). Indeed, Huebner notes how such a dualism possesses an inherent contradiction of the "Constantinian synthesis that affirms that everyone is Christian by law yet confesses at the same time that not everyone is Christian by conviction" (Huebner, 2012: 62). The empire even provided special exemptions to the "religious" as it was beneficial to the empire. Eusebius, for example, comments that "clergy were exempt 'from all public duties, that they may not by any error or sacrilegious negligence be drawn away from the service duty to the Deity, but may devote themselves without any hindrance to their law. For it seems that when they show greatest reverence to the Deity, the greatest benefits accrue to the state'" (Huebner, 2012: 61).

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[4]   It should be noted that, although I have tried to consistently use terms such as "empire" and "state" according to their proper historical timeframe, thereby hoping to avoid any form anachronism, some of those whose work I quote, such as this quote from Villa-Vicencio, use terms such as "state" synonymously with "empire." The two, however, are used to refer to the ruling authorities of the day.

And lastly, when Christianity encompasses everyone within the empire, an alternate guiding source than the Bible and the insights of the worshipping community are sought as the ethic of Jesus, it is assumed, is no longer "realistic" for the way society *en total* relates to one another. Ethical discourse, in other words, faces two particular tests in Christendom: 1) can you ask such behavior of everyone? 2) What would happen if everyone did it? (Yoder, 1984: 139) Thus, greater emphasis is placed on law and policy making for the empire as it is now the entity responsible for social and political matters.

The implications of this shift are substantial. This shift changes the ecclesiological character and witness of the church, its political involvement, as well as its missional focus. Whereas before Constantine the church was concerned for the way it followed and embodied the ways of Jesus, the church after Constantine became primary concerned for believing correctly (i.e., orthodoxy). Thus, a disconnect emerged between the beliefs of the church from the lived expression that sought to imitate Jesus' lived example. Indeed, due to the above traits of this shift, the church was no longer a particular – or peculiar – community as everyone in the empire was now, at least officially, part of the church.

Arne Rasmusson provides a good summary:

> The Constantinian shift means that the church changes from being a minority to becoming the imperial religion of, with time, almost everyone. Not to be Christian thus required great conviction. This led to the creation of the doctrine of the invisible church as the true believers or the elect still were considered a small minority. The church thus no longer signified an identifiable people, but came to mean primarily the hierarchy and sacramental institution, with the consequence that faith and Christian life primarily were understood in inward terms (Rasmusson, 1995: 222).[5]

Allan Boesak likewise says:

> Before the Constantinian period, the Christian Church was a band of people, ethnically and socially mixed, politically neither influential nor powerful. When under Constantine Christianity became a state religion, however, the Church changed.

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[5]   For an excellent look at the Constantinian shift and the implications for how "conversion" (i.e., what it meant to become "Christian") was understood, see KREIDER, A. 1999. The change of conversion and the origin of Christendom, Harrisburg, Pa., Trinity Press International. See also John Howard Yoder's The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 135-147; The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2003), 65-84; and "The Disavowal of Constantine: An Alternative Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue" in The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical, ed. by Michael G. Cartwright (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1998), 242-261. See also Stanley Hauerwas, Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 74-78.

> From then on, Church and State would be allies. The confession of the Church became the confession of the State, and the politics of the State became the politics of the Church. The politics of the Kingdom of God would henceforth be subjected to the approval of Caesar (Boesak, 1977: 29).[6]

Through this shift, one of the most significant shifts to occur was the way in which "power" was understood and embodied. Through this shift, the church begins to assume and understand power the same way as the empire understood it. The result is that the church, in grappling with the question of power, begins to mimic the structure, approach, and sometimes the very goals of the empire itself. Charles Villa-Vicencio, for example, comments that

> [o]ne of the consequences of the alliance between the historic Constantinian alliance between church and state has been the emergence of a hierarchy of control in the church similar to that which exists within the state. Indeed, in many situations the church is today more authoritarian, more hierarchical, more oppressive and less democratic, less participatory and less liberating than the state (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 47).

Likewise, Yoder notes how, through the division of labour between the church and the empire, where the empire is now the entity concerned with matter outside of the church, thus with matters outside of the empire as everything inside of the empire is now "Christian," "mission" in the sense of calling one's hearers to faith in Jesus Christ also becomes redefined. "Beyond the limits of empire it had become identical with the expansion of Rome's sway" (Yoder, 1984: 137). Thus, not only did the change in understanding power affect the church's ecclesiology, but its missional purpose and identity as well.

Put another way, the church's imagination, through its intimate relationship with the empire, is re-shaped and begins to embrace the way the empire defines concepts such as "power." Power, the ability to affect something, including the way in which one relates to others (i.e., politics), came to be understood as a central characteristic of the empire as it was given the task to care for the social and the political within its territory. The church, therefore, released its understanding and definition of power and adopted the empire's understanding. The empire now simply relied on the church to justify and bless its use of power as its rightful handler through its practices and conquests.

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6   Boesak, in fact, continues by saying that "the Fall of the Christian Church" through this Constantinian alliance is precisely when the Church became a white Church (29).

3. The Christendom imagination and the nation-state

This Christendom paradigm shaped the church's imagination and its self-under-standing. And so, even as the Renaissance, Reformation, and other more "political" events gave birth to the modern sense of the nation-state or nationhood, the church still largely assumed its Christendom or Constantinian role (Yoder, 1984: 141). In other words, although the symbiotic relationship the church enjoyed with the em-pire changed as the modern, liberal nation-state emerged, the church continued to assume, and continued to seek, its social relevance through the expressions of the nation-state. "The social arrangement remains, but on the national scale" (Yoder, 1984: 141). Yoder describes this as neo-Constantinianism.

William Cavanaugh provides a similar view surrounding the birth of the nation-state. Cavanaugh notes that the basic ecclesial assumption operating during the birth of the modern nation-state was that a country was viewed as an organic whole; the state would be responsible for the bodies, the church for the souls (Cavanaugh, 1998: 16). Indeed, "[t]he church… had already handed the bodies of its members over to the state" (Cavanaugh, 1998: 16).

One of the principle myths that assisted the birthing of the modern nation-state was the often untested assumption that religion is violent in nature. It is often as-sumed, notes Cavanaugh, that the modern nation-state emerged because of and in response to the violent nature of religion (see Cavanaugh, 2009). Some sug-gested that the nation-state emerged as the one body that would be able to bring unity to those who held different doctrinal beliefs. The nation-state, in other words, emerged as the peace-maker, the entity that could truly bring about peace in the land as its citizens subordinate themselves for the common good. Religion, there-fore, was relegated to the private life whereas loyalty to the sovereign state provided the necessary grounds to unite those who differed (Cavanaugh, 2009: 10). This, however, is not all that different from that which took place in the Constantinian shift and the assumed roles in Christendom where the political was separated from the spiritual and the social separated from the personal.

Cavanaugh challenges the myth that religion is intrinsically violent and argues that the commonly called "wars of religion" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centu-ries are in fact better understood as the birthpangs of the modern nation-state (Gin-gerich Hiebert) as it sought to become the one sovereign and objective body, thus ridding and/or subordinating other social bodies, such as the church, in its quest to be the peace-maker among differing and conflicting people prone to violence due to their doctrinal differences (Cavanaugh, 2009: 10). Cavanaugh concludes, however, that far from solving the problem of violence, there arose a change in what people were willing to kill for, namely the nation-state (Cavanaugh, 2009: 12). "Ostensibly, the holy was separated from politics for the sake of peace; in reality,

the emerging state appropriated the holy to become itself a new kind of religion'' (Cavanaugh, 2009: 11).

Cavanaugh acknowledges that the church was implicated in the wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and that these wars were really not simply about politics. ''The point is that the transfer of power from the church to the state was not the solution to the violence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but was a cause of the wars. The church was deeply implicated in the violence, for it became increasingly identified with and absorbed into the statebuilding project'' (Cavanaugh, 2009: 11-12). The church, therefore, dismantled itself as a social body and assumed its role of taking care of the moral well-being of the citizens while leaving the political, that is the social well-being of society, to the state. In effect, the church was relegated to the private realm where it assumed a chaplaincy role, while the state assumed its role as the one objective unified entity whose concern was the public welfare within its territory. Put simply, the logic of Christendom continued even upon the birth of the modern, liberal, nation-state.

And so, even in the birth of the liberal, secular, nation-state, the church has continued to assume the logic of Christendom and the way in which power is understood and embodied. The church, with its Constantinian imagination, has continued to understand power as that which rules over others in determining how society ought to be ordered and structured. And the role to wield such power is that of the empire or state. Within the church this has, historically, taken the form of mimicking the power structures of the empire – a top-down, hierarchically based understanding of power and authority – in order to effectively influence the empire or those "in power", i.e., those who rule, in how they order and rule over society. Put simply, the church has embraced the assumption that power is the ability to influence and order society through the empire or state. The church's role, if involved in any way, is to try to guide the way in which "the powers" use its power.

4. The Power granted through the Holy Spirit

Historically, the church, by and large, with a few notable exceptions,[7] accepted the way in which the empire or the state understood power. This notion of power, however, is confronted with several incongruences when compared to the biblical narrative and its depiction of power, specifically Godly power, which the church is called to embrace and be led by. For example, a small and seemingly insignificant nation becomes the people of God; a child defeats a notorious warrior with pebbles

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[7] Some of the notable exceptions can be found, I think, in Anabaptism and its history as well as certain Liberation Theology movements whereby the power that is harnessed in challenging oppressive regimes is that of the people – a "power from below." In this way, there are many similarities between Liberation Theology and Anabaptism.

and a sling shot; a savior is born in a barn to a carpenter; death, ironically, overcomes death and provides the possibility for life. All of these examples demonstrate the radically alternative way in which God works. They also, I think, demonstrate what we often miss – the paradoxical nature of God's power. God's work demonstrates an alternative reality as to what is possible and challenges us to align our lives according to such a reality. The difficulty, it seems, is not only aligning our lives and the way we participate in God's mission, but also to *believe* and *trust* in this seemingly illogical character of power embodied throughout the story of God's active presence in the world.

The promise Jesus makes to his disciples in the beginning of Acts helps us, I think, grapple with and better understand this alternative form and understanding of power.

> Acts 1:4-8:
> And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;
> For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.
> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The book of Acts begins with Jesus reminding his disciples of the promise he has made about the arrival of the Holy Spirit. This is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that, once he departs, another helper would come to walk with, accompany, and strengthen the disciples in their journey of being like their teacher. This promise, the fire that the author already foretells in Luke 3:16,[8] is fulfilled in Acts chapter 2 with the arrival of the Holy Spirit – i.e., the Pentecost event. We are led, in other words, to assume that with the fiery arrival of the Holy Spirit the promise which Jesus makes in Acts 1:4-8 is fulfilled: "*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…*"

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[8]   "John answered, saying to them all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

The rest of Acts goes on to demonstrate the way in which the Holy Spirit works in and through this newly formed community—the church; a community which was itself formed by the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost event marks a moment in which the power of God is bestowed upon Jesus' disciples. It also marks the moment in which the disciples received the power to follow the example of their teacher. The promise made in Luke 6:40, whereby "a disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40), is fulfilled through the lives of Jesus' disciples who, like Jesus, act and suffer because of the ways of Christ.

The key to understanding the ability of the disciples to behave like the example Jesus provided lies in understanding the purpose of the power they received from the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8 we find Jesus promising that the disciples "*shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" The power that the disciples were to receive, in other words, would allow them to be witnesses to Jesus.

In order to better understand the significance of Jesus' promise as well as the apostle's actions after Pentecost, we must understand the meaning and significance of power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia)*, especially as it used in both Luke and Acts; the two volumes written by the same author. These two words, *dunamis* and *exousia* are commonly used in reference to power. But the two are not synonymous. Indeed, there are some significant and interesting differences in how these two terms are used.

Dunamis is used 15 times in Luke and 10 times in the book of Acts. The author uses *dunamis* to refer to the ability to act. More than this, it refers to an activity that transforms things. In every instance, except for one (Luke 10:19), this term is used to describe either the characteristic and ability of God (e.g., "power of the most High"; "power of the Holy Spirit"; "power of the Lord"; "power of God"; etc.) or the extension of what is possible because of this Godly power (e.g., power to heal, power to caste out demons, power to do mighty works, power to do signs and miracles, etc.). Almost entirely, *dunamis* is used to describe the ability of God or those committed to acting in the ways of God to act in a way that transforms something.

Exousia is often used to describe power in relation to authority. The author of Luke-Acts uses this term to talk more about possessing the authority to act, rather than the ability to act itself. This term is used 16 times in Luke and 7 times in the book of Acts. Whereas *dunamis* is used in a positive sense except for one instance (Luke 10:19), *exousia* is more complex. *Exousia* is used positively when it refers to authority belonging to God or Jesus Christ.[9] Yet 17 of the 23 times the author uses

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9   e.g., Luke 4:32 & 4:36 Jesus has authority over spirits; 5:24 Jesus has authority/power to forgive sins;

exousia in a more negative way. It is more often used in an almost derogatory way in referring to those who are in positions that rule over others and in possession of "worldly", as opposed to Godly, authority.[10] Indeed, there are several instances where the author's use of *exousia* as authority to rule over others is the opposite of Godly power.[11]

In exploring the ways in which these two terms are distinguished in Luke-Acts, we can see how the form of power that is connected to *exousia*, that is possessing authority over others, is not, it seems, the way of Jesus or the desire of God.[12] God

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9:1 Jesus gives authority to the disciples to cast out demons and to heal; Acts 1:7 God has authority; 8:19 Simon requests for authority so that people could receive the Holy Spirit.

[10] E.g., Luke 4:6 refers to the authority that the devil possesses and provides; 7:8 refers to the authority the Centurion possesses over others; 12:11 refers to those who rule society – leaders in the synagogues, the magistrates, and the authorities; 19:17 refers to the authority a servant receives over cities; 20:2 the chief priests and scribes ask Jesus "by what authority are you doing these things?"; 20:8 Jesus does not respond to the question regarding authority; 20:20 notes that authority is possessed by the governor (particularly interesting considering the rest of the dialogue in the chapter that leads to this statement); 22:53 refers to the power of darkness; 23:7 refers to what is in Herod's jurisdiction; Acts 5:4 refers to the power/control that Ananias had over his own land and possessions; 9:14, 26:10, and 26:12 authority is in reference to the chief priests; and 26:18 refers to the power of Satan.

[11] Three examples will suffice in demonstrating this point. 1) In the temptations of Jesus, the devil speaks about the authority (exousia) he possesses and with which he tempts Jesus: "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish" (Luke 4:6). Here exousia is a possession and a tool of the devil. 2) A second example can be found when Jesus' authority is questioned (Luke 20:1-8). Jesus is asked "by what authority are You doing these things [miracles, healing, driving out unclean spirits, etc.]?" Rather than getting into a battle about who has authority (exousia), Jesus, in a similar move to that of the temptations where Jesus failed to participate in the quest for the same type of authority that the devil possesses, side steps the question and refuses to participate in the system of ruling over, or having authority over, others. Interestingly, however, the author throws another reference in the same chapter that highlights that authority—this type of authority that Jesus sidesteps—is something which the governor possesses. Exousia, in other words, is again distinguished as a feature of worldly kingdoms or rulership, not a feature in the ways of God's kingdom (which again brings into perspective the second temptation of Jesus regarding the nature of the kingdoms of this world – Luke 4:5-8). 3) Lastly, in the final chapter in the book of Acts (Acts 26), there is an interesting interplay in the way exousia is used. Exousia is used 3 times in this chapter. The first two times it is used to describe the authority of the chief priests, a reference made to Paul's old life when he was persecuting the church. The last time, 26:18, it is used to describe the power of Satan. Although there are more examples that can be given, these three serve to demonstrate the point that exousia, when not referring to God's authority, is often used with a more negative connotation.

[12] Note that I am not making a generalized conclusion about the nature of exousia in the whole New Testament. To do this we would need to look beyond Luke and Acts. I am here drawing this conclusion on the way this term is used in Luke and Acts. For a broader perspective in how such terms are used throughout the New Testament, see WINK, W. 1984. Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Fortress Press. What is noteworthy in Walter Wink's book, however, is that 85 percent of the time exousia is used in the New Testament it refers to a "structural dimension of existence" (ibid.), which are often depicted as fallen. See also YODER, J. H. 1994. The

is the rightful possessor of authority (Acts 1:7), but authority *over* others is not the way in which power is to be embodied among Jesus' followers.

Instead, right after the author notes that God is the rightful possessor of authority (*exousia*), he specifies that the apostles shall receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit descends upon them. The power (*dunamis*) or ability to act referred to in this verse is the ability to be witnesses to Jesus. The word that is translated as "witnesses" here is the Greek word μαρτυς (*martus*). It is noteworthy that this same word would later be used to describe those who would die because of their faith – i.e., martyrs. Out of all of the derivatives of *martyrion* (μαρτυριον), *martus* is the form most often used in the book of Acts (13 times). Although *martus* at first meant "to give witness to" or "to testify" and was not necessarily connected to death, it is significant that in a very short period of time – between 10 – 30 years (depending on whether you ascribe to the idea that the book of Acts was written in the early 60's or in the 80's) – *martus* did become associated with death and martyrdom.[13] Already in the book of Acts, for example, we are told about Stephen who becomes the first martyr. Others soon meet the same fate – Peter, Paul, and countless others in the early church. Christian faith and being a "witness" to Jesus Christ, in other words, became closely associated with martyrdom in the early years of the church. The bodies of the early Christians were, in a very literal way, given as a living sacrifice and testimony to God. Martyrdom became but one species of a larger narrative genre that comprehends the death of believers at the hands of hostile authorities within a wide range of other faithful practices that becomes a bodily witness to God's drama of salvation in the world (Fowl, 2011: 44).

Indeed, "witness" understood in this light, that is following Jesus Christ's example of self-sacrificial love for the other is closely related to the notion of *kenosis* found in the New Testament. Kenosis describes the understanding of divine self-emptying. It is based on the understanding that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Triune God, limited himself in becoming a person in order to live a human life. One could argue, as Hans von Balthasar did, that the idea of kenotic self-surrender is an all-pervasive characteristic of divine love itself, including within the perichoretic and reciprocal interrelations in the Trinity itself (Coakley, 2001: 199). Thus, Donald Dawe, in his *The Form of a Servant: A Historical Analysis of the Kenotic*

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politics of Jesus : vicit Agnus noster, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans.

[13] We can already see the connection between martus and death in several instances in the book of Revelation (e.g., Rev. 1:5, 2:13, 6:9, 12:11, 17:6). Scholars suggest that the book of Revelation was written in the 90's CE. There is ongoing debate as to when the book of Acts was written. Some argue that it was written in the 80's, whereas others argue that it was written in the early 60's. Either way, we can see how the meaning of martus began to shift from simply "testifying" to an understanding that intimately connected testifying with death and martyrdom.

Motif, concludes that "[t]he divine kenosis is the key to the whole drama of human salvation" (Dawe, 1963: 17). Furthermore, the context of such a motif (e.g., Phil. 2:6-8 and 2 Cor. 8:9) emerged as a practical and ethical appeal. "The moral appeal of God's free self-giving is the motivation for the life of self-giving love for the Christian. God's free self-giving, his kenosis, describes the pattern of life for the Christian" (Dawe, 1963:17).

Thus, the power Jesus promises through the arrival of the Holy Spirit points to a vastly different understanding of power than that which emerged in the Christian church after Constantine. Whereas power in the post-Constantinian church has largely embraced the way empire defined power, a top-down, hierarchically based form of power and authority that seeks to affect the way society is ruled, which has meant forms of change brought about through force, domination, conquest, and control, the power that Jesus promises is one that allows those who receive it to act in a way that mimics the ways of Jesus and the desire of God. It is a promise of receiving *dunamis* that invites followers of Jesus to challenge injustice and violence, to heal, and to participate in mighty works in a way that is based on love, invitation, servanthood, and care for the other. The form of power that Jesus promises is one that allows those who receive it from the Holy Spirit to live in ways that imitate the life and kenotic example of Jesus, even if, like their teacher, it also leads to one's own death.[14] The power of the Holy Spirit promised in Acts 1:8, in other words, is the power to live a life of self-denying love – an *agape*, *kenotic* love, an example of which was exemplified in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

5. Implications of being a witness

If we embrace and seek to embody this alternative form of power that Jesus promises when the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples, it will change the way we live, the way in which we understand God's mission, and cause us to re-imagine the way in which we embody our ecclesial and missiological practices.

There are many implications that we could (and perhaps should) focus on. In this paper we will only look at three.

1) This first implication that arises from a paradigm of witness, which we already touched on earlier, is an enacted practice based on a different understanding of power – a power based on vulnerability and incarnation, which, at first glance, seems foolish. Our ability to "witness" to Jesus Christ means that we will not base or mimic forms of power that dominate, oppress, conquer, or force – forms of

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[14] The World Council of Church's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) describes this as receiving the inspiration from the Holy Spirit "to a self-emptying and cross-bearing life-style" as we bear witness "to the love of God in word and deed." See KEUM, R. D. J. 2013. Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes.

power that are violent in their very nature – even if it may lead to "Christianizing" those who are conquered. These characteristics are unfortunately all-too-common in ecclesiologies and missiologies that operate from a Christendom paradigm as this paradigm has embraced a post-Constantinian understanding of power and have often structured themselves accordingly.[15]

Interestingly, the World Council of Church's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), in its "New Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism" recognizes the need to shift our missional understanding as it suggests a shift from "mission to the margins" to "mission from the margins" (Keum, 2013: 14-17). It notes how mission has often been an activity that has gone from the centre to the periphery, from the privileged to the marginalized of society (Keum, 2013: 5). However, "[m]ission expressed in this way has too often been complicit with oppressive and life-denying systems. It has generally aligned with the privileges of the centre and largely failed to challenge economic, social, cultural, and political systems which have marginalized some peoples. Mission from the centre is motivated by an attitude of paternalism and a superiority complex" (Keum, 2013: 16).

Thus, rather than a Constantinian or Christendom based paradigm, a paradigm of witness operates from a confessional foundation – a foundation that cannot be forced.

Such a confessional foundation was so clear in the life of the early church that a theology of two baptisms emerged: the first by water, and the second by blood. The early church recognized that the act of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord – a politically loaded confession – could very well lead to their death. And yet, it was precisely this act of confession, even in the face of death, that demonstrated a different allegiance and a different understanding of power. Joerg Rieger, in looking at Philippians 2, notes that the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus provides a different sort of power which Jesus embodies: "a power that is in diametrical opposition to the power of the emperor" (Rieger, 2007: 43). And it was this diametrically alternative form of power that led to Jesus' own death as well as the death of many confessors in the early church.

And yet, it is in this way that martyrdom was (and is) missiological. Tripp York, in referring to Maximilian's example, notes that

> [t]hough the empire killed [Maximilian] for his refusal to worship their gods, his act, as any act of martyrdom, was not against the empire – as if Christian witness

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[15] J. Kameron Carter, for example, introduces what he describes as the color of Constantinianism in how, with the advent of modernity, Christianity became a vehicle for white, European conquest because of this form of oppressive understanding of power and how it became severed from "the other" (i.e., Christianity's Jewish roots) who was foreign to European Christendom. "Remade into cultural and political property and converted into an ideological instrument to aid and abet colonial conquest, Christianity became a vehicle for the religious articulation of whiteness, though increasingly masked to the point of near invisibility" (Carter, 2008: 23).

is merely reactionary or defined by what it is against. Rather, his martyrdom and early Christian martyrdom in general was *for* the empire. Any act of witness is always a testimony to the good news that is the resurrected Christ, which gives those watching the ability to see the world as it really is: redeemed (York, 2011: 23-24).

One's confessional stance causes him or her to be a witness of an alternative body politic, which puts into practice different ways of being that seeks to live rightly with one another, recognizing that this alternative way of being may lead to the same consequence as the one who inaugurated it.[16]

2) The second implication, which logically follows from the first, is that ecclesial and missiological practices that have as their foundation this alternative form of power – the power to be witnesses – means that such practices are guided by the ability and the willingness to die for the other. The life Jesus lived thus provides the ultimate example. Throughout Jesus' life and teachings we can see his ongoing concern for people to live justly and in peace with one another. Put another way, through Jesus we see God's ongoing desire for his creation to live rightly with one another – that is live in just relationships. This tireless concern became embodied in a life and lifestyle whereby the cross became a politically motivated, legally-to-be-expected result of a moral clash with the principalities and powers. Jesus' example demonstrated – witnessed – the embodiment of a different form of power – one based on a self-sacrificial love rather than enacting violence and a willingness to kill.

Again, Tripp York says it well:

> Martyrdom, the ultimate act of *imitatio Christi*, is a far more complex act of the Christian than a simple dying for one's principles (though that is no small feat). …
> [T]he early church understood martyrdom in general, and the body of the martyr in particular, as the arena for the cosmic battle between God and the power of evil, which begins with the public confession and culminates in the Christian's "second baptism." This is a baptism that is not just for the believer, but for the sake of the world. It is a liturgical rite at odds with the formative liturgy of the empire. It is an oath not to Caesar but to what is above Caesar *for* Caesar (York, 2011: 37).

Thus, a paradigm based on being witnesses will be concerned not only to participate in God's great *shalom* project, that is seeking peace and justice so that we may live rightly with one another and with God, but also in the *way* this project is pursued – imitating the ways of Jesus, even unto death. Both – embodying right

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[16] Note, for example, paragraph 89 and 92 in KEUM, R. D. J. 2013. Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes.

relationships or dying towards that pursuit – provide a witness to Jesus and the kingdom he envisioned and inaugurated.

3) The final implication that derives from a paradigm based on being witnesses that we will look at (although there are many more) is the confidence in which we can now live because of the resurrection. Because of the resurrection we no longer need to live in fear in living lives that are based on the example and teaching of Jesus and the allegiance that we pledge to him. The Spirit received at Pentecost, and the power promised upon the Spirit's reception (Acts 1:8) "gives Christians courage to live out their convictions, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom" (Keum, 2013: 14).

Fear of death brings about more death. Yet Jesus demonstrates that death is defeated, ironically, through the willingness to die for the other. Through Jesus' death we have learnt that death no longer has the final word. Thus, even though witnessing to Jesus will cause us to live a life or embody a lifestyle that may result in our own deaths, we can live in confidence knowing that death has been defeated. Put simply, we need not fear death.

6. Conclusion

To embrace a paradigm based on being witnesses to Jesus Christ is to embrace and live according to an alternative understanding of power. The power which the Holy Spirit bestows is that which allows followers of Jesus to live in ways that demonstrate the same kind of self-sacrificial love that Jesus demonstrated through his life *and* death. Unlike the power that empires and states embody, which the church that continues to operate according to a Christendom paradigm has embraced, the power that the Holy Spirit provides is the ability to live and potentially die for the other. In this way we witness to Jesus Christ and the same kind of love that he exemplified.

If we understand "witness" and the power to be such in this way, and if we seek to live a life that is faithful to such an understanding, it cannot but affect our understanding of the church and its mission in the world. Questions pertaining to the way in which we understand the nature of the church, the way in which we structure it, and the mission or missional practices of such a community will be affected dramatically when we seek to embody a form of power that makes us vulnerable to the point of death out of love for the other. Such an interpretation, in other words, provides an alternative ecclesiological and missiological imagination.

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Missionising Youth Identity Crisis
Towards a missional hermeneutic of coping in youth ministry practice

Victor Counted[1]

Abstract

The intention of this paper is to interpret the ontological conditions of youth[2] identity[3] crisis missionally. This is first done by conceptualising identity crisis as a psychological phenomenon using frameworks of authenticity and attachment to explain the impact of early attachment abuse, abandonment depression, attachment-anxiety with God, and self-regulation on the identity formation of the youth. Secondly, the paper introduces a missional hermeneutic that provides an interpretative framework for coping with the crises[4] of identity amongst young people. A missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation, therefore, elaborates on the missional

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[2]   It might be difficult to give a definition of "youth" in this paper because of the on-going debate on who is a youth. Nel (2000: 97) has noted that the concept of youth is comprehensive and inclusive. The idea of youth is often looked at as being age-related and connotes specific age brackets. Sometimes between 18 and 35 years, and sometimes between 18 and 25 and so on. These age categorizations does not really explain who a youth really is, as František Št ch has pointed out in his paper "Who are Youth in Theological Perspective?" Stech described youth as young people, adolescents or young adults whose age varies from early pubescence to late young adulthood. This "youth" perspective suggests a period of transition and formation from childhood to adulthood. Owing to this point, Stech saw youth from a theological perspective as a community in transition and not as a strictly age-related group, but rather a viewpoint, the special way human beings relate to God. Theologically, "we may see youth as inseparable from our whole humanity or from the human condition." In other words youth is an integral part of one's identity that also expresses "'kairos', a very opportune time, distinct from others by its characteristic features (e.g. longing for love and acceptance, searching for meaning, openness, excitement, activity, creativity, hope, pursuing development, expecting the future to come, etc.) but yet inseparable from totality of human being." (Stech 2016, p.263). Youth is therefore looked at in this paper through the lens of formation and human expectation, and as a community in transition awaiting God who reveals Himself within their ontological crisis and experiences.

[3]   Identity is another important concept I want to define in this paper. My interest is not to look at the identity of the youth as it were but to understand the different ontological experiences that form the youth's identity and belong to the youth's humanity in their everyday life. In other words, I am looking at how the attachment abuse, abandonment depression, insecure attachment experience with God, and experiences of self-regulation impact youth identity and in the process is seen as some sort of ontological crisis. These experiences are what I have conceptualised in this paper as identity crisis. I am not referring to their identity in Christ at this point.

[4]   The crises of identity has been conceptualised in this study as the constellation of attachment abuse, abandonment depression, insecure God-attachment anxiety, and experiences of self-regulation as part of the ontology of being a youth living the world.

basis of biblical interpretation as a powerful framework within which to interpret a skewed, conflicted identity. The author herewith proposes a missional opportunity that can activate the missional consciousness of young people in their time of crisis and identity formation. Furthermore, the author insists that this missional methodology can be a very useful strategy for producing therapeutic change in young people and can help youth ministry workers and pastoral caregivers to reframe the crisis of youth identity formation from the perspective of 'missio Dei'.

1. Introduction

Elsewhere (Counted, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2016d) the author has established that staying true to self and resolving a relationship conflict with God due to the effects of attachment abuse, abandonment depression, separation with loved ones, etcetera, are the building blocks of youth identity crisis. These negative and conflicting experiences often give young people problems coming to terms with what their identity should look like in relation to the "mission of God", i.e. *missio Dei*, which is stylishly explained as the story of God's walk with humanity from beginning to end and humanity's response to God's invitation to become part of his mission, even in the time of crisis (cf. Wright, 2006). The experience of negative emotional impulses of insecurity and abandonment or identity crisis in general applies to all of humanity from time immemorial, even with the early church (cf. Bosch, 1991) and it is still true today as we move into the third millennium. But it is even more applicable to contemporary youth born in a time where old paradigms of life are collapsing.

Against that background, this paper will highlight the experiences of identity crisis among young people today and suggest a hermeneutical key for unlocking these experiences missionally. Hence, the author proposes how the story of God's mission to the world can provide a fruitful framework within which to interpret youth identity crisis and provide a missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation. The author will thus pay close attention to the missional interpretation of youth identity crisis as an opportunity for representing the character of God, after the youth is reduced to a 'weak' state of mental experience due to the effects of a compounding internal conflict.

2. Conceptualising Youth Identity Crisis

Bosch (1991) saw how the looming crisis of identity in the early Christian Church was portrayed through emotional outbursts, as the then Gentile Christians struggled

with their identity when the faith of the Church was tested. According to Bosch, they were asking relational and emotional questions such as, "'Who are we really?', 'How do we relate to the Jewish past...?', 'Is Christianity a new religion or a continuation of the faith of the Old Testament?', 'How do we relate to the earthly Jesus, who is gradually and irrevocably receding into the past?'" (1991, 85). These and more were questions related to the crises of identity confronting the early Gentile Christians at that time. These questions spotlight the kind of emotion-laden crises the early Gentile Christians were facing, as the Church was undergoing an "almost complete transformation" (Bosch 1991, 85). The identity crisis in the early Christian Church, according to Bosch, was fueled by the "increasingly hostile attitude toward the church displayed by Pharisaism" (1991, 85).

In a similar study on *Emotions in the Christian Tradition*, Roberts (2014) argues that the early Christians' experience "express a character that is attuned to the way things are [today]: to our nature as creatures, to God's nature as God, [and] to the relations we bear to the goods and evils of life" (Roberts 2014, 34). Due to our nature as creatures, we are left within the confines and crisis of our "world" to discover ourselves and experience God for ourselves in relation to what our identity should look like. Therefore, it is on this basis that the author gives a definition to the phenomenon of identity crisis, in particular the subcultures of 'self and God images' as the constellation of the human identity and our nature as creatures - necessary to discover the core of our existence as we stay true to self and maintain a positive relationship with the divine (to read more see Counted 2016a, 2016b). Identity crisis is therefore a time of testing and a "period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies and one that is, to a large extent, still amorphous and opaque" (Bosch 1991, 366). This is also a point where "danger and opportunity intersect", says Bosch (1991, 366). The author proposes that this 'danger' can be linked to a polluted attachment contagion, resulting from lack of secure attachment relationships with caregivers/attachment figures, which often lead to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, fearful-avoidance, low self-esteem and self-deception in social relationships with self, close others, and even with the divine (cf. Bowlby 1989; Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2010; Davis, 2010; Counted, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d).

Bowlby (1982) viewed the attachment system as one of the motivational bases of human behaviour, which provides an explanatory framework for understanding social relationship conflicts in relation to our identity. The attachment phenomenon explains how social relationships are determined by the nature of the internal working models of an attachment system. Internal working models are the mental representations of ourselves in relation to our identity and close others, which develop through the effects of a particular set of activating triggers, e.g. our mental

states, environmental demands, or emotional needs, during a parent-child bonding experience. This sense of attachment resonates with each and every single one of us, and as a result, when we are deprived of quality attachment by a relational partner or experience some kind of insecure attachment in an unhealthy relationship, we seek out ways to compensate for such relationship elsewhere or decide, out of own volition to explore a new relationship in a more 'stronger' and 'wiser' relational partner otherwise known as a substitute attachment figure (SAF). The role of the SAF can be that of an "affect regulation tool" (cf. Kirkpatrick, 1998: 961-973) and/or as a "security-enhancing figure" (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004: 174). Relationships with relational partners, SAFs, or attachment figures, e.g. parent, friends, a deity, etcetera, are maintained due to the attachment functions they afford in relation to a general 'set-goal'. For example, from being a target for our proximity-seeking behaviours, to acting as a safe haven providing security, to being a response to loss or separation (cf. Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012), and serving as a source of emotional strength and support in times of difficulty.

An unhealthy attachment experience can constitute a huge crisis of identity for a youth, especially when they experience any form of insecure attachment such as early abandonment, attachment abuse, unavailability of an attachment figure (cf. Ainsworth, 1978), and even more so when coupled with other social and environmental self-encounters (cf. Masterson, 1976). These difficult experiences do in fact influence the identity crisis of young people as they trigger their insecure attachment tendencies (like attachment-anxiety, attachment-avoidance, and disorganised attachment) toward potential future relationships. An insecure attachment experience with a divine personality (especially with God) who sometimes may be perceived as unavailable or insensitive can expose the youth to a state of crisis, which is a state where the youth feels abandoned and struggling with an undesirable, imaginary 'bad place'. Such a state of crisis can even lead to a split personality (Barach, 1991; Sadock & Sadock, 2007), where we see the youth trying to avoid their present self-realities and stay true to self by living in the 'future', creating images of a positive, promissory, hyphenated, and religious self (Counted, 2016a, 2016b). Authenticity scholars like Wood *et al*. (2008) and Counted (2016b) see this experience as the consistency or congruity between one's primary experience, symbolized awareness, and outward behaviours. These self-tendencies are some of the ways young people externalise their crisis of identity in relation to how they experience an attachment figure (AF), stay true to themselves, and experience their social environment (cf. Barry, Nelson, Davarya & Urry, 2010). Hence, a negative attachment contagion is not only self-destructive but also represents the threshold of an identity crisis.

Furthermore, Masterson (1976, 1981, 1985) and Moltmann (1974) support this conceptualisation of identity crisis, referring to it as a time of a depleting nar-

cissism, which plumbs the youth into an 'ugly' self-discovery and a search for authenticity (Bialystok, 2009; Counted, 2016b), a journey with the potential of self-creation/split-personality to satiate the attachment needs with the divine or another attachment figure. Hence, as the youth struggles with the difficult experiences of attachment and abandonment both in the past and present, they experience some kind of destructive 'acting out' and 'acting in' while relating with the social environment and attachment figures. According to Dykstra (1997), such internal conflict is externalized by displays of tensions discharged in the social environment as a result of attachment separation caused by divorce, sudden death, or separation from loved ones, abandonment depression, attachment abuse like unavailability and inaccessibility of an AF, et cetera.

Such acting out or acting in often leads to a self-discovery crisis, which is a regulatory experience employed by the youth to remain true to their self and maintain a positive attachment experience with close others. Self-regulation or splitting often highlights the experience of an identity crisis and acts as a way of dealing reasonably with an internal difficulty that involves a "radical alternation between two extreme or caricatured selves, with neither self fully determining one's identity" (Dykstra 1997: 30). A youth applying self-regulation while dealing with their identity crisis can be both loving and idealizing, and at the same time, hating and denigrating, according to Eagle (1987).

However, when young people apply the self-regulatory defense to counter their identity crisis they often go through life 'splintering' their self-realities and at the same time "relating to people as parts – either positive or negative – rather than whole entities" (Pruyser 1975: 36). According to Pruyser, when young people experience this type of crisis, they will be unable to maintain a consistent, healthy commitment in their social relationships with close others, and even with God. Moreover, due to their poor frustration tolerance, they will have difficulty maintaining a positive image of their attachment figures and even of themselves, particularly when their AFs are not physically and emotionally present for them. Such self-conditioning automatically makes the attempt to create a single unified self-concept that a youth recognizes as himself or herself in both good and bad moments infertile. Pruyser further reasons that such radicalization of the self makes the youth prone to a crisis of identity - "a 'good' self that engages in immature, clinging, passive, unassertive behaviours and a 'bad' self that wants to grow, assert itself, be active, and independent" (Pruyser 1975: 40). Ultimately, the bad-self continues in an unending struggle of wandering and self-discovery, developmentally disjoined, and challenged by hyper-selectivity while building and destroying relationships with close others and staying true to self (Pruyser 1975). Dykstra (1997) believes that such self-creation potential of the 'bad self', although not in all cases, eventually hardens the youth into having a consistent lack of

tolerance for ambivalence, makes the youth anxious of social relationships, and creates a self-ambiguity within the confines of interpersonal relationships and spirituality, thus constituting the identity crisis. This will be discussed later as the crisis of identity formation, since it represents a significant time of testing and a period of transition the youth undergoes that ontologically belongs to their humanity as they discover and define their identity in the present life.

3. Introducing A Missional Hermeneutic

The propositions of Wright (2006) and Hunsberger (2011) for a 'missional hermeneutic' took a turn on missiologists, as they saw the bible as a tool that not only provides the basis for mission but also elaborates on the missionary nature of the religious life. Wright (2006) and Hunsberger (2011) argue that the story of God's mission to the world ought to be the lens through which the believer should read the bible as it provides a fruitful hermeneutical framework for understanding our nature as humans. Consequently, in an attempt to define the nature of the missional hermeneutic of the bible, Hunsberger (2011) first presents the bible as the product of God's mission for dealing with the human experience. This missional perspective converges a swelling tide of imagination, arising from the emphasis of the story of *missio Dei,* which can be surmised within the context of 'Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus the Messiah, Church, and New Creation' (Russell 2014: ¶3). The missional story starts and ends with the revelational portrait of what the future new creation in God should look like in relation to God's character. More in-depthly, a missional hermeneutic also includes 'the multiplicity of perspectives and contexts from which and within which people read the biblical texts' (Wright 2006: 39) and recognises that the 'writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God' (Ibid: 48). Drawing from this background, the primary tenet of a missional hermeneutic is that it sees the bible as a missional phenomenon.

Wright provides us with a summary of what a missional hermeneutic really is:

> A missional hermeneutic, then, is not content simply to call for obedience to the Great *Commission* (though it will assuredly include that as a matter of nonnegotiable importance), nor even to reflect on the missional implications of the Great *Commandment*. For behind both it will find the Great *Communication*—the revelation of the identity of God, of God's action in the world and God's saving purpose for all creation. And for the fullness of this communication we need the whole Bible in all its parts and genres, for God has given us no less" (2006: 60-61).

The 'Great Communication' of God's mission to the world starts with the creation story: God created the heavens and the earth. Human beings were wittingly crafted

in the image of God as the pinnacle of His artistry, functioning in His image over the rest of God's creation. From the earliest beginnings, "humanity was created for missional purposes to represent God before creation by reflecting God's character, with one another and with the world" (Russell 2014: ¶4). The opportunity that lies in this missional intention of God is discussed in this paper as a missional hermeneutic of coping.

And like the abandonment and attachment history of most crises of youth identity, the Great Communication of the missional intention of God was flawed by a 'Fall' - an error of the past, which has been corrected by the emergence of Jesus the Messiah through the nation of Israel to rebuild the mission of God through the Church to the world. As a missional response to youth identity crisis, a missional hermeneutic sees the crisis of youth identity, firstly, as a missional phenomenon, and secondly, as a unique opportunity that not only provides the basis for embodying the missio Dei in our everyday lives, but also elaborates on the nature of the missionary life as a story of God's walk with the youth from beginning to end rather than just about their salvation. This perspective calls young people back to God's mission as a missional community that embodies God's image before the world as they interpret the crisis associated with their identity in order to hear God's living voice, giving them the answers to life's complex questions.

4. Towards A Missional Hermeneutic of Coping

Drawing from Hunsberger's (2011) proposition, a 'missional hermeneutic of coping' would take God's people back to the task for failing to live in God's character, as the people of God. This perspective announces the confronting effect of God's love over the nature of identity crisis to enable the afflicted assume a new promissory self emerging out of God's identity (cf. Counted 2016b). It is against this backdrop of God's intention that Hunsberger (2011) argues for a missional hermeneutic to remind us of the mission of God to the world, one borne out of perfection to 'purify' us within the ontological confines of our being and existence. Hunsberger further argues that this missional opportunity starts by coming to grips with the Great Communication of the bible in relation to our ontological and pathological placements (identity crisis). A missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation, therefore, seeks to draw us closer to the mission of God as we understand our crisis of identity as part of the Great Communication of the scriptural story of God's redemption. This missional hermeneutic also beckons on the youth and youth ministry workers and pastoral caregivers to interpret the crises of youth identity in light of God's perspective.

The proposed missional perspective tends to have a gravitational pull towards what, according to this author, is the most fundamental aspect of what makes our

crisis of identity missional and an opportunity for mission. With caution, none of these hermeneutical perspectives are sufficient on their own to provide a robust *missio*-logical interpretation of youth identity crisis.

5. Personalising the missional direction of God's story

Hunsberger starts with an emphasis: "The framework for biblical interpretation is the story it tells of the mission of God and the formation of a community sent to participate in it" (2011: 310). Wright (2006) in his book "The Mission of God" explained this more clearly, as he offers an elaborate rationale for interpreting the scripture from the perspective of missio Dei, in which the reader finds themselves as part of the biblical story. This is a shift from what the bible means *to* the reader to what the bible is *for* the reader. It is an understanding that includes the "missional basis of the bible" and excludes the "biblical basis for mission" (Wright 2006: 103, 106). Therefore, in terms of helping young people in their crisis of identity, the first step to a missional hermeneutic of coping would be to see young people as a community *sent* to participate in the missio Dei because, indeed, they are part of the story of God's mission. This first step starts with the process of inclusion, an understanding that includes the missional basis of young people in a way that helps them find themselves in the revelational portrait of God's Great Communication. This inclusiveness allows the youth ministry worker or pastoral caregiver to draw the attention of the youth to the inclusive character and intention of God, one that enables the youth to see themselves as part of a global and intergalactic enterprise.

Wright adds, "The God the Bible renders to us, the people whose identity and mission the Bible invites us to share, and the story the Bible tells about this God and this people and indeed about the whole world and its future" (2006: 108-109) are the basis for understanding the plot of the story of God's mission. In other words, when youths see themselves as part of the narration of the purposeful story of God's mission for the world, it gives tangible meaning to their crises of identity. A missional hermeneutic of coping, therefore, starts with this first task of inclusion as the youth ministry worker or pastoral caregiver loosens the meanings of the crises facing the youth with the aim of re-reading the meanings as a whole story of God creating and redeeming the world. This first step answers the 'why' and 'where' questions in Louw's account on the 'Meaning of Suffering'. According to Louw, this becomes the quest for understanding God's identity as it relates to youth identity. When young people understand the missional direction of the story of God's mission, such revelation can reveal a deep longing to locate God in their attachment and abandonment history in terms of providence, support, and protection (cf. Louw 2000: 16). In asking "Where is God in my experience and what is His will?" the youth may encounter the presence of God by envisioning their difficult

attachment and self-experiences in light of God's story. This perspective frames a sense of coping upon which a hermeneutic is undertaken as young people explore their experiences and all that lies behind it in relation to God and his mission to the world. Such missional posture allows the youth to rest on the promise of the ultimate story of God to lead them back to the image of God as new creations in Christ.

Over all, having a missional direction of the story of God's mission allows the youth to forge meaning in their helpless and difficult experiences; as a faith community being sent to fulfil the missio Dei (Goheen, 2008). Most importantly, this first step would also require an understanding of the meaning of missio Dei in a more personal and transformative way. This revelational understanding of the mission of God transcends the traditional understanding of the phrase in terms of *sending*, "in reference both to the mutual sending among the persons of the Trinity and to God's sending of Israel and the church", and thus the youth (Hunsberger 2011: 312).

By encouraging the suffering youth to personalise the missional direction of God's story for their lives, they are empowered to participate in the missio Dei as they practice a self-hermeneutic process that becomes, in itself, an embodiment of the good news they are called to proclaim (cf. Brownson 2002). This hermeneutical process may not entirely erase their crises of identity but would re-frame it (cf. Capps, 1990), so that the quality and character of the youth-in-mission can become a reflection of God's intention.

A direction to the story of God's mission would produce in the youth a kind of 'dislocation' (see Brownson 2002: 313), which accompanies the experience of being 'called' and 'sent' and would generate in our young people a critical principle by which their coping becomes evidently self-correcting and redemptive.

6. The missional purpose of the crises of youth identity formation

The second aspect of a missional hermeneutic looks at the purpose of biblical writings as it "pertains to the character of the biblical literature itself" (Hunsberger 2011: 313). Hence, if the first step to a missional hermeneutic has to do with recognising scriptural narratives as essential core of the missio Dei, then the second missional hermeneutic should deal with the purpose and aim of those narratives, thus emphasizing its "authority by virtue of their formative effect" (Ibid: 313). The emphasis at the second step to a missional hermeneutic of coping is not to focus on what the crisis mean to the youth per se but how God is present within the crises and how the difficult attachment and self experiences equip the youth for mission. Thus this second model emphasizes the need to focus on God who reveals Himself within a crisis. This model draws our attention to the purpose of the difficult experience of youth identity crisis which is to know God and grow in the knowledge of

God as a better witness in the face of adversity and the crisis of identity formation. By knowing God and witnessing to his mission to the world through their suffering and identity formation, the youth is invited into the process of discipleship as Christ's followers on a journey through their earthly ministry (cf. Guder, 2007; Hunsberger, 2011). While preparing and encouraging the youth to see their suffering in light of the missional purpose of God (e.g. as it relates to the suffering of Christ on the cross), they are also transformed as people of character, embodying the very image of God.

Ultimately, the purpose of youth identity crisis as it relates to the mission of God is to contribute to the continuing formation of the missional identity (and consciousness) of the youth. This identity formation happens as the powerful story of God's grace is told within the context of a missional community in transition; in a way that enables young people to see themselves as part of the big story of creation and 'sent' to the world to represent the missio Dei (Guder, 2004). This revelational portrait of missio Dei makes it possible to use the experiences of identity crisis to equip young people for missional purposes (Goheen 2008).

As the author proposes this missional hermeneutic for scores of theologians and youth ministry workers and pastoral caregivers, a continuing work is required in order to elaborate on the ways in which youth identity crisis can be understood from the perspective of divine purpose - as it transforms and prepares the youth-in-mission as a witness (Hunsberger, 2011; Louw, 2000; 2008).

7. The missio-cultural locatedness of youth identity crisis

Two aspects of the 'missional hermeneutic' framework (*missional engagement with cultures* and *missional locatedness of the readers*) have been merged into one in this third missional hermeneutic of coping procedure because of their emphases on community, culture, and location. Hunsberger (2011: 314) is of the opinion that the "approach required for a faithful reading of the Bible is from the missional location of the Christian community". This is a movement away from the purpose of the scripture to looking more intently at "the character[s] of a missional hermeneutic from the other side of the coin – from the position of the community being thus formed" (Hunsberger 2011: 314). Barram (2007) understood a missional hermeneutic as more than a linguistic interpretive structure of the missio Dei from the scripture. As for Barram, a missional hermeneutic is an approach to scriptural text rooted in the conviction of God's mission in and for the world. This entails reading the scripture as a community called by God for his purposes here on earth, as was the Christian community in the New Testament who were caught up in the mission of God as they read the scripture from their social and cultural location (Barram, 2006; 2007).

In the same vein, the author argues that a robust missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation in youth ministry practice should move away from its general purpose to look more fruitfully at the practical and cultural issues within the youth community that might trigger a crisis of identity. This third process pays attention to the history of abandonment and difficult attachment experiences that might have led to the crisis of youth identity at the first place. Hence, interpreting cultural and societal proclivities that lead to attachment abandonment and attachment abuses in families can be a step in the right direction for understanding the youth as a community in displacement who within the whole story of God's mission is also part of a faith community.

The most resourceful way of understanding the cultural and missional placements of young people undergoing a crisis of identity would be to aim at faithfully emphasizing the cultural and missio Dei roles within the missional purpose of God. A missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation should therefore consciously and persistently approach the issues of identity crisis within the youth community by highlighting the cultural engagements of the story of God's mission and the shared experiences of young people to a range of critical, located questions. Questions that point to the church's foremost missional purpose of empowering and liberating those that are down and broken within a contextual community. Knoetze (2015) sees faith communities as the solution to the deceptive games played by organisations, families, and youth in a distrusting community. Knoetze believes that through participating in the missio Dei, "the church will have to be open to, as well as reach out to, people who are hiding behind masks and are expressing fear and hate" (2015: 8). If this is done, Nel (2000) reasons that the church can help the family and youth as a hermeneutic and an agogic community to find their identity in a relationship with the Trinitarian God. Knoetze further articulates the role of the church in achieving this hermeneutical step succinctly:

The faith community must position herself in such a way that she knows and is known intimately by the African families and youth. As part of the missio Dei, the church will have to make an effort to listen, understand and want what is best for the families and youth in Africa, accepting differences and respecting uniqueness in a way of confirming their humaneness. In this, the church is both a hermeneutic and an agogic 'lebensraum' (Nel 2000:18–25). Communication and relationships are built on trust and commitment. Where these two features are experienced, families and youth will share and be intimate. Where there is a lack of trust and commitment, instead of intimacy in relations and family, the church will experience a distance in its relation to the community.

It is this author's conviction as well that faith communities have a major role to play here, as Nel and Knoetze have pointed out. The emphasis, however, is to un-

derstand the way in which issues of youth identity crisis model engagement with the culture of communities and families involved. The church can also start by asking critical questions such as, 'How does our understanding of community and family affect the way we relate with our loved ones?', 'How has the circle of parental abuse and apathy become a norm in our communities and affected the way young people relate to God, self, and their social others?', and 'How can the church build and encourage better family models that can encourage and strengthen secure attachment relationships between parents and their children?' These questions and many more could help the church understand the missio-logical issues related to the cultural locatedness of the youth-in-crisis and engagements of communities with the youth culture, as faith communities set the path straight for reconciliation and healing.

8. The prophetic-missional voice of the youth in crisis

The 'prophetic pathos' (Mills 2007: 110-136) of the scripture is often seen "challenging conventional norms" (Counted 2015c: 204) as it portrays the prophetic persona as a liminal being existing on the margins of society by virtue of being the voice that "performs social destruction and thus embodies the community's own existence on the borders between life and death" (Holt & Sharp 2015: 75). The prophetic persona plays a huge role in shaping the missional basis of the bible as a prophetic account, with implication for the religious life (cf. Evans 2000; Chung 2012). The prophetic-missional voice, therefore, penetrates into the word-event in terms of how the youth verbally appropriate the meaning of their identity crisis. This aspect of coping has profound consequences in the way youth identity crisis is interpreted in itself.

The term 'prophetic' has been discussed in the past (cf. Capps, 1990; Bosch, 1991) on a state-based level, mostly referring to how the prophetic persona in the bible critiques the contemporary life, as it moves away from the missional direction and purpose of God in a time of crisis. It is proposed here that the term 'prophetic' can also be used on a personal, relational, and pragmatic level to keep the youth in check overtime by testing the actual crises of identity over what is most essential to it: a prophetic-missional voice. This step can help the youth forge meanings that influence the outcome of their lives in a time of crisis (cf. McCullough & Willoughby, 2009), and can strengthen the emotional and social traumas associated with their identity. Furthermore, having a prophetic-missional voice can also mean relating to the crises of youth identity in terms of God-control and God-regulation, i.e. some sort of self-control and self-regulation that is missionally inspired. It has more to do with distancing the youth from the psycho-historical limitations of their milieu in order to shape and stabilize their perceived world order in terms of God's order.

Against this background, the argument is that the crisis associated with youth identity formation results from the lack of vocabulary to interpret and regulate at-

tachment insecurity and existential self-experiences, whereupon, when the youth fails to grasp an achieved understanding of the meaningfulness of their identity crisis, their emotional security is threatened and their sense of identity remains elusive to them. However, as the youth experiences the limits of their own human ability, it is important to encourage them, at this point, to have a prophetic-missional voice that reminds them of God standing with them by having a purpose for them in relation to his missio Dei story. Such a prophetic trigger can disabuse the threats of nothingness and helplessness in the experience of identity crisis, as it relates the hopeless self-experiences of the youth to a world of order that stands in consonance with the mission of God.

Consequently, this missional hermeneutic of coping at this stage takes a missiological approach in order to communicate the prophetic dimension of the missio Dei to the youth in crisis, as they are reminded of God's love and presence in testing times, through his mission for and with them, and indeed, the world. Having a prophetic-missional voice can also mean having a missio-logical perspective that engages in linguistic conventions in order to down-regulate the experience of a compounding internal conflict so as to reflect the character of God in a time of crisis.

As an affect regulating means for young people, a prophetic-missional voice facilitates God's control, God-monitoring, God-regulation, missional well-being, and authentic imago Dei behaviours by serving as a system that uses information about the present crisis of youth identity to change that crisis. For this reason, a prophetic-missional voice emerge when the youth is encouraged to exert control over their own responses in a time of identity crisis so as to maintain a spiritual well-being, live up to missional standard, and override a difficult attachment condition while in pursuit of a desired future (cf. Baumeister & Vohs 2004; Carver & Scheier 1998). Barkley equally saw this process as "any response, or chain of responses, by the [youth] that serves to alter the probability of the [youth's] subsequent response to a [difficult] event and, in doing so, functions to alter the probability of a later consequence related to that event" (1997: 68). As for Louw (2000), this can mean applying the transcendent quality of God to our daily lives using metaphorical theology that views God as "the inspirited body of the entire universe, the animating, living Spirit that produces, guides, and saves all that is" (McFague 1993: 20). Counted (2015b) also sees this process as an indication of a relationship experience with God using 'God concepts' that suggest a transcendent connection of some kind. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2008) on the other hand describe this process as the application of the 'God attachment language' that allows the individual to see the divine as a strong and enduring attachment figure in a time of crisis.

A prophetic-missional voice that responds to the crisis of youth identity caused by attachment abuse, abandonment depression, attachment separation, depleting

narcissism, self-discovery, and etcetera using prophetic filters would bring about a change of attitude that have the character of promise amid an internal conflict. Therefore, on this basis it is argued that having a prophetic-missional voice and applying the three proposed models of a missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation, i.e. seeing the suffering youth through the missional lens of God's story, explaining the missional purpose of the crises of youth identity, and addressing the missio-cultural locatedness of youth identity crisis, can redeem and transform the youth as the people of God; on a mission to the world by example of their own lives. This hermeneutical key would help the youth-in-mission to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit as they reinvent and reinvest themselves in the character of God as a community in transition hoping for an emerging future through God's mission.

9. Conclusion

This article aimed to highlight the experiences of youth identity crisis and to provide a missional hermeneutic for youth coping with the crisis of identity formation. The introduction of a missional framework as coping mechanism would enable youth ministry workers, or pastoral caregivers in general, to fruitfully provide therapeutic change for youths suffering a crisis as a direct effect of an attachment abuse, early abandonment, insecure attachment relationship with God, or self-discovery experience. The proposed hermeneutical methodology offers four guidelines for helping young people in youth ministry practice. Firstly, helping the youth to see their suffering in light of the whole story of God's mission to the world, allowing them to see themselves as part of God's missional community. Secondly, it is argued that a missional hermeneutic of coping would help the youth forge meaning in their experience as they are led to uncover the missional purpose of their identity crisis for themselves. Thirdly, a missional hermeneutic for coping with the crisis of identity formation provides sufficient explanation for understanding, on a deeper level, the cultural and community factors engendering the crisis of identity among young people within a familiar context. This approach helps the youth ministry worker and pastoral caregiver to address issues related to attachment abuse and abandonment depression from its community and cultural roots. Finally, it is proposed that having a prophetic-missional voice could be helpful in the process of coping as youths relate to their crises of identity using prophetic languages (in form of vocabularies or metaphors or God concepts) that strengthen and reassure them of their role as a missional community, living the missionary life in the world.

In submission, it is hoped that the missional hermeneutic introduced in this paper will help strengthen the work of youth ministry practitioners and pastoral caregivers, as they apply this methodology in their practice in order to help the

youth-in-crisis to alter the meaning of their identity crisis with the knowledge of the missio Dei. The author hopes that this missional shift would enable the youth to find themselves as part of the missional story, on the basis that the structure of their thought and the structure of their reality mirror each other, thus, seeing their crisis of identity as a missional opportunity to live out the character of God in an inspiring way.

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Book Reviews

The distinctive identity of the church: A constructive study of the post-Christendom theologies of Lesslie Newbigin and John Howard Yoder
Nikolajsen JB 2015

Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick. x + 219 pages. ISBN 978-1-4982-0207-7. No price quoted

The identity of the church is a contested issue in the contemporary period when many people are deserting the institution in favour of more intimate, mystical experiences which enhance their sense of well-being, however temporary. The traditional church no longer holds its revered place in society or in local communities. Except for the places in it is called to 'hold the faith' as in contexts of persecution, the church has virtually become part of the furniture of a conservative society. To live in a post-Christendom era means that we live in an altered relationship with the state and with communities and individuals. These need redefinition and that is the main purpose of this book.

Historically the church has moved from a marginal position in society to a central place. It has returned, in a sense, to the pagan (read secular) society from which it emerged. While the institution decreases in relevance, personal religiosity increases exponentially. Post-Christendom society seems to imply a pluralistic multireligious society. Nikolajsen seeks to analyse the writings of Lesslie Newbigin and John Howard Yoder as examples of different kinds of community.

Newbigin's work represents the missional church tradition derived from the ecumenical movement while Yoder represents the free church tradition based in the Anabaptist movement. These are not mutually exclusive and have a number of commonalities. Both view the church in a distinctive way which can provide a sound basis for a post-Christendom ecclesial identity.

The methodology adopted in this study lies in the field of systematic theology and aims to analyse distinctive themes which exemplify the two theologians' thinking on the identity of the church through a hermeneutical-analytic reading. These are interpreted through context, intertext, authenticity, consistency, coherence and pragmatism. All this is examined according to the author's synthetic- constructive method which allows for comparative readings.

Chapter one describes the basic structure of the research. Chapter two focusses on the distinctiveness of the church particularly in a post-Christendom society with reference to Newbigin's theology. Chapter four adopts the same approach to Yoder's

theology. The author attempts a constructive understanding of the role of the church in this time of ecclesiastical marginalisation, while chapter five summarises the results of the analyses. He points to Newbigin's early writings in which he develops a missional ecclesiology based on his critique of Christendom while his later writings reflect on the mission of the church in a Western post-Christendom society, at the heart of which stands the doctrine of election. For Yoder, the church is the mission. He defines various marks of the church seemingly unaware that John Calvin had implied, and John Knox had stated explicitly the role of discipline as a mark of the church in the sixteenth century. The other three are 'the moral nonconformity of Christians', the obligation to preach the gospel and suffering as an integral part of the life of the church. The author concludes that Newbigin's view of the church is that of a functional minority while Yoder argues for the distinctiveness of the church as a separate institution within the society in which it lives.

Several challenges for a post-Christendom church are suggested; the need to accept existence in a pluralistic society; social ethics; epistemology. What is required is a radically new constructive approach to theological discourse. This is the future of the church in pluralistic Western societies. What I found difficult to understand is the author's negative preoccupation with sectarianism. This is an interesting book well worth studying.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria. PRETORIA, 0002

Transformative religious experience: A phenomenological understanding of experience significant relief as the result of their religious conversion
Iyadurai J 2015

Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick. xii + 265 pages. ISBN 978-1-62030-746-3. No price quoted

Simply put, this book is about conversion despite its elaborate title Transformative religious experience. It aims to understand the dynamic which enables the Holy Spirit to radically alter lives despite formidable obstacles before and after the experience which in almost all of the cases examined here are sudden immediate affairs. Conversion is a very risky business in India which is the context of the study. The narratives included here offer some insight into this remarkable process through psychological analysis leading to the discovery that the encounter between the divine and the human involves a cognitive restructuring where a new set of beliefs, values and practices re-

places previously held faith or no faith practices. This is a transdisciplinary research model which draws on psychology, sociology, anthropology and theology to produce a phenomenological aspects of conversionperspective in which integrates religious practices with psychosocial factors to give a central place to religious experience. Throughout, the argument is substantiated with case studies.

Chapter one examines the experience of visions that leads to conversion with substantiation from oral evidence. The role of dreams is the subject of chapter two. These precipitated life changing effects. Chapter three explains incidents where people became aware of God communicating with them as the result of scripture reflection on the Bible or preaching. The response comes from within. Stories of converts who have struggled towards conversion are presented in chapter four as the result of miracles where they have tested the authenticity of the religious option before accepting it. Chapter five focusses on conversion experiences associated with prayer. This is followed by a chapter on mild experiences including an awareness of sin, personalising the message of the gospel and feeling the experience of God. The mystical turning point of conversion, the divine-human encounter, is analysed in chapter seven. It is the changeover of faith. The features of this experience are revelatory, conversational, noetic, transient, passive and intimate. Chapter eight highlights of conversion and its transforming events are spiritual, psychological, behavioural, physical social and economic. Conversion for many is not a peaceful or pleasant experience for those who experience conversion and its consequent hostilities and persecution from among family and friends. The Step model of transformative religious experience is delineated in chapter 10. This is a flexible model that can accommodate the complex aspects of conversion which is both a process and an event. The aim of the book is to introduce readers to conversion in the Indian context through the voices of those involved where the divine-human encounter has led to an intimate personal relationship with Jesus. Often this has involved a costly personal sacrifice of friends and even family.

Despite the potential for negative fallout post conversion, no evidence is made available of struggle during the actual process of conversion although the step model has two stages – disenchantment and crunch which are critical. From the evidence presented from examples of those who have had negative or struggle experiences directly related post the conversion experience we can only conclude that the process itself was problem free. This leaves on with the feeling of inauthenticity despite the largely oral evidence provided. Nonetheless, it might help some in the midst of the process to gain insight into what is happening to them. Unfortunately, the sceptical may reach other conclusions. But read for yourselves in spite of my reservations,

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria. PRETORIA, 0002

Creation care in Christian mission

Kaoma KJ (ed.) 2015

Oxford: Regnum. xvi + 320 pages. ISBN 978-1-908355-94-2. No price quoted

It is fortunate that this issue was tackled during the 2010 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh because it is one of the most vital and pressing matters in life today, let alone mission. We have been aware of living in the midst of a crisis of epic proportions for over fifty years and for the most part are oblivious to its effects, immediate, short term and long term. This topic is the pressure cooker which is about to blow its lid off and the fallout and its effects, using an African metaphor, will be the proverbial pawpaw hitting the fan. It is difficult to conceptualise how impending chaos can be avoided but there are many attempts at mitigation evident globally on the part of Christian bodies where politics has failed to provide a coherent solution, even since the 1980s when ecological issues (the integrity of creation) were linked to justice and peace.

A significant novel feature of the ecological crisis is the holistic approach which no longer views humanity apart from the environment; they are interdependent. This provides a broader front on which to confront the economic and political forces which appear to be hell-bent on Destruction of all, particularly since this is God's world and we are fortunate in having been created to participate in God's mission in it. This is an ecumenical concern with all major traditions participating singly or in company with others.

Very appropriately, the volume begins with a contribution from that doyen of southern African missiology, Inus Daniel on earthkeeping ministry in Zimbabwe linked to ecumenism and interfaith perspectives. Cederholm's chapter on focusses on eco-spiritual transformation while Santos et al offer an insight into how communities care for their environs. A Norwegian perspective is Våaje's contribution to this section.

Section two opens with Dana Robert analysing historical perspectives on Earth care (note the upper case denoting the holistic approach of human, animal and environmental integration). This is followed by Hart's paper on the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church with its sacramental aspect which is later echoed by Metropolitan Coorilos. This theme is pursued from an evangelical perspective by Bookless, despite their being a divided evangelical witness on this subject. Then Yong offers a Pentecostal perspective with its emphasis on the role of the spirit in environmental care. Faramelli challenges against an oversimplified approach to the topic. Grenfell-Lee concludes the section with an exposition on 'empathy' which is a necessary factor in care for the Earth.

In section three Wright offers a critique of what he describes as a defective theology of creation which evades the biblical witness to creation care. Then Moore suggests a multi-faceted approach with a challenge to be daring in living with the paradox in doing mission in Earth care. Pui-lan advocates a 'winning hearts and minds campaign (WHAM) to raise consciousness from the experience of indigenous peoples globally, while Petersen proposes that science and ecological mission are interdependent. Mvula employs the imago Dei concept to argue for poor peoples' responsibility to care for the Earth. Carriker develops a biblical theology of care based on the salvation narrative and W'Ehusha uses 2Kings17:24-29 to work out a concept of 'priestly mediation through educating people.

This is a valuable contribution to developing awareness among Christian communities who may not have been conscientised regarding Earthcare. It is informative and challenging as well as drawing on relevant global resources. It is to be commended for its clarity of thought and expression despite being multi-authored.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETORIA 0002, SA

The reshaping of mission in Latin America
Alvarez M (ed.) 2015

Oxford: Regnum. xii + 316 pages. ISBN 978-1-908355-90-4. No price quoted

The question that dominates this book is the place of mission in Latin America. That might be taken for granted but appearance are deceptive in this case. For centuries the Latin American nations were the subject of Roman Catholic missions; until in 1987 Luis Bush declared that Latin America was rather than being a mission, it was then a 'mission force'. The mission was followed by an intense period of church planting which led to further missionary endeavour by both traditions, although the missionary outreach of Evangelicals and Pentecostals, which included social action, goes back to the opening up of Panama in 1916. This book serves to engage a process of mutual edification of the differing traditions in Latin America, particularly in trying to understand the discrepancy between numerical growth and human transformation. Hence, it is a narrative of mission from the margins to the margins. Of note, is the significant revival among Mayan peoples which have extended to the Inca and Aztec populations. This has led to a call for Protestant mission to be practised holistically within a context of hope for a better future. The approach adopted her is multi-cultural, including African and Asian voices and those of women children and youth.

As a mission field, Latin America was open game (almost literally) for the Roman Catholic colonisers and their religious counterparts for the next four centuries, with their traditional approach of establishing an institutional visible Roman Catholic church presence, although a translation of the Bible from the sixteenth century was to become a key instrument of evangelisation.   This was as true of the revival sparked by Pietism with its emphasis on a personal experience of faith in practice in contradistinction to formal affirmation of creeds. Individual conversion was essential. Yet even they were incapable of resolving the issues of poverty and injustice, although they were possessed of great endurance and loyalty in the context of a hostile environment. Also in contradistinction to the Roman Catholics, they operated with a weak ecclesiology and an extremely fundamentalist theology which inevitable led to sectarianism. This necessitates a strong focus on leadership development.

George asserts that such traditional stereotypes can be challenged by developing a holistic perspective through the erection of building blocks including liberation, dialogue, integral/holistic mission and ecclesiogenesis. And he adds a further component – compassion (with passion). Inculturation and interculturity in the Latin American context are characterised by contextuality, plurality and ecumenicity in the promotion of a society characterised by solidarity, interdependence and communion – in sum, authentic partnership. However, in all this recognition of the role of the Holy Spirit can operate as an ecumenical corrective and also a source of renewal.

The ecumenical configuration is complicated by the presence of significantly large bodies of Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals, leading to confusion regarding the meaning of 'Ecumenism in the Spirit', leading voices in the search for identity and mission, how the process of mission and unity evolved and diverse forms of Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism. It seems that common ground is found in the unity of the Trinity. And into this complex mix comes the prosperity gospel which dominates much American inspired contemporary religion. The overarching motifs of the Missio Dei and koinonia are crucial elements in the search for identity and partnership along with mission and unity as gifts of the Spirit.

This book is extremely informative and engaging particularly for those with little knowledge of the Latin American context. Yet, this is a necessary addition to our understanding if we are to gain an integrated overview of global mission.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETORIA 0002, SA

Seeing new facets of the diamond: Christianity as a universal faith
Bediako GM, 2014

Oxford: regnum. xv + 378 pages 978-1-908355-59-1. No price quoted

This book constitutes a wonderful tribute to the late African theologian, Kwame Bediako, edited by his wife and several friends. It is also a tribute to the commitment he devoted to the development of African theology and theological education, perhaps most evident in the establishment of the world famous Akrofi-Christaller Centre in Ghana, the first postgraduate centre of its kind in Africa.

Walls reminds us that the study of religion in Africa is not new since it has been provided in African tertiary education since 1947 and included the biblical subjects and African Traditional Religion (ATR). As the subject developed within the academy it became clear that many of the ideas, beliefs, institutions, assumptions and practices of primal religion are common in America, South East Asia, China, and the Pacific. Its religious systems are not uniquely African but are to a large degree universal, meaning that African religious and cultural insights may have a relevance far wider than the African continent. Fotland points out that this is available through the designation of 'primal religions' which are historically prior to historical religions and contain the basic elements of religion in the relationship between peoples and the transcendent world. Bediako himself had already claimed that Europe shares with Africa a pre-Christian primal religious heritage.

It is now apparent that Godself was revealed to Africans prior to their exposure to Jesus Christ. This has challenged those who believe that no good can emerge from Africa. Tshehla urges African thought leaders to soberly present appropriate evidence and interpretation which cannot be justifiably ignored'. Bediako himself made fresh and original contributions, to risk dislodgement from benefactors who have prescribed the perimeters of acceptable African thought, and speak primarily within the terms of reference prescribed by one's indigenous philosophy and worldview, even as these frankly engage Jesus Christ.

In terms of theological education Balcomb asserts that Africa needs to get in step with Christianity as an African religion at an epistemological level. A clear and distinctive shift needs to be made toward a philosophy grounded in African wisdom for 'forced confrontations as between the traditional African religio-cultural heritage and contemporary Christianity and/or Islam are untenable' (Tshehla 2014:63). Curriculum development has to deal with the hegemony and normativity of Western birthed theology despite our reiterations that all theology is contextual. Even in the West and north, western theology has lost its edge. With regard to the impact of globalisation, Gillian Bediako (2014:362), reflecting Kwame Bediako's thinking, comments:

this is not translating into an acceptance of Western value-setting for the Christian religion in the rest of the world. … not only is the western theological academy unable to commend the Christian faith to its own Western context, but it also has increasing difficulty in understanding the world Christianity beyond the West.

This appears as a global crisis of confidence in the normativity of western Christianity.

Now is the time for a deeper penetration of Africa into Africa if the Africanisation/transformation process is to be marked by authenticity and integrity. Guiding principles in such a paradigm change are suggested by Carpenter: the reintegration of theological disciplines, reconstructing of systematic theology, re-grounding theological discourse, re-engaging other ideologies and traditions and renewing the theological mind. To these might be added recognising 'primal spirituality' as a universal spirituality, and the prioritising of eco-justice. After forty years experience in the Ghanaian Akrofi-Christaller Centre for postgraduate studies, Bediako (2014:363) proposes the need for a novel integrated intellectual framework with a communally based epistemology and ontology which is premised on an understanding that Christianity is a 'non-Western religion'. She cautions, however, that this can only be achieved where 'the Christian faith lives as a vital presence, informing human experience - individually and collectively - and so is capable of shaping all of life'. She has an extremely positive yet, realistic view of the present and future 'that the vocation of Christian institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America could now include the rescue of the Christian academy!' (Bediako 2014:362-363). Then we might be surprised by joy as we re-encounter the awe and wonder and love of creation which can give us hope for the future.

This is an excellent volume and well worth deep study.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETORIA 0002, SA.

Blessed and called to be a blessing: Muslim-Christian couples sharing a life together
Richmond H 2015

Oxford Regnum. xvi + 168 pages. ISBN 978- 908355-89-8. No price quoted

This valuable book on the sensitive topic of mixed marriages within a particular context is the result of practice-based or action research. While this might be an obstacle to a faithful marriage, it also provides opportunities for mutual understanding of differing faith perspectives. In the case of Christianity and Islam, this is an urgent need which reaches up to the level of international politics. It is

based in two case studies carried out in Indonesia and Australia by someone who is well acquainted with both contexts. The subject has become more topical as a result of the increased mobility of peoples and the resultant exposure to other peoples and cultures. The focus is on Christian mission and Muslim da'wah relating to the Other in our midst and the prospect of compatibility. This is a practical theological narrative study which brings theology and religious traditions into an engagement on issues which are of mutual concern. Here a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' operates to illuminate issues from multiple perspectives on experiences. In such cases the ethical values of anonymity and confidentiality are vital.

The author chose a 'Missiological Inquiry Approach' based on Thomas Groome's (1980) 'Shared Praxis Approach' as set out in his Christian Religious Education. Groome delineated a five movement process of praxis (theory interacting with practice and vice versa). In this context it involved partners sharing stories of faith degrees of interaction between two religious faith groups.

After the introductory chapter, Richmond examines what is involved in a discussion of marriage and inter-marriage in Islam and Christianity. Chapters two and three deal with intermarriage in Indonesia and Australia respectively. Chapters five to nine discuss the critical findings of the study through interviews conducted highlighting those findings which are relevant to missiology.

A significant finding is that having a theology of being called provides a sound basis for married life. Commitment is fundamental for co-existence and development ion a relationship of marriage as loving friendship and spiritual companionship. Shared devotions are important which might mean agreement on meditation and silent prayer where shared values contribute to a sense of togetherness and spiritual partnership. Heightened religiosity has the potential for good and bad in the relationship, raising the question regarding the extent to which God's purposes are fulfilled in such relationships where no one community has a monopoly of God. Two motifs emerge from the study; that of respectful witness and joint witness.

Richmond draws a five point missiological approach in addition to the two theological approaches – coercional, invitational, connectional, affirmational and actional. Ultimately, the majority of the couples involved in the study found their vocation and affirmed a deepened and abiding faith in God's activity and power to draw people together.

This book has much to offer the whole arena of relations between people of different faiths, beyond the marriage relationship and deserves to be read, reflected on and acted upon.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETORIA 0002, SA.

Forgiveness and Reintegration: How the transformation process of forgiveness impacts child soldier reintegration
Goins S 2015

This book is the result of courageous research in a complex problem area which appears to defy resolution – child soldiering. Here the victims become perpetrators and the perpetrators become victims. It is certainly s situation where all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). But how do we achieve restoration and transformation. Is it possible and even desirable? This is the subject of this research which was carried out following Sierra Leone's ten year civil war and ended in 2002. It focusses on forgiveness and reintegration from the perspectives of theology, psychology, philosophy and anthropology. It is transdisciplinary in its attempt to make sense of the past, present and future through the eyes of those most intimately involved and affected – children. The outcome is the possibility of overcoming a horrendous past through the transformative process of forgiveness. The necessity of dialogue between the disciplines is vital and normative as the research struggles towards the vision of reconciliation built on a form foundation of dealing with the past through reconstruction of truth in the achievement of restorative justice as an achievable aim. Any forgiveness attained must be of the costly kind; nothing less will suffice. The ultimate aim os reconciliation which brings us closer to both God and one another as well as peace of mind within ourselves following what has been described as 'soul murder' (p.2).

The book begins with an understanding of forgiveness and proceeds to an examination of child soldiering and its implications. Chapters follow on forgiveness language in the available literature; the civil war in Sierra Leone; disarmament demobilisation and reintegration, hearing forgiveness; seeing forgiveness; conditions favouring forgiveness; benefits of forgiveness. Then the author concludes the work and explains her research methodology. This final chapter may have come sooner to give the work greater coherence. Several appendices are included.

Sin is a state of alienation which can arise inter alia in our case study from rape, amputation or murder. A vital component of future life for those who survive is hope. This may imply some form of restoration to a former state of wellbeing, but it may also mean a pressing on to an uncertain future with no possibility of a return to past conditions. It involves a reconstruction which may involve body, mind and spirit – a re-embodying (rehabilitation: re-inhabiting the body holistically) – although that may be impossible for those who have lost limbs, for example. Forgiveness is integral to this holistic process. However, we should not underestimate the

resilience of children which can more easily be nurtured than in adults. But the process is not universal; it occurs in a definite time and place so local factors must be considered.

As a result of the study, forgiveness emerges as a unilateral or bilateral process that is realised beyond words in action and is related to cultural context. It involves questions regarding the ability to forgive and be forgiven as well as redemption. Bilateral forgiveness offers greater possibilities of reintegration whereas withholding forgiveness was an obstacle to comprehensive reintegration. This applies equally to groups in addition to individuals which is often the case in child soldiering. In cases where a belief in ancestors is encountered, secondary forgiveness may play an important role. What is important, and this may involve the belief in ancestors is that reintegration depends on a balance of social relationships in the community, and is necessary for a recovery of social values.

This book cannot fail to make an emotional impact on a reader, despite it being about academic and social research. Its findings can be applied to a variety of situations that confront us in the contemporary world.

Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETO-RIA 0002, SA

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