



# The mission position of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in post 1994 South Africa

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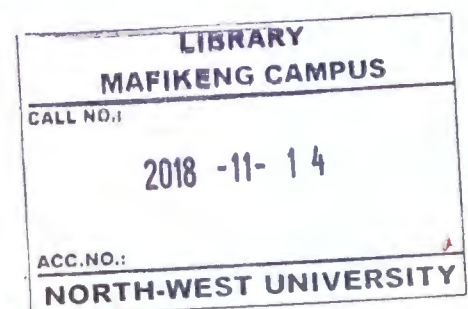
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## **PREFACE**

My sincere gratitude goes to my Supervisor, Professor Johannes J Knoetze, for all the time, effort and energy he spent helping me to complete this study. Thank you Prof. for the patience. May the Almighty God bless and keep you in the matchless name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I thank the North West University and the faculty of HSS Theology for having me as their student. I also thank the retired Professor Sarel van der Merwe for his motivation. He would always say, "How far are you with your studies?" Thank you once more Prof. I would like to give thanks to my administrative assistant Mr. Thapelo Mokolobate who assisted me a lot technologically for the brotherly love he has shown and the time he spent helping me. I would also like to give special thanks to my children (daughter) Tumelo and (my son) Itumeleng and my granddaughter Omo for the love and support they gave me throughout my studies.

May the Omnipotent God Bless you all.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is written with the aim of finding the mission position of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa, bearing in mind the influence of the socio-historical contexts of South Africa in the ministry of the AMEC, as well as the theologies that influenced it prior 1994 and their relevance in post 1994 South Africa. Since this topic was never investigated before there is not much information that can enhance it. From the history of the AMEC it is clear that the church is the product of the liberation struggle. This study needs to investigate as to whether the AMEC is still on its original intent of liberation or has it changed. It also intends to propose a new theological understanding that might enhance the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

Although the situation of the African Americans might not have been the same as that of the black people in South Africa, at the end of the day they all want liberation from whatever kind of bondage. All eyes, including those of the AMEC members, were looking up to God the Creator for redemption and salvation from political structures. Since mission is said to be the participation of God's people in God's action in the world, and missiology is the practical part of it, this dissertation will investigate the position of the AMEC in relation with *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa and to where and how it directs its missionary work. This dissertation will also investigate and find out about the challenges of the AMEC member in participation in *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa. The AMEC with her experience of suffering is able to teach God's people about the redemptive-salvific plan of God: to develop, give hope to the hopeless, heal the spiritually ill and feed the hungry.

Since liberation theology is no longer on the forefront in post 1994 South Africa, the AMEC will need to change to a proposed new theological understanding which will enhance her participation in the *missio Dei* in post 1994. Technology affected the AMEC since members became part of the global world and became more knowledgeable. Some congregants become more knowledgeable than their pastors due to lack of thorough theological training. With more knowledge and choices people do "church hopping" if they do not hear and see what they want in their respective churches. It has become an imperative that the AMEC must develop and train ministers and pastors at academic institutions if they want to sustain the church in a global society. Hendriks (2004:17) stated that the "globalised world requires a new paradigm in leadership and training". Transformation will play an integral part in this process, hence transformational theology is proposed to enhance the mission position of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

And key terms

# OPSOMMING

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# **CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study investigates the mission position of the AMEC in post 1994 in South Africa. Attention will be given to the theologies that influenced the AMEC prior 1994 and their relevance post 1994 in South Africa. The challenges of the AMEC in participating in the *missio Dei* in South Africa will be discussed. An introduction to a proposed new theological understanding within the AMEC that will enhance the ministry in post 1994 will be addressed. The origin and the tradition of the AMEC, from America to its founding in Africa, are used to give the reader an understanding of this church. The study focuses on the AMEC in a small part of South Africa, called the five Presiding Elders' Districts of the West Conference of the 19th Episcopal District of the AMEC. The descriptions of the Presiding Elders' Districts which form the West Conference are as follows: Johannesburg, Potchefstroom, Lichtenburg, Mmabatho, and Khunwana. The geographic demarcations of the mentioned Presiding Elders' Districts are not political but according to the church boundaries.

## **1.2 THE ORIGIN OF THE AMEC**

According to Beck (1988:369-376) the AMEC begun in 1760, with the birth of Richard Allen, who was a slave of Benjamin Chew, the Attorney General of Pennsylvania from 1755 to 1769. Beck highlighted that in 1768 Allen and his family were sold as slaves to Mr Sturgis in Delaware, who sometime during Allen's adolescence sold Allen's family and Allen never saw them again. It is explained that at the age of twenty, after Allen's conversion by Methodists, he purchased his freedom and became an itinerant preacher. Beck (1988:369-376) elucidates that November 1787 was the time in which tension between black people and white people in America reached a boiling point. One example was when one of the black Americans named Absalom Jones was pulled up off his knees by a sexton during prayer in church. He sees this as the initial evidence of the oppositional process and demonstrates the discrimination that black people faced even in such intimate moments as personal and communal prayer in church. A nonconforming minority led by Allen formed the Free African Society in May 1787, and because they liked Methodism, but not the way they were treated, they affiliated with the Methodist denomination. This black exodus from St. George's Methodist Church is the development of Mother Bethel AMEC, containing the seeds of outside opposition, internal factionalism, and collective devotion that are Mother Bethel AMEC's hallmarks today.

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:3-6), affirm that the AMEC was initiated in 1787 in Philadelphia by a group of African descends under the leadership of Richard Allen. The AMEC in full is African Methodist Episcopal Church. The word African in the name does not

imply that the church is in Africa and for Africans only but simply means that Americans who initiated the church were of African descent. Episcopal denotes that it is connectional and led by bishops. The Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:3-6) explains that the AMEC developed from the St. George's Methodist Church which was led by white people who denied black people leadership positions. The movement to organise the AMEC from the white people's church was in response to the black people's need for opportunities for self-expression and fuller involvement in the worship service and in society as a whole. The movement was the response to a call for spiritual, educational, social, and general growth. It further responded to development, recognition as humans and other means through which the AMEC members could grow a sense of dignity and respect.

Dickerson (1983:479-491) articulates that it was in 1891 when Bishop Turner preached African Methodism across the Atlantic into Liberia and Sierra Leone and into South Africa in 1896. Among the pioneers who spearheaded the birth of the AMEC in Africa is Daniel Coker. The AMEC grew from strength to strength in Africa and spread as far as to Southern Africa. The AMEC now has members across the Republic of South Africa and the neighbouring states.

The origin of the AMEC as highlighted by Beck (1988:369-376) and Dickerson (1983:479-491) clearly indicates that the founders of the AMEC were motivated by the need for liberation. They presented Bishop Turner as an organiser for the Republican Party and the one who had also helped to build a black political base in Georgia. As a theologian, Bishop Turner raised considerable controversy through his Black Nationalist liberation theology which begun with the premise that "God is a Negro" (Beck 1988:369-376). Beck asserts that Bishop Turner was the singular voice among black clergy who called for compensations for slave labour and he also supported the immigration movement to Africa.

The political liberation of all people during 1994 in South Africa raised the question: is there still a need for the AMEC to continue with the liberation theology? The researcher suggests the transformation theology since the experience is that when people have been segregated and oppressed in one way or the other, they can fight for liberation from a certain ethnic wishing to be oppressors themselves. The spiritual transformation will make life easy for people and provide corruption, poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS free society. The researcher is of the opinion that people may be liberated but not transformed and since liberation has been preached for many years but bringing no fruit, it may be replaced with transformation theology. Maybe a paradigm shift from liberation theology to a new theological understanding of transformation theology will enhance the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. Transformational theology might address the concerns of the people, especially members of the AMEC, as the church takes a stance to protect the rights of people through participation in the transformation of a divided South African society.

### 1.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMEC IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

According to Mbiti (1980:817-820), missionaries who introduced the gospel to Africa in the past 200 years did not bring God to the African continent but instead, God brought them. He emphasises that God as described in the Bible is the same as the god who was known from the beginning in the traditional African religiosity. Mbiti (1980:817-820) says the missionaries proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ but used the names of God who were and are already known by African people. He also acknowledged that the Africans have welcomed the developments in Africa that came with the missionaries.

In 1886, Mokone who was an elder of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa, opposed and resented the racially segregated district meetings which had been accepted from of the Methodist government (Millard 1999:74). He stated that during the meetings each side was required to meet apart from the other, yet black ministers were compelled to have a white chairman and secretary. Millard (1999:74) enunciates that Mokone resigned from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1892 and that same year he and the other twenty black people held the founding service of the Ethiopian Church in Marabastad in Pretoria. It is explained that Mokone, in his resignation letter gave the following, among others, as his reasons: racial segregation and discrimination, no family allowances for black ministers and poor wages (Wesleyan Methodist Church Minutes 1892).

The development of the AMEC in South Africa was attested to by Lamola (1988:5-14) who avows that it was founded by the Reverend Mokone who resigned from the Methodist Church in 1892 and founded the Ethiopian Church. The name Ethiopian Church originated from Psalm 63:4, "Ethiopia shall lift up her hands to God". Mokone was later instrumental in uniting the Ethiopian Church with the AMEC after being informed by his niece Charlotte Maxeke on the leadership opportunities and educational issues black people can benefit from in America.

Millard (1999:74) explained that after Mokone had heard about the AMEC in America, he persuaded his followers to affiliate there. Prior to their final decision Mokone as representative of the Ethiopian church wrote a letter to the then bishop of the AMEC in America for more information. In 1896, in the conference presided over by Bishop Turner under the leadership of Rev Mokone, the Ethiopian Church and the AMEC decided to amalgamate. In 1898 Bishop Turner came to South Africa and declared the merged churches the 14<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC and encouraged the spread of African Methodism. In 1900, at the fourth session of the South African Annual Conference held in Cape Town, three delegates including the Rev Mokone were elected to the General Conference of the AMEC at Columbus Ohio. Later that year the AMEC received recognition as a church by the government of the Cape Colony as it was first associated with politics. Mokone contributed to African church history with the founding

of the Ethiopian Church and later amalgamating it with the AMEC in South Africa. He acted against authoritarianism and control of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and contributed to the flowering of the independent African church movement which cuts across ethnic boundaries by providing Africans voice in their own religious affairs. Millard (1999:74) asserts that during Bishop Turner's visit in 1935, he was, at least on one occasion, quite outspoken in his advocacy of Africa for Africans.

#### **1.4 THEOLOGIES WITHIN THE AMEC**

As the ministry of the AMEC have developed from the experience of racial discrimination and segregation in America, and the same as in South Africa, it studied and accepted different theologies mostly known as liberation theology. Although the history of the AMEC is rich on liberation of black people in America and Africa particularly in South Africa, it is unfortunate that very little is written since most information is verbal. This brings a challenge to the AMEC to gather more information about the church and to write it down, especially for the coming generations to understand their roots.

The term liberation theology is used to cover different kinds of liberation theologies. It is also a specific form of theology that originated in Latin America. It began in 1986 with a lecture by Gustavo Gutierrez in his, "Towards a Theology of Liberation" and must be understood against the background of the failure of the so-called "Decade of Development" where in the 1960s the developing countries were to catch up with the West through modern technology. Liberation theology then developed to address the situation in which theological understanding was needed to liberate people of the south from the colonialism and oppression of people from the north. Black theology is also known as a form of liberation theology and originated in the United States of America. In South Africa black theology started within the University Christian Movement around 1970 as a reaction against the oppression of black people by racism. The University Christian Movement started a Black Theology Project and became associated with the Black Consciousness. These theological initiatives started from the 1950s and gained momentum during the 1960s and are still growing with the concepts like Africa renaissance and de-colonisation. In contrast to Black Theology, African Theology focused on the cultural and religious ingenuity of Africa and tries to enhance a relevant, holistic Christianity within the African tradition(s). All three of the above theologies, liberation theology, black theology and African theology are active in the AMEC. The important question for the AMEC in South Africa after 1994 is whether these theologies are still addressing the relevant issues in the current context since the AMEC has a decline in membership.



## **1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The problem this study needs to investigate is whether the AMEC with her different founding theologies is still relevant to the spiritual needs of (South) Africans in post 1994 South Africa and her participation in *missio Dei*? The study also needs to investigate the relevance of the different founding theologies like liberation theology in post 1994 South Africa.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The main research question is: Why is the membership of the AMEC declining in a post 1994 South Africa and will another theological understanding enhance the AMEC's participation in the *missio Dei*?

To answer the main research question attention must be given to the following questions:

- How do socio-historical contexts of South Africa influence the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa?
- Are the theologies that influenced the ministry of the AMEC in the beginning still relevant in post 1994 South Africa?
- What are the challenges for the AMEC members in participating in the *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa?
- Which new theological understanding can address the needs of the AMEC members in post 1994 in South Africa?

## **1.7 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of this study is to find a relevant theological understanding within the socio-economic and historical context of South Africa that will enhance the missional ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

In an attempt to reach the above aim the following objectives should be attained:

- Understand how the socio-historical and economic contexts of South Africa influenced the AMEC ministry in post 1994 South Africa.
- Critically discuss the theologies that influenced the AMEC ministry in the beginning and their relevance in post 1994 South Africa.

- Determine the challenges of the AMEC members in participating in missio Dei in post 1994 South Africa.
- Propose a new theological understanding that will address the needs of the AMEC members in post 1994 South Africa.

## **1.8 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT**

The central theoretical argument of this study is that since liberation theology seems not to answer to the spiritual needs of the members of the AMEC; a new theological understanding is proposed that will enhance the AMEC ministry in post 1994 South Africa.

## **1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This is a missiological study that investigates scientifically and critically the presuppositions, aims, structures, methods, patterns of cooperation and leadership which the AMEC missional ministry apply (Verkuyl 1978:5). According to Dr Kirsteen Kim (2002), missiology is practical and investigates the mandate, message, and mission of the Christian church especially the nature of the missionary work. Kim stresses that the core of missiological discipline remains the teaching of the church and inherent in the discipline is the study of the nature of God, the created world and the church. Dr Kirsteen Kim in her paper presented at the Research Seminar of the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham on 29 October 2002 describes missiology as a theological discipline which has a distinctive focus and methodology of its own and draws its experience of crossing cultures from the church worldwide in its global and local expressions of missio Dei. Mashau (2013) in his "Missiology, a voice from the margins" cites a number of theologians who have called for mission and missiology to be at the heart of theology (Bosch 1982; Jongeneel 1998:208-221; Laing 2009) reminding us of Bosch's statement, "Missiology is the mother of theology" (1991:16).

The researcher aligns herself with the missiological definitions and descriptions as outlined by Verkuyl (1998), Kim (2002), Mashau (2013), and Bosch (1991a). This dissertation is missiological and studies the mission position and the impact of the missionary work of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. Special attention will be given to the influence of the socio-historical contexts of South Africa in the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The study also investigates the theologies that influenced the AMEC prior to 1994 and the relevance of these theologies in post 1994 South Africa. Taking into cognition the challenges of the AMEC in participation in the missio Dei, a new theological understanding of transformation will be proposed for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

It should be noted that many members of the AMEC are living in poverty, since the gap between the rich and the poor is growing everyday within the South African context. Hendriks (2004:120) notes that politicians only need the poor during the time of elections and, thereafter, they ungraciously disregard them until the next elections. This is the case with the political parties in South Africa towards the elections, taking advantage of the desperation of the poor. In their manifestos the political parties will always promise the people many things like free education, employment, houses and the provision of basic needs as these are in the Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of South Africa (1996). Non-compliance on service delivery brings about dissatisfaction which leads to strikes where the important properties end up being damaged by angry people in different communities and institutions. On 29 September 2015 the dissatisfied Kopela village community in the Tswaing Local Municipality of the North West Province burnt three schools namely: Noto High, Ramokonyane Middle, Kopela Primary and a Clinic. In the end the victims of circumstances are still the poor, rural communities who will stay without schools and will remain vulnerable to different political parties who will take advantage of their vulnerability for their own benefit.

Bosch (1991b:435-437) also describes the poor as the marginalised with little or no participation in society. He emphasises that solidarity with the poor and the oppressed is a priority in Christian mission. He also reflects that the church's relationship with the poor is its missionary yardstick. Bosch (1991:435-437) encourages God's people to be on the side of the poor, as God is on the side of the oppressed. The calling of the AMEC to let the Kingdom come is part of the *missio Dei*.

Mphahlele (2008:28) pleads with anybody who calls himself a Christian to fight against hunger, poverty, suffering, oppression, exploitation and racism. He avows it is clear that the political change that came in 1994 is not able to address many social issues, haunting the South African society and he believes that the church in post 1994 South Africa can make a difference. This is still evident in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of democracy in South Africa where people (for example in the North West Province) are still striking and expressing their anger by burning tyres and other stuff on the roads protesting for service delivery. To mention a few: Itsoseng in Lichtenburg, Lekoko and Makhubung villages in Mahikeng and some villages in Ramotshere Moilwa Municipality.

Ewell (2012:387) cites Genesis 12 on the calling of Abraham and highlights that Israel was called to be the example of God's dealing with humankind. He asserts that the prophets in the Old Testament continually reminded Israel of her calling to be the means of bringing the good news about the living God to all the nations. He goes on to say, in the New Testament, the church fed the poor and cared for the sick.

According to Flemming (2012:164), the Book of Revelation places God's saving mission in Christ within a cosmic framework. He describes God as the One who redeemed Israel and the church, and also as the Creator of all things. Flemming presents God as the sovereign Creator who seeks the liberation of the world from the forces that hold it captive. The book of Genesis begins with the creation where God formed the heavens and the earth and Revelation ends with re-creation where God was preparing a new heaven and a new earth. The Bible story commences in a garden with two people who commune with God and it finishes in a city, an urban garden, complete with a "green-belt" (Rev.22:1-2), with people from every tribe and nation dwelling in God's immediate presence.

### **1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This is a comparative literature study of relevant literature sources as well as minutes and other documents from the AMEC.

### **1.11 ETHICS**

A letter of permission was also obtained from the R. R. Wright Theological Seminary Dean, Rev T. A. M. Mbambo, to continue with the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the North West University and guidelines and ethical codes were followed.

### **1.12 STUDY LIMITATION**

Although this missiological study will address issues of national and international importance to the Church it is limited to the 19th Episcopal District of the West Conference of the AMEC.



# CHAPTER 2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE MINISTRY OF THE AMEC IN POST

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to study how the socio-historical context of South Africa influences the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The chapter will highlight the South African history, the AMEC in the “new” South Africa, at grass-roots level and the relationship with the AMEC as denomination. Concepts such as globalisation with the macro-, meso- and micro level influences will also be discussed. The AMEC ministry found itself in the midst of the poor and the hopeless who need faith, love and hope in order to be participants in God’s mission. Bosch (1980:232) presents the church as the body of Christ, by being in the midst of the world, and emphasised that it does not have to withdraw from the world in order to be Christ’s body. He avows that the church is simultaneously a theological and a sociological entity, which needs to be understood as a historically, psychologically and sociologically phenomenon in world history. Bosch (1980:232) explains that the focal point of God’s involvement in world history is called mission, which he describes as an exegesis of history. He also emphasises that the church needs to be in the midst of the poor, the marginalised, the homeless, the unemployed, the corrupted and the HIV/AIDS victims. Christ himself has never withdrawn from the poor in any kind of situation, for example, he healed the sick (Matthew 8:1-17; 9:1-8) and fed the hungry (Matthew 6:1-4; 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17).

Hendriks (2004:27) maintains that:

“if Christianity really wants to engage the hearts and minds of believers, it must seriously regard the contexts that shape their lives, and in which their communities are rooted. The congregations have to find their place within the religion ecology and to understand that their local practices, values and habits are shaped by a great number of environmental influences”.

For the AMEC to engage the hearts and minds of its congregants in post 1994 South Africa it needs to have a flexible scope which will stretch from the local situation to the global community, widening from the past, to the present, and into the future. The socio-historical contexts of South Africa might negatively or positively influence or affect the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The AMEC is challenged to take the socio-historical contexts of South Africa in post 1994, seriously since it can destroy or build its congregants. The AMEC need not ignore the fact that global realities strongly influence the local situation, and that the

increasingly interconnected character of all human, political, economic and social life on earth is quite clear.

## **2.2 THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONALITEXTS OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE AMEC IN POST 1994 SOUTH AFRICA?**

In order to be able to respond to the question on how the socio-historical contexts of South Africa influence the members of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa, the highlights about South African history are important. Also important is the AMEC ministry in the new South Africa at grass-roots level and its relationship with the broader AMEC.

### **2.2.1 The socio-historical context of South Africa**

Aliber (2003:473) explains South African history from the settlement of the Dutch and Huguenot settlers in the Cape in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which brought about European colonisation that was by then limited to the Cape. The settlement expanded to the north and east and the British settlers arrived in Xhosa land and Natal; it was then that the pressure on Bantu-speaking African groups became gradually powerful. Aliber (2003:473) indicates that the most direct and chaotic characteristic of this pressure was the dispossession of land by white people through which black farmers were forced, either to evacuate to other areas, or to become sharecroppers or farm labourers. He further highlights that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the African and coloured people were relegated to townships, away from white people's residential areas, presumably to segregate the black poor from the white poor. He goes on to explain that in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the discovery first of diamonds and then of gold led to a rapidly growing demand for black mineworkers and various white governments introduced laws and policies to facilitate the supply of this labour.

According to Aliber (2003:473):

“The Natives Land Act dating from 1913, in particular, formalised the distinction between the African reserves and white farming areas, prohibiting Africans from acquiring, owning, and renting land in the latter. This had the effect of limiting their economic options so severely as to compel many to sell their labour to the mines and the white farmers.”

Aliber (2003:473) alludes to the fact that the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 formalised the powers of local authorities to demarcate urban settlements according to race. In 1950, H.F. Verwoerd, who was then Minister of Native Affairs but later became Prime Minister of South Africa, introduced the Urban Labour Preference Policy, which signalled the intentions of the ascendant National Party both to continue and to fortify the discriminatory system of labour and

pass controls. This led many households in the so-called rural areas to remain landless, while many others were left with tiny areas of land. In the early 1970s, 54% of all Africans lived outside of the homelands in the white areas. Aliber (2003:473) indicates that, "based on a per adult equivalent poverty line of R352 per month, in 1995, 56% of Africans were poor, 38% of coloureds, 5% of Indians, and 1% of whites".

The situation of South Africans has changed since 1994 after the first democratic elections when the country was led by the first democratically elected black president. The colour line is no more a burning issue in South Africa. Black people are now free to go to schools, colleges and universities of their own choice and the language of instruction was accepted by the majority in the country as compared to the situation prior 1994 when Afrikaans was imposed on learners and students. Education is a priority to the South African government and free education in the General Education and Training band is offered to address the imbalances of the past, even if there are still some gaps that need to be bridged. The National Scheme of Nutrition Programme was introduced to assist learners with food in schools especially the previously disadvantaged communities according to quintiles. The government offers foster and support grants to orphans and builds RDP houses for the poor communities.

Swart, (2006:17) highlighted the three meanings of an ecclesiastical response under which the churches can be evaluated in terms of their social engagement.

- a) The works of charity in the growth of awareness where the Christians and the Christian churches in part were not apathetic to the poor.
- b) A social involvement merely through charity denotes a church sector lacking the capacity for a critical, social theoretical understanding. Charity is not merely an innocent and pious social engagement by the church but goes far beyond that.
- c) Charity work represents a form of paternalism of which the net result has been the historical, almost complete estrangement between the Christian churches on the one hand, and working classes and the poor, on the other. In this process Swart (2006:24) describes charity as an activity in which the middle classes direct the process.

The discriminating notices like "whites only" and "non- whites only" are no more used in public places in post 1994 South Africa. The Constitution of South Africa (Act no 108 of 1996) has no room for racial discrimination, hence the incident of racism at the University of Free State, the exploitation of students at Vaal University of Technology and violence at the University of Limpopo were condemned (Cloete 2008). Together with social issues like racism, xenophobia and homophobia, service delivery is a big problem in post 1994 South Africa. Bad service delivery is the cause for many unnecessary death cases of the most vulnerable in hospitals and care centres. Many communities in different municipal areas strike and demolish infrastructure

in protest against the local authorities. The new democracy and the change in the laws and regulations of the country challenge the AMEC and its leadership to revisit their calling and ministries. The Christians must witness in word and deed to the issues of the day and the transformational power of the Trinitarian God.

### **2.2.2 The AMEC at grass-roots level**

The South African Constitution with the Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996) gives individuals the right to freedom and equality regardless of race, ethnicity or language. Freedom which allows everybody to stand for elections, secrecy to vote, speak out on any matter, criticise the government without fear of being arrested or punished. However, these have not had a remarkable influence on the ministry and policy of the AMEC or other mainline churches. The AMEC is not doing well in South Africa in post 1994 with the Bill of Rights as it still has a challenge with gender equity. This is supported by the statistics on the appointments of pastors and the Presiding Elders in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC as will be reflected in Chapter 4 (The 119<sup>th</sup> West Annual Conference Minutes 10-13 November 2016).

Dominance by one ethnic in the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa still needs serious transformation at the grass-root level to be a church for all believers. The only place where there are few white people in the AMEC is in USA. White people, especially in South Africa, chose not to be members of the AMEC and the researcher is of the opinion that maybe it is because of their knowledge of the history of the origin of this church. The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa needs to revisit its theology in the light of history, as well as its vision, mission, purpose and objectives as a church in post 1994 South Africa.

Since the AMEC was born from segregation and discrimination, its voice must be loud and clear when addressing the socio-historical context of South Africa post 1994. Post 1994 South Africa still includes contexts such as poverty, corruption, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, racism, gender equity and equality. It is clear that the AMEC has played a liberation role in pre 1994 South Africa, but the new democracy has not really changed the circumstances of societies captured in some of the circumstances mentioned. The AMEC, based on its original history, needs to be in solidarity with those that are said to be liberated as stated by politicians, but are not yet. The AMEC needs to keep on witnessing against all evil in societies and bring the message of transformation and hope to people. The AMEC needs to address the afore-mentioned socio-historical contexts also from within herself. When the poor become poorer and the rich become richer as people are pushing corruption within the state, and the AMEC is quiet about the situation, how do they align with the Gospel of righteousness? The AMEC ministry must be all-

inclusive but careful not to compromise the gospel for material matters, by being more secular than divine.

### **2.2.3 The relationship with the broader AMEC**

The AMEC is connectional and episcopal. The General Conference is the supreme body of the AMEC where the Senior Bishop presides over the proceedings and the bishops are in charge of their designated districts. In the general conference of the AMEC, which is quadrennial, the delegates from the 20 Episcopal Districts of the AMEC elect the bishops when there are vacancies and it is this conference that decides on the doctrines and discipline that governs the church. The Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC is amended every quadrennial in America. Domination of America in the top structure of the AMEC make the amendment of laws that govern the entire church sometimes difficult as the cultures and situations are not the same.

The AMEC celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Session at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from the 06-13 July 2016. At this meeting the AMEC commemorated the founders and unveiled the statue of Richard Allen. There were six vacant bishopric posts and thirty-one candidates were shortlisted. The required qualification for a bishopric according to the Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:117) is a seminary degree from an Association of Theological Schools, and from outside the United States a degree from the accredited seminary as it has been determined by the country that issued the qualification. The grading of qualifications, which was never mentioned before, disqualified most of the candidates from Africa (Minutes of the AMEC's 50<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Session in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 6-13 July 2016).

The AMEC in Independence from dominant American AMEC, will allow the AMEC to deal with its own internal affairs which hinders mission America, of course, did a lot towards the liberation of the African Americans from the oppression and slavery by white people and contributed to the origin of the AMEC in Africa including South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that when people have children they take care of them, children go through all the stages of life under the guidance and care of the parents and at the certain age a child becomes independent. Parents give children their blessing and they go out into the world to see what the world has in store for them. Teachers do their work of teaching and letting those they taught to face the world. This is not the case with the African Americans and Africans in South Africa in particular, in post 1994. The African Americans use the AMEC in South Africa for international recognition and other reasons better known by them.

The AMEC in South Africa works very hard for the AMEC in America to the extent of taking all the Title Deeds of all the properties to America (AMEC 2012:55). The pastors' salaries are tabled in dollars (AMEC 2012:103) and this does not make sense, since most of the



congregants in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District cannot even afford a stipend of at least R3000.00 for their pastors. The AMEC in South Africa is not realistic about its own situation since its individual pastors struggle to make ends meet, but still have to pay large amounts budgeted per circuit to satisfy the needs of the AMEC in America. It is high time that the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa takes heed of its position in the *missio Dei* and its calling in (South) Africa. These macro-level influences, globalisation, digital influence and secularism on and in the AMEC in (South) Africa will be discussed below.

## **2.3 MACRO LEVEL INFLUENCES**

### **2.3.1 Globalisation**

According to Jenkins (2002:1), Christianity must recognise the influential impact of globalisation on a local church. Globalisation challenges the leadership of the church to understand the diversities in the mission orientations of different movements within Christianity and that calls for discernment and wisdom. The AMEC needs to go back to its Doctrine and Discipline to make amendments where necessary so that it can face new challenges, changes and opportunities. The example given by Jenkins (2002:1) is that in Zambia and Africa at large, three main movements are worth mentioning: the dying of the Christendom, the growth of African independent churches (AICs) and American Pentecostalism with its overtones of the prosperity gospel. Hendriks (2004:77) and Soko (2010) refer to globalisation as a change on a macro level brought about by global coverage, by media, and information technology that made it possible. They see globalisation as, “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through an increasing volume of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows, and a more rapid spread and widespread diffusion of technology”.

According to Castells (2004:424-425), global power is in the process of being redefined as it is moving from physical power to intellectual power; from might to mind; and from guns to information. He stresses that power has moved to the network society where there are two major actors. The first, he maintains, is the power elite who control the flow of money and are the main financial actors in the informationalised global neo-capitalistic economy. The second major players are social movements of which the church can be one, but with a radically different identity than that of Christendom. In *The Power of Identity* (Castells 2004:424-425) describes how the different identity information processes work and also how the availability of information technology to all people shifted power balances and accelerated urbanisation all over the world. Castells (2004:424-425) goes on to say that:

“The new social networks that are formed in order to face new challenges bring the nation in demise, democracy under attack. Patriarchies and the founding structure of all

contemporary societies that are built on the power and authority of men over women and children experience an irreversible transformation. The structure and culture of families are changing worldwide and nothing seems to be the same any longer.”

A study by Hendriks (2004:76-79) indicates that the macro level includes the global society and consists of the culture-specific ideologies, attitudes and beliefs, which shape the culture's structures and practices. However, these culture-specific factors are increasingly being influenced by the process of globalisation through children's exposure to television and websites. He sees all of these environmental influences as forces that may affect the local congregation. Macro transections are partially illustrated by what the effects of socioeconomic and political conditions can have on people in both personal and professional capacity and competence. Hendriks (2004:76-79) attests to the fact that no congregation can escape being influenced by its environment and also indicates that globalisation has an open-ended scope as it reached from the local environment to the global community, stretching from the past to the present, and into the future.

Globalisation has actually led to a range of social concerns that have become part of the gradually expanded universe. Globalisation encourages diversity and has an impact on the relationships of the AMEC in America and South Africa, with its top down management that shows no change and growth in leadership. The relationship between globalisation and the daily experiences of the AMEC members in South Africa, defines the need for transformation and there is no way in which this can be escaped. The AMEC in South Africa post 1994 has to understand globalisation as a new world with new challenges that requires a new style of leadership, as well as well-trained leadership to be obedient to the missio Dei and relevant to the coming of the Kingdom.

Hendriks (2004:91) alludes to the fact that economic, political and social influences are contextual factors of globalisation that had a direct influence on society and in transforming and changing its identity. The AMEC members in the districts of the West conference may not fully participate in missio Dei because their leaders failed to comprehend and address the global and contextual challenges that influenced the church. The AMEC ministry should stay abreast of God's missional praxis in this fast and ever-changing world.

### **2.3.2 Digital influence and secularism**

According to Mian, in the News of 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015, the AMEC numbers three million people spanning thirty-nine countries on five continents. The AMEC is international and global and this has a serious impact on its ministry in South Africa. The AMEC members' lifestyles have been influenced by exposure to different networks, television and websites. People

electronically access and are exposed to everything and this exposure has changed the attitude of the AMEC members in South Africa tremendously towards the church.

According to Kroesbergen (2014:9), the influence of “electronic” churches on mainline churches, resulting in differences in the mode of worship, cannot be explained without understanding the influence of global Christianity. Since the AMEC members have access to electronic churches and some like these churches’ modes of worship, they sometimes not even bother about going to church because what they see electronically is exactly what they want. This is attested to by Hendriks (2004:77) when saying, “The electronic age of information brings other cultures, influences and world events to local congregations almost daily.” Information technology affected the entire church and thus could not leave out the AMEC congregation.

### **2.3.3 The AMEC and patriarchy**

The introduction of global Christianity in South Africa continued to give rise to a paradigm shift in leadership, and praise and worship, particularly in the mainline churches. According to Castells (2004:192), patriarchy is the male-dominant structure of society including the church. In the year 2000 there was a sign of transformation towards women's participation in the bishopric office of the AMEC, and coincidentally that was the case with the Roman Catholic of Zion (RCZ Synod Pastoral Letter August 2000) as women were allowed to become pastors. This was a good action that needs to be appreciated about the AMEC as it signifies a transformation from the patriarchal government, even if the percentage of women participation is still very low. The AMEC women are admitted to the ministry in numbers unlike before, even if gender equity and equality on the higher levels are still a challenge in this church in post 1994 South Africa. Castells (2004:194) emphasises that the global Christianity has turned towards challenging structures and dogma of the church and this led to transformation towards the role and identity of women in faith communities. This is the mirror in which the AMEC needs to look at itself in post 1994 South Africa and to transform its leadership style.

### **2.3.4 The Good News and inequality**

The principal purpose of the entire church of Christ including the AMEC is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people. The Good News is inclusive in meaning in that all people are equal before God. Therefore, it is important to teach people about the incarnated Christ who died, was resurrected on the third day and ascended to heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father. Some of the black churches in South Africa have served as settings in which the civil rights movements held their meetings, recruited new members and raised money. The AMEC in this instance also played a pivotal role in hiding the ANC activists and their armouries. This was publicly attested to by the then Potchefstroom ANC Secretary at the funeral of the late



Reverend D. M. Phetlhu on 20 February 2016, who was the then pastor of the Potchefstroom circuit when the armaments were said to have been hidden under the choir stage. The then ANC Secretary in that funeral made mention of the AMEC at Tshidilamolomo village which had also opened their doors for the activists who crossed the Botswana borders.

Krüger (2004:27) indicated that since democracy the Constitution of South Africa with the Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996) gives people the right to freedom and equality. Freedom gained in 1994 allows everybody to stand in elections, freedom of religion, freedom to vote, freedom of speech, freedom to criticise the government without fear of being arrested and punished. Equality means all people are equal, irrespective of age, colour, gender, disabled, rich or poor. All citizens of South Africa have the right to enjoy all the benefits of freedom. Based on the freedom brought about by democracy where people are free to join the religion of their choice, some of the AMEC members changed their religious affiliation. In the light of the new political freedom, the question remains what is the calling of the AMEC in a post 1994 South Africa?

Hendriks (2004:14) emphasises equality of all the people which must influence the church structure where the local congregation is a complete church in which the fullness of Christ dwells. He emphasised that the church depends on the reality of local faith communities forming congregations, and the importance of empowering the laity in the light of equality before God. Hendriks (2004:14-15) is of the opinion that the clericalism and denominational hierarchies, where ministry and the witness of the church take place from the top down, lead to laity becoming mere receivers of whatever is provided for them and this results in spiritual immaturity and the inability to make informed moral decisions. .

According to Hendriks (2004:15), congregations need to be spiritually mature to foster spiritually mature members, who rear children, who know and follow the Lord, and who are able to deal with their contextual realities of HIV/AIDS, corruption, unemployment, abuse of power, and poverty also in a spiritual mature way. He emphasised that people need to deal with the above-mentioned issues in their own environments, as these realities are in and around them. He further maintains that knowledge, information and working from the bottom up is important and makes the case that this will only be possible when all members are trusted and viewed as equals before God. As discussed above, not all members in the AMEC are empowered to participate on different levels in the *missio Dei*. The AMEC will benefit from transformation theology as a new theological understanding in post 1994 South Africa. The West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC must do theology in their context empowering participants to no longer be objects but equal subjects of the ministry.

Based on what Hendriks (2004) said, the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is challenged to put forth the spiritual maturity of its congregation by encouraging informed moral decisions and

independence. The AMEC must revisit and renew its Doctrine and Discipline which is dominated by the American culture to accept the African cultures as equal. The full involvement of members in Africa in the amendment of the laws and regulations which govern the AMEC is pivotal in post 1994 South Africa. The way the African Americans treat the Africans, especially the South Africans, gave birth to the new-born African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa (AMECSA) which is led by the Rev Dithipe. Rev Dithipe was one of the Presiding Elders in the 15<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC (this includes Vryburg), which is developing and supported by congregants who proclaim, "We are tired of being led by the African Americans with the Doctrine and the Discipline that do not cater for the Africans in Africa". This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> group (from which the researcher is not prepared to disclose other names and this is not for discussion now) in South Africa to recuse themselves from the AMEC. The impact from the macro level is viewed as positive and negative. The main concern is that it contributes to some divisions in the AMEC in South Africa.

## **2.4 MESO-LEVEL INFLUENCES**

As indicated above, the influence of the macro-level on the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is the decline of the membership of all mainline churches in the South African society. On this level the AMEC is affected since individuals and other organisations bring their own symbols and different modes of worship which attract people to their worship gatherings. Some of the members in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC left the church because it does not really address their needs while they experience the AICs do so because they are more focussed on the spiritual needs of Africans and not on politics. By viewing the television, access to the websites, and listening to the different radio stations, people acquire more knowledge and have more choice options. Some of the AMEC members started seeing and admiring the African Independent Churches and the Pentecostals as the kind of religion they want to follow. As stated, these churches, especially the AICs, are focussed more on the spiritual needs of the African people and are not focussed on the political issues South Africans face.

Hendriks (2004:76-79) describes the meso-level as the level that includes groups, organisations, institutions, schools, etcetera, within the South African society. Barkan (2013:189) describes meso-level structures as different types of local-level civic organisations that can mediate between micro-level of individuals and macro-level of larger political communities. These levels challenge the AMEC in South Africa to rethink where it still lacks as to its growth in participation on the meso-level in the *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa. Christ in Matthew 26:18-20 commissioned the church to "go teach, baptise and make disciples" and this cannot be exchanged in one way or the other to be the mission of the government, but remains the responsibility of the church.

The mission of God is a holistic concept which includes mental, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual health, hence it is the responsibility of the AMEC to take care of these factors. It becomes difficult for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa to participate in the *missio Dei*, when the faith community is suffering from poverty, unemployment, unjust politics, homelessness, corruption, racism, inequality and HIV/ AIDS. In all these factors the western districts AMEC has the responsibility of giving the community hope in a hopeless situation by helping people to see God's presence in all situations in post 1994 South Africa. In spite of the challenges of the diverse denominational settings in South Africa with different perspectives about the triune God and even different beliefs, the AMEC has to participate in *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa. Some of the most influential movements on meso-level such as AICs, Pentecostalism, poverty, RDP, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, corruption, racism and the causes of declination, and growth of the church will now be described.

#### **2.4.1 African Independent Churches (AICs)**

Barrett (1968:1-7) describes the AICs as any group of people numerically larger than the community to which members of an extended kinship group belong, often with a common name, language, culture and territory. There are four related meanings used to define independent namely: (1) independence; (2) a territory not under the control of any other power; (3) in ecclesiastical usage the principle that the individual congregation of a church is an autonomous and equalitarian society free from any external ecclesiastical control; and (4) the polity based on this principle include multiplicity of missionary agencies, land hunger, personal quarrels, political unrest, unnecessary delay in establishing independent mission churches, missionary illiteracy of the African mind-set, language, greed, determination, superiority and faulty biblical interpretation.

This study concludes that an African Independent Church is a Christian church independently started in Africa by Africans. Nmah (2010:482-483) describes independency as characterised by a reference to a tribe as a quasi - national political unit, having a high degree of political distinctiveness, with common symbols, history and traditions though not necessary having an exclusive language or culture of its own. Sundkler (1976:54-64) describes a varieties of terms for these African churches: African initiated churches, African independent churches, African indigenous churches and African instituted churches which are all covered by the abbreviation 'AIC'. These terms have largely been imposed upon such groups and may not be the way they would describe themselves. Sundkler (1976:54-64) indicates that the foundations of the Zionist churches originated in Zululand and further elaborates that the Apostolic tradition follows its origin from St John Apostolic Faith Mission of Mrs Christinah Nku. He (1976:54-64) recognises that the AICs help their affiliates to acclimatise to a modernised world that is different from their cultural beliefs. The term "African" in the AICs describes them as the Christian groupings which

are formed in Africa by Africans, in contrast with the “African” in the AMEC which designates it as initiated by people of African descent in America (AMEC 2012:13).

Sundkler (1976:54-64) also says that the AICs differ from one another and not all of them are culturally African in their organisational forms. He further alludes to the fact that Africans tend to have in common a belief that ancestral spirits interact with the living which is a belief also shared by many Asian people. As according to Sundkler (1976:54-64), some AICs have large numbers of affiliates located all over a country (the Zion Christian Church of South Africa), while others may consist only of an extended family and their acquaintances meeting in a house or out of doors. The rise of Pentecostalism and especially the “so called prosperity gospel” in Africa is also another ‘spiritual’ wave influencing Africa.

Shaw (1996:233-236), Kalu (2007:281), and Paas (2006:142), recognise the rapid growth of AICs as to the decline in the mainline churches. Like other mainline denominations the AMEC in the western districts is also affected negatively by the AICs with an influence from Pentecostal theology. The AICs respect the African culture and in some instances accommodates African beliefs. Shaw (1996:233-236) notes that the explosive growth of independent churches in the 20th century is adequate proof that colonialism had inhibited the gospel in many parts of Africa. The missionaries' notions of racism and their attitudes of superiority brought paternalism to church affairs (Shaw 1996:233-236), since leadership was not shared with Africans.

Kalu (2007:281) and Paas (2006:142) point to the spiritual beliefs in Africa regarding evil and the spiritual need of deliverance from evil. Kalu (2007), Shaw (1996), Martey (1993), Paas (2006) and Turner (1979) agree that AICs are a sign of awakening of African nationalism and rediscovery of traditional beliefs and African identity as well as a spiritual home where the spiritual needs of Africa are addressed.

Anderson (2004:122) alludes to the fact that the rapid growth of the AICs, which initially broke away from mainline denominations, was experiencing from 1950 to 1960 mid the apartheid politics in South Africa and colonialism on the continent. Anderson (2004:122) indicates that it was during this period, when healing movements led by prophets playing an important role, that an emerging spirit of the liberation struggle in which Africans vowed to take charge of their affairs of life to provide contextualised Christianity in Africa emerged. He alludes to the fact that the AICs are an African response to emergent needs, since they felt that the Western Christianity has not done enough to meet them.

Oduro *et al.* (2008:17-18) define the African Independent Churches as the churches which were started in Africa by Africans and mostly for Africans. As highlighted by Oduro *et al.* (2008:17-18), most Africans became Christians because they heard the preaching of the Good News by



their fellow Africans and because they saw how this faith has changed the lives of their fellow Africans. Oduro *et al.* (2008:17-18) state that the AICs have connected the Christian message with the real needs of Africans. They suggest that the mainline churches should move away from putting their doctrines upfront followed by the Bible, but to put the Bible upfront then the doctrine (Oduro *et al.* 2008:17-18). The congregants' now-a-days follow the ministries which are open and direct to addressing their needs and not those who glamorise and also compromise the truth.

#### **2.4.2 Pentecostalism**

Cox (1995:4-5) states that the story of the first Pentecost has always served as an inspiration for people who are dissatisfied with the way religion in the world in general is developing. He highlighted that people turn to Pentecostalism because of its promises about transforming the present, since they desire an experience of a God who does not remain distant during life's turmoil.

Cox (1995:4-5) further points out that:

“...because of the social and cultural disarray in our present context, Pentecostalism is booming almost all over the world. Its origin can be traced back to 1906 in the United States. The distinctive worship and praise of Pentecostal churches comprised shouting and dancing, speaking in tongues and non-traditional music. It created a new form of worship that had become extremely appealing to disinherited and deprived people in America and in other nations of the world, even until today.”

Kalu (2007:359) needs Pentecostalism in Africa to be viewed from a historical perspective against the background of globalisation that continues to influence traditions and reshape identities all over the world. In Africa, many factors have had an influence: political views, ethnicity, poverty, cultural orientations, theological views and possibly the alignment of mainline churches with local governments. According to Kalu (2007:359), Pentecostalism believes that everyone can personally receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy or the ability to speak in tongues. He asserts that Pentecostalism accepts the diversity of the faith in many different forms in diverse local contexts. Kalu (2007:359) argues that Pentecostalism is distinctly an African culture and was not imported from the West. He further said that throughout the history of the church, there were repeated schisms that arose from differences in worship, theology, church order and leadership.

Mashau (2013:1) alludes to the fact that Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon with a large following in North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. According to Mashau (2013:1), the rise, growth and influence of Pentecostalism in Africa are enormous and

have, without fear of contradiction, become one of the dominant expressions of Christianity on the continent. He further went on to say, Pentecostalism's manifestation ranges from classical Pentecostalism (first wave), to the charismatic movement (second wave) and the charismatic renewal movements (third wave). He alludes to the fact that the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa came with a fair number of missiological challenges to the evangelical reformed churches. The AMEC needs to exercise the spirit of sensitivity whilst dealing with the influence of Pentecostalism, but at the same time to learn from this movement the zeal for mission and the role of the Holy Spirit in mission.

### **2.4.3 Poverty**

According to Aliber (2003:473-490), there are two kinds of poverty being: chronic and transitory. He conceptualises chronic poverty as poverty that is transmitted from one generation to the next, which usually means that children from poor households are likely to become poor adults, whose children will in turn risk remaining in poverty. He indicates that almost all poverty was intergenerational, because colonialism and apartheid left little room for it to be otherwise. Aliber (2003:473-490) argues that poverty was transmitted not only through sequential generations of households by virtue of the lack of opportunity to accumulate human and other capital, but at the level of communities as well in the sense that they were deprived of infrastructure and amenities and were often situated in remote, marginal areas without economic projections. Aliber (2003:473-490) goes on to say in South Africa prior 1994, generally, a household was defined poor in particular when monthly expenditure per adult was equivalent to or below R237.

According to Wright (2006:473-490), the primary function of a church is to spread the gospel and social action is secondary in this regard. It must be well understood what the AMEC in South Africa is meant to be, as well as what it is meant to say. Wright (2006:473-490) believes: "If we preach the gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what transformed looks like, by portraying the whole church having integrity, justice, unity, inclusion and Christlikeness." He stresses that the Gospel, according to Saint Paul, needs to be obeyed and not just believed. Wright (2006:473-490) attests that the gospel is good news that needs to be heard and to be seen. He says it needs words and deeds, message, and proof. Social action with no evangelic interest, according to Wright (2006:473-490) is as non-holistic as is evangelism with no social concern. To be concerned for the poor and hungry but not to be concerned for people hearing the good news of Jesus is not to follow the example of Jesus.

As highlighted by Magezi (2012:101-104), "Poverty is pain. It feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but morally. It eats one's dignity and drives one into despair. Poverty is like living in jail, under bondage, waiting to be free." Mphahlele (2008:7) highlights that since 1994 the South Africans complained about the migratory policies of the colonial and apartheid

regimes that had a devastating influence on families, especially African families. His plea was that this sorry state of affairs and the decay in society be addressed urgently, but unfortunately the South African families are still struggling with the structural imbalances of the past. This was evident at the well-known Marikana massacre of 2012 in South Africa at which one of the issues raised was related to the separation of the families by distant employment.

Presently poverty, HIV/AIDS, corruption, racism, unemployment, and gender equity and equality are all factors that need attention within the South African context in post 1994 South Africa. This may lead to the spiritual death of the congregation simply because the congregation does not attend to discerning God's will in these circumstances and, as such, is not able to recognise the anguish and pain of its neighbour. The socio historical contexts of post 1994 South Africa must guide the ministry and theology of the AMEC at national and local levels, even at international level. Hendriks (2004:69-70) states it clearly that it is important that all congregations, irrespective of whether rural or urban, must understand that their local practices, values and habits are shaped by their local and national environment.

Nürnberg (2007:8) describes poverty as rampant in rural and informal settlements. He emphasises that personal suffering and frustration translate into social tension and this experience affects the rich and the poor. The AMEC in South Africa as a self-proclaimed redemptive community cannot disregard this truth. Nürnberg urged Christians to see their private lives in the context of God's holistic mission in the world including the economy. Nürnberg (2007:8-9) stresses that the church is given the privilege of participating in God's mission and must live out its life within its merger communion and continue to empower its members and society to get involved in the world. Serving Christ according to Nürnberg (2007:8-9) is, "to share in God's concern for the guilty, the needy and the suffering and to reflect the gospel of God's grace in Christ". This challenges the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa to be all-inclusive and show no indication of discrimination of any kind. The AMEC which is still clinging to the liberation theology in post 1994 South Africa needs to be reminded that social barriers are broken down by God's unconditional acceptance of the unacceptable into his fellowship (Ephesians 2: 8, 14). Nürnberg (2007:8-9) further goes on to say that not all the rich are exploiters and not all the poor are exploited. He reminds the reader that being rich or poor comes in different ways and people in both situations have needs. He says that people, who are called to act as facilitators of God's redemptive work among the poor, need to instil confidence, hope and self-respect to the poor through accepting them in the faith community and worship service to God.

Nürnberg (2007:27) believes that just sharing our food with the poor is not a solution to their problem, since handouts are degrading and humiliating and also lead to dependency. He motivates the poor to get on their feet as far as possible. All the help given to the poor as

highlighted by Nurnberger (2007:27) should take the form of empowerment to arouse their initiative, resourcefulness and imagination. According to Nürnbergger (2007:25), people need unconditional acceptance, belonging and respect more than anything else. He stresses that the core of the Christian gospel is God's suffering, liberating and transforming acceptance of the unacceptable into his fellowship. He reminds Christians that the distressed needs to hear that, "God is for us and with us and not against us". He believes that the poor must be encouraged to believe that God has given them sufficient gifts to get out of their situation since He wills their situation to change. The poor congregants must experience the acceptance of God through the acceptance by the people with whom they worship. He elaborates on this by quoting the Apostle Paul saying, "Christians are saved not by the words of love, but for the works of love." (Ephesians 2: 8-10). Paul knew from the Old Testament that wealth is a blessing, but envy is idolatry.

The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa must see development as a need for transformation in order to widen people's opportunities for choice. The socio-historical contexts of South Africa challenges the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa to be involved in a ministry of poverty alleviation (*diaconia*). If the problems of the people are left unattended and the church remains silent, it will be failing to show that it is the salt and the light of the world (Emedi 2010). The AMEC has the responsibility of leaving the buildings and going out to the people. It needs to find the needs of people, especially the congregants, analyse them and come up with the strategy of how to satisfy them.

Frost (2011:57) reiterates the impossibility of separating the announcement of God's reign from its demonstration. He cites David Bosch saying, "There is in Jesus' ministry no tension between saving from sin and saving from ailments, between the spiritual and the social." Neither should there be in the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. As alluded to by Frost (2011:57), "where unbelief is encountered the reign of God will be announced and where poverty is encountered the reign of God will be demonstrated; since the reign of God covers all human experience so should the mission of God".

The AMEC stresses social action as it appears more than eight times in the Doctrines and Discipline (AMEC 2012:159-442). All the AMEC ministries in South Africa participate in giving food parcels, clothes and blankets to the poor as social action. The effort and action might look good to the church and the recipients, but to the researcher this seems to spoon-feed the poor instead of developing their skills for future use. The said action is more of hunger relieving than poverty eradication. People become dependent instead of being empowered to participate in the transformation acts of God. Much is still lacking for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa on skills development for the poor. Spoon-feeding makes people lazy to think and to do things on their own because they depend much on what is given to them.



Healing the sick, challenging unjust political and social structures, feeding the poor, embodying the values of the reign of God, telling others about the Jesus event are all examples of authentic signs of a missional church, which the researcher challenges the AMEC to be. The AMEC members and its leadership are all facets of God's mission in this world which is the mission of putting all things right. The involvement of the AMEC in this venture must include both their lips and their hands. It must involve evangelism, encouragement, peace-making, worship, and proclamation as well as service, justice-seeking, healing, building and feeding.

#### **2.4.4 Poverty is growing in South Africa, post 1994**

Using the notion of an "enclave economy", meaning a system that heavily relies on exclusion but intentionally seeks to benefit the few, Mbeki (2011:6-7) argues that this type of an economic system "that Verwoerd was so eloquent about" has hitherto been pursued by the ANC government. He continues to say while in the prior democracy, Verwoerd did not have to worry about the black people's votes. The ANC does, and if they want to keep these votes they must keep its voters poor.

Nicolson, in a report published in the Daily Maverick (2015), indicates that according to Stats South Africa 2011, the new measures of poverty show some increases in the number of people suffering from poverty. Rebasings the poverty line, from a Food Poverty Line of R321-R335 means an increase of 20,2% of people living in extreme poverty to 21.7%. He reports that the rebasing, however, brings about a substantial increase in the estimates for overall poverty from 45.5% to 53.8% when a switch is made from the existing upper-bound poverty line of R 620 per person per month to the revised level of R 779 per person per month. It is reported that the latest statistics show that 21.7% of South Africans live in extreme poverty, not being able to pay for basic nutritional requirements, 37% don't have enough money to purchase both adequate food items and non-food items so they have to discard food for things like transport and airtime, 53.8% can afford enough food and non-food but fall under the widest definition of poverty in South Africa, surviving on under R 779 per month. It is reported that, despite the World Bank's recognition of South Africa's effort to reduce poverty, many people are still struggling.

Lehohla's report of 2015-06-17, 12:20 on News 24 is the same as above with additional information that, South Africa's food poverty line translated into \$2.34 (about R26) per person per day. It was reported that this was almost double the international line for extreme poverty at \$1.25 (about R14) per person per day. This, according to the report means that, on average, South Africans are enjoying relatively higher living standard compared to many populations across the world that live below \$1.25 a day.

The President of South Africa in his twenty-year review entitled "South Africa 20 Year Review 1994-2014" (Zuma 2014) highlighted the challenges which still remains and how they could best be addressed as the democratic government enters the third decade of democracy. He attested to the fact that more still need to be done to address the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty. The question remains what is the calling of the AMEC in South Africa within these socio-economic circumstances?

#### **2.4.5 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

Bruwer (1996:2) supports development but often sees it as a means of dominating people in a way that degrades them to mere pawns, when it should widen the opportunities for choice. He stresses that efficient and effective development must clearly outline its aims and objectives so that in the end it does not frustrate the participants in one way or the other.

Lehohla, in Statistics South Africa (2002-2009), reported that the percentage of households that live in formal dwellings and whose dwellings were fully owned increased from 52,9% to 55,3% while the percentage of partially owned dwellings declined from 15,5% to 10,6% . About 12% of households had 'other' forms of tenure arrangements in 2012. It was reported that the highest percentage of informal dwellings were found in the North West Province (21%) and Gauteng (19,2%) located in the western districts of the AMEC. The RDP's Policy Framework was developed with the purpose of reducing the poverty afflicting millions of South Africans by addressing the inequalities and injustices of the past. Access to water, jobs, land, education and health care were among the priorities highlighted. The RDP office was established within the office of the President charged with the responsibility of coordinating RDP related issues, including, spending of the initially modest RDP budget.

Aliber (2003:475-476) goes on to say the RDP may have continued with the name as an assortment of government activities broadly consistent with the aim of reducing poverty and chronic poverty in South Africa, but inside and outside of the government, a common charge was that the RDP was dead.

#### **2.4.6 HIV/AIDS**

The Vatican Radio on 20 January 2013 reported that:

"In mining areas, mineworkers are housed in hostels and there is a huge migration of many people, particularly destitute women from rural areas. This results in extreme poverty, desperate people and mineworkers who have left their homes to work away in the mines for many months. Thus, the HIV infection rate is very high and increasing. Destitute women around mines are forced into prostitution to be able to feed themselves

and their children. This is termed “survival sex” because the only means they have of surviving is to engage in sex for money with those who have money, being men who left their families behind in other countries or in rural areas and spend months in hostels.”

Aliber (2003:482) reports that many children under the age of 15 have lost their mothers or both parents to HIV and AIDS. The number of HIV and AIDS orphans is set to rise as South Africa’s high HIV prevalence rate among adults translates into a higher prevalence of AIDS and then AIDS related deaths. One of the big issues related to HIV and Aids is stigmatisation. According to Goffman (1963:3), stigma is an attribute that reduces a person in the minds of others “from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one”. Such things as physical abnormalities, character blemishes, and racial or religious affiliations can stigmatise a person. He describes stigma as deeply discrediting and signifies blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty. Stigmatised individuals possess a characteristic that labels them as different in a negative way.

Lehohla, in Statistics South Africa (2002-2009) reports progress seen on HIV medications since HIV transmissions from mother to child have decreased to less than 3% in countries like the United States. The report specifies that in the year 2000 the South African Department of Health outlined a five-year HIV/AIDS plan, which was not supported by the then South African President, Thabo Mbeki (BBC News, 23 September 2003). It was reported that after consulting a group of HIV denialists headed by Dr Peter Duesberg, Mr Mbeki rejected conventional HIV science and instead blamed the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic on poverty. According to the report it was obvious that without political support, prevention efforts had a difficult time gaining a foothold. Even when the South African government gave in to worldwide pressure and established a plan that would make HIV medications publicly available, the response was slow and inadequate. The latest report, according to Lehohla in Statistics South Africa (2002-2009), shows the prevalence estimates and the total number of people living with HIV as follows: “the total number of persons living with HIV in South Africa increased from an estimated 4,9 million in 2002 to 5,51 million by 2014. For 2014 an estimated 10,2% of the total population was HIV positive.”

Mbona (2012:181-204) articulates that AIDS was diagnosed in South Africa in 1982 in a white homosexual air steward. Mbona (2012:181-204) also explains that the large movement of people between Zimbabwe and South Africa could have offered a possible channel and this is further supported by the perception of “associating AIDS with cross-border women”.

According to Mbona (2012:181:204) the:

“Ignorance and complacency lay behind the denial of HIV/AIDS, and the general perception among Christians that HIV/AIDS existed outside the community of the faithful delayed initiatives undertaken by the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the United Methodist churches’ followers. While the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference publicly admitted the existence of AIDS and made a statement as early as 1987, ordinary lay Catholic Christians associated HIV/AIDS with *runyoka* (a local sexually transmitted condition believed to attack males who had sexual intercourse with someone else’s wife) and witchcraft.”

The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa in its 119<sup>th</sup> West Annual Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District first emphasised the insertion of HIV/AIDS questions into the disciplinary questions by the Presiding Elders to the pastors in their quarterly meetings. This is to check with the pastors on how the local church supports the HIV/AIDS programmes and assists the members. This also needs to establish as to whether the local church has the health committee as to the amended Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC which is not yet released (The 50<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the AMEC 6-13 July 2016).

#### **2.4.7 Unemployment**

Lehohla in Statistics South Africa (1994-2014) reported that: “The official unemployment rate of South Africa has increased from 22% in 1994 to 25% in 2014. The official unexpanded unemployment rate for South Africa was 35% in both 1994 and 2014.” South Africa's unemployment rate is remarkably high and it is most visible in the form of the day labourers who stand at the side of the road or on street corners every day, waiting for any temporary job (Blaauw, Louw & Schenck 2006:458). His report states that South Africa's informal sector is small compared to other developing countries and the observed unemployment is not voluntary. According to Lehohla in Statistics South Africa (1994-2014), this study extends the analysis by examining the correlates of earnings of day labourers, specifically the so-called thickness of the labour market. He reported that the standard explanations of labour market outcomes have focused on the attributes of individuals, specifically the importance of education, as well as on labour market characteristics and social networks. A few authors, according to Lehohla in Statistics South Africa (1994-2014), have also considered the spatial aspects of the labour market and recently found that urbanisation is an important predictor of wage differentials in the formal sector.

Bruwer (1996:65) is concerned that the youth of South Africa have been given high expectations, but now experience bad times of unemployment, disappointment and destruction, which he sees as, “all ingredients for revolutionary incitement and not at all conducive to the process of growth”. Bruwer sees these unfulfilled expectations as the source of the desire for

the instant results of mass action and the instant fruit of looting. He clarifies that the young people of South Africa are driven towards confrontation and destruction rather than towards a process of growth culminating in transformation. According to Lehohla's report on Statistics South Africa 1994-2014, the South Africa Jobless Rate edge down to 26,6% in the second quarter of 2016 from 26,7% in the first three months till the end of March. South Africa is said to have nearly 36 million employable people, but only 15,5 million have jobs.

#### **2.4.8 Corruption**

Frisch (1994:60-61) briefly highlights that corruption kills the development spirit and nothing is as destructive to a society as the rush to quick and easy money which makes fools of those who can work honestly and constructively.

Lodge (1998:157-187) indicates that the setting of the Local Municipalities under administration is one of the signs of corruption. He also explained that the discriminatory tendering, political solidarity and the expansion of citizen entitlements by government and departmental officials stimulate corruption. The Tswaing and Ventersdorp Municipalities are the examples of those that were set under administration by the North West Provincial Government for the financial year 2015-2016 as was broadcast by Mosimanegape Moseki (Motsweding FM 6 October 2016).

Wiseman (2009:106) highlights that anti-corruption laws are inadequately enforced in South Africa. He describes two forms of corruption that are mainly dominant in South Africa, first being tender-preneurism which describes individuals who enrich themselves through corrupting the awarding of government tender contracts. This is mostly based on personal connections and corrupt relationships, although outright bribery must also take place, and sometimes involving an elected or politically appointed official or his or her family member holding simultaneous business interests. This is often accompanied by overcharging and cheap workmanship. The second is the BEE fronting which he describes as the abuse of rules governing Black Economic Empowerment, where black people are given seats on the Board of Directors of a company while having no decision-making power, in order to qualify the company for government contracts in terms of BEE. Wiseman (2009:106) relates this to Cadre development and deployment, which he says is an official ANC policy.

As attested to by Wiseman (2009:106) corruption in South Africa is seen to be one of the greatest factors of poverty, poor development and protests. He presents forth the fact that the people who are elected to represent others use the status for private gain by satisfying their financial needs and obligations through corrupt means. He believes that participants in corruption are many besides politicians and elites who actually are thought of engaging in this act (Wiseman 2009:106). According to Wiseman (2009:106) corruption economically impacts



seriously on the individual, community and the country and it is often responsible for increased costs of goods and services. He maintains that in such situations the poor suffer the effects of injustice whilst the rich always stand a better chance of getting justice over them. Socially, corruption discourages people to work together for the common goal, annoys the public and results in poor governance. Demanding and paying bribes become the habit and this results in social inequality and an expanded gap between the rich and the poor, civil conflict, increased poverty and lack of basic needs like food and water. Corruption gives birth to drug abuse, as people will think they reduce the level of stress. Jealousy and hatred develop on the side of the poor because they would question others' success and think they are somehow robbed and will feel insecure. Corruption, according to Wiseman (2009:106), also undermines the lawfulness of the government, reduces productivity, hinders development, worsens poverty, marginalises the poor, creates social unrest and then lead to their downfall.

Statistics South Africa (2013-2014) reports that households were asked questions about the perceived levels of crime in the period 2010-2013 in South Africa. This included question on the reasons why people are engaging in corruption and the main reasons why people are paying bribes. Households were asked what their perception was about which government officials were not likely to be involved in corruption. More than 70% of households believed that corruption has increased. Only 14,5% believed that the levels of corruption had remained unchanged during this period, whilst 13,6% said that corruption had decreased. The North West province had 81,6% of households who perceived corruption had increased and 5,9% who were of the opinion that corruption has decreased over the years and 12,5% who say it stayed the same.

It was also reported that when households were asked about their perception on why people were engaging in corruption, the options they could choose from included: real need or greed, get rich quickly or other reasons (April 2012-February 2014). Of those interviewed 43,1% of households in South Africa believed it was pointless to report corruption because nobody will care, only because of the benefit received from the bribe and 13,4% also thought that it was a common practice. Corruption in South Africa was confirmed by Witsoe, (2014:73-85) who highlights that after Mr Zuma became the national president in April 2009, COSATU and the South African Communist Party became disappointed at his leadership and failure to implement policies. Witsoe (2014:73-85) highlights that corruption continued unchecked and that threatens to turn South Africa into another Zimbabwe and derail the national democratic revolution. It is the responsibility of faith communities in South Africa, like the AMEC, that needs to encourage people to live a moral life.

### 2.4.9 Racism

Odhav, (2009:33) indicates that numerous policies in the higher education system relating to its apartheid past were abandoned, and the social and political system became more accessible in all areas with more rights for all. However, prior to the first democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994, higher education policies were highly problematic. It needs to be determined in what ways such problems spilled over into the post-apartheid era, if at all. The “structural flaws of apartheid’s higher education”, are: unequal access for staff and students in relation to race and gender; an undemocratic system instantiated by an illegitimate government resulting in a wasteful system and poor planning capacity” (Odhav 2009:33).

According to Evans (1990:23-24), black researchers did not emerge, since black universities were not intended to be research centres. The two factors identified as a cause of the non-emergence of black researchers are the overall apartheid policy that was unfriendly and the almost universal correlation of class to education in South Africa making the majority student population mainly white.

According to Gumede (2014:1-2) racism has a terrifying impact on individuals and some of its aspects are described as:

“Rejection or neglect as well as attack – a denial of needs, a reduction of persons to the status of objects to be broken, manipulated or ignored. The violence of bombs can cripple bodies; the violence of miseducation can cripple minds, the violence of unemployment can murder self-esteem and hope, the violence of a chronic insecurity can disfigure personalities as well as persons.”

Gumede (2014:1-2) points out that black people who are in many instances victims of racism are often depicted as being poor ‘by choice’ as a result of their own actions and faults. He further says that part of South Africa’s 1994 democratic project was to undo the racism rooted in institutions and social life and build societies based on human rights. Institutionalised racism and apartheid have left black South Africans with massive “existential insecurity”. Chronic insecurity according to Gumede (2014:1-2) caused by humiliation scars, slavery, colonialism and apartheid have caused a dislocation of familiar and trusted social benchmarks either culturally, individually or socially and this leaves a void in many individuals of the society. The researcher agrees with Gumede’s description of racism and attests to the fact that the AMEC has experienced and suffered all the pains caused by racism. In spite of the experiences, pains and voids caused by racism, the researcher maintains that transformation will be the solution to all the problems, hence there is a proposal for transformation theology. The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa must help broken individuals fill this void of brokenness by showing them love and

giving hope in such. Gumede (2014:1-2) reiterates that, "in the globalised world, self-esteem, identity and value are measured increasingly by possessions, and this reinforces existential insecurity among poor black people". The political situation of South Africans has changed for the better since 1994 after the first democratic elections when the country was led by the first democratically elected black president Nelson Mandela. Although schools, colleges and universities are now open for everybody irrespective of colour, race, religion or sex, much unrest is experienced in these institutions (News 24. 2015-01-30). Education is now a priority in the South African government, since the government and the NGOs are embarking on free education for all to address the imbalances of the past. Even if there are these kinds of opportunities illiteracy is still there, poverty and unemployment which are sometimes the results of corruption still exist. The researcher's observation is that all these factors highlighted affect the AMEC and the global church, because most people join the churches seeking clarity of their situations with the hope that the church is the relevant institution to clarify and give hope.

The issue of racism in the AMEC is understandable and defensible, in a way that this church was born out of discrimination and segregation by the Free African Society (FAS) in America. This understanding or reasoning is supported by Mian's report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015 about the alleged Dylann Storm Roof who was fuelled by racism in America and took nine lives with a gun. What makes this incident more relevant is the fact that it includes the death of the pastor on 17 June 2015 in the Emmanuel AMEC in Charleston after an hour of Bible Study. As highlighted by Mian, the alleged gunman confessed during his siege to have chosen the AMEC in Charleston because Charleston is the most historic city in the state, which one time had the highest ratio of black people to white people in the country. The AMEC in America, according to Mian, has always been the symbol of black resistance. The AMEC is one of the churches that fought for liberation in America and also took part in the fight against apartheid in South Africa as highlighted in the previous chapter. The question the AMEC needs to answer is whether racism as a form of hatred can be hosted in any church that confesses Jesus Christ as saviour, and living in a democratic society?

According to Msomi & Shilaho (2015:1) racism remains a key challenge to South African democracy and the society needs to engage with it with truthfulness and openness. Msomi and Shilaho stressed that inequalities created and institutionalised by apartheid are still prevalent in the new dispensation. The AMEC has always truthfully and openly opposed racism. As highlighted by Msomi & Shilaho (2015:1) racism must be addressed through the redevelopment of the moral fibre.

The researcher thinks that though the AMEC is a protestant church, it is not addressing most of the problems in the country like corruption, tenderpreneurism, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, HIV/AIDS and discrimination on gender and race. She argues that all these



problems which are aggravated mostly by corruption, are threatening the country and its economy and the AMEC members, like other faith communities, are affected. The researcher believes that corruption is affecting the economy of South Africa tremendously and her concern is on the investors as to whether they will continue to invest in a corrupt country. Unfortunately it is the poorest of the poor that suffer the most, as the gap between the rich and the poor is still increasing.

## **2.5 THE MICRO-LEVEL**

Hendriks (2004:76-79) describes the micro level in the context where the influence of people and events are within the immediate context of the church. The micro-system involves direct interaction with the people around. The AMEC in South Africa is experiencing a decline in local congregation due to proselytism.

Bruwer (1996:88-90) indicates that, "It is only the gentle and patient application of love that will cure bruised communities and where leadership is undeniably, denying space to people, the Church must be forewarned against it." The AMEC like other churches is not called just to uphold law and order but to implement the teachings of Jesus Christ which are very sympathetic. The instruction of Jesus to the disciples was not only to "preach the kingdom of God", but also to "heal the sick" (Luke 9:2; Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:14-15). The healing of the total person was entrusted to disciples. Jesus' ministry of healing, the *shalom* of the kingdom, also became theirs. Christian service should never be fragmented into different professions. The AMEC in South Africa must involve and embrace different types of ministry so that the mission of God may be understood by the faith community and the name of God be glorified by his creation.

According to Schulz (2009:19) proselytism does not only stand for bringing adherents of other religions into Christianity but also Christians from one denomination to another. It is commonly called "sheep stealing" and is perceived as violating the common courtesy and respect churches should have for one another. He went on to say that as long as various denominations exist, and some church body offers itself as a better alternative over others, people will be inclined either to "hop churches" or to be drawn to a fellowship elsewhere. The researcher is of the opinion that perhaps the AMEC members move to another churches because they find their preaching and teaching of the gospel clearer with holistic worship. Schulz again said that even if Christians think that every church presents a part of larger Christianity, they would still prefer to attend a church of their own liking or preference.

The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa experience proselytism as most of the congregants, especially the sick who need healing, leave for vibrant Pentecostals and African Independent

Churches (AICs). Other people are attracted to Pentecostalism and the AICs because they like their praise and worship style. It seems that the Pentecostal and AICs get more congregants because their worship is holistic and they attend to the spiritual needs of the African people.

Hendriks (2004:44) believes that images can put thoughts into words as they explain and help us to understand. Dulles (1985:21) says: "When an image is employed reflectively and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of a reality it becomes what is today called a 'model'." The types of church models used to explain the Word of God and the systems put in place for the church's administration and information can best describe congregational diversity. The explanation and consideration of the diversity of typologies and models, according to Dulles (1985:35), are as follows:

### **2.5.1 The institutional model**

According to Hendriks (2004:45-51), the institutional model describes the church by similarities taken from the political society that define it in terms of its hierarchical structures and the rights and powers of its officers. This top-down model emphasises teaching, blessing through participation in church activities and obedience to the official dogma and authority of those that develop it. His emphasis is that it leads to clericalism, juridicism and triumphalism, major liabilities and no real scriptural support and cannot deal with transformation (Hendriks 2004:46).

### **2.5.2 The proclamation model**

Hendriks (2004:46) attests to the fact that in Protestant churches the Word is central while in the Catholic Church, liturgy and the sacraments are central. The researcher aligns herself with Hendriks that neither the church nor the sacraments can save a person, but the grace of Jesus Christ. He elaborates that the sacraments are secondary and visible signs of the Word. Matthew 28:18-20 motivates Christians to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and pray that God, in his grace, will lead them to conversion.

### **2.5.3 The Body-of-Christ model**

Hendriks (2004:48) indicates that in the Body-of-Christ model the state, church, school and the corporate business are all examples of societal structures and need good organisation, competent leadership and authority and the social relationships alike. The understanding of the researcher about the Body-of-Christ model is that it encourages families and friends to form groups for social activities in which the interactive communication takes place (Dt.6:4-9; Col 3). Here individuals become a group who covenants. Hendriks (2004:48) emphasises that, "this kind of model has a strong biblical base in the notion of communion (*koinonia*)".



#### **2.5.4 The transformation model**

Hendriks (2004:51) describes the transformational model as “the servant model” since its focus is on serving and explained that it gave rise to a new style of doing theology that called for transformation. Since the church is part of the entire human family, it shares in its imperfections and injustices. The researcher advises the AMEC to follow the leadership of Christ who came into this broken world to serve and heal it by carrying the cross and working from the bottom upwards. She pleads with the AMEC ministers to follow the example of Isaiah by being with the people where it really hurts (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-19) and its leadership should also wash the feet (John 13). The researcher maintains that not only the AMEC members should exclusively or primarily benefit from the efforts but the world, the poor, unemployed, HIV/AIDS sufferers, homeless, and those that are discriminated against on the bases of gender and race.

#### **2.6 THE RECOMMENDED MODEL**

Based on the above models as described by Hendriks (2004) the researcher recommends the Body-of-Christ, transformational and proclamation models for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa as the models that will enhance its ministry. Since the institutional model is described to be leading to clericalism, juridicism and triumphalism, and having major liabilities and no real scriptural support and cannot deal with transformation, it is not suitable for the AMEC and cannot help it to grow. It has been the tradition and the culture of the AMEC that proclamation of the Word is primary and the sacraments are secondary. Proclamation of the Word is good, but the performers need to demonstrate it to the listeners and hearers so that the message will bring fruits. The AMEC needs to be humble in attending to the situations of the congregants just as Christ had demonstrated humility. The transformation model will give birth to the transformation theology which is a primary need for the AMEC ministry to remain a relevant church in the post 1994 South African context.

As has been pointed out, doing missional theology is God’s invitation to faith communities created in his own image to participate in his missional praxis (Genesis 1:26-28). The emphasis in the approach of Heitink (1999:6-9) and Hendriks (2004:23-24) is that theology is not about what the church does, but about God and the church’s identity. What the Church needs to rediscover is that it is the body of Christ. From Genesis 1:26-28, the basic argument follows that the triune God made humans in his own likeness. From this point of view, God draws his people into a relationship with Himself and with one another. This basic assumption also determines an individual’s personal identity, which is the source of meaning for humans as witnesses of the Kingdom of God. Diversity and change are global and will continue to challenge the AMEC’s tradition and culture.

The AMEC in South Africa continues its mission as a ministry to the oppressed and those in need, spreading the gospel of liberation in the spirit of social justice present from its roots. It is advisable for the AMEC ministers in post 1994 South Africa to find more appropriate ways of ministering to the faith communities about the Kingdom of God in preparation for transformation to take place so as to allow them participation in *missio Dei*.

As per the information given regarding the influence of the socio-historical contexts of South Africa on the AMEC in post 1994, where its ministry is happening, it will be advisable for the AMEC to look into the theologies that influenced it prior 1994 and to investigate their relevance in post 1994 South Africa in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 3 THE THEOLOGIES THAT INFLUENCED THE MINISTRY OF THE AMEC IN POST 1994 SOUTH AFRICA

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The question that this chapter attends to is: Are the theologies that influenced the ministry of the AMEC in the beginning still relevant in post 1994 South Africa? The objective is to give a critical discussion of the theologies that influenced the AMEC and evaluate their relevance in post 1994 South Africa.

When studying the AMEC's history which presents itself as one of the Protestant Churches, which was influenced by, and embedded in, liberation theology, the researcher deduced that this theology does not address all the spiritual needs of the current AMEC members in South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that liberation theology has been preached for many years in South Africa and South Africans should have been liberated and speaking the new language. If for the past 23 years of democratic dispensation people are still singing the song of liberation then it is going nowhere and needs to be replaced by a theological understanding that will address the spiritual needs of God's people. The information obtained makes the researcher to propose the new theological understanding that will enhance the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. Bosch (1991:430) is of the opinion that in all major ecclesiastical traditions, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions, people look not only at where they are at the present moment, but also at where they come from. Knowledge of the past is pivotal only if it spearheads transformation. It will never be possible for the AMEC in South Africa to forget that they are from the apartheid background. Just as the history of the African Americans in America indicates that they were sold as slaves to white Americans hence the Free African Society that gave birth to the AMEC. In South Africa the apartheid regime did not operate the same as that of America and the two instances will not be discussed as such.

On these premises the AMEC in South Africa must look for a real, reliable and collective guide to the truth and justice of God, to apply as criterion in evaluating the relevance of the original theologies in South Africa post 1994. In cognisance that the AMEC is a protestant church, the different kinds of liberation theology that have impacted on it will be looked into, as well as their relevance in South Africa post 1994. To get a better understanding of what the calling of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is, it is required take a historical look at some of the theologies that influenced the AMEC's identity and ministry prior 1994.



### 3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Liberation theology, as explained by Ukpong (1984:49), seeks to reflect on the socio-economic development of the poor with a view to structural change. This theology addressed the challenges such as poverty, hunger, malnutrition, starvation, political oppression, discrimination and colonialism.

Wilmore, (1984:135) pointed out that the de-radicalisation of the black church in USA, which started during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Bishop Henry Turner's influence declined, rendered the black church a different church to the one it used to be in its inception. Cone (1993:271) aligned himself with Wilmore (1983:135) that it is because of de-radicalisation that the black churches of today, with a very few exceptions not involved in liberation but primarily concerned about how much money they raise for a new church building or the preacher's anniversary.

Boff & Boff (1987:1-4) explain that the historical roots of liberation theology are to be found in the prophetic tradition of evangelists and missionaries from the earliest colonial days in Latin America. They emphasised the starting of a great wind of renewal that blew through the churches from the 1960s when the churches began to take their social mission seriously. The laypersons committed themselves to work among the poor; charismatic bishops and priests encouraged the calls for progress and national modernisation. Boff & Boff (1987:1-4) go on to say various church organisations promoted understanding of, and improvements in the living conditions of the people where groups set up educational radio programmes and the first base ecclesial communities. They regard development and underdevelopment as two sides of the same coin. The poverty of Third World countries was the price to be paid for the First World to be able to enjoy the fruits of overabundance. Liberation theology is said to have its roots in Latin American Roman Catholicism. Liberation theology's rise is seen as a response to widespread poverty and the mistreatment of large segments of Latin American society.

According to Bosch (1991b:439), liberation theology's question is not knowing whether God exist, but knowing on which side God is. Maimela (1987:preface) in his vision of a new South Africa in which he attests "no one is free until all are free" involves both the oppressed and the oppressors, especially in view of the dual nature of sin that tarnishes the dignity of both the oppressor and the oppressed. He alludes to the fact that the oppressed groups become partners with God in building a more compassionate society. He urges both black Christians and white Christians to work for justice for everyone before, during and after liberation from racial bondage and to be on guard that leadership in the new liberated South Africa does not become oppressors themselves. From this perspective, he recognises that the oppressed black masses had a critical part to play in their own liberation. He is emphatic that it is hope in the Redeemer and liberating God that challenged black Christians to come out of the cocoons of

“defeatism and apathy” when they were inspired “to be on the cutting edge of social transformation as embodiment of Christ’s love in human relationships” (Maimela 1987:iv).

The example of how liberation theology view scripture through the poor and destitute is demonstrated in Luke 1:52-53, when Mary praised the Lord saying, “He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the lowly and has sent the rich away empty” According to liberation theology, Mary is expressing joy that God has liberated the materially poor and fed the physically hungry while bringing down material rich. He is a God, who favours the destitute over those with wealth. Liberation theology is supported by some prophets in the Old Testament, for instance, Malachi 3:5 who warns of God’s judgement on those who oppress the working man: “I will come near to you for judgement. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me’, says the Lord Almighty.” (also Isaiah 58:6-7; Jeremiah 7:6; Zechariah 7:10) Jesus Christ’s words in the New Testament, in Luke 4:18, also show his compassion for the oppressed.

According to Becken (1973:6-7), it has become customary to divide Christian theology in Africa into two main areas, being black and African: Motlhabi, 2007:22 acknowledged that the histories of black people were consistently being ignored. His argument is that in the democratic dispensation, black theological language is changed into some ‘neutral theology’ because neutral language best embody the spirit of rainbow nation which is brought about by the negotiation settlement, called the new South Africa. Motlhabi still believes in the relevance of black theology of liberation in a democratic dispensation in South Africa.

The researcher believes that AMEC after the long experience of physical and spiritual slavery has dedicated its services to God by gathering his people to where the word is proclaimed. The word of God is central to the AMEC then the two sacraments being baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The AMEC ministry is still sustainable in a technological and globalised Christianity.

### **3.3 BLACK THEOLOGY AS LIBERATION THEOLOGY**

As highlighted by Becken (1973:6-7), black theology refers to the response of South Africa’s black people to the need to reinterpret the gospel in the light of their political and social deprivation under the apartheid government of the Republic of South Africa pre 1994.

Moore (2011:5) describes Black theology in South Africa as, “a situational theology relating to that of the black man in South Africa”. He defines Black theology as a theology searching for new symbols with which to affirm black humanity and also a theology of the oppressed, by the oppressed, for the liberation of the oppressed. Black theology as a theology of liberation, according to Moore (2011:139), does not only speak to the oppressed black people but hopes



that the white oppressors will also hear the good news and be saved. Moore (2011:5) alludes that liberation theology arises out of a particular historical situation or experienced reality. In the case of South Africa this was the crisis of apartheid, the effects of which are still experienced by all South Africans even in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of democracy. Like the Black Theology of North America, South African Black Theology has black experience as one of its major sources.

Black theology, according to Boesak (1977:13), is a situational theology and the black people's attempt to come to terms theologically with their social situation. He says "it seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of blacks will begin to make sense". As to Wilmore and Cone's (1979:446) observation, the resemblance between black experience in South Africa and in North America is very close; hence the need for a dialogue between the two.

As defined by Mosala (1989:1-4), South African black theology is a cultural tool of struggle propounded by young South Africans who were influenced by the new black consciousness. He emphasised that at the centre of the development of black theology was the need for a brand of theology that would ensure liberation from the rules of oppression. Black theology was also meant to speak to the oppressor in a way that would allow him to hear the good news and be saved. Black theology is a biblically inspired movement that arose in South Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s geared toward the political, social, economic and religious emancipation of the people of South Africa. It is a cultural tool because it draws heavily on the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) spearheaded by Steve Biko. Mosala (1989:1-4) stated that South African black theology is also situational because it is concerned with an interpretive model of the Christian Scripture in a way that addresses the situation of the Blacks, Coloureds and Indians of South Africa.

Motlhabi (1994:113-141) mentions that black theology in America is far ahead of its South African counterpart in trying to develop a "holistic theological approach". This theology in America is concerned not only with present day liberation issues but also with the socio-cultural and religious rooting of the African-American struggle. Motlhabi pleaded with the black theologians in South Africa to decide on their true theological identity, or else, their theology will remain at the tail end of both African Theology and American Black Theology in development.

Roberts (1994:80) argues that: "Black Theology must speak externally to liberation from white oppression; internally to the need for forgiveness from sin and exploitation within our own group; it must speak of liberation within from blacks and liberation from without whites. But at the same time, liberation theology must speak of reconciliation that brings together blacks, and also of liberation that brings blacks and whites together."

Maluleke (1998:3) says without abandoning the notion and language of liberation, Black Theology can no longer pronounce on liberation in meta-narrative and kerygmatic terms. He argues that Black theology has wanted to place a high premium on 'solidarity with the poor' and not with the state or its organs, however democratic and benevolent such a state might be. This theological positioning must not be mistaken with an utter defiant-state stance. According to Maluleke (1998:3), Black Theology is not about the powerful but about the powerless and the silenced. The AMEC in South Africa is encouraged to also stand on the side of its silent, hopeless and powerless people. Mwambazambi (2010:1-2) defines South African black theology as a conscious and theological dimension of the liberation struggle against apartheid.

The argument of Buffel in his 'Black Theology and the black masses' (2010:470-480) is that there is still a need for black theology even if apartheid is believed to have died and black people have political power. Buffel (2010:470-480) maintains that for as long as the black experiences involve pain and suffering, there will be a need to reflect on what it means to be black in the South African context. The researcher is of the opinion that the socio-economic, cultural practicalities and situations that compelled black theology are still dominant in post 1994 South Africa. Amazingly, now the political power is in the hands of the black people, they seem not ready to change the situation of the previously disadvantaged but to worsen it.

As articulated by Isabel Phiri and Julius Gathogo (2010:185-206), the black theology in South Africa comes out of the practice of conformity to the Gospel in the realities of current suffering, racism, oppression and everything that denies the Lordship of Christ. They both agree that Black Theology in South Africa comes from the dejected and very oppressive social conditions that were existing during the apartheid regime that ended in 1994. With the death of apartheid, it may be argued that black theology now comes out of the experience of poverty among blacks. It also comes out of the neo-colonial experience arising from the racial tensions that are still a part of South Africa even after apartheid.

According to Chimhanda (2010:434-445), all human beings are accountable for individual sin as well as for structural or systemic sin. This study agrees with Chimhanda (2010:434-445) on the importance of reconciliation for both the oppressor and the oppressed, but also reminds the reader that only the transformed can reconcile, hence, the proposal of transformation theology. He emphasised liberation from white oppression; the need for forgiveness from sin and exploitation within our groups; and suggests for liberation theology that must speak of reconciliation that brings together black people, and also for liberation that brings black people and white people together. The researcher is of the opinion that reconciliation is driven by transformation and suggests that the AMEC in South Africa must transform to and develop a transformation theology. The AMEC will need a paradigm shift to transformation and lead a transformed life where it will engage the state to pull together in instilling reconciliation amongst

all people. Since reconciliation is never an easy task, black theology must speak externally to liberation from white oppression, and internally to the need for forgiveness from sin.

According to Moore (2011:2), black theology took its understanding of black from the Black Consciousness Movement, which used black as a positive identifier opposed to the negative term 'non-white'. Thus 'black' referred to all the victims of racism collectively (including 'Coloured' and 'Indians'). Black was not simply about pigmentation but more importantly about attitudes of mind. So 'black' referred specifically to those victims of racism who were engaged personally and directly in the liberation struggle. The white people are likely to see the heart of the gospel as being about salvation of the soul, whereas for the black people the primary message is that Jesus came to set the oppressed free. He went on to say black theology is about black people interpreting the Gospel in the light of black experiences as well as interpreting black experiences in the light of the Gospel. What was central to black experience in South Africa was their systematic racist oppression and interpreting the Gospel called for an answer to how the Scriptures address this reality of oppression. He alludes that the answer advocated by the black theologians was that the Gospel was a message of liberation of the oppressed. Velleem (2013:4) defines black as non-white or non-person, less than white and therefore less than human.

Adebo (2013:1) argues that black theology is relevant in the sense that most of the problems that stimulated its emergence still exist in the country. Adebo & Harold (2013) and Molobi (2010) agree that black theology must be revived and continued. Tutu (1994:203) also supports the continuation of black theology by saying, "it must be the vigilant watchdog, seeking to be prophetic when things are wrong in the". The researcher's opinion is that black theology in post 1994 South Africa is going nowhere for as long as there are still corrupt leaders in the country who negate the principles of *Ubuntu* and contradict the views of black theology. People, particularly leaders, need to transform so as to know, to see and to treat the poor as people made in God's image and assist them to stand up on their feet. In this instance, hearing and understanding the gospel of the theology of transformation will assist God's people to get ready for the transformation journey which will at the end qualify them as participants in *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa.

Enns (2014) in his 'Moody handbook of theology' emphasised that because of black theology's extreme over-emphasis on racial issues, a negative result is that it tends to separate the black and white Christian communities, and this is completely unbiblical since we are all made in the image of God. He supports this statement by saying, Christ came to earth to unite all who believe in Him in one universal Church, His body of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23). He encourages the members of the body of Christ to share a common bond with all other Christians, regardless of background, race or nationality. "There should be no division in the



body, and its parts should have equal concern for each other.” (1Cor 12:25) We are to be of one mind, having the mind of Christ, and have one goal, glorifying God by fulfilling Christ’s command to “go into the world”, telling others about Him, preaching the good news of the gospel, and teaching others to observe His commandments which are to love God and love others as ourselves, regardless of race (Matthew 22:36-40). Jesus makes it a condition for our participating in his salvation to give food to the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, console the sorrowing, because “when you do this to one of my least brothers or sisters you do it to me”. Social action is a mandate for Christians and should be in the image of the gospel which is open to everyone.

Sundermeier (2003:24) notes in the 1970s that the two approaches of African and black theology were showing signs of coming together. He indicates that these two theologies need to equip themselves with modern issues if they were to remain relevant to today’s Christians. Black theology to Sundermeier (2003:24) is unique in that it arose within a colonial situation, thus within a context quite different from the American AMEC. Since colonisation and discrimination are said to have past, the AMEC is advised on a new theological understanding that will not allow it to dwell in the past but will enhance its existence and its relevance in post 1994 South Africa.

### **3.4 AFRICAN THEOLOGY**

African theology as highlighted by Becken (1973:6-7). It is a Christian thought that concerns itself basically with the relationship of Christian theology to African culture. As according to Becken (1973:6-7) it demonstrates a particular concern for its relations to the Bible and Christian tradition. He goes on to say it finds its primary promoters in West African Protestantism and among Catholic theologians of French-speaking Africa

Mbiti (1986:59) defines African Theology as, “a theological reflection and expression by Christians” and that the Bible is its basic source because “it is the primary witness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ”. Tutu (1979:485) indicated that black people are compelled to help the white people to correct many of the distortions that have happened to the gospel to the detriment of all. He believes that black theology is like the inner and smaller circle in a series of concentric circles (Tutu, 1979:490).

Setiloane (2001:59) sees African Theology and Black Theology as soul mates belonging to the same stable each with a peculiar contribution to the struggle for liberation. African Theology should never, in spite of all taunts of failing to be ‘prophetic’ in the traumatic situation of the black people in South Africa for example, cease to see its role as sending back the blacks to their grass roots. According to Anthony (2004:1), the term “African theology” originated from the

1950's major discussion in Rome involving the African and Haitian priests studying how to adopt indigenous traditional African religious beliefs, practices, rituals, history and culture into the Christian message of Christ for the African people. Van Eck in his lecture at the opening of the academic year of the African Institute for Missiology (AIM) on 27 January 2005 at Klipdrif in Hammanskraal, described African theology as "the study that seeks to reflect upon and express the Christian faith in African thoughts, meaning forms and idioms, as it is experienced in African Christian communities, and always in dialogue with the rest of Christendom".

Motlhabi (2004:178) sees black theology as African theology and African theology as black theology. According to Molobi (2010:494-509), African Theology, Black Theology and Theology of the AICs shared a common vision on liberation, of an independent and truly African church, which is vibrant and has meaningful African culture. All these theologies were intended to produce knowledge systems of God which will help to establish culturally independent churches in their African context.

### **3.5 FEMINISM AS LIBERATION THEOLOGY**

Smit (1993:250-255) emphasises that Christ's salvation is one of liberation from spiritual and earthly enslavement be it political, social, or personal. He appeals for the freedom of all. Jesus openly accepted the oppressed and outcasts like tax collectors, prostitutes, Samaritans, lepers, and women. Christ has freely socialised with women, irrespective of opposition. The AMEC must still learn to treat women with respect and allow them full participation in *missio Dei*. Smit (1993:250-255) goes on to say for many feminists the church signifies oppression. The AMEC is also the ultimate patriarchal and oppressor since it practises overpowering women by the authority of men. "After 2000 years the church remains an institution structured by men for men. Whilst proclaiming external freedom in Christ, it endorses temporal bondage for women" (Smit 1993:250-255). Women are given the menial and tedious tasks while men make the vital decisions. To him, "One of the major areas of controversy in the church is the ordaining of women to professional ministry". He is amazed at why should there be any questions of ordaining women who have felt the call of God to the pastorate. Ordination of women to professional ministry in the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is one of the developments that needs to be appreciated.

According to Smit (1993:250-255), the abuse of women in many areas of life and their treatment as inferior to men for many centuries is a virtual "given". Although the Reformers made some far-reaching changes in the theology of women by raising their status in theory, in actual practice little was achieved. The Methodists and Quakers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all advanced the cause of equality for women, but they were a minority in the church. Smit (1993:250-255) applauds the emphasis on Jesus as the Liberator of every facet of



life. We must also keep in mind Smit's (1993:250-255) suggestion that "for Christians, all ideologies must be subject to constant critique in the light of the Gospel". The present century has seen an escalation in the battle for equal rights for women in politics, society and economics, as well as in the church. As the century draws to a close, women still fail to enjoy a position equal with men in the AMEC. If the gender and equality is restored in Christ, then why does the AMEC seek to see women as subordinates to men? Women's liberationists are correct in their insistence that the church must practice consistency in its theology and this challenges the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa as well.

The researcher needs to advise the AMEC ministry and laity to take the bold stand on social issues such as service delivery, giving hope to the HIV/AIDS affected and infected, caring for the poor, *combatting* racism, corruption and unemployment and by empowering, training and liaising with the government and the NGOs on matters of social concerns.

The discussed theologies of liberation seem to no longer address the spiritual needs of the AMEC members in post 1994 South Africa. There might be challenges that debar the AMEC members in South Africa to fully participate in *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa that will need attention. On the premises of the above information, Chapter Four of this study will look into the challenges of the AMEC members in participation in *missio Dei* in post 1994 in South Africa.

In answering to the question of whether there is a need for black and liberation theology in South Africa in the post 1994 era, Vellem's (2015:662) response is that the time of uprising is not over, and believes that the question is not about the relevance of black theology and thus black ecclesiology post 1994, but what the post 1994 democratic dispensation does to the former. He maintains it is the progression of racist logic, neo-colonial and economic exclusion related to modernist constructs that the prism of black ecclesiology would focus on.

# **CHAPTER 4 THE CHALLENGES OF THE AMEC MEMBERS ON PARTICIPATION IN MISSIO DEI IN POST 1994 SOUTH AFRICA**

## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter intends to investigate the challenges facing the AMEC members in participation in missio Dei in post 1994 in South Africa. The challenges mentioned above in chapter 2 were there prior 1994 and are still here in post 1994 South Africa. These concepts will be investigated against what the AMEC members believe in and how do these challenges affect their participation in missio Dei. Also, how must the understanding of the missio Dei influence the AMEC to think new about these challenges. The information obtained will guide the investigations towards the necessity of introducing a theological understanding of transformation that will address the spiritual needs of the AMEC members in post 1994 South Africa.

### **4.1.1 Mission of the AMEC**

The mission of the AMEC is to minister to the social, spiritual and physical development of all people (AMEC 2012:13). Engelsviken (2003:482) emphasises that mission is God's work from the beginning to the end and that God is the acting subject in mission. According to Engelsviken (2003:482), "The mission, and with it the church, is God's very own work." Both the AMEC and its mission are tools of God and the instruments through which God carries out His mission.

### **4.1.2 Vision of the AMEC**

The vision of the AMEC (2012:13) is that in every level of the Connection and of the local church, the AMEC shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, of which the AMEC evolved, which is to seek out and save the lost and to serve the needy.

### **4.1.3 The purpose of the AMEC**

According to the Doctrines and Discipline (2012:13), the ultimate purpose of the AMEC is to:

- make available God's biblical principles,
- spread Christ's liberating gospel, and
- provide continuing programmes which will enhance the entire social development of all people.

#### **4.1.4 The objectives of the AMEC**

The Doctrines and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:13) states that in order to meet the needs at every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AMEC shall implement strategies to train all its members in:

- Christian discipleship,
- Christian leadership,
- current teaching methods and materials,
- the history and significance of the AMEC,
- God's biblical principles, and
- social development to which all should be supplied for daily living.

#### **4.2 THE MISSIO DEI AS *MISSIO TRINITATIS DEI***

Bosch (1991b:392) explains *missio Dei* as the good news that God is the God-for-people, and mission is primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate. A mission refers to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs of participation on *missio Dei*. According to Bosch (1991b:392) mission has its origin in the fatherly heart of God who is the fountain of the sending love. Bosch (1991b:391) explains that the idea of *missio Dei* first surfaced in the Willingen Conference in 1952 and expounds that mission was put in the context of the doctrine of Trinity, and not of ecclesiology or soteriology. This is also attested to by Engelsviken (2003:482) who clarified that the term *missio Dei* was not actually used at the Willingen conference, but was used by Hartenstein in his summary report, where he described mission as, "participation in the sending of the Son by the Father, in the *missio Dei*, with an inclusive and holistic aim of establishing the Lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation".

Bosch (1991b:390) further elucidates the classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit was expanded to include yet another movement where the God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sent the church into the world. Bosch further alluded to the fact that mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God and that it is not the church that has mission of salvation to fulfil in the world, but the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the

church. He understands mission as, “the movement from God to the world and the church as an instrument for that mission” (1991b:390).

Berkhof (1996:85-87) indicates that the Bible never dealt with the doctrine of the Trinity as an imperceptible truth. He explicated that the Bible reveals the Trinitarian life in its various relations as a living reality to a certain extent in connection with the works of creation and providence, but particularly in relation to the work of redemption. Berkhof (1996:85-87) also believes that in God there are no three individuals alongside of, and separate from one another, but only personal self-distinctions with the Divine essence, which is not only generically, but also numerically One. The Divine being of God implies an ‘I’, ‘Thou’ and ‘He’, which assume personal relations to one another (Matt 3:16; John 1:18; 3:16; 5:20-22; 14:26).

Murray (2004:57) believes that there is a certain order in the ontological Trinity. In personal subsistence the Father is the first of the equals, the Son the second of the equals, and the Holy Spirit the third of the equals. The ontological Trinity and its inherent order is the metaphysical basis of the economical Trinity, (Berkhof 1996:85-87). Scripture clearly indicates that all things are out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 28:19 when Christ was commissioning the disciples, He said: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.

Volf (1998:217) hints at a trinitarian premise for polycentrism through description of subordination within the triune God when he says: “The structure of Trinitarian relations is characterised neither by a pyramidal dominance of the one nor by a hierarchy bipolarity between the one and many, but rather by a polycentric and symmetrical reciprocity of the many”.

Woodward (2012:20) believes that hierarchical forms of leadership create an ‘individualistic approach to spiritual formation’ whereas polycentric leadership provides a ‘community of leaders within the community’. He also believes that a polycentric model of missional leadership gives people equal authority and revolving leadership’ (Woodward 2012:100). Polycentrism recognises that leadership can come from anyone whom the Holy Spirit empowers, regardless of age and experience. In this regard the AMEC needs to look at its leadership, especially in the ministry in local faith communities, but also internationally.

The AMEC believes there are three persons in this Trinitarian Godhead being the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The name in the Old Testament is ascribed to the Triune God, to express the theocratic relation in which God stands to Israel as His covenant people (Gen 9: 9-17; 15: 18; 17: 2; Psalm 105: 8; Eze 37: 26). God is biblically explained as the creator of the universe (Gen 14: 19; Is 40: 28; Col 3: 10). The AMEC’s original motto read as “God our Father,



Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother” and operated until the 1980s, after a surge of Pentecostalism since 1906 which convinced the AMEC to alter its motto to “God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Man Our Brother”. The 1912 General Conference retained the motto until at the sitting of the 2008 General Conference where the new motto which still stands was adopted and now reads, “God our father, Christ our Redeemer, Holy Spirit our Comforter, Humankind our Family” (AMEC 2012:14). To the researcher the change of motto shows development on the side of the AMEC and in that it realised the separation it made in the Trinity when “man” was put on par with the Father and the Son and leaving out the Holy Spirit. The researcher is of the opinion that the word ‘man’ in the original motto of the AMEC showed that this church is not gender sensitive and this was also a sign of patriarchy. This according to the researcher addresses man since the election of the first woman bishop as stipulated before was only on the 11th July 2000. This very woman was also the first woman president of the Council of Bishops of the AMEC. The current motto shows the AMEC’s acknowledgement of the Holy Trinity and recognition of the *missio Dei*. The change of the motto is one of the developments in the AMEC which needs to be acknowledged and appreciated as it shows theological understanding of the Holy Trinity. Marumo (2013:45) refers to God as the Trinitarian God who is different from the distant Supreme Being who is worshipped in traditional beliefs of Africans.

### **4.3 THE BELIEFS OF THE AMEC**

#### **4.3.1 The AMEC believes in the Father as originator of the *missio Dei***

As highlighted by Mbiti (1990:29), “God is known and thus not a stranger to African people and in African traditional life and there are no doubters. Since God is the One who created the universe and saved His people, it is evident that salvation is not limited to the believers only but to all and includes the creation of the new heaven and the new earth as stated in Revelation 21:1.”

The first Article of Religion in the Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:14) affirms God as the Father and the First Person in the Trinity, God of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker of all things, both visible and invisible, whilst the Apostle’s Creed (2012:487) also confirms the AMEC’s belief in God the Father Almighty the maker of heaven and earth. The name “Father” is applied to the first person in the Trinity in His relation to the second person (the Son) and the whole universe (Mt 11: 27; Jn 6: 46; 8:9 19; Heb 1: 2; 11: 3). In some cases it applies particularly to the first person, to whom the work of creation is especially ascribed in Scripture. It is from this understanding that we read in John 3:16 that, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son”. Because of the love of the Father for his creation and His covenant (Gen 12) with his people, he does not forsake them but sends his Son to save the



world. "It was the origin of God's election of Israel as the means he would use to bless the nations, and it undergirds Paul's theology and practice of mission to the Gentiles in the New Testament," (Wright 2006:324).

#### **4.3.2 The AMEC's belief in the Son**

As highlighted by Berkhof (1996:210) the Socinians and the Unitarians rejected the notion of the tri-personal Godhead, as they see in Jesus a mere man and regard the name "Son of God" as applied to Him primarily as an honorary title conferred upon Him. Scriptures teach us that Jesus is the complete revelation of God (John 1: 18; Heb 1:1- 4). Jesus Christ is described as the Son of Man (Mt 16:27) and the Son of God (Is 9:6; Mt 3:17; 16:16; 1 Jn 2:23; Rev 2:18) and is the one who was sent and became a *diakonos*. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for sins (1Jn 2:2; 4:1) and mediator of the new covenant, the new life which is eternal (John 17:3) and died as ransom to set sinners free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation (Col 1:15; Eph 5:23) and a light for revelation to the Gentiles (Lk 2: 32). Jesus, the Son, is described as God from eternity to eternity. When Christ came, so did the kingdom of God as John the Baptist preached in the Desert of Judea (Matt 3:2) and Christ himself also preached about it in His Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:3-12; 10:7; 13:24; 16:19; Lk 9:2; 10:9; 23:5; Jn 18: 36), where He even taught people about the difference between the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of earth.

The AMEC believes in Jesus Christ (Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24) as the Second Person in the Trinity, his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection (AMEC, 2012:14). The Apostles' Creed as contained in the Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:487) also affirms this belief. The motto of the AMEC affirms Christ as the Redeemer. According to Guder (2000:47) the incarnation as in John 20:21 is at the heart of God's mission and it demonstrates the independence of God's mission as it is not dependable on cultures and languages (Guder 2000:78).

This is attested to by Knoetze (2015:4-7) when saying, "The fact that God sent his Son gives everybody the opportunity to become a new person in Christ". Knoetze (2015:4-7) indicates that the unconditional love of the Father is shown in the fact that he sent his Son Jesus Christ and the Father and the Son sent the Spirit who is with us, in us and amongst us, and who empowers us.

#### **4.3.3 The AMEC believes in the Holy Spirit**

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:14) describes the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity proceeding from the Father and the Son. When Jesus Christ ascended into heaven to rule this earth from the right hand of God, he did not leave God's people as orphans but He sent them the Holy Spirit. The fourth Article of Religion in the Doctrine and Discipline of

the AMEC (2012:14) and the Apostles' Creed (2012:497) confirms the AMEC's belief in the Holy Spirit as the comforter, as it is also indicated in the motto. God the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide the disciples as indicated in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit which Christ has promised his disciples, taught them to obey what he has taught and he commissioned them to baptise the believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:18-20). It is clear and understandable that without the power of the Holy Spirit, no sending into the world would be possible. The Old Testament speaks of the 'spirit of God', the 'spirit of the Lord' and uses the term 'Holy Spirit' only in Ps 51:11 and Isa. 63:10-11 while in the New Testament this is commonly used (Jn. 1:29; Acts 3:19; Col 2:13). The spirit equips Christians with all the gifts (Eph 4:11-12) that they need, so that they can serve each other and the world. The Holy Spirit has been given to equip and build-up the church as well for service in the world. As the sending Father sent the Son, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sent the Church into the world.

Knoetze (2015:4-7) describes the Holy Spirit as the One who calls people to preach the Good News (Is 6, 61). It is also the Holy Spirit that convicts people for sin, guides people into all truth and makes God known (Jn 16). It is the Spirit who strengthens believers and reveals the richness of the love of Christ known to them (Eph 3). Knoetze (2015:4-7) indicates that the Holy Spirit makes God known, not through knowledge (*gnosis*) or certain texts, but through the fullness of God's Word. According to Romans 10, believers may confess that they live *ex auditu verbi* [from hearing the Word]". Knoetze (2015:4-7) goes on to say, "The Holy Spirit is the living God that gives life in creation (Gen 1:2), in the lives of believers, in their thinking, their convictions and their behaviour". He believes that the Holy Spirit also gives life to the church.

#### **4.3.4 The Church**

In Paul's understanding, the church is "the world in obedience to God" and "the redeemed creation" (Käsemann 1969:134). The legitimate sign of the church is the cross of Christ (Käsemann 1974:130). In Paul's thinking the "righteousness of God" (Rom 3:21-31) is to be interpreted as a gift to the community, not to the individual. God's pilgrim people need only two things: support for the road and a destination at the end of it (Power 1970:28). The AMEC like other churches described by Beker (1980:326) is in the world and for the world, meaning that it must have "an active vocation and mission" to the created and its institutions.

He emphasises the fact that there is indeed no place in the church for the isolated self or for the selfish (Beker 1983:85). It is also the community of hope which groans and labours for the redemption of the world and for its own consummation (Beker 1984:69). Beker (1984:69) describes the church as a proleptic reality, the sign of the dawning of the new age in the midst of the old and as such the vanguard of God's new world. The AMEC's existence should be for

the sake of the glory of God and a reflective solidarity and interdependence” between it and the world, following the description of the church by Beker (1984:36). The unity of the church is called to question when groups of Christians segregate themselves on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or social status. God in Christ has accepted us unconditionally; we have to do likewise with regard to one another (Bosch 1991:165). Both the AMEC and its mission are the tools of God, and instruments through which God carries out his mission.

Berkhof (1996:555) describes the biblical names of the Old Testament Church, as *qahal* or *kahal* which are derived from an obsolete root *qal* (or *kal*), meaning “to call”, and *’edhah*, from *ya’adh*, ‘to appoint’ or ‘to meet or come together at an appointed place’. He highlights that these two words are sometimes used indiscriminately, but were not, at first, strictly synonymous. Berkhof (1996:555) defines *’Edhah*, as a gathering by appointment, and *’qahal* as the actual meeting of the people. He says the New Testament uses words derived from the Septuagint, namely, *’ekklēsia*, from *’ek* and *’kaleo*, meaning “to call out”, and *’synagogue*, from *’sun* and *’ago*, meaning to “come or bring together”. The latter, he says, is used exclusively to denote either the religious gathering of the Jews or the buildings in which they assembled for public worship, (Matt: 4:23; Acts 13:43; Rev: 2:9; 3:9). According to Berkhof (1996:555), sociologists are said to have pointed out that any social organisation, in order to continue, must have boundaries, maintain structural stability as well as flexibility, and create a unique culture. He went on to say the numerically small communities that Paul left, assumed the name *ekklēsia* as used in the Septuagint and which is the translation for the Hebrew *’Kahal*, whilst in current Greek, it normally refers to the town meeting of free male citizens of Greek constitution. The word Church comes from the Greek term *ekklēsia*, which means “the called out ones” (Harrison 1996:95), or as suggested by Erickson (1998:104), deriving from *kuriakos*, “belonging to the Lord”.

The AMEC is the kind of a church that needs to revisit its structure and become flexible, whilst on the other hand considering its culture. The AMEC is similar to the church described by Murray (2003:57) that needs transformation to become all-inclusive, meaning changing its doctrine for its betterment and practise proper pastoral appointment criteria. It also needs direction on its benevolent programmes and to consider a new theological understanding that will enhance it in post 1994 South Africa. The AMEC must be transformed to an all-inclusive church in which the Word of God will be proclaimed and the pastors and lay people will be appointed in offices on the basis of their talents and qualifications. The AMEC’s history of where, when, why and how it started is clear and straight to the point that it is protestant and needs to change in order to adapt to the present. The AMEC appears lacking as to all-inclusiveness especially on gender issues, employment practices where qualifications and

relevant skills must be considered, participation on poverty alleviation and HIV and AIDS support programmes and therefore needs development in such aspects.

According to Wright (2010:284), the primary function of a church is to spread the gospel and social action is secondary in this regard. It must be well understood what the church is meant to be, as well as what the church is meant to say. If we preach the gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what transformed looks like, by portraying the whole church having integrity, justice, unity, inclusion and Christlikeness.

According to Hendriks (2004:69-70), the contextual analysis of the congregation is necessary when the church is self-centred and focused on its own institutional well-being. The AMEC needs not lose vision of its missional character and the needs and challenges that might be addressed in its community. Hendriks (2004:25) is of the opinion that the identity of the church is missional by its very nature. His emphasis is on the fact that the faith community consists of disciples participating in God's ongoing mission, praxis, involvement with this world, with the poor and the sick, with the rich and the powerful, with earth and sky. Hendriks (2004:25) reminds us that God wants us to internalise that we are his apostles, a people called, a people sent to be an eschatological sign of a new Kingdom and a new Jerusalem. The AMEC like any other church should be the kind of church in a closer relationship with the poor, than any other institution since many congregants are the poor, sick and wounded in one way or another and the church is their only place of hope.

The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa in particular must understand that the primary mission work is not for those already in the pews, but to the world. The AMEC must remember that the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) is not for the converted but to convert the non-converted. The AMEC has a challenge on participation in *missio Dei* in post 1994 in South Africa when it has to teach and make the above-mentioned people disciples.

The Church, according to the Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC (2012:14), is a congregation of faithful people, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance. God's creation of the universe and all who dwell in it (Ps 24:1-2) is basic for the mission of the AMEC, as stated in the Apostles' Creed (2012:487) where the Christians declare that they believe in the communion of Saints. The AMEC members must understand that they are the community of faith who are involved in creating new relationships among themselves and in society at large, by bearing witness to the lordship of Christ.

In the researcher's understanding of the *missio Dei*, the AMEC as community of faith is not the other world, but involved with the world, meaning that it is also missionary and has the



responsibility of full participation in *missio Dei*. The AMEC members like other Christians are called to practise a messianic lifestyle inside and outside the church. The AMEC must count itself as one of the eschatological people of God and a living witness of the endorsement of God's promises to his people in the world. The church must always be a primary community on the way to its self-surrender unto the kingdom of God. The primary mission of the AMEC in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District must be witnessed by the proclamation of the Word accompanied by deeds.

Jesus called the Church to carry and continue His ministry as commanded to them. The church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus, therefore, His mandate becomes its mandate (Luke 4:18-19). The church has to go on with the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20): "make disciples" which entails "going, baptising, and teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you".

The researcher aligns herself with Paul's thinking in Romans 3:21-31 and his emphasis that there is indeed no place in the church for the isolated self or for the selfish. When he says the unity of the church is called to question when groups of Christians segregate themselves on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity or social status. The AMEC as a product of liberation theology must lead an exemplary life especially on the side of the poor and the discriminated. The AMEC still has a problem of gender where men are dominating women in its leadership positions. When the history tells that the founder of the AMEC moved out of the church because of segregation and discrimination, where does it stand as compared to the description of the church Paul is talking about in Rom 3:21-31. The mission of the AMEC (2012:13) is not yet fully participating in the *missio Dei*. Seniority determines the order of the AMEC and is used as a defence mechanism even if nothing qualifies one. Development and training is still lacking in the AMEC since most of the pastors are not life-long students. Like the people who know the pain of segregation and discrimination, the AMEC is challenged to transform and do things better than before. Paul describes the church as the holy Christ's body on earth, and says when believers are insensitive to the needs and circumstances of others, they actually "despise the Church of God" (1Cor 11:22). The church in general according to the researcher is in a closer relationship with the poor, than any other institution and as such it is in a better position to develop the congregants.

#### **4.3.5 The Local Church**

Barackman (1992:381) suspects that, "although Jesus Himself, the founder of the Church (Matt. 16:18) did not plant a single local church, their establishment was influenced by the words of Jesus in both Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20". Barackman stresses that the definition of the local church does not deal with any specific form of the church government but is all-inclusive.

In his book 'Practical Christian Theology' (1992:381) he defines the local church in its content, its organisation, its practice, its mission and its hope: Thus the local church is:

- **In Content**

A gathering of the baptised, belonging to a certain place, who profess to be saved by trusting in Jesus and His anointing work (Acts 2:41, 47; 11:20-26; 18: 8-11).

- **In Organisation**

A gathering who are in agreement in doctrine, policy, and practice (Acts 2: 46; Eph. 4:1-6)

- **In Practice**

A gathering who, recognising the Lord's presence (Mt. 18:20), assemble regularly to worship God (Acts 2:47; 13:2), to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42;20:7; 1Cor 11:23-26), to fellowship together in the study of the Word and in prayer (Acts 2:42; 4:23-31) to exercise their spiritual gifts for the edification of one another (Acts 9:31; 13:1; 1Cor 12:1-13; 14:23-26), to do good works (Acts 11:27-30;Gal.6:10; Rev.2:5) and to exercise corrective discipline when it is needed (Matt 18:15-20; 1Cor 5:4-5).

- **In Mission**

A gathering who bear witness to the gospel (1Thess. 1:8)

- **In Hope**

A gathering who are looking for the return of Jesus (1 Thess. 1:10; Phil. 3:20; Tit 2:13)

#### **4.4 THE AMEC PRACTICES**

Only two sacraments are recognised in the AMEC, baptism is to be performed on young children and the Lord's Supper. Concerning the Lord's Supper, the AMEC articles (Doctrine 2012:13) state that it is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves but rather a sacrament of redemption by Christ's death.

According to Schueneman (2012:873-902) life is crucial and he authenticated it by an example of the coming of Jesus that, "He came so that we can have life and that in abundance" (John 3:16). The AMEC uses the Eucharist which is the breaking of bread and the mass. These sacraments are administered for the glorification of God (AMEC 2012:14). The Sunday worship services are held in the AMEC and may vary from church to church. There is no decree that

they are exactly alike and they may vary among cultures. Individual churches of the AMEC have the right to use the rites and ceremonies in a way that suits the congregation.

Schueneman's (2012:873) view is that the eucharist and all the sacraments are expression of relationship between church, world and God's kingdom. He elaborates that when the devil showed all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, he presented him with power and glory, because they were available to the devil (Luke 4:17). Jesus, however, laid claim to another kind of kingdom, which is not of this world (John 18:36). Schueneman (2012:873) explains that the kingdom of God cannot be limited to a certain area. He says one cannot draw a boundary to show where the Kingdom of God begins and where it ends. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Redeemer (Lk 21:28; Eph 1:7) and the Saviour of the world (Titus 3:16; Jn 4:14). The attributes ascribed to him are eternal existence, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. He takes upon himself to be surety for His people and to execute in His incarnation, sufferings and death. The attributes of wisdom, power, mercy and grace are specifically attributed to Christ.

The apostle Paul urged with the Christians in Rome to worship the living God in every sphere of life (Rom 12:1). O'Brien (2004:201) encourages Christians to be indelible, whether inspired or not, for otherwise they would fall short of the ultimate goal of building up other people (1Cor 14:16-17).

A typical worship service in the AMEC may include music and hymns, responsive prayers, Scripture readings, a sermon, the offering, and communion. The AMEC is founded within the Trinity because when baptising they do it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The bread in the Lord's Supper is administered in remembrance of the body of Christ. The wine is the remembrance of the blood of Christ that was shed on the cross. The mission, vision, purpose and objectives of the AMEC are developed looking into the mission of God. The AMEC only needs to re-visit and re-evaluate its missional character and come up with the strategy on how to meet the challenges it faces in participation in *missio Dei*.

## **4.5 THE AMEC'S VIEW ON SIN**

### **4.5.1 The definition of sin as to the Western Christian theology**

According to Migliore (1991:131), the Western Christian theology understood sin as a conscious human decision to turn away from God. He says in the Western Christian theology sin has also been understood as an act of idolatry. In biblical terms, 'idolatry' refers to the case whereby a human being decides to create his or her own God out of either himself or herself or out of an object of his or her own choice and thereby undermining the position of God



Rhodes (1991:8) highlights that sin is not primarily from an individual but from a social and economic perspective. Berkhof (1996:225) sees sin as an activity of the thought, word and deed contrary to the individual's conscience and his knowledge of the will of God. Adeyemo (1979:57) refers to sin as described in Genesis 13 and also as described by Paul saying, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom 5:12). Adeyemo attests to the fact that biblically, man is a sinner not because he sins, but because he is a sinner by nature. Wright (2010:40) expounds on sin as human disobedience and rebellion against God Creator (Gen.3-11). He further indicates that God chose not to abandon or destroy His creation, but redeemed them within history through persons and events that run from the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to the return to Christ. According to the doctrines of the AMEC (2012:15), the original sin stands not in the following of Adam, but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that is engendered of the offspring of Adam. As to the given explanations and definitions by the above-mentioned theologians (Adeyemo 1979; AMEC 2012; Berkhof 1996; Rhodes 1991; Wright 2010) the researcher sees sin as thoughts, actions, words and deeds of individuals, communities and societies that are contrary to the will of God the Creator of the universe. The researcher agrees that sin is the result of disobedience to God's will since God gave man the laws to abide with and also created man for His glorification. This part of the study assists the researcher in the understanding of sin from other perspectives.

#### **4.5.2 An African view of sin**

In traditional African religion and culture, both human sin and evil are perceived in terms of breaking of the peaceful relationship within the community (Maimela 1983:45). Sin in African Traditional Religion is mostly concerned with transgression of morals or community norms.

This is attested to by McGrath (1994:270) and Kelly (1977:348) who believe that before the fall, human beings were in a state of perfection and blessedness. Hick (1983:43) says, "All evil is either sin or a punishment for sin." Mbiti (1986:200) elucidates that African people recognise social order and peace as essential and sacred and their disruption is regarded as sin and thereby punishable.

The researcher aligns herself with the creation story that the world was created perfect by God, until some of the angels turned from the Supreme God, thereby rebelling against Him. She believes that these angels tempted the first man and woman to fall and this fall of angelic and human beings was the origin of sin. In the AMEC with most of its members as Africans, the church should take note of different views of sin to be able to bring the good news of liberation and salvation of all kinds of bondages whether, spiritual, cultural or political.



## **4.6 CHALLENGES OF THE AMEC FROM A MISSIO DEI PERSPECTIVE**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher will deal with the challenges of the AMEC from the missio Dei perspective and find the way of overcoming them. The researcher has identified the following sub-topics as challenges of the AMEC from the missio Dei perspective.

#### **4.6.1 Leadership within the missio Dei**

It was mentioned by Jenkins (2002:1), as quoted in chapter two, that global Christianity challenges the leadership of the church to change and this also refers to the AMEC. The leadership of the AMEC in South Africa has to understand the continued diversities in Christian mission. The examples Jenkins (2002:1) has made, were those of Zambia and Africa at large in which the three main movements are worth mentioning: the dying of Christendom, the growth of African Independent Churches (AICs) and American Pentecostalism with its overtones of the so called "prosperity gospel". Global Christianity is one of the transforming movements in the history of religion worldwide and shows no possibility of stopping its impact on religion worldwide.

The AMEC is challenged to revisit its theology and transform since globalisation is calling for transition and transformation. Comprehension of diversities in the mission orientations of all the movements within Christianity is a need for the AMEC. The AMEC as the protestant church first needs spiritual transformation so that it can preach it to those in need in order to carry forward the mission of Christ. The researcher believes that the AMEC is in good relationship with the government on the ground that even in America where it started, regardless of what was happening in the church as a result of the state laws there was no blood shed.

Richard Allen and Absalom Jones with a group of worshippers peacefully exited St George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as an act of protest against segregation in the house of the Lord. The history of the origin of the AMEC never told the world that the church was up in arms for liberation of black Americans. Liberation from discrimination and segregation was the primary concern of the AMEC at its origin but the responsibilities that came with liberation is not yet addressed in post 1994 in South Africa hence a suggestion for the new theological understanding of transformation theology.

Globalisation definitely affects the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa but it should not be an excuse for its declination it must rather be seen as a steppingstone. In order for the AMEC to be proficient in missional development participation in the missio Dei and the contextual realities of secular communities should be re-discovered. The AMEC must be ready enough to sustain

its Christian ethos while being able to adapt and improvise to whatever obstacle, including globalisation, presents in contemporary South Africa in post 1994.

As described in the introduction of chapter one that the West Annual Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District is composed of the Johannesburg, Khunwana, Lichtenburg, Mmabatho and the Potchefstroom Presiding Elders' Districts; the top-down leadership structure as according to gender will now be described. The current Episcopal head of the One Hundred and Twenty First West Annual Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC is the Bishop who is a male. The afore-mentioned five Presiding Elders' Districts are led by males; then forty-four pastors of whom thirty-eight are males and six are females. This is an indication that the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC in post 1994 in South Africa is still not sensitive enough to gender equity and equality. Both gender equity and equality as described in the National Gender Policy Framework (Kornegay 2000) of South Africa are problems of concern in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The fairness, justice, equal conditions and realisation of full human rights and potential in both gender equity and equality simply means that men and women should be given equal opportunities to succeed despite their differences. The appointments according to gender remain a challenge in the West Conference of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

To enhance the statement on gender equality and equity as a challenge facing women in ministry in the AMEC, the example of Jarena Lee who was the first black woman in America to be refused admission in itinerant ministry in 1820 and only permitted to hold prayer meetings in her house and to exhort until her death in 1855 will be used. The AMEC Council of Bishops at the Connectional level, under the leadership of Bishop John Richard Bryant, the Senior Bishop, had on Friday the 8 April 2016 announced that Mrs Jarena Lee will be posthumously ordained at the 50<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Session of the General Conference which will be held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from the 6<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 where she will be announced, rightly and deservedly as the Reverend Jarena Lee (General Conference Minutes of the AMEC at Philadelphia, PA. 2016). Women are nowadays admitted into ministry in the AMEC but the challenge is that both gender equality and equity are not taken care of in post 1994 South Africa.

Since the establishment of the AMEC in 1816 the first female bishop was only elected at the 46<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Conference which was held in the year 2000. To date the elected female bishops are approximately 4% of the total number of bishops in the AMEC and there has never been a female bishop in Africa as a whole and this also signifies inequality on gender issues. The AMEC's appointment criteria are still lacking and discriminating to gender issues, as men are still dominating in holding or occupying higher positions than women. This statement is in no



way intended to undermine the role played by men in the ministry of the AMEC, but rather to shed light on what transformation has (has not) taken place in the church.

The AMEC needs to change its culture, actions and assumptions by transforming and changing to something new and different. This calls for a paradigm shift in leadership style and a new kind of mindset. The way things have been done no longer works for anyone hence change is paramount for in the new world. It is advisable for the AMEC to transform and witness God's grace by participation in *missio Dei*.

Elkington *et al.* (2015) call for a different type of leadership, that is not seen as an autocratic top down CEO, but as a servant, leader and a shepherd who serves to equip the body to accomplish the work of the ministry, the *missio Dei*. The missional leader who is seeking to accomplish the *missio Dei* will look to leadership development with a view to how those enhanced leadership qualities strengthen the rest of community in their call to accomplish the mission of God. (Fleming 2004:11-18). The researcher agrees with Elkington *et al.* (2015) that the members of the church must be given freedom to accomplish the mission of God and the ministry of the local church according to their giftedness, talents and culture.

#### **4.6.2 Social challenges and the *missio Dei***

Verhey (1986:1) articulates that “whenever and wherever Christians have joined together in a gathered community, their elementary intentions have been to discuss and determine their personal and social responsibilities in the light of their shared views and communal reliability”. Hendriks (2004:27) indicates as in chapter two that the church as a theological and sociological entity and must be in the midst of the world. Anderson (2004:84) points out that the mission of God does not discriminate between the believers and non-believers.

According to Parratt (2004:5), the church will have to analyse and reflect upon the social and political situation in which people live before daring to speak and teach about the presence of God. Without analyses and reflection (discernment), churches may dehumanise people even more if they engage them in unsustainable development, and creating expectations that cannot be met.

Emedi (2010:36), in his work on ‘The Local Church as an Agent of Social Transformation in a Poor Community’, realises that the social function of the church is most probably underplayed in churches. His motivation on the underplayed role of the churches is based on the grounds that, “during Christ’s early ministry, He modelled compassion and mercy for the poor, the sick and the needy, the oppressed and the outcast of the society”.

The Scripture testifies that Jesus preached, taught, did the good and healed the sick (Matt 4:23-24). Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. We are taught, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Luke 4:18-19, Isaiah 61:1-11). Social concern is also described by James as the mark of a true religion (James 1: 27): "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

The 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the AMEC must seriously regard the context that shapes the lives of its members and this challenges the AMEC to take its stance in the world as a Christ sent church. The AMEC needs not distance itself from the developmental programmes of the government, but to influence them by fully participating and contributing in their development. By influencing, participating and contributing to the government developmental programmes the AMEC will be in a position to assist in service delivery as it will identify and submit the needs of its members to the government. The AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is also sent to the world and has a lot to contribute in proclaiming transformation in the world. Whilst the AMEC continues to proclaim the Kingdom of God in the world, it must also have the interests of the poor, the marginalised, ostracised, robbed, unemployed, corrupted and HIV/AIDS victims at heart.

The AMEC has a stable infrastructures which can be fully utilised for development of the poor communities and congregants. The AMEC has the potential of feeding the poor, but the effort is not sustainable because it is done occasionally. It would be advisable for the AMEC to selflessly demonstrate a concern for the needy of all conditions and origins. The AMEC has to collaborate with various entities and public institutions so that no one seeking support may be lacking a hand to help them overcome their difficulties.

Vorster (2007:256-259) alludes to the fact that the church has to restore its holiness by becoming a strong voice in opposing the mistakes of the past neglect of the poor, the downtrodden and the sick. As reported by Wilkinson in the Daily Maverick (2015), the South Africans blame foreigners for joblessness and other social evils as a scapegoat to complex social problems in the country. It is stressed that these perceptions often turn to be contrary to the scientific research which shows that foreigners contribute to job creation even in the South African situation. Other social challenges are said to be the xenophobic attacks on foreigners which left many refugees dislodged and stranded and this is still continuing (SAHO 2015).

Soares *et al.* (2017) describe the *missio Dei* in terms of provision for refugees, challenges faced by refugees and the responsibility that the church has towards refugees and the displaced.



They go on to say, Jesus Christ's mission is related to people of various backgrounds, even those on the margins of society. Soares *et al.* (2017) encourage the pastors and church leaders to empower the church members with the Word of God from the perspective of *missio Dei* to the refugees. They agree that the church has the responsibility to participate in what God is doing in the world. Such participation shows political involvement and a social responsibility towards the refugees and the destitute of the society to express the love of God to them.

#### **4.6.3 Political challenges from the *missio Dei* perspective**

Prior 1994 in South Africa people were brutally killed if they were suspected to be police informers and that evil deed was called necklacing (which was ramming a tyre over the head and shoulders of a victim, filling it with petrol and setting it alight). That action was given potency from a speech by Winnie Mandela on 13 April 1986 at a rally at Munsieville saying: "We have no guns, we have only stones, boxes of matches, and petrol. Together, hand in hand, with our boxes of matches and our necklaces we shall liberate our country." Since that time until today the stones, boxes of matches and the petrol are the powerful political tools and a heart wrenching image. The democratic South Africa which is said to have been liberated by use of stones, boxes of matches and petrol, is in post 1994 continuing to reap what has been sown. The unfortunate part is that more of the victims are the poor, since the rich will never have reasons to protest. The daily stoning and burning of properties and people, by people with no guns in their hands, are indications of dissatisfaction of residents in different communities and the way of sending the message. The AMEC as a protestant church must be in a position to be the voice of the voiceless and give hope to the hopeless in the hopeless situations.

In Time magazine a report was published on the eve of South Africa's general elections on 22 April 2009; Dlamini quoted a jobless and disillusioned Vincent Ntswayi saying, "My life was better during apartheid. Freedom turned to be just a word." These statements were uttered in fifteen years of democracy and that shows there are still gaps which need to be bridged. As it was stated in chapter one that the dissatisfied community in Kopela village in the Tswaing Municipality for example, protested due to non-service delivery and a lot of damage was done especially on the part of infrastructure. This has an economic impact on the country and affects the church in general. The AMEC must be in solidarity with the poor and protect them from being used by politicians to vote them into the government and thereafter forget about them until the next elections.

The church is symbolised as the Body of Christ and the researcher's understanding about the parts of the body is that they all need each other. Maimela (1998:118) highlights that God came down from His throne and chose to be born of poor parents, to live and die as a poor and oppressed human being so as to give the oppressed black people new life and hope. He

explains that in so doing, the Creator, in Jesus, chose to identify the divine being with human suffering and pain and letting Him share in it so that God might win freedom and life in its fullness for the downtrodden. Maimela (1998:118) and Maluleke (2005:1) agree that God saved humankind by showing solidarity with them in their struggles. They went on to say Africans and African theology place a high premium on the fact that in becoming human in Jesus, God was not born in the sumptuous palaces of kings, but that the Almighty and transcendent God chose to empty the godhead in order to take on the nature of a slave. The AMEC as the community of faith must be in solidarity with people who are discriminated against and oppressed because of race and gender by emphasising to the believers and non-believers holding high positions in government that people are made in the image of God and before Him we are all equal. The poor, unemployed and the HIV/AIDS infected and affected people must be given hope and shown how God loves all His creation and provides in times of need. It is the responsibility of the AMEC to condemn publicly and report all the acts of corruption even in the government.

Mphahlele's (2008:28) pleads with anybody who calls himself (or herself) a Christian to fight against hunger, poverty, suffering, oppression, exploitation and racism. Mphahlele (2008:28) clarifies that the political change that came in 1994 is not able to address the social issues haunting the South African society and believes that the church can make a difference. The researcher aligns herself with Mphahlele (2004:28), because if the political change of 1994 in South Africa could have addressed these social issues, the communities would not protest against the government. There would simply be no heart breaking statement uttered by the jobless and disillusioned Vincent Ntswayi in Time Magazine of 22 April 2009, in the fifteen years of democracy where people were expecting to have benefitted much. South Africa is presently in the twenty third year of democracy but people are still talking the same language of poverty, unemployment, lack of gender equity and equality, racism, corruption and the HIV/AIDS epidemic which are still threatening the country. The AMEC in America is in its 201st year and South Africa in its 101st year of existence but did not experience transformation at all. The AMEC must stand up to defend and speak for the speechless as the church is participating in God's mission in post 1994 South Africa.

According to Ewell's (2012:387) exploration,

“In the Old Testament, Israel was never called to be a boundary of God's love, grace and judgement, but to be an example of God's dealing with humankind. The Old Testament prophets, have not only urged God's people to turn away from other gods and return to the worship of the true and only God, but they also longed to see the nations stream up to Jerusalem to worship God in the temple.”

Ewell (2012:387) goes on to say that “in the New Testament the church grew and it was strengthened through its holistic witness, where at the end of Acts 2, preaching and teaching go hand in hand with feeding the poor, caring for the sick and devoted to fellowship”. Jesus would always change the situation of people and this the researcher believes the AMEC as faith community must practice and live, participating in *missio Dei*.

#### **4.6.4 Ministerial challenges from the *missio Dei***

The retirement age of 73 year is still a challenge to the ministry of the AMEC. The old pastor will be preaching to the young, energetic and knowledgeable people who become bored at times and resort to joining the churches where they will feel spiritually fulfilled. The AMEC allow its pastors to work, since it does not have a central budget for its pastors. Having no central budget for the pastors, aggravates their problems and leaves the small congregations with the headache of paying pastors who are completely dependent for support. The poor people who need the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa for protection and assistance will find it difficult to buy their pastor a bar of soap which they themselves struggle to have.

The working class will also have their tensions, as one will sometimes use his or her money to meet some church obligations. They will cooperatively support the services of the church and remember their pastor in prayers but they have their own financial problems. Ordained young ministers and pastors, because of poor congregations, choose diverse settings in which they will work. Kiser (2016:1) in his journal attests to the fact that the challenges that pastors sometimes have to face make one feel like “he has been trained to serve the church that does not exist”.

The AMEC still has the old people who are sometimes not even able to come to church and would always want to see their pastor visiting them. The researcher feels it is a blessing to have the old aged in the church and also taxing as not all the AMEC pastors are full time to can visit the aged frequently and to have enough time with them.

The researcher thinks that the appointment of AMEC pastors on yearly basis is challenge to the progress of the church as there is no stability in administration and this needs attention as for the church to be focused on *missio Dei*. These appointments are done without any induction even for the newly ordained and appointed ministers and sometimes one finds himself or herself practicing what he saw his predecessor doing whether it's wrong or right.

#### **4.6.5 Theological education and the *missio Dei***

Russel (1988:33-34) encourages Christians to adopt God's mission as the paradigm of theological education. He says the mission of theological education is to conscientise the people of God about their calling to participate in God's mission, to create a deepening

awareness of the socio-cultural reality of people's missionary calling, to transform it, and of their capacity to transform it. The mission of theological education is to equip and to empower God's people to participate in God's mission and therefore in the mission of the church.

Theron (1995:45-56) believes that theological education must equip and empower the people of God to fulfil God's mission. Mission, as attested to by Theron (1995:45-56), that requires of the church to be involved in the transformation of the society, to resist and to transform all social economic, political, cultural structures and values that oppress, diminish, and destroy life. To enhance the importance of theological education for the AMEC ministry, the researcher will use the relevance for theological education

#### **4.6.6 The relevance for theological education**



Theron (1995:45-56) highlights some aspects that are relevant for theological education, and which can be integrated, reformulated and translated into the development of a new model for theological education. The relevant principles which should shape and inform theological education as stated by Freire (in Theron 1995:45-56) are the following:

- *Human beings are conscious and historical beings living in a specific time and place.* They are subjects who are creatively present in the world, constantly recreating and transforming reality through their dialectical interaction with the world where their consciousness is directed.
- *Human beings are beings of dialogue and praxis* whose calling is to improve themselves and the world and thus to transform the world.
- *Education is never neutral:* It has a form and content that relate to people in society, and therefore has the influence of raising an explicit kind of society. Education as a political act is directional and either maintains the status quo or it is aimed at liberating processes that challenge the status quo.
- *Education must aim at liberation* and the transformation of society. Education must lead to realisation which in turn will result in transformation. Theological education must influence positive social transformation.

Theological education, as highlighted by Theron (1995:45-56), must aim at the transformation of society, and also at conscientising the church about the problems and oppressive structures in its context, be they social, cultural, economic, political or religious. Theron goes on to say theological education should be Biblical training, leadership training, equipping people with leadership, communication and management skills, enabling church leaders to be servant



leaders in order to provide effective leadership and responsible stewardship in all the ministries of the church by working effectively with groups and by managing projects.

Athyal (2003:51) maintains that theological education should be the transformational means as far as missiological challenges are concerned. It must empower people for the transformation of all social, economic, political, cultural structures, and values that oppress, diminish, and destroy life and prevent or deny the incarnation of God's love, justice and peace. Missional leadership is carrying out God's mission in every place with response to every human need and to the whole creation.

Saayman (2013:133-145) recommends mission as theological education to be the most important need in the development of Christian mission. He describes the concept of *mathetes* as very important for the understanding of theological education as mission. The researcher agrees with Russel (1988), Theron (1995) and Du Preez *et al.* (2014) on the importance of theological education for pastors, ministers and lay people who all need theological education. If people can be made aware that everyone needs more theological inputs in all different departments, organisations, and in families they might have a different view on theological education. Workshops, posters and seminars can deliver the message quickly but people must understand first why they need theological education and how to get it. Theological education can assist youth to grow and guide their children in future, as they will know the *missio Dei* and the importance of their participation in it. Du Preez *et al.* (2014) assert that the growth towards spiritual maturity and an increasing zeal to serve and to love the Lord and to serve others as part of *missio Dei*, should be the highest purpose of theological education.

In conclusion, the researcher is convinced that the challenges of the AMEC in *missio Dei* perspective can be addressed by looking into the leadership position to find as to whether the right people are at the right position at the right time. It is also advisable to look into the social challenges since the believers and non-believers are both made in the image of God and all need to hear his Word. The AMEC's sound relationship with the state is of vital importance and this is evident as the church has chaplains in different departments including South African Policing Services, Army and Correctional Services (Minutes of the Annual Conference, 16 October 2017). The researcher urges the leadership of the AMEC to take the pastors serious and believes that theological education is key and relevant for AMEC growth and sustainability in *missio Dei*.

## CHAPTER 5

# THE PROPOSED NEW THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ADDRESS THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE AMEC MEMBERS IN POST 1994 SOUTH AFRICA

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will serve as the conclusion of the study and will describe the transformation theology as the newly proposed theology that will address the needs of the AMEC members in post 1994 South Africa and the values of good theology as tabled by Erickson (1998:16). It is in this chapter where the researcher will summarise the work, highlight the major findings as well as give the recommendations. The researcher intends not to despise any theology but to say transformation is imperative in addressing issues of unemployment, homelessness, inequality, poverty, corruption and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, and HIV/AIDS status. Before proceeding to examine the proposed transformation theology it will be necessary to define the word 'transformation' as it is understood in this study.

### 5.2 WHAT IS TRANSFORMATION?

Biblically, *transformation* means, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

*Transformation* as the post-apartheid condition is the replacement of an unjust system with an alternative democratic and humanising vision and practice which takes place under specific local and global historical circumstances. This was the political transformation. Now the AMEC and other churches must help the South African society to renew their minds and not to conform to the world. Transformation and a theology of transformation is thus not only the changing of physical circumstances and systems, it is also the renewal of thoughts. Theology of transformation starts with the renewal of thoughts. From a *missio Dei* perspective it is to see past the pattern of this world towards the Kingdom of God and to start living from this mindset.

Having defined what is understood by transformation, the researcher will now move on to discuss the values of good theology as outlined by Erickson (1998) to enhance the study.

## **5.3 THE VALUES OF GOOD THEOLOGY**

### **5.3.1 Theology is biblical**

According to Erickson (1998:16), theology is biblical because it is primarily God's Word that constitutes the content of theology. Biblical theology takes its primary contents from the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The former motto of the AMEC which was, "God Our Father. Christ Our Redeemer. Man Our Brother" and the current which is "God Our Father. Christ Our Redeemer. Holy Spirit Our Comforter. Humankind Our Family" are both biblical and contextual (AMEC 2012:13). The motto first had the Father, Son and man and could be viewed as more contextual. Currently the motto has the Trinity and humankind and is viewed as biblically more correct. The AMEC believes in the Holy Trinity and uses the Bible as the canonical book since proclamation of the word is central to this church. It is of utmost importance that the church (AMEC) must always transform as it engages with new or different contexts and thus engages with understanding the revelation of God anew in a different context. These new understandings will transform the engagement with the context and also the theological understanding.

### **5.3.2 Theology is systematic**

Erickson (1998:16) presents theology as systematic because it attempts to draw together into one coherent whole what the entirety of Scripture says on a given topic, such as human sinfulness. Systematic theology is holistic in its nature. Systematic theology addresses theological topics one by one and attempts to summarise all the biblical teaching on a particular subject. It integrates biblical, historical and sometimes philosophical theology into its methodology. The systematic theology should naturally flow into practical theology where the conclusions drawn from Scripture are made practicable to the church. The researcher understood the systematic theology as a theology that does not address certain issues and leaves others out. The proposed transformational theology of the AMEC then needs to take into account the different theologies, especially, liberation theology, black theology and African theology when engaging in the road to a new systematic transformational theology for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa.

### **5.3.3 Theology is applied in the context of human culture**

As described by Erickson (1998:16) theology must relate the teachings of Scripture to data found in other disciplines that deal with the same matter. The AMEC in its teachings of Scripture can relate to socio-economic circumstances since the congregants and the community are vulnerable due to corruption, poverty, HIV/AIDS and discrimination of any kind. The researcher believes that the Bible is written by the people who were inspired by the Supreme God, who made Himself known through creation and in the story of Israel (Wright 2006:191), hence



theology relates the teaching of Scripture to other disciplines. In the proposed transformational theology the context of South Africa and in this study specifically the rural Africans in South Africa needs to be taken in consideration. Although it needs to be a transformational theology that addresses macro- and meso challenges as discussed in chapter two, it also needs to be a relevant transformational theology for the micro challenges that AMEC members experience in the rural parts of South Africa

#### **5.3.4 Theology is contemporary**

Erickson (1998:16) observes that theology aims at paraphrasing timeless biblical truths in a form that is understandable to people who are living today. It is exactly this characteristic of theology that inspires this study. Although the original theologies of the AMEC are still relevant in some instances it does not really address the current issues in a transformational way. In a new context it sometimes needs to rethink some convictions in another more contemporary way, which will do more justice to the revelation of God in the current context.

#### **5.3.5 Theology is practical or transformational**

The biblical doctrine, according to (Erickson 1998:16), is not only to inform people, but also to be applied in everyday life. Theology as understood by the researcher is not only theory but also practice. The importance of accredited theological education for the leadership of the AMEC and lay people needs to be emphasised as a key factor for the renewing of the mind. Thinking about transformation is to be informed not only by reflection about the needed change, but also by the state of actual practices. A continuous evaluation of ministries and theologies against biblical principles is of utmost importance for all churches including the AMEC.

The AMEC needs to find a theology that is biblical, systematic, contemporary, practical and culturally congruent. Stephens (1998: 3) calls on the church to recommit herself to “biblical strategies of human service and social transformation”.

### **5.4 WHY TRANSFORMATION THEOLOGY?**

The two letters of Paul to the Romans (12:2) and the Corinthians (2 Cor 3:18) affirm transformation. Paul advises the Romans not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but to be *transformed* by the renewing of their minds. Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18 goes on to say: “and we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”. God wants His people to be transformed with renewed minds. Transformation is also mentioned in various books in Scripture (Ps. 51:10; Ez. 18:31; 36:26; 2Co.11:13, 14, 15; Eph.4:22-24; Col. 21-22; Tit 3:5). For the social, political and spiritual transformation to take place the AMEC pastors and



congregants need to first understand the mission of the church. Stott (1984:24) describes the church as, “the only cooperative that exists for the benefit of non-members”.

The researcher proposes the transformation theology in place of the liberation theology for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa under the impression that transformation theology will change the values, attitudes and the personalities of people. Transformation will take place when the congregants are given a chance to relate theological education to the actual problems of the people around them. This is attested to by Hendriks (2004:35) that there is a real need for transformation as the church faces new challenges that require radical changes to the way it ministers and witnesses. He further says the challenge is to become a missional church in which the congregation grow towards spiritual maturity; in which they are able to discern, independently, the guidance of the triune missional God and become involved in making Kingdom principles important. As articulated by Venter (2015:173-203), “Transformation has a definite direction in terms not only of memories of the past, but also of attentiveness to the present and of hope for the future. The challenges of the present political background should inform the path of transformation.”

## **5.5 PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSFORMATIONAL THEOLOGY FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES**

According to Tamez and Brown (2017:79-91), James addresses the diverse Judeo-Christians communities that live in foreign lands and to diverse sectors within those communities. James especially strengthens the hope of those who are suffering due to economic problems, discrimination and oppression. He describes these as circumstances that, in the end, are positive because they produce perseverance, the perfect people and it helps them to arrive at wholeness (1:2-4). He encourages people to exercise persevering patience he derived from the Greek word *upumonè* (1:3, 12; 5:11) which does not allow itself to be crushed by the weight of oppression. The other form of strengthening hope is defined on patience derived from the Greek word *makrothymia* which indicates the patience necessary not to despair. He uses a scenario of a farmer who sows and has to wait until the tree gives fruit (5:7, 10), but nevertheless, is still active, collaborating so that it gives good fruit. For him it is the patience of prophets (5:10). These examples of being patient in transformation indicate that in transformation the ‘being function’ – being faithful to God – is just as important as the ‘doing function’. Sometimes the persevering patience in transformation speaks more than the deeds.

Other forms of strengthening are the proverbial declarations that favour the poor:

First: "Let the poor on boast in being exalted, and the rich boast by being humbled", and "declares the punishment of the landholder that retains the salaries, because God has heard the cry of the peasants" (5:1-6).

Second, James exhorts against greed using the Greek word *epithymia* being a desire that he believes to give birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death (1:13-15)

Third, he attacks the ambition and power struggle among some community leaders who do not demonstrate in actions the wisdom from on high that they should have; on the contrary, they have in a way that reveals rivalries, envy and ambition to possess more.

Fourth, he challenges communities not to let themselves be seduced by the values of the society in which they live. He discourages giving the best place to the rich person and the worst to the shabbily dressed poor person (2:2-4).

Fifth, James calls for radical conversion of God's people to leave behind their friendship with the world. He condemns people who do not share the values of God (4:4) and believes that change is possible.

Sixth, he calls communities to coherent faith as for him faith is false if it continues to discriminate against the insignificant people and does not demonstrate solidarity with the needy. James does not contrast faith with works, but true faith with false faith.

The researcher aligns herself with Tamez and Brown (2017:78-91) that the situation of the poor, homeless, HIV/AIDS sufferers, oppressed and discriminated on the bases of race and gender will change. They need not allow themselves to be crushed but to be active and have persevering patience and not to despair but to hold on to the Creator of the Universe who is the Most High. The AMEC cannot assist the congregants in their circumstances by preaching a new life and lifestyle without listening to, and analysing, their real needs and then give hope.

Transformed leadership is the necessity for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. Transformation theology by the transformed leaders will enhance the AMEC's members in post 1994 South Africa as it will connect their sense of identity and self-esteem to its mission which must be developed from *missio Dei*. Supporting the poor, unemployed, homeless, HIV/AIDS infected and affected, segregated and discriminated by giving them hope in their hopeless situations will be the evidence of transformation rather than liberation.

When the AMEC's members in post 1994 South Africa apply transformation theology they must be honest about the state of affairs in this country and in their lives and they need to make

sense out of it since honest transformational theology will be part of its legacy. In spite of all, liberation theology had a part as it was projected to do, however, there are some gaps that need to be bridged.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

In chapter one of this study attention was focussed on the outlines of the mission position of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa by interacting with the history of its origin, development, theologies within, the problem statement, research question, the aims and objectives, central theoretical argument, literature review, ethics and the study limitation . Since mission is founded on *missio Dei*, the researcher needs to know the position on which the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is standing in *missio Dei*. The researcher posed a question on: How would a shift in theological understanding of *missio Dei* contribute to a growth in the membership of the AMEC?

Chapter two of this study investigated how the socio-historical contexts of South Africa influence the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa, by analysing the macro, meso and micro levels, and the recommended model. The researcher also engaged the diversity of ministry models as highlighted by Dulles (1985:35) to enhance the study.

In chapter three of this study the researcher investigated theologies that influenced the ministry of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The researcher engaged with the development of liberation theology in South Africa, black theology, African theology and feminism by checking on how they influenced the AMEC ministry in the beginning and sought for their relevance in post 1994 South Africa.

In chapter four, attention was given to know the challenges of the AMEC members on participation in *missio Dei* in post 1994 South Africa. The researcher outlined the mission, vision, purpose and objective of the AMEC. The *missio Dei* as *missio Trinitatis*, beliefs and practices of the AMEC, how does the AMEC view sin and its challenges from the *missio Dei* perspectives.

As to the investigations and findings, in chapter five the researcher proposes a new theological understanding that will contribute to address the spiritual needs of the AMEC members. Transformation theology as proposed by the researcher for the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is clearly defined and the values of a good theology are outlined. The researcher explained why the suggestion for transformation theology and brought up the perspectives on transformational theology from the book of James, concluded the study and gave recommendations to the effects.

It is from the above information where the researcher deduces that the challenges of the socio-historical, socio-economic and socio-political experiences in post 1994 South Africa should inform the development of transformation theology for the AMEC. The AMEC members in post 1994 South Africa cannot detach its socio-historical contexts from the larger global developments. Transformation cannot escape the strange and undecided effects of the globalisation and the digital revolution. The researcher is of the opinion that when thinking of transformation theology, the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa must also think of re-introducing the moral values and not only by the word of the mouth, but also by living and demonstrating them in the lives of its members. Wright (2006:41) argues that “the words of Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Lk 24:45), and the AMEC is also obliged to make people to understand the Scriptures.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the conclusions reached by this study, the researcher would like to suggest the following recommendations:

1. A broader understanding of the mission position of the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa is paramount. This will assist the AMEC to move without resistance from the liberation theology to transformation theology.
2. When the AMEC understands transformation as described in this study and argued from the Book of James it will carry its mandate and it will be easy to engage with poor, unemployed, corruption, homeless, HIV/AIDS affected and infected, and discriminated against. It will also carry the mandate to address the rich and the corrupt political leadership as well as discriminatory actions within the AMEC.
3. Accredited contextual theological education and life-long learning for spiritual leaders need to be emphasised in the AMEC in post 1994 South Africa. The importance to equip the members for their ministry in society is of utmost importance
4. The AMEC should do an “ecology of their different congregations” (Hendriks 2004:69) in developing a practical transformational theology to address all spiritual and physical needs of the societies in which they are present.



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