

**A RELEVANT LITURGY FOR THE
REFORMED CHURCHES
IN
SYNOD MIDLANDS**

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Sing to the Lord, all the world! Worship the Lord with joy; come before him with happy songs! Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him; we are His people, we are His flock (Psalm 100:1-3).

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Abstract

One of the most important yet most undermined aspects of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands is its liturgy. Little study has been done on liturgy and few Church Councils make liturgy their concern. Consequently most of the Reformed Churches in Midlands are faced with the problem of syncretism, secularism and modernistic trends in the liturgy.

All human beings are religious people. All humans beings are believers yet it depends whom and how people worship and in whom or what they believe. People have different cultures and in some instances, as is the case with the African religion, culture and religion are not easily separated. Liturgy has an indispensable task in transforming culture. This study aims at scrutinising the manner of worship in Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. It is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on basic-theoretical principles, the second on meta-theoretical guidelines and empirical findings and the third on a critical-hermeneutical interaction between the basis-theoretical principles and the meta-theoretical guidelines.

This study indicates that the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands need a relevant liturgy that is suitable for the African members but also a liturgy that is not easily influenced by culture and by the world. Liturgy has to shape culture and culture has to be accommodated in the shape that liturgy takes. This does not occur at the same level. The gospel preaches to culture and leads it to repentance. The sermon, however, is presented within a certain culture, context and language. This is where culture fits in and contributes to the shaping of the liturgy.

A relevant liturgy for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands would be a dynamic liturgy that displays an interactive communicative character. There has to be a dialogue between God and His children. The liturgist should not be an individual standing between God and humans, blocking the dialogue-related character of the liturgy. All members have to be participative and should follow the liturgy. This study therefore calls upon a free liturgy because African people are spontaneous. However this liturgy should also be characterized by the necessary order.

Opsomming

Die liturgie is een van die belangrikste maar ook mees ondermynde aspekte van die Gereformeerde Kerke in die Middellandse Sinode. Daar is min navorsing gedoen oor die liturgie en net 'n betreklike klein aantal Kerkrade bekommer hulle oor die liturgie. Die gevolg is dat die meeste van die kerke in die Gereformeerde Kerke in die Middellandse sinkretisme, sekularisme en modernistiese tendense in die gesig staar.

Alle mense is religieus. Alle mense is gelowig maar baie hang af van wie en hoe hulle aanbid en ook in wie of wat hulle glo. Mense het verskillende kulture en in sommige gevalle – soos dit die geval is met die Afrikageloof – is dit moeilik om kultuur en geloof van mekaar te skei. Die liturgie het 'n onmisbare rol te speel in die transformering van kultuur. Hierdie studie is daarop gemik om die manier waarop daar aanbid word in die Gereformeerde Kerke van die Middellandse Sinode onder die loep te neem. Die studie word in drie dele verdeel. Die eerste gedeelte fokus op basis-teoretiese beginsels, die tweede op meta-teoretiese riglyne en empiriese bevindings en die derde op 'n krities-hermeneutiese interaksie tussen die basis-teoretiese beginsels en die meta-teoretiese riglyne.

Hierdie studie toon aan dat die Gereformeerde Kerke in die Middellandse Sinode 'n liturgie nodig het wat toepaslik is vir die Afrikaanlede maar ook 'n liturgie wat nie maklik beïnvloed sal word deur kultuur en die wêreld nie. Die liturgie moet die kultuur vorm and kultuur moet geakkommodeer word in die vorm wat die liturgie aanneem. Hierdie dinge gebeur nie op dieselfde vlakke nie. Die evangelie preek vir die kultuur en lei dit tot bekering. Die preek word egter aangebied binne 'n sekere kultuur, konteks en taal. Dit is hier waar die kultuur inpas en bydra tot die vorming van die liturgie.

'n Toepaslike liturgie vir die Gereformeerde Kerke in die Middellandse Sinode sal 'n dinamiese liturgie wees wat 'n interaktiewe kommunikatiewe karkakter vertoon. Daar moet 'n dialoog plaasvind tussen God en Sy kinders. Die liturgie moet nie 'n individu wees wat tussen God en mens staan en die dialogiese aard van die liturgie ondermyn nie. Alle lidmate moet deelnemend wees and moet die liturgie volg.

Hierdie studie beveel dus 'n vrye liturgie aan want Afrikamense is spontaan. Hierdie liturgie moet egter gekenmerk word deur die nodige orde.

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A relevant Liturgy for Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands

Section A

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and statement of problem

1.1.1 Definition

Liturgy is from the Greek word “*λειτουργία*” coming from the words “*λειτος*” (of the people) “*λαος*”, and “*εργον*” (work). It embraces Temple worship (Luke 1:23; Heb 8:2) as found in the Old Testament—hereafter abbreviated OT—as well as personal service to one’s fellow being (Phil 2:25), one’s service to Christ (Rom 15:16) and the coming together of disciples (Act 13:2; see Vos and Pieterse, 1997:4).

Jasper (1972:222) says that liturgy denotes an act of worship, in particular the Eucharist. In Christian usage liturgy became confined to the idea of service to God and since worship was regarded as the supreme service to God, it was applied to the Eucharist. Barnard (1981:51) agrees with Jasper, yet he adds also a limited meaning to liturgy as simply referring to the elements around the sermon, the sermon and the Holy Communion. This implies that liturgy has to do with the form, order and expression of the worship service. Liturgy is also used in a broader sense. It is a realising of the heavenly worship service here on earth. Within this context it is not limited to what happens during the worship service only, but also in the daily lives of members. Van der Walt (1982:5) defines liturgy as the power station of the word of God. It is “looking at” and “examining”. It is a priestly service of the believers. Vos and Pieterse (1997:4-5) say that liturgy was the public service which the rich citizens rendered to the state (especially with regard to finance and charity). It could also be viewed as service of the king to his people. The Septuagint sees it as priestly sacrificial services. The NT links the word “liturgy” with service of the Christians to

Christ and to one another. It further links this word with gatherings for reasons of worship.

Hence liturgy within the context of this study will not only concentrate on the liturgy of the church, but rather on its broader sphere. This study will attempt to give answers to three aspects in the liturgy; worship songs, funeral services and wedding ceremonies.

1.1.2 Background

The researcher has been in different offices in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands. At this stage he is serving as a minister in three of the congregations. The churches around Synod Midlands are mainly congregations making use of Southern Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Zulu and Xhosa. His experience in the liturgy over the past years has shown that the liturgy in its present form is not sensitive towards the cultural situation of the churches.

Man is a cultural being. The first mandate to man was a mandate of culture (Gen 1:28 and Gen 2:15; see Van der Walt, 1999:1). Hence whether one accepts this fundamental command or not, he/she has to respond in one or another manner. The church has to rediscover its task of transculturation (inculturating the one faith in a variety of cultures). As Uzuoku (1982:2) states, Pope Gregory the Great once said: *in una fide nil officit consuetude diversa*, meaning that as long as the Church preserves one faith there is nothing inconsistent about a divergence of customs. The opposite has been experienced in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. This caused Tlhagale (1998:1) to argue that the African culture was not recognised as having its own wisdom, insights and values that informed the lives of the Africans. The growth of the African culture appeared to have been arrested. It was either a matter of civilising the African or assimilating them into Western culture. Linda (1997:39) argues that White missionaries attempted to stamp out any vestiges of Africans' indigenous culture and religion upon their conversion to European Christian denominations.

On the other hand Njumbuxa (1995:47) reasons that people are emotionally involved with their culture. For this reason De Klerk (2001b:273) adds that even the churches

in the last decade discovered that the gospel is understood better and is more easily accepted when its presentation and reception as well as the reaction on it is rooted in one's own culture. Culture is not merely superficially related to humanity, but deep-seated. One cannot be fully without it.

To add to this Van der Walt (1997:8) advocates that culture is alive, rich and complex. It includes habits, customs, social organisations, techniques, language, values, norms, ideas, beliefs and much more. Perhaps this is the reason why the Roman Catholic Church, as Daneel (1991:102) states, approached the African culture by way of accommodation or adaptation and assimilation. The idea with this was that anything which enjoys general recognition in the way of life of a people provided it is not inextricably interwoven with superstition should be weighed sympathetically by the church and, if possible, preserved unaltered and undamaged. As a result there was confusion, misinterpretation and tension. The African people could no longer clearly separate what was Christian from what was heathen. Van Deventer (1994:401) judges this to have led to secularism.

Turaki (1999:16) adds that Western missionaries failed to develop a relevant Biblical theology of African religions, cultures and society. With regard to this Daneel (1991:108) states that in the Reformed tradition Calvinist thinking was more pessimistic in view. In its approach, human nature is corrupt. Individual conversion is thus important in its approach. In its mission, the past and church indigenisation underwent transformation. It was more a process of discontinuity and negation of the old life. To emphasise this, Daneel (1991:10) provides the example of a certain Rev. A.A. Louw (a missionary) who represented an uncompromising frontier spirit. He was convinced that none of the heathen dances, dream messages of the spirits, messages addressed to the ancestors, consultation with the divine or any form of traditional marriage could be assimilated into or purified within the church community. The argument is that this policy of elimination and negation made the African to live in two worlds. On Sunday at church he is a Christian and so were the children at a school erected by the missionaries. But during the week at home, at the villages, they

were confronted with witchcraft, wizardry and destructive forces. Here God did not appear to be the Insider, because the Christian message insufficiently penetrated this world. People did thus not really change their public liturgy outside.

De Klerk (2001a:57) states that in the transformation process of South African society interaction between culture and liturgy is of current interest and yet it has not been reflected upon incisively enough. Moreover De Klerk (2001b:273) reasons that liturgy has a decisive impact on the vision, aspiration and hopes of the believer. He further reasons that the response of the believer is culturally bound and liturgy attains an indigenous character. In his discussion of the indigenisation of Christianity, Turaki (1999:17) reasons that the need to indigenise Christianity became a rallying cry of some African theologians and scholars, especially in the 1950's and the 1960's. Their primary objective was to strip and rid Christianity in Africa of all its Western striplings and coverings and to replace that with what is African. Christianity in Africa was brought under the cover of Western culture, and for this reason, African culture had to replace Western culture. Moreover Christianity would be much better understood if it were fully indigenised.

To add to this, Turaki (1999: 20) also speaks of an Africanisation of Christianity. He emphasises the need for Africans to control institutional Christianity and determine its destiny in Africa on their own. It focuses on definitions of Christianity and the African participation in the process of Christianisation. However: for the indigenisation and the Africanisation of Christianity to take place, it is also important to evaluate the question of contextualisation. This means that the liturgy must be made relevant and meaningful in its application within its context. It must however be considered whether the African context or the Biblical text should be emphasised. It is all too easy to lose what is valuable by casting away what is no longer valuable. These facts and the impact they have in the liturgy or way of worship of these churches calls for serious study. This thesis hopes to contribute to that.

It is a well-known fact that if a member of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands visits any of the Reformed Churches of (say) Synod GKSA, he/she at once encounters a difference. The difference is not necessarily because of the language used, but rather because of differences in culture: the way of singing and the way of

doing things, that is, the liturgy of the service. It is not easy for such a member to feel at home at once. The same can be said of a member from Synod GKSA visiting any congregation in Synod Midlands. There is a cultural difference. The difference is in the way of singing, the manner of responding (spontaneity), and moreover, it is in the content of the songs. Synod GKSA makes use of Psalms and Scriptural hymns whereas Synod Midlands makes use of the *Lifela tsa Sione*, with an exception of not more than three congregations. Synod GKSA makes use of the organ with their music, while Synod Midlands generally uses a “bit”, at times beating clocks, especially during Feasts or youth gatherings.

While the whole of the liturgy will receive attention, there are three elements of worship that will receive special attention in this study: church music, liturgical activities at funerals and the liturgical activities at wedding ceremonies.

1.1.2.1 Church music

Music is the speech of angels. Having church music in mind Brown (2001:348) declares: “... *congregational song is in trouble, nowadays, because our culture undermines it, through social mobility, performance-oriented popular music, electronic discouragement and overamplification*”. Since this appears to be the case in the USA, what is the situation in the South African context, especially in the context of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands? In a few congregations in Synod Midlands in which the researcher conducted worship services and paid visits, it was discovered that members no longer learn by heart most of the hymns in the *Lifela tsa Sione* the volume of songs that is being used in the services. Only the well-known hymns that are used by local musicians are still recognised among the church members. The church hymns appear to have little importance to most of the young members. They would rather prefer performance-oriented popular music. They further prefer to perform in front of the congregation members during the worship service with bells (clocks) and bits.

An additional concern is that choruses play a very important role in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. Without evaluation by a Classis or Synod, they are brought in the worship services especially before the service begins and after the

sending away greeting. The argument is as Jensen (2001:359) states, that churches today are filled with colours and sounds that might have driven earlier generations right out of the doors. Restraint is no longer a desire or even an expectation. While earlier the congregation left edified, today they want to leave the church edified but also uplifted, because music, Stevenson (1992:295) reasons, is one key to the heartfelt dimensions of worship. No matter where people are, singing has the power to help people freely express their feelings for God.

Music and the people of God have been partners ever since God called out a people for His Name. Scripture points out that it is God who truly gives a song (Borror, 1992:263). Nevertheless, the question remains: where does one draw the line? Can music still be controlled in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands and what criteria can be used to evaluate and approve of the music that should be used in these churches?

1.1.2.2 Funeral services

Concerning funeral services Macleod (1966:89) states the following: *"It is a pity and shame that in two matters – weddings and funerals – the Reformed Churches have so far lost control that we ministers find ourselves officiating at what are often rather pagan ceremonies... Most funeral services bear little relation to that sense of victory which throbs on every page of the NT since Christ rose from the dead"*. Orion (1966:7) argues that there are numerous voices raised that the funeral no longer has meaning for our time. It is seen as a vestige of past eras, an anachronism and a wasteful, unneeded empty ceremony that outlived its usefulness long ago. However others stubbornly insist that the funeral be preserved intact without question. In all it always has to be questioned whether the funeral is vestige or value.

To which extent is this view on funeral services true in the South African context today? In modern funeral services, the researcher observed that burying people in a religious way is the option that many people still prefer. One of the basic reasons for attending church services is to be buried when one dies. In a situation of one who did not attend church services, a lay minister would be paid some money to bury the deceased.

It is obvious that there lies something behind this tradition. The intention of this research is to pay special attention to the question whether funeral services truly bear little relation to that biblical sense of victory since Christ rose from the dead as Macleod (1966:89) states - or whether the opposite is rather the case.

The next issue relating to the funeral is the night vigil. It is the tradition still kept during deaths among the members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands that night vigils are held mostly on the last week before the burial. The author's observations on several occasions show that every member is given the opportunity to "preach" or to bring a message of comfort to the people. There is no order as to how this should take place. In some places there is the all-night-long night vigil on the last night before the burial. Immediately after the Scripture reading and the exposition thereof by the preacher, the floor eventually becomes open to everyone, including very young adults, non-church members as well as non-Christians. The problem here is that there is considerable misinterpretation of Scripture. After the funeral service the next day, there will be "after tears" (wiping off of the tears and comforting oneself using beer). It can be argued that a funeral is a family matter. Nevertheless, the church has a responsibility of comforting and proclaiming the good News. Yet, how far then should the church be involved in this, keeping the tradition but at the same time preventing syncretism?

1.1.2.3 Wedding ceremonies

Another issue of concern is the wedding ceremonies. Marriages are said to be from heaven. Nevertheless they are not immune to various forms of earthly attrition that cause one in four of these unions to end in divorce within the short aftermath of three years (see Macleod, 1966:78). In the solemnisation of the marriage, two aspects are of importance: instruction in the meaning of Christian marriage and the wedding ceremony as a service of worship before God. State (1992:423) states that wedding is not simply a perpetuation of customs that is at the heart of the wedding ceremony, but that for Christians it is an enactment of faith, a celebration of divine promise in the midst of a covenant community. This emphasises the fact that the marriage ceremony is a worship ceremony. Nevertheless - in agreement with Macleod

(1966:81) - even though wedding ceremonies assumed a Christian liturgy, what happens during these ceremonies, clearly indicate that social customs and secular pressures are still claiming excessive recognition.

During wedding ceremonies traditional songs are used in most instances, even in the church building when the couple is being blessed. Some of these traditional songs will be evaluated in this study. Perhaps there might not be a serious problem in using these songs, but there is a problem with the contents of the songs. Some of these songs use vulgar language and are not encouraging. As De Klerk (1982:113) puts it, the liturgy becomes humanistic-worldly. Because God instituted marriage, it has to carry the character of a worship service. As the situation is at present, it can be argued that while the minister is busy blessing the message, the witnesses at the same time are busy cursing the marriage because of this humanistic approach. An example is the following old traditional Sotho song mainly used at weddings:

*“Dikuku di monate (cakes are nice)
lenyalo le boima (marriage is tough)
rona re a tsamaya (we are departing (now))
o tla sala o di bona” (you will see for yourself)*

Two things are obvious in this song. Firstly, marrying puts one in a difficult situation that is contrary to what God meant it to be. Secondly, the family or people are not there really to support, but to enjoy the wedding ceremony and the food that will be prepared for them. You must see for yourself how you will deal with the problems that you will encounter. The argument for the retention of this song has been that this might not really be what people mean when they sing it, but unfortunately it is what they sing. To clarify this point further, a few other wedding songs will be analysed as the argument in this thesis unfolds.

1.2 Problem statement

From these underlying problems, a question arises: “How could the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands come to a liturgy that is Biblical and contextual?” This question can be expounded as follows:

- 1 What Biblical guidelines does the Word of God provide for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands to solve the problem of secularism and syncretism in the liturgy?
- 2 How should the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands be modified to fit within its culture?
- 3 How can this new liturgy be developed to serve the church and the Kingdom of God?

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to develop a Christian liturgy for the worship services in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands, with special emphasis on the music, the funeral services and the wedding ceremonies. This liturgy will be biblical and contextual and will be used to the glory of God, the growth of the congregation and the strengthening of the members.

In order for this to be a success, the study will focus on the following objectives:

- 1 To analyse the basic theoretical aspects in order to determine the positive contribution that can be provided for the development of the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands, answers to the following questions will be given:
 - What does Scripture teach about liturgy?
 - What church historical developments took place that have to be taken into consideration for modern liturgy today?
 - What cultural aspects or philosophical ideology influenced these different traditions?
- 2 To determine the meta-theoretical aspects of the Christian liturgy the following questions will be considered:
 - Through the eyes of Anthropology, Philosophy and culture, meta-theoretical aspects will be questioned from a bird's eye perspective on the influence

liturgy has on the culture of the African people when singing in services, at wedding ceremonies and at funerals in a multicultural context.

- The disciplines of Anthropology, Philosophy and the study of culture will be consulted in particular with a view to how and why these members of the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands behave in singing, at wedding ceremonies and at funerals. This means that their cultural context will first have to be determined in order to understand the reason for their present behaviour.
 - Under the empirical rubric of this study the question will be asked how different people in different Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands evaluate their own liturgy. (Questions pertaining to empirical research are placed in an addendum to this thesis.)
- 3 In developing a practical theory for Christian liturgy the following question will be answered:
- From the guidelines of Scripture, history, tradition, culture and the information gathered through interviews, what model of a Christian liturgy can be developed for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands?

1.4 Central Theoretical Argument

This study holds the following:

- The liturgy that is being used in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands has been deprived of its cultural expression and is now under drastic influence of secularism and syncretism. A serious retrospection is called for to illuminate these important developments.
- A search for a true Christian Reformed liturgy that is compatible with the culture of a specific group of people will be an answer to the present situation.

1.5 Research method

A problem exists because a specific field of practise might no longer be satisfactory, as is the case that called for this specific study. To solve the problem, however, there must be a way or an approach, referred to here as “method”. Van der Ven (1994:29)

analyses two arguments with regard to the methodology in practical theology. The first argument is that practical theology has no methodology at all and even that it should not have one because it is not a discipline to make use of procedures and method. To add to this Heyns and Pieterse (1990:8) explain that G J Planck viewed practical theology as *theologia applicata*. It is simply the practical actualisation of theology. It is more about the truth of God's revelatory praxis in Jesus Christ. In his turn Karl Barth viewed it as dependent on and subordinate to, *inter alia*, systematic theology.

The second argument, as Van der Ven (1994:29) explains, is that methodology in practical theology is viewed as not to be the alpha and omega of practical theology, but at least as a necessary condition for it. Yet without a sound and clear methodology, practical theology cannot fulfil its task. Much depends here on the conception one has of practical theology, whether it is a tradition-based perspective of theology as *sapientia* or *scientia*. Understanding practical theology as an encounter between God and human being, Heyns and Pieterse (1990:9) reason that one can also study this encounter scientifically. Moreover, one can also argue that if theology is a science, than practical theology is also a science. The adjective that qualifies theology (practical) does not change the nature of what it qualifies (theology). Based on the *scientia*-perspective it is assumed in this study that methodology is involved, but what methodology?

In his research Burger (1991:36-37) observed that there are two extremes in the sphere of the methodology of practical theology. The one extreme is more traditional and deductive in their exercise of the subject. The other extreme in reaction to this problem focuses more on the real situation. The problem with the former extreme is that the methodology is idealistic and much uncontrolled. It does not answer to the practical needs of the church. The problem with the latter is that taking the church as the basis, practical theology loses its theological basis i.e. it loses the important principle of accepting Scripture as the norm. The solution to this is not a choice between the two, but rather a combination. Hence in one's research, it remains a requirement always to understand what the Bible says about the object of study, but never to overlook the empirical situation.

The method of approach that will be followed here is the model set out by Zerfass (1974:166ff) for Practical Theology. This method comprises of the basic-theory, the meta-theory and the praxis-theory.

1.5.1 Basic- theory

Kruger (2002:9) states that the basic-theory has a specific function within a specific discipline, in this case Practical Theology. It grants biblical-dogmatical and ethico-normative foundations. Venter (1995:199) mentions that the basic-theory of practical theology describes systematically, from the revelation of Scripture, the nature and the purpose of the communicative activities of the church within which the activities take place. Because such activities might no longer be satisfying to the needs of the congregation, the basic-theory is formed to develop a new praxis from a scientific perspective. Practical theology has to study the present situation but should not attempt to come to answers before it understands what Scripture reveals about the situation. Moreover, it should analyse the historical development of the situation in its social context. According to Van der Ven (1994:30) Schillebeeckx, arguing for a chair in practical theology in the Netherlands, stated that the formal object of practical theology is to relate theological insights to empirical facts in a methodologically grounded and systematically structured manner.

Hence the basic-theory in this study will take its point of departure from liturgical practices as found in the Old and NT. These will be established according to a grammatical-historical point of view. The OT study will focus specifically on the great events where the Lord met with his people as a congregation. This includes events like the Sinai event, the liturgical events of the Temple and the Synagogue, the main Festivals, like the Passover, the Pentecost Feast of Weeks and the Feast of the Tabernacles. Attention will also be given to the home and the individual.

The NT study will focus in detail on the place, time and the different liturgical components of the services and the different worship services (the Aramaic Christian and the Gentile Christian worship as well as the sub-apostolic period). The study will also pay attention to the character and significance of the service.

This information will be expanded by an evaluation of the influence of culture and tradition on different liturgical practices as found in historical development of the Christian worship. This includes the following periods: early Christian worship, Ancient and Medieval worship, the Reformation and Modern Protestant worship. Special emphasis will be given to the Protestant liturgical tradition over the years, especially with regard to the influence of its culture and tradition. The idea is to find basic theoretical principles that will be taken into consideration in the establishment of a relevant liturgy for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands.

1.5.2 Meta-theory

For the meta-theory, which is about the relation between (in this case) Liturgy and disciplines not of a theological nature (see Heyns en Pieterse, 1990:51 and Venter, 1995:198-199), the following will be considered as potentially positive contributions to this study: literature dealing with inculturation, culture and worship. This implies that even a literature study outside the discipline of Theology will be studied and views will be interpreted, especially concerning the influence that culture has on liturgy. These cultural aspects will be analysed in the way they appear in their different race groups. The intention is not to see how they differ but more to compare their points of agreement. This will help to form a multicultural liturgy and not a multiracial liturgy respecting only one specific culture as is the case now.

1.5.3 Empirical-theory

When it comes to the fact that the empirical situation analyses of this study draw on the knowledge of other sciences in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of reality, it must be considered that Heyns and Pieterse (1990:36) make it clear that the empirical-theory is not outside the scope of the meta-theory: one is part of the other. However the empirical-theory connects the “who does what” primarily with the “where and when”. The empirical approach attempts to show that all the scientific knowledge is based on experience and can be deduced from experience. The experiential process rests on all people. It is an observation that affects everyone, yet the way they would react on this observation would differ from one person to the other.

The process of testing goes along a trajectory of observation, experiencing, choosing and evaluating. It has moments of deduction and of induction; it is a conscious process of comparing and evaluating (Heitink 1999:233). Hence, as Pieterse (1993:26) suggests, in empirical research one has to distance himself/herself, one has to remain objective and one has to be able to describe, comprehend and explain the situation. The process is very systematic and orderly. It is scientific and concrete. This approach involves interviews in the form of questionnaires or personal interviews. As has been mentioned, the method of approach that will be followed for this part of research is that set out by Van der Ven 1993 and Heitink (1999:220-240) and clearly identified by Van der Ven (1994:29-44) and Venter (1995:199).

Under the rubric of empirical-theory the following will be done:

- The research will preferably be qualitative. New information will be gathered in the form of interviews. Four congregations in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands would be visited. Five people from different levels of ages and gender from each congregation would be interviewed. The criteria for the selection of the congregation would be based on the level of the enculturation that took place during the last few years.

This data in combination with the data from the basic-theory and the meta-theory will be utilised to form a new praxis.

1.5.4 Praxis-theory

Hermeneutic interaction takes place in this section of research. Hermeneutics has to do with understanding and interpretation. Van der Ven (1993:83) states it well: we cannot place our own context and prejudices in brackets. Our understanding of tradition is always determined by the horizon of our own time and situation. We must place our prejudices at risk and allow criticism from tradition, to learn from it, in order for a revision to take place. The hermeneutic process is thus always a melting together of our own time and the horizon of the tradition. It is a process of interaction between the ideal and the reality.

Kruger (2002:9) states that the praxis theory describes how the basic-theory has to function in practise. At this stage the basic principles from the basic-theory and the data from meta-theory in addition to the empirical research will have been collected. The subsequent hermeneutical interaction implies that all the data has been processed in an interactive manner, by way of interpretation, re-formulation and re-adjustment. The result of the praxis-theory is then a development of a new praxis. This is the stage wherein the theory becomes the practice. The new praxis focuses on the values of the Kingdom of God. It leads to a new understanding of the gospel in one's own context and situation, to a change in the present context and then to a changed praxis (see Pieterse, 1993:27-28).

1.6 *Feasibility of the research*

The results of the basic-, meta- and praxis-theories together will be utilised to develop a model for a culturally relevant liturgy for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. This model will challenge the dangers of the exposure to syncretism and secularism. Its use in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands will spiritually uplift the members and help them in the transformation of the mind to know what the will of God is (cf. Romans 12:1-2). It will also be of great service to the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 2

2. Basis theoretical perspectives from OT idea of liturgy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Problem formulation

As a matter of fact there is no straightforward liturgy set out in the OT. It is thus the intention of this chapter to do an intensive study of the liturgy in the OT. The idea is to have basic theoretical/regulative principles from the OT. This chapter as well as the chapter that will follow (focusing on the liturgy of the NT) will lay the foundation for the rest of the findings in the sections on the history of "liturgy".

2.1.2 Method

This chapter will also make use of the basis-theory as a point of departure. Heitink (1999:164) argues for a hermeneutical circle when dealing with the basis-theory. According to him this circle acts as an interpretation theory that is typical for human sciences. It has as its primary task the understanding of the text but it may also be applied to the understanding of actions. It is a process of moving from guessing to testing. This chapter will therefore attempt to understand what Scripture reveals about the worship liturgy of the OT. To reach this understanding, this chapter will be exegetical. The historical-grammatical exegesis method will be used. This method will include word study and also some literary studies. Moreover, it will be a process of determining what will have to be done in relation to the interpretation of the text (see Heitink, 1999:179).

To see how liturgy developed into its present stage, this study will concentrate on the origin of the different forms of liturgy that eventually gave rise to the Reformed liturgy which is being used in most of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands today.

2.1.3 For a working start this chapter will focus on:

- The liturgy of the OT
- The Sinai event
- Temple worship
- Festivals
- The Synagogue

2.2 OT liturgy

One cannot put it better than Barnard (1981:68) when he says that the key to the understanding of the OT cult is God himself. God begins and takes in everything the initiative. He commands his people to gather. He determines the how, when and where of their meeting. He gives content, purpose and form to the gathering. It is from him and to him. Hence, God is in the centre and all is about him.

Old (2002:1) states that we worship God because God created us for this purpose. Through worship we reflect the glory of the Lord, because we are created in his image. God did not only create us to worship but also commands us to worship. God is alive and differs from other gods. God is Holy and Almighty (Lev 11:44). He is a jealous God (Ex 20:5) who demands sole worship (Ex 20:3). He reveals himself as the Lord God. In fact before him there are no other gods (Is 44:6). The being of God determines the nature of worshipping him. God speaks and acts. He rules over the universe. He is a God who delivers, leads and protects. He especially chose Israel to be his people in the OT. He delivered her from slavery in Egypt, and Israel pledged to serve and worship him in gratitude (see Barnard, 1981:68).

It is clear that God is both the subject and the object of worship. Dawn (1995:80) puts it clearly when she says the gifts flow from God as the subject and return to God as the object of our reverence.

OT worship is characterised by what was acceptable or unacceptable. In defining what was unacceptable in the OT worship system, the Bible helps us to better understand the nature of worship itself. Neither priests nor sacrifices with defects

were acceptable to God. Malachi offers us a picture of a later generation that “despised” God’s name, and showed their disrespect by bringing crippled and diseased animals for sacrifice. The prophet says sarcastically: “Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you?” Malachi gives God’s verdict: “I will accept no offering from your hands. My name will be great among the nations” (Mal. 1:6–11).

Acceptable worship then recognises the greatness of God. Acceptable worship honours God, both by being our best for Him, and bringing our best to Him. If we approach worship with an attitude of awe and respect; if we come with a pure heart and mind; if we bring God the best of whatever we may have—then our worship is acceptable. For such worship alone shows due respect for our God.

Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold (1978:41) speak of three main centres of Jewish worship at the birth of Christianity: the Temple, the Synagogue and the home. However, to get to grips with what the OT liturgy looks like, this study will limit itself to a few basic events centring on OT worship: the Sinai event, the Temple, the Synagogue, the Festivals and the home.

2.2.1 The Sinai event

The OT links the Sinai revelation with the exodus. Ex. 19-24 narrates the preparation and the theophany, Ex. 32-34 the people’s sin and the destruction and replacement of the tablets, Ex. 25-31 the giving of cultic ordinances. Sinai, also called Horeb in Deuteronomy, is traditionally associated with Mt. Sinai in the south of the Sinaitic peninsula. God delivered the Israelites, his people, from Egypt, out of slavery. He led them through the Red Sea, and to Mount Sinai. The tradition uniformly declares that after the exodus God, having led his people to Sinai, gave them his law there. According to Kittel (1995) Judaism often refers to the event at Sinai and gives expanded descriptions of it. At Sinai Israel is set in paradisiacal conditions but it becomes subject to infirmities again with its sin. At a later stage the evil impulse became withdrawn and the people again received the radiance given to Adam in

paradise. But the sin of the golden calf intervened, and the radiance would return only in the messianic age.

The Law, which also contains oral tradition, is given in most languages, and is meant for the Gentiles too. Sinai is a high and holy mountain, the place of God's presence. God will come to it again at the end of the days. As He spoke His Word there once, He will speak it again at the eschaton. Sinai links heaven and earth, it will finally be God's throne, it will bear the tree of life, and it will merge with the mountain of paradise.

Here at Mount Sinai God entered into a covenant relationship with them. Two things are important in this covenant: the content of the covenant and the context in which the covenant was made. Ex 19-24 describes the context of the Sinai event. However there is a pertinent part of this material: the public meeting between God and his people at the foot of Mount Sinai, as found in chapter 24 of Exodus.

- 1 *And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.*
- 2 *And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.*
- 3 *And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.*
- 4 *And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- 5 *And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.*
- 6 *And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.*
- 7 *And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.*
- 8 *And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all*

these words.

- 9 *Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:*
- 10 *and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were {1} a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. {1) Or work of bright sapphire}*
- 11 *And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.*

The following can be deduced from the passage above: God summoned Moses before Him with Aaron, Aaron's two eldest sons Nadab and Abihu (see Lev 10), and 70 of the elders (leaders) of the people. The men, all 73 of them - except for Moses - were to keep their distance (see Ex 19:12-13, 24) from the LORD out of respect for His majesty and holiness. Moses went to the top of the mountain, the 73 other leaders were on the mountain but not at the top, and the people were below at the foot of the mountain. God was now ready to confirm the Mosaic Covenant with His people. Moses rehearsed before the people the entire set of words and laws of the Law (20:22-23:33), called "the Book of the Covenant" (24:7). After hearing these laws the people heartily submitted themselves to obey them (see 19:8) and Moses wrote down God's commands (see Richards, 1991).

When one looks carefully at the background of this event, one realises immediately that these words were spoken after the delivery of the Ten Commandments, when the people - overwhelmed with awe at the appalling display of the Divine Majesty - beseeched Moses to act as mediator between God and them. Although paralysed at first by the awfulness of the scene, Moses, having been reassured of the Divine voice, (chapter 19:19), drew near into the thick darkness (chapter 20:21). Here he remained in mysterious communication with God, and was instructed in the application of the great principles of the Decalogue bearing on matters of interest and importance in the social economy. Furthermore this required an immediate authoritative settlement in accordance with the national constitution. The result of that solemn conference is related in chapters 20:23-23:33. The close of it is described in the commencement of chapter 24 (see Walvoord, 1985).

In the beginning of this chapter, the words “and He said...” implies that God initiates the calling, the place and the manner of approach. God also has his own people to approach his holiness (Carson, 1994). Moses here acted as an ambassador of God to deliver the divine message to the people. Moses recorded the words from God and the next morning he built an altar. The altar was built with twelve pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. He read the message in the audience of the people (vs. 7). Not only elderly people were elected for the divine service, but even young people are included here. These were neither first-born sons nor Aaronic priests but men chosen by Moses for this particular act, perhaps “as the strongest and most active members of the community”.

They are the ones who offered sacrifices and offerings (vs. 5). All people had to respond by agreeing to hear and to obey. This meeting involved all the people. They all became active participants in this liturgy (vss 7 & 8). The activity of offering was viewed as a covenant and was sealed with blood. It is significant that no sin offering is described. These were redeemed people who, at that time, were committing themselves and entering into a close and binding communion with their Redeemer by means of these sacrifices of dedication and fellowship. Blood was sprinkled on the altar to represent the presence of God. Blood was also sprinkled on the twelve tribes of Israel to seal the covenant between God and his people (vs. 8). Here Moses acted like a priest, as the sacerdotal order was not yet instituted in Israel. In the blood sprinkled upon the altar, the natural life of the people was given up to God, as a life that had passed through death, to be pervaded by His grace. And then through the sprinkling upon the people it was restored to them again as a life renewed by the grace of God. It became a vital power, holy and divine, uniting Israel and its God. This is a transposition of Israel into the kingdom of God, in which it was filled with the powers of God’s spirit of grace and sanctified into a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

This is the only time in the OT when *people* were sprinkled with blood. Possibly the people were sprinkled in the sense that the stones which represented them (v. 4) were sprinkled. The sprinkled blood, then, symbolised the legal transaction between God (represented by the altar, Ex 24:6) and the people (represented by the stones). Israel was thus ceremonially set apart through blood (the blood of the covenant) as the people of the true God. Later the New Covenant, established by Jesus, was also

ratified by blood, His own (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25-26).

The book of the law is referred to here as the book of the covenant. This implies that the law is termed covenant in this context. The people of Israel voluntarily had to enter into a covenant relationship with God. Hence it was important to elicit from them a formal expression of their voluntary consent to the conditions and stipulations embodied in the covenant. Accordingly there was a public rehearsal of the law. The delivery of the law and the ratifying of the covenant were followed from verse 9 by a "covenant meal". This was a sacral meal during which the God of Israel manifested his presence and his fellowship. What is certain here is that the fellowship between the Lord and his people preserved by the covenant finds its direct expression in worship (see Carson 1994).

Then Moses prepared the people for the ratifying of the Law. First Moses made an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai and erected 12 stone pillars to represent Israel's 12 tribes. Since the Levitical priesthood had not yet been organised, young Israelite men (perhaps the dedicated firstborn, 13:1-16) and Moses served as priests and offered burnt and fellowship offerings to the LORD. In the ratification ceremony Moses sprinkled blood on the altar (24:6) and on the people (v. 8) who had heard him read the Book of the Covenant and had promised once again to obey it (v. 7; see v. 3) (Walvoor, 1985).

Webber (1982:24) analyses from this passage five important aspects of Judaic and Christian worship:

- God invoked the meeting.
- The people were arranged in a structure of responsibility.
- The meeting between God and Israel was characterised by the proclamation of the Word.
- In the assent the people acknowledged their acceptance of the conditions of the covenant, thus signifying a commitment to hear and to obey the Word.
- Moreover, the meeting was climaxed by a dramatic symbol of ratification; a sealing of the agreement. In the OT God always used blood to signify his

relationship with man.

2.2.2 Summary

One can highlight the following points about this occasion for the liturgy:

- God initiated the Sinai event with his people.
- He is present with his people and He makes a covenant with them.
- Where God is present, there is great fear and adoration.
- The extent is such that people ask God not to speak to them directly but rather through Moses.
- The climax of the meeting is the proclamation of the Word of God.
- There is an appeal to both the ambassador (Moses) and the people.
- The appeal to the ambassador is that he should live in a close and special relationship with God.
- The people have to make a commitment to the Lord to accept his condition.
- There is also fellowship with the Lord which is expressed in the “sacral meal”

2.3 *The Temple*

In Israelite worship the Temple plays an imperative role. The Temple was the religious centre of Israel, a place where teaching took place, a custom even Jesus and his disciples followed (Lk 2:46ff). To understand the importance of the Temple and the sanctuary the following points will be considered: the symbolic nature of the Temple, the character of the Temple, the ministry and the liturgy of prayer and the word.

Webber (1982: 25-26) points out the most basic features of sanctuary and Temple worship as follows:

The tabernacle and the Temple emphasised the presence of God in the midst of Israel. De Klerk (1987:20) highlights the fact that God was literally dwelling among

his people. The Temple was the house of God. When the Ark was taken there (1 Kg 8:10) the Temple was filled with a cloud. From Ex 33:9; 40:34-35 and Num 12:4-10 it is evident that the cloud was a sign of the Lord's presence in the Tent of Reunion. Solomon read a short poem on the occasion of the dedication of the Temple saying that he had built for the Lord a dwelling place, a home where He would live forever (1 Kg 8:13).

This idea of the presence of the Lord in his Temple was the whole reason for the worship celebrated there and the pious customs of the faithful. Hezekiah's actions provide a most striking example: when he received the threatening letter of Sennacherib, he went up to the Temple and spread it out before the Lord (2 Kg 19:14). Hezekiah addressed Him as Israel's God, whose throne was the atonement cover ("mercy seat," KJV) on the Ark of the Covenant between the cherubim. God had said He would dwell between the cherubim in a unique sense (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Chron 13:6). The king recognized that God is a Spirit, not a piece of wood or stone (see 2 Kg 19:18). He alone (see v. 19) was the real Ruler of Judah (Walvoord, 1985).

Concerning the Psalms, their connection with worship and the Temple is evident. The OT authors often speak of the "house of the Lord" or the "courts of the Lord" and they do so because of the writer's confidence that God lived in the Temple (see Ps 27:4; 42:5; 76:3; 84; 122:1-4; 132:13-14 and 134 to quote but a few). Taking Ps 122 into consideration, one can picture the pilgrim at the end of the first day in the city: (2) lit. "Our feet have actually been standing within your gates!" The wonder of "home", contrasts with the "far country" (122:5); the company of "brothers" (8) with the "sniping of foes" (122:2, 7). Anticipation has been crowned by arrival (2), the sight (3) and constitution (4-5) of the city. No wonder it all issues in responsive prayer for the Lord's people, their fellowship and the security of the city itself. Isaiah 26:1-4 teaches that amid life's threats we live already, by faith, within the "strong city" (Heb 12:22; see Eph 2:6). In this sense the pilgrim of old, still on his hazardous journey, could sing of feet already planted on Jerusalem's pavement (Carson, 1994).

Despite the fact that the prophets had some reservations about the worship practice at the Temple, they shared the same belief about the Lord's presence in his Temple.

The prophet Am (1:2) speaks of the roaring of the Lord from Zion; and making his voice heard from Jerusalem. The prophet Isaiah was called to take up his office of prophet when he was in the Temple. He had a vision of the Lord sitting on the throne, and of a cloud filling the sanctuary as on the day of its dedication (6:1-4). Is (2:2-3) saw the Temple built on the mountain of the Lord, and especially from the time of Isaiah, the name Zion took on a religious meaning. Jeremiah too saw the throne of the Lord's glory in Zion (14:21). It is clear from Jeremiah that the presence of the Lord among his people was grace. Therefore people had to be faithful. For this reason Jeremiah preached against the Temple itself (Jer 7:1-15). The Israelites believed the lies of the false prophets. They thought they could live in sin and still go to the Temple and worship a holy God. According to Jeremiah 7:6 and 9, they were guilty of breaking at least five of the Ten Commandments, but the false prophets assured them that the presence of God's Temple in Jerusalem guaranteed the nation God's blessing and protection from every enemy. Of course, this was not faith; it was blind superstition, and Jeremiah quickly shattered their illusions (Wiersbe, 1993). The prophet also preached against the blind confidence in the building which was not accompanied by the desire to reform one's life (Jer 7:1-15; 26:1-15).

Ezekiel, too, saw the glory of the Lord leave the Temple, which had been defiled by the sins of Israel (Ez 8-10). From Ez 43:1-12 we read that God came back to his Temple, which became his throne, to dwell forever among his people. The prophets Haggai (1:9) and Zac (2:14; 8:3) after the return, encouraged the rebuilding of the Temple, and the reason is that God must come back to live in Jerusalem. Ez 48:35 thus gives Jerusalem the significant new name "the Lord is there!" (see De Klerk, 1987:29).

The tabernacle and the Temple were characterised by a sacred sense of space, sacred rituals and sacred ministers. What is striking about this is that God ordained them. 1 Chr 28:12 reads, "He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the Temple of the Lord". 1 Chronicles 28:19 reads "All this is in writing", David said, "because the hand of the Lord was upon me, and He gave me understanding in all details of the plan". Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:14) mention that the highest possible worship could be rendered to the Lord only on his own altar in his own Temple.

Concerning the sense of sacred space, nothing in the Temple furniture or layout was randomly selected or haphazardly placed. It appears characteristic of Semitic religion that the holy place is not merely the precise spot, an altar or sanctuary, where worship is performed but that it also includes a certain space around the Temple or altar.

Concerning the sacred rituals, they were visible and tangible expressions of the relationship of God's people with Himself. They grew out of the ratification at Sinai, and they anticipated the sacrifice of Christ. Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold (1978:41) specify that the Temple was primarily concerned with sacrifice, which was usually permitted nowhere else. The Jews also said their prayers there or towards the Temple (1 Kg 8:28ff; Lk 1:10). Through sacrifices there was communication between God and his people. Sacrifices had different aspects as they differed in themselves.

Concerning the sacred ministers of the sacred rituals, they represented the entire nation. They were mediators between God and Israel. Only the Levites could be priests. God called them and they were consecrated to his service in an elaborate ceremony (Ex 29); for example, they wore garments fitting to their service (Ex 28:40-43; 39:1-31). The garments were of such a nature that according to Ez 44:19 they had to remove and leave them behind when they left the holy place "lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments". They were given stringent requirements for holy living (Lev 21:1-22:10). About the priests Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:14) say that they had to perform their worship according to absolute, immutable and indispensable rules promulgated by God himself.

De Vaux (1973:327) refers to the Temple itself as a sign of election. God himself, through His grace, chose to live among his people, to live in this city and in this Temple. According the 2 Sam 24:16 and 2 Chr 3:1 the site of the Temple was marked out even before its building by Theophany. Ps 132:13 says the Lord chose Zion as his home, it was his residence (see Ps 69:17).

However we also discover here that although God was very present in his Temple, people met him from a distance.

- They were only allowed to proceed as far as the entrance.
- The priests could venture as far as the Holy place.
- The high priest could venture as far as the Holy of Holiest, yet only he was allowed this only once a year, on reconciliation day.

The following must be highlighted about the Temple itself, in addition:

- God himself was present.
- The Temple was a place for teaching.
- The Temple was a place for sacrifices (thanksgiving, reconciliation, et cetera).
- The worship service was pious (people as well as the offering had to be without blemish before the Lord).
- There were prophets to interpret the Word and act as a mouth-piece between God and his people.
- The glory of the Lord filled the Temple.
- The Temple had a sacred sense of space, sacred rituals and sacred ministers, all ordained by God.
- The Temple was a sign of election.

The next issue that will receive attention is liturgical prayer. Prayer and the proclamation of the Word in Temple worship do not always receive enough attention. In most situations the emphasis is on different sacrifices. What will follow here is a short discussion on both liturgical prayer and proclamation of the Word. This will help with the formulation of the basic liturgical principles of OT worship.

2.3.1 Liturgical prayer

Prayer is man's communication with God. It brings the one who prays into a personal relationship with God. It is an expression and a pouring out of the heart to one who is higher. In the OT the liturgical prayer was not an institution independent from other cultic acts, except perhaps for the penitential acts of singing or praying as found in Nehemiah 9. This chapter is about the confession of the Israelites which occurred during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Word of God had a tremendous

impact on the community. It pointed the people to their sin (Ne 8:9), led them to worship (Ne 8:12, 14), and gave them great joy (Ne 8:17).

According to Neh 9:1-5a the Feast of Tabernacles concluded on the 22nd day of the month. After a one day interval, the 23rd, the people assembled on the 24th. They separated from foreigners (see 10:28). Then they confessed their sins. This was evidenced by fasting and wearing sack-cloth (see Gen 37:24; Is 4:1-4; Ps 30:11; 35:13; 69:11; Is 22:12; 32:11; 37:1-2; Lam 2:10; Dan 9:3), a dark coarse cloth made from goats' hair, and having dust on their heads (see Josh 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 1:2; 15:32; Job 2:12; Lam 2:10; Ez 27:30). These were signs of mourning and grief. For about three hours the people again stood (see Neh 8:7) while the Law was read. Then for another three hours they confessed their sins and worshipped the LORD.

Brown (1998:141) states that this was like two-way traffic. God first speaks and people sincerely responded by true confession and penitence. They also worshipped God who guaranteed their pardon. This vital two-way relationship is strongly encouraged throughout Scripture. Several Levites, some of whom were mentioned in 8:7, were involved in leading the people in their praise of the eternal God. Five of the eight Levites in 9:4 are listed in the group of eight in verse 5. These five may have been the same or different men. One group was involved in petition (v. 4) and the other in praise (v. 5). In verse 5 the Levites encouraged the people to stand up and praise the Lord. Brown (1998:148) further reasons with regard to the standing that adoration plays an essential role in worship. They had to think about the everlasting God who hears, pardons, and changes people. And in prayer they constantly had to reflect on God's nature and character as well as his mighty works in creation.

The striking point about this paragraph in the book of Nehemiah is the absence of the names of either Ezra or Nehemiah. The emphasis is on each individual accepting a share of responsibility in word, attitude and deed for the past sin and present plight of the community. Appropriately, therefore, it was two groups of otherwise unknown Levites who led the congregation in their worship and confession. True confession arises from a renewed appreciation of who God is, and that is very much the starting point for this prayer. From the beginning of time, God has revealed himself as one

who is worthy of all blessing and praise. He alone is the LORD, as shown by creation; He chose Abram, freely promised him a land and proved that he is righteous by keeping that promise; (Carson, 1994).

The material in Nehemiah 9:5b-10:39 follows the normal covenant form used in the ancient Near East: preamble (9:5b-6), historical prologue (9:7-37), acceptance of the covenant (9:38-10:29), and the stipulations (10:30-39). The prayer in 9:5b-31 was voiced by the Levites on the people's behalf. It rehearsed major events in Israel's history, first stating God's glory (v. 5b), uniqueness (v. 6a), and Creation of the universe (v. 6b). The history of the Israelites was also rehearsed. The pericope of 9:32-37 deals with the concluding part. In this concluding part of the Levites' prayer, they asked for relief, again acknowledging God's power, majesty (see 1:5; 4:14) and loyalty (see Carson, 1994).

From verses 38 Israel makes a promise never to disobey again. The prayer was also realistic in character. It recognised the solidarity as well as the individuality of their sins. It is striking that these people confessed many sins they themselves did not commit. They did not build the calf of gold; they were hardly responsible for the execution of the prophets. But for these sins they dressed in sack-cloth and ashes. The reason is that these people were the first to acknowledge that the awful thing about sin is its power to disseminate itself. Nobody sins in secret. When we sin we grieve God, damage ourselves and eventually affect others because we become something less than we might otherwise be (Brown, 1998:150).

Prayer will also be treated in this study, as an exterior act of worship. It stood in an intense relationship with sacrifice. Sacrifice was the central act of the cult, and the very action was prayer in itself; but vocal prayer accompanied it. Am 5:23 says that hymns were sung to the accompaniment of instruments while sacrifice was being offered (see Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, 1997). Public prayer naturally became rhythmic hymn-singing. Liturgical singing made its appearance once the cult and the priesthood were organised in a public sanctuary. Solomon's Temple had a group of musicians attached to it from its earliest days. The prayer book of the second Temple was the Psalter. The text of the Psalter makes it clear that the psalms were used in connection with worship, for example Ps 20; 26; 27; 66; 81; 84; 107 and so on.

Looking at the place and time of prayer, the Israelites normally prayed in the Temple, or courts of the Temple, facing the sanctuary (Ps 5:8; 28:2; 138:2). Is 56:7, Mt 21:13 and Lk 19:46 call the Temple the “house of prayer”. After the Exile the Jews outside Jerusalem turned towards the Holy City and towards the Temple (1 Kg 8:44,48). Daniel prayed in his high room from a window facing Jerusalem, three times a day (Dan 6:11). Ps 55:18 tells us that the Israelites prayed in the morning, at noon and in the evening. Psalm 4 is an evening prayer; Psalm 5 is a morning prayer. Some of the Israelites prayed standing upright (1 Sam1:26; 1 Kg 8:22; Jer 18:20). According to 2 Chr 6:13 Solomon kneeled down on a platform he built. Some prayed with their hands risen (1 Kg 8:54; Is 1:15; Lam 2:19). Late Judaism sanctioned the custom, and it governed the orientation of Synagogues.

2.3.2 Concerning prayer, the following can be indicated further:

- 2.3.2.1 Prayer was basically done three times a day (morning, noon and evening).
- 2.3.2.2 Different postures in prayer were evident: standing, kneeling and the raising of hands.
- 2.3.2.3 It appears that the place of prayer played an important role, being there or facing towards it was something that OT worshippers believed in no matter where they were.
- 2.3.2.4 Prayer was also done in the form of music as in the case of the Psalms. Prayer was also conducted in a sacrificial form.
- 2.3.2.5 Prayer reflected on the nature and character of God as well as his activities in history.
- 2.3.2.6 It involved thanksgiving, confession, and worship. It was also filled with requests for the blessings of the Lord.

2.3.3 The Word

Two distinct matters are clear in the OT. God approached man in event and word. The word would usually come after the event to unfold its meaning. This is clear from Ex 12:26-27 and Deut 6:20-25: *“And it shall come to pass, when your children shall*

say unto you, "what do you mean by this service?" 27 that you shall reply, "It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses". And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28 And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

The concept of hearing the Word is also emphasised (see Deut 6:4) "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord ...*" According to vs. 3 hearing was always accompanied by observing that which was heard. The Ten Commandments were also read to the people in order to hear them. The prophets in the OT were mouth pieces of the Lord, their words were the Lord's words hence the expression "thus says the Lord..." (Jer 4:3, Jer 32:42, Ez 5:5, Ez 6:3 etcetera.).

The following matters about the proclamation of the Word in the Temple (see Barnard 1981:78-79) deserve further attention:

- Teaching was the main function of the priest. He was the depository of sacred lore and could advise men in any ritual matter.
- At the holy place it was the task of the priest to teach the Torah and to reveal the oracles.
- The priests observed and preached the teaching to and against the people. They also applied it to the world situation.
- The priest had to teach people about cults and religious issues, to distinguish between what was clean and what was unclean.
- They had to study the Word and its interpretation to act as judges in private and public matters. They were recognised as interpreters; hence the priests became teachers of morality and religion.
- Knowledge was entrusted to the priest for interpretation, and though this knowledge certainly came from God long ago, it was handed down to men century after century through teaching and practice.
- Prophets played the same role. The prophet was a man of the Word. He was a spokesman of God. God directly inspired him to give a particular message in definite circumstances.

2.3.4 Summary

Based on this discussion, the following points should be emphasised:

- God took the initiative in Temple worship.
- The worship was centred on God.
- The plan of the place and the method of worship were from God himself.
- The divisions of the day and the regular gatherings were arranged by God himself.
- People practically experienced the presence of God in the Temple worship because his glory filled the Temple
- The proclamation and interpretation of the Word occurred as an unfolding of God's revelation.
- The proclamation, interpretation and application of the Word were the specific functions of the priests and the prophets. They were entrusted with knowledge from God.
- People viewed the Temple as the house of the Lord and as sacred (this includes the sense of space, the ritual and the ministers. These were all God-ordained.)
- The manner of prayers was dependent on and related to the other cultic actions except perhaps in situations of penitence.
- The Temple was also a sign of election.
- Place and time with regard to prayer had a special significance for OT worshippers
- The Psalter was used, although in different forms such as music, poetry or ordinary language.
- Office and ministry determined one's depth of entrance into the Temple.
- Special emphasis was placed on the influence of the fulfilment of the Temple worship through the work of Christ.

2.4 Festivals

Israel always had to remember the great acts of God in their lives. They had to remember how God delivered them, saved them, gave them harvests and so on.

However this remembrance was not only a comprehensive recalling, but it was also always something concrete, visible and audible that embodied and demonstrated the act remembered from the past in the present situation. Through the act of worship, people could relive for themselves the whole history of salvation. This can be referred to as a re-enactment, which brings joy before the Lord (see Exo.13: 8). De Klerk (1987:126) stresses the fact that the Feasts were accompanied by the proclamation of the Word. Salvation stories had to be retold with every Feast and in some instances the people gathered together and the president would read from the Law.

There were major and minor Festivals. According to the shortest calendar as stipulated in Ex 23:14-17, there were three major landmarks of the religious year in Israel; the Passover, the Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) and the Tabernacles that had to be kept. When celebrating these Festivals, it would not be for mere enjoyment, but Israel would appear before the Lord. And so it is in Ex 34:18-23. The Festivals were the same here but their names were written slightly differently. In both Ex 23: 14-17 and 34:18-23 there is mention of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but no mention of the Passover. These two festal calendars do not mention where the Feasts should be held. However, Deut. 16:1-17, verses 2, 11, 15 and 16 add that men are to appear "at the place which He will choose". A special character in the celebration of these Feasts is that the men were to approach the Lord not empty-handed. Everyone had to approach the Lord in accordance to the blessing he received from the Lord.

According to Easton (1996) on each of these occasions every male of the Israelite was commanded "to appear before the Lord" (Deut 27:7; Neh 8:9-12). The attendance of women was voluntary (see Lk 2:41; 1 Sam 1:7; 2:19). The promise that God would protect their homes (Ex 34:23, 24) while all the males were absent from their homes during these Feasts for war was always fulfilled. During the whole period between Moses and Christ we never read of an enemy invading the land at the time of the three Festivals. The first instance on record is thirty-three years after they had withdrawn from themselves the divine protection by imbuing their hands in the Saviour's blood. This happened when Cestius, the Roman general, slew fifty of the people of Lydda while all the rest had gone up to the Feast of Tabernacles, AD 66.

Exegetically, it is evident that these Festivals, besides their religious purpose, also made people to have a feeling of a national unity. The times fixed for their observance were arranged so as to interfere as little as possible with the industry of the people. The Passover was kept just before the harvest commenced. Pentecost was held at the conclusion of the corn harvest and before the vintage. The Feast of Tabernacles took place after all the fruits of the ground had been gathered in.

The calendar of Deuteronomy suggests a centralised *cultus*. And here the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread are linked. The Leviticus 23 calendar gives precise dates even for the Feast of harvest and Ingathering. Another important distinction in the Leviticus calendar is that people had to be holy for the Feasts. Num 28-29 has its own calendar. However, the basic difference between the Number and Leviticus calendar consists in the sacrificial details that Numbers provides. Ez 45:18-25 appears to give another list of Feast days. This text, describing the hope of restoration of the exilic prophet, lists two atoning Festivals, one for each half of the year. On the first day of the first month (the vernal year), the people were to offer a sacrifice for their sins, and again on the seventh of that month. The two ceremonies together accomplished the cleansing or expiation of the Temple. At the beginning of the seventh month and the seven following days, another anointing procedure had to take place. The only Festival singled out was the Passover, set for the fourteenth of Abib. Where the occasions were the same, the sacrifices that Num 28-29 require nevertheless did not agree with those of Ez 45 (Wise, 1992:237).

2.4.1 The Passover

Passover is associated with the release of the people from Egypt. The word is derived from the Lord's "passing over" the families where the blood had been smeared on the door posts of their houses to protect the first born. Kurtz (1998:359) states that the term pass-over signifies literally to "stride" or "spring over" anything with the intention to spare it. Two things distinguished this period: the paschal meal with which it began and the eating of the unleavened bread during the whole time that it lasted. The OT describes this day by giving the date, time and the manner of eating (Ex 12; Num 9; Deut 16; 2 Chron 35). It also highlights that the Feast is

symbolic. It had meaning for the then-present situation of the Israelites but it also had an eschatological meaning. The then-present symbol was that of immediate victory: on the tenth day of the Abib (see Num 9:5) each family had to choose a year old lamb. They would slaughter the lamb at twilight of the fourteenth day of the Abib and sprinkle blood on the lintel and door posts. Blood symbolised salvation. The angel of death passed every door post where there was blood (Ex 12:23). This had to be done annually. On the next day began the Festival of the Unleavened Bread. This continued for seven days. From the fifteenth to the twenty-first day no leaven was consumed. The first and the last days of unleavened bread were days of rest and of worship.

Kurtz (1998:362) argues that despite the fact that the Passover is not placed directly in relation to the sanctuary or the altar, it is not deprived of its validity as an act of worship. It should be understood that as soon as the sanctuary and the altar existed, the Passover was placed in the closest and most essential relation to them.

According to the 2 Chr 30:17; 35:3-11 and Ez 6:20 lambs were killed by the Levites for those who were ceremonially unclean. These included the captives. Num 9:13 mentions a strict punishment given to the person who did not keep the Passover, unless he was on a journey. His soul would have been cut from among his people. Ez (45:21–24) re-instituted the Passover. The observation of Passover was also renewed by the Israelites on entering Canaan (Josh 5:10, 11). Hez (in 2Chr 30:1) and Josiah (in 2 Kg 23:22, 23; 2Chr 35:1, 18) renewed the observation of the Passover after the return from captivity (Ez 6:19, 20) (see Swanson and Nave, 1994).

2.4.1 The Pentecost Feast of Weeks

This was known as the Feast of Weeks. It was the second great Festival of the year. It was a Feast of thanksgiving and joy for the completion of the harvest season bringing people from all over Jerusalem to celebrate. It fell seven weeks after the cutting of the first barley and cereal grains. Starting from the day of the Sabbath on which the first sheaf was presented to Yahweh (see Lev 23), seven complete weeks were counted. This would arrive at a total of fifty days, whence the Greek name for the Feast, Pentecost.

Achtemeier et al (1985) says that as a designation for a particular religious observance, the Greek word appears only twice in the LXX, namely, in Tob 2:1, and 2 Macc 12:32. In the Hebrew OT, the customary name for the observance is the Feast of Weeks. In Ex 23:16, it is called “the feast of harvest, of the first fruits of your labour, of what you sow in the field”.

In Ex 34:22, the Feast of Weeks is further defined as “the first fruits of wheat harvest”. It was also proclaimed as a “holy convocation” (see Wood, 1996). These phrases indicate that the Feast of Weeks was originally an agricultural Festival, an occasion on which the community was expected to show gratitude to God for the first fruits and the early harvest. The dating of this Festival also suggests its original agricultural context. Deut 16:9 says that it is to be dated seven weeks “from the time you first put the sickle to the standing grain”. Lev 23:15-16 directs: “And you shall count from the morrow after the Sabbaths, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall they be, counting fifty days to the morrow after the seventh Sabbath”. Josephus calculated the date of Pentecost as the fiftieth day after the first day of Passover, and, in time, this manner of calculation became standard. The OT regulations restricted work on the day of Pentecost. The sacrifice of various animals and of bread made from newly harvested grain was required (see Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31 and Wise, 1992: 237).

2.4.2 The Feast of the Tabernacles

The Feast of the Tabernacles was the third great Feast of the religious calendar. It was kept for 7 days from the 15th to the 22nd day of the 7th month. It came at the end of the year when the labours of the field were gathered in, and was one of the three annual Festivals at which every male was required to appear (Ex 23:14–17; 34:23; Deut 16:16). It was a time of rejoicing (Deut 16:14). The designation “Feast of booths (tabernacles)” comes from the requirement for everyone born an Israelite to live in booths made of boughs of trees and branches of palm trees for the 7 days of the Feast (Lev 23:42). Sacrifices were offered on the 7 days, beginning with thirteen bullocks and other animals on the 1st day and diminishing by one bullock each day until on the 7th seven bullocks were offered. On the 8th day there was a solemn assembly when one bullock, one ram and seven lambs were offered (Num 29:36).

This is the last day, “that great day of the Feast”, probably alluded to in Jh 7:37. As a Feast, divinely instituted, it was never forgotten. It was observed in the time of Solomon (2 Chr 8:13), Hezekiah (2 Chr 31:3; see Deut 16:16), and after the Exile (Ez 3:4; Zac 14:16, 18–19). The ceremony of water-pouring, associated with this Festival in post-exilic times and reflected in Jesus’ proclamation in Jh 7:37f, is not prescribed in the Pentateuch (see Wood, 1996). Its recognition of rain as a gift from God, necessary to produce fruitful harvests, is implied in Zac 14:17 (see 1 Sam 7:6).

In Lev 23:39 it is also known as “the Feast of Yahweh”. It was held after harvest and vintage (Deut 16:13). It was the most important and best attended of the pilgrimage to the sanctuary. In recognition of its importance, it is also known as “the Feast” (Ez 45:25). Wise (1992:237) says about this Feast that it also underwent some interesting historical development. The essence of the biblical prescription by the early post-exilic period required a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where the Feast was kept for seven days.

The people were to live in huts to recall that Israel lived in huts after the exodus from Egypt. Like the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), this Festival was originally a harvest Festival (Ex 23:16,17), particularly connected with the produce of the threshing floor and the olive and winepress. The people dwelt in booths during this Festival (Lev 23:42; Ne 8:15,16). It was the occasion that had to be observed with rejoicing (Deut 16:14,15) and perpetually (Lev 23:41). Customs observed at Feast of Harvest was the bearing branches of palms (Lev 23:40; Rev 7:9) and drawing water from the pool of Siloam (Is 12:3; Jh 7:2,37-39) and the singing hosannas (Ps 118:24-29; Mt 21:8,9) (see Torrey, 1995).

2.4.5 Summary

The fundamental issues about these Festivals could be listed as follows:

- They were initiated by the Lord as has been demonstrated in the cases of the Sinai event and Temple worship.
- People had to be holy and had to act in accord with God’s prescription.

- In certain cases worshippers had to bring offerings in accordance with the blessing of the Lord.
- They served to remind people about the great salvation-acts of the Lord.
- They called upon every member to an act of retrospection.
- They called upon people to obey the Lord.
- They called upon people to worship and give thanks to the Lord.
- They were celebrated with great joy and gladness to the Lord for all his great deeds. This included the carrying of palms and singing hosannas.
- They were accompanied by Word proclamation which was regarded as essential.

2.5 The Synagogue

2.5.1 The origin of the Synagogue

According to Negev (1996) it seems that the earliest Synagogues - that is, houses of assembly and prayer of Jewish congregations - originated in Babylonia during the exile of the Jews after the destruction of the First Temple and in the Persian period. In the Hellenistic period there were Synagogues in many Jewish centres throughout the Hellenistic world.

Easton (1996) defines the Synagogue as “an assembly”, found only once in the Authorised Version of Ps 74:8, where the margin of the Revised Version has “places of assembly”. This latter meaning of “place of assembly” is probably correct; for while the origin of Synagogues is unknown, it may well be supposed that buildings or tents for the accommodation of worshippers may have existed in the land from an early time, and thus the system of Synagogues would have developed gradually. Initially the Greek word *συναγωγή* did not refer to a building, but to a group of people who gathered for religious purposes. The Greek words *προσευχή*, *ευχαιον*, *προσευκτεριον* as well as *Σαββατειον* (i.e., the place where they met for the Sabbath) were also used to indicate the place of gathering.

It is not known when and where the Jewish Synagogue originated. While some researchers surmise that the Synagogue originated before the exile to Babylon, others think that it only originated during, or even at, the return from exile (Du Toit, 1998).

The Synagogue probably originated as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the subsequent dispersions of the Jewish people during the Exile. It might have been a substitute for the Temple or developed as a supplement to the Temple. Historically it fulfilled both roles (Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold, 1978:42). Easton (1996) states that some, however, are also of the opinion that it was especially during the Babylonian captivity that the system of Synagogue worship, if not actually introduced, was at least reorganised on a systematic plan (Ez 8:1; 14:1). The exiles gathered together for the reading of the law and the prophets as they had opportunity, and after their return, Synagogues were established all over the land (Ez 8:15; Ne 8:2). In later years, when the Jews were dispersed abroad, wherever they went they erected Synagogues and kept up these services of worship (Act 9:20; 13:5; 17:1; 17:17; 18:4). The form and internal arrangements of the Synagogue would greatly depend on the wealth of the Jews who erected it, and on the place where it was built. Yet there are certain traditional peculiarities which have doubtless united together by a common resemblance the Jewish Synagogues of all ages and countries.

2.5.2 Common features

Easton (1996) notes that the following features are common to all Synagogues:

- Arrangements for the women's place in a separate gallery or behind a partition of lattice-work.
- The desk in the centre, where the reader, like Ezra in ancient days, from his "pulpit of wood", may "open the book in the sight of all of people and read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading" (Ne 8:4, 8);
- The carefully closed ark on the side of the building nearest to Jerusalem, for the

preservation of the rolls or manuscripts of the law

- The seats all round the building, whence “the eyes of all them that are in the Synagogue” may “be fastened” on him who speaks (Lk 4:20)
- The “chief seats” (Mt 23:6) which were appropriated to the “ruler” or “rulers” of the Synagogue, according as its organisation may have been more or less complete.

Webber (1982:27) thus views the Synagogue period as an inter-testamental phenomenon and not strictly of the OT. Nevertheless the worship of the Synagogue strictly differed from that of the Temple. It was distinguished as a religion without offerings. There were no sacred rituals and it did not support a sacred ministry. It had a new focus: that of reading and understanding the Word of God. The affirmation of faith, prayer and the reading and interpretation of Scriptures were the important aspects of Synagogue worship.

Achtemeier et al (1985) says that the Jewish Synagogue is both a congregation of Jews who pray, read Scripture, and hear teaching and exhortation based on Scripture as well as the place where the congregation assembles. As the Synagogue developed in rabbinic Judaism, it also became a place for study of the Bible, its commentaries, and Talmudic materials. The origin of the Synagogue is obscure, but it certainly existed by the first century AD in both Palestine and the Diaspora (see also Negev, 1996). The Gospels attest first century AD Synagogues in Palestine. Jesus preached and discussed with Jewish leaders and congregations in Synagogues as found, for example, in Mt 4:23; 9:25; Mk 1:21; 3:1-6; Lk 4:16-28; 13:10.

2.5.3 The function of the Synagogue

Achtemeier et al (1985) further states that the function of the Synagogue, how the congregation was organised, and what went on in the Synagogue can only be surmised. In Palestine before the destruction of the Temple the Synagogue would have been one of many indigenous organisations in Jewish villages and cities. People may have met to read Scripture and pray either in a house or outside, without any elaborate organisation. In the Diaspora where Jews were a minority in the cities

they inhabited, the Synagogue probably functioned as the centre of the community and its leaders may have been community leaders recognised by the civil authorities (that is, the Counsel House and Place of Assembly). The aims of the gatherings were, among others, to settle public affairs, make announcements, swear oaths, administer punishments and execute manumissions. Synagogues were used to teach the young, to house visitors and for communal meals.

Du Toit (1998) reasons that the Diaspora Synagogue was not an alternative to the Temple in Jerusalem and did not have a cultic character before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. No sacrifices were made in the Synagogue - this was only done in the Temple in Jerusalem. Consequently, the services were characterised by Scripture reading and prayer. However, it increasingly became the religious centre of Judaism and it gradually took over the place of the Temple. The other functions of the Synagogue were to propagate the Jewish faith and to preserve their cultural identities, due to the fact that the rise of the Synagogue was closely related to the rise of rabbinic learning after the exile. The burning desire to obey the Law completely necessitated a thorough study and comprehensive exposition of the Law. Everything established by rabbinic learning was essentially a result of scribal exegesis.

According to the Kittel (1995) in addition to the fact that the Synagogue was a school, it was also a place where the rabbi studied (a place where virtue was taught). In view of the central position of the law, Synagogues were also places of teaching and learning. They either served as schools or contained school rooms where children may have received instruction in addition to that given by their parents. Schools may at times have been adjacent to the Synagogues but they were usually more directly associated. The Synagogues also served as hospices. In addition to the fact that they were offering provision for the poor, Synagogues acted as hospices to put up visiting Jews, especially in Jerusalem during the great Feasts. Moreover they acted as *Aedes sacrae*. Some Synagogues were dedicated to civil rulers, and shields, pillars, wreaths, and inscriptions were set up in them in honour of the emperors and to show loyalty to them. In return Synagogues enjoyed privileges corresponding to *Aedes sacrae*. In times of tension this did not always protect them from disrespect and even desecration. Jews regarded their Synagogues with pride and commitment.

Devout Jews visited them daily, rabbis delighted to study and teach in them, and attendance was high on Sabbaths and Feast days.

2.5.4 Liturgy of the Synagogue

Wood (1996) explains that those qualified were permitted to conduct the services (Christ, Lk 4:16; Mt 4:23; Paul, Act 13:15). They were ten males and the appointed day for public worship was the Sabbath (Acts 15:21). The *Mishnah* (*Megillah* 4. 3) indicates that the service consisted of five parts. First, the *Shema* was read. This prayer covers Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num 15:37–41. Then synagogical prayers were recited, the most ancient and best known being the eighteen petitions and benedictions. These were followed by the reading of the Law. The Pentateuch, which was subsequently read in the Synagogues in annual cycles, was originally covered in 3 years. After the reading from the first portion of the OT Canon a selection from the Prophets was read. In the time of Christ this portion was not yet fixed, but the reader was permitted to make his own choice (Lk 4:16ff.). The reading of Scripture was central. The portion of the Prophets was expounded, and an exhortation drawn from it. The benediction concluded the service. Later additions were the translation and exposition of the Scripture portions read.

All these different aspects of the liturgy of the Synagogue will receive attention within the following sections.

2.5.4.1 The *Shema* and the daily prayers

Public worship commenced on ordinary occasions with the so-called *Shema* which was preceded in the morning and evening by two benedictions and succeeded in the morning by one, and in the evening by two, further benedictions; the second being, strictly speaking, an evening prayer. The description here applies to the worship of the ancient, not of the modern Synagogue. The *Shema* could be said at home, in the Temple or in the Synagogue. The customary time for saying the morning *Shema* was before starting work—at sunrise, and for the evening *Shema* after work was done—at sunset, or at bedtime. The morning and evening prayer usually followed the *Shema*. The former could also be said later on in the morning, at the time of the morning

sacrifice. Between the morning and evening prayers, a midday prayer was said at three in the afternoon, at the time of the afternoon sacrifice in the Temple. We read of this thrice-repeated prayer in Dan 6:9, 11. As to the afternoon prayer, we read in Ez 9:5 that Ezra prayed his prayer of humiliation "at the time of the evening sacrifice" (that is, the afternoon sacrifice) (see Du Toit, 1998). The same is said of Daniel (Dan 9:21).

The *Shema* was a kind of "belief" or "creed" composed of these three passages of Scripture: Deut 6:4-9, 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41. It obtained its name from the original meaning of the word "*Shema*": "Hear, O Israel", as found in Deut 6:4. From the *Mishnah* (Ber. i. 3) it becomes clear that this part of the service existed already before the time of our Lord; and we are told (Ber. iii. 3) further that all males were bound to repeat this belief twice every day; children and slaves, as well as women, being exempted from the obligation. The exclusion of women from priestly or Levitical roles was not derogatory. Rather, the males were to "bear the burden" for the people.

The affirmation of faith is expressed in the *Shema* which is divided into three sections (Achtemeier et al, 1985)

- Deut 6:4-9--the first section--proclaims the unity of God as a central confession and sets forth the primary duty of the Jewish people to love God fully.
- Deut 11:13-21--the second section--emphasises the doctrine of rewards and punishments.
- Deut 28:1-11--the third section--stresses the duty of each person to strive for holiness because the essential nature of God is to be emulated. This requires the Jew to be a holy person.

There can be little doubt on the subject of the nature of these proceedings, as the *Mishnah* expressly mentions the three Scriptural sections of the *Shema*, the number of benedictions before and after it, and even the initial words of the closing benediction (Ber. ii. 2, i. 4; Tamid, v. 1). It is quite possible that our Lord knew some of these prayers. They most probably still exist in the Synagogue, although with later additions, which it is not difficult to eliminate. Expressions are used which lead one to suppose that, while the liturgical formulae connected with the *Shema* were fixed,

there were local variations in the way of lengthening or shortening (Ber. i. 4). The following are the benedictions before the *Shema*, in their original form as quoted from Edersheim (2002), (see also Wood, 1996)

1. "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the world, Who formest the light and createst the darkness, Who makest peace and createst everything; Who, in mercy, givest light to the earth and to those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness day by day and every day renewest the works of creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiwork and for the light-giving lights which He has made for His praise. Selah! Blessed be the Lord our God, Who hath formed the lights".

This benediction, while acknowledging the Creator, has such frequent reference to God in connection with the "lights", that it reads like a confession of Israel against the idolatries of Babylon. This circumstance may help to fix the time of its origination.

2. "With great love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God, and with much overflowing pity hast Thou pitied us, our Father and our King. For the sake of our fathers who trusted in Thee, and Thou taughtest them the statutes of life, have mercy upon us and teach us. Enlighten our eyes in Thy law; cause our hearts to cleave to Thy commandments; unite our hearts to love and fear Thy name, and we shall not be put to shame, world without end. For Thou art a God Who preparest salvation, and us hast Thou chosen from among all nations and tongues, and hast in truth brought us near to Thy great Name--Selah--that we may lovingly praise Thee and Thy Oneness. Blessed be the Lord Who in love chose His people Israel."

The *Shema* came only after these benedictions. The Mishnah gives the following explanation of the order in which the portions of Scripture of which it is composed were arranged (Ber. ii. 2). The section Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is said to precede that in 11:13-21, so that we might "take upon ourselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and only after that the yoke of the commandments". Again: Deut 11:13-21 precedes Num 15:37-41, because the former applied, as it were, to both night and day; the latter only to daytime.

One cannot fail to observe the light cast by the teaching of the Mishnah upon the gracious invitation of our Lord: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt 11:28-30).

These words must indeed have had a special significance to those who remembered the rabbinic lesson as to the relation between the kingdom of heaven and the commandments. Moreover they would now understand how, by coming to the Saviour, they would first take upon them "the yoke of the kingdom of heaven", and then that of "the commandments," finding this "yoke easy" and the "burden light".

The prayer after the *Shema* was as follows (in the form here given it is older than even the prayer referred to in the Mishnah) (Ber. ii. 2)):

"True it is, that Thou art Jehovah our God and the God of our fathers, our King and the King of our fathers, our Saviour and the Saviour of our fathers, our Creator, the Rock of our salvation, our Help and our Deliverer. Thy Name is from everlasting, and there is no God beside Thee. A new song did they that were delivered sing to Thy Name by the seashore; together did all praise and own Thee King, and say, Jehovah shall reign world without end! Blessed be the Lord Who saveth Israel!"

The following prayer is also referred to in the Mishnah, and is so apt and simple:

"O Lord our God! Cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up again to life, O our King! Spread over us the tabernacle of Thy peace; strengthen us before Thee in Thy good counsel, and deliver us for Thy Name's sake. Be Thou for protection round about us; keep far from us the enemy, the pestilence, the sword, famine, and affliction. Keep Satan from before and from behind us, and hide us in the shadow of Thy wings, for Thou art a God Who helpeth and deliverest us; and Thou, O God, art a gracious and merciful King. Keep Thou our going out and our coming in, for life and for peace, from henceforth and for ever!" (To this prayer a further addition was made at a later period.)

The *Shema* and its accompanying "benedictions" seem to have been said in the Synagogue at the lectern; whereas for the next series of prayers the leader of the devotions went forward and stood before the ark, hence the expression "to go up before the ark" for leading in prayer. This difference in position seems implied in many passages of the Mishnah (especially Megillah, iv.) which makes a distinction between saying the *Shema* and "going up before the ark". The prayers offered before the ark consisted of the so-called eighteen eulogies, or benedictions, and formed the "Tephillah," or supplication, in the strictest sense of the term. These eighteen, or rather, as they are now, nineteen, eulogies are of various dates--the earliest being the first three and the last three. There can be little doubt that these were said at worship in the Synagogues, when our Lord was present. Next in date are eulogies 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 16. Eulogy 7, which in its present position seems somewhat incongruous, dates from a period of great national calamity. The other eulogies, and some insertions in the older benedictions, were added after the fall of the Jewish commonwealth--eulogy 12 especially being intended against the early Jewish converts to Christianity. In all likelihood it had been the practice originally to insert prayers of private composition between the (present) first three and last three eulogies; and out of these the later eulogies were gradually formulated. At any rate on Sabbaths and on other festive occasions only the first three and the last three eulogies were repeated, other petitions being inserted between them.

There was thus room for the endless repetitions and "long prayers" which the Saviour condemned (Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47). Besides, it must be borne in mind that, both on entering and leaving the Synagogue, it was customary to offer prayer and that it was a current Rabbinical saying, "Prolix prayer prolongeth life." But as it is sure that on the Sabbaths when Our Lord attended the Synagogues at Nazareth and Capernaum the first three and the last three of the eulogies were repeated, they are cited here, as follows:

1. "Blessed be the Lord our God and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the great, the mighty, and the terrible God; the Most High God, Who showeth mercy and kindness, Who createth all things, Who remembereth the gracious promises to the fathers, and bringeth a Saviour to their children's children, for His own Name's sake, in love. O King, Helper, Saviour,

and Shield! Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah, the Shield of Abraham."

2. "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; Thou, Who quickenest the dead, art mighty to save. In Thy mercy Thou preservest the living; Thou quickenest the dead; in Thine abundant pity Thou bearest up those who fall, and healest those who are diseased, and loosest those who are bound, and fulfilllest Thy faithful word to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto Thee, Lord of strength, and who can be compared to Thee, Who killest and makest alive, and causest salvation to spring forth? And faithful art Thou to give life unto the dead. Blessed be Thou, Jehovah, Who quickenest the dead!"
3. "Thou art holy, and Thy Name is holy; and the holy ones praise Thee every day. Selah! Blessed art Thou, Jehovah God, the Holy One!"

It is impossible not to feel the solemnity of these prayers. They breathe the deepest hopes of Israel in simple, Scriptural language. But who can fully realise their sacred import as uttered not only in the presence, but also by the very lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who Himself was their answer?

The three concluding eulogies were as follows:

17. "Take gracious pleasure, O Jehovah our God, in Thy people Israel, and in their prayers. Accept the burnt-offerings of Israel, and their prayers, with thy good pleasure; and may the services of Thy people Israel be ever acceptable unto Thee. And oh that our eyes may see it, as Thou turnest in mercy to Zion! Blessed be Thou, O Jehovah, Who restoreth His Shechinah to Zion!"
18. "We praise Thee, because Thou art Jehovah our God, and the God of our fathers, for ever and ever. Thou art the Rock of our life, the Shield of our salvation, from generation to generation. We laud Thee, and declare Thy praise for our lives which are kept within Thine hand, and for our souls which are committed unto Thee, and for Thy wonders which are with us every day, and Thy wondrous deeds and Thy goodnesses, which are at all seasons--evening, morning, and mid-day. Thou gracious One, Whose compassions never end; Thou pitying One, Whose grace never ceaseth--for ever do we put our trust in

Thee! And for all this Thy Name, O our King, be blessed and extolled always, for ever and ever! And all living bless Thee-Selah-and praise Thy Name in truth, O God, our Salvation and our Help. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah; Thy Name is the gracious One, to Whom praise is due".

This eulogy is given here in its shorter form, as it is at present used in evening prayer. 9. "Oh bestow on Thy people Israel great peace, for ever; for Thou art King and Lord of all peace, and it is good in Thine eyes to bless Thy people Israel with praise at all times and in every hour. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, Who blesseth His people Israel with peace".

Another act, hitherto unnoticed as far as is known, has to be mentioned in addition. It invests the prayers just quoted with a new and almost unparalleled interest. According to the Mishnah (Megillah, iv. 5), the person who read in the Synagogue the portion from the prophets was also expected to say the *Shema* and to offer the prayers which have just been quoted. It follows that, in all likelihood, our Lord Himself had led the devotions in the Synagogue of Capernaum on that Sabbath when He read the portion from the prophecies of Isaiah which was that day "fulfilled in their hearing" (Lk 4:16-21). It is unlikely to withstand the impression of how suitable to the occasion would have been the words of these prayers, particularly those of eulogies 2 and 17.

The prayers were conducted or repeated aloud by one individual specially deputed for the occasion, the congregation responding by an "Amen". The liturgical service concluded with the priestly benediction (Num 6:23, 24) spoken by the descendants of Aaron. In case none such were present, "the legate of the Church", as the leader of the devotions was called and he repeated the words from the Scriptures in their connection. In giving the benediction, the priests elevated their hands up to the shoulders (Sotah, vii. 6); in the Temple, up to the forehead. Hence this rite is designated by the expression, "the lifting up of the hands".

The thing that is evident about the *Shema* is that the restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers, the return of the (*Shekinah*) glory to the Temple and the rebuilt city of Jerusalem as well as the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty are recurring

themes in the prayers.

2.5.4.2 Prayer

Prayer was the second element of the Synagogue worship. This, however, did not make prayer a minor element in the Synagogue. The Synagogue had three sessions of prayer: the morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Prayer was “the lifting of men’s thought to God and his Word and the prostrating of the soul before him in adoration and prayer”. The versions of Jewish prayers that have been transmitted in the tradition show that the Synagogue liturgy did not have a fixed text but varied both in content and wording over time and from place to place (see Achtemeier et al, 1985). The *Tefilla* proceeded the morning session; a series of prayers was divided in three sets, and was recited in a standing posture. It was a “calling on the Lord as Judge”. The first part is a series of three prayers. These are benedictions, concentrating on the praise of God by paying homage to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and revering God as the one who nourishes the living, quickens the dead, and is the Holy One of Israel. The leaders in prayers were to represent the whole congregation and they were confirmed by the “Amen”. The second part of thirteen prayers would then have followed to be subsequently concluded by the last three prayers which concluded with the thanksgiving. The *Kedusha* which was followed by the Aaronic blessing between the eighteenth and the nineteenth prayer followed the third benediction of the *Tefilla* (Webber 1982:28).

The afternoon prayer session consisted of the following: one or two psalms, the *Amida* and the doxological prayer; *Tefilla*; *Kadish* or the later *Alenu*. The evening prayer session consisted of the following: they would first sing a psalm, followed by song of praise and two *Berachot*, the same as in the morning. The *Shema* would follow and would be preceded by another two *Berachot*, namely; the *Geullah* and the *Hashibenu*. After this they would sing a group of psalms. The service closed with the *Amida*, the *Kadish* and the *Alenu* (Barnard 1981:93).

Prayer had five main parts: (see Barnard 1991:95):

- The *Berachot* – the emphasis here fell on worship and praise to the Lord. It

contained the introduction to the prayer and blessings.

- The *Semirot* – the centre here lies in Ps 145-150.
- The *Kriat Schema* - this was the middle and the most important part of the prayer.
- The *Tefilla* – the *Tefilla* forms with the Schema the oldest and the most important part of the prayer session of the Synagogue.
- The *Tachanun* – it contained of a variety of texts and prayers from different periods. The emphasis here was on private and combined prayers.

2.5.4.3 The Torah and the Prophets

The Torah is the third element of Synagogue worship. Every Jew had to study the Torah and to pass on its teaching to the next generations. The reading of the Torah was followed by a sermon (Luke 4:16-30). The verse by verse reading was usually accompanied by a translation. The sermon interpreted and applied the Scripture reading to the daily life of the people. The priests were replaced by the rabbis, the teachers of the Law, and even common members. There was also a certain portion read or directed to the youth. Hence the Synagogue was also known as the “*bet ha sefer*” (house of the book) and “*bet ha Midrash*” (house of interpretation). The process was the following: The chazzan went to the ark and took in a disciplined manner the scroll. While the congregation sang a psalm verse, the *chazzan* presented the scroll unto them, moved it from its cloak, and read or sang it to them. However, as it is the case with the Torah, the reading from the Prophets would later be preceded by a benediction. The prophets were read in Hebrew. However the translation would occur after every third verse, not verse after verse as was the case when it came to the Torah (see Tenney, 1985:90-91).

It has already been pointed out that the main purpose of the Synagogue was the teaching of the people. This was accomplished by the reading of the law. At present the Pentateuch is arranged for this purpose into fifty-four sections, of which one is read on each successive Sabbath of the year, beginning immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles. But anciently the lectionary, at least in Palestine, seems to have been differently arranged and the Pentateuch so divided that its reading occupied three or, according to some, three and a-half years (half a Jubilee-period). The section for the day was sub-divided, so that on every Sabbath at least seven persons

were called up to read a portion each which was to consist of not less than three verses (Edersheim, 2002).

The first reader began and the last closed with a benediction. As the Hebrew had given place to the Aramaic, a "*meturgeman*", or interpreter stood by the side of the reader and translated verse by verse into vernacular. The aim with the translation was to preserve the primacy of the Hebrew text over the Aramaic paraphrase (see De Klerk 1987:127-128). The translator was not to speak more loudly than the reader did. He was also forbidden to use the Hebrew scroll; his whole function was to provide an oral translation of the written word. The reader would read the text in a standing posture out of respect. He would not touch the text, as it was considered to be Holy. For the sake of modal inflection the reading would be musical. After the reading of the Torah there would be also a reading from the Prophets. The pericopes from the Prophets were only read on the Sabbath and not during the daily normal meeting. Unlike the case of reading the Torah where many people could participate, only one would read from the Prophets. The purpose with the reading from the Prophets was to complement the Torah and serve as a commentary on the Torah which was highly regarded (Deddens, 1993:16-17).

It was customary to have service in the Synagogues, not only on Sabbaths and Feast-days, but also on the second and fifth days of the week (Monday and Thursday) when the country-people came to market and when the local Sanhedrin also sat for the adjudication of minor causes. At such week-day services only three persons were called up to read in the law; on new moon's day and on the intermediate days of a festive week, four; on festive days, when a section from the prophets was also read—five; and on the day of atonement, six. Even a minor was allowed to read, and, if qualified, to act as "*meturgeman*". The section describing the sin of Reuben and that giving a second account of the sin of the golden calf were read but not interpreted; those recounting the priestly blessing and, again, the sin of David and of Amnon, were neither read nor interpreted. The reading of the law was followed by a lesson from the prophets. At present there is a regular lectionary, in which these lessons are so selected as to suit the sections from the law appointed for the day (Edersheim, 2002).

2.5.4.4 Scripture interpretation

The reading of the prophets was often followed by a sermon or address with which the service concluded. The preacher was called "diarshan", and his address a "*derashah*" (homily, sermon--from "*darash*" meaning to ask, inquire or discuss). When the address was a learned theological discussion--especially in academies--it was not delivered to the people directly, but whispered into the ear of an "*amora*" or speaker who explained to the multitude in popular language the weighty sayings which the Rabbi had briefly communicated to him. A more popular sermon, on the other hand, was called a "*meamar*"--literally, a "speech" or "talk". These addresses would consist of either a rabbinical exposition of Scripture or doctrinal discussions in which appeal would be made to tradition and to the authority of certain great teachers. For it was laid down as a principle (Eduj. i. 3) that "every one is bound to teach in the very language of his teacher". In view of this two-fold fact, we can in some measure understand the deep impression which the words of our Lord produced, even on those who remained permanently uninfluenced by them. The substance of His addresses was far other than they had ever heard of or conceived as possible (see Edersheim, 2002).

It seemed as if they opened quite a new world of thought, hope, duty and comfort. No wonder that even in contemptuous Capernaum "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth". Moreover, even the very Temple-guard sent to make Him prisoner were overawed and before the council could only give this account of their strange negligence: "Never man spake like this man" (Jh 7:46).

Similarly, the form also of His teaching was so different from the constant appeal of the Rabbis to mere tradition. It seemed all to come so quite freshly and directly from heaven like the living waters of the Holy Spirit that "the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt 7:28, 29). The translator's duty was not merely to translate but also to make the reading clear, to give an interpretation. It was done more freely with the prophets than with the Torah. The sermon usually grew from the remarks in the translation. The sermon was more in the form of a homily. The interpretation was straightforward

and was actualised to the edification and the sanctity of the congregation. The chief purpose of the homily was always to explain the word, show its topicality and relevance and bring out the teaching it contained for the lives of those present at the Synagogue service. The text was compared with another text before it would be explained. The explanation was about the application of the *praxis pietatis*. The sermon turned from the teaching style to a more edifying style (see Barnard, 1981:97-98).

The days of meeting were usually on the Sabbath, and the days of Feasts (see Lk 4:16-27; Act 13:15, 27; 15:21). Christ took part in the Sabbath-day services of the Synagogue and taught there. The first local church, having separated from the Synagogue, referred to itself as "Synagogue" (Act 19:8ff and Jm 2:2). Unlike the Temple situation, everyone could participate in the Synagogue. However, preparation was important for every holy task. The congregation would also participate with their "amen" and "hallelujah" responses. Later on the rabbis or the lawyers of Scripture could be called for the reading and exposition of Scripture.

2.5.4.5 Summary

Based on this discussion the following main influences of the Synagogue on the Christian churches today should be mentioned:

- The Synagogue worship had a teaching character.
- Worshippers met during the week for schooling in the Law and on the Sabbath.
- Scripture was read, translated and interpreted.
- Services were without offerings and sacrifices.
- Fixed daily prayer meetings occurred and observance of Feast days with a new context was practised.
- Prayer was emphasised in particular (certain aspects of prayer were taken over from earlier traditions). The predecessor led the congregation in prayer and they responded with the "Amen" but did not all pray together simultaneously.
- Exclamations also played an important role in other worshipping (that is, the calling of "Hallelujah" and "Amen").
- The singing of the Psalms was undertaken by the congregation without the

employment of musical instruments.

- The view of the Synagogue served as a congregation and it involved the participation of everyone.
- Communal meals were enjoyed at the Synagogue. The *koinonia* among the Christians could have been a continuation of the Synagogue activity.
- The poor were supported in the Synagogue. (The fact that there were no needy persons among the believers in Act 4:34 could have risen from this activity in the Synagogue).

2.6 The home and the individual

The home was the scene of the Jewish family worship. It was always the parent who had to circumcise his sons (Gen 17:12; 21:4 and Ex 4:24-26). This was a domestic ceremony (Lk 1:58f). It was also the duty of the parent to educate the child (Gen 18:19; Ex. 13:8; Deut 6:6ff; Ps 78:3-6; see 1 Tim 3:15). This could be referred to as people-oriented worship. Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:14) differentiate between priesthood-oriented worship and people-oriented worship. The Sinai event, Temple worship and Synagogue worship can be defined as priesthood-oriented worship. In the case of people-oriented worship the emphasis lies on individual responsibility towards God. Worship in its primary sense refers to the life of a whole nation, a life and a belief that have immediate practical and social consequences. In a secondary and derivative sense, worship may also refer to outward moments of prayer and reflecting, alongside all the other aspects of ethical and practical behaviour, an indispensable inner attitude to the God who speaks and acts according to an eschatological plan. In this category one can place Moses and the burning bush (Ex 3), Annah's request of a child (1 Sam 1) and the psalmists like David who lived a life marked by deep conviction and piety (2 Sam 7:18-19).

More extensively stated in the OT is the act of king David in 2 Sam 12:20 where it reads: "*Then, David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the Lord, and worshipped*". Job in his situation of affliction (1:20) when he lost all his family and possessions did the following liturgical acts: "*Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground, and worshipped*". The same can be said of 2 Chr 20:18-19:

“Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. This was more like a family worship”. 2 Chr 29:28-29 read: “The whole assembly worshipped and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped. And Hezekiah the king and the princess commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshipped”. What is distinct about this worship is that it does not in these instances refer to specific or traditional acts or practices done at specific sacred or holy places. Ordinary people in different situations know that there is always enough reason to fall down before the Lord in worship, whether it is at home, at Synagogue or on other occasions.

2.6.1 Summary

- Individual and family liturgy promote a strong personal relationship with the Lord.
- Individual and family liturgy form the basis of the congregation liturgy.
- Individual and family liturgy create room for a personal encounter with the Lord.

2.7 Individual and family prayer

In the individual situation prayer also played a very essential role that cannot be underestimated. In the life of the patriarch Abraham prayer seems to have taken the form of a dialogue—God and man drawing near and talking to each other (Gen 18; 19). It then developed into intercession (Gen 17:18; 18:23, 32) and then into personal prayer (Gen 15:2; 24:12; see also texts related to Jacob: Gen 28:20; 32:9–12, 24; Hos 12:4). The patriarchal blessings are called prayers (Gen 49:1; Deut 33:11). During the period of the Law, not very much prominence was given to formal prayer. Deut 26:1–15 seems to be the only case where it is definitely recorded. Prayer had not yet found a stated place in the ritual of the law. It seems to have been more of a

personal than a formal matter. While the Law may not afford much material yet the life of the law-giver, Moses, abounds with prayer (Ex 5:22; 32:11; Num 11:11–15).

Easton (1996) states that no rules are laid down anywhere in Scripture for the manner of prayer or the attitude to be assumed by the suppliant. The following are mentioned: kneeling in prayer (1 Kg 8:54; 2 Chr 6:13; Ps 95:6; Is 45:23); bowing and falling prostrate (Gen 24:26, 52; Ex 4:31; 12:27); spreading out the hands (1 Kg 8:22, 38, 54; Ps 28:2; 63:4; 88:9); and standing (1 Sam 1:26; 1 Kg 8:14, 55; 2 Chr 20:9).

Prayer is frequently enjoined in Scripture (Ex 22:23, 27; 1 Kg 3:5; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 37:4; Is 55:6; Jl 2:32; Ez 36:37, etcetera) and we have very many testimonies that it has been answered (Ps 3:4; 4:1; 6:8; 18:6; 28:6; 30:2; 34:4; 118:5; Jm 5:16–18, etcetera).

The following are only a few examples:

- Abraham's servant prayed to God and God directed him to the person who should be wife to his master's son and heir (Gen 24:10–20).
- Jacob prayed to God and God inclined the heart of his irritated brother, so that they met in peace and friendship (Gen 32:24–30; 33:1–4).
- Samson prayed to God and God showed him a well where he quenched his burning thirst and so lived to judge Israel (Judg 15:18–20).
- David prayed and God defeated the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Sam 15:31; 16:20–23; 17:14–23).
- Daniel prayed and God enabled him both to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and to give the interpretation of it (Dan 2:16–23).
- Nehemiah prayed and God inclined the heart of the king of Persia to grant him leave of absence to visit and rebuild Jerusalem (Ne 1:11; 2:1–6).
- Esther and Mordecai prayed and God defeated the purpose of Haman and saved the Jews from destruction (Es 4:15–17; 6:7, 8).

Negligence in prayer also had its sown consequences: According to Evan (1988:171–173) negligence of prayer was grievous to the Lord (Is 43:21, 22; 64:6, 7). Moreover

many evils in life were to be attributed to the lack of prayer (Zeph 1:4–6; Dan 9:13, 14; see Hos 7:13, 14; 8:13, 14). 1 Sam 12:23 shows that it is a sin to neglect prayer.

In the Books of Joshua (7:6–9; 10:14) and Judges (6) we are told that the children of Israel “cried unto the Lord”. In Samuel’s day prayer seems to have assumed the nature of intercession (1 Sam 7:5, 12; 8:16–18) and personal requests (1 Sam 15:11, 35; 16:1). In Jer (15:1) Moses and Samuel are represented as offering intercessory prayer for Israel. David seems to have regarded himself as a prophet and priest and he prayed without an intercessor (2 Sam 7:18–29). The prophets seem to have been intercessors, e. g., Elijah (1 Kg 18). Yet personal prayers are found among the prophets (Jer 20 which is both personal and intercessory; 33:3; 42:4; Am 7). In the Psalms prayer takes the form of a pouring out of the heart (42:4; 62:8; 100:2, title). The psalmist did not seem to go before God with fixed and orderly petitions so much as simply to pour out his feelings and desires, whether sweet or bitter, troubled or peaceful. Consequently the prayers of the psalmist consisted of varying moods: complaint, supplication, confession, despondency, praise. True prayer consisted of such elements as adoration, praise, petition, pleading, thanksgiving, intercession, communion and waiting. The closet into which the believer entered to pray, was not only an oratory--a place of prayer, it was an observatory--place of vision. Prayer is not “A venture and a voice of mine; but a vision and a voice divine” (Evans and Coder, 1998:171-173). Is 63:7 and 64:12 illustrate all essential forms of address in prayer

2.7.1 Summary

In conclusion when it comes to prayer, it can be said that prayer is like the dove that Noah sent forth which blessed him not only when it returned with an olive-leaf in its mouth but also when it never returned at all. God answers prayers differently and prayer assumes different forms. Evidently individual and family prayer did not necessarily differ from the public prayers done in places of worship.

2.8 *Picture of the OT worship*

From worship as the OT describes it one can draw the following conclusions:

- In every aspect of worship God initiated the meeting: worship centred on him.
- He was always present with his people and He made a covenant with them.
- The presence of God was experienced with great fear and adoration.
- The glory of the Lord filled his Temple and this indicated the presence of the Lord in an explicit way.
- The plan of the place and the method of worship was from God himself
- The climax of every meeting was reading, interpreting and proclaiming the Word of God.
- There was an appeal to the people/congregation to live in a close and special relationship with God.
- The people had to make a commitment to the Lord to accept his conditions.
- There was also fellowship with the Lord which was expressed in the “sacral meal”.
- The divisions of the day and the regular gatherings played a great role to indicate the time for prayer or worship.
- The “house of worship” was viewed as the house of the Lord and as sacred.
- The manner of prayers was dependent on and related to other cultic actions except perhaps in situations of penitence. Later on prayer received special emphasis and certain aspects of prayers are still being used today.
- A Psalter was used in different forms such as music, poetry or ordinary language.
- There was special emphasis on the influence of the fulfilment of the Temple worship through the work of Christ.
- The calling of “Hallelujah” and “Amen” also became introduced in the Synagogue at a later stage.
- The Synagogue gave rise to fixed daily prayer meetings and the observance of Feast days with a new context.
- While in the Temple most functions were priesthood-oriented, the Synagogue had the congregation as participants in worship.
- Although the emphasis might differ some of the Festivals like the Easter is still very influential today.
- The Festivals had a divine institution (people had to be holy and had to act in accord with God’s prescription).
- In certain cases people had to bring sacrifices to the Lord according to his

blessings to them.

- These Festival meetings had to remind people about the great salvation acts of the Lord.
- The Festivals called every member to retrospection and obedience to the Lord.
- In addition to adoration and fear, joy, happiness and hosanna (filled with shouting and dancing) always followed every occasion of worship.

2.9 Basic theoretical principles as derived from OT worship

From the picture of the OT worship the following basic theoretical principles may be gathered

- 2.9.1 God stands in the centre of all worship. It is about, around and concerning him.
- 2.9.2 God is the initiator of true worship. Worship does not originate from man.
- 2.9.3 God also gives the plan and the manner of worship.
- 2.9.4 In true worship God's presence and glory is experienced by his people.
- 2.9.5 Fear and adoration accompany worship and prayer. If there is no fear, God is not worshipped because his presence is not experienced.
- 2.9.6 Gladness, joy and happiness in other instances also accompany true worship.
- 2.9.7 God himself communicates with his people through his servants. This means that He makes himself audible in his presence. They listen actively and respond to prayer, confession, praise and worship.

Chapter 3

3. Basic theoretical perspectives from NT ideas of liturgy

3.1 *Method and work-plan*

The approach here to the New Testament (hereafter abbreviated NT) will be mainly exegetical. Secondary studies will also be done to learn what other authors say about the liturgy of the NT. Some of the sources that will be referred are old but not obsolete: they are standard works reflecting intensive research. Among them one can make mention of Cullmann (1953) and Maxwell (1958). The chapter will be preceded by an orientation on the liturgy of the NT. The orientation will highlight the characteristics of NT liturgy, the different kinds of worship in the NT and the elements of NT worship. This chapter will also concentrate on the place of worship as the NT worship drastically changed from Temple worship to Synagogue and house worship, while keeping in mind that the Synagogue worship also had a long history before Christianity. This section therefore keeps factors related to historical time in mind. The different liturgical components also receive special attention after considering historical time factors in NT worship.

3.2 *Introductory analysis of the liturgy of the NT*

An intensive discussion has been done on the OT liturgy. However, the NT liturgy receives a new connotation. In the NT “worship” still means primarily “bow down” but the word also translates Greek terms signifying service or piety. Martin (1989:59-60) reasons that the books that make up the library of the NT are literary deposits of worshipping communities. They originate in a way of life marked by beliefs and practices that are all bound up with the worship of God. The external form of worship differs radically from that of the OT. Since the death of Christ constituted the perfect sacrifice, no more sacrifices were needed (Heb 9:11-12, 24-26). Achtemeier et al (1985) states that the entire institution of Temple, priesthood, sacrifice and a cleansing ritual became obsolete. Rather the church itself, that is, all the believers were at once Temple and priesthood inhabited by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:21-22; 1 Pet 2:9).

Deddens (1993:17-18) explains it clearly when he says that after Christ has fulfilled the covenant, the term "liturgy" comes to be used in reference to the service of worship that takes place when the congregation comes together (Acts 13:2). The altar and the sacrifice have fallen away, the atonement has been made and the shadows are fulfilled. The characteristic of the NT liturgy is that God and his people encounter one another in the meeting of the risen and exalted Christ, as Lord. The meeting takes place on the day of the exaltation and resurrection of Christ (see Martin, 1989:65). At once Martin (1989:65) warns that one should not gain the wrong impression that liturgy promotes a false Christomonism, as if Christ took the position of the Israel's covenant God. God remains supreme as the provider of salvation and his rule is the goal of all services of worship. The Lordship of Jesus took nothing from the power of God. In the NT the verb "to give thanks" which is a most significant idiom is not once addressed to the exalted Lord but uniformly to God the Father. In the hymnic piece in Phil 2:6-11 the praise and celebration which climaxes in the acclamation "Jesus Christ is Lord" is immediately qualified by the Pauline coda: "to the glory of God the Father". However, Christ is so exalted by the Father that nothing is possible without Christ in the NT context.

Martin (1989:70) also highlights three types of worship as found in the NT: charismatic, didactic and Eucharistic. Under the charismatic rubric he mentions the offering of praise and prayer under the direct afflatus of the Spirit, whether in intelligible or ecstatic language. Under the didactic rubric belongs a very wide range of activity in the congregation but certain features are common throughout. The teacher uses throughout intelligible speech which aims at clarifying the divine will to the people, whether by his wisdom or knowledge, instruction, prophecy or discernment. The Spirit is the responsible agent behind these ministries. The third element, the Eucharistic, signifies the offering of a Jubilate of thanks, whether by prayer, hymns or canticles. In all aspects it should be kept in mind that the development of the NT liturgy is unique because the Holy Spirit has been within the church to counsel and guide her since the time of the Pentecost.

3.3 *What is the essence of NT worship?*

This can be answered by looking at three Scriptural portions: Jh 4:24 where Jesus answered the Samaritan woman that God is Spirit and whoever worships him must

worship him in Spirit and in truth. Walvoord (1985) states that this should not be translated "God is a Spirit" as in the KJV. God is not one Spirit among many. This is a declaration of His invisible nature. He is not confined to one location. Worship of God can be done only through the One (Jesus) who expresses God's invisible nature (Jh 1:18) and by virtue of the Holy Spirit who opens to a believer the new realm of the Kingdom (see Jh 3:3, 5; 7:38-39).

The words of Jesus here should be understood within context. Jesus met a woman at the well and asked her to give him water to drink. Instead of the woman helping this strange man at the well she started an argument with Jesus. While arguing with Jesus, the woman realised that Jesus was a prophet. She in turn was in a great moral and spiritual need. Her secrets are out now. Jesus knows that He had more than five husbands and that the one she is with now is also not hers. This argument led to the stage where this Samaritan introduced to Jesus an issue of the place of worship. This may seem a diversion to avoid an unpleasant subject; it is more likely that her realising that Jesus was some kind of Jewish prophet prompted her to show her acquaintance with Jewish-Samaritan differences over the main place of worship (Jh 4:20). Worship was closely linked to a sacred place. In the past there had been a Temple built on Mt Gerizim to rival the Temple at Jerusalem. Even after the Gerizim Temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, the Samaritans continued worshipping on the mountain. It is not clear how concerned the woman was about these differences, but she seized on it as a matter worthy of discussion. Jesus used her reply to make a profound statement that transcended the argument about location. Jesus first turned the discussion away from the place to the object of worship (Jh 4:22). Although neither Jerusalem nor Mt Gerizim was relevant in this matter, the Jews were nevertheless superior in their understanding of God. Since the Samaritans were restricted to the Pentateuch, they lacked the theological richness of the revelation of God in the rest of the OT. When Jesus says salvation is from the Jews (Jh 4:22) He is not saying all Jews will be saved, but that the knowledge of that salvation in the Scriptures came through the Jews. Because the neuter of "what" is used in the Greek version in both cases, this draws attention more to the essence of worship than to the person worshipped. The reference to *a time is coming* (Jh 4:23), modified by *has now come*, shows clearly that it is the ministry of Jesus which would radically transform

worship. The mode of worship is now to be in Spirit and truth, which transcends all racial and local considerations (see Carson 1994).

The main emphasis here is on spirit as Jh 4:24 shows. "God is spirit" may be compared to "God is light" and "God is love". These are ways in which he can be known. The spirituality of God was not an idea alien to the Jews but they had not recognised the need for any correspondence between the one worshipped and the worshippers. Jesus taught that the worshippers must share something of the nature of the person worshipped. The linking of spirit and truth here points to the necessity of genuine worship. God desires worshippers who are in tune with him (Jh 4:23) (see Carson, 1994).

The second Scriptural portion to look at is 1 Cor 14:23-25 with the emphasis on vs. 25. At this stage of the argument the focus is not on prophecy--this will receive attention later in the discussion. Rather the focal point at this stage is verse 25: *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* This is almost a fulfilment of the prophecy of Is 45:14 which states that Egypt will come to Israel, it will bow down before her and supplicate before her saying, surely God is in you, there is none else, and there is no other god. In Zach 8:23 we read that men will take hold of the Israelites and follow them because they have heard that God is with them. God is here (God is with you) is the essence of worship in the OT and NT. The presence of the living God should be experienced in full. If God is absent, there is no worship.

The rest of the research on the NT worship will be based upon this concept of "surely God is here with you". From the OT through the NT the true calling to repentance is not based on the beauty of the liturgy and the wonders done by worshippers. It is simply a realisation of the presence of the living God. He has to reveal himself unto the worshipper and in this way people can come to the acknowledgement that God is truly there among them.

The next point about the phrase of "surely God is here among you" is that people become convinced of God's presence and the working of the Spirit. They do not only see. Something happens with them and in their lives. They find themselves in the

presence of the Holy God and they cannot do otherwise than to confess. This is a very important aspect of worship. The same happened with the Samaritan woman at the well. In Jh 4:19 she confessed that Jesus is a prophet and in verse 29 she confesses Jesus to be the Messiah. Interestingly enough in the same pericope as found in John this woman even invited other people to come to Christ. She could not hold her conviction to herself despite the fact that she was not the kind to speak to other people because of her bad behaviour. Meeting Christ drastically and immediately changed her completely.

3.4 Determination of the characteristics of Christian worship

Christian worship was internal rather than external. Only three rituals are known from the NT: baptism, communion and the laying on of hands. However for none of these do we have any explicit instructions describing how they are to be performed. Baptism initiated a person into the church. It consisted simply of immersion in water and was probably accompanied by a reference to Jesus, in whose name the person was baptised. The laying on of hands was associated with receiving spiritual gifts (Act 8:17) or a special commission (Act 13:2-3). Only communion was celebrated on a regular basis to commemorate Jesus' death and as a joyous anticipation of the future kingdom Feast (see Mk 14:25; 1 Cor 11:26). It consisted of a simple meal of bread and wine over which a blessing was spoken (1 Cor 10:16).

The first day of the week was a favourite day for Christian assembly (Act 20:7; see 1 Cor 16:2) though early Christians might also have met daily (Act 2:46). At these meetings there would be teaching, exhortation, singing, praying, prophesying, reading letters and the "breaking of bread" (probably communion; Act 2:42, 46; 15:30; 1 Cor 14:26; Col 4:16). Above all, great joy and thanksgiving characterized Christian worship (see 1 Thess 5:16-18; Achtemeier et al, 1985). Similar to the case in the OT, the NT does also not provide us with a clear picture of the outward development of the gatherings for worship that would be valuable for all ages. Hence this study will concentrate on a few Scripture portions and some early Christian material to determine the form of the NT liturgy.

What made the situation more complex is that there were different kinds of worship as Vos and Pieterse (1997:56) point out. The Aramaic speaking congregation, the

congregations from the Hellenistic-Judaic world and congregations from the early heathen-Christianity are noticed. It is clear from these different congregations that there were different elements distinguishable in the liturgy of NT worshippers.

From 1 Cor 11-14 three elements should be highlighted:

- The administration of the Holy Communion (1 Cor 11:20-34).
- Prophecy - proclamation of the Word (1 Cor 14:5-7, 29-31).
- Prayer and speaking with tongues, an ecstatic exercise in which some were gifted, but one that had to be more carefully controlled (1 Cor 14:2, 14-19, 27-28).

In Act 2:42 four elements are distinguished:

- The teaching of the apostles – preaching and Scripture reading.
- Agape
- The Eucharist
- Prayer

It is already clear from this that Christian worship was not a precise copy of Synagogue worship. The new emphasis was on the Prophetic Books rather than the Law. At a later stage the Christian Scriptures also took form, comprised of letters and memoirs of the Apostles and others, collections of the sayings and acts of our Lord and finally the Apocalypse. Maxwell (1958:3) reasons that these new Scriptures in their early stage took precedence over the old and the highest place was given to the Gospels described as the crown of all Scripture. In addition to the use of the Psalms that were used in the Synagogue, the Christians also produced their own hymns.

Before these components are discussed in detail some Scriptural liturgical references need to be placed together to work out the pattern of liturgy of the NT. According to Maxwell (1958:4-5) one gets the following picture:

Scripture lections (1 Tim 4:13; 1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16); Psalms and hymns (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16); common prayers (Act 2:42; 1 Tim 2:1-2) and people's

Amen (1 Cor 14:16) are clearly marks of the early church. These very elements were also visible in the Synagogue. The early church appears to have had a confession of faith (1 Cor 15:1-4; 1 Tim 6:12); and perhaps almsgiving (1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 9:10-13; Rom 15:26). Commonly joined to the above one finds the Celebration of the Lord's Supper derived from the experience of the Upper Room (1 Cor 10:16, 11:23; Mt 24:26-8; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20). The prayer of Consecration would include thanksgiving (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23, 14:16; 1 Tim 2:1), remembrance of our Lord's death and resurrection (Act 2:42; Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23, 25, 26), intercession (Jh 17) and perhaps the recitation of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4). Probably there were singings in this part of the service and the Kiss of Peace (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14). Men and women were separated as in the Synagogue; the men were bareheaded and the women veiled (1 Cor 11:6-7). The attitude of prayer was standing (Phil 1:27; Eph 6:14; 1 Tim 2:8). One sees here that there were many similarities between the worship of the Synagogue and the sacramental experience of the Upper Room.

Martin (1989:63-64) also has his own construction of the Pauline order of worship: Salutation/ Thanksgiving/ Intercession/ Scripture Lesson followed by Teaching and Admonition/Reading from the Psalter/ Doxology/ Kiss of Peace/ Dismissal including the Invocation, "Come, Lord", and the Grace-Benediction. Presumably the solemn Eucharist, as distinct from convivial agape meals (1 Cor 11:17-34) would follow, prepared for by the preceding ceremonies as in 1 Cor 16:22-24. Martin bases this information on texts like 1 Cor 12-14, 16:20-24 Col 3:16, 17 and the Pastorals.

As a work-plan for this investigation, the place, time and liturgical components of the service are discussed. After this some basic principles will be determined from the data acquired.

3.4.1 The place

The book "Acts of the Apostles" gives a description of the life of the Christian community. As it was a custom for Jesus to worship in the Temple (Mt 5:23 etcetera) in Act 2:46 it is stated that the early Christians gathered in the Temple daily, being one-hearted. They went from house to house breaking bread, praising God, having

koinonia and they were pleasing the whole community. Marshall (1980: 85) comments that the “ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ” here might simply refer to the courtyard of the Temple in Solomon’s portico (see 5:12). Moreover this implies that the Christians did partake in the daily worship of the Temple. It should be noted that there was also a congregation observing the priests executing their duties and entering the sanctuary. The congregation would take part in prayer and would receive the blessing of the priest (see Lk 1:10). The early Christians believed they had a true relationship with the Lord and hence took part in the worship of God in the accepted manner. In the honeymoon of the Acts of the Apostles Christians were not yet excluded from the Temple by the religious authorities. It only happened at a later period. It is also possible that the Theological question about the replacement of the sacrifices by the sacrifice of Christ had not yet occurred to them (see De Villiers, 1977:65).

They also gathered in one another’s houses and broke bread together with a spirit of intense and sincere joy. As it appears in verse 47 of Acts 2 there is a possibility that the breaking of bread also took place in the Temple. Act 1:13 further mentions the Upper Room in which all the apostles, Mary and family gathered. During the Last Supper according to Lk 24:33, Jesus and his disciples gathered in an Upper Room too. Act 12:12 makes mention of a room in which many believers met to pray in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. The Upper Room discussed here might be the same. Paul in a few of his letters refer to the places where the early Christians met as “ἡ κατ’ οἶκον ἐκκλησία” (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5, Col 4:15 and Phil 2). From this it becomes evident that in respect of place, the gatherings of the Christian community were growing above and beyond the limits of the Jewish settings. The Temple did not suffice for their requirements perhaps also because of distance and the spreading of the community. Martin (1989:62) argues that within this setting of house churches, the “holy kiss” (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14) is to be viewed as a sign and symbol of “belonging” to the group.

How should the future of the Temple for Christians be interpreted? Walker’s (1996: 208) interpretation of Heb 8:5 is that the Jerusalem Temple was a “shadow” of the reality now found in Christ. The Hebrew author also discourages association with the Temple sacrifice practices, for Christ was the ultimate sacrifice (9:27; 10:10). He also

speaks of things of the old covenant which are now obsolete and these obsolete things are growing old and will soon disappear (8:13). Even though the argument here can be that the reference in this specific verse is to the old covenant, its disappearance can only be realised by the destruction of the Temple. In Heb 9:8 the author shows that the Holy Spirit indicated that the way into the Holy Sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. The implication here is that the Temple has lost its status and can thus not stand forever.

The Synagogue also played a great role in the era of the honeymoon of Christianity. Our Lord also worshipped in the Synagogue as found in Lk 4 as was His custom to worship in the Synagogue on the Sabbath. According to Act 13:14 and 15, Paul and his fellows visited the Synagogue on the Sabbath. The rulers of the Synagogue even granted them permission to say a word of encouragement for the people. Maxwell (1958:2) believes that there is no doubt that the Jewish Christians grew up in the Synagogue tradition and were taught there from early childhood. The impact of the Synagogue was stronger on Christianity than that of the Temple. The reason was that the majority of the Jews of the Dispersion had never seen worship in the Temple. Even in Palestine the real home of worship was the Synagogue. Moreover the Temple was destroyed by the Romans and never rebuilt; the Synagogues remained. The destruction of the Temple and the spreading of the Synagogues could have resulted in the fact that even the Gentile Christians had little knowledge of Temple worship.

It is clear from this that in the time of the NT there was no longer great emphasis on Temple worship. Temple worship died out systematically among the Christians. The Synagogue played a big role but greater emphasis was placed on house worship. In house worships the breaking of the bread and the proclamation of the Word took place. It is evident that Christians could be freer and they could practice their liturgy in a none-restricted form. The people of the house churches had their own setting and belonging to this group was symbolised by the "holy kiss" as has been indicated.

3.4.2 The time

Act 2:46 already mention that the worship gatherings occurred daily (see 5:42, Lk 24:53). It is problematic to confirm whether the Sabbath day was still observed.

Nevertheless it appears that in their earliest times the early Christians created a specifically Christian setting in which one day was specifically observed namely the Lord's day (1 Cor 16:2, Act 20:7 and Rev 1:10). It is evident here that the early Christians chose this day because on this day Christ had risen from the dead. Upon rising He appeared to the disciples who gathered together for a meal on this day. And on this specific day the Holy Spirit descended on the church. With this in mind it is clear that the first day of the week was meaningful to the early Christians. For them every Sunday was a celebration of the risen Lord. In 1 Cor 16:2 Paul requests the congregation to lay aside on that day something for the collection for the poor. In Act 20:7 Paul preached till midnight on the first day of the week when the congregation gathered for the breaking of the bread. In Rev 1:10 the Spirit took up the apostle John on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. (The Lord's Day refers to the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

Cullmann (1953:12) mentions that Sunday which we know as the Lord's Day today has its origin from the heathen sun cult, in so far as there was recognised in it a symbol of the resurrection, and this led to the circulation of the term Sunday in Christian circles. Constantine the Great raised this day to the status of an official holiday with a leaning towards syncretism. However, this does not in any way detract from the exclusively Christian origin of Sunday in the early Christian community.

Concerning the issue of time, it is clear that Christians gathered every day because they could simply meet in houses. But they also had a special day of worship when all would be together and they made use of the Lord's Day for their gatherings.

3.4.3 The liturgical components of the service

The following components will receive attention in this section:

- The Word service.
- The breaking of the bread (agape meal, Lord Supper, Last Supper, Eucharist, Holy Communion).
- Prayer.

- Baptism.
- Confession of faith and responsive exclamations.
- Benedictions and greetings.

Singing will not receive attention in this chapter: a separate chapter will be devoted to it since it needs special attention.

3.4.3.1 Prayer

Kittel (1995) defines εὐχομαι and εὐχῆ in non-biblical Greek as the most comprehensive terms for invocation of the deity. The sense “to vow” is present as well as “to ask, pray”. The LXX has the word but here and even more so in the NT προσευχομαι becomes the main term. Προσευχομαι has the following meaning or meanings:

- “To pray, ask, beseech” or “prayer, petitionary prayer, invocation”: both noun and verb occur in this sense in Jms 5:15-16 thus ruling out any magical operation and perhaps implying prayer for forgiveness as well as healing. In 2 Cor 13:7, 9 Paul uses the term when praying to God that the Corinthians may not do wrong and may show improvement. His courteous wish of Act 26:29 also becomes a prayer when he adds the words “to God”: only God can bring about the conversion of Agrippa and his listeners.
- “To vow, dedicate,” “vow”. Only the noun occurs in this sense in the NT. We find it in Act 18:18 and 21:23. The shaving of the head indicates that this is a Nazarite vow (see Num 6:7, 9, 19).
- The cultic connection weakens with time and εὐχομαι can thus take on the more general sense of “to wish” or “to ask”. The salutation in 3 Jh 2 reflects this. So does Paul’s statement in Rom 9:3 where he could wish (not pray) that he himself might be cut off from Christ for the sake of his fellow Israelites. In Act 27:29 again the ship’s company wish rather than pray that day may come.

Kittel (1995) further states that prayer may be offered to Jesus as well as the Father in view of his identification as κύριος, whether in invocation of Jesus when praying to

the Father or in direct prayer to Jesus. Except in Rev. 5:8, 14 προσευχεσθαι and προσκυνειν are not used with reference to such prayer.

Vos and Pieterse (1997:62-68) mention that the person who prayed in the NT had to be fully dependent on God. With reference to Luke 18 they point out that the widow had to struggle with the unfair judge until she was treated fairly. In this way, as Christians, we have to pray unceasingly, knowing that God is our only refuge. In the example of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the emphasis is on the fact that we approach God, knowing that we are empty-handed. We do not even deserve anything good from God. We are sinners. We only live from grace and therefore our case with the Lord has to be right. Our dependence upon God indicates that we are totally not capable of anything good on our own.

According to Van der Kam (2001:211) the Qumran community saw its prayers as substitutes for sacrifice: "They shall atone for guilty rebellion and for the sins of unfaithfulness, that they may obtain loving-kindness for the Land without flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifice. And prayer rightly offered shall be as an acceptable free-will offering" (1QS 9.4-5).

3.4.3.2 The essence of prayer

Cullmann (1995:16) reasons that the essence of prayer is that it is a conversation with the living God as a partner. Any course for distraction to this goal profanes prayer and if it is then supposed to be a talk with God, it becomes blasphemous hypocrisy. This is clear from the warning of Christ in Matthew 6:5 against hypocrisy in prayer. From the context of Mat 6:f. it is clear that there was already a tendency in the NT for people to have long prayers. The tendency which Jesus warns against was that of making a show (play-acting) while thinking that it could convince God with long and loud prayers. Those who prayed in this manner also thought that it was important for other people to see how they can pray. In contrast to this Christ clarifies the fact that God knows our needs and we thus cannot convince him with the beauty of our words but rather with the sincerity of our hearts. In this context Jesus does not condemn long prayers. He instead encourages persistence in prayers (Lk 11:5-13; 18:1-18) with right motives of course. The warning of the Lord against hypocrisy provides us with a clear model of NT prayer for the Christians who follow Christ as

their Lord.

3.4.3.3 Jesus and Prayer

What makes prayer even more essential is the very fact that Jesus regularly prayed to the Father and not only instructed us and taught us to pray. Dunn (1992:618) states that prayer was central for Jesus within the much larger rituals, including sacrificial rituals, focussed on in the Temple. He calls the Temple a “House of Prayer” (Mk 11:17 see Is 56:7). It was his regular practice to attend the Synagogue on the Sabbath. In the Synagogue He would no doubt have joined with the rest in prayer. He was probably brought up to say the *Shema*.

Moreover: that Jesus was a man of prayer may be seen from his withdrawals for prayer (Mk 1:35, 6:46), his blessings at meals and his prayers at exorcisms and healings. He prayed after his baptism (Lk 3:21). He found assurance in prayer, prayed for his disciples (Jh 17) and gained help in prayer during the passion (Mk 14:35-42, Mt 26:36-46; Lk 22:40-46). In John his prayer at the raising of Lazarus (11:41-42) convinced those around him of His divine mission. In view of his unique relation to the Father, his prayers were not put on the same level as those of the disciples. Distinctive of Christian prayer is the certainty of being heard by virtue of God’s love, so that all things may be brought to him (Mk 11:24).

Confidence in prayer lies behind the addressing of God as Father/*Abba*). Christ always addressed God as “Father/*Abba*”. Packer (1996) argues that Jesus directs us, however, to address God as Father—in other words, to seek access and welcome God’s presence on the ground that we are children in his family and He looks on us with a father’s love. With this we are to link the thought that our Father is “in heaven”—in other words, that He is God, sovereign and self-existent. Fatherly love on the one hand and transcendent greatness on the other are two qualities in God which the entire prayer assumes at every point.

3.4.3.4 The Holy Spirit and Prayer

The wonder of the NT prayer is that the Spirit is at work in prayer, attesting to us that we are God’s children and interceding for us in our frailty (Rom 8:15, 26). The Holy

Spirit prays with us. Ryrie (1995) states that the Spirit is involved in our praying in two ways. First He guides and directs us as we pray so that we bring to God those petitions which are in His will (Eph 6:19). Second He prays through us with *groanings which cannot be uttered* (Rom 8:26). The fact of this praying is perfectly clear though its ramifications. The verse says that the Spirit helps us which literally means that He puts His hand to the work of praying in cooperation with us. Apparently the groaning does not find expression, for it is unuttered, but it issues in prayer that which is in accordance with the will of God. Wuest (1997) explains this in greater detail when he says that the Greek word translated with "help" literally means "to lend a hand together with, and at the same time with one".

The Holy Spirit lends a hand together with us as we are praying. It is not that He helps us bear our weaknesses but rather that He helps our weaknesses. The weaknesses spoken of here occur on two levels: *what* we should pray for, the matter of prayer and *how* we should pray, the form and manner of our prayer. The word "what" has an article before it in the Greek. Literally we do not know "what" to pray for. That is, we do not know the particular definite thing to pray for. As to the general subjects for prayer, the salvation of the lost, the sanctification of the saints, our daily needs and so on, these we know of. But to be specific in our praying involves knowledge of God's will in particular instances and of that we are naturally ignorant. It is right here that the Spirit comes to our aid.

3.4.3.5 The importance of prayer

Even a cursory perusal of the NT reveals the large and important place of prayer. The Christian life cannot be sustained without it; it is the Christian's vital breath.

The NT shows that to continue in prayer is a positive command (Col 4:2 and 1 Thess 5:17). We are commanded to take leisure or a vacation for prayer as found in 1 Cor 7:5. Praying is God's appointed method of our obtaining what He has to bestow (Mt 7:7–11; 9:24–29; Lk 11:13). The lack of the necessary blessings in life comes from failure to pray (Jms 4:2). Even the apostles regarded prayer as the most important employment that could engage their time or attention (Act 6:4; Rom 1:9; Col 1:9). It is not too much to say that God made us to pray; that prayer is not the easiest but the most *natural* activity in which we ever engage; and that prayer is the measure of us all in God's sight (see Packer, 1996).

In his prayer, our Lord commanded us to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom. Prayer for the kingdom is fundamental but future salvation is so close to present life that one may at the same time pray for daily bread, remission of sins and deliverance from temptation. Constant prayer is needed because the filial relation to God needs constant renewal. Jesus in giving the Lord's Prayer does not mean to restrict freedom and yet the text has a certain normativeness since Jesus is not hostile to formal prayer and the disciples require and request guidance in prayer (Lk 11:1ff).

In prayer Christians are to avoid selfishness (Jms 4:2ff.). They are to remember that this *aeon* is coming to an end (1 Pt 4:7) and they are to honour each other (1 Pet 3:7). External things can have a place in prayer (Mk 13:18; Rom 1:10). Intercession (for the sick and imprisoned, for instance) is important (Jms 5:14ff; Act 12:5). Prayer is to be offered for the brethren and even for enemies (see Jesus on the cross). Thanksgiving is also an integral part of prayer (see the graces at meals, the greetings in epistles and Paul's cry in Rom 7:25). Prayer may be offered kneeling (Act 21:5) or standing (Mk 11:25). Common as well as private prayer is in order (1 Cor 14:13ff; Mt 18:19 with its special promise for the two or three who gather in the name of the Lord.

3.4.3.6 Inferences about prayer as found from the NT

Prayer is an invocation of the deity: a matter of communication with the living God as one's partner. Furthermore:

- It can be offered to Jesus or the Father as Κύριος.
- It is persistent but also sincere in character.
- It is the breathing of the soul and the expression of the being. It has to be done regularly under all circumstances.
- There is no stipulation as to the time and venue of prayer in the NT or to the posture in prayer.
- It can have either a private or public character.
- It should be under the full control of the Holy Spirit who helps in prayer.
- Prayer takes up different forms: intercession, thanking, requesting, beseeching, etcetera

3.5 *Word service (prophesying and speaking in tongues) and Scripture reading*

Jesus in Rev 1:3 says that the one who reads the Word of the prophecies of Scripture is blessed. There is also a blessing for the one that hears and obeys the message of Scripture. Moreover in the conclusion of the book of Rev (22:18-19) there is also a cursing for the one who, having heard the word, adds or subtracts from what has been said. Even Paul instructs or requests that his letter to the Colossians (4:16) also be read to the Laodiceans and the one from the Laodiceans also to be read to the Colossians and the letter of the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:27) to all the believers. It is evident that in the NT context reading played a great role.

The Word of God is sufficient to bring everyone to repentance. This can happen without dependence on man's explanation of it. Paul in his second letter to Timothy writes that all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. De Klerk (1987:103-104) in his comment on this passage rightly emphasises the essential role of Scripture reading. The primary Author and thus the primary Exegete of Scripture is the Holy Spirit. Paul says "All

Scripture” and not part of Scripture is Spirit-breathed. 2 Pt 1:21 adds that prophecy never had its origin in the will of man. Instead men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit opens the understanding of people to understand what they hear. Even the preacher of the Word has to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit to understand what he preaches. For this reason reading always has to be accompanied by a praying heart. The reading of Scripture has to be understood within this context. It is not just a minor issue, neither has it been, for it calls upon the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. A praying reader will always have the guidance of the Holy Spirit (see De Klerk, 1987:104).

Not only did independent Scripture reading have a great role in the NT but so did preaching. It is one of the main reasons for the coming of Jesus Christ. Mk 1:14 says that Jesus went to Galilee and there he proclaimed the good news of God: “The time has come; the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news”. The result of his preaching amazed people because he taught with authority (vs. 22). The concept of authority is emphasised in verse 27: “What is this? A new teaching with authority!” One thing that is clear from this, Reisinger (2002) argues, is the fact that Jesus was not only a Master preacher, but also a doctrinal preacher. A preacher who attempts to edify the church without doctrinal instruction is like a builder attempting to build a house without a good foundation. Having taught his disciples how to preach Jesus, as found in Mk 16:15 sent his disciples to go into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation.

Swanson and Nave (1994) defines preaching as an act of exhorting, prophesying, reproving, teaching. In the discussions of Paul with the Corinthians, tongues and prophecy play an essential role. Preaching will be discussed here under the rubric of the concept of prophecy. It will also be shown in this section why prophecy is so important as a means of preaching. In addition the difference between tongues and prophesying will be established and their importance will be analysed.

Tongues and prophesying are the two predicted signs of the Holy Spirit (Is 28:11, 12 predicted tongues; J1 2:28-32 predicted prophesying). Both these Scriptural passages

in the OT were dealing with the coming of the Holy Spirit. During the Pentecost Peter quoted JI 2. Act 19 states that when the disciples of John the Baptist trusted Christ, as a result of Paul's ministry to them, they spoke with tongues and prophesied. The same thing happened on the Pentecost: the disciples spoke in tongues and Peter prophesied.

In this context "prophesy" has to do with standing before the Word of God, making it shine to attract and motivate people. This is how 2 Pt 1:19 explains the word: "We have a more sure word of prophecy which shines as light in the darkness". The Greek and the Hebrew for "prophet" both agree that the concept has to do with being a spokesman for someone. Much of the OT was of declarative nature. It is not used here in the context of predicting the future but rather in the context of proclaiming God's Word. Prophesying is more like expository preaching, essentially, which is the clearest use of prophesying in the church today (see Stedman, 1971).

Bertsche (2000) refers to this kind of prophecy as declarative prophecy of truths already revealed in Scripture. He distinguishes between three kinds of prophecy, the first being *normative prophecy* containing revelation recorded as Scripture now. People like Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah fall in this category. Amos did not view himself as a professional prophet (Am 7:14-15) but as one sent to go and prophesy. This category was therefore not limited to recognised prophets.

A second kind of prophecy may be categorised as *private prophecy* and this would typically contain a revelation with personal application only. Examples include Nathan (2 Sam 7:2) and Micaiah's prediction to Ahab's defeat in 1 Kg 16:7). In the NT Agabus (Act 11:27-28, 21:10) comes to mind along with the four daughters of Philip (Act 21:9, see also Act 13:1; 15:32 for prophets like Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Judas, Silas).

A third kind should be termed *declarative prophecy*: this involves a Spirit-directed proclamation as found in 1 Cor 11:4-5 and 14). Here God calls on men to give their lives to prophesying like the bands or schools of men known as "the group of prophets" (1 Sam 10:5) or the "sons of the prophets" (1 Kg 22:14). In the NT we have Peter continuing Joel's prophesying from long before (Act 2:16-18) that may serve as

a further good example of declarative prophesy.

One has to consider further that in the NT there is an overlap between prophecy, teaching and preaching (Act 13:1). In Lk 7:39-40 Jesus is referred to as both Prophet and Teacher. Judas and Silas, having been prophets themselves, are said to have encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message (Act 15:32). It is unlikely that this lengthy message was a new revelation. The message would largely have relied upon the text of the OT. This points out that declarative prophecy is more like teaching and preaching. For this reason modern preachers may be referred to as declarative prophets.

Concerning speaking in tongues Thompson (2002) states that it was important that tongues should have an interpretation. He reasons that speaking in tongues and prophecy are on the same level provided that tongues are understood, that is, interpreted. As verse 1 Cor 14:13 states those speaking in tongues must pray that they should receive an interpretation. In his argument Thompson (2002) reasons that the people who spoke in tongues did understand what they were praying. The prayer for interpretation was not for themselves but rather for the people who could not hear. This is also his interpretation of verse 14 where Paul spoke of praying with the spirit and mind. Thompson says that the fact that Paul spoke of an "unfruitful mind" must also be read as referring not the one who prays with the listener as much as to the one doing the praying in the first place. After an exegetical study on the issue of tongues and prophecy the researcher will give his viewpoint on Thompson's exegesis.

Paul (in 1 Cor 12-14) defines the importance of spiritual gifts in the Church. Chapter 12 describes the gifts as of edification, instruction in the Word and the gifts of supporting. According to Goin (2002) they are the gifts belonging to apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastor-teachers. These gifts are essential since they form the solid foundation on which the expression of all other gifts is built.

In chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, Paul mentions that love is the controlling factor. The love of God is greater than any supernatural gift and needs to be the context in which our spiritual gifts are expressed. 1 Cor 14:1 says that love has to be pursued and

spiritual gifts earnestly desired but especially so in the case of prophesy. Spiritual gifts act as channels for love. The basic reason that we are to express our spiritual gifts, to minister and serve, is for the benefit of other people. 1 Cor 14:26 states that the outcome of every worship service is that every one either has a psalm, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation to give. All these things should be done for edification through love for others (Goin, 2002).

The reason why the apostle Paul emphasises that prophesy should be more earnestly desired is that the Corinthian Church had apparently exalted the gift of tongues above the prophetic gift of the proclamation of truth. MacArthur (2002) says that it was common practice in the pagan mystery religions of the NT era for people to believe that they could enter into a state of frenzy or ecstasy, slip out of their body and commune on another level with a deity. In doing that they would speak to that deity in another language, the language of that god. They believed that this ecstatic, supernatural phenomenon was a great act of devotion toward that god. Consequently it was self-edifying. This is how this pagan practice infiltrated into the Corinthian Church. Now what Paul wants to do in this chapter is to restore a healthy balance in the public worship life of that congregation.

Paul (in 1 Cor 14) distinguishes between prophesy and speaking in tongues. It appears that this was a common use in some of the congregations. He describes the contrast in three categories: as to those addressed, as to those edified and as to the value of the gift to the church.

A. As to those addressed:

Tongues are addressed to God (vs. 2). They originate from the Spirit and they utter mysteries (language not understood). Wiles (2002) says tongues is basically prayer and praise. The interpretation of tongues is not "thus says the Lord". The interpretation is an explanation of the mysteries spoken to God.

Prophesying is addressed to men (vs. 3). It edifies, encourages and comforts.

B. As to those edified:

The speaker in tongues edifies himself. The one who prophesies edifies the whole church.

C. As to the value of the gift to the church:

Tongues are desirable--prophesying much more so. The reason for this is that prophesying builds the church whereas tongues do not unless they are interpreted.

Tongues are not necessary in the church unless they are interpreted. Hence Paul says the person who wants to speak in tongues should rather remain silent if there is no interpreter (vs. 27-28). And the people who speak in tongues must wait for their turn. It is also advised that they pray for the gift of interpretation. In the case of prophecy people should also wait for their turn. They should be able to control their own spirit. There is a danger that speaking in tongues might turn into a sign to unbelievers that would merely confirm their unbelief (their reaction: people are mad). Quoting Jack Hayford's teaching, Wiles (2002) writes, "The exercise of tongues is an intelligent act. Not that the language is known, but the voice to speak is known and the Person being spoken to is known, (God), and the one who gives the utterance is known".

Prophesying is a continuing gift for the church for its edification for believers. The reaction of a stranger is that he becomes convinced and judged by the Word. Among the other properties that edify the church as Paul indicates in verse 6 are the following: revelation, knowledge, prophesying and teaching--speaking in tongues is excluded from this list of gifts. From this it can be argued that in his exegesis Thompson missed the basic point which Paul explains in verse 2 namely that the person who speaks in tongues addresses God and not man. It is a speech of mysteries in the Spirit. It is a thanksgiving to God. Hence Paul says that the one who speaks in tongues must pray to be able to interpret his speaking and not, as Thompson puts it, that people should "automatically understand" what goes on. Verse 13 says there must be interpretation. And the question is, if he has to pray for interpretation, whereas he understands what he says, why then should he pray for

interpretation at all? Another problem that Thompson's analysis gives rise to is that he views the "speaking in tongues" in 1 Cor 14 to be the same as the "speaking in tongues" in Acts 2. However the "speaking in tongues" of 1 Cor 14 indicates that the persons who speak in tongues do not know what they are saying. The language is not only strange to others but also to them. In agreement with this exegesis MacArthur (2002) states that in the true gift of tongues in the NT era was the ability to speak a language that was unknown to the speaker but known to someone present. While in Acts 2 people could understand what was being spoken. Hence, the two Scripture portions are not similar as Thompson argues.

3.6 *The practical benefit of prophecy to the others*

1 Cor 14:3 gives three benefits of prophecy, viz. edification, exhortation and consolation. When prophecy edifies, it spiritually strengthens and stabilises. It gives growth in understanding and builds emotionally. When prophecy exhorts, it motivates. It comes to a person's side and places an arm around his/her shoulder. It encourages and gives direction. The third benefit of prophecy as consolation is a means to comfort somebody with tenderness and hope, to empathise with that person and to give sensitive counselling (Goins, 2002; Thompson, 2002).

3.6.1 Inferences from the service Word in the NT worship

- God wants his Word to be heard
- When the Word of God is read or preached, it brings God forward as if He is directly speaking.
- Prophecy, which is the same as preaching, was and is a great means of transporting the Word of God to people. One has in mind here, in particular, the category of declarative prophecy.
- There is a great overlap between preaching, teaching and prophesying.
- The proclamation of the Word is a gift to the Church. Its function is to edify, exhort and console.

3.7 *The breaking of the bread*

According to Marshall (1980:34) the earliest datable source that describes the Last Supper is to be found in Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth. It is also the earliest evidence for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the church. Paul bases his account on what he received from the Lord and delivered to the Corinthians Christians. This is an indication that Paul was citing what he received from tradition. There is, however, also a possibility that he received this account through divine revelation from the Lord (see Wood, 1996). If Paul received this from the church, it could only be from Antioch, Damascus or Jerusalem. Importantly, then, Damascus was the first church he had contact with after his conversion. This gives reason to the argument that Damascus and Antioch took their knowledge from the church in Jerusalem. Paul visited Jerusalem within three years of his conversion (Gal 1:18). Hence there is also a strong possibility that he could have received this information from Jerusalem.

What Paul cites in the letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 11) is reported in considerable detail in Lk 22. While Paul gives an account on a particular event of the Lord's Supper, the Gospels give a historical report of the Lord's Supper in its context in the story of Jesus. Paul provides the word of institution to tell the church how to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The Gospels explain how Christ instituted it. However it should be noted that the Gospels also make it clear that Christ instructed the disciples always to do partake in the Holy Communion in remembrance of him until He comes back. Despite the fact that the Gospels are less well adapted for liturgical use than Paul's account the words of institution from Paul are understood better in the light of the Gospels' narrative (Marshall, 1980:35). One can therefore not be understood without the aid of the other and they should be read in tandem when it comes to liturgy and the Last Supper.

Martin (1989:61) reasons that there is nothing in early Christianity more "primitive" than the sacraments. He further states that it is difficult to determine whether the breaking of the bread in Acts presents us with a full range of possible meanings and solutions to unanswered questions. For instance in the case of the breaking of the bread at Troas (Acts 20:7-12) the question arises: was it the Sunday Eucharist? And

in the case of the daily *koinonia*: was it convivial or sacramental according to Acts 2:46? Another question could be: what is the essence of Act 27:35?

Different arguments and opinions can be given on the issue of the breaking of the bread but what stands firmly is that the Holy Communion was to be kept as Christ instituted it. This is what Paul wanted to remind the Corinthians of in 1 Cor 11:17-34 (see Wood, 1996). Witherington (1995:241-250) states that during the agape meals in Corinth there was a problem with the well-to-do people who treated this meal as a sort of private dinner party, perhaps a banquet followed by a drinking party (*convivium*) see vs. 21d of 1 Cor 11. From this it is clear that some even got drunk. The result was a serious division between the “haves” and “have-nots”. There was also a problem of disorderliness and inequality in the proceedings. It was customary for the Graeco-Roman people in their parties (*collegium*) to invite people according to ranks and status in life. The Corinthian Christians placed the agape meal on the same rank as their parties. Paul says in verse 18 of 1 Cor 11 that he finds it difficult to believe such behaviour among the Corinthian Christians. Rhetorically speaking, this was simply to shame them for their bad behaviour. Paul in this passage wanted to distinguish the Lord’s Supper from all pagan memorial meals. He shows in verse 23 that the Lord’s Supper involved a historical memory. The remembering of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is not merely an occasional, perhaps annual, memorial service for Jesus. Something more positive is involved namely the proclamation of the dying but risen Lord and a sense of what he has done for believers through his death and resurrection as well as a sense of his death “until He comes” (vs. 26).

Richardson (1991) states that this simple, solemn service is conducted “in remembrance” of Jesus’ death. The phrase reflects the vital OT concept of *zikkaron*, “memorial”. This might be a memorial Festival, a place, or an object intended to remind Israel of God’s acts for them in the past. By contact with the *zikkaron* the living sensed their participation with past generations in God’s historic acts. Thus the Lord’s Supper is a unique, holy occasion for the gathered church to sense the participation of every member with Jesus in His death.

Having the synoptic Gospels in mind one has no reason to question the issue whether the Lord’s Supper was the Passover or not. However turning to the Gospel

of John there is evidence that the Jews had not yet celebrated the Passover at the time when Jesus had already concluded his meal and was on a trial before Pilate (John 18:28). John in fact says that the day of crucifixion was the Day of Preparation of the Passover (Jh 19:24). According to John the meal held by Jesus took place before the Feast of the Passover. We thus encounter different views on the character of the Lord's Supper (Marshall, 1980:57; Higgins, 1960:13).

Wood (1996) that Lord's Supper could not have been the regular paschal meal for the Lord died at the same time as the lambs. When it comes to the determination of whether this was the paschal meal or not there thus is an apparent *impasse* which is further complicated by the allegation that the Synoptic account is not consistent with itself. For instance, Lk 22:15 may be read as an unfulfilled wish. Wood further states that for those scholars who prefer to support the Johannine dating and believe that the last meal could therefore not have been the Passover, the question arises, what type of meal was it then? They answer this question by postulating a Sabbath *Kiddush*. According to this view Jesus and his followers constituted a religious group which met on the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover and held a simple service in which a prayer of sanctification over a cup of wine was said.

Before giving an opinion concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper, some further research is done here.

Analysing the synoptic Gospels Smith and Goetz (1999) describes what happened during the Passover as follows:

- In the history of that night when Jesus and his disciples met together to eat the Passover (Mt 26:19; Mk 14:16; Lk 22:13), the manner in which the Paschal Feast was kept by the Jews of that period differed in many details from that originally prescribed by the rules of Ex 12. The grouping of the multitudes that came up to Jerusalem was determined by accommodation. Families stayed together. In some instances they would stay in groups or with friends. One member among each group would be the celebrant, or "proclaimer" of the Feast. The ceremonies of the Feast took place in the following order (Mt 26: 26):

- The members of the company that were joined for this purpose met in the evening and reclined on couches, this position being now as much a matter of rule as standing had been originally (see Mt 26:20), ἀνέκειτο; Lk 22:14; Jh 13:23, 25. The head of the household or celebrant began the meeting with a form of blessing pronounced over a cup, of which he and the others then drank. In accordance with Rabbinic traditions the wine was to be mixed with water not for any mysterious reason but because that was regarded as the best way of using the best wine.
- All who were present then washed their hands. The washing of hands was also believed to involve a special benediction. The table was then set out with the Paschal lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs and the dish known as Charoseth (חרוֹת), a sauce made of dates, figs, raisins and vinegar. The ceremony was designed to commemorate the mortar of their bondage in Egypt. The celebrant first and then the others dipped a portion of the bitter herbs into the Charoseth and ate them.
- The dishes were then removed and a cup of wine was brought in again. Then followed an interval which was allowed for questions that might be asked by children or proselytes who might have been astonished at such a strange beginning of a Feast—at the close of this the cup was passed round and drunk. The dishes were then brought on again and the celebrant repeated the commemorative words, which opened what was strictly the Paschal supper. The celebrant subsequently pronounced a solemn thanksgiving, followed by recitals of Ps 113 and Ps 114. Then came a second washing of the hands with a short form of blessing as before and the celebrant broke one of the two loaves or cakes of unleavened bread and gave thanks over it. All of them then took portions of the bread, dipped them together with the bitter herbs into the Charoseth, and so ate them. After this they ate the flesh of the Paschal lamb with bread and other accompanying food in accordance with their preferences and after another blessing a third cup, known as the "cup of blessing", was handed round. This was succeeded by a fourth cup and the recital of Ps 115-118 followed by a prayer. Accordingly this cup became known as the cup of the

Hallel or of the Song. There might have been, in conclusion, a fifth cup, provided that the "great Hallel" possibly (Ps 120-137) was sung over it.

The Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20) is also called "the Lord's table" (10:21), "communion", "cup of blessing" (10:16) and "breaking of bread" (Act 2:42). As Easton (1996) puts it, in the early Church it was called also "Eucharist," or giving of thanks (see Mat 26:27) and it became known in the Latin Church as "mass", a name derived from the Latin formula of dismissal, *Ite, missa est*, "Go, it is discharged". The account of the institution of this ordinance is given in Mt 26:26–29, Mk 14:22–25, Lk 22:19, 20, and 1 Cor 11:24–26. John does not mention it.

Mt 26:26-30 and Mk 14:22-25 place the institution of the Holy Communion after or during the eating of the Paschal lamb. This was the time when Jesus broke the bread and the implication is that the third cup was used as the sign of the new covenant, symbolising the blood of Jesus Christ. Despite the question about the time of institution of the Holy Communion, Barclay (1967:27-28) and Marshall (1980:59-62) show with a number of arguments that the Lord's Supper was a Passover meal. His arguments are the following:

- The synoptic Gospels specifically date the meal on the Day of Passover. Mk 14:12 says that this occurred on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb.
- Jesus stayed in Bethany but He ate the meal in Jerusalem. The Passover meal was eaten in Jerusalem. It was eaten in the evening (Mk 14:17; Jh 13:30; 1 Cor 11:23). While Jesus ate with large numbers of people, here he ate with only the twelve disciples, a number that corresponds with the requirement that the Passover should be celebrated in groups of at least ten persons.
- It was eaten in a reclining position (Mk 14:18; Jh 13:22, 28). The original Passover was eaten standing, ready for the road, but once the people were settled in the Promised Land the rule suggested that people should eat in a reclining position to show that they had passed from slavery to freedom.
- It appears according to Jh 13:10 that the guests were in a state of Levitical purity such as was required for the eating of the Passover lamb.

- The meal in the Upper Room did not begin with the breaking of bread as an ordinary meal would have begun. The breaking of the bread took place in the course of the meal.
- Wine was drunk at the meal. At the Passover this was obligatory.
- The poor were remembered. During the meal Judas went out. The disciples thought that he was going to buy something for the poor (Jh 13:29). It was the standard practice of the Passover time.
- The meal ended with the singing of a hymn and the Passover meal ended with the singing of part of the Hallel and the Great Hallel. The Last Supper included an explanation of things like the significance of the bread and wine. Jesus also offered an explanation when He instituted the Holy Communion.
- After the meal Jesus stayed close to Jerusalem and did not return to Bethany since the night of Passover had to be spent in Jerusalem or its immediate neighbourhood.

These points reveal that the Last Supper corresponded in many details with the Passover ritual. Moreover, as has been indicated, in all three synoptic Gospels it is clear that the Last Supper of Jesus was a Passover meal. The meal which the disciples were sent to prepare is clearly stated to be the Passover (Mk 14:12-16; Lk 22:7-13) and Jesus then acted as a host at this meal with his disciples. Despite the fact that there are counter-arguments to be made against the fact that this was a Passover meal, it can without doubt be asserted that Jesus held the meal because he wished to celebrate the Passover. Jesus says in Lk 22:15 that He earnestly desired to eat that Passover with his disciples before He suffered (see Marshall 1980:78).

The accounts of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians, Luke and John, as Forrester, MacDonald and Tellini (1983:111-112) state, all suggest that in the course of the Supper Jesus informed his disciples to regard what He did and said at that time as an example to be followed frequently. In Paul and Luke it is an explicit command to take the bread and the cup. In John, Jesus states that the disciples should serve one another as he has served them, washing their feet in the Upper Room. They had to always do this in remembrance of Jesus Christ. This does not at all imply a

commemoration of a dead Jesus or a wake to a dead God but instead a recalling of Jesus and his work. For He is present in the Supper according to his promise and the fruit of his self-offering is given to his people. Furthermore: just as the Israelites always celebrated the Passover meal to remember the exodus, so we have to remember the spiritual exodus from the slavery of sin through Jesus Christ. The Last Supper, the crucifixion and the resurrection are tied together intimately and inextricably. The Jesus who gave himself on the cross for his people and who gives himself to them in Supper may be understood as the Passover lamb. Paul says in 1 Cor 5:7-8: *Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the Feast*. This sacrament is not only a recalling of what Christ had done before his death but also a focus on the future, the rescue and the act of deliverance, the promise of the Kingdom of God.

Concerning the Holy Communion, Calvin (1998b) says that Christ was placed in bodily presence before our view or handled by our hands. For these are words which can never lie nor deceive; “take, eat, drink”. “This is my body, which is broken for you; this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins”. In bidding us to take this, He intimates that it is ours. In bidding us to eat, He intimates that it becomes one substance with us. In affirming of his body that it was broken, and of his blood that it was shed for us. He shows that both were not so much his own as ours, because He took and laid down both not for his own advantage but for our salvation. And we ought carefully to observe that the chief and indeed almost the whole energy of the sacrament consists in these words: It is broken for you: it is shed for you. It would not be of much importance to us that the body and blood of the Lord are now distributed had they not once been set forth for our redemption and salvation.

The Lord’s Supper, as Cullmann (1953:26-32) argues, was not necessarily separated from the service of the proclamation of the Word. He refers to texts that give such an impression but he exegetically shows that even though different names might have been used for the Word service and the breaking of the bread, there was no distinction between them. He further shows, however, that the service of the Word “for edification” should be distinguished from the Word service with a missionary purpose. He wants to prove through this distinction that the Lord’s Supper was the basis and the goal of every gathering. Further motivation for this belief is also the

facts that in the other parts of liturgy such as confession and prayer the risen Christ stood at the foreground.

An important aspect of the breaking of the bread is that people partook in this with gladness and sincere hearts and praising God. Members enjoyed the favour of the other members who were present. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. This is the essence of the whole Christian liturgy: joy, gladness and sincerity in praising God. The liturgy is not centred in itself. Its purpose is to praise God and to enjoy fellowship with other people. This is what makes the church to grow. The church must be a caring church. This means that even through the breaking of the Lord, other members in Christ should be considered as part of the family and all should be viewed as one body in Christ, sharing the same cup and eating the same bread with their Master. Nothing should take place for self-edification.

Easton (1996) highlights the following characteristics concerning the Holy Communion:

- To commemorate the death of Christ: "Do this in remembrance of me".
- To signify, seal and apply to believers all the benefits of the new covenant. In this ordinance Christ ratifies his promises to his people and on their part they solemnly consecrate themselves to him and to his entire service.
- To be a badge of the Christian profession.
- To indicate and to promote the communion of believers with Christ.
- To represent the mutual communion of believers with each other.

Ryrie (1995) highlights the following as purposes in observing the Lord's Supper:

- It is a remembrance of the life and death of our Lord. The bread symbolizes His perfect life which qualified Him to be an acceptable sacrifice for sin and the body in which He actually bore our sin on the cross (1 Pt 2:24). The wine represents His blood shed for the remission of our sins. We can never anticipate seeing that body again or another shedding of His blood, so the Holy Communion has to be a

remembrance.

- The supper is an announcing of the basic facts of the gospel (1 Cor 11:26).
- The supper serves to quicken our anticipation of His second coming for we are reminded that we observe it only until He comes again (1 Cor 11:26).
- The supper should remind us of our oneness with each other in the body of Christ and of the fellowship which we share as fellow members of that body (1 Cor 10:17).

The elements used to represent Christ's body and blood, are bread and wine. The kind of bread, whether leavened or unleavened, is not specified. Christ used unleavened bread simply because it was available on the Paschal table. Wine, and no other liquid, is to be used (Mt 26:26–29). Believers “feed” on Christ's body and blood with the mouth of faith. This is a permanent ordinance in the Church of Christ and is to be observed “till he come” again.

3.7.1 Inferences of principles: the Lord's Supper

- It is one of the most original sacraments in the NT.
- The Lord's Supper was a Passover meal. Through it the church remembers the spiritual exodus from slavery of sin through Jesus Christ.
- The Lord instituted it for his own people and sanctified it to remain holy forever. Hence it is not a common meal.
- In this sacrament the Lord is spiritually present among his children to nourish them through his grace by the Holy Spirit.
- It is a remembrance of the life and death of our Lord till He comes again. Thus it is a permanent ordinance of the church and a badge of Christian profession.
- It is more than a mere recalling of the past.
- It deals with the present and it focuses on the future final fulfilment of the God's Kingdom. It quickens our anticipation to his Second Coming.
- It announces the basic facts of the gospel.
- It reminds us of the oneness with one another in the body of Christ and of the fellowship we share as members of that body.
- The elements that are used are bread and wine.

- The believers partake in this through faith of humankind, in gladness and with sincerity.
- The Lord's Supper was not separated from the proclamation of the Word.
- This leads us now to another important element in the NT worship: baptism.

3.8 Baptism

According to Wuest (1997) the Greek word βαπτίζω means "to dip repeatedly". It was used in connection with the act of sinking ships. It meant also "to bathe". It was used in the phrase "soaked in wine". Swanson and Nave (1994) says βαπτίζω could have meant "to wash", assumedly by dipping in a ceremonial way (Mk 7:4). Louw and Nida (1989:536,537) say it meant "to cleanse ceremonially" with the visible agent of water to show purity and initiation into Christ through repentance (Mt 3:6; Mt 20:22; Mk 16:16). Strong (1996) gives the following definition of βαπτίζω: it meant "to dip repeatedly", "to immerse, to submerge (as of vessels sunk), to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash oneself, bathe and to overwhelm".

Βαπτίζω is not to be confused with βαπτω. The clearest example that shows the meaning of βαπτίζω is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be "dipped" (βαπτω) into boiling water and then "baptised" (βαπτίζω) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the NT, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. Consider for example. Mark 16:16. "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved". Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!

In all the different meaning possibilities water (liquid) is involved in the term "baptism". With a view to the baptism as instituted by Christ instituted as a sacrament

for the Church, Ryrie (1995) reasons that the matter of water baptism involves two questions: "How should it be done (mode) and on whom should it be performed (subjects—believers only or also infants)?" In arguing these issues it is important first to define the meaning of the word "baptism". Any definition of baptism will have to be broad enough to include its use in relation not only to Christian baptism but also Jewish proselyte baptism, Spirit baptism and even the strange use that occurs in 1 Cor 10:2.

Ryrie (1995) further reasons that the mode of baptism has been and continues to be a much-debated question. He gives the following arguments for non-immersion:

- Indeed, if baptism illustrates the Spirit's coming upon a person, then pouring or sprinkling water on the top of the head best pictures this.
- Immersion would have been highly improbable, if not impossible, in instances like those recorded in Act 2:41 (too many people involved for immersion), Act 8:38 (too little water available in a desert place) and Act 10:47 and 16:33 (not enough water in a house for immersion).

In Hebrews 9:10 baptism is used to include all sorts of OT rituals, even those which involved sprinkling. Thus the word does not always mean exclusively "to immerse". The Greek language has an unmistakably clear word that meant "to dip".

Ryrie (1995) gives the following arguments for immersion:

- "To immerse" is the primary meaning of the Greek word βαπτίζω.
- The normal understanding of the prepositions "into" and "out of" (the water) would indicate that immersion was practised.
- The baptism practised on a proselyte to Judaism was a total immersion (though self-performed, not by another) and this would indicate that Christian baptism followed the same customary mode (though it was performed by another on the one being baptised).
- Immersion best pictures the significance of baptism which is death to the old life

and resurrection to the new (Rom 6:1–4).

- Immersion was the universal practice of the early church and every instance in the NT either demands or permits it. For example, 3,000 people could have been baptised in the various pools around Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.
- The Greek language has words for pour and sprinkle but these were never used in the case of baptism.

In agreement with Ryrie (1995) one seems to be driven to the conclusion that immersion is the biblical mode. Immersion seems to have been the mode of baptism practised universally in the early church. This is the most natural meaning of the word used and of the picture conveyed by the ordinance. The first exception to immersion was pouring, not sprinkling, and it was allowed in cases where immersion was not possible, for instance in the cases of sick people. Indeed, pouring was called “clinical baptism”. Cyprian (AD 200–257) was evidently the first to approve of sprinkling, though it was not generally practised until the twelfth century.

The other question concerns the proper subjects for baptism: believers only or should infants also be baptised? The arguments for infant baptism include the following:

- The analogy between circumcision (which obviously was done on infants) as the initiatory rite into the old covenant and baptism into the new.
- Baptisms of entire households would certainly have included infants (as in Act 16:33).
- The NT seems to make promises to households where there is at least one believing parent; therefore, to baptise the infants in such households was quite proper (1 Cor 7:14).

The following may be given as arguments against infant baptism and for believers:

- If baptism is an initiatory rite it must only be performed on those who have exercised faith in Christ and thus have been made members of God’s family. Only natural birth was necessary to become a member of Israel but since the new birth is required to be a member of God’s family today, only those who can consciously exercise faith should be baptised. This argument does not consider the fact that

God is a God of the covenant who made a covenant relationship with his children over the ages. The covenant stands from generation to generation and is not dependant on what humans do.

- Household baptisms in the NT do not specify the presence of infants. Of course one could counter-argue that the absence of infants could be assumed as much as their presence.
- There is no decisive evidence for the practice of infant baptism by either the Jews or Christians in apostolic times. If baptism is the sign of association with Christ and Christianity, then the sign should only be used by those who have so associated themselves. And since the only way to associate is through the personal act of faith in Him, baptism can only be experienced properly by those who have believed. It is clear, for instance, that all in the household of the Philippian jailor were of sufficient age to be able to hear and understand the Word of the Lord which Paul preached to them (Act 16:32). Thus those who believed and were baptised had reached an age of being able to understand intelligently. This may have included children but not infants.

The opinion of the author with regard to the argument that infants may not have been included is that such an argument is based on an assumption; it is not what Scripture says directly. Scripture simply mentions "households". A household does include infants if they are present in a family. If children were included, the next question would be at what age they would have been to be able to confess their faith, hence we sit with *argumentum e silentio*.

There is one clear example in the NT of re-baptism and that is of the baptised disciples of John the Baptist who were later baptised with Christian baptism after hearing and responding to the Christian message as preached to them by Paul (Act 19:1–7). This incident shows that John the Baptist's baptism and Christian baptism were not identical and that even though one has been baptised before, when he becomes a believer in Christ he should be baptised again as a testimony of his identification with the new message and group.

Karleen (1987) views Baptism as a picture of our identification with Christ and His work and the Lord's Supper as picturing our ongoing union with Him and His work.

As such the two are mnemonic in nature: they are designed to help our weakness in comprehending great spiritual realities. Their practice does not gain us merit before God and especially not salvation.

Karleen (1987) further states that there are actually several baptisms in the NT. Baptism does not appear in the OT although we find mention there of ceremonial cleansings, for example in Lev 8:6. All of these kinds of baptism have to do with association or identification. John's baptism was part of his preparation of people for the coming of the Messiah and when individuals were baptised they identified themselves with John's message of a coming One. John's baptism of Jesus shows His identification with the needs of Israel to be met through His roles as Prophet, Priest and King (Mt 3:15). Our Lord also spoke of the baptism of the cup (Mk 10:38–39). This refers to His undergoing death as sin (see 2 Cor 5:21 (He had no sin but was made sin and not sinner)). He would be associated with death and all its terrors. The fourth baptism in the NT is the work of the Spirit that associates us with Christ (1 Cor 12:13). It is this kind of baptism that is pictured by water baptism for the believer. As such it portrays our entrance into life with Christ.

It is evident that baptism plays an essential role in the NT. Jesus commissioned in Mt 28:19 to baptise the believers. The disciples baptised people as we read in several pericopes in the NT. Yet as Willimon (1979:152) says the NT says little on how to baptise. It does not give liturgical rubrics to be followed. Within the great variety of meanings within baptism its interpretation relies heavily to the interpretation of a specific church in terms of issues such as the forgiveness of sins, rebirth, cleansing, death, refreshment, resurrection, adoption and light.

3.8.1 Inferences about the meaning of baptism for the NT

- The NT concept of baptism has to do with a real union and a change and is not only a matter of being dipped into water.
- Baptism portrays one's entrance into new life with Christ.
- Water is involved as an element of baptism except in the case of Spirit baptism.
- Baptism seals the forgiveness of sins.

- Baptism with water in the NT could either precede or follow the Spirit baptism.
- Baptism can occur either be by immersion or sprinkling on in running water.

3.9 Confession of faith

Already during the historical time of Christ in the NT people like Peter and Thomas confessed to Him. These confessions were public declarations of what one was convinced of and what one came to believe and accept as the truth. The approach to this here will be to analyse in some detail one or two of the creeds to understand the motive behind the confession and the purpose of confession.

In Mt 16:16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Son of the living God”. This confession of Peter's came after Jesus asked who they as disciples said He was. Jesus first asked his disciples what other people call him, or who they say He is. It should be understood from this that what people call Christ is what He is for them. It is their understanding of what and who He is. For this reason the disciples with whom Christ dwelled throughout the years also have to give their confession about him. The response of Peter was made also on behalf of the other disciples. This is what they believed about him. This response then was a confession. The Holy Spirit inspired it. Jesus in His comment to this confession mentioned that it was the Father who revealed this to Peter (vs. 17).

Hendriksen (1973:643) calls this the most complete confession of all those that Peter made and that preceded it, as found in other Scripture portions. It is also clear from Hendriksen that a confession says more than the words it contains. For example, more can be said about Jesus as Messiah and more can be said about Jesus as the Son of the living God.

In Jh 20:28 we read of the wonderful confession of Thomas. “Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God”. Keener (1993) says that Thomas' response is a confession of Jesus' deity (see Rev 4:11). The background of this confession goes back to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Thomas among all the disciples happened to be the unfortunate one who did not witness the resurrection of Jesus.

When the other disciples informed him about this he said that unless he was able to place His finger in the hand of Christ where the nails had pierced, he would not believe that Jesus was alive.

Something is good about this occurrence. It is there for a purpose. When Jesus appeared again in the closed room, Thomas was there. Jesus knew about his doubt and He challenged Thomas to prove for himself that it was He. Christ's further comment was that the one is blessed who did not see but still believed. However the good in Thomas' confession is so strong that He was left doubtless. He bowed before Jesus and called him Lord and God. He needed nothing more. He was convinced and sure about what he believed about Jesus Christ.

There are several more confessions that can be quoted in the NT. For instance Jh 1:49 reads, *Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* In Jh 6:68-69 Simon Peter answered him, *Lord, "to whom shall we go?" You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God*". In 1Cor 8:6 Paul says, *yet there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things are and for whom we exist and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and through whom we exist*. Acts 8:36-37 gives us another confession: *And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See here is water! What is to prevent my being baptised?" And Phillip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may". And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"*. In 1 Tim 3:16 we read: *Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory*. Philippians 2:6-11 has Jesus given the name above every other name and that at his name to which every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

3.9.1 Inferrals about the confession of faith as found in NT worship

What is clear from these confessions is that their speakers are convinced of what they say. Their sayings have lifelong implications. What they say has meaning in

their lives and can mean a lot to those who also concur with these confessions. A confession here is not something of the heart. It is verbal and outspoken for all to hear. When analysing these creeds or acclamations it is clear that their point of reference is the same: Jesus Christ. Yet they emphasise different aspects on the point of reference. Some acclamations confess Jesus Christ as Lord, some as the Son of God. Further examples confess Jesus as one with the Father through whom all things including us exist (see Rev 4:11) and some confess him as the King of Israel (like Nathaniel). One can agree with Keener (1993) that these confessions could have given rise to the reason why early Christians in their hymns confessed Jesus as God. *“Pliny, a governor writing near the probable location of John’s readers two or three decades after John, reports that Christians sing hymns to Christ ‘as to a god’”*

The next point that will receive attention is the importance of responsive exclamations, which were also of importance in the early church.

3.10 Responsive exclamations

Allen (2002) mentions the following as words of worship, *Abba*, Hallelujah, Hosannah and Maranatha. Barnard (1981:144) includes the Amen among these. According to Kittel (1995) and Wood (1996:726) the following can be stated about these exclamations:

3.10.1 Maranatha

- Maranatha occurs in the NT only in 1 Cor 16:22 in Paul’s greeting. It also appears at the end of the Eucharistic prayers in Didache 10.6. It is more common in later ecclesiastical use often to give added weight to anathema.
- The term is undoubtedly Aramaic but the exact meaning is debatable. Linguistic research suggests three equally possible meanings: “Lord, come” as a prayer for Christ’s return; “Our Lord has come”, as a confession of his coming in humility, and “Our Lord is come”, that is, He is present in worship.
- Paul used the Aramaic term most probably because it had already become a recognized formula in the first Palestinian community. This shows that Jesus was

confessed as Lord and that petition was made to him.

- In Didache 10.6 where Maranatha does not come directly in the Eucharistic prayer, it seems to carry the sense “Our Lord is present” as a warning against participation by the unholy. The early Christians through this said that Christ came in the flesh and He is present with them in Spirit, and that his return was imminent. This was and is a splendid affirmation of the faith of the Church through the ages. The OT expectation has been realised. It is an expression of the joyful expectation of the return of the Son of God to come and fulfil His final purpose and dwell among his people (Allen, 2002). The context of 1 Cor 16:22 supports this understanding. Rev 22:20 strongly suggests that “Lord, come” is the real point that this term makes for ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ seems to be a translation of Maranatha. If this is Paul’s meaning in 1 Cor 16:22, he is impressing on the church the urgency of its hope. Either way there is a link to the Eucharist which carries the certainty of the Lord’s presence but also the expectation of his return (1 Cor 11:26). Confession of Christ’s coming in the incarnation is less likely in this context.

3.10.2 Inferences about the concept “Maranatha” in the NT worship

We may thus conclude that Maranatha is either a confession of the presence of the exalted Christ or a fervent and expectant cry for his coming again in glory. This can be summarised in the following words: Maranatha is a word of waiting, a word of hope and a word of warning. Maranatha represents three spheres. It puts focus back to the promise of the coming of the Messiah. It makes us contemplate the death of the Messiah who came and it makes us express our faith in His presence, especially as a congregation gathered together. It focuses on the future expectation of the Messiah to come and judge the living and the dead. And in this way it is a prayer.

3.10.3 Amen

“Amen” is a Hebrew word that means “firm” and hence also “faithful” (Rev. 3:14). In 1Cor 14:16 it is not used by the person who prayed but by the audience to corroborate or confirm their sentiment with what must be prayed. This indicates

complete acceptance. Carson (1980:148-149) explains that “Amen” lends its weight to what is said either by stressing that the speaker means what he says or by assuring others that he welcomes and agrees with the statement which has been made. According to Hawthorne (1992:7) the affirmation could either be focussed on a prayer that had been made (1 Chr 16:36), a curse that had been pronounced (Deut. 27:14-26) or a doxology that had been sung to God (Ps 41:13; 72:19 and 89:52). In its appearance it not only confirmed the words but it also invoked their fulfilment. It also appears in a doubled form in the OT, for example in (Num 5:22 and Ne 8:6). The doubling served to make the response especially emphatic. In Is 65:16 the Authorised Version has “the God of truth” which in Hebrew is “the God of Amen”. The promises of God are Amen: they are all true and sure (2 Cor 1:20; Easton, 1996).

In the context of 2 Cor 1:20, the apostle, having mentioned the stability of the divine promises, made a digression to illustrate this great and sweet truth: that all the promises of God are yea and amen. Firstly they are the promises of the God of truth (v. 20), of him that cannot lie, whose truth as well as mercy endures forever. Secondly they are made in Christ Jesus (v. 20), the Amen, the true and faithful Witness. He has purchased and ratified the covenant of promises and is the surety of the covenant (Heb 7:22. 3). Thirdly these promises are confirmed by the Holy Spirit. He does establish Christians in the faith of the gospel; He has anointed them with his sanctifying grace which in Scripture is often compared to oil; He has sealed them, for their security and confirmation; and He is given an earnest in their hearts (v. 21, 22). An earnest secures the promise and is part of the payment. The illumination of the Spirit is an earnest of everlasting life; and the comforts of the Spirit are an earnest of everlasting joy. The veracity of God, the mediation of Christ and the operation of the Spirit are all engaged that the promises shall be sure to all the seed and the accomplishment of them shall be to the glory of God (v. 20) (Henry, 1996).

Christ also used the term “Amen”. In the Gospel according to John, Christ frequently used the word, especially with duplication where it is translated with “verily”, “verily”. The implication of this usage is that Christ says that what He said is special and of great significance to us. The “Amen” of Christ is that we must take his word seriously and rely upon it with implicit confidence. According to Hawthorne (1992:7) concerning this duplication scholars have observed the following key qualities:

- That as yet no exact Hebrew equivalent of the expression “Amen, I say to you” has turned up.
- That it is found in all the Gospels.
- That it appears in all strata of the Gospel tradition.

These qualities suggest that we have here the creation of a new expression by Jesus. It is an authentic reminiscence of Jesus’ own words to direct attention to His authority to speak in the place of God. One can say that the expression goes hand in hand with the OT prophetic formula of “thus says the Lord”. Nevertheless Jesus was beyond the prophets because unlike the prophets He has been given the Spirit without measure (Jh 3:34, see Lk 4:1).

“Amen” is used as an epithet of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 3:14). Christ does not only speak the “Amen”: He himself is the “Amen”. No word from Christ can fail and will fail. God’s promises in Christ have been and are being fulfilled. The “Amen” of the church is a response to Christ’s “Amen”. The context of the “Amen” is once more an indication that God takes the initiative in everything.

Carson (1980:150) further highlights the fact that the usage of “Amen” in prayer and praise is a characteristic feature of the worshipping Church and that it is rooted in biblical practice. When Paul was addressing the issue of speaking in tongues among the Corinthians he argued that there had to be an interpreter so that the congregation would respond with the “Amen”. Paul envisages here that “Amen” was the normal usage of the church. It represented the church’s own glad affirmation of its indebtedness to the grace of God. Paul in his letter also frequently makes use of the “Amen” to confirm what he said.

3.10.4 Inferences about the concept “Amen” in the NT worship

From this information it can be inferred that “Amen” was used from the OT through the NT right into the church today. God initiated the “Amen”, fulfilled it in Christ who is the “Amen” himself and sealed it by the Holy Spirit. “Amen” is not only a word

indicating that one agrees with what has been said or prayed but it also emphasizes one's belief in God's promises and one's agreement to what Christ did.

3.10.5 Abba

The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word literally meaning "the Father". There is a common misunderstanding that *Abba* means "Daddy". Indeed in modern Israeli-Hebrew *Abba* is borrowed from Aramaic to mean just that. But in NT Aramaic *Abba* was not used that flippantly. In Aramaic *Abba* was used by children as a word of deep emotion and feeling, of warmth and intimacy, of dignity and respect. It is more properly translated as "dear Father". As a child Jesus grew up speaking Aramaic. That was His true mother tongue, the language of his home. Jesus also spoke Hebrew to participate in the religious ceremonies of the day and He spoke Greek as the language of commerce. But it was in the language of his home that Jesus cried out to His heavenly Father (Mk 14:36).

Immediately following the Passover celebration, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, to a place called Gethsemane. Gethsemane literally means "the place of the oil press". An olive press consists of a huge stone implement which grinds and crushes the olives to extract the oil. And it was at this place, the place of the oil press, that Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One, was crushed and torn by the pain of His suffering. It was here that He fell down to the ground and cried out to God. It was here that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Lk 22:44). And it was here that we first heard Jesus say "*Abba*", Father, all things are possible with you. Take this cup away from me: nevertheless, not my will but yours be done (Mk 14:36). At this point in Jesus' life, in His deepest suffering, He called out to God in His mother tongue, the language He learned as a boy. The Son of God crying out to His Dear Father, asking for release, yet submitting to His Father's perfect will. Here in *Abba* is a word of submissiveness, of deep trust, of high power and of family relationship. To call the God of heaven *Abba*/Father is to refer to the Creator of the universe in terms of intimate relationship. To speak to God in this way is unusually daring, in light of OT history. But it is the way the Lord Jesus spoke to God, and it is the way Jesus instructed us to speak to God as well, as members of His family (Allen, 2002). Among the Jewish people it was a very unusual way of

addressing God. This was a highly personal way and it truly indicated the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son (Hurtado, 1992:275).

In OT times the Hebrew people knew that God was the Father of his people and they often used names that were built on the Hebrew word "אב" which means "father". But they rarely actually used the word "father" in prayer to God. They knew they were His children (Deut 14:1), a people chosen by Him (Deut 14:2). They knew of His mercy, that He relates to His people as a father to a beloved child (Psalm 103:13). They knew that God the Father loves His children even more than a mother loves her new-born child (Is 49:14-16). On rare occasions the prophets of Israel would even dare to call God "Father" (Is 64:8). Yet it was a distinctly NT development of an OT theme for His people actually to reach out to God in the word "Father". The idea underlying *Abba*/Father is found regularly in the praying of Jesus. Jh 17, often called the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus, is a "Father" prayer. Jesus begins this prayer with the word "Father" in verse 11. He says "Holy Father" and in verse 25 He says "Righteous Father!" Our liberty to speak to God as Father is especially prominent in the prayer which Jesus gave as a model to His people in Matthew 6 and Luke 11, often called "The Lord's Prayer". In this prayer we have the wonderful beginning: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Your name". In the words "hallowed be Your name" we are warned from cheapening the blessed term "Father". With this instruction, Jesus is saying that because He referred to God as Father so may His people. One of the things that Jesus explained to us is that we bear the family name hence the members of the family may speak to the Father by the same term used by His Son Jesus. To call God "Father" is to speak to Him as His child, as a member of the family (Allen, 2002).

There are two other instances in the NT where *Abba* is used. They are in Rom 8:15 and Gal 4:6. In both passages the Bible makes it clear that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to join the Saviour in calling God "*Abba*, Father". Paul states in Galatians 4: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, '*Abba*, Father!'" The passage in Romans states: "For you did not receive the gift of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, '*Abba*, Father'". The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God and since we are children we are heirs

- heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Rom 8:15-17). Here is the tone of Gethsemane again. We suffer with Him that we may be glorified with Him. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18). That is, the suffering of this present world is a mirror into the suffering of Jesus in Gethsemane but with Jesus we are able to say, "Abba!" and we are empowered to say it by the Holy Spirit of God. It is a weapon against doubt (Allen, 2002).

3.10.6 Inferences from the NT about the concept "Abba" in worship

- The word expresses submissiveness.
- The word expresses deep trust in the person addressed.
- The word expresses deep emotion and feeling of warmth and intimacy.
- The word expresses a fatherly, intimate relation.

3.10.7 Hallelujah

"Hallelujah" is a word of worship from the Hebrew Scripture which has entered every place where the biblical faith of God is proclaimed. In language after language, dialect after dialect, people after people, place after place, this word of worship, like the word "Abba", has found its home in the vocabulary of those who love God. Hallelujah is spoken by Sotho speaking believers as well as by the Zulu and the Afrikaners; by peoples in the United States of America as well as by those in the jungles of South America; by Germans and Greeks, the English as well as by the Eskimo.

Allen (2002) states that wherever there is vibrant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is also the word Hallelujah. Perhaps this rare phenomenon of a few universal words of faith is a part of the reversal of the confusion of language at Babel. In these words of worship, believers in Jesus everywhere speak with the same voice despite the fact that Hallelujah is a Hebrew word, especially associated with the book of Psalms. When it came into the NT Greek, the pronunciation became "Alleluia" due to the

differences in the two languages and their alphabets.

The word is Ἀλληλουϊά, so written in Re 19:1,—or more properly Hallelujah (הללויה), "praise ye Jehovah", as it is found in the margin of Ps 104:35, 105:45, 116:1, 111:1, 112:1, 113:1 as well as Ps 113:9, 115:18, 116:19, 117:2. The Psalms from 113 to 118 were called by the Jews the Hallel and were sung on the first of the month at the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of the Passover. Psalms 113 and Ps 114 were sung before the Feast and at its termination, after drinking the last cup. The hymn (Mt 26:30) sung by Christ and his disciples after the Last Supper is supposed to have been the great Hallel which seems to have varied in accordance with various Feasts (Smith and Goetz, 1999). The literal meaning of "Hallelujah" sufficiently indicates the character of the Psalms in which it occurs to be hymns of praise and thanksgiving. They are all found in the last book of the collection and bear marks of being intended for use in the Temple-service given that the words "praise ye Jehovah" were taken up by the full chorus of Levites. In the great hymn of triumph in heaven over the destruction of Babylon, the apostle in vision heard the multitude in chorus like the voice of mighty thunders burst forth: "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth". This was a response to the voice which came out of the throne saying "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you that fear him, both small and great" (Rev 19:1-6). In this, as in the offering of incense (Rev 8), one finds evident allusion to the service of the Temple, which the apostle had often witnessed it in its fading grandeur. The use of this Hebrew word in the Greek NT (Rev 19:1-6) serves as the biblical basis for its adoption into many other languages.

Hallelujah is made of two elements. The first is an imperative (command form) of the verb "halal" meaning "praise". The second, "Yah", is a short form of Yahweh which means "I AM". Yahweh (sometimes pronounced "Jehovah") is the principal name of God in the Bible. Hallelujah, therefore, is properly interpreted as the command "(You) praise Yahweh".

The verb "halal" has the special force of carrying a sense of joyful, celebrative boasting. Occasionally it is found in negative contexts where it refers to the arrogant

self-boasting of the wicked (Ps 5:5; 73:3; 75:4). The word is also used at times of persons boasting of the physical beauty of men and women (Gen 12:15; Songs of Solomon 6:9; 2 Sam 14:25). But "halal" is used pre-eminently in the context of the praise of God and particularly in the context of public worship (Allen, 2002 and Carson 1980:153).

3.10.8 Inferences from the NT about the concept "Hallelujah" in worship

There are numerous verbs for "praise" in the Hebrew Bible. Each of these words has its own particular nuance and its own flavour. Nevertheless they all have these two things in common: each speaks of public worship--that is, what we do together in community-- and each speaks of vocal worship - that is, what we do aloud, in word or in song. This means that each of the words for praise in the Psalms is a word of public, vocal response to God. A person can properly breathe a prayer of praise to God in his or her quiet moments as a solitary act of worship. But when the writers of the Psalms use the vocabulary of praise, they have in mind specifically the public and vocal actions of people in the community of faith (see Allen 2002).

3.10.9 Hosanna

It is important to examine the context in which God gave His holy name, "Yahweh", to His people for it is here that we discover the essence of His name. In Ex 2:25-3:15 God presented His name to Moses. In this passage, the Hebrew people were in horrible slavery to the Egyptians and they cried out to God for deliverance. In response, God remembered His covenant with them and He said to Moses, "I have seen the affliction of my people, I have heard their cry, I know their sorrow, and I am come to deliver them". In essence God said: "I AM for my people". Then, in verse 15, God said: "This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations". God wants us to call Him by His name. By His name, "I AM," the Lord asserts His eternal nature, His independence, His freedom. By His name, He ties Himself to His people, binds His covenant to their community and promises to maintain that relationship with them through His loyal love forever. By His name, He reminds us of His transcendent majesty. His name not only reflects His omnipresence, it also reveals His everlasting love and care for us. His name is a symbol of His character

and, in itself, is reason for the exuberant, boastful praise in God that causes kings and peoples to stand in reverence, to dance with joy or to kneel in awe-struck wonder. The name "Yahweh" ultimately points to the meaning of the name "Jesus" which in Hebrew is pronounced "Y'shua" and means, "Yahweh saves". To praise the name "Yahweh" is ultimately to praise the name of Jesus.

According to Smith and Goetz (1999) "Hosanna" is the cry of the multitudes as they thronged in our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem (Mt 21:9, 15; Mk 11:9, 10; Jh 12:13). The Psalm from which it was taken, the 118th, was one with which they were familiar with because they were accustomed to recite the 25th and 26th verses at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the Great Hallel, consisting of Ps 113 - 118, was chanted by one of the priests and at certain intervals the multitudes joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm and shouting Hallelujah or Hosanna (Ps 118:25) as they waved them. On each of the seven days during which the Feast lasted the people thronged in the court of the Temple and went in procession about the altar, setting their boughs bending towards it; the trumpets sounding as they shouted Hosanna. But on the seventh day they marched seven times round the altar, shouting meanwhile the great Hosanna to the sound of the trumpets of the Levites (see Freedman, 1992:291). The very children who could wave the palm branches were expected to take part in the solemnity. From the custom of waving the boughs of myrtle and willow during the service the name Hosanna was ultimately transferred to the boughs themselves. It was not uncommon for the Jews in later times to employ the observances of this Feast which was pre-eminently a Feast of gladness to express their feelings on other occasions of rejoicing. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that they should have done so under the circumstances recorded in the Gospels.

Allen (2002) states that Hosanna is a Hebrew word that is dynamic in its meaning and powerful in its usage. In its OT setting Hosanna has its home in the contexts of pain and despair of people who cry out to God for deliverance. It is a prayer for help, a plea for salvation. Hosanna is the desperate cry, "Save Us!" In its NT context Hosanna becomes a shout of praise, "Hosanna in the Highest!" It is a declaration of the saving work of Jesus, the Messiah. Because He is "Saviour" Hosanna is no longer just a prayer; it is an affirmation that God has acted finally and decisively in

His work of salvation.

Hosanna is an imperative (command or request) form of the Hebrew word "yasha" which is the principal verb "to save" in the Hebrew Bible. It is a pictorial word which basically means "to make room", "to give breadth and depth" and "to give room to breathe". The idea of salvation in the Bible is thus pictured as pushing away the constraints and freeing up the pressures that bear down on us. This is the meaning of Hosanna! (Allen, 2002). Moreover the word "Saviour" comes from the substantive form of the verb "yasha" and means, "one who liberates or sets us free from all that presses in." There is only one Saviour and He is the Lord. Is 43:11 says, "I, even I am the Lord, and apart from Me there is no saviour." And Is 45:21-23 states, ". . . there is no other God besides me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Look to Me and be saved . . . to Me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall take an oath." This prophetic passage refers to Jesus, see Ph 2:10-11: "*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*".

The classic OT example of the God's salvation is Israel's escape from Egypt. God's people found themselves standing before the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in hot pursuit. With the water before them and the army closing in behind, the pressure and desperation tightened on them like a chokehold—it was a hopeless situation. When they cried out to God for deliverance, He broke the grip of their oppression and made a way of escape by parting the sea. One could almost hear their sigh of relief as God gave them "room to breathe" (Allen, 2002).

This literal event is the working out of the pictorial aspect of the word "Hosanna". The basis for the NT use of the word "Hosanna" is in Ps 118. This Messianic Psalm takes on a special beauty because it was sung after the meal at the Passover Feast. It is believed to be the same psalm that Jesus sang just before He went to the Mount of Olives on the night before His death (Mt 26:30). In verse five this concept of "giving room" is made exceptionally clear: "*I called upon the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place*". And once again we see the prophetic reference to Jesus in verse 22: "*The stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone*". This Messianic passage is echoed in I Pt 2:4-8 as he speaks of

the Saviour Jesus.

In verse 26 of Ps 118 we first hear the prophetic declaration, "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*". Some 800 years later these same words rang out through the streets of Jerusalem as Jesus entered the city on Palm Sunday. In Mt 21:9, Mk 11:9 and Jh 12:13 we find that the people cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!" These words were no longer only a plea but a cry of praise and acclamation: "Here is the Saviour!" or in the words of Lk (19:38), "Glory in the highest!". Hendriksen (1973:766) sees two elements included in this exclamation: supplication and adoration (prayer and praise). The Freedman (1992:291) explains that in the original cry the Aramaic use of the proclitic particle ܐ as the object marker was mistaken for dative sense, "to/ for the Son of David", thus distorting the imperative cry for help. "Hosanna" is viewed as an imperative. There it involves a cry for deliverance to the Son of God. The translation according to Freedman the word should thus be rendered: "Hosanna (please help), O Son of David" and "Hosanna (please help), O Most High".

When the religious leaders heard the crowd, they were outraged. They knew these words could only be applied to the coming of the Messiah. They commanded Jesus to silence His followers, "*Do you not realise what they are saying.*" And Jesus responded in these unforgettable words, "I tell you if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Lk 19:40). In other words, these words from Ps 118 were so crucial to the divine plan of the ages in identifying Jesus as the true Deliverer, that if these words were not said by the people, they would have to be said by the rocks themselves.

3.10.10 An inferral from the NT about the concept "Hosanna" in worship

No wonder the word Hosanna is a word of worship throughout the world. Wherever believers in Jesus gather, there will be the word "Hosanna" in their music, in their prayers and in their liturgies. For Hosanna is a continuing call for help to the very one who has come to save. Hosanna is a cry that has become a joyful assurance, a constant reminder of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3.10.11 An inferral from the NT about exclamatory words in the worship service

Exclamatory words include words of joy, words of prayer and words expressing expectation, hope and comfort. They are words that never lost their meaning and their essence. They are words that still bring encouragement to believers. Through them believers express their reliance upon the only living Triune God.

3.11 *Benediction and greetings*

Benediction and greetings are very common in the NT. This is especially noticeable in NT letters which always include a greeting and end with a benediction. However the question begs whether the early churches took the formulae for greeting from these letters or whether the style followed in the letters was taken from the early church tradition (Barnard, 1981:147).

Much information has been gathered regarding the NT worship. It is clear that one cannot draw up a liturgical sequence but at least one may for sure determine elements that have been there and that may still be used in the church of Jesus Christ. Another aspect is the different important principles that may be useful in determining how God should be worshipped in the present situation. This would however be finally determined in a hermeneutical interaction between the basic-theoretical principles and the meta-theoretical guidelines. What follows now is a list of the basic theoretical principles of the NT worship, as it was the intention with this chapter.

3.12 *Basic theoretical principles of NT worship*

- 3.12.1 Christ became the centre of worship in the NT.
- 3.12.2 Everything became possible for the believers through Jesus Christ who gives strength.
- 3.12.3 Almost every aspect of the liturgy was accompanied or preceded by

prayer.

- 3.12.4 The NT people were Spirit filled in their liturgical proceedings.
- 3.12.5 The element of joy and gladness remained continuous in the NT worship.
- 3.12.6 The resurrection of the Lord became like the pivotal point in the Theology of the NT, hence:
- 3.12.7 The Lord's Day replaced the Sabbath for Christ resurrected on this day and thus the day received new meaning among Christians.
- 3.12.8 Houses and Synagogues gradually replaced Temple worship.
- 3.12.9 Time was no longer an issue: people met at different times to proclaim the gospel.
- 3.12.10 Women actively participated in serving the ministers but also helped in the proclamation of the Word.
- 3.12.11 Sacrifices were replaced by prayer and breaking of the bread.
- 3.12.12 Prayer and thanksgiving could be done according to the ability of the leader.
- 3.12.13 The response of the people was emphasised as this indicated that they were praying together (dialogue in worship).
- 3.12.14 The breaking of the bread was regarded as imperative for the early meetings.
- 3.12.15 The breaking of the bread was not easily separated from the Word service; the two went hand in hand.
- 3.12.16 Prophecy (Word proclamation) received a greater emphasis.
- 3.12.17 Confessions were important and they gave rise to the doctrine of the NT worship and belief.
- 3.12.18 Words of worship found an important place in NT worship.
- 3.12.19 The holy Kiss became introduced as a symbol of solidarity.
- 3.12.20 The worship services began with a salutation and ended with a benediction.

3.13 Basic theoretical principles: a summary

- 3.13.1 God is always present in the worship among his people.

- 3.13.2 The risen, exalted Christ stood in the centre of NT worship as Lord.
- 3.13.3 The Holy Spirit permanently dwelled in the church and guided in all elements of worship.
- 3.13.4 The Word of God is read and proclaimed.
- 3.13.5 Sacraments replaced sacrifices and prayer continued.
- 3.13.6 God met his people in the exalted Christ and the people met with God in the exalted Christ and with one another in a mutual relationship.

Chapter 4

4. Historical development of the worship

4.1 Introduction

Due to the fact that the NT cannot provide a systematic liturgical sequence, guidance can also be sought from the early church. The purpose of this section is to study the liturgy of the church throughout history. The Lord never forsook his church but He sent his Spirit to guide the church in all truth. The immediate successors to the apostles carefully maintained apostolic practice, as this section wishes to demonstrate.

Just as culture influenced worship during the Old and NT eras, it continued to do so for the next two thousand years. This section of study will concentrate on the historical development of worship services from as far as the Apostolic Fathers to the time of the Reformation. Concerning this historical development, good and detailed work has already been done by scholars like Maxwell (1958) in his "Outline of Christian Worship", Barnard (1981) in his "Die Erediens", Cullmann (1953) in his "Early Christian Worship" and White (1990) in his "Introduction to Christian Worship". The idea with this section is not to repeat what they have done but to analyse and get the basics, the similarities and the differences in the development of worship in the history of the church, as well as its influence on the Reformed liturgy as it is today.

4.2 Work-plan

This chapter focuses on the history of liturgy from the first to the twentieth century. It will mainly involve a literature study. The results will help us to see whether we are in line with what history has taught us so far.

4.3 A survey of the worship order from the first to the third century

4.3.1 Late first and early second century worship

Although there are some material on this period it does not give final details on how exactly the liturgy was conducted. One only gets the impression that the Christian worship did not develop as a single organised whole. It was more like Judaism, which had a number of variant traditions in different geographical areas with great liberty of improvisation (Bradshaw, 2001:2). The teaching of the Apostles and their reminiscence as understood by the Church Fathers were recorded in the "Didache". The "Didache" was written towards the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. It is worth quoting for it presents for the first time an order for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

4.3.1.1 The Eucharist in the Didache

It gives a glimpse into the time of the Apostles. Chapter 14 of the Didache says that coming together on the Lord's Day should be to break bread and hold Eucharist. This should be done after the confession of sin in order for one's offering to be pure. This is a serious matter for one was prohibited to join in the meeting if he has quarrelled with someone else as this would defile one's sacrifice: only after reconciliation could one enter the ceremony, Chapter 9 of the Didache writes about the procedure of the Eucharist service. Concerning the cup, thanks has to be given thus: "*We thanks you our Father, for the holy vine of David your son, which you have made known to us through Jesus Christ your Son. To you be glory to eternity*" (own translation). Concerning the bread thanks has to be given thus: "*We thank you our Father for life and knowledge, which you have made known to us. To you be glory to eternity! Just as this bread was scattered upon the mountains, gathered, and became one, so let your church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom. For yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ to eternity*" (own translation). The instruction further is that none should eat or drink if he/she has not been baptised in the Lord's Name. The motivation is that holy things should not be given to dogs. Chapter 10 deals with the thanksgiving after the meal. The thanksgiving prayer closes with a doxology and with words taken from Rev 22. The expression of

“Maranatha” followed by that of “Amen” were used to conclude the thanksgiving prayer.

An interesting remark closes chapter 10 stating that the prophets should be suffered to hold the Eucharist, as they will. This conclusion on chapter 10 of the Didache has an impact on the interpretation of the word “εὐχαριστεῖν”. In chapters 9 and 10, this word is used to refer to the “Eucharist” in the sense either of holding the Eucharist or/and to give thanks. In this context the prophet should be allowed to give thanks as he pleases or to hold the Eucharist as he pleases.

4.3.1.2 Prayer in the Didache

With regard to prayer, the context also implies that the liberty of public prayer was restricted to the prophets. The people only responded with the “Amen”. It further appears that prayer as in the Didache consisted mainly of two parts, the thanksgiving (praise, invocation) and the intercession (petition). Didache 8:2, testifies that the Lord’s Prayer was still in use in worship services towards the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century. According to verse 3 the instruction to the congregation was that it should pray three times a day. In this manner the Christian community became increasingly aware of the living Presence of the Lord in their prayers. Moreover prayer was experienced as a corporate activity. Nevertheless no description can be detected in this text on the posture in prayer.

4.3.1.3 Baptism in the Didache

Chapter 7 of the Didache teaches about the baptism. It implies matters that have to be rehearsed. This is possibly the teaching from chapter 1 to 6. After this the baptism should be done in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in running water. Ample room is left for the employment of “other kinds” of water (cold or warm) and even water poured on the head. However it was very important for the person baptising and the person baptised that both should fast before the baptism.

4.3.1.4 Inferences from the first century liturgy

The meetings were about proclamation and the breaking of the bread. The term

“Eucharist” had a double meaning--of holding the Eucharist, but also of praying. Hence the president could either pray or hold the Eucharist as it would please him. Confession of faith and baptism were preconditions for being invited to the table of the “Eucharist”. Baptism was done in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, with water. The amount of water was not a basic issue. The baptism could occur in a river or with running water or even with water poured on the head. However fasting was very important for both the person administering the baptism and the one baptised.

4.3.1.5 Basic guidelines

What is clear from this century is that the two sacraments were kept, namely, the breaking of the bread that replaced the OT sacrifices and the baptism that came in the place of circumcision. It is also important to see the sacred manner in which the sacraments were kept. Baptism was done after confession of faith and people had to live true lives to take part in the sacrament of the breaking of the bread. The fact that nothing is mentioned about the Word is because the sacraments did not go without the proclamation of the Word. The third important issue that one can learn from the first century is the importance of and emphasis on prayer.

4.3.2 Mid-second century worship

Towards the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr in his Apology chapter 67 (see Maynard-Reid, 2000:31) says that Christians met on Sundays in a house of one of the members. They would read from the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets for as long as time permitted. After the reading, the president invited the imitation of these noble things. All would stand to offer prayers. After the prayer they would bring bread, wine and water and the president would send prayers and thanksgiving to the best of his ability while the congregation assented, saying “Amen”. The distribution and reception of the consecrated (elements) by each one took place and then they were sent to the absent by the deacons. The fact here that they met in people’s houses clearly supports the response of Justin Martyr to Rusticus when he asked about their meeting place: *“We Christians do not hold our assembly in a single place, as you think, prefect. For our God is not circumscribed by*

place. Being invisible and immortal, He fills the heavens and the earth, and we worship and praise him everywhere” (Musurillo, 1972:57).

Concerning the Baptism and the Eucharist, Justin says in his Apologia I, lxi and lxxvi that people who come to believe the truth or things they are taught are instructed to live accordingly and they are taught to pray and to fast. Before their baptism they had to pray and fast and so would the ministers of this sacrament. Then they would come to a place where there was water. They would make ablution in the water in the name of the Father and Lord of all and of the Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. And these people, having made a profession of their faith, would be invited to the table of the Eucharist. All people who are illuminated and who kept the Commandments were invited to the Table. They would all offer sacrifices of prayers and after the prayers they embraced each other with a holy kiss. The bread was then brought to the president with a cup of water and wine. He would give thanks to the triune God for this gift. People would assent in “Amen”. The deacons would give a piece of bread and water and wine to each of those present and they would carry them away to those absent.

During the time of Justin Martyr (see Apologia I, iv) the sign of the cross was essential in all aspects. The cross was a sign of miracles: through it one could do all worldly business even to the extent of crossing the sea and remaining unharmed. It was viewed as the sign that makes ploughing possible. The shape of the cross had to be shown in almost all objects for their functioning to be a success.

4.3.2.1 Inferences from the second century liturgy

Word proclamation was so important that for as long as time allowed it the believers would read from the memoirs of the apostles and give words of encouragement (sermons). Baptism was preceded and followed by fasting. No one could approach the Holy Communion without having been baptised first. The new converts were encouraged to live lives that are pleasing to the Lord. A third element, water, was added to the bread and wine (the known elements) which the Lord used in his institution for the Eucharist. The deacons distributed the elements among the members and they would carry them home to those who were absent. No one could

approach the Holy Communion unless he/she kept the commands of the Lord and lived accordingly. The sign of the cross at this stage had its own importance.

4.3.2.2 Basic guidelines

Like the first, the second century emphasised the importance of the sacraments and their sanctity. It is interesting that the elements could be carried to members that were absent. This offers a guideline on the issue of elderly people who are unable to attend the service of the Holy Communion due to distance and illness. Prayer became all the more important: to such an extent that fasting became re-emphasised.

4.3.3 Third century worship

Maynard-Reid (2000:31) further notes that there were no major changes in the worship of the third century except for the addition of some ceremonial issues and that Justin Martyr's description can therefore be viewed as largely valid for a description of third century worship. The chief officiator was either the bishop or the minister and such a large congregation had more than one minister. Deacons directed people in other matters like reading Scripture, leading in prayer, guarding the entrance, keeping the order, and presenting and assisting in the distribution of the elements. There was a considerable amount of flexibility and freedom even though certain parts of the worship service were fixed.

4.3.3.1 Basic guidelines

Deacons played an essential role in the church. In addition to assisting in the administration of the sacraments, their responsibility increased. Their work-load included directing people in the reading of Scripture, possibly also including their teaching them to read Scripture. They also led people in prayer. In addition to other things, the third century also concentrated on keeping the order of the service. Already during this period we discover that liturgy is not about the sequence of things but about their order. Liturgy was already becoming flexible and free but it remained orderly.

4.3.4 Fourth century worship

Until the fourth century, as Maynard-Reid (2000:32) notes, the life of the church should be understood against the background of hostility and persecution. The fourth century presented a turning point in the liturgy, a time of liturgical innovation. Moreover the edict of Milan 313 brought freedom of the church in the Empire. This took place after the conversion of Constantine. It resulted in the fact that the slogan during the Empire became "Christ and culture". Bradshaw (2001:3) says that it was at this time not only respectable, but it also had some advantages to be a Christian. There was now a movement from private to public worship. People brought their different cultures, practices and mystical cults into the church. Non-Christian practices received a Christian baptism. The liturgy became worldly to such an extent that it was a *cultus oublicus*, seeking the divine favour to secure the well-being of the state.

Maynard-Reid (2000:32) further states that the Greek dichotomy between sacred and secular made its way into the Christian spirituality. It caused a separation of worship and everyday living. Bradshaw (2001:4) argues that the fact that worship moved from intimacy into the theatre meant that services became much more formally structured. The result was that elements of the ceremonial as found then in the imperial court were assimilated into the practices of Christian worship since this provided the natural model for a style of liturgical practice more appropriate for such large assemblies. Buildings were enlarged and choreography became necessary to move the clergy and people through the great basilicas. This choreography included special dress worn by the leaders. The bishops wore the garb and insignia of the senatorial class and the clergy continued to officiate in old fashioned clothing. There was now a move from the influence of the Greek to that of the Latin. Though the Greek culture left its mark and influenced the world view on liturgy, the growing church adapted to local cultural situations.

Webber (1982:103) says in connection with this situation that the church, recognising that the language of worship was intelligible to the people, the lingua franca also became the language of worship. The unfortunate part about this is that at a later stage when the masses spoke different languages from Latin, Latin was still retained

as the language of worship. People no longer truly understood what was happening, and this made the aura of mystery around the clergy and the Mass more enhanced. The church distanced itself from the people even more as it increasingly viewed itself as a hierarchical institution rather than a body. The church dispensed salvation. The liturgy, especially the Eucharist, became the means of receiving this salvation.

Towards the close of the fourth century, negative things about the liturgy became increasingly predominant. Deddens (1993:20-22) points out the following:

- There was an overestimation of the office-bearers and great emphasis was placed on the liturgical acts they performed.
- The celebration of the Holy Communion became the central point in the liturgy.

Despite the fact that matters appeared very religious in the beginning, all this structuralism led to the fact that after fourth century, that which was most essential in the worship service namely the meeting between God and his people became deeply degraded. God spoke less because the pulpit was shoved to the corner. The congregation became increasingly inactive and God's presence was realised exclusively by way of the sacraments. The congregation became spectators of what was taking place between God and the priests (clergy) from a distance. This continued to such an extent that the altar became so completely dominant that the church was many miles away from the NT and the church of the first few centuries.

Despite the changes that took place around Rome itself, there were also some other influential ecclesiastical centres of Christianity that emerged and grew throughout and beyond the Roman Empire. These centres developed a particular style of worship that reflected the local culture. The political, social and cultural circumstances in which the church existed had a relative influence on it. Not only the basic structure (with regard, for instance, to the Word and Table) but even the style of the liturgy reflected local culture. And this gave rise to the Eastern (or Byzantine) and the Western (or Roman) styles of liturgy (Maynard-Reid, 2000:33).

4.3.4.1 Trends from the liturgy of the fourth century

Culture, practices and mystical cults were brought into the church with a Christian

baptism. The worship became mystical and people no longer understood what was happening. The service was no longer intimate: instead, it turned into something in the nature of theatre. The language was no longer understood. God's presence was felt only through the sacraments which were used as a means of getting saved.

They also had special dresses for the worship service because of the culture of the day. The office-bearers received higher honour and the members became passive observers of what happened between God and the clergy. The greatest problem was that the pulpit was shoved to the corner and the sacraments stood in the centre of worship. God no longer directly spoke and met with his children through his Word and Spirit.

4.3.4.2 Basic guidelines from the liturgy of the fourth century

The teaching from the fourth century may be summarized as follows: deny the Word of God its rightful place in worship then you end up with chaos. Put people at the centre of worship, then God becomes excluded from the service. Aesthetics, mysticism and technology to attract people at services are destroying the church. Only the pure Word of God is essential. Sacraments go hand in hand with the Word. The role of the liturgy is to transform culture, tradition and life. The Word of God always has the final say in everything.

4.3.4.2.1 Liturgical forms in the East

Bradshaw (2001:5) states that there are three main families of liturgical rites that may be distinguished in the East. First there is the West-Syrian type, which originated largely from Jerusalem and Antioch. Together with the Jacobite, Maronite and Armenian rites, Eastern rites also included the Byzantine rite practised by the Greek and the Russian Orthodox Churches. Second there is the East-Syrian family, which—because of geographical and political factors—developed in relative isolation from their West-Syrian counterparts. Third there is the Egyptian or Alexandrian family, which includes the Coptic and Ethiopian rites.

The liturgy of the East reflected the Hellenistic love for the aesthetic. This liturgy

made extensive use of ceremonial signs and symbols. It was highly ceremonial, gloriously beautiful and deeply mystical reflecting the ostentation of the Greek culture (Maynard-Reid, 2000:34). Bradshaw (2001:6) adds that in the course of history, Eastern rites have accumulated much peripheral material and have frequently absorbed within a single service elements, which were originally intended as alternative forms. This made them very long and repetitive with a profusion of symbolic elaboration of what were formally merely utilitarian actions. Unlike in the West, the language of the liturgy remained in the vernacular, even if in most places it had become archaic in the course of time and somewhat removed from the normal form of the then-contemporary speech.

However this liturgy is of some importance because it is viewed as the first complete liturgy preserved to modern times. When it was written the imperial ban upon Christianity had been lifted and the *disciplina arcani* was relaxed accordingly. The value of this book is unique as it has not been in continuous use and therefore, it has not been subject to change and revision. It was embedded in a manual of ecclesiastical life, which had been lost for centuries, yet it came through unaltered. The general scheme of the liturgy as set out by Maxwell (1958: 12-14) was as follows:

4.3.4.2.2 Liturgy of the Word

- Litanies.
- Lections from law, Prophets, Epistles, Acts, Gospels, interspersed with psalms sung by cantors.
- Sermon.
- Dismissal of catechumens: four classes in all, after a separate deacon's litany and bishop's prayer of blessing had been said to each of them.

4.3.4.2.3 Liturgy of the Upper Room

- Deacon's litany and bishop's prayer for the faithful.
- Salutation and response.

- Kiss of peace, with word of response.
- Offertory: ceremonial washing of bishop's and presbyter's hands.
- Presentation of elements at Holy Table by deacons.
- Vesting of celebrant in a "splendid vestment".
- "Fencing" of table by chief deacon.
- *Sursum corda*, preceded by salutation.
- Consecration Prayer, as follows:
- Preface: thanksgiving for creation and providence (very long).
- Singing of the Sanctus.
- Thanksgiving for redemption.
- Anamnesis: Words of institution.
- Memorial and oblation.
- Epiclesis.
- Great intercession.
- Lord's Prayer.
- Deacon's litany and bishop's prayer.
- Elevation: Holy things with response.
- *Gloria in excelsis* (Lk 2:14 only).
- *Benedictus qui venit* (Mt 21:9 and the word, "God is the Lord and has appeared unto us").
- Delivery: the Body of Christ; the Blood of Christ, the cup of life".
- Communion, while Psalm 34 was sung.
- Deacon's exhortation and bidding.
- Bishop's post-communion, thanksgiving and intercession.
- Bishop's prayer and blessing.
- Dismissal of people by deacon.

According to Jasper (1972:224) the Orthodox liturgy is related to the Byzantine liturgy. The word liturgy is normally used in the Byzantine rite only with reference to the Eucharistic liturgy and not to the whole of the formal public worship as it was in the West. The Eastern Orthodox Church—such as those churches of the Byzantine rite—celebrated the Holy Eucharist in communion with Rome according to three liturgies: the Liturgy of St James the brother of the Lord, the Liturgy of St Basil the

Great and the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. Four principal divisions of the liturgy may be distinguished:

- The preparation of the bread and wine, or *prothesis*, which was performed privately before the service.
- The introductory office of prayer and praise or *enarxis*.
- The *synaxis* or liturgy of the Word, or liturgy of the catechism.
- The Eucharist proper or the liturgy of the faithful.

Prothesis means preparation. Grisbrooke (1972:325) states that it designates three different but related things:

- The rite of the preparation before the Divine Liturgy or the Eucharist.
- The chamber to the North of the sanctuary in which the greater part of this rite took place.
- The table in that chamber on which the elements were prepared.

The preparation included that of the ministers as well as the gifts. The *enarxis* was sung with the celebrant standing in the sanctuary before the holy doors: originally it had been sung with all the ministers outside the sanctuary. The *synaxis* comprised three parts: the entrance rite, readings from the Scriptures and the common prayers of the church. The Eucharist proper commenced after the dismissal of the catechumens. It comprised of seven parts: the prayers of the faithful, the great entrance (the entrance with the offering), the kiss of peace and the creed, the anaphora (the Eucharistic prayer), the breaking of bread, the communion and the conclusion.

4.3.4.2.4 Trends of the Eastern liturgy

It was aesthetic and ceremonial with signs and symbols and it was long and repetitive. The vernacular was retained although it became archaic. Their liturgy had four principle divisions: the *prothesis* (performed before the service privately), the *enarxis* (introductory office of prayer and praise), the *synaxis* (liturgy of the word or of

the catechism) and the Eucharist proper (liturgy of the faithful).

4.3.5 Medieval and Roman Catholic worship

Bradshaw (2001:6) divides the western rites into two main families: the practice of Rome itself, which was followed throughout the southern Italy and the non-Roman family of rites. Medieval Liturgies also known as the Celtic Liturgy according to Crichton (1972:227-229) became known only after they had received Roman interpolations (that is, a spirit of sober pragmatism). This liturgy was simple, lacked ostentation and was not highly ceremonial. The missionaries of St Augustine (d.605) and the main structure that continued throughout the Middle Ages introduced the Roman rite into England. This led to the building of churches, cathedrals and abbeys on a grand scale that involved the compilation of a series of liturgical books. During this period of time different liturgies were introduced and adopted. Concerning this Bradshaw (2001:6) states that the churches of the West turned to Rome as the ancient and apostolic centre of Christianity in that part of the world. This was for authoritative guidance in matters of liturgical practice. Missionaries from Rome also carried their own liturgy into the countries in which they went. This took place until the fathers of the council of Trent requested the Pope to reform the liturgy, as it varied in almost every diocese. The new missal was completed under Pious V in 1570 to be the exemplar for all churches and the mass was to be followed for all time.

A few Marian priests were secretly still using the Sarum Liturgy, one of the varieties of the liturgies used before the Trent Liturgy. The Liturgy of Trent was however not left unmodified. It changed from time to time. The result that was debated on the liturgy in the Second Vatican Council of 1962 which had been called by John XXIII left no doubt that the changes would exceed mere alterations in the Tridentine mass. Post-conciliar commission was introduced to produce a liturgy that should make the mass more alive and meaningful. Life became very different from 1570. The congregation in this liturgy also assumed an active participation in the liturgy. People were reciting the *Gloria in Excelsis* in the creed and responded through various chants (see Crichton, 1972:227-229). There was thus similarity everywhere but not uniformity.

A few changes can be noticed here: the Pope announced that incense might be used whether the mass is sung or said. The mass began with an entrance song. A shortened confession by the priest and the people followed. The liturgy of the Word received a vital role. The Pope then said that the treasury of the Word should be more generously distributed. There was also a lesson from the OT and a lectionary was compiled after the four sequences of hymns preceded the reading from the NT. After the NT reading the creed and the prayers followed. The offertory procession at the beginning of the Eucharistic liturgy, linking the gift of bread and wine with the giving of money, was encouraged where possible. A few minor alterations also occurred at a later stage (see Crichton, 1972:227-229).

Brashaw (2001:7) mentions that there were introduced separate liturgical books for different ministries involved in the celebration of a rite. The bishops or priests presiding over a liturgical rite would have had *Sacramentaries* containing the prayers they were to say. The people responsible for reading would have had *Lectonaries*, indicating the beginning and endings of passages to be read. The singers used *Antiphones*. This contained the musical parts of the service. The ceremonial rites were contained in an *Ordo*. Later because one minister conducted the whole rites, all these became included into a single volume. Ordinary lay people did not have a copy of the liturgy at all. Different reasons can be given to this: the illiteracy of most, the high cost of copying and also the tendency that developed among people to view the liturgy as something done by the clergy on behalf of the people. The lay people could occupy themselves meanwhile with their own private devotions.

The Medieval period also saw a new development. Some worship became more introspective, personal and pietistic. It fought against growing institutionalism, worldliness and prosperity that characterised church and society and promoted more privatised, non-institutionalised worship. There were also fine choirs that usurped the role of the congregation in the service. Because some of the congregations were rich more private masses were celebrated. Traditional and communal institutional worship turned people to para-liturgical devotions such as the rosary or the way of the cross or to a form of contemplation and meditations.

However among the Catholics there were also conservatives such as the Old Catholics. Pursch, Ruth and Tol (1972: 239-240) state that the celebration of the Eucharist stood at the centre of liturgical life in the Old Catholic churches of the Utrecht Union. The greatest emphasis however was on the proclamation of the Word in the reading and the preaching. They saw the Word service and the liturgy of the sacrament as the two pillars of the mass. The Old Catholic churches made use of the *Missale Romanum* in its old form as laid down by Pius and not the revised liturgy after Vatican II—even though they did not make use of this older form without alterations.

Out of Roman worship grew Anglican worship. Buchanan (1972:231-232) states the following about the Anglican liturgy: the roots of Anglican Eucharistic liturgy lie in the reforming of Cranmer in the reign of Edward VI (1547-53). Cranmer's whole aim were a wholly vernacular liturgy, a simplification of ceremonies, participation by the people (including receiving communion regularly and in both kinds) and elimination of transubstantiation, mass-sacrifice and other unreformed doctrines. When it came to the Sacraments nothing preceded reception. There was no trace of consecration in reception whether in name or thing. Fenwick and Spinks (1995:37) say that the Anglican Church had a Reformational ideal. The ideal of the English Reformers was a weekly Eucharist with the congregation receiving communion. Baptism was to be a community event involving the whole congregation at public worship. The Book of Common Prayer also assumed that there would be morning and evening prayers in the parish church with a congregation.

White (1989:100) adds that even the yearly calendar received new changes. The liturgical focus was more on Sunday and the events of the NT. A gradual break-up in the unity of initiation was noticed as baptism, confirmation and first communion were slowly pulled apart. Queen Elisabeth 1 and Edward VI were both confirmed immediately after baptism but later it was required that children should first be able to say the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments and answer the question of the catechism before confirmation. With regard to baptism, provision was also made for adult baptism. The child was to be baptised by being dipped three times in the front (submersion) with provision for pouring if the child was weak. There was also a form for the blessing of the water.

In addition to the worship liturgy, there was also ministry of the sick and the dying. The tone of the funeral service was changed from fear to hope, the dominant theme being taken from 1 Cor 15. regarding marriage ceremonies, the traditional purposes of marriage were cited: procreation, a remedy against fornication, and for a mutual society, help and comfort, vows common in England were exchanged and the ring was given with the promise "With my body I thee worship".

4.3.6 Trends of the medieval period

Worship became simpler with no ostentation. Concomitantly it became less ceremonial. Different missionaries introduced different liturgies wherever they went. The congregation became actively involved in reciting the creed and the chanting. There was similarity but not uniformity. Incense could be used with the mass said or sung. Different ministries were introduced: the *Sacramentaries* for the prayers, the *Lectionaries* for the reading, the *Antiphores* for the singing and the *Ordo* for the rest of the liturgy. Later on only one man ran the show. This resulted in the worship becoming introspective, personal and pietistic as opposed to institutionalism, worldliness and prosperity. Not only did one man replace the role of the different ministers but also a choir replaced the role of the congregation in the singing. During the worship service the congregation would keep themselves busy with their own private worship. Rosaries, the way of the cross, contemplation and mediation were introduced.

4.3.6.1 Basic guidelines

The Medieval period teaches that one problem cannot correct another. From pluralism, worship became individualistic to a large extent and the unity of the church suffered consequently. The participation of the congregation members became replaced by the work of the clergy. The service became so mystic that the individual began to be preoccupied by his or her own things. Instead of people being taught they were restricted from active participation. The Word was no longer proclaimed in

a manner understandable by people. Latin was no longer a common language understood by all. People had a desire to hear the Word of God and did not have access to it. Therefore, because of the thirst that members had for salvation, they began to seek different manners of getting saved. Consequently they sought security and salvation from dangers from the following: rosaries, the way of the cross, contemplation and mediation. The more people introduced different things in the church for salvation, the further they grew from God.

4.3.7 Reformation worship

To get to grips with the situation of the sixteenth century a letter is quoted which Calvin (1998a:193) wrote concerning the NECESSITY OF REFORMING THE CHURCH: This quotation is relevant with regard to the liturgy, because it shows how the liturgy was distorted when Calvin was in the ministry.

"To The Most Invincible Emperor Charles V. , and The Most Illustrious Princes and Other Orders, Now Holding A Diet Of The Empire At Spires, A HUMBLE EXHORTATION Seriously To Undertake The Task Of Restoring The Church.

Presented In The Name Of All Those Who Wish Christ To Reign.

AUGUST EMPEROR,

Be pleased, Most Invincible Cæsar, and Most Illustrious Princes, to call to mind the many corruptions by which, as I have already shown, the worship of God was polluted, and you will assuredly find that impiety had broken out like a deluge, under which religion was completely submerged. Hence, divine honours were paid to images, and prayers everywhere offered to them, under the pretence that the power and deity of God resided in them. Hence, too, dead saints were worshipped exactly in the manner in which of old the Israelites worshipped Baal. And by the artifice of Satan, numerous other modes had been devised by which the glory of God was torn to pieces. The Lord exclaims, that he burns with jealousy when any idol is erected, and Paul demonstrates, by his own example, that His servants should be zealous in asserting His glory, (Acts 7:16.) It is no common zeal for the house of God, which ought to penetrate and engross the hearts of believers. When, therefore, the Divine

glory was polluted, or rather lacerated, in so many ways, would it not have been perfidy if we had winked or been silent? A dog, seeing any violence offered to his master, will instantly bark; could we, in silence, see the sacred name of God dishonoured so blasphemously?

*In such a case, how could it have been said, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me?" (Psalm 49:9.) The mockery which worships God with nought but external gestures and absurd human fictions, how could we, without sin, allow to pass unrebuked? We know how much He hates hypocrisy, and yet in that fictitious worship, which was everywhere in use, hypocrisy reigned. We hear how bitter the terms in which the Prophets inveigh against all worship fabricated by human rashness. But a good intention, i.e., an insane licence of daring whatever man pleased, was deemed the perfection of worship. For it is certain that in the whole body of worship, which had been established, there was scarcely a single observance, which had an authoritative sanction from the Word of God. We are not in this matter to stand either by our own or by other men's judgments. We must listen to the voice of God, and hear in what estimation he holds that profanation of worship, which is displayed when men, overleaping the boundaries of His Word, run riot in their own inventions. The reasons which he assigns for punishing the Israelites with blindness, after they had lost the pious and holy discipline of the Church, are two, viz., the prevalence of hypocrisy, and will-worship, *ἑθελοθησκειαυ*, meaning thereby a form of worship contrived by man. "Forasmuch," said He, "as the people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid," (Is 29:13, 14, Calvin, 1998a: 193).*

From this letter it is clear that during the sixteenth century when the Reformation began there was a fight against medieval doctrines and the teaching—which the Reformers regarded as a corruption of pure Christianity—which was embodied and expressed in liturgical rites and practices. Worship was polluted and religion was impious. There was also a problem with idol worship. These problems called for a

serious Reformation.

Reformation also came with the growth of Rationalism. There was an articulation of the whole new consciousness of the individual. Reformation worship had its own fundamental features: the use of vernacular, restoration of the ministry of the Word to a prominent place chiefly through the preaching and expounding of Scripture as well as the inclusion within the services of the reading of long passages of doctrinal instruction and moral exhortation. Deddens (1993:23) stresses that the Reformers called for the gospel to be loud and clear enough for the people to hear and understand. The people were drawn from the static status of being spectators to become a genuine party to the covenant and again actively participate in the liturgy. The worldly “encounter between God and the clergy” had to change to the biblical “encounter between God and his people”. Many Reformers made use of fixed orders of service and prescribed texts were valuable instruments in ensuring that what they did and said was pure and did not contain objectionable features. However there were extreme Reformers who believed that prayers which were read from a book were not really prayers at all. Ministers were not really allowed to shape worship. Thus the production of models to be followed in worship continued (see Bradshaw, 2001:8).

4.3.7.1 Luther as a Reformer

Luther was the first to start with the Reformation. According to Maynard-Reid (2000:35) one of Luther's greatest contributions was to put worship in the vernacular of the people and to encourage congregational singing through the use of popular tunes. These changes were part of the Renaissance and humanist push to make worship intelligible.

During the Reformation, around 1517, the liturgical form among the Lutherans had a twofold motivation: theological and didactic. They judged the inherited rites theologically by the Reformed norm: justification through faith by grace. They moved away strongly from medieval superstition to the teaching of the gospel. Strong (1996) emphasis was placed on vernacular and the preaching of the Word. Preaching was regarded to be the living voice of the gospel: Christ present and active. In the Lutheran tradition the sermon could either precede the introit or follow the creed. Luther excised the offertory and the canon. Hence the order of the *missa fedelium* was as follows: preface, words of institution (sung), Sanctus (with elevation), Our Father (omitting doxology), *pax* (interpreted as a public absolution), communion in both kinds (with Agnus Dei), collection, *Benedicamus* (replacing the *Ite missa est*) and Aaronic blessing (Brand, 1972:238).

White (1989:40) summarises Luther's liturgical reforms as follows: they were strongly pastoral in the sense that they were conceived of not as scholarly programs but out of the realities of the parish as he (Luther) knew it. They were truly universal even though they were founded on a particular people, his Saxon neighbours. The reform of Luther developed a whole new theology of the laity. Not only worship was affected but also the very concepts of the church, ministry, secular life and economics. In times of need people could assume the role of clergy. The Christian community struggling in the wilderness could choose their own ministers. Their choice would have as much authority as if they had been ordained by the Pope. Christians could and were expected to administer one another in daily life. Baptism acquired a new dignity: it became an initiation of every individual to the priesthood of all believers. Whoever came from the baptism of water could boast that he or she was a priest, bishop and Pope. Worship was made accessible to all and all could also actively

participate in music. The passivity of the Christians had to come to a radical end, all had to play an active priestly role. The Holy Communion was more frequent.

Luther was not that radical in as far as the piety of the people was concerned. He was tolerant. Although he would criticise such practices of elevation and images, he would not trample on that to avoid scandalising the laity. He also preached with intensity against this and showed it in his hymns. These hymns became important in the reshaping of the piety of the people.

The sermons of Luther dealt with biblical text in a direct and earthy way. They were not studied as bits of rhetoric but in a folksy and anecdotal manner aimed at helping people to visualise the biblical narrative with graphic examples drawn from daily life. They tended to be expository rather than moralistic. Confirmation became introduced. Children who were about to partake in the Holy Communion due to the influence from the school were examined in public. The pastor would lay hands on them to bless them. As with other liturgies it can be assumed that this liturgy also underwent changes to the present form.

Luther did not make as significant a break with his Catholic liturgical heritage as did the other Reformers. Lutherans as well as Anglicans retained much of the ancient form of worship. Calvin and the other Reformers went further. They replaced a number of elements with new ones.

4.3.7.1 Other prominent Reformers

Other prominent figures in the Reformation are people like Martin Bucer, Ulrich Zwingli (the Swiss Reformer) and the Anabaptists of the Radical Reformation. Bucer reduced the liturgy to its simplest form giving preaching precedence as well as the singing of metrical psalms. The lectionary disappeared and the minister chose his own text from which to preach. He did away with the organ and instrumental music in favour of human voices singing biblical texts (Maynard-Reid, 2000:36).

Zwingli and the Anabaptists of the Radical Reformation made a greater break with the past. Lamb (1972:243) states that although the Reformed Churches have been

accused of neglecting the Eucharist, their liturgies all stress its importance. In the two books he produced Zwingli derived everything from the mass—yet he removed all accretions. He provided separate orders for the ordinary preaching service without communion and for the Eucharist which he regarded as another form of preaching. The order of the Eucharist was sequenced in the following manner: exhortation and fencing of the table followed by:

- The Lord's prayer.
- A prayer of humble access.
- The words of institution.
- The fraction.
- Communion: first of the ministers and then of the people.
- A psalm (said or sung).
- A post-communion prayer.
- Dismissal.

It should be taken into account further that:

- There was no consecration prayer and no intercession.
- Celebration was allowed only four times per annum.

Zwingli emphasised the importance of people hearing the Word only and that there should never be distraction from this such as an organ, musical instruments, vestments and pictures. The Anabaptists went further: they even rejected formal worship. Because of their persecution under both Roman Catholics and Protestants they believed that a true church was a suffering people and obedient church who had to encounter hardships. Hence their services were secret, unscheduled and impromptu (Maynard-Reid, 2000:36).

4.3.7.2 Calvin as a Reformer

Calvin (1998b) advocates for the sole worship of God. He explains that whenever Scripture asserts the unity of God, it does not contend for a mere name but also enjoins that nothing which belongs to Divinity be applied to any other; thus making it obvious in what respect pure religion differs from superstition. For one to understand Calvin, it is important to make a study of his view of worship in order to understand

what influenced his views. Hence, this section will look into Calvin's own exegesis about worship in his Institutes.

The Greek word εὐσεβεία means "right worship": for the Greeks, though groping in darkness, were always aware that a certain rule was to be observed in order that God might not be worshipped absurdly.

Calvin has been very critical of the worship of his day as it can be seen from his institutes in Calvin (1998a:161). He states that human beings acknowledge and confess that God must not be worshipped absurdly, yet what they confess is not forthwith manifested because people do not cleave to the one God. God, in vindicating His own right, first proclaims that He is a jealous God and will be a stern avenger if He is confounded with any false god. God is His Word defines what due worship is in order that the human race may be kept in obedience. He embraces this teaching in His Law when He first binds the faithful in allegiance to him as their only Lawgiver and then prescribes a rule for worshipping him in accordance with His will. The Law is designed as a bridle to curb men, and prevent them from turning aside to spurious worship. But it is necessary to attend to the observation that unless everything peculiar to divinity is confined to God alone, He is robbed of his honour, and his worship is violated.

Calvin (1998a:162) in the same chapter further reasons that it may be proper here more particularly to attend to the subtleties that superstition employs. In revolting to strange gods, it avoids the appearance of abandoning the Supreme God, or reducing him to the same rank with others. It gives him the highest place but at the same time surrounds him with a tribe of minor deities among whom it portions out His peculiar offices. In this dissembling and crafty manner the glory of the Godhead is dissected and not allowed to remain whole. In the same way the people of old, both Jews and Gentiles, placed an immense crowd in subordination to the Father and Ruler of the gods and gave them, according to their rank, room to share with the supreme God in the government of heaven and earth. In the same way, too, for some ages past, departed saints have been exalted to partnership with God to be worshipped, invoked and lauded in his stead. And yet we do not even think that the majesty of

God is obscured by this abomination whereas, in fact, it is in a great measure suppressed and extinguished—all that we retain being a frigid opinion of his supreme power. At the same time, being deluded by these entanglements, we go astray after diverse gods. The distinction of what is called *δουλια* and *λατρία* was invented for the very purpose of permitting divine honours to be paid to angels and dead men with apparent impunity. For it is plain that the worship that Papists pay to saints differs in no respect from the worship of God. For this worship is paid without distinction; only when they are pressed they have recourse to the evasion that what belongs to God is kept unimpaired because they leave him *λατρία*. Calvin's argument is that if one does not give God the worship and service due to him, one can by no means call that true worship. Human beings cannot receive service due to God (see Calvin, 1998a:163).

This superstitious religion is what is encountered in the issue of the ATR (African Traditional Religion). This will receive further attention. Yet Calvin (1998a:163) indicates that it is the nature of human beings to revolt against God. Human beings are religious and they stand without excuse before God. The problem they have is that instead of worshipping the true Creator, they go for the creation.

Calvin in his Institutes distinguishes between worship and service. *λατρεία* in Greek has the same meaning as *worship* in Latin; whereas *δουλεια* properly means service, though the words are sometimes used in Scripture indiscriminately. But granting that the distinction is invariably preserved, the thing to be inquired into is the meaning of each. *Δουλεια* unquestionably means service and *λατρεία* worship. But no man doubts that to *serve* is something higher than to *worship*. Yet human beings have a greater tendency of serving other human beings more than they would serve God although they would acknowledge that God deserves the highest worship. To criticise this tendency, Calvin in his exegesis does show that *λατρία* is not the only word used for service to God, because when Paul reminded the Galatians of what they were before they came to the knowledge of God, he says that they “did service unto them which by nature are no gods” (Gal. 4:8). The word used is *δουλια* and not *λατρία*.

Therefore the Reformers had enough reason to return to the model of the NT period. With regard to the ceremonial worship the Reformers tried to distinguish between what they regarded as commands from God and those things that they regarded as merely human additions to the essential nucleus. As a result fundamental Reformers regarded anything, which they judged not to be explicitly commanded in Scripture to be inadmissible in Christian worship (Bradshaw 2001:8).

McDonnell (1967:132-133) and Deddens (1993:23) agree that Calvin did not only want a return to the NT liturgy, simple, clear, spare and direct. It was also not Calvin's desire to replace the worship by sacrament with the worship by Word and to let the church have the Word proclamation as the centre in the life of the church. He wanted liturgy to assume a totally new structure. It had to be more than a ritual Pelagianism. The ceremonial exhibitionism, which he experienced in the church, was like the theological cousin of Pelagianism. What the church once lost, Calvin wanted back: the central role of the Word.

4.3.7.3 Calvin and the administration of the sacraments

The sacraments in Calvin's time were not without problems either. In his Institutes, Calvin (1998a) writes this; *"Lastly, we have brought into our Churches the ancient custom of accompanying the administration of the sacraments with an explanation of the doctrine contained in it, and at the same time expounding with all diligence and fidelity both their advantages and their legitimate use; so that, in this respect, even our opponents cannot find any ground of censure. But nothing is more alien to the nature of a sacrament than to set before the people an empty spectacle, unaccompanied with explanation of the mystery. There is a well known passage quoted by Gratian out of Augustine — "If the word is wanting, the water is nothing but an element." (This is concerning the baptism). What he means by the word, he immediately explains when he says, "That is, the word of faith which we preach." Our opponents, therefore, ought not to think it a novelty when we disapprove of mere exhibition of the mystery. For this is a sacrilegious divorce, which reverses the order instituted by Christ. Another additional fault in the mode of administration, commonly used elsewhere, is that the thing which they consider as a religious act is not understood, just as is the case in the performance of magical incantations. I have*

already observed, that the other sacrament of the Christian Church, the Holy Supper of our Lord, was not only corrupted, but nearly abolished. Wherefore it was the more necessary for us to labour in restoring its purity. First, it was necessary to eradicate from the minds of men that impious fiction of sacrifice, the source of many absurdities. For, besides the introduction of a rite of oblation in opposition to the express institution of Christ, there had been added a most pestilential opinion, that this act of oblation was an expiation for sin. Thus, the dignity of the priesthood, which belonged exclusively to Christ, had been transferred to mortal men, and the virtue of his death to their own act. Thus, also, it had come to be applied in behalf of the living and the dead. We have, therefore, abrogated that fictitious immolation and restored communion, which had been in a very great measure obsolete. For, provided men went once a year to the Lord's Table, they thought it enough, for all the remainder of that period, to be spectators of what was done by the priest, under the pretext, indeed, of administering the Lord's Supper, but without any vestige of the Supper in it. For what are the words of the Lord? Take, says He, and distribute among yourselves. But in the mass, instead of taking, there is pretence of offering, while there are no distributions and even no invitation. The priest, like a member cut off from the rest of the body, prepares it for himself alone. How immense the difference between the things! We have, besides, restored to the people the use of the cup, which, though it was not only permitted, but committed to them by our Lord, was taken from them (it could only be) at the suggestion of Satan".

What can be deduced from this quotation is that the sacraments eventually became a spectacle to the congregation. They were not participators but mere spectators. The minister was drinking the wine for them. There was no proclamation of the Word that preceded or accompanied the sacraments. The minister was talking a mysterious language to the congregation and doing mysterious things they did not understand. Calvin and the Reformers were fighting to change this mysterious sacrifice into a Holy Communion accompanied and clarified by the Word.

Calvin regarded weekly communion as Scriptural and therefore essential but the magistrates of Geneva allowed it only quarterly. After Calvin, some Reformed churches followed their own traditions with slight changes from his order. Brienens (1987:19) and Barnard (1981:314) summarise his liturgy with regard to his services

as follows:

- The Holy Communion had to have its rightful place on the day of the Lord (every Sunday).
- The service began with prayer.
- After the prayer a sermon followed.
- After the sermon preparation of the elements on the table took place.
- The minister read the words of institution.
- An explanation of the meaning and purpose with the Holy Communion followed and also the banning of all those who according to Christ's command were not worthy of the Holy Communion.
- Then there was the Holy Communion prayer that the Lord may prepare the hearts for the reception of the gifts in thankfulness.
- This was followed by the distribution of the elements while psalms were sung or Scripture portions read.
- After the distribution people were exhorted to have faith and to live according to it, to love and to glorify Jesus Christ with their lives.
- Thanksgiving prayer and praise followed.
- A hymn was sung to the glory of the Lord
- The congregation was sent off with the blessing of the Lord.

An essential character of the Holy Communion to Calvin was the *sursum corda*. According to Balke (1980:225) Calvin argues that that which the bread and wine sign and seal forces us to lift our hearts to higher place. Calvin (1998c) writes in his commentary of 1 Cor 11:24 the following: *"Having given thanks. Paul observes elsewhere, that every gift that we receive from the hand of God is sanctified to us by the word and prayer (1 Tim 4:5). Accordingly, we nowhere read that the Lord tasted bread along with his disciples, but there is mention made of his giving thanks, (Jh 6:23,) by which example he has assuredly instructed us to do the like. This giving of thanks, however, has a reference to something higher, for Christ gives thanks to the Father for his mercy towards the human race, and the inestimable benefit of redemption; and he invites us, by his example, to raise up our minds as often as we approach the sacred table, to an acknowledgment of the boundless love of God towards us, and to have our minds kindled up to true gratitude"*.

Barnard (1981:323-327) further explains Calvin's full liturgy in this way: the services were done from the table; only the sermon was delivered from the pulpit. It was only at a later stage that the whole service was done from the pulpit.

- The opening *votum* was in the form of an *adjuditorium* (Ps 124:8). It can be said that it had its origin from the preparatory session of the Mass and even from the Synagogue.
- Music received a special place and meaning in liturgy.
- The Decalogue was regularly read at the services.
- After the Decalogue a public confession followed. This confession replaced the personal confession before the Roman priest. Calvin grounded himself on Scripture with regard to confession of sins. People could come in public before the Lord with their sins and ask for forgiveness.
- Prayer for enlightenment and illumination by the Holy Spirit before the reading of the Word and proclamation received special attention.
- The sermon followed the Scripture reading immediately and it was an explication of what was read.
- After the proclamation it was time for intercession. Calvin realised that prayer lives and rests upon the Word. "*Orare nisi praecunte verbo non possumus*" (we cannot pray unless the Word is first proclaimed).
- The Credo followed the intercession. The *Apostolicum* was used over the *Niceanum*. The congregation confessed it and not only the minister. It expressed that we all want to live and to die in Christ.
- If there was a Holy Communion on that Sunday, the Communion invocation would follow the credo.
- After this the Sunday collection followed (either before the Holy Communion or immediately after the sermon depending on the Holy Communion).
- The post-communion prayer for thanksgiving preceded the benediction. For Calvin the Holy Communion was not a remembrance meal but a new meal of a united congregation with the living Christ as Guest. He himself shared his gifts. The renewal of the covenant became clearly visible through this.

Brienen (1987: 151ff) offers a good outline of Calvin's liturgy. He highlights the fact that Calvin believed that a Scriptural, true and pure liturgy is one that does not look for what seems good to mankind but one that considers what God prescribed and adheres to that. Calvin also wanted freedom in the ceremonies of the liturgy. His motivation was that Christ himself practised a free liturgy in his life on earth. Liturgy had to be to the honour of God and to the salvation of man. The purpose of mankind is to serve God and stand in obedience to him. People must serve God throughout his life. They must not only think of God when in trouble and in need, but their entire life must be worship to God. Man is fully dependent upon God for everything. Moreover Calvin believed that the edification of the congregation is the *criterium* for the liturgy. This should be understood in the context that Christ stands at the centre of the liturgy. He is the Master, the Teacher and the Preacher and He works through his Spirit in everyone. The liturgy had to be simple. Even the components of the liturgy had to be simple: including prayer, the sermon, the administration of the sacraments and the hymns. The liturgy also had to be accessible. Calvin could not take it when there was prayer in Latin and when people simply did not understand. How could they say Amen on what has been prayed? Every activity and message had to be aimed at the service of the congregation and the people had to be able to follow. Mysterious activities were not welcome in Calvin's liturgy. Moreover the liturgy was also to be decent and orderly (1Cor. 14:40). By decent Calvin meant "a divine reverence to God" and with "order" he meant not sequential order but peace and tranquillity. Nonetheless Calvin's liturgy also consisted of a liturgical moment. The Spirit is there to teach us all truth and to reveal to those whom God loves the secrets that no eye has seen, ear has heard and mind understood, for He understands all things, even the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10).

4.3.7.4 Trends of Reformation worship

The era under discussion was influenced by Rationalism. Reformation worship had its own fundamental features. The use of vernacular was used in worshipped service. The ministry of the Word was restored to a prominent place (chiefly through the preaching and expounding of Scripture. Included with the proclamation of the Word was the reading of long passages of doctrinal instruction and moral exhortation. The gospel became loud and clear enough for the people to hear and understand. There

was again a true encounter between God and his people. Music by the whole congregation became of importance once more, returning to its rightful place in the service. Nothing absurd had to distract and disturb the service of God. Fixed orders of service were used in order to prevent heresy: for example, some Reformers believed that written prayers were no prayers at all. Prayer had to be from the heart and directed by the Spirit. The Reformed liturgy once more placed God at the centre, through his Son. The liturgy had to be simple and clear, decent and orderly. Holy Communion became viewed as essential for every week but was nevertheless administered on a quarterly basis. It was not administered without the official proclamation of the Word and those who were not pure were banned from using the Holy Communion.

4.3.8 Guiding principles as inferred from second century liturgy to Reformation liturgy

History teaches that the moment the word of God is shoved to the corner many disturbances, disorders and indecencies come to the front in the church. There are basic elements that should remain unchanged or even untouched. These elements run throughout the liturgy of the church. These are; the Word and its place in liturgy, prayer and its importance, the sacraments and their relationship to the Word as well as music. The rest of the other things and their practices should be to the edification of the church members.

God has to remain in the centre of the entire worship. Nothing must replace God's presence. The meeting that takes place between God and human beings is tri-dimensional. God meets His children, they meet God and they also meet mutually with one another. The history of liturgy gives a warning that is that care must be taken concerning the culture of the day. It is true that God is worshipped through culture. But no-one's culture is absolutely correct. Therefore it is the function of liturgy to transform culture and also gain from culture. Human beings have to be obedient in learning what God expects of them and how He wants them to worship him.

4.3.8 Worship of the eighteenth century

This period is also important because the Reformation did not lead to the end of the problems encountered in the era of worship. New problems arose. De Bruyn (1996:11) states that what the Reformation was for the 16th century, Methodism was for the 18th century. Methodism, as he reasons, can be considered as one of the greatest and most far-reaching religious movements. The 18th century was a period of transition: tepid, apathetic but yet interesting. The following broad trends underpinned it: Deism, Moralism, Antidogmatism, Empiricism and Scepticism. These trends led to religious and moral decay. Drunkenness, sexual immorality, maltreatment of animals, hedonism and a barbaric prison system pulled down the level of communal life. It was a situation in which some were extremely rich and others starkly poor.

De Bruyn (1996:14) states that the reaction of the Anglican Church to this was deplorable. The noble people belonged here but they scoffed at the situation in which the church found itself. The higher clergy were immersed in politics. The lower class was ignorant and unbelieving. Ministry and pastoral care were left in the hands of the lower clergy, who were remunerated poorly for their work and there was just as much drunkenness and immorality among the clergy as in the rest of the population. The Sunday message was in the nature of a humanistic morality that could be contracted in a sentence: "*Behave yourself in society*". People came to church to "laugh, whisper and sleep". There was no call to repentance. And this is what gave birth to Methodism.

Methodism, according to the De Bruyn (1996:17-18), can be characterised as follows:

- Repristination: going back to the house churches of the NT (this was the birth of the Methodist societies).
- Ascetism: abstinence from secular pleasures and luxuries, self-chastisement and seclusion.

- Mysticism: to come in touch with God on a personal level and even to be unified with him in a certain degree. It is a penetration to the mysteries that are not perceptible to the senses. Religious experience plays a high role here.

Methodism in a way gave birth to the Liturgical Movement of the twentieth century. This is so because John Wesley, the father of Methodism, also emphasised the conscious, personal, subjective religious experience, striving for holiness in heart and conduct. His doctrine of sanctification resulted in his doctrine of perfection. In criticising John Wesley or Methodism, one should look first at the context in which John Wesley was living. There was a great need for repentance. A drastic change had to take place. Wesley's intention was not in the first place to fight the church and begin with a new church. Hence, he started with the societies with the intention of getting few people together for Bible study and in depth introspection in the life of the individual. His home background by a mother, who was a Purist, one cannot expect otherwise. The Wesley family believed in method in whatever they did. And this had a strong influence upon the children, Charles and John.

The same can be said today of different religions. They all start with a good intention and as a reaction against a specific wrong. But at the end it turns out badly. Motives are usually good but the manner and the handling of the matter usually has its own negative aspects. The same can be said of the Reformation as well as the Methodism.

4.3.9 Methodist liturgy

White (1972:239) states that John Wesley made little alteration from the liturgical book of England for a Methodist liturgy. He omitted most of the holy days, translated the word "priest" with "elder" and changed the pronouns of the prayer of absolution from "you" to "us". Service music was not expected and it was indicated that the *Gloria in excel* and the *Sanctus* were to be recited. John Wesley expected that hymns would be sung and he and his brother Charles Wesley wrote 165 Eucharistic hymns. He made a few changes in the rubrics and the Nicene Creed. The exhortations and second post communion prayers were dropped. Collection for the

king was eliminated. He changed the notion of praying for “the Supreme Rulers of these United States”. Only one word was omitted in the prayer of consecration, a redundant “one”. Then the final blessing took place. Only small changes from this were made in the next half-century.

Fenwick and Spinks (1995:87) say that John Wesley combined the use of extempore prayer and preaching services with a high esteem for the Book of Common Prayer. An abridgement of this book was made in 1874. Different abridgements appeared and some ministers espoused free prayer and despised liturgical forms.

A major revision of the Book of Common Prayer took place 1964. Its order was as follows: prelude, hymn, Scripture sentences, salutation, collect for purity, Lord’s prayer, Gloria in Excelsis, invitation, general confession, prayer for the pardon, comfortable words, prayer for the church, epistle, anthem or hymn, gospel, creed and sermon. After the sermon came notices, hymn, offertory, prayer of dedication, *Sursum corda*, preface, *Sanctus*, prayer of consecration, prayer of humble access, *Agnus Dei*, communion of clergy, communion of people, peace, post-communion prayer, hymn, blessing and postlude (White 1972:239).

Out of Methodism grew Pentecostalism (Buys, 1996:56). Pentecostals have open-air meetings, worship services and evangelistic services. Hollenweger (1972:241) says that classical Pentecostalism follows the pattern of different Protestant traditions. However the Eucharistic services have created some difficulties for Pentecostals. The problem with this is that they are at times wholly unstructured. The result of this is that they produce meetings so stereotyped that, for all their boasted freedom, they become more barren than the very liturgical services they deprecate and with less aesthetic appeal. Some of the Pentecostals might not make use of a written liturgy but use instead an oral liturgy which can also be flexible. This allows for a framework of the whole liturgical structure. It is thus evident from the liturgy of the 18th century that liturgy lives within a certain context. This context has an influential character on the liturgy. Yet in the complex situation in which the church finds itself, there are always people who search for the truth. The main problem is that people usually go from one extreme to another. In trying to bring change in the liturgy, one should learn

from the Word of God but should not ignore the teaching from history. This one of the reason why there was a Liturgical Movement in the twentieth century.

4.3.10 The Liturgical Movement of the twentieth century

The Liturgical Movement is part of the reawakening of the Church. The Nineteenth century philosophies which had no place for God have been allowed full rein in twentieth century societies; the effects of the two World Wars and numerous local conflicts aided the development of the Liturgical Movement. It so happened that that which was traditionally without question accepted--beliefs, values and morality--were widely abandoned and questioned. The nineteenth century can also be marked by a decline in numbers and in confidence. The Liturgical Movement should be seen in this light.

Buys (1996:66) states that the night between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was indeed the birth-hour of Pentecostalism. This happened after a certain Parham and his students had a night watch, and one of the students, Ms Agnes Ozman, asked him to lay hands upon her. She allegedly started to speak Chinese and a halo shone around her head. The other students spoke in 21 other different languages although they had never done any studies in these languages. They argued that all they needed for speaking in tongues was a baptism with the Holy Spirit. This baptism became an important aspect in the liturgy for the laying on of hands brought upon them the receiving of the Spirit and the proof to it is the speaking in tongues. There was no other proof as Seymour, the Baptist minister, believed. It happened that in 1906 that Seymour who studied at Parham's school held a revival in an old Methodist church in 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles. This was when miracles happened. People flocked in and wild hysterics broke loose when in their service they felt the tremors of the earthquake which on 18 April devastated the neighbouring city of San Francisco. This event gave rise to the birth of many Pentecostal churches including the South African AFM (Apostolic Faith Mission) which was begun by John Murray.

Things had to happen in the church. People once more needed a touch and excitement in worship. Christianity felt challenged by the world. Churches in the

Ecumenical Movement gathered to discuss common things that affected them. Hence it is not surprising that the Liturgical Movement has its origin in many families of Christendom.

Smit (1982:10) states that within the Liturgical Movement there are three parallel movements; the movement within the Anglican and the Lutherans, the development within the Roman Catholic Church and the Liturgical consciousness of the “separated” churches. He further states that the Second World War also had a great impact in the Liturgical Movement. This can be referred to as the Liturgical Revolution. Pop music became introduced in England in 1960. Germany followed this in 1962. Barnard (1981:22) states that the Second Vatican Conciliate of 1963 had rich results. A few experiments were brought into the church. The *Societas Liturgica* that was formed in 1967 with its workshops and here much liturgical experimentation also occurred. The liturgy received a totally new form on different levels in different churches. Different ideas became introduced and all this happened to attract and address the member. Every aspect of man had been introduced. People attended services with the worst of expectations. Changes were simply the order of the day.

Fenwick and Spinks (1995:5-11) describe the following characteristics of the Liturgical Movement:

- The struggle for community: protest against individualism in society and in church.
- Participation: people demanded understanding and involvement in worship and not only clericalism.
- A rediscovery of the early church as a model: an attempt to get back to “purer” traditions, before medieval and Reformation developments.
- A rediscovery of the Bible: a wider application of Reformation principles, more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and less dogmatic and moral sermons.
- A rediscovery of the Eucharist: Emphasis is placed here on the regular communion of the believers.
- Emphasis on the vernacular, this includes changes in music.
- A rediscovery of other Christian traditions: ideas have to be imported from other traditions, too, not only one’s own tradition.

- Emphasis on proclamation and social involvement: true worship and sacramental participation should restore humanity to its true status in Christ and this should have a visible impact on society.

4.3.11 Inferences from the Liturgical Movement of the twentieth century

It is evident that the Liturgical Movement has been making an important contribution especially with regard to the active participation of members. The Bible was once more translated into the language of the people. The culture and tradition of the people were taken into consideration. There was more freedom in the worship services. This freedom was not the one Calvin had in mind which was freedom in Christ. It was freedom in the expression of the emotions and the feelings. This means that there was no problem if someone would shout or scream while the other one is preaching, singing or praying. The intention of moving from the individual to the members was good but the consequence thereof once more placed people at the centre of worship. God became only the Object of worship but no longer assumed a central position as Initiator. It was no longer about how He wanted to be worshipped but about how members chose to worship him.

The Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands can also be said to have been affected by the Liturgical Movement. Through the Liturgical Movement secularism and syncretism cropped into the worship in many different churches. Hence there are some of the trends of the Liturgical Movement are not new in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. One of the trends is that of freedom in expression. This led to the introductions of choruses and hymns that have never been approved by the Church Councils, the Classes or the Synods. One has to keep in mind that there have to be cultural and traditional changes but it is equally important to keep in mind that there have to be criteria followed. Changes should not be introduced to suit man but should in the first place be answerable to God. The basic principles and the meta-theories have to meet somewhere on the road in a hermeneutical interaction and a balance has to be maintained.

4.4 Basic Theoretical principles

4.4.1 The Word must always stand in the centre of worship.

4.4.2 The sacrament plays an essential role and must not be dishonoured. However they never have to replace the proclamation of the Word.

4.4.3 Prayer has an outstanding role in worship.

4.4.4 Worship is centred on and initiated by God. Once this principle is broken, worship becomes miserable.

4.4.5 Neither the congregation, nor the individual can come with his or her own institution of worship. Worship is God-centred.

4.4.6 Liturgy lives within culture and among the people. Nevertheless it is there to transform culture and give it a biblical shape.

Chapter 5

5. Basic theoretical principles when it comes to liturgical music

5.1 Introduction

Steenbrink (1991:3) notes that nowadays not only outsiders complain about the music used in liturgy but also members of the Christian churches in Africa. They feel that the music brought by the missionaries is not a good vehicle for witnessing outside the church or to express the religious feelings within the community. Westermeyer (1998:3-6) mentions a few reasons why the study of church music is so important:

- Practical reasons: one has to know something about the discipline related to your decision making.
- Theoretical or intrinsic reasons: from the theoretical aspects flow practical ramifications, though they might at first not be apparent.
- Church music is intriguing because it impinges on a number of areas. People from various backgrounds and disciplines relate to church music from their own perspectives.
- The fact is that church music is a cultural matter: it does not happen in a vacuum but in a specific time and place. The time and place have a history, memory, community and trajectory that attend to them.
- Church music is intrinsic because it is an organic part of our daily life. It is natural for it is linked with birth, death, fear, happiness, joy, sorrow etcetera.
- Music-making brings to life the faith of the church. Music gives flesh to this faith. Just as church music can be the cause of enormous peace in a congregation it can also be the cause of enormous wars: people want to sing specific types of music, the musicians are adamant about their choice and the minister has his own choice of music. This lifts the stakes because the musical doing is so potent and so expressive to the being of the people.
- Because music, worship and theology involve people beyond the rational, they arouse emotions of conscious or subconscious likes and dislikes.

Church music is a matter that deals with the infinite Creator. The danger is that in our objective, analytical and dispassionate activity, we not only study what we do in relation to the Creator but we subtly shift our stance until we presume to be the creator. Worship is informed by the study we do but worship and what we study are not so identical that we should confuse them. Our worship is the expression of our relation to God.

It is evident from this introduction that church music plays an essential role in worship-liturgy. It is an easy means of transporting the doctrine of the church and giving flesh to the faith of the church. Even people who cannot read can sing. Music is easily learned and followed. Music also easily fits within the culture of people and promotes their language. In one way or another, the liturgy of the worship service of the Reformed Churches begins and ends with music. Music is found throughout the Reformed liturgy. Therefore working on liturgy also requires focus on the music. Due to the fact that music has such an important role in the liturgy of the church, it will receive special attention in this thesis.

5.2 Work-plan of this chapter

The intention with this chapter is to concentrate on music as it was involved within the liturgy from the times of the Old, into the NT and throughout history to the twentieth century. The study will be an exegetical and a literature study. Deductions will be made from every historical period and the end result will be used as principles and guidelines for the liturgy of today.

5.3 Liturgical music in OT worship

The music of the OT was basically a utilitarian art (Sendrey, 1969:32, see Westermeyer, 1998:10). According to Gen 4:21 Jubal the brother of Jabal, son of Lamech and Adah, was the ancestor of all musicians who play the harp and the flute. This was a practical occupation alongside the first smith and cattle-breeder. Evans and Coder (1998) argue that the first sacred music on record is found in Job 38:7 where the morning stars sang together at the creation of the material universe. The earliest recorded singing by men appears in Ex 15:1 when the people of Israel

rejoiced over their salvation from Egypt.

A few texts from the OT will be identified in order to categorise different types of music within their OT context:

In Ex 32:17-18 Joshua heard the people shouting and he said to Moses, "I hear the sound of battle in the camp". Moses said, "That does not sound like a shout of victory or a cry of defeat; it is the sound of singing". The context of these verses describes a Feast that the Israelites made in favour of the god (golden calf) they believed to have delivered them from Egypt. Aaron made this golden calf from the melted gold from the earrings of the Israelites.

A Festival was pronounced the next day and the people were celebrating when Moses and Joshua came back to the people. They were revelling around the calf with music. What Joshua heard from a distance was worship music. Music could also be used as an incantational magic tool to manipulate a god (1 Kg 18:26-29). Here the prophets and priests of Baal were shouting and dancing around the altar slashing themselves with swords and spears as was their custom, until their blood flowed.

It could also be a doxological story of Israel's deliverance sung to God (Exodus 15:20): "The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took her tambourine, and all the women followed her, playing tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang for them: *"Sing to the Lord, because He has won a glorious victory; He has thrown the horses and their riders into the sea"*. Bingle (2000:11) makes important hints with regard to Exodus 15. This song can be referred to as "the Song of Moses" and "the Song of Merriam" but the majority of scholars and tradition go for "the Song of the Sea". He explains that this song is not just any song; it is a song of victory, a revelation of the power of God. This hymn is also viewed with Judges 5 as the only expanded hymn of victory in the Hebrew Bible. This hymn can be distinguished from other hymns by the following characteristics:

- There is a strong focus on the Name of the Lord to emphasise his important role in victory.
- There are also specific phrases that are linked to God like "my strength" and "my

refuge” to emphasise the role of the Lord in the victory.

- The hymn specifies the manner in which God used nature to protect Israel.
- It also gives a description of the humiliation of the enemy.
- And it gives a description of the fall of the enemy.

A few important things can be noted from this description that can be used as principles for worship music.

- God's name and honour play an important role in the composition of Church music. We have to praise God and uplift only his name.
- God's characteristics are essential in Church music because they explain his role in nature and because Church music is about the deeds of God and not of man.
- Church music can also become a means of proclamation, a means of teaching people about God. It is often easier than other means because people can learn the song and make the message their own.

According to Abe (1991:296) this antiphonal song led by Merriam in Exo 15 was the beginning of vocal music.

The fact that music was also used in teaching and bringing a message is evident even in other portions of Scripture. Deut 32:1-4 has Moses give a final warning to the Israelites by method of singing. Moses then spoke the words of the *song* which had been given to him by God (31:19) to warn Israel against being disloyal to him and his ways. The song is rather different from the preaching style found in most of the rest of the book. It is, in contrast, poetic, and in both substance and style it anticipates passages in the Psalms and the prophetic books.

The opening verses (1-3) of Deut 32 are a kind of call to worship (see Ps 29:1-2) announcing praise of God. They also show that the song will function as a kind of witness to the covenant that has been made. This is implied by the appeal to the heavens and the earth to listen to the words that will be spoken (see 30:19). Witnesses, usually gods of the nations concerned, played an important part in

ancient Near Eastern treaties. Since monotheistic Israel could not call on other gods as witnesses, Moses called, picturesquely, on the heavens and earth instead.

The next section (4–14) turns to praising God. As *the Rock* He is the one who saves and in whom refuge can safely be taken (Ps 18:2). His truth and righteousness (or straight dealing) are fundamental qualities (Ps 25:8–10; 33:4). These have been shown in his kindness to Israel from the beginning of his dealings with them (6b–14) despite the people's ingratitude (5–6a). God is remembered here as the *Creator*, especially of Israel (see Is 43:15) and as their Father (Carson, 1994).

In Judg 5:1-31 Deborah and Barak celebrated their triumph in song. The Hebrew used in this song shows it to be one of the most ancient pieces of poetry in the OT. A version of it was sung on the day of battle (1) and it was probably given its present form soon after. It may have been preserved in some collection such as "the Book of Jashar" (Jos 10:13) or "the Book of the Wars of the LORD" (Num 21:14). Songs like these were often sung in public worship and were reminders to later generations of the faithfulness of God and of the great things He had done for Israel, his covenant people. But this particular song appears as part of the Deborah-Barak episode which is not formally concluded until the song is complete (see v 31b and see 3:11, 30). Unlike the preceding narrative, however, it is not concerned with how the Lord took the honour of victory from Barak and gave it to a woman. It pays tribute to those individuals and tribes who valiantly played their part (including Jael) and rebukes those who did not, thus alerting us to a certain lack of unity among the tribes (Carson, 1994).

We have a song which was sung by the women after David destroyed Goliath (1 Sam 18:6, 7). Women came out of all cities of Israel in the homeward march from the pursuit of the Philistines. This is a characteristic trait of Oriental manners. On the return of friends long absent, and particularly on the return of a victorious army, bands of women and children issue from the towns and villages. This is to form a triumphal procession, to celebrate the victory, and, as they go along, to gratify the soldiers with dancing, instrumental music, and extempore songs, in honour of the generals who have earned the highest distinction by feats of gallantry. The Hebrew women, therefore, were merely paying the customary congratulations to David as the

deliverer of their country, but they committed a great indiscretion by praising a subject at the expense of their sovereign (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, 1997).

1 Sam 10:5 and 16:23 indicates the effect and power of music in different categories. In verse five of 1 Samuel 10, Saul becomes influenced by the music of the prophets and he too prophesies. In the next instance of 1 Sam 16:23, Saul is in a different state, for the spirit of the Lord has left him. David's knowledge on playing the lyre had a profound effect upon the demonised Saul. His skill as a harpist contributed in making him a member of the royal family. It is clear from these two instances that sacred music brings refreshment, and drives away evil spirits. Wilson-Dickson (1992:11) says that this biblical narrative makes a dramatic claim. It suggests music to have a power to penetrate the mind where other forces fail, breaking down barriers directly and immediately. Mention can also be made of Solomon. Like father like son, Solomon was both a songwriter and a composer (1 Kg 4:32). Abe (1991:296) reasons that instrumental music figured largely in Solomon's Temple (1 Chr 25) (see Evans and Coder, 1998: 306).

According to Evans and Coder (1998:306ff), a number of other remarkable facts are revealed concerning sacred music.

- It provides an atmosphere favourable to the ministry of the Word. For example, as it states in 2 Kg 3: 14-16: *¹⁴And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. ¹⁵ But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. ¹⁶ And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.*
- It helps to bring men to God, as found in Ps 40:1-3 *¹I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. ²He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. ³And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD*.
- It contributes to the defeat of the enemy 2 Chr 20:21, 22 states: *²¹And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise*

the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. ²²And when^c they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

- *It fills the house of God with glory, 2 Chr 5:13, 14 ¹²Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets;) ¹³ It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; ¹⁴ So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.*

- Sin can also affect the worship of the Lord through music. Sin made the Israelites lose their song while in captivity (Ps 137:1–4) but they recovered it again after they were restored to the land (Ezr 3:2, 11).

Chupungco (1994:105) states that Temple music was well organised and it consisted of instrumental music. This means that music was more professionally organised and professional musicians were appointed from the house of the Levi (Viljoen, 2001:425). The shofar, for example, announced the entrance of priests. Harps and lyres were proper to the Levites. They were allied to the art of poetry and were also suitable for the psalms and other Temple songs. They had a way of sustaining the lyric of the song and focusing attention to it. And it is for this reason that the harps and the lyres were regarded as properly liturgical instruments. According to 1 Chr 25:1-3 David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service (liturgy) specific people with different duties. The instruments here also played a vital role. They prophesied with the harp, lyre and cymbals. The lifting of the horns also played a vital role in the liturgy of the Temple.

It is evident that music was in most instances accompanied with joy and dancing. David leaped and danced before the Lord when the ark was brought back from the house of the Gittite to the city of David (2 Sam 6:10-20). Wright (2002:206-207)

emphasises the fact that David danced with great exuberance before the Lord. This should be understood in the context that this music had an aural element which attracted God's attention and so prepared the way for his gracious response. This was where Michael's objection came in: she criticised David for exposing himself...before the eyes of the servants' slave women. David's counter-objection was that he was dancing before the Lord and not before the eyes of the servants' slave women.

Wright (2002:207) strongly focuses on the fact that "vocal song" should not be replaced with musical instruments. He states further that after the author of Samuel listed the emotional mode of expression he moved to the main mode of musical expression, song, before he came to the main melodic instruments (lyres). After this he mentioned auxiliary idiophones (and here the hand-drum, the main idiophone in the biblical instrumental repertoire came first). The house of Israel joined him in this.

The women who were praising David after Goliath's death were joyously singing and dancing. Music in the form of the Psalter received a prominent place in worship.

Viljoen (2001:425) states that music played an even more essential role in Temple worship after the Babylonian exile than before. The organisation was so well that there were people who played the instruments, some sang and it appears that there even emerged something of a liturgical calendar indicating which psalm was to be sung on which day. The psalm book is thus believed to have been collected into a songbook of the congregation of the second Temple in accordance with this liturgical calendar.

It can further be noted that musical instruments formed a central part in Israelite worship. Ps 150 mentions a few instruments that may be used to praise and worship the Lord: ³ *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.* ⁴ *Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.* ⁵ *Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals".*

It is clear from this passage, as Viljoen (2001:426) indeed notes that music was not limited to the Temple alone. Religious songs existed for every occasion: from personal prayers, funeral songs, love songs, war songs, working songs and songs praising God to songs that accompanied many different Festivals and sacrifices. Songs could be sung in different forms, like the responsorial psalmody where the leader sang the first line and the congregation responded by singing the second line. In the antiphonal psalmody two parts of a verse, or alternate verses, were sung in turn by two choruses. The soloist also had a place upon reciting passages using melodical formulas, and these were responded upon by outcries like “Hallelujah”, “Amen” or “Hosanna”.

5.4 *Inferrals from and/or about OT music:*

- Music is used for worship, praise and incantation.
- Music is also used to narrate a doxological story.
- Music is used for teaching and for bringing a message.
- Music is used in triumphal processions to celebrate victory.
- Music has effect and power on someone.
- Music provides an atmosphere favourable to the ministry of the Word.
- Music helps to bring men to God.
- Music contributes to the defeat of the enemy.
- Music fills the house of God with glory.
- Instruments may accompany music but should not replace vocal music.
- Music is in most instances accompanied with joy and dancing.

5.5 *Liturgical music in NT worship*

Fourie (2000:58) reasons that seemingly the alpha and the omega of the NT is church music. Luke 1 begins with songs of praise and Revelation concludes with a song. Luke 1 records the *Maginifica* (Lk 1:46-55) and the *Benedictus* (Lk 1:68-79), Lk 2 the *Gloria in Excelsis* (Lk 2:14) and the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk 2:29-32). At the birth of Jesus the angels brought music for Jesus. Even Jesus was singing. He sang the

“Hallel” with his disciples as we read in Matthew 26:30 and Mk 14:26. It can be added that the not only did the angels come to earth to sing but they kept on singing day and night in heaven. In heaven there is daily worship (Rev 7:15 see Rev 5:9-10, 12-13). God out of his love recorded some of the music for us (Rev 15:3ff and other portions indicated). It is clear that these songs were sung and some are still sung in heaven as is well known. The melody, tone, rhythm and the nature of the song of the angels at the birth of Jesus and the songs that are sang at the throne in heaven are unknown. What is indeed known is that they were sung (see Fourie, 2000:60). Music is not only recorded but it is also encouraged according to Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 for through singing Christ's message remains in our hearts and for edifying one another (see Williamson, 1967:72). There is no question about the fact of singing in the NT. The issue to consider is the music tradition that was followed in singing and the impact it had on the people. It is essential to investigate whether music in the NT had the same power as the music of the OT and whether it was indeed necessary for the church.

Viljoen's approach to the understanding of the NT song and music is that they should be understood within their cultural and traditional context (2001:425). This means that at least three cultures play a role in the tradition of music in the NT. These are the Jewish musical traditions, the Greek musical tradition and the Roman musical tradition. The music has to do with Jewish people receiving instruction about singing in Greek and living in the centre of a Roman world. This implies that the OT tradition of music should still be taken into consideration when dealing with the NT tradition of music.

Abe (1991:299) also agrees that the mode of worship during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ in Palestine was still Jewish. This makes music and dance still prominent. The Jews still observed rituals, Festivals and Feasts. Jesus is also understood to have expected the Jews to demonstrate their faith in him in acts of music and dance (Mt 11:17; Lk 7:32). Nevertheless the disciples of Jesus did not engage in formal worship with music and dance except the breaking of the bread (with gladness and joy of course, Act 2:46) since their preoccupation was evangelism, travelling from place to place and the founding of new churches.

Fourie (2000:117) states that Greek music had a great influence on the church. From the eleven antic Greek melodies that have been discovered at least one had been used by the church. Much can be said with regard to the Greek music tradition. Viljoen (2001:428) states that in Greek mythology, music was ascribed a divine nature. It was a pursuit of truth and beauty. It was an inseparable part of religious ceremonies and had a strong ethical character. The ceremonies were held to honour the gods and to celebrate their truth, beauty and influence on the cosmos and on human beings. Music was composed of a *logos*, *harmonia* and *rhythmos*. The harmony of tones and the rhythm were subordinate to the word (*logos*). There was strong power in music: it was believed to be able to heal sickness, purify the body and mind and work miracles in the realm of nature. Music was regarded as a force that had effect on the universe, be it negative or positive. Music imitated the passion of the soul. When one listened to music that imitated a certain passion he or she became imbued with the same passion. Habitual listening to music with a specific pattern was believed to have an influence on the character and lifestyle of the person. Music could uplift or calm someone.

Not much can be said about the Roman music tradition. Viljoen (2001:431) states that there is only second hand information and as it appears most of their art music derived from Greece. For this reason the study will not be intense on the Roman music tradition, but will from here onwards look on as it is viewed in the NT.

5.6 NT music tradition

Music can be used to strengthen the individual. James (2:13) states that in times of joy one should sing songs of praise. Music is not only spiritual but it is clearly of the mind also. Trumpet music shall be used when Christ returns (1 Cor 15:52 and 2 Thess 4:16). Music also forms part of the worship service. Paul puts a principle for church music in 1 Cor 14:15. One has to sing with the spirit but also with the mind because music should also have the function of edifying others. The same applies to prayer. In Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16 Paul states that we have to sing psalms, songs of praise and other spiritual songs. These have to be sung wholeheartedly and with thankfulness to the glory of God. It is also clear that it should not only be for self-upliftment but mainly to the glory of God. This means that when one is singing he or she is God-glorified through the singing. This can only happen if one is Spirit-filled

(vs. 18). All praise and thanks should be done in the name of the Lord. Yet no one can say Jesus is Lord if he or she is not filled by the Holy Spirit.

5.6.1 Inferrals

- Music is highly emphasised in the worship service of the NT.
- It was sung at Jesus' birth. When He comes back we will hear with the sound of trumpets.
- In moments of joy, music fills the sphere in the NT. This is also the situation in heaven.
- Music was sung to the glory of the Lord in the NT. One had to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be able to glorify God, else the music would simply be for self-edification. Music was not an either-or matter. It had to be sung with the mind and with the Spirit.
- Music should be sung with a heart of thanks and with full devotion. It is easy to be involved in the either-or spirit, either singing with the mind or with the spirit. There should be a beautiful balance between the two aspects.

5.7 *Liturgical music in first century worship*

Chupungco (1994:105) reasons that the church of the first century could not afford musical instruments. The Synagogue made use of local talent and resources after the destruction of the Temple AD 70. Professional instrumentalists and singers of the Temple moved over to the Synagogue with their great knowledge. Chupungco (1994:105) further states that the reading of the Word, the proclamation and prayers were done in some degree of melody. The audible nature of all reading presumed rhythmic and melodic features that today would be more quickly classified as music rather than as speech. There was a kind of chanting in cadence that fell someplace between modern categories of speech and song. Music in this context respected the meaning and the structure of the text. Music became a vehicle of proclamation. This was the musical tradition which the Church clearly inherited from their Word-centred synagogal form of worship.

5.8 Liturgical music in second - and fourth century worship

The church of second to the fourth century, as Chupungco (1994:105) and Fourie (2000:112) reason, had little or no sympathy for musical instruments because these were often associated with pagan worship or else with immorality. This might be due to the fact that the first century church did not use musical instruments for Temple services because of her synagogal tradition but also because in the times of Plato this kind of music was used to expel demons and invite the gods for the worship. It was therefore the function of the church already from a very early period to fight against whatever appeared to be jeopardy and a threat to the church. The human voice and the heart of the human were enough to bring praise to the Almighty. The wrong with this was that the church also had a tendency of always losing what was good by casting out what was bad. Here was matter of accepting the singing person but failing to accept his accompaniment through which he/she expressed himself /herself in the music. What is important is that the music instruments were viewed as an accompaniment to the music that was sung and that all this had to be done to the glory of the Lord. "What the one does vocally, the other one does with the instrument" (Fourie, 2000:115). There is a tendency that concentration should fall on the beauty of the music—hence the danger arises that the One to whom the music is addressed or the One who the music addresses is left out of the picture. The temptation can be very great indeed.

Until the fourth century liturgical music continued to develop in the context of the house church. The practice of the cantillation continued to be the norm especially for biblical readings and the prayers said by the presider of the assembly. Cantillation, as Killian (1976:46) puts it, also led to the Greek "lyrical chantings". It can be said that music was another means to proclaim the Word or the liturgical text. There is no doubt that the psalms were sung during this period. However *psalmi idiotici* began to appear at this time. They were compositions by Christians in the style of psalms and hence could be sung like psalms. These non-biblical psalms answered the Christian need to sing "psalms" that were directly and explicitly Christian. This period also called for a Trinitarian doxology at the conclusion of every psalm to support the Christian interpretation of the psalms. Already during the time of Tertullian hymns were introduced. Pliny also indicates this in his writing to Trajan: "They were

accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing alternately among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god”, 1974:108-110 and Killian, 1976:46-47). Tertullian says: “After the ritual hand-washing and the bringing in of the lights, each one is invited to stand and sing to God, as one is able: either something from the Holy Scriptures or one’s own making” (Killian, 1976:46-47).

5.9 *Inferrals about music of the first four centuries*

The church of the first to the fourth century did not prefer instruments. The heart and the mind were enough to glorify God. Cantillation played an essential role. It was used a means of proclaiming the Word or the liturgical text. It was an easier way of bringing the message over because people could learn the rhythm and sing together in their minds. For people to understand the teaching or doctrine of the church was a matter of building it through cantillation or music into the minds of the congregants. Christian psalms were introduced. The Trinitarian doxology became part of worship. History clearly shows that OT psalms were not the only psalms prescribed to be used in the church. So does the instruction of Paul when he mentions that, psalms as well as hymns and other spiritual songs should be sung in the church. It is not that musical instruments were not in line with biblical principles. Instead the warning derived is that the church should be careful about anything that might become a jeopardy to the faithful and true worship that only glorifies God.

5.10 Liturgical music in the worship of the medieval period

During this period there was a movement from the houses to the basilica. This did not only involve a change from architectural space but also acoustic space. People worshipped in an imperial hall which encouraged grand, almost theatrical, celebrations. Choirs that were trained for specialised music evolved during this time. It was when the *schola cantorum* appeared to train people from infancy to a very high technical standard to chant singing. Women had no access to this *schola cantorum*. Due to the fact that among the heretics, women assumed high ranks, they could act as prophets, lectors, deacons and singers. It is argued that the church restricted women as a matter of church discipline and not because of culture. The negative aspect of the professionalism that developed within the liturgical music is that the congregation became in a sense more passive (Chupungco, 1994:113-114). This was also a period when instruments became introduced, except in Rome (Killian, 1976:54).

5.11 Inferences from and about the music of the medieval period

What is worst about the music of the Middle Ages is that it became more secularised, mystical, devalued and scholastic. It became incomprehensible to the people also because of the fact that it was sung in Latin. This is the reason why music at the end of the day was sung only by the pope or by the choir with only the pope or bishop responding. Music became privatised and reserved for the *schola cantorum*. It is within this context that we should evaluate the changes that the Reformers brought about.

5.12 Liturgical music in the time of reformation worship

Martin Luther was a great lover of music. He compiled not less than 24 hymns. It was important for him that music should be sung in the language of the people. There was a pedagogic purpose with the music that was used in the Church. Luther wanted the music that was first sung only by the choirs and by the blessing bishop who responded to be sung by the whole congregation because he believed that this was what the practice had been in the OT. Christian hymns for him were good and

pleasing to God and he argued that such music should not be kept secret from the church. His music contained much theology because of the pedagogical character in them Barnard (1981:267). Broekhuijsen (2000:309[69]) states that the text of church music had to be good in language, inspiring and communicative with powerful imagery as in the Bible itself. The text of the church also helps to determine the liturgical function of the music. Rhythm plays an important role, too, because, as Keyzer (2000:266) argues, the content of the text was not always understood immediately with the singing of the song. In most instances this would occur only after a period of time because one first had to acquaint oneself with the rhythm of the song. However it was important that the text should be understood despite the fact that it might take time.

Barnard (1981:268) states that three categories of music can be found in Luther: the rhyming of Scriptural portions, translations of songs from the Medieval Ages and Free hymns. An analysis of his music shows that during Luther's time the vocabulary of the day was limited. Through the singing in one's own tongue one could even know more words than music. Music also made the same contribution as poems with regard to language. It was also important to see that music could be used for teaching. Difficult doctrinal issues could be simplified through music and so could difficult concepts. Children could grow with this music and hymns and understand all the better when they are at later stages of interpretation. It is little wonder that when it came to music and hymns Luther made a very substantial contribution. He made use of the tunes of the popular music. He did not want the devil to be the only one with beautiful tunes and ways of praise. He used the popular style in the church in a positive way to glorify God.

However music was not only encouraged in the times of the Reformation. For example, Zwingli strongly discouraged singing in the church not to mention the use of musical instruments. Although Zwingli was among Reformers the most musical with a beautiful voice who composed songs and could almost play all the musical instruments, he nonetheless contributed to the vanity of music in the reformed tradition. His basic argument was that he wanted nothing to disturb the proclamation of the Word. There had to be absolute silence so that the Word could be proclaimed with power (Barnard, 1981:283-284). Centuries after Zwingli some liturgists still feel

that if music does not find the right place in the liturgy and if it disturbs the necessary silence - or if it becomes dominant and does not serve - then it would be better if it were omitted altogether (Kealy, 1972:141, Taylor, 1987:311).

In counter-point to this one has to understand that right from the OT God had a beautiful purpose with music. In heaven angels are singing day and night. We learn that even Jesus was singing during the institution of the Lord's Supper. One can understand Zwingli's concept on the issue of silence. After everything has been done, music will be sung before to prepare for the Word or afterwards to respond. Music does not and did not take place simultaneously with Word proclamation. One can argue here with Luther that because music is pleasing to God people should not be excluded from this wonderful opportunity of praising Him.

Unlike Zwingli Calvin had the same idea as that of Luther which was to make people sing in their own language. As Luth (1990:189) reasons, Calvin recognised the force of hymns. Chant for him was not only praise but also an important element in the preaching of the Word of God. A spoken text may have an effect upon a human being but the same effect can be much greater in the form of a melody. Hence the melody can become the funnel for the text. Calvin encountered a problem, though: as much as he desired people to sing there was nothing available. Despite the fact that he was not that poetical and musical he composed a few rhythms of the Psalms. Unlike Luther he did not go for hymns and any song. He remained exegetical and he even refused to interpret the Psalms in their NT context. Rather: from the NT he made rhythms of Scriptural portions. He also made use of the Psalm compositions of other well-known people around there (Deddens, 1993:106-107 and Barnard, 1981:317). As Luth (1990:189) states, Calvin's argument for being so selective in what had to be sung was precisely the result of the great effect music had on the human being. Hence the employment of music had to be monitored.

Calvin desired that Psalms be sung in the church as it had been done in the ancient churches. The congregation had to sing with mouth and heart. Psalms could contribute in lifting the heart to the Lord and to move spiritually towards God, singing praises and glorifying him. During the time of Calvin instrumental music was not of high priority. Keyzer (2000:262) maintains that in the Roman Missal they hardly

talked about instruments. Liturgical music was viewed in general as vocal. Instrumental music played little more than a role of accompaniment even when it was used. There was great comfort and glorification in the Psalms and according to Calvin the Pope robbed the people from this by not making them sing Psalms in the church. Calvin's strategy was first to teach the music to the children and then to the elderly through the children (Barnard, 1981:320-321).

Calvin's argument with regard to the use of the Psalms was that he could not find any better music. He also reasoned that it was worth it giving God back what He had given to us in the first place. Like Zwingli Calvin was not in favour of accompaniment in music. He believed that music was between God and the people and there had to be order. When evaluating these arguments one should understand the Reformers in their own context. We have to understand the challenges they faced and the peace and order they wanted to maintain in the church. Much as in the case of the churches of the second century which refused musical instruments one can understand that they were sceptical of falling into the same of trap in the fourth century where everything simply went out of order. Anything and yes everything, even the slightest that could bring hindrance to the pure proclamation of the Word, was for them abhorrent. Deddens (1993:108-109) says that Calvin dusted off the psalms and gave the church people a psalm to sing from. However it should be understood that we live in a different period in which many spiritual songs are as much uplifting as would the psalms. God is the same today, yesterday and tomorrow. He still inspires people through his Word and reveals him through his Word and Spirit. This means every Christian has a personal experience with God as much as David, Moses, Merriam, Solomon and all the other members who composed songs and psalms did. The basic principle that remains valid is that God should be uplifted. This should not be contrary to his Word and it should be sung by mouth and heart as Calvin argues. It is also interesting to realise that both Calvin and Luther made use of contemporary tunes of Geneva. This implies that it is not improper to make use of modern tunes to bring praise to the Lord. It is a matter of the development of the culture and as society moves forward the church should lead and not become a follower. The church should show that light to the world.

5.13 Inferences about music during the Reformation

The Reformation reacted negatively to the music of medieval centuries. Some of the Reformers carried this into over-extremity while some were more compliant. On account of the great need that existed for it, music had to be translated and composed. It had to be brought back to the people because people were only used to the mystical Latin music which many could not follow or interpret. Moreover they were not truly part of the singing because the singing was done by the choirs. The people of the Reformation believed that music was an event between God and his people and had to be clear.

One of the Reformers was totally against music and an accompaniment of musical instruments. This was also because of the many problems that music caused in the medieval period. Some wanted only psalms in the church. Due to the fact that people did not know the psalms, the strategy of first teaching them to children was used so that they (children) should in turn teach the elderly. It is clear from this that music was a means of transferring knowledge from one person to another. History teaches here that one should be careful not to discard what is useful in the process of discarding what is no longer useful. The criteria the Reformers had in mind about music were that it had to be sung by mouth and by heart; one needs to add that this occurred with very limited accompaniment. This was also true of OT music as has been indicated. "By mouth and by heart" is a good summary of the NT teaching that the song was not only rational or only emotional. Both aspects had to be considered when singing and it should be sung to God's glory. Thus Calvin could argue that we have to give God back what belongs to him.

5.14 Degeneration in the music of the reformation

In a nutshell the music of the seventeenth century was oriented towards physical, outward manifestations. It was about the feeling of the individual and not the congregation. There was a strong biographical element in them. It was more of an expression of one's own salvation. There was virtually nothing about the calling of the believers in this life, about God's covenant, his Kingdom and his church. These Reformers were mostly tender and sentimental in content. Under this rubric belongs

the Methodist hymns of Charles Wesley and the pietistic Lutherans of the seventeenth century. Emotions came to play a great role and songs were thus used to reach and touch off the emotions (Deddens, 1993: 109-111).

This music had a great impact on contemporary music and this is indeed one of the phenomena that called for this specific study. The “Lifela tsa Sione” which has been used in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands show influences from the songs of the seventeenth century. Lutheran and Methodist individualism are clearly evident in the “Lifela tsa Sione”—as it shall be proven at a later stage in this study.

5.15 Liturgical music in the African context of twentieth century worship

Maynard-Reid (2000:69) states that it is impossible to “have church” without good music. For the African, music is just something that he/she cannot go without. Music is to worship as breathing is to life. It is the most permanent characteristic of the heritage that blacks possess. It permeates the entire African life and thus continually ministers to the whole person. It is even believed among the African that the Spirit will not descend without a song. Worship without the Spirit is non-worship. Vocal music and not necessarily the drums that accompany it, plays a vital role in the evocation of the Spirit and it intensifies the power of the Spirit’s presence with the people.

Maynard-Reid (2000:70) further states that while the early white settlers placed a heavy emphasis on the words with the music being incidental—a handful of tunes were used, often interchangeable with different sets of lyrics— the black felt a need to emphasise music over the words. But it was not just for a different melody: it was an entirely new rhythm, an entirely new feel. Blacks and whites could receive the same training, learning from the same sources, yet with regard to music they would sing entirely different songs. If a black composer took a song written by a white composer he or she would reshape it and improvise it in a folk-like manner or “blackenise” it, giving it new life. It is unfortunate that white missionaries in the times of slavery viewed black music as heathen, nonsensical, barbaric and wild hymns and the drums they used as heathen instruments.

In view of Maynard-Reid's argument it can be said when blacks realised that African music was always associated with heathen practices, nonsensical and barbaric, they reaction to that. Their reaction resulted in syncretism and secularism of church music. Syncretic: in the sense of mixing into the "Christian" pattern a contemporary style and the African way. Syncretism is not necessarily wrong. Yet one should distinguish carefully between the good and the bad of what one accepts into one's culture or belief. Secularism can be considered in this study as the result of unevaluated syncretism. Syncretism that leads people away from God is a means of transforming to the world pattern (Romans 12:1). OT people in many instances made use of things they took from other nations. Yet God was very sceptical about this in most instances. However Solomon's Temple had a totally foreign design. The material and the style of building was not from Israel but was brought from foreign countries--an example of syncretism. The African wants to be home in the church and not alienated. He or she does not want to live a double life of doubt and insecurity. He or she does not want to be inside the church what he or she is not outside the church.

5.16 Conclusion

It is important that room should be left open freedom in the way people sing, yet the principles should be set right so that people should understand that church music is not about people in the first place but rather it is about people in their relationship with God. People should listen to what they are singing. The text and the rhythm should not be at a distance from each other. The two should be very close so that whoever sings should link the two. If we sing Psalm 100 or 150 then we should express the joy to be found in the text. If we sing Ps 51 we should look for a humble heart of prayer. The mind and the mouth should be partners with regard to what is being sung. Yet music always has a ministerial function as it became evident. Music should not dominate but it should serve. It should have a function within the liturgy.

Based on these discussions the following theoretical guidelines can be inferred:

5.17 Basic Theoretical guidelines

- 5.17.1 Church music must be faithful to the Bible (point 5.2 and 5.3).
- 5.17.2 It has to glorify God in a manner pleasing to him (point 5.2 and 5.3).
- 5.17.3 It must edify the congregation. It should not be individualistic and driven by feelings and emotions. The Spirit and the Word should direct it. The edification that comes through it could be by means of song-confession (point 5.3).
- 5.17.4 The unity of the congregation should be maintained and it should be evident in the process of the singing (point 5.3 and 5.8).
- 5.17.5 The language should be understandable. The music should be made in such a way that people should sing by heart, through the Spirit and in understanding (point 5.8).
- 5.17.6 Church music should have an effect on the one singing or listening. It is not a dry poem without any message (point 5.3).
- 5.17.7 Church music should not replace the Word but should provide an atmosphere suitable for the Word (point 5.3).
- 5.17.8 Church music when sung should indicate that people are Spirit-filled and because the singers are Spirit-filled it should fill the house of God with glory (point 5.3).
- 5.17.9 Instruments that are used with church music should be used as accompaniment and not to dominate (point 5.1).

Chapter 6

6. Liturgical aspects of funeral services

6.1 Introduction

In the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in South Africa and in the different synods there is almost no specific liturgy for burials. All ministers follow a certain pattern of burying and simply follow tradition. From experience and attendance of funeral services among the different synods it is clear that slight differences occur. These differences will receive attention later in this study under the meta-theoretical section.

The truth is that we all have to die some day (Heb 9:27). Paul pointed out that death is to be feared because it is the punishment for sin (Rom 6:23). Death came into the world as a punishment from God due to the fall of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. God placed a tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden. It was a tree of "knowledge of good and evil". Man was tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit and as a result death came into being (Gen 3). The first death of Adam and Eve was spiritual: they got separated from the living true God. However the first physical death recorded in the Bible is the death of the son of Adam and Eve which did not occur naturally but through murder. Cain murdered his brother Abel (Gen 4): nothing is mentioned here of any burial or funeral that took place.

Liturgy invites us to confront the meaning of death as a profound human reality, a reality woven into the fabric of the world and its history. In most instances of death there are funerals or burial services among Christians, it is very rare, although it now becomes a practice that some members would prefer their bodies to be cremated when they die.

6.2 *Method and work-plan*

The purpose with this chapter is to look at the history of burials or funeral services from the Old and NT simultaneously. Not much can be said about either of the two Testaments independently for there is a great link between OT and NT funerals. The main idea is to determine the different liturgical elements of the burial ceremony. The influence of the lamenting/mourning will receive special attention because the aim of this study is to look at night vigils that are being practised among the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. As it is the aim with this study to make liturgy relevant for Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands, it is also idea to look into the situation of the liturgy of the funeral services whether they are relevant and whether they have a changing effect on the bereaved. Further, this study would also attempt to strategise a model that should be followed in order to bring amendments to the way funeral services are conducted at present. This chapter will also focus on the history of burial services among Christians and the role of lamenting.

The approach will be exegetical with regard to the OT and the NT. With regard to the historical part a literature analysis will be made. After a discussion on funerals as found in the OT and NT the historical part will analyse literature from the first century to the seventeenth century. These centuries had a great impact on funeral services as they appear today. At the end of this chapter a conclusion with some guiding principles will be formulated. These guiding principles will be gleaned from the summaries that will be made at the end of each point under discussion.

6.3 *The Old and NT view on funeral services*

6.3.1 Interval between death and interment

Burial has to do with the disposition of a human corpse to prevent its desecration. The Hebrew word and the Greek word meaning "burial" describes either the act of burying (Eccl 6:3; Is 14:20; Jer 22:19; Mt 26:12) or the burial place (Gen 47:30; Deut 34:6; 2 Kg 9:28; 21:26; 23:30). Pfeiffer (1975) states that a funeral is the performance of rites for the dead in the presence of the body and preceding burial.

Achtemeier et al (1985) states that burial customs among the Hebrews consisted of two important elements: the mortuary ritual which accompanied the burial and the physical preparation of the body and its final resting place. Hebrew burials, like those in other countries with warm climates, usually took place on the day of death (Deut 21:23; Act 5:5–10). The seeming haste, a sanitary measure occasioned by the heat, was also necessitated by the ceremonial laws of the clean and unclean which warned against the touching of a dead body (Num 19:11–14). Immediately after the preparation for the burial, as a rule, the burial took place on the very day of the death, usually within twenty-four hours (Act 5:5-6, 10). After the burial a funeral meal was usually given (2 Sam. 3:35; Jer 16:5, 7; Hos 9:4). Where the temperature was often high and no embalming was practised decomposition of the body occurred rapidly. Consequently there was a lack of elaborate ceremonies in burial.

Among the Jews interment or burial of the body was the common practice and to allow the body to decay above ground or be subject to destruction by vultures or dogs was the greatest of dishonours (1 Kg 14:10-14; 2 Kg 9:34-37) (see Pfeiffer, 1975).

Though a number of burials are mentioned in the Bible, the word “funeral” does not appear in the English versions. The account of Ananias and Sapphira illustrates the simplicity of burial and the shortness of the interval between death and interment. When Ananias died, the young men wrapped him, probably using the garments he wore and carried him out and buried him (Act 5:6). His wife was not even informed of what had happened. Some three hours later she came in and within minutes she too died and shortly was buried beside her husband (Act 5:10).

Often a procession escorted the corpse to its resting place. The funeral procession of Jacob was impressive for size because Jacob was the father of the vizier of Egypt (see Gen 50:4–14, esp. vv. 7–9). A much simpler procession is mentioned in Lk 7:12 where the only son of a widow of Nain was being carried to his grave accompanied by his mother and a large crowd from the town (see 2 Sam 3:31). Ordinarily a coffin was not used; the body was borne on a bier and placed directly into the tomb or grave. The funeral of Asa, king of Judah, was exceptional: he was laid on a bier filled with spices and a great fire was made in his honour (2 Chr 16:14). Funeral services

in other parts of the ancient Near East were often quite elaborate, those of Egypt particularly so, because of the importance of the funerary beliefs in Egyptian religion (Achtemeier et al, 1985).

6.3.2 Stages of a funeral

Four stages or aspects in a typical funeral can be distinguished: the personal showing of compassion by being present, the bewailing of the dead, the removal of the dead to the burial site and the burial itself. The personal showing of compassion by being present and the bewailing of the dead evidently go hand in hand and will be treated as such in this discussion. The removal of the dead to the burial site and the burial itself will also be discussed under one rubric.

The personal showing of compassion was considered everybody's duty in order to show solidarity. Already in *Tobit* (1:17f; 2:3-8; 12:12f) to bewail and bury the dead was seen as a good deed. The bewailing of the dead and beating of the breast was very typical of a Middle Eastern funeral. Often professional mourners were employed. The "crowd making a tumult" of Mt 9:23 (see Mk 5:38) probably refers to these (female) mourners. This same verse also mentions flautists. These probably introduced the wailing which took place at the home of the dead but also at various stations during the funeral procession. Although the burial preferably took place on the day of death because of the hot climate, the time of mourning usually lasted a week.

6.3.4 Preparation for Burial

The Bible only gives elements on how the body is prepared for the burial. In Gen 46:4 it is indicated that immediately after the death of a member the eldest son of a relative member would close the eyes of the deceased. The information received from the NT is that the mouth was bound shut (Jh 11:44), the body washed (Act 9:37) and then anointed with aromatic ointments (Jh 12:7; 19:39; Mark 16:1; Lk 24:1) (in the case of those who could afford this). The body was usually treated with fragrant oil (Jh 19:40) and finally the limbs were wrapped in a winding-sheet, with a head-cloth bound over the face (Mt 27:59; Jh 11:44) although individuals of high rank

would frequently be clothed in fine garments (see Du Toit, 1998). The Hebrews neither embalmed nor cremated their dead except in rare instances (Gen 50:2–3, 26; 1 Sam 31:11–13). The body was then carried to the burial place on a bier or litter (Lk 7:12, 14).

6.3.5 Burials and burial sites

Du Toit (1998) states that cemeteries were normally outside a city or town. Although individual or family-crypts were used, there were also communal graves, as we see in Mt 27:7. In the earliest times of which we have record kinsmen carried their dead to the grave (Gen 25:9; 35:29; Judg 16:31), but in later times this was done by others (Am 6:10). The corpse was usually borne to the grave on a simple bier (see Lk 7:12 and 14). The wealthier classes gave their graves a more permanent appearance and, like Joseph of Arimathea, even had them prepared beforehand. Graves built from dressed stone were commissioned by some while others had graves carved out of rock. It was customary to have a family-crypt where the deceased could be buried with their forebears. Such a grave could have more than one room. If the grave became too full the bones were often placed in stone coffins (*ossuaria*). Burial was so essential that anyone who discovered a corpse by the roadside was required to bury it (2 Sam 21:10-14). It was a great shame not to be buried. When a corpse was left to lie in the open or thrown onto a waste-dump, it was known as an “ass’s funeral”.

Richards (1991) reasons that the manner of disposing dead bodies in biblical times varied from country to country. In Egypt the outstanding burial practice for nobles and royalty was the unique method of embalming. The internal organs were removed from the body cavity and replaced by linen cloth and a resinous gum. The body was then wrapped in yards of linen bandages from the toes to the head. If the deceased was a king or high official, the body was enclosed in a case of plaster-like substance which was painted with the face of the dead person and otherwise engraved with various markings. The mummy was then encased in several coffins. Such was, no doubt, the method used in embalming Joseph (Gen 50:26) though Jacob’s preservation would probably have been less elaborate (Gen 50:2–3). However

among the Jews no incisions were made in the corpse or organs removed as in the mummification process.

In the case of pagan Egyptians the body was buried with helpful items for the future life and often with portions from the Book of the Dead. Kings were buried in elaborately prepared tombs, some of which were housed in pyramids as late as the Twelfth Dynasty in the time of the patriarchs. Excavated Babylonian tombs also indicate that great care was taken to prepare the body for burial and for the future life. Personal items to be used in the next life were placed with the body as in the royal tombs of Ur. The greater the dignity of the deceased, the larger the tomb and the more extensive were the provisions for the hereafter. Poorer people were buried in simpler graves accompanied by food and personal effects.

In NT times such a tomb would often be closed with a circular rolling stone set in an inclined groove (Mk 16:3–4). The rocky hills around Jerusalem as well as those in other places contained many rock-hewn tombs (Lk 23:53; Jh 19:41; Mk 5:3). Poorer people buried their dead in graves dug in the earth and covered them with stones. Such a cemetery was found near the monastery at Qumran at the Dead Sea with 1 200 graves placed in rows. The Early Bronze Age cemetery at Bab edh-Dhra contains thousands of graves. Only leading men were allowed to be buried within the city walls (1 Kg 2:10). A graveyard for paupers was located outside the S wall of Jerusalem (Mt 27:7–8; Act 1:19) (Achte-meier et al, 1985).

Achte-meier (1985 et al) further explains that a variety of burial sites were utilised by the ancient Hebrews depending on the occasion of death, the time allotted for burial and the geological characteristics of the area. The most common type of burial arrangement was the simple shaft or trench grave which was often lined with mats, wood or stone slabs. These simple graves were sometimes marked by a tree (Gen 35:8) although in the case of infamous individuals the burial plot was identified by a pile of stones placed over it (Josh 7:26; 2 Sam 18:17). Caves were frequently utilized for burials either for their convenience or because time or money did not permit the cutting of a tomb from rock. For instance, Sarah (Gen 23:19) and other members of Abraham's family (Gen 25:9; 49:31; 50:13) were buried in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron.

Rock-cut tombs are the best documented burial sites known today and they display a wide variety of forms. Some were designed for a single interment but most were designed for multiple burials, usually by one family (Is 22:16). The tombs of the wealthy were frequently located in gardens (2 Kg 21:18, 26; Mt 27:57; Jh 19:41-42). Some tombs were marked by monuments or pillars (2 Kg 23:17) or whitewashed on the outside (Mt 23:27) to prevent Jews from accidentally touching them and being rendered ceremonially defiled. Rock-cut tombs were sealed with square slabs of stone or, as was common in the Roman period, with rolling stones (Matt. 27:60). Excavations have revealed sixty such tombs West of the Jordan River while two have been discovered at Tell Hesban East of the Jordan.

If the family was prosperous enough to own property a cave was used (Gen 42:29–31) or a tomb was hewn out of rock in which were carved a number of shelves or niches for the various members of the family (2 Kg 21:18, 26; 23:30). According to Achtemeier et al (1985) both archaeological and biblical data indicate that individuals of wealth or political rank enjoyed burials with elaborate funerary assemblages that included robes, jewellery, furniture, weapons and pottery (1 Sam 28:14; Is 14:11; Ez 32:27). Graves were often decorated and supplied with inscriptions. Often they were also painted white (see Mt 23:27) so that one could plainly see and avoid them, for touching them would make one impure. As a precaution against wild animals and robbers, the grave could be locked with a hinged door or else the mouth of the grave was covered with a great circular stone which could be rolled back and forth (see Mt 27:60 and Easton, 1996).

Despite the fact that Jesus was counted among the poor during his time on earth, He received the burial of a rich man. The anointing of Jesus is described as part of his burial preparation (Mt 26:12; Mk 14:8; Jh 12:7). In the burial of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus used “a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight” (Jh 19:39–40). The Galilean women also intended to anoint Jesus’ body (Mk 16:1; Lk 23:55–24:1). The body was wrapped in linen cloth with spices in the windings in accordance with Jewish custom (Jh 19:40; see Jh 11:44; Acts 5:6).

6.3.6 The OT and NT concept of mourning

Mourning is something that was allowed in the OT. On the very day that Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem in December 589/January 588 BC, Ezekiel is told to speak a final word to the Jewish exiles in Babylon (24:1–2). He speaks a poetic parable about a cooking pot (vv. 3–5) which represents Jerusalem. Its inhabitants are due to be “boiled” in the fires of the Babylonian siege (vv. 6–8). The intense heat will sear the meat off the bones and char them and the empty pot will be heated red-hot till it is cleansed of impurities (vv. 9–14).

Then God warns Ezekiel of a crushing personal blow. His beloved wife is to die and Ezekiel is permitted only silent groans. This is totally contrary to OT funeral practices which featured loud wailings and passionate expressions of grief (vv. 15–17). His wife does die and the heartbroken Ezekiel responds to his loss as God commanded (v. 18). Ezekiel explains that God made him a sign of what is about to happen. Soon the delight of the exiles’ eyes—the Jerusalem Temple, and their relatives there—will be destroyed, too. They will groan within for it will then be clear that the city came to a fall because of her own sins (vv. 19–24). Then Ezekiel is struck dumb (see 3:24–27) to remain silent until word comes from Judah that his predictions have been fulfilled. Thus God’s people would know that all that had happened was from the Lord (24:25–27) (see Richards 1991).

The use of professional mourners was quite common when finances permitted it (Mk 5:38). The procession was led by these professional mourners followed by family members who filled the air with cries of sadness and agony (2 Sam 3:31; 2 Sam. 3:32; Job 21:33; Eccl 12:5; Jer 9:17; Am 5:16; Mt 9:23). Among the Canaanites the mourning ritual included cutting or mutilating one’s flesh but this was expressly forbidden by Jewish law (Lev 19:27–28; 21:5; Deut 14:1). The period of mourning varied among the ancient Hebrews. Mourning for Jacob lasted for seventy days (but this also included the embalming period—Gen. 50:3) while Aaron (Num 20:29) and Moses (Deut 34:5–8) were mourned for a period of thirty days after burial.

People who assisted in any way or who had any relation to the corpse were under certain restrictions. According to Rowell (1977:3) a man was forbidden to recite the

Shema if there was corpse in his house. The bearers and those who assisted in any way in the funeral arrangements were also forbidden to recite the Shema. The Talmud according to Rowel also has a number of restrictions with regard to the mourning. *"He is forbidden to do work, to bathe, or anoint himself, to have (marital) intercourse, or don sandals; he is forbidden to read the Pentateuch, Prophets, or Hagiography, or to recite the Mishnah, or Midrash and halacoth, or the Talmud or aggadoth. If however, the public have need of him, he need not abstain"* (Rowell, 1977:3).

Pfeiffer (1975) states that Christian burial in NT times was viewed in the light of the hope of resurrection. Death was referred to as sleep (1 Thess 4:13) and the grave as a place of rest. "I sleep" is indeed the source of the English word "cemetery". The body was viewed with respect as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and as the subject of resurrection (1 Cor 6:13–14). Pagan excessiveness in mourning was discouraged (1 Thess 4:13). Burial was also used symbolically to depict the believer's positional identification with Christ in death to sin (Rom 6:4–5). Many also view this passage as referring to burial in the waters of baptism (see Pfeiffer 1975).

6.3.7 Summary on the Old and NT

Old and NT people did not follow the pattern of the pagans. There was no formal funeral service. Moreover God's people did not bury their deceased with provisions for the future as the pagans did. Intervals were usually short between death and interment. Burials could take place on the same day of the death without any prior arrangement. It was a religious custom not to leave the dead unburied. Not to bury someone was regarded as a curse. Even someone who was found lying dead in the street was to be buried by the person who found the corpse.

Mourning could happen even after the funeral and last for a week. An exceptional case was that of Joseph which lasted for longer than a week. There were also professional mourners who were hired to accompany the corpse to its place of rest. This was also the case in the NT. Jesus, on one of the occasions, turned their mourning into laughter and their laughter into tears of shamefulness. This was the

time when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus. He also had mourners at the funeral of his daughter. When Jesus informed the family that the child was only sleeping, the very people who were mourning mocked and laughed at him. However, due to the fact that Jesus has authority over life and death, He raised the daughter and the mourners in disappointment and shamefulness had no longer any reason for crying, neither for mourning and were left with their shame and amazement.

Paul, when writing to the Thessalonians, exhorts them not to mourn like those without hope. Christians could cry for the immediate loss. Yet they should at once also think of the heavenly joy and the glory that is waiting in the New Jerusalem. Jesus conquered death and so shall all those who believe in him have victory over it. Paul encourages Christians to comfort one another with these words.

6.3.8 The church historical concept of funerals and mourning

White (1990:288) states clearly that information about Christian burial in the first three centuries AD is very scarce. For example, Hippolytus says little except indicating that the price of burial was to be kept reasonable. Tertullian indicates a funeral Eucharist and yearly Eucharist on the anniversary of death. Serapion gives a prayer of a dead person before burial. Augustine tells a little about the death of his mother, Monica. Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:158-159) and White (1990:289) further state that the general atmosphere of Christian burials was that of hope in the resurrection. Dead Christians who had kept the faith were treated as victors and the funeral processions had the character of the triumph accorded victorious generals upon their return home. Their bodies were washed, anointed and wrapped in linen at the home of the deceased while prayers were said. Due to the fact that cemeteries were outside the city walls, the carrying forth was a significant part of the rite. It was done through the accompaniment of psalms of hope and praise and shouts of "hallelujah". White garments were worn, palm leaves and lights were carried and incense was burned as the community marched to the cemetery in broad daylight (unlike the night-time funerals of pagans). With regard to the graveside service, there was prayer and a celebration of the Eucharist. After the corpse that was standing by the graveside was given the final kiss of peace, it was buried with

the feet toward the rising sun. An agape might have followed immediately and there were services on various days after the death and on the anniversary of the death. The Christian death was thus seen as a "heavenly birthday".

The medieval ethos of the Christian burial, as White (1990:290) and Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:158-159) state, took a different turn: that of fear. Burial came to be draped with the medieval imagination of hell and purgatory and the terrors of dying unprepared. The funerals as well as the burial were abused. There was the belief that if one could scare the hell out of people one could as well scare people out of hell. Death became a threat that was employed in an attempt to discipline the living. Pictures and painting of the last judgement, hell and its torments were found everywhere. The late medieval drama often included hell's mouth into which the unrepentant sinners were dragged. The burial rites were permeated with awe and fear over the destination of the soul. The burials were usually in churchyards. The procedure was as follows: the body was met at the corpse gate, carried into the church with psalms, the Eucharist was celebrated; the dead person was granted absolution, incensed and sprinkled with holy water and the interment followed in the churchyard or beneath the church. The "Day of wrath" chant that focussed on judgement and the possibility of judgement from the clear confidence of early Christians was used.

According to Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:158-159) the Reformation had to shake loose this attitude. Luther deplored the mournful character of funerals and wanted to make them stronger expressions of hope. He condemned popish abominations such as vigils, masses for the dead, processions, purgatory and all other hocus-popus on behalf of the dead. He was in favour of services that focused on the resurrection of the dead with comforting hymns of the forgiveness of sins, of rest, sleep, life and that of the resurrection of departed Christians. He utilised hymns, psalms, a sermon and a simple ceremonial for burial rites (see Krech 2002:70-71). There later even arose an issue on whether sermons had to be preached at cemeteries or not. For at a later stage some Puritans went as far as regarding burials as purely a secular matter and conducted no services. Calvin approved of sermons at burial but he, like Luther, did not provide a liturgy for Christian burial. The

Reformed tradition tolerated a service of psalmody, Scripture reading, sermon and prayer after the burial (see White, 1990:291).

According to Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:159) the Calvinists went further. They saw a pressing need to prepare people for death. After intense guidance in the process of sickness, the burial would take place in the following manner: "The corpse is reverently to be brought unto the grave, accompanied with the congregation, without any further ceremonies; which being buried, the minister, if he be present, and required, goes to the church, if it be not far off, and makes some comfortable exhortation to the people, touching death and resurrection" (Forrester, McDonald and Tellini (1983:159). The Westminster directory for the Public Worship of God (1645) advocates for silence during burial because of the hurt that was done to the living by these ceremonies at the burial. Things like kneeling before the corpse and praying by or towards the corpse were viewed as superstitious. It argued that there was no benefit to the dead in this kind of behaviour and thus such things had to be laid aside.

Funeral services in the nineteenth century also had their own trends. According to Pretorius (1998:188) death was generally believed to be a difficult process during which the dying required help to depart this life. Therefore specific rituals such as stopping all clocks in the house and covering the mirrors in the death-room were performed. This done to prevent the spirit from becoming entrapped in its own reflection or for the deceased to take along the person who sees his/her picture in the mirror. The custom of taking out the corpse through the front door of a house with the feet first still exists among the Africans today. The reason why it is believed that the feet must exit is that the spirit should not find its way back home. It even happened in Great Britain that coffins were carried all round the cemetery up to three times. This was to introduce the deceased to the underworld.

Pretorius (1998:198) further states that the corpses of murderers, self-slayers, illegitimate children and sometimes even the unbaptised children were buried facing the West. The rationale behind this was that they did not share in the salvation of Christ and therefore should not see His second coming.

6.3.9 Summary: church historical information on funerals and mourning

It is evident that burials were usually accompanied by different services which carried different elements with them. It can be deduced from the history of burial that it took several forms. It was seen in some instances as a triumphant celebration of a heavenly birth as was the case in the first few centuries before the medieval period. In the medieval period death became a prayer for mercy and deliverance. It was a means of scaring people about the awaiting judgement and the fires of hell. In the time of the Reformation burials became a trustful commitment into the hands of God with sure hope of the resurrection of the body. After the Reformation burial became very commercial. It granted opportunities for people to advertise themselves, the beauty of their dresses, the expenses they could afford in their preparation for the burial service, etcetera.

6.4 Conclusion

It can be learned from the first few centuries and the Reformation that great respect was given to the person who died in the Christ. It was not respect in the sense of giving the deceased the status of being worshipped but the NT message that death was profit was clearly evident in the understanding of these people. They were like welcoming the person in the new heavenly life that was waiting those who had fallen asleep. The message to one another was a message of hope in resurrection. They did not believe in the pagan practices like absolution and kneeling in front of the corpse that were brought along because of the fear of hell. People should live in hope and trust in God. Death situations and burials should grant opportunities of bringing messages of hope to the bereaved. People are to be comforted in their lost and given hope for the new live awaiting in the New Jerusalem.

6.5 Basic guidelines

6.5.1 Burial was essential in the OT and in the NT. Not to be buried was a curse.

6.5.2 Mourning was permitted on ground that hope accompanied it.

6.5.3 Death had to remind people of the joy and new life awaiting them in the New Jerusalem.

6.5.4 The proclamation that accompanied funerals also had to be about the new life with God and not only about the comfort in lost.

6.5.5 The funeral had to be a triumphant march to express the joy of the victory of the deceased.

Chapter 7

7. Liturgical acts on wedding ceremonies

7.1 Introduction

Olthuis (1975:28) states that the Lord gave man marriage so that husbands and wives could enjoy growing strong together. He states further that marriage is a human community. Man and woman have to grow together in marriage and have to make love to develop their marriage. The couple has to explore the meaning of reality, justice and unity together. They have to share in the delights and pains of existence together. All these take effort and trouble. The process that binds this couple together is called marriage. Marriage must take on a legal -, family -, and community - and religious face for it to be constituted. It is important to keep in mind that God institutes it in the first place.

7.2 Method and work-plan

This chapter will concentrate on marriage ceremonies. As has been the case in preceding chapters of this study, this chapter again involves an exegetical analysis and a literature survey. Moreover, as we have seen in the case of burials, there is little that is directly available from the Bible when it comes to liturgy and marriage. It is therefore necessary to gather information from different instances and records in the Bible and history. Some basic and guiding principles can be inferred from this. Technically, this chapter continues after its introduction with an OT and NT exegesis, followed by a historical survey of marriage ceremonies as found in the available literature. In particular the idea is to focus on the way in which ceremonies were conducted, that is, the liturgy itself.

7.3 Liturgical aspects of marriage ceremonies

God instituted marriage according to Gen 2:18-25. A few additional points can be highlighted from this passage: God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. He realised humankind's need for a partner. The next point is that God did not ask the human's opinion with regard to marriage. God himself made the partner, not only a person of the opposite sex, but a suitable partner from his own flesh. Once He had created her God did not leave it for the human to decide whether he would like the partner or not, God took the woman to the man. The man in appreciation welcomed and accepted the woman by singing to her. Man gave a name to the woman out of appreciation and joy. He sealed the marriage with these words of institution as found in vs. 24: "that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one". According to Joubert (1994:77) this embodies a life-long institution between man and woman. Any human act to break this institution is regarded as committing adultery. Marriage is a religious ritual that changes the status of the man and the woman permanently. For they have to be one, love each other and be humble to each other. These are the points worthy of statement when it comes to the first recorded marriage.

It is clear that marriage is not a human institution. Marriage pleases God and makes him happy. Gen 1: 27 states that God created male and female and was very pleased. He blessed them. God made one woman for one man, as a suitable partner. This proves that God intended monogamous marriages.

The Hebrew term for marriage is **הַנְּתִיחַן** and the Greek term for marriage is "γάμος". The "Enhanced Brown-Digger-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon" translates **הַנְּתִיחַן** with marriage and wedding. The Aramaic is **הַנְּתִיחַן** and has the context of marriage-alliance, marriage according to Strong (1996) the Greek expression has sixteen occurrences. The American Version translates it as "marriage" nine times and "wedding" seven times. The word can refer to a wedding or marriage Festival, a wedding banquet, a wedding Feast, marriage and matrimony.

7.5 Preparation for marriage in the OT context

The institution of marriage does not differ from the regular practice of marriage because God still chooses partners for his children. He still blesses marriages and is still in control of what happens in marriages. He is not at a distance. Abraham asked for God's blessing when he sent his son Isaac to go and look for a wife. In Gen 24:7 Abraham said to his servant God will send an angel before him so that he (servant) can get a wife for his son. In Gen 24:12-14 the servant prayed God to choose a wife for Abraham's son and God answered his prayer even before he finished praying. The striking point in this whole passage is the response of Laban and Bethuel (the brothers to Rebecca): "since this matter comes from the Lord, it is not for us to make a decision". God's choice is final and correct. Man's choice can only be a great disaster. The teaching from this passage is that every wife is from God. However the manner in which He gives differs from one person to another. There is a prescription here as well as a description of a specific situation. The prescription is that a wife as well as a husband is found from God. The description is that the method is God's choice. God can work according to one's request, or he can decide to do it in any other way that pleases him. God's choice is always good. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997) state that Isaac established Rebecca at once in the rights and honours of a wife before he had seen her features. Disappointments often take place but when Isaac saw his wife "he loved her" Gen 24:67.

God's choice of Rebecca was a good choice. Rebecca was an energetic woman who could serve a number of animals from the well. She was hospitable for she welcomed the stranger to her home. Moreover she was a woman of faith. Without waiting for a conference with the selected bride the other members of the family gave their definite commitment: Rebecca would be Isaac's bride. They were disposed to keep the girl for a while (perhaps for several months) but the maiden, when asked what she preferred, declared her willingness to begin the journey immediately. It was a momentous decision for a girl to make. Her new home was a long way off and she would probably never see her family again. She was stepping out on faith even as Abraham had done years before. New life in Canaan was to be her reward (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, 1997; see Pfeiffer 1962).

The symbols used in this preparation were a ring around the nose and bracelets around the arms. Abraham's servant placed these on the girl. When she left the house the parents gave her a blessing: "May you, sister, become the mother of millions! May your descendants conquer the cities of their enemies!"

In Gen 34, after Shechem has raped Dinah, he made a request in vs. 12 to Jacob: "Tell me what presents you want, and set the payment for the bride as high as you wish; I will give you whatever you want, if you will only let me marry her". According to Achtemeier et al (1985) it is clear from Gen 34:12 that the bride price was separate from the other gifts presented by the groom's family to the bride's. When the family of Rebecca accepted the terms of her marriage, Abraham's servant responded by presenting costly gifts to her, her mother and her brother (Gen 24:53). As Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997) state the brothers could conduct all the marriage negotiations, their father probably having deceased, without consulting their sister. Their language seems to indicate they were worshippers of the true God. This also explains the teaching in Ex 22:16 that if a man seduced a girl, he had to pay the bride price as a penalty and make her his legal wife. From both passages it is indicated that marriages were generally contracted at a young age and arranged by the parents or family members or at least with their consent. It was common to marry within the clan and first cousins were suitable partners (Gen 24:4; 28:2).

Concerning the bride's price Gen 29 shows that Jacob worked for seven years to get Rachel (vs. 18) but was given Leah instead. He had to work for another seven years for Rachel (vs. 30). It is noteworthy that the passage mentions a wedding Feast (vs. 22) during which the bride was given to the bridegroom by the father (vs. 23) and a subsequent week of marriage celebration (vss 27 and 28).

Achtemeier et al (1985) states that the Bible prohibits consanguineous marriage (Lev 18). Priests were subject to even more stringent marriage regulations than ordinary Israelites such as the prohibition of marriage with a divorcée (Lev 21:7). There was usually a betrothal period after which the marriage had been celebrated (Deut 22:23). David was promised the oldest daughter of Saul, Merab, but when the time of the marriage came she was given to Adriel (1 Sam 18:17-19). This cheating business in

marriage happened to Jacob and as we now see, also to David. It is not certain if written contracts were in use as they are mentioned only much later in Tob 7:14.

7.6 *The wedding ceremony and the week of marriage celebration as found in the OT*

A wedding in this context is defined as a ceremony by which the husband and wife enter into matrimony within a larger communal transaction known as marriage. In the biblical time of the OT, during the wedding ceremony both parties were beautifully dressed and ornamented (Is 49:18; Jer 2:32; Ps 45:14-15). The bride wore a veil (Song of Sol. 6:7) which she took off only in the nuptial chamber, a custom that may make intelligible Leah's mistaken identity in Gen 29:21-25. According to Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997) the veil was an essential part of female dress. In country places it was often thrown aside but with the appearance of a stranger it was drawn over the face to conceal all but the eyes. In a bride it was a token of her reverence and subjection to her husband.

There was also the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness (Jer 16:9), dancing, the pronouncing of blessings (Ruth 4:11-12) and the recitation of love poetry. These were contributed by the accompanying villagers, family and friends. The great nuptial poem celebrating erotic love, the Song of Solomon, identified with the occasion of one of his own royal weddings (see 3:6-11), is a lovely and extended example of the lush poetry of such occasions. Ps 45 is another wedding poem in which all of the above mentioned steps are followed by a royal couple. After the procession, a week-long Feast took place at the bridegroom's house (Mt 22:2) or, in special cases, even at the bride's house (Gen 29:27; Jdg 14:10-12).

The sexual relationship was consummated on the first night (Gen 29:23) in the "tent" (Gen 24:67) or some other bridal chamber. If the mores of Near Eastern villagers down to the present day are admissible evidence, they support the importance that Deut 22:13-21 places upon the "tokens of virginity". These blood-stained garments of the wedding bed were preserved by the bride's parents as evidence should the groom elect later to slander his wife as having "played the harlot" prior to their marriage. So joyous for the entire community was a wedding and the inauguration of

a new family that a newly married groom was free from conscription into the army for one year, “to be happy with his wife whom he has taken” (Deut 24:5) (see Achtemeier et al, 1985).

7.7 Marriage in the NT context

There are no known specific rites or a liturgy on how marriages were meant to be served in the NT. What is clear is that Jewish marriages lasted several days and were celebrated far into the night as found in Lk 12:36; 14:8; Jh 2:1ff. These texts also show that there were certain marriage practices that took place like the bride waiting for the bridegroom to come. There is no detail given on how the ceremonies were held and what truly happened before and after the blessing of the couple if there was any blessing. Yet a striking fact is that Jesus also valued marriages. In Jh 2:2 we read that Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana and that He accepted the invitation. This very text will be used to get some idea of what happened and what the presence of Jesus at such a wedding contributed. It is clear from Jh 2:1-12 that Jesus was not an ordinary guest at this wedding even though He might have been invited as an ordinary guest. He was a divine guest and a host at the wedding ceremony. There was a shortage of wine (vs. 3) and Jesus’ mother referred the problem to Jesus. Jesus was hesitant, saying that His hour had not yet come. Yet He did not disappoint the couple, the master at the wedding and the guests. He instructed that the jars should be filled with water to the brim. He turned the water into wine and instructed the servants to serve the people.

The exegetical facts about this are that this was the very first miracle of Jesus Christ. Importantly, it this miracle did not happen in the Temple but at a wedding ceremony. Jesus was not pleased that the wine was finished and that people would get less drunk. No: He made better wine for the greater enjoyment of the guests. This wine was better than the first (vs. 10). Jesus’ intention was to reveal his glory and it happened, not in the Temple, where there was a limited number of people (only Jews) but in public where anyone could have been invited (even Greeks or Romans). Jesus revealed his glory by filling the need at the wedding. He revealed his glory by improving the situation (better wine). He revealed his glory by renewing the situation and there was plenty of wine left so the party could continue.

The presence of Jesus here indicated that marriage as a divine institution was still blessed by God and that it was a delight to God when people married. Through that miracle He made an everlasting promise that when He is invited He will make a difference at any wedding ceremony. He will provide everlasting joy, He will fill the needs and He will improve and refresh the marriage life. What is good and interesting about this is that the people were part of the celebration. That is, marriage does not only involve the couple and the Lord, it brings two people together along with their families. The love that brought the two people together and led them to marriage is a symbol or fragment of the love of God to his church. God's love to his church has no true comparison; it is beyond human comprehension.

The next Scriptural pericope in the NT that needs attention is Eph 5:22-33. In this pericope Paul likens the relationship in marriage between the couple to the relationship of Christ and his church. Marriage is highly symbolic. It is a mystery that cannot fully be understood by humans. A man has to love his wife as Christ loves his church and gave himself for it, to sanctify it so that she should be pure without stain before God. In this way man has to love his wife as his own body. Marriage assumes the function of not only sharing a love relationship and respecting each other but also of cleaning the other partner in preparing the partner for the return of Jesus Christ. Marriage is a school of training, a foretaste of heavenly love and blessing. It is a means of accepting each other in weakness and in strength just as Christ accepted the weak and sinful church, to the extent that He even died for it. Kittel (1995) states that the teaching on marriage in Eph. 5:22ff. is based on the normative union of Christ and the church with overriding love on the one side and self-giving on the other in a relationship that resolves all tensions as the wife is entrusted to the husband and the husband takes responsibility for the wife in mutual service in Christ.

Kittel (1995) further reasons that Gen 2:24, which speaks of the union of man and wife, forms the starting point of the NT ideal in marriage. Continued here is the work of creation in Gen 1:28. For Jesus, marriage is the original form of human fellowship. It has its basis in creation, has a history which divides into three periods, and will end with this aeon. Full union is the original state (Mk 10:6ff.). Sin causes the disruption which led to the bill of divorce allowed by Moses. Jesus inaugurates a new period marked by a new law of divorce, a deepened ideal, and a fourfold reservation (Mk

10:9-10). According to this realistic view, dissolution may take place, but not a new marriage, for replacement of one spouse by another is adultery and affects the original union. The cause of marital failure is hardness of heart; hence the need is for a new heart (5:27-28). Inward as well as outward union is demanded. Copulation without communion is fornication. Free love and double standards are both ruled out here, though the initiative of the husband in the conclusion and direction of a marriage is assumed in Lk 17:27. The four reservations are as follows: (1) In some ages marrying and giving in marriage may be frivolous and irresponsible (Lk 17:27); (2) marrying may sometimes hamper our readiness for God's call (Lk 14:20); (3) some people have the gift of celibacy (Mt 19:12); (4) there will be no more marrying in the new aeon (Mk 12:25).

Though Jesus himself does not marry and marriage belongs to the passing aeon, He does not warn against marriage or enjoin celibacy but instead He endorses the institution found in Gen 2:24. Paul develops the same motifs. In 1 Cor 6:16-17 he shows how the union of Gen 2:24 rules out fornication. In 1 Cor 7 he quotes Jesus in rejection of remarriage after divorce (7:10-11). Once contracted, marriage must be fully carried out with only brief periods of withdrawal (7:3ff.). Paul, however, presses more strongly the fourfold reservation of Jesus. Marriage may hinder true dedication to God (7:5, 32ff.) and is not consonant with the hour (7:26, 28-29). Although the ideal is that widows should remain unmarried, young widows are exhorted to remarry rather than engage in questionable activities (1 Tim 4:3; 5:5ff., 11, 14). Marriage is to be honoured according to Heb 13:4 and if celibacy is also extolled in the case of the 144 000 of Rev 14:4, it is on account of their special calling. In general, building on the foundation laid by Jesus, the NT finds in *αγαπη* rather than *ερος* the force that creates and sustains marital fellowship. The ground and measure of human *αγαπη* lie in the love of God as this comes to expression in Christ's love for his community.

Jesus takes up this idea of the messianic wedding in the parable of the virgins (Mt 25: 10ff.) and also when He calls himself the Bridegroom (Mk 2:19; Jh 3:29). He himself is now the Son for whom the King holds the great Feast (Mt 22:1-2) and the kingdom itself is compared to the Feast to which those who are first invited refuse to come, leaving the door open for others (Mt 22:3ff.). The bride refers to the covenant

people in OT thought as well as the church of Christ in the NT thought (see 1 Cor 6: 14ff.; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Jh 3:29). This idea is most vividly depicted in Revelation where the bride waits with longing (22:17) and the day of consummation is at hand (19:7ff.) when the New Jerusalem will descend as a bride adorned for her husband (21:2) (see Kittel, 1995).

7.8 *Marriage in the historical context*

To understand what happened in marriage ceremonies from a historical perspective one has to have a NT background. According to Rice and Huffstutler (2001:153) one searches in vain for any hint of marriage ceremonies in the NT. Jewish Christians were probably married according to Jewish customs and gentile Christians according to Roman customs. The spreading of the Church throughout the Roman Empire influenced Christianity to make use of the Roman civil rules in marriage without any special Church blessing. There was no liturgical ceremony. Nevertheless, as Read and De Lange (2001:153) reason, the earliest wedding ceremonies were very simple and held outside the church. Perhaps a minister could have been invited but there is no evidence for this.

Rice and Huffstutler (2001:153) state that it was the custom for the father to hand over the daughter to the groom in her own family house, after which the bridal party walked in procession to the new husband's home for concluding ceremonies and a wedding Feast. No official words were spoken and no blessing granted. The habit of giving a blessing developed among bishops in the fourth century and it was usually given on the day of the wedding or even a day before. Because of the power it had the Church gradually assumed authority over such an important institution as marriage. Eventually in the eight century, because religious wedding became so common, church marriages became recognised as legally valid.

Rice and Huffstutler (2001:154) further explain that customs regarding wedding ceremonies differed among different people. According to the Roman custom marriage was by consent. According to the German custom marriage was not complete until sexual intercourse had taken place. Charlemagne reformed these practices and proposed that all marriages should be examined for legal restrictions such as previous marriages or close family relationships.

The set pattern became as follows:

- The priest asked the bride and the groom if they had consented to the marriage.
- The father of the bride then handed over his daughter to the groom and gave him her dowry. At times, the priest himself performed this function.
- The priest blessed the ring, which the bride put on the finger if the bride and the priest gave the couple his blessing.
- The couple and the family would then enter into the church for a nuptial mass, for which the bride was veiled and blessed.
- At the conclusion of the mass, the priest gave the groom the kiss of peace, which the groom then passed on to the bride (see van Vlastuin, 1999:12).

In the Middle Ages Augustine developed the idea of marriage as a sacrament. Van Vlastuin (1999:12) states that the Vulgate also translates the “mystery” in Eph 5:32 with “*sacramentum*”. Augustine taught that marriage fulfilled the theological definition of a sacrament in two ways: it was a sign of the union between Christ and the church and it was a sacred pledge between husband and wife, a bond of fidelity between them that could not be dissolved except by death. The sacramental act was the consent that the partners gave to each other. Marriage was believed to have imprinted the souls of the two people and this united them permanently. In Augustine's own words: “*Now this is threefold, faithfulness, offspring, and the Sacrament. For faithfulness, it is observed, that there be no lying with other man or woman, out of the bond of wedlock: for the offspring, that it be lovingly welcomed, kindly nourished, religiously brought up: for the Sacrament, that marriage be not severed, and that man or woman divorced be not joined to another even for the sake of offspring...*” (Calvin 1998c). This opinion resulted in the fact that marriage became a church issue in all respects. However the marriage took place in public at the church door—only Mass was received in Church.

Luther rejected this concept of marriage as a sacrament. He argued that it did not possess the power to create a permanent imprint on the souls of the two parties. Though he hated divorce, he would accept it in extreme cases because even Christ

had allowed divorce in case of adultery. Both Luther and Calvin rejected the two states of life: the single life or celibacy and marriage. Calvin reasoned that marriage laws had to fall under the jurisdiction of civil authorities and he contended that the governments were morally obliged to make marriages and divorce laws in strict conformity with Christian principles. Furthermore he advocated that the only ground of divorce was that of adultery (Rice and Huffstutler, 2001:155 and van Valstuin, 1999:12-13). There had to be some clarity with regard to the role of the church and the state in their relation to marriage. Hence at a later stage the minister became an agent of the state in officiating marriage but he also remained a servant of God in blessing the marriage. Cranmer and the Reformers then moved the entire marriage service into the church.

Calvin also denied giving marriage a sacramental status. He argued that all people accepts that marriage instituted by God (Genesis 2:21-24, Matthew 19:4 ff.) but no one ever saw it administered as a sacrament until the time of Gregory. Marriage is a good and holy ordinance of God; and farming, building, cobbling and barbering are lawful ordinances of God and yet these are not sacraments. For it is required that a sacrament be not only a work of God but an outward ceremony appointed by God to confirm a promise. Even children can discern that there is no such thing in matrimony. From this it is clear that the Reformers had great respect for marriage and acknowledged that it was instituted by God. Yet contrary to the Roman Catholic view they deny marriage the status of being a sacrament.

7.9 Summary: wedding ceremonies

It is worth noting that nowhere in the Bible does a priest come to bless a marriage. It was usually the task of the fathers to handle the matter and even to pronounce the blessing over the family. Marriage and marriage ceremonies in the OT - and NT context were a family issue. There is no doubt that the public was invited to acts as witnesses but they had no other role than that. Changes came in the tenth to twelfth centuries when the priests became more and more involved in blessing the marriages. This led to marriage being viewed as a sacrament. It was also no longer the father but the priest who placed the hand of the bridegroom into the hand of the groom. The Reformers were radically disapproving of a sacramental view of

marriage. The Reformation made marriage a state's issue. This caused confusion between the role of the state and that of the church with regard to marriage. As a result church officials became agents of the state in officiating marriage.

This is also the case today. In both the OT and the NT and in history, too, there is no specification on what exactly should be done during wedding ceremonies. This is also one of the reasons why Calvin rejected marriage as a sacrament. There are no external elements linked to marriage except its state and its sanctity as an institution from God. The NT gave marriage a new meaning. Marriage became a symbol of Christ's relationship to his church as much as it embodied the relation of God with Israel. Moreover Christ in his presence at the Cana wedding gave marriage a divine status. He is the host to provide all the good in a marriage to which He has been invited. The guidelines that can be derived from the Bible and from history are limited yet enough to lead and provide us with knowledge on the nature of wedding ceremonies. However with the present status of marriage in the church one will have to develop some principles that are relevant to the occasion and because it takes place in the church in the presence of God and his congregation and indeed because it is instituted by God, the whole ceremony will thus have to glorify God.

7.10 Basic theoretical principles

7.10.1 God instituted marriage and takes delight in it hence marriage ceremonies have to glorify God.

7.10.2 Marriage is a symbol of Jesus Christ in relationship with his church (and of God in relationship to Israel). Hence Christ accepted the invitation to a wedding ceremony.

7.10.3 Wedlock binds two people together and Christ who is guest becomes the host in the wedding ceremony.

7.10.4 As much as wedding ceremonies are family issues, they equally invite the church for blessing and the state for legalising marriages.

Chapter 8

8. Summary of section A

8.1 Introduction, method and work-plan

The intention with this chapter is to come to new information. The basis-theoretical principles that were gathered in Section A will now be summarised to construct a few final basis-principles with a view to formulate a questionnaire that may be used for interviews. These final basis-principles will also be used in the last section that will deal with the hermeneutical communicative interaction in order to come up with a new model that would be used in the churches.

8.2 Chapter 2: Liturgical principles from the OT

Chapter 2 attempted to make an exegetical study on the OT liturgy to determine the basis-theoretical principles taught in the OT.

The following picture was formed:

- 8.2.1 God stands in the centre of all worship. Worship is about Him and it concerns Him as much as it centres on Him (2.9.1).
- 8.2.2 God is the Initiator of true worship. Worship does not originate from humans (2.9.2).
- 8.2.3 God also gives the blueprint of worship (2.9.3).
- 8.2.4 In true worship God's presence and glory are experienced by his people (2.9.4).
- 8.2.5 Fear and adoration accompany worship and prayer (2.9.5).
- 8.2.6 Gladness, joy and happiness accompany true worship. These never go without adoration and fear. If there is no fear, God is not worshipped because his presence is not experienced (2.9.6).
- 8.2.7 God himself, through his servants, communicates with his people. This means that He makes himself audible in his presence. They listen actively and respond in prayer, confession, praise and worship (2.9.7).

- 8.2.8 Summary of basis-theoretical principles
- 8.2.8.1 Worship originates from God, for God and according to his will (8.2.1-8.2.3).
- 8.2.8.2 Man has to approach God's holy presence in fear and adoration, through praise and prayer (8.2.4-8.2.6).
- 8.2.8.3 In true worship God reveals himself by his proclaimed Word (8.2.7).

8.3 Chapter 3: Liturgical principles from the NT

Chapter 3 makes an exegetical study about the NT teaching with regard to worship. The following basis-theoretical principles could be gathered:

- 8.3.1 Christ is the centre of the NT worship (3.12.1).
- 8.3.2 Everything in the liturgy or worship service became possible for the believers through Jesus Christ who gives strength (3.12.2).
- 8.3.3 Almost every aspect of the liturgy is accompanied or preceded by prayer (3.12.3).
- 8.3.4 The NT people are Spirit filled in their liturgical proceedings (3.12.4).
- 8.3.5 The element of joy and gladness remains continuous in the NT worship (3.12.5).
- 8.3.6 The resurrection of the Lord is like the pivotal point in the Theology of the NT (3.12.6).
- 8.3.7 The Lord's Day replaced the Sabbath, for Christ resurrected on this day and thus the day received new meaning among Christians (3.12.7).
- 8.3.8 Houses and Synagogues replaced the Temple worship gradually (3.12.8).
- 8.3.9 Specific time that was stipulated for worship was no longer an issue, people met at different times to proclaim the gospel (3.12.9).
- 8.3.10 Women actively participated in serving the ministers but also helped in the proclamation (3.12.10).
- 8.3.11 Sacrifices were replaced by prayer and breaking of the bread, which was regarded as an essential for the early meetings (3.12.11).
- 8.3.12 Prayer and thanksgiving could be done according to the ability of the

- leader (3.12.12).
- 8.3.13 The response of the people was emphasised as this indicates dialogue in worship (3.12.13).
- 8.3.14 The breaking of the bread was not easily separated from the Word service; the two form an inseparable unity (3.12.14).
- 8.3.15 Prophecy (Word proclamation) received a greater emphasis (3.12.15).
- 8.3.16 Confessions were important and they gave rise to the doctrine of the NT worship and belief (3.12.16).
- 8.3.17 Words of worship found an important place in the NT worship (3.12.17).
- 8.3.18 The holy Kiss became introduced as a symbol of solidarity (3.12.18).
- 8.3.19 The worship services began with a salutation and ended with a benediction (3.12.19).

8.3.20 Final basis-theoretical principles on the liturgical aspects of the NT

- 8.3.20.1 God meets his people in the exalted Christ and people meet God in the exalted Christ and one another mutually (3.13.1).
- 8.3.20.2 The Holy Spirit directs every element in the worship service and confirms the full presence of God in worship (3.13.2).
- 8.3.20.3 Prayer, Word proclamation and singing received a higher recognition (3.13.3).
- 8.3.20.4 The breaking of the bread always went hand in hand with the Word proclamation (3.13.4).
- 8.3.20.5 Confessions and exclamations continued as part of worship (3.13.5).
- 8.3.20.6 Woman participation in worship became more evident (3.13.6).

8.3.21 Principles that continued from the OT to the NT.

- 8.3.21.1 God is always present in the worship among his people (2.9.1, 8.2.1, 8.2.7 and 8.3.20.1).
- 8.3.21.2 The Holy Spirit now permanently dwells in the church and guides in all elements of worship, while in the OT he functioned in specific people for a special occasion (2.9.4 and 8.3.4 and 8.3.20.2).
- 8.3.21.3 The Word of God is read and proclaimed (2.9.7 and 8.2.7).
- 8.3.21.4 Sacraments replaced sacrifices and prayer continued (2.9.5, 3.12.11, 3.13.4 and 8.3.20.4).

8.3.21.5 God meets his people in the exalted Christ; the people meet with God in the exalted Christ and with one another in a mutual relationship (3.13.1 and 8.3.20.1).

8.4 Chapter 4: Liturgical aspects on the history of the church

Chapter 4 makes a literary study to determine the guidelines that history provided for the worship services.

The following basis-theoretical principles could be deduced:

8.4.1 The Word must always stand in the centre of worship (8.2.7 and 8.3.15-8.3.19).

8.4.2 The sacraments play an essential role and must not be dishonoured however; they never have to replace the Word proclamation (8.2.14 and 8.3.21.4).

8.4.3 Prayer has an outstanding role in worship (8.3.20.3 and 8.3.21.4).

8.4.4 Worship is about, around and initiated by God. Once this principle is broken, worship becomes miserable. Neither the congregation, nor the individual can come with his own institution of worship, worship is God centred (8.2.1 and 8.2.2).

8.4.5 Liturgy lives within culture and among the people. Nevertheless, it is there to transform culture and give it a biblical shape (8.2.7).

8.4.6 Summary of the Chapter 4: History

8.4.6.1 God Triune has to remain at the centre and circumference of liturgy. True worshippers always seek God's good will (8.2.1, 8.2.2 and 8.3.21.5).

8.4.6.2 The Word of God should stand above ostentation, pomposity, aesthetics and other things (8.2.7., 8.6.3, 8.7.1).

8.4.6.3 Liturgy has to be simple, orderly and holy (8.4.5).

8.4.6.4 People have to understand whom and how they are to worship. (This implies culture of the people and the way to pray [communicate] to God) (8.2.7, 8.4.5).

8.5 Chapter 5: Liturgical aspects on Music

Chapter 5 dealt with liturgical music and the following basis theoretical principles could be determined:

- 8.5.1 Church music must be faithful to the Bible (5.12.1).
- 8.5.2 It has to glorify God in a manner pleasing to him (5.12.2).
- 8.5.3 It must edify the congregation. It should not be individualistic and driven by feelings and emotions. The Spirit and the Word should direct it. The edification that comes through it could be by means of sung-confession (5.12.3).
- 8.5.4 The unity of the congregation should be maintained and be evident in the process of the singing (5.12.4).
- 8.5.5 The language should be understandable. The music should be in such a way that people should sing by heart, through Spirit and understanding (5.12.5).
- 8.5.6 Church music should have an effect on the one singing or listening. It is not a dry poem without any message (5.12.6).
- 8.5.7 Church music should not replace the Word, but should provide an atmosphere suitable for the Word (5.12.7).
- 8.5.8 Church music when sung should indicate that people are Spirit-filled, and because the singers are Spirit-filled, it should fill the house of God with glory (5.12.8).

- 8.5.9 Final basis-theoretical principles on music
 - 8.5.9.1 Church music must always seek to glorify God.
 - 8.5.9.2 Church music has to edify those singing it.
 - 8.5.9.3 Church music has to provide an atmosphere suitable for God to deal with his people.

8.6 Chapter 6: Funeral services

Chapter 6 dealt with the funeral services and this is what the Bible and history teaches:

- 8.6.1 Burial was essential in the Old and NT. Not to be buried was a curse (6.5.1).
- 8.6.2 Mourning at the funeral service is permitted on ground that hope accompanies it (6.5.2).
- 8.6.3 The funeral service (Death) should remind people of the joy and new life awaiting in the New Jerusalem (6.5.3).
- 8.6.4 The proclamation that accompanies funerals should be about the new life with God and not about the comfort in lost (6.5.4).
- 8.6.5 The funeral must be a triumphant march to express joy of victory of the deceased (6.5.5).

- 8.6.6 Summary of chapter 6
- 8.6.6.1 At the funeral service burial is like planting seed that will grow beautifully, and like a new heavenly birth.
- 8.6.6.2 The funeral service calls upon hope and trust in the promises of God.

8.7 Chapter 7: Wedding ceremonies

Chapter 7 studies the wedding ceremonies from a Biblical perspective to a historical one and the following were discovered:

The following basis-theoretical guidelines were determined from the wedding ceremonies:

- 8.7.1 God instituted marriage and takes delight in it, hence marriage ceremonies have to glorify God (7.10.1).
- 8.7.2 Marriage is a symbol of Jesus Christ in relation to his church (God in relationship to Israel). Hence Christ accepted invitation to the wedding ceremony (7.10.2).
- 8.7.3 Wedlock binds two people together in Christ; and Christ, who is guest, becomes the host in the wedding ceremony (7.10.3).
- 8.7.4 As much as wedding ceremonies are family issues, they equally invite the church for blessing and the state for legalising marriages (7.10.4).

- 8.7.5 Final basis-theoretical principles on marriage
- 8.7.5.1 God instituted marriage, hence delights in wedding ceremonies (8.13.1).
- 8.7.5.2 Once Christ is invited in wedding ceremonies, He becomes the host also and fills the marriage with heavenly blessings (8.13.2 – 8.13.3).
- 8.7.5.3 The feasting character of wedding ceremonies brings the church, the community, people, families as well as the state together not only as witnesses but as part of the wedlock (8.13.4-8.13.5).
- 8.7.5.4 Conclusive basis-theoretical principles

From all the information gathered the following stands firm and can be applied to every element and aspect of worship:

- 8.7.5.1 God initiates worship and stands in the centre of liturgy.
- 8.7.5.2 Worship service is a meeting that takes place between God and his people, the people and God and the people mutually, all this happens in the exalted Christ.
- 8.7.5.3 God's Spirit and Word direct all liturgical aspects and provide direction.
- 8.7.5.4 The sacraments always accompany the Word proclamation as a symbol and sign of God's grace.
- 8.7.5.5 God's holy presence fills his congregation with glory.
- 8.7.5.6 Praise and adoration, and humiliation and awe accompany every aspect or element of worship.
- 8.7.5.7 Liturgy is an earthly activity with a divine nature symbolising a heavenly liturgy that will be perfect. Hence liturgy always has to strive for this perfection. This infers the role of culture.
- 8.7.5.8 Liturgical music is a Spiritual, verbal and emotional element that proclaims, exalts, rebukes, comforts, motivates and inspires.
- 8.7.5.9 Funeral services are used to comfort and encourage people about the future hope for a new life.
- 8.7.5.10 God who instituted marriage also gives guidelines on the order of wedding ceremonies because they take place in his presence.

8.7.5.11 Christ not only always accepts wedding invitations but is prepared to become a host in the wedding ceremony (for ever) as well.

B. Meta-theory

9. The present relationship between liturgy and African culture

9.1 Introduction on section B: Meta-theory

Chapters 2-5 deal with the hermeutical circle as Heitink's (1999) defines it. A description from the Biblical perspective as well as a historical perspective has been given. These chapters also open a little light on the behaviour of people and sources that influence their behaviour.

This section adopts a different approach. It will concentrate on the here and now of liturgical activity. The intention of this section is to deal with the meta-theoretical and empirical aspect of liturgy and culture. The basis-theoretical principles have been determined in the previous section: it is therefore possible to ask members of the Reformed Churches around Synod Midlands how they understand themselves with regard to worship and how they evaluate such a religious experience.

Before focusing on the empirical part (see chapter 10) this section will make a study to evaluate the cultural life of 21st century society. This study involves a literature survey about liturgy and culture with special emphasis on the African culture which surrounds the communities of which the churches of Synod Midlands are members. Liturgy here should be understood in a very broad sense encompassing the whole sphere of human life and not only in an ecclesiastical sense.

9.2 Work-plan

The chapter examines literature on liturgy and culture. It should be noted that very little information exists which deals with the liturgy of the South African Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands in particular. Little study has been done so far which deals with aspects of the way the South African indigenous people worship God. Hence the information that will be gathered from indirect sources needs to be handled with great care. There are sources dealing with culture in general and with worship. However they do not have a special focus on the people in their cultural and

social context. Instead they work with links and similarities of a more general nature. The material will be studied with special focus on sections that imply or deal directly with an African liturgy of worship.

9.3 Method

If one follows the method of Heitink (1999:235) one will divide this section into two circles: the regulative - and the empirical circle. The regulative circle is about defining the problem, diagnosing, planning, intervening and evaluation. It therefore entails a literary study. On the other hand, the empirical circle is about observation, induction/supposition, deduction/prediction, testing and evaluating. Here the focus is on liturgy and culture.

People find themselves within a specific culture and have a certain way of behaving. People are guided by cultural principles that determine their daily activities. They do not simply act: they know what impact their action will have either on themselves or on society. Even people who argue to be individualists exist within a community and their behaviour has a direct or indirect impact on society and vice versa. The same can be said of people's liturgical activities whether they are done from an individualistic point of view or from a communal point of view: they are influenced by cultural behaviours. The empirical circle will be discussed in the next chapter.

9.4 *The necessity of studying the relationship between liturgy and culture*

De Klerk (2001a:279) argues that the African is a religious being as it is the case with all other human beings. In addition to being religious, the culture of the African lies close to his or her heart. Due to this fact his or her ideas, values and activities are strongly formed by his or her religious activities. There is therefore a strong relationship between culture and liturgy. Acknowledging the relationship between liturgy and culture, De Klerk (2000:458) also argues that the function of liturgy should remain to transform the culture. Liturgy should not be so "strange" that it is unable to communicate within its cultural situation. On the other hand liturgy should not be so

“locally-modern” that it should deprive the gospel of its transforming power. It is important that liturgy should reflect the local culture but also have some traditional and historic trends of the catholic Christian fellowship within it. The risen Christ should always stand in the centre of this liturgy. De Klerk (2001b:66) states that culture that is not transformed by the liturgy amounts to a demotion of liturgy. Veith (1994:xii) confirms this when he states that the church always has to confront its culture and that it must exist in the tension with the world. The church would risk becoming irrelevant if it either ignores its culture or if it simply accepts the culture uncritically. It would be risking syncretism and unfaithfulness.

This fact is relevant because, as Lukken (1997:136) states, liturgy is the heart of culture, the most dynamic and deepest element thereof. In line with this Barnard (2000:5) states that liturgy and culture stand in a dynamic relationship with each other. To shed further light on this he argues that liturgy should be viewed as a complex of rituals and symbols. It has to do with the meaning the participant grant to the ritual and the manner in which they deal with it. When the liturgy is approached from its rituality its context becomes respected because people, whether the community or the individual, give shape to the ritual. They would act from within a specific culture that has an influence on them. Barnard (2001:49f) also argues that to understand the ritual one has to understand the culture. One cannot simply export a ritual from one culture to another without the necessary inculturation. The consequences of such behaviour would bring about much damage to the existence of the other culture. This is clearly evident from the consequences that the Western liturgy and European colonisation had on cultures in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Inculturation implies here that the celebration of a liturgy has to be relevant to a concrete group of people.

De Klerk (2001a) provides examples of a number of positive contributions of liturgy to culture and transformation. The following are worth mentioning for the purpose of this study: liturgy has to be indigenous and has to revive the humanity value system. It should be the function of liturgy to strive bringing about reconciliation and to promote the facilitation and involvement of the members.

9.5 A description of the cultural garment in which theology was dressed when it came to Africa

Tovey (1988:1) reasons that in preaching the gospel to the Africans the missionary societies tended to export the worship of the parent body either in exactly the same form or in the form that was seen to be ideal. The prevailing attitude that is clear about most of the early missionaries is what is expressed in many hymns "*Hole le lehae, le fuba sa Ntate*" which may be translated as follows: "Far away from home, from the bosom of the Father". There was that general belief that Africans were lost and that they were heathen people dwelling in darkness far away from God and far away from their heavenly home -- they had to repent from this. Through the penetration of the European or Western religion the new Christian culture was to be built. This was also the time when many schools were built to promote the Christian religion and the new culture that the Africans had to learn. For these buildings the missionaries are greatly honoured. Nevertheless the Africans had to be civilised and Christianised. For if they were in heathen darkness there was no reason for them to be sensitive to their culture. Hence it can be argued that the great task of the missionaries was not to come to the African countries to learn and to listen but to teach and to convert. Holmes (1999:154) adds that before the Vatican II all traditions were condemned as pagan. This even applies to the African culture. The African way of singing and praying is/was viewed as heathen and as an incorrect form of worship. In order to be a Christian we had to set aside all our tradition and all the teachings of our elders. Hence if one enters some of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands one should not be surprised to find that some people still sing in a typically Western pattern.

Despite the criticisms that can be made of the missionaries they not only planted churches and build hospitals and schools but the vitality of Christian communities also bears witness to the fact that the Gospel really was communicated whether one should consider that communication as inadequate or not. Hearing God's Word is always preceded and followed by the Holy Spirit with a direct interpretation of the Word to the hearers. This should be a comfort to all of us. Moreover there are also a number of African theologians who share in the inheritance of the Gospel as the Apostle Paul proclaimed it. Paul proclaimed a gospel that set the early Gentile

Christians free from Jewish attempts to impose upon them the regulations of Jewish Law. The gospel he preached about the salvation found in Jesus Christ crossed cultural boundaries and included all people without reserve (see Bediako, 1990:5-6). Christians today therefore carry great responsibility to combat the problem that many African churches still encounter in their worship.

9.6 *An antidote to the problem of the theology brought to the African*

To combat this problem inculturation is required. Tovey (1998:1) defines inculturation as the transformation of the worship of the African church to make it a more authentic expression of African Christianity. Inculturation defines in a wider perspective the relationship between culture and worship. Karecki (1993:152) argues that inculturation is considered one of the biggest challenges facing the mainline churches. As a matter of fact liturgical inculturation is more essential in this process because liturgy is made up of symbols and rituals and thus can be a great formative element in shaping the missionary consciousness of a people and in helping faith to be celebrated. Due to a system of worship that was exported there has been reason for alienation from ones won culture. The worshipper is a foreigner in his or her worship. He or she is deprived from his or her own way of worship. Inculturation should be a process in which the alienation that is felt in worship has to be destroyed.

It should be clarified at this stage that inculturation will not only have to do with foreign culture that the Africans inherited from the missionaries but will also involve and attempt to correct that new culture that came through modern society and which took place without the proper biblical principles being considered. The standpoint in this approach is that liturgy has to transform culture and yet allow culture to give it shape. There must be a mutual interaction between culture and liturgy. However, liturgy and culture will not be placed on the same level in this study.

According to Chupungco (1992:25) there was a shift from “enculturation” to “inculturation” already around 1973. Hence inculturation is not a new liturgical terminology. G.L. Barney, a Protestant missionary and professor at Nyack Alliance School in Nyack, New York, already coined the term in 1973. Barney stated that the essential nature of the supra-cultural components should neither be lost nor distorted

but interpreted clearly through the guidance of the Holy Spirit in “inculturating” people into a new culture. However Shorter (1988:11) states that the term was used earlier than the date suggested by Chupungco. According to him the first recorded use of this term was in 1962 Fr Joseph Masson SJ, professor at the Gregorian University in Rome used it in a theological context shortly before the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Fr Masson wrote: “Today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is inculturated in a variety of forms (*d’ne facon polymorphe*)”.

It appears, moreover, that there is much to debate on who used the term most frequently and what its impact was. Nevertheless this section will concentrate on its implication and its understanding in the contemporary context. For as it shall appear in this study many contemporary authors use the word but from different theological perspectives. They view the concept from different perspectives ranging from a missiological - to a systematically theological - to a liturgical point of view. However, the idea or the definition is the same. In its relationship to liturgy, inculturation became a creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and the culture or cultures (see Shorter, 1988:11). As De Klerk states (2001a:283) inculturation also becomes a means of transporting the gospel. It becomes part of the specific culture yet is not of that culture specifically. In this situation there exists a fruitful tension that renews faith and heals culture.

Chupungco (1992:28) mentions three notable traits of inculturation:

- Inculturation is an ongoing process and is relevant to every country or region where faith has been sown.
- Inculturation holds that the Christian faith cannot exist except in a cultural form.
- Inculturation also holds that between the Christian faith and culture there should be interaction and reciprocal assimilation.

Inculturation therefore involves and assimilation between Christianity and culture and the resulting interior transformation of culture on the one hand and the rooting of the Christianity in culture on the other. Holmes (1999:154) makes it much clearer by saying that inculturation gives one a choice. You may choose what elements you

want to bring into your culture. Through inculturation we discover our spiritual traditions and our roots.

9.7 *The impact of this antidote upon the problem of theology to the African*

The fact that liturgy transforms culture has its own implications on every culture. This is so because, as Barnard (2001:50) reasons, liturgy has the following dimensions:

- Liturgy is in the first place trans-cultural. The same contents of the liturgy apply to all different cultures. Holmes (1999:16) likens the relationship between culture and the gospel to a marriage. However this is like a polygamous marriage. Because the gospel-as-liturgy remains the same the contents thereof will be the same although cultures differ. Therefore the same principles of liturgy have to be applied to these different cultures.
- In the second place, however, liturgy is also contextual. Its application adapts according to the needs of the local natural and cultural contexts. Chupungco (1992:17-19) argues that the church has to be relevant by relating to the contemporary society. The environment and setting in which the local Church lives combine to act as the context that sheds light on its theology, sacramental life and missionary activity (see also Wachege 2000:45).
- In the third place liturgy is contra-cultural. It fights against everything in culture that is not in line with the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the gospel comes in contact with a culture Jesus judges such a culture. Culture becomes purified and strengthened when it meets the face of Jesus (see Holmes, 1999:168).
- In the fourth place liturgy is cross-cultural. People of different local cultures can share the same things or behave in the same pattern with regard to certain liturgical issues such as praying with lifted hands, clapping hands when singing, or kneeling when praying.
- A fifth point that Barnard does not mention but which is worth mentioning to my mind is that inculturation entails hybridity: both as a process and as a product (Holmes, 1999:169). This is essential because there are liturgical elements that might have their dynamic equivalence in the African tradition. Certain Biblical symbols are better represented by the African tradition. Hence it is important to study the context of the specific occurrence and evaluate whether that cannot be

better symbolised. There are, for instance, African ceremonies that are very sacred to the African as would the church rituals to the Christian. Christ's command to love one's neighbour as he/she loves herself or himself is clearly expressed in the African concept of *ubuntu*. This concept is so strong that the true and traditional African feels incomplete without his fellow and therefore would do everything in his or her capacity for the well-being of his or her neighbour.

- There is also a sixth point not mentioned by Barnard: inculturation entails incarnation. Holmes (1999:163), along with the other scholars she quotes, also relates inculturation with incarnation. The belief is that as the Word became flesh, so, in a certain sense, God has assumed and continues to assume race, culture, country and history in the affirmation of the risen Christ. God achieved his mission by the incarnation of his Son. Jesus was culture-bound as a Jew, and a Jew of Galilee, and also as a speaker of (probably) Galilean Aramaic. Moreover by occupation He was a carpenter in the tradition of his earthly father who in turn said as the Father has sent him into the world so Jesus sends us into the world. In this way Christ is giving us a model for worship. Chupungco (1992:17-19) confirms this point of incarnation by reasoning that the local church should strive to identify itself with the people among whom it dwells as Christ identified himself with the people He lived with. He goes as far as arguing that the Church should not merely become a Church *in* but a Church *of* a particular locality.

The researcher is sensitive to the sixth point because the Biblical incarnation of Christ is a unique and divine concept. One cannot simply apply what happened to God to what happens to human beings. Moreover, to say that Christ was culture-bound as a Jew is also a dangerous concept, a better word would rather be that Christ was culture-related and not bound. Unlike the Jewish men of His time, Christ talked to a Samaritan woman at the well. He ate and talked to sinners, which was deemed as evil by the Pharisees. He touched lepers; something religious people would not have dared to do. He did what people who were culture would not have done.

It is also wrong to argue that because Christ identified himself with the people among whom He lived, the church should likewise incarnate and identify itself with the

particular locality. The church has to identify itself with the world but it should remain a divine institute. It cannot incarnate in the sense in which the Word became flesh.

With Shorter (1988:11) one may conclude on a definition of inculturation as provided by Arrup that the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context are of such a nature that this experience not only finds expressions through elements proper to the culture in question -- and this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation -- but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and making it so as to bring about a "new creation".

Given these important introductory points one is able subsuently to scrutinise the culture of the members of the Reformed Churches within the different provinces of Synod Midlands. This part of this study will primarily focus on matters that are conventional among the African people and that typically belong to African tradition and belief. This means that the study will first sketch a view of the African traditional religion that still has an impact on the lives of many African people including some of the Christians. Many African people might argue that they do not hold on to the traditional beliefs. Nevertheless in extreme situations they adhere to some elements of it.

When the African traditional religion and the traditional culture came into contact with the Christian liturgy the African person had his or her own way of living. Not every aspect will receive attention here but only those that are of direct consequence to the theme of this thesis. Mumbi (2000:27) mentions a few aspects that have to be deliberated when handling the inculturation in Africa. These points will receive greater attention in this study. Yet their structure and order will be modified in line with the structure of this thesis, as follows:

- Anthropological perspectives and social ethics.
- Communalism.
- Family life.
- Rites of passage.

- Worship and veneration of the ancestors.
- Music and dancing.
- Death and funeral services.
- Marriage and wedding ceremonies.

9.8 African culture in first contact with Christian liturgy

The work accomplished by the missionaries could not really rid the African of his traditional faith. Perhaps this is also because of the fact that inculturation was never applied during earlier periods of missionary activity. Mumbi (2000:21) says that this failure was by and large due to not taking into account the African traditional heritage for “a faith that does not become culture is a faith not fully accepted, not entirely thought as ours, and not faithfully lived”. He further states that Christianity must be seen as an interweaving between the divine and the human, a dialogue between the divine Word and human word. Despite the fact that the gospel is not identical with culture the Kingdom of God is lived by men who are profoundly linked to culture and the building up of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing elements of a human culture or cultures. The Gospel is independent of cultures but compatible with them. This calls even more for the proclamation of the Gospel because culture has to come in direct contact with the Word of God in order to be transformed. In the same way as a letter needs an envelope, so faith needs a culture to reach its destination.

Praem (1965:135) states that it is natural that Africans should express their own human experience in their own terms. He further says culture is the communal expression of the human and ritual is the communal expression of its religious core. The ritual leads in a sense to encountering God. God has made the various cultures come to flower simply in order to prepare manifold ways for the praise of his glory.

However if culture has to be transformed the question begs *what* aspects of culture have to be transformed. We live in a new period where everyone or most people are under the influence of the ideologies of pre-modernism, modernism and post-modernism. It is not a matter of going back to the old African traditional culture which

most people are not practising and even appear to be much less interested in. Nevertheless Wamugunda (1998:47) is correct in stating that true inculturation must focus on the African who struggles every day to “decolonise” his or her mind. It is this African whose thought-patterns, Christian life and doctrine must be reformulated. To define African culture one can say that it is more than concentrating on the traditional song or dance and musical instruments in the liturgy. It is what we live and experience every day. Mtetwa (1998:59) argues that it is self-evident that there is some glory in Africa's past even though that past was demonised by both the missionary enterprise and colonisation on one level and by apartheid on another. Schüman also supports retrospectively the past. In his article in *Barnard and Post* (2001:181) he argues that no human being can live in the past because such a person will be at a *cul de sac* of life and his or her future will come to a dead end. Yet he also mentions that the opposite is equally true: without reminiscences of the past, society and communities will be without direction or even without a future. This remark is important with regard to the African situation.

Yet, part of the problem is that the traditional African culture can become a study on its own. It is worth mentioning that the African culture differs to a large extent from place to place and nations to nations. However there are a number of common elements among the African people. This is what brings them together as a people with *ubuntu* living now in a common area. The culture in homelands will differ slightly from the culture of townships because the people in townships are exposed to different influences. Many people still adhere to their culture but they practice it in a common way with the other people of a different culture. The Sotho, Tswana and Xhosa who stays in the same vicinity would make use of the same elements and method when making *mpho ya badimo*. This brings about a development of a common African culture within which the members of the churches in Synod Midlands find themselves.

One eventually has to demarcate one's research to certain aspects within the culture with the idea of getting the grips of the aspect. The research here therefore limits itself to those cultural aspects that may be considered to continue having an influence on the liturgy of the members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands.

9.8.1 Anthropological perspectives and social ethics

9.8.1.1 Anthropocentrism

Before one begins with the African religion it is equally important to establish the position which humans occupy in African thought and culture. Concerning his or her position Zahan (1979:6) states that humans are the supreme and irreducibly superior reality. Humans are superior to all else in existence. The divinity itself enters his or her affairs in the same way as do other beings to which he is close and which he or she uses. This does not mean that the African places himself or herself in the position of God or that he or she places the earth in opposition to the spirit. Humans venerate divinity not for the glory of God but rather for his or her own personal development. This is what makes humans to have a central position in creation. Kuypershoek (1996:243) explains that the African person cannot be seen or summed up outside his or her relationship to his or her land and his or her people. He lives and thinks, he eats and drinks, he sleeps and works, he plays and he loves, he lives and dies, embedded in his *ubuntu*. This concept of *ubuntu* will be dealt with in the section of this thesis that deals with family life (9.8.2) where it will find greater relevance.

African anthropology views the human being as consisting of two major parts according to Van der Walt (2003:68). He or she consists of an immortal soul or spirit that goes to spirit-land after death and a body that rots in the grave. (The concept of ancestry will receive further attention later in this study). In most African cultures he or she is also said to consist of a shadow or *seriti*. This is a doubling of the body functioning as a force that gives dignity to being. Every African person receives a name that influences his or her personality *bitso lebe ke seromo* (free translation: a bad name makes someone a bad).

9.8.1.2 Communalism

With regard to the social life of the African Van der Walt (2003:69) argues that without the tribe (community) the individual has no identity. The older one grows the closer he or she gets to the ancestors. Therefore he or she has more wisdom and is regarded as more important in society. There is also seniority at birth. The eldest son

is always said to be the equal of his father and the daughter the equal of her mother. The eldest son is always referred to as *mojalefa* "the inheritor". The position one acquires in life determines the role one plays in society. Women are inferior to men and in most instances do not qualify to become ancestors. Rituals are highly respected and everyone has to undergo a ritual in one or another manner to attain a certain status in life.

Concerning the place of living, the geography of the African people does not necessarily make them too different from others. For instance it is important to note that despite the geographical separation between the Tswana and the Sotho, as Setiloane (1975:24) argues, legend has it that all Sotho-Tswana are descended from a common ancestor. The Basotho later became separated as a distinct geographical unit about nine generations from the present day. Each chiefdom is composed of kin claiming patrilineal descent from a common ancestor of an earlier generation. He further states that on a large scale, in historical times, Moshoeshe created the Sotho nation precisely by gathering together, in a common allegiance to himself, refugees dispersed by Zulu warriors of Tshaka and Mzilikazi. Membership of a chiefdom became defined in terms of common ancestry. The newcomers symbolise this by accepting the *badimo* (ancestors) of the group they join as their own.

Because of this claim to common ancestry in most instances what the Zulu and Xhosa believe about the ancestors can also be claimed for the Zulu and the Xhosa. In certain instances this study therefore combines what the researcher believes to be common between both the Sotho and the Nguni groups. The term "Sotho" will refer to the South Sotho, Tswana (West Sotho) and Pedi (North Sotho) and the term "Nguni" will refer to the Xhosa and the Zulu, partly with reference to extreme traditional societies but more often in reference to the different townships and locations where they are situated.

9.8.1.3 Conclusion

The African human is believed to have a central position in creation. There is some divinity in the human being hence a king or a chief can be worshipped. Yet there is no clear ontological distinction between divine (Creator God) and human. The human

being is also viewed as a being with two parts: an immortal soul and a body that is mortal. When he or she dies the body becomes rotten and the spirit dwells or reincarnates. He or she has to go through certain rituals for a prosperous life and for life status. There is a belief that there is a common ancestry among the African people and that they are only geographically separated. As a matter of fact the place where they dwell would have its own influence on the language and the culture. One's birth position also determines the status one would have in the family or in society in the case of the royal family. The older one grows the wiser he becomes and the closer he gets to the ancestors.

9.8.1.4 Meta-theoretical perspectives

9.8.1.4.1 African people have got some divinity within them.

9.8.1.4.2 Age and gender play an important role in the status of the African.

9.8.1.4.3 African people are believed to have common ancestry.

9.8.1.4.4 Humans consist of an immortal soul and a mortal body.

9.8.2 Family life

The African being is part of a whole that literally means everything to him. He is only truly human when in communication with human beings and in a good relationship with them. His family are there to protect him and stand by his side against any threats he might encounter in life. This means that even if he gets married he remains part of the family but he also gets a family in addition. This leads to an extended family. The idea underpinning this is that every person becomes related to another. Hence family units among the Africans should be understood in the context of "I belong, therefore I am" (see Kuyperhoek, 1996:244).

Productive units within the households of traditional Africans consist of a married man, his wife or wives and their children, grandparents and other usually unmarried dependent relatives. The household lives in a homestead: a number of huts enclosed within a palisade. The family groups are thus made up of such households. There are additional family groups that are closer to a given family and these can be defined as belonging to the other. These family groups together form a ward. The ward forms a

distinct social, political and economic unit within the chiefly polity (Shillington, 1985:8).

One can deduce that the concept of *botho* or *ubuntu* (humanity) has its origin within such structures. It can also be argued that proverbs like *bana ba motho ba arolelana hlooho ya tsie* -- which means "a person's children share among themselves even a head of a locust" -- derive from the livelihood within these structures. One working husband is responsible for a great family and in this way the children of the different wives have to live as a single family, supporting, protecting and caring for each other. This *botho* concept can also be understood in terms of the notion of a whole in which the group is seen as the primary unit and the individual as measured by it. Kgatla (1995:25) says that unlike the Western culture, in the African culture an individual is no more than a link in the chain binding him or her "horizontally" to others and "vertically" to the ancestors. The group is thus more than the sum total of individuals within it. Setiloane (1975:32-33) adds that the significant level or organisation is not that of individual men and women but of man- and woman-in-community. Hence the common expression of *botho* that says; "*Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*" (Humans are human through, with and in association with other humans).

This kind of family structure has, however, suffered drastic changes in locations and townships. The structure that reigns now is that of father, mother and children. When need be there may be some other members of the relatives staying with this family. These non-working members will then help with the raising of the children and the daily activities at home. However there are no longer smaller units for the family members. They all share a common house with a few rooms. Even in this situation *botho* is clearly expressed in the fact that everyone is seen as part of the family. It should be noted, however, that some of the members are very individualistic because of influence from a secularistic and materialistic world. Many among them live independently from their families and will only think of them in situations of death and other important functions that need the serious involvement of the relatives.

This important structure of *ubuntu* or *botho* should make an important liturgical contribution. As Paem (1965:140) states: because life for the African is communication and since the African cannot live separately from his fellows this

aspect also determines his worship. God makes use of the same concept of communality to build those taking part in the same act of worship into a single family. This means that people staying in the same house, worshipping in the same way and sharing the worship acts with other people in their midst and vicinity are made into a single family in Christ with these other people.

9.8.2.1 Conclusion

The family structure of the African house gives rise to *ubuntu*. Because of the many wives and children who all share the same father there is already that respect for one another in the family. There is always a horizontal link to the other family members and a vertical link to the ancestors.

9.8.2.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives.

9.8.2.2.1 African people are strongly influenced by the concept of *ubuntu*.

9.8.2.2.2 African people are human through, with and in association with other people.

9.8.2.2.3 African people are horizontally linked with other people and vertically with the ancestors.

9.8.2.2.4 The concept of *ubuntu* greatly influences the African way of worship.

9.8.3 Rites of passage

As has been explained, the concept of *botho* not only underpins the staying together of family groups but it is even inculcated into initiands during the time of initiation. Initiation is very common especially among the South Sotho and the Xhosa. Certain Batswana in the rural areas also still practice this but it occurs very rarely if at all in the urban areas. According to Setiloane (1975:37) during the initiation all the initiands are grouped together: children of chiefs and commoners, of rich and poor. There is no differentiation. Their faces are covered with masks of grass and reeds and their bodies all daubed with white ochre. It is difficult then to distinguish them as they are mostly of the same age and sometimes they have the same body structure. They are all covered with a shroud of sameness and will continue thereafter to share, each and all, in the blame and the shame, the joy and the glory of any of their group. The

aim is that of common adulthood. A good human being is one who promotes the well-being of his or her own society. The *mophato* (initiation) does not teach the initiands only the joys of close fellowship in hardships but also that of responsibility to others without which the community is impossible. A man and woman have to learn that freedom is impossible outside the close necessity of the group.

The system of teaching is that of repetition in the form of stories -- song and dance are further useful instruments of instruction. The format of teaching is mostly in the negative "do not". This is an opportunity for the elderly to transmit the teaching of the fathers and ancestors. The new generation has to know its roots. There is also satire used in music. This is employed to draw attention to anti-social tendencies in behaviour (Setiloane, 1975:40-41). This song can be used to demonstrate "*ntho ena ke masawana, tsa ba bang di a patwa tsa rona di a pepeswa, ke masawana ntho ena ke masawana*". A free translation of this would be "this thing is unfair, our secrets are exposed but that of others are hidden, this is totally unfair". It is often sung in the form of two groups, one mentioning an issue and the other one responding. Boys will only be regarded as men after the *mophato* and girls as women after their *bogwera*. This will grant them dignity in society.

9.8.3.1 Conclusion

Initiation is an essential process which the African has to go through. Here is where he or she learns about himself or herself and his or her descent. S/he is taught how to behave in society and all that is related to the goodwill of the society and his/her own wellbeing as well as that of the family he/her will have. After initiation one would be ripe for marrying at any time and for engaging in relationships with the opposite sex.

9.8.3.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives.

9.8.3.2.1 Initiation is a process that leads the African through a stage of growth.

9.8.3.2.2 Initiation also opens life doors to the African.

9.8.3.2.3 Equality in treatment is a respected concept among Africans.

9.8.3.2.4 Sharing among African people is part of their being.

9.8.3.2.5 Music and poetry play an essential role.

9.8.4 Worship of God and veneration of the ancestors

This part of the study is the crux of the whole section. As Thorpe (1991:1) reasons, the ATR is closely interwoven with the African culture. Religion and culture are actually two sides of the same coin. If one wants to know about the African people it would be better to begin with an inquiry into the religious aspect of the traditional African. The African religion is a primal religion. It came into existence independently in isolated areas and has no immediately apparent historical relationship to other religions. It has no sacred writings but is orally passed on from one generation to another. It has no specific founders. It has great tolerance and flexibility. It also forms an integral part of life in primal cultures. Many missionaries failed to understand it as such and thought that the people with whom they came into contact had no religion.

Thorpe (1991:108) states that with regard to the concept of God there are a number of extant views and explanations. To mention a few: some people see the ATR (African Traditional Religion) as monotheistic, others see it as polytheistic and others see it as pantheistic. These terminologies are simply used here to describe the differences. It should be noted that they are non-existent in the African vocabulary. People with a monotheistic theology recognise only one God as Creator *ex nihilo*, the Sustainer of everything that has being or existence. Many Africans give greater emphasis on lesser gods and/or spirits and this makes them polytheistic and in some instances pantheistic. For example when they plant trees, one growing high is referred to as the grandfather who passed away and one that does not grow well as the grandmother. The polytheistic and pantheistic African carries the concept of a *deus otiosus* or *deus remotus*. Nonetheless one fact remains: no matter how and what their particular religion all African people believe in a Supreme Being, with one or more names describing him in terms of his activities or characteristics. The ATR incorporates both theism and spiritism in its belief in both a Supreme Being and a general world of spiritual powers. It is for this reason that the worship of God and the veneration of the ancestral spirits are placed under the same heading.

It may be asked why the ATR is still relevant in the 21st century when so many other things have changed even in the African religion and culture. Traditional customs are changing daily due to technology, education, politics and culture and even religion. The fact is, as Gehman (1989:18) states, that even professing “Christians” revert to traditional beliefs and practices during times of crisis, especially death. Superficial customs may change easily with the passage of time but the deep-core worldview beliefs of a people are very persistent.

In the year 2000 I addressed women at their annual conference in a place called Jouberton in Klerksdorp (RSA). The topic was the true meaning of “*solus Christus*”. Attention was drawn to the fact that salvation came only through Christ. But due to the fact that many South African Christians still hold on to ancestral veneration a number of questions were posed. To answer these questions really needed in-depth understanding. One of the women openly confessed that she has been struggling for a number of years. She regularly attended church services. She and her children believed in God and great bad luck befell their family. They had no success in life. Her children were suffering and jobless. They were without a breadwinner since her husband had died. The church was of no help to her and she therefore resorted to an *inyanga* for help. The *inyanga* advised her to sacrifice to the ancestors and all her problems would be solved. So she did and indeed she now lives a prosperous life and her children are now working.

How should one respond to such instances? The temptation is very big even on the side of a minister not to disagree with this and it is not easy to convince such a person that only God can help and that ancestors are helpless people. The question would still be why God only responded to her after she had sacrificed to the ancestors. The argument will also give the impression that God does work through the ancestors. The following kind of logic can be inferred from this situation:

- a. The woman and her family suffered and struggled desperately.
- b. The church was unable to give answers to her problems.
- c. She went for help outside the church.
- d. She was advised to sacrifice to the ancestors.
- e. The ancestors became happy.
- f. They in turn intermediated with God on the behalf of her and her family

g. And thus God answered through the ancestors.

Many people nodded during her argument showing that they believe in some way or another that one has to consult ancestors on a regular basis even if one is a confessional church member. Ancestors are viewed as spirits that have control over the living and their daily activities and as intermediaries between human beings and God. It was clear from this conference that many Christians even up to the present time lack a proper understanding of the manner of their relationships with regard to the ancestors. To look for a solution to this problem one has to make a thorough study of what the Word of God says about ancestral veneration.

Nowhere in the Bible do we read that ancestors should be worshipped or consulted. Moreover, there is no communication with God and the dead. Mourning for and/or honouring a deceased have nothing to do with ancestral veneration.

These are two distinct matters. 1 Sam 28 narrates an incident of Saul who found himself in a desperate situation. Samuel was dead (see 25:1) and the Philistines were camping at Shunem (in the Valley of Jezreel). Saul who was at Gilboa, five miles northwest of Mount Gilboa, was afraid. He had purged out the mediums "necromancers" -- those who communicate with the dead -- and spiritists or soothsayers -- those who contact the spirits (v. 3). And the Lord refused to answer his inquiry for help. He at last resorted to a celebrated medium at nearby Endor who had somehow survived the purge. Disguising himself, Saul made his way at night to Endor, in the Valley of Jezreel just north of Mount Moreh. After putting her at ease, Saul asked the medium to contact Samuel. Drawing on the demonic powers of necromancy she called up the apparition of Samuel. Deut 18:10-11 and Lev 19:31 attack the practice of consulting the dead (necromancy). Saul upheld such laws. It was a sign of his desperation that he consulted a medium and that he had to go as far north as Endor because of influence from the secularistic and materialistic world, a journey to the far side of the Philistine camp.

The biblical author here is not concerned either to attack or to ridicule the practice of necromancy; he is simply intending to portray Saul's desperation and Yahweh's firm decisions. Whether God allowed Samuel himself to reappear or whether some spirit

took the form of Samuel, the fact was that as far as Saul was concerned, he saw Samuel and he heard the voice of Samuel. This voice repeated and confirmed Yahweh's rejection of Saul and His preference of David. Verse 19 also adds a prediction about the outcome of the battle next day. The intention of this story is to emphasise Saul's hopelessness—and to show how low he had sunk so that even a criminal helped to comfort him. For the woman was a criminal by Saul's own laws. The chapter certainly does not endorse the activities of mediums; God's guidance is never to be obtained from them (Carson, 1994).

In the African context one could equate this to a situation of consulting a *sangoma/inyanga* to inquire from the dead. In a situation of hardship and desperation a typical African will immediately resort to the *sangoma* for divination. He will suspect that bad luck befell them because of disrespect for and unhappiness among the ancestors. Gehman (1989:17) mentions that when the ancestors are unhappy their spirits return to haunt the living. Their spirits become a menace to the living and they thus cause sickness and death among the living.

The Bible discourages consultation of dead. In the first place Saul purged all the necromancers and the spiritists and in the second place, having heard of the woman who escaped the purge, approached her by night in disguise to call upon the spirit of Samuel. She was so startled by Samuel's appearance that she immediately realised that the work was of God and not herself and that her disguised nocturnal visitor was King Saul. This implies that she did not really expect to raise up Samuel but only a satanic imitation of him. When she described the vision as a spirit ("mighty one") and as an old man clad in a robe Saul knew it was Samuel. That Samuel's appearance, even in visionary form, was not the expected result clearly teaches that necromancers or mediums have no real power over the deceased, especially the righteous, but that they can only produce counterfeits. Samuel's appearance here is explained by the intervention of the Lord who graciously permitted Saul one last encounter with the prophet whom he had first sought so long ago in pursuit of his father's lost donkeys (1 Sam 9:6-9) (Walvoord 1985).

A distinction should be made between showing honour and respect to those who have passed away and worshipping them. One should interpret the worship of the

typical African through the eyes of the ATR. It should be distinguished between showing honour and respect to those who have passed away and worshipping them. One should interpret the worship of the typical African through the eyes of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Kgatla (1995:127) states that every activity of the African, both individual and communal, has some religious significance. Religion has something that accompanies everyone from birth to death. There are no irreligious people in the traditional community. Hence, one can reason that it is difficult to separate some of the cultural activities from the religious activities due to the fact that there is no clear distinction.

It is also very important to give a traditional view of God among the Sotho and the Nguni as well as a glimpse on the worship of the ancestors here. It should be noted that different names for God are used among these groups. The Sotho speak of *Modimo*, the Xhosa of *Thixo* and the Zulu of *Nkulunkulu* (the Great Great one) (Dupre, 1975:70). The Sotho refers to the ancestors as *badimo* and the Nguni refer to them as *amadlozi*. The same honour and regard is given both to God and the ancestors.

Akrong (2001:20) argues that the African cultural context operates with a worldview that excludes the mechanical rationalism of the modern Newtonian cosmology. African Christianity is still influenced by the worldview that believes in the reality of the spiritual dimension and its participation and influence on everyday life. The African oscillates spiritual agency in almost everything they do in their daily life. The function of the religion is to find ways to fight against evil forces and to deal with the threats that challenge the African thought. Pastors have to be aware of the fact that African Christians have a need for spiritual protection. The local culture cannot be separated from Christian insight.

Nyirongo (1997:51) states that there is strong belief among many Africans that God is so awesome that human beings are unworthy of approaching him directly. His needs have then to be presented through intermediaries and in like manner they worship him through intermediaries. Some of these intermediaries are believed to be so powerful that they can act independently of God. Thus one must constantly guard against their evil malice in case of anger. It is thus clear that these spirits do not

always have to contact God, as they have resources and power. They, unlike God, can disappoint people. With regard to God, M'Timkulu (1977:15) states that for the African, God is mainly interested in two aspects of life, the concept of *ubuntu* and the coherence of society. Sin for the African in this context becomes then a breaking of this relationship. Breaking this relationship is viewed as ceasing to remain human because the victim has denied himself or herself all the qualities of *ubuntu* and has disrupted society. A human being in this way also loses his or her sacred quality.

Because of the fact that God is remote and afar humans thus have to serve God through the ancestors. The ancestors are loved and feared, depending on the circumstances of the individual or the tribe. This relationship has an accompanying substitution of ancestor worship for the cult of the creator god. This substitution of the "highest being" with its symbolisation can also be noticed in the identification of god and the dead. This happens when the spirit of the deceased is summoned by the name of god, for example by employing the word *badimo* as the plural for god (the equivalent is *mulungu* in the case of eastern Africa).

The concept of life after death is an essential concept in the African mind. The ancestors are not dead people but people in a higher rank of life; people who live in another world. Both Dupre (1975:71) and Zahan (1979) agree that the African religion accommodates the idea of reincarnation. This is so especially with regard to the continuation of life after death. The African regards the ancestors as being among them. They are present during graduation ceremonies, during parties and in different occasions and they are mentioned and summoned to be witnesses.

One has to mention here that the concept of reincarnation among African people is not common. Perhaps one may speak of animism. To say that the ancestors are present is true but not in the form of other people or something else. I therefore disagree with Dupre and Zahan that the ATR accommodates reincarnation.

Van der Walt (2003:65) has the following construction of the ATR view of the Supreme Being or Creator God (not the Biblical God):

- He created but does not sustain.
- He is not worshiped but used.

- He is approached in prayer only after the failure of other intermediaries.
- He has no close relationship with the people.
- He does not reveal himself like the God of the Bible.
- He does not provide people with laws on how to be worshipped.
- He does not regard humans as accountable to him.
- He does not show love towards humans.
- He does not ask for love from humans.
- He does not demand a faithful relationship of trust from humans.
- He does not demand gratitude for anything. He is served through the ancestors.

Thorpe (1991:113) argues that just as a chief is not approached directly without due courtesy, so petitions to god should be directed through proper channels – neither casually nor without proper consideration. The ancestors are viewed as closer to god and live in a realm of spiritual realities. People have an ambivalent attitude towards ancestors. At the same time they love and fear them depending on the circumstances. They are generally expected to be protective and beneficent even if they were not like that in their earthly lives.

Concerning the intermediaries, Nyirongo (1997:52) states that there are different types ranging from higher deities to ordinary spirits and ancestral spirits. In the visible world we may also include kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine men, witch doctors, diviners and mediums. The belief is also that only good spirits or people qualify as intermediaries. The emphasis is on the good human beings do while they are still alive. The deceased must also have received full funeral rites because it is at the burial ceremony that the deceased is transformed from an ordinary person to a potent spirit able to bestow favours on those he leaves behind. Nyirongo's argument is correct because personal experience shows that frequently you will hear people saying at funeral services: "greet those who have preceded us in the journey" or "pray for us where you go" or "communicate on our behalf with God to help us". Without a funeral service the spirit of the deceased is believed to become a harmful ghost. The third qualification is that the candidate must have reached long life or ripe age. Children or young people do not receive that status of becoming ancestors.

One may ask what happens with someone when he/she dies. Lk 16:22 tells us that when the poor man died he was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the Feast in heaven. To show that the dead do not have contact with the living we also read that the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth to go and warn the living. However Abraham responded that the people living have Moses and the Prophets (the Word of God) with them and they should be obedient to the Word. The OT emphasises this fact in Ecc 9:5 where it clearly states: "yes, the living know they are going to die, but the dead know nothing". Christ says in Jh 9:4 that as long as it is day He must do the work of the One who sent him, for night is coming when no one will be able to work. It is clear from this that deceased people do not become *badimo* "ancestors/gods". Instead we read in Rev 14:13: "happy are those who from now on die in the service of the Lord. Yes, indeed, they will enjoy rest from their hard work because the result of their service goes with them". In Is 57:1-2 we read that when good people die no calamity can hurt them, they find peace and rest in death. Death for a Christian is like a waiting room. All work on earth is complete. They do not carry any responsibilities over the living. They -- together with us -- eagerly wait for the day of judgement. Heb 11:39-40 states that all the people who made a good record on earth have not yet received what God had promised them. God had decided on an even better plan for them: these people should get their rewards in our company.

Exegesis of 1 Sam 28 makes it clear that these people are not truly communicating with the living. Rather it is simply a case of some evil spirits that act in disguise of the real deceased. God does not use the departed to proclaim His message. Instead He makes use of the living. To think that God is helped by dead people who are referred to as gods is actually to despise God and to make him incapable to work without such people.

The same can be said about the veneration of the saints. In his antidote to Article 13 which is about the veneration of the saints Calvin (1998b) states in his Institutes that no other veneration of saints is recommended to us in Scripture but that which is universally due to believers, in accordance with Ps 15 and Ps 139. It is to be rendered to them according to the measure of grace that they receive. Calvin states here that saints may in proportion to their different divine gifts we have to honour them. But to render worship to them is profane superstition, and savours more of the

madness of the Gentiles than of what becomes the Church of God. This is plainly repugnant to the precept, "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only" (Deut 6:13; Mt 4:10.)

What then about the gifts to the ancestors *mpho ya badimo*? What usually happens in the African context is that many people resort to slaughtering for the departed. They make offerings in order to appease the departed and perhaps in such a way gain their favour. Paul says in 1 Cor 10:20 with regard to such activities that sacrifices that are offered on pagan altars are offered to demons, not to God. Christians are not encouraged to be partners with demons. One cannot eat at the Lord's Table and also the table of the demons. And one cannot drink from the Lord's cup and also the cup of the demons. This is to make God jealous and no one can stand his anger (1 Cor 10:21-22).

9.8.4.1 Conclusion

The ATR is a primal religion, orally transmitted. There is a great link between culture and religion. Religion can be said to be in-built in one's culture to the extent that not practising a certain aspect of the culture would be like having trespassed against god and the ancestors. The god served by the traditional African is almost like the Greek/Roman god whom one has to serve for the sake of getting a favour from him (*do ut des* "I give that he may give"). However there is much flexibility and tolerance the ATR. Worship can be done through the ancestors. The ancestors can on their own respond negatively or positively without even first contacting god. It is clear from the Bible that ancestors cannot be worshipped. They cannot even be a gateway between humans and God. God is served only through his Son Jesus Christ.

9.8.4.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives

9.8.4.2.1 The ATR is a primal religion

9.8.4.2.2 The ATR is an orally transmitted religion that is flexible and tolerant.

9.8.4.2.3 The ATR is an integral part of life in primal religions.

9.8.4.2.4 The ATR can be monotheistic, pantheistic and polytheistic.

9.8.4.2.5 The god of the ATR created but does not sustain creation.

9.8.4.2.6 The god of the ATR is not worshipped but used

- 9.8.4.2.7 The god of the ATR is approached in prayer only after failure of other intermediaries.
- 9.8.4.2.8 The god of the ATR does not demand love and does not give laws on how to be worshipped hence the notable tolerance and the flexibility in this kind of religion.
- 9.8.4.2.9 The deities differ from higher deities ordinary spirits and ancestral spirits.
- 9.8.4.2.10 In the visible world we have as mediators kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine men, witch doctors, diviners and mediums.
- 9.8.4.2.11 Only good spirits or people qualify as intermediaries and the deceased must have received full funeral rites.
- 9.8.4.2.12 The ancestral spirits need to be satisfied through sacrifices and prayers.

Contrary to these principles the Bible teaches that the Christian God is a God of love. He is directly worshipped through his Son, Jesus Christ. He is a very jealous God who does not tolerate any idolatry whatsoever. He demands sole worship. Moreover He does not make use of ancestors to communicate on behalf of humans. He created, sustains and deals with his children on daily basis. He is ever present and ever involved in the life of a human being and takes responsibility for his creation. Humans can only truly understand him by his revelation unto them. We can only know God in as far as He reveals himself unto us and not more. He talks through creation, his written Word and his incarnated Word.

9.8.5 Music and dancing

African music plays a great role in their daily life – from a cradle to the grave, in joy or love and sorrow, in work or in battle. All actions of daily life among the African are intermingled in the wide range of African art which is richly represented in music, dancing, and folk tales. This is indeed a special African natural gift. Music is found in the traditional worship of the African and accompanies rituals and ceremonies. Music and religion are very closely connected. Music is further also efficient to express the religious belief and feeling of the African (Eriyo, 1987:181).

Music provides a very personal, deeply emotional and articulated means of expression, individualised to different cultures. It differs in accordance with different eras in history and different geographical spaces. It forms an integral part of the solemn liturgy. It is mostly through singing that the Gospel and culture meet. Therefore – if one truly wants to start with inculturation – the writing of hymns and songs is the starting place (Steenbrink, 1991:7).

Due to the relationship between music and religion, African music is very liturgical in character. Hence liturgical music forms an integral part of the worship service liturgy and is not merely like icing on a cake. Singing should thus not be used simply for its own sake. It should have meaning at a particular point in the liturgy. As Kealy (1972:141) puts it: if music is not equal in value to the quality of the silence it is breaking, it is better not to sing at all. It must have an enriching effect else it can as well be omitted. Nevertheless one wonders if the same can be said about the music in most of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. A certain Karl Gustav Fellerer as quoted by Joncas (2001:306) states the following: *Church music was considered as an ornament of worship, and a means for providing artistic display; no longer was it looked upon as a liturgical unit. The notion that church music is an integral part of the liturgy was lost... No longer was the liturgical action itself the focal point; instead it was man, and music was conceived of in terms of its effects on man, and in reference to man's taste....*

This describes the general attitude found among most worshippers even in the Reformed tradition. It is all about good music. If the music is not according to their liking, the church service becomes described as boring. Some even believe that the sermon is not truly inspired if the music is not good, because music is viewed to have an influence on the preacher. Unlike the Reformed Churches in Synod GKSA which concentrate more on the rational (content) aspect of music, the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands put more emphasis on the subjective and the emotional effect that music has on them.

African music in most instances is accompanied by body movement and dancing. Without music, dancing and instruments, De Klerk (2001:293) states that the African liturgy is as good as dead. Emotions should be expressed. Dancing does not only express joy but also pain in serious crisis moments and prosperity. Music accompanied by dance is in most instances an expression of emotions and experience. Dancing can also take the form of aesthetic performance and so can the music. In order for the dancing and the music in the church not to only turn into aesthetic performance it is essential that they have to be oriented toward communal prayer and praise and made responsive to the word and sacrament. In this way congregational music can be integral to a blessed life and provide a foretaste of heavenly bliss. This can contribute to *shalom* or the “*peace which at its highest is enjoyment of living before God, with one’s neighbours and in nature*” (see Brown, 2001:344).

The music introduced to the African by the Westerners was clothed in a non-African skin. This music was alien to the African culture. Steenbrink (1991:11) argues that most lyrics originated from the first generation of converts and were composed by lay preachers and lay people. The training of the pastors emphasised western music for use in the liturgy. The rejection of the African music in liturgy was not only founded on religious motives alone but also political factors. As Eriyo (1987:183) states, this music was viewed as primitive, savage or pagan and in this way African music was doomed to die out and had no place in Christian worship. The problem is that the (western) religious music that replaced African music was still foreign to them despite the fact that they sing it with enthusiasm and perhaps even better than when they were introduced to them. Many of these songs remain foreign to their own religious beliefs and feelings. It is in a sense artificial.

According to Leach (1999:12) many songs are designed primarily to work on the emotional level. Since there is no logical theological content these songs are doomed to a short life. They cannot truly stand the test of time. Many of them are hardly published because they will die before the music alongside them begins to age. This is one of the reasons why popular songs which are sung in society are preferred above the known hymns that have been sung for ages in the churches. However the

problem with the popular music is “easy come and easy go”. What is needed is still a firm foundation; music that is typically religiously African and introduced to the people in training sessions.

Eriyo (1987:185) also states that the African people have many polyphonic songs, some of which are poor in content and in musical composition but have been accepted and spread all over South Africa. He makes mention of the following obstacles and handicaps that stand out: some of the musicians lack adequate and proper musical formation and training and other musicians show a severe lack of liturgical, theological and pastoral formation. The result is that such music gives to the congregation empty words or a “poor sermon”. A beautiful hymn well understood and lived has the value of a good sermon. Once the liturgical text is given proper priority, the music becomes an explicit confession of faith and not a mere polyphonic performance.

Taylor (1987:311) states that the function of the music is ministerial: it must serve and not dominate. The service must not appear to be a service of continuous singing. It appears in many congregations at present that singing is used in the place of reflection. During the distribution of the Holy Communion many congregations will sing without ceasing. This singing will continue even after the distribution while eating the bread and drinking the wine. They do not give themselves time to meditate and to remember the death of the Lord.

With regard to singing with instruments the following hint is important: Taylor (1987:313) states that instruments should be used as servants of singing and that they must not dominate. This is especially important because the tendency in many congregations today is instruments that dominate. When they are used with excessive loudness they can destroy the atmosphere of prayer. *“The use of the musical instruments to accompany the singing can act as a support to the voices, render participation easier, and achieve a deeper union in the assembly. However, their sound should not so overwhelm the voices that it is difficult to make out the text...”* Taylor (1987:313).

On the other hand using the chant melody is not a tendency among the African members of the Reformed Church in Synod Midlands. As Brown (2001:245) states chants is more for self-effacing. One can readily contemplate or pray through chant rather than only listening to someone else praying. It offers little opportunity for virtuoso display. The tunes of the music largely determine people's interest.

There are psalms books translated for the Churches in Synod Midlands in Southern Sotho and Setswana. However these psalms are very scarcely used, one can count the churches where these psalms are sung. Two known churches that make use of them are the Reformed Church Kagiso and the Reformed Church Garankuwa. However they use different tunes from those used. The main problem why these Psalm hymn books are not used in most of the churches is because they are almost direct translations of the Afrikaans Psalm hymn books. In addition they are written in the same tunes that are used for the Afrikaans psalms which are mostly strange to the African ear. It is thus important that the music should be designed to give people back to the people.

The African Christian believers of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands in most congregations still use the *Lifela tsa Sione* as it has been indicated before. The *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook, as Müller (1990:41) states, was originally composed by French missionaries of the Parish Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho. These authors, namely; F. Coillard, E. Casalis, S. and E. Rolland, T. Arbousset and A. Mabile were reformed people as Müller (1990:41) argues. Their missionary work began in 1833 (Setiloane, 1976:1). One should understand the background of this music within the historical and social context of that era. When the missionaries came to Lesotho the heathendom was still very strong. They did not know anything about Christianity and the saving power of Jesus Christ. Ancestral worship was robust and it was still part of the being of the African.

The teaching or theology of these missionaries is strongly found in their hymns. Hymn 68 "*Lichaba tsohle tsa lefatshe, li tla tla Sione*" (a rhythming of Isaiah 2) is sung against the background of viewing the African Sotho-Tswana people as the Lost tribe of Judah, that somewhat relates to the Arabs. They still have to come back

to Zion, stop fighting and living a peaceful and harmonious life. This song also testifies that these French missionaries had the belief that all are children of Abraham and also believed that there will once again be a re-union in the New Jerusalem and there will no longer be any war again.

Almost all these songs that were used by the missionaries should be understood in the light of their theology. Hymn 323 "*Ke sikilwe ke Jesu*" is a nice way of escapism from the problems of the world. Hymn 342 "*O mohau wa Molimo ke koetsa e kaakang*" should be viewed against the situation of the lost sinners that have been saved from deep darkness, when they were in a hopeless state of death.

Not all these songs are originally from the missionaries. The people from where the missionaries came wrote some of these songs and the work of the missionaries was to do the translations into the languages of the natives. They wrote these hymns under the following rubrics: God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel, the Religion, Death and the Service of the Lord. They are altogether 449 hymns, of which 10 are Psalms, 5 are NT Scriptural songs and the other are general religious hymns and choruses as in the old Hallelujah hymnbook of some of the Afrikaans speaking churches. Despite the fact that the authors and the composers of the hymns were evangelical in tradition, their music was influenced by the music of the seventeenth century. Irrespective of the fact that the *Lifela tsa Sione* was also used in the Dutch Reformed Church in SA, before the use of the *Hosanna*, some hymns are still being used, one cannot deny the fact that the theology of some of these hymns are questionable.

Lekaiakala (2002:7) for instance argues that *lifela* (hymns) (416; 429) have no place in the holy and orderly worship service, although some sects would use them. One should be very hesitant to agree with him, as there are no reasons indicated why he does not find place for them in the holy and orderly worship. Hymns 416 can be questioned, but it also depends upon one's criteria for what you deem as "holy and orderly" for the worship. Hymn 416 is a directly doctrinal and is not a Scriptural hymn in the Reformed understanding of what is Scriptural (this means that the words of the songs should be directly from Scripture though not verbally).

Hymn 416 is rather a prayer for God's light to shine upon the darkened and miserable Africa, which is full of bloodshed, with its people in bondage and full of shame as it was the situation then. The prayer is that this "Star" should shine at every end. The name of Christ appears at the end of the last stanza. The "Star" whose immediate light is hoped for with great eagerness also refers to Christ, as the Bright morning star.

Hymn 429 is very doctrinal. It says: People of all nations are sinners, white and black, people are full of guilt. God placed his law in their hearts, they broke it and exalted themselves against God. They deserve death, eternal punishment. Before the great Lord, no one is righteous. But Jesus appeared, the Son of God, Saviour, and paid for their sins, and in the ransom blood was shed. At the cross, He died with love, to take upon him their guilt and those who believe get saved (own free translation).

It is thus not understandable why this hymn does not deserve to be in *Lifela tsa Sione*. One of the criteria for church music as inferred in Chapter 5 is that every song has to be answerable to the Word of God. It might not be Scriptural in the sense that words are not directly taken from the Bible, but the message and the teaching is Biblical. As mentioned before, the context in which the hymn was written has to be taken into account. Even the Biblical psalms and Scriptural songs have been written within a specific social historical context. People experience God in different times in different ways.

However one can fully agree with Lekalakala (2002:7) when he strongly criticises the continuous empty choruses that are sung in the church and the beautiful melodies that are used in the church without any biblical message. It is like a tradition today that people make use of such choruses to a very large extent in church, at night vigils, at funeral services and even at wedding ceremonies. Due to the fact that they become very common among the members they tend to become part of the liturgical songs.

9.8.5.1 Conclusion

It can be said that Christian western religious music had a theology different from African theology. This music was introduced with its own strange tunes. People learned these tunes but these did not affect their culture. As a result they lived two different lives. They worshipped the African god differently from the Western God. Music would have been the best weapon to fight against the idea that was upheld at that time of a darkened African theology – provided that it also respected the culture. Yet even the way of singing and the tones were used to fight against whatever was African, including African culture.

9.8.5.2 Meta-theoretical principles.

9.8.5.2.1 Music is natural to the African.

9.8.5.2.2 Music is found in the traditional worship of the African and accompanies the ritual and ceremonies.

9.8.5.2.3 Music and religion are very closely connected.

9.8.5.2.4 Music is also efficient to express religious belief and feeling.

9.8.6 Death and Funeral services

There are a number of myths around the concept of death and life among the African but they will however not receive attention in this study, as the basic idea is to analyse what happens during the burial. One can however not truly speak about burial without mention death. The concept one has on death usually determines what one does in situations of death and how the burial takes place.

The reality of death puts everyone to the test. White (1999:130) states that the process of making sense of death is complicated further for twenty-first century people by the fact of living in the midst of a death-denying culture. She says that these people routinely remove the dying from the living and place them in clinical settings and that to think of death as among them is considered “morbid” or “macabre”. Kongocha (2000:40) states that just as there is rejoicing at receiving a new member in a family and clan so one finds different customs surrounding the death and the funerals of a dead member of this family and clan. These different customs are based not only on the culture but also on the faith of the people. It all depends on the people’s beliefs on life and what death entails. With regard to this

one may argue that liturgy thus plays a very essential role. It teaches us the meaning of our death, gives us the words, images and rituals by which we may speak honestly about death and dying and it provides us with the tools to undertake the task of “dying well”.

Modern Christianity has all too often forgotten both hope and fear and refused to think about death as part of the Christian message. Cemeteries are now located out in the suburbs of both our cities and our consciousness. Burial customs have become more commercial. The commercial aspect became even worse because of the tombstones and the private burial plots for ordinary people that were introduced in the 17th century (see White, 1990:291 and Kongocha, 2000:40).

It is important that one takes a small journey into the ATR view of this. Tihagale (2001:1-24) gives a very clear and broad South African perspective of rituals that centre on death and funeral rites as they looked like in the past. He puts almost every aspect in the negative as if nothing among these things is still in use among the Africans. These things are worth mentioning here because they were and in some sense still are the expressions of the Africa understanding about death. This understanding about death also determines the African’s relationship with the ancestors. Tihagale (2001:1-4) among other things mentions the following concerning burial rites in the ATR: burials used to take place at sunset or just the following day. Night vigils precede the burial though not in all places. The deceased used to be buried in a cattle-byre or behind huts. Corpses used to leave the hut while people were walking backwards. In the chapter on the history of funeral services, this tendency of corpses leaving the house with the feet already existed. The idea was that the deceased should get lost and no longer come back.

Tihagale (2001:2-4) also mention the following: the male relatives used to shave their hair and women leave their hair unkempt. Widows used to smear their bodies with soot partly made from the burnt hair of the relatives. Men went for hunting in order to wash the spears to remove the darkness caused by the death of the head of the family. The oldest surviving brother used to practice the OT levirate. Burials used to be conducted in secret so that the witches should not know where the corpse was buried. Graves used to be dug by family members. Family members lined up to throw

soil into the grave. After burial each relative would place a stone on the grave in order to shake hands with the deceased spirit. Personal effects of the deceased used to be buried with him/her or burnt. The assegais and sticks that the men used were broken and buried with him. The deceased used to be wrapped in his/her mat or with the skin of the beast slaughtered for the farewell ceremony. The hut in which the deceased lived used to be set on fire. Fire was the African way of coming to terms with death and the pain of loss.

Despite the fact that Tlhagale views most of these elements as obsolete a number of them are still practised among certain African people. Many of these elements are evident in many funeral services. One practical example is that of the corpses leaving the house with the feet and never with the head so that they may not trace their way back to the house. Family members still shave their hair and undergo other rituals after the funeral. Some still bury certain artefacts with the deceased with the belief that these would be used in the near future of the deceased. In case of a child who dies while having used medication, the bottles with medicine will be put into the grave with the corpse or placed above the grave. The washing of the spades is still a practice at smaller places where the municipality is not helping with the digging of the graves. From this it is clear that some African people still have a great fear of death. Death is an enemy that separates people from their beloved. Many of the poems collectively called *kodi ya malla* are indications of the African-Christian understanding of death. In many of these poems words like these are evident: "Death, you merciless one, you separate us from the ones we love. Oh, who would be there for me, the breadwinner is gone. If it were possible, I would have destroyed you death. I hate you...". Sometimes one asks what effect the gospel has on the understanding of people about death. The truth remains that many people still fear death and they are not sure of their destiny when they die.

Experience and the practical situation of this period have proven that burials have assumed a different pattern. A few things that have been noticed by the researcher in his experience in the ministry are highlighted here. It is true that funerals are used for commercial purposes. Many people attend funerals to advertise themselves. They buy new clothes for such an occasion because they want to appear different among people. The family buys expensive coffins and very expensive tombstones to impress

the people who attend the service. The other problem encountered is that expensive meals are prepared for the people who attend the service. The result of all this is that many people go without food after the burial. They have to pay the debts they accrued and the children who remain behind suffer the consequences. People are not buried immediately: at times they stay for up to two weeks waiting for family members who are working at faraway places. The nearby families are in many instances not in the position of making final decisions since they have to wait for the other members. The longer the corpse remains in the mortuary, the higher the money to be paid especially when the deceased did not belong to specific funeral undertakers.

In the case of death the core belief that remains is that the deceased has to be buried properly or else the spirit will be moving and not find rest. This goes hand in hand with mourning. African people mourn a great deal when someone passes away. The concept of mourning has a very long history as explained in Chapter 6 which deals with the liturgical aspect of funeral services. A relevant pericope that can be quoted about the length of mourning in the Bible is the following: ³⁷ *But she asked her father, "Do this one thing for me. Leave me alone for two months, so that I can go with my friends to wander in the mountains and grieve that I must die a virgin." He told her to go and sent her away for two months. She and her friends went up into the mountains and grieved because she was going to die unmarried and childless.* ³⁹ *After two months she came back to her father. He did what he had promised the Lord, and she died a virgin. This was the origin of the custom in Israel* ⁴⁰ *that the young women would go away for four days every year to grieve for the daughter of Jephthah of Gilead"* Judges 11:37-40.

This example is a description and not a prescription on how mourning should take place. Nevertheless: the problem encountered is that people of different cultures have diverse manners of mourning. Some mourn for a very short time and later on suffer terrible consequences of heart problems due to the fact that they never indeed took proper time to separate with the deceased. Some mourn for too long as if they have no hope of the future resurrection. In some instances mourning is simply a custom and not a matter of the heart. Mourning, according to verse 39 of Judges 11, simply became a custom. It might happen that even people who were not acquainted

with the daughter of Jephthah of Gilead also joined in the annual mourning that used to take place. Such a practice, if applied in the African context, might give rise to other strange practices and beliefs. The mourning might be accompanied with sacrifices and even some veneration of the deceased. The daughter of Jephthah would be asked for blessings or rain. Customs that started in a simple way and out of respect in many cases lead to misplaced veneration, awe and fear.

The congregations also have their own way of comforting of growing grievance. It became tradition among a number of churches to have comforting services during the last week before burial as well as on the last night before the interment. These comforting services are usually short depending on the place and on the different congregations. There is usually a day for the youth, a day for the elders and church members and day for women. The last night before the burial takes the longest. In some instances it ends at midnight and in some others it is like the normal comforting services. In still other cases it takes the whole night.

Attention should be paid to the different forms of these comforting services. It should be noted that no written documentation of these has yet occurred. The youth visits the place of the deceased usually on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. They are from different denominations. If circumstances allow they will meet together, if not they will come at different times to comfort the bereaved families. The women's organisations meet on Thursdays and immediately after their meeting they will also go to the place of the bereaved to bring a message of hope and comfort the family. They will also be from different denominations. These groups would usually do a prayer, Scripture reading and a message of hope by one or two depending on the time available. This further involves singing.

The church members together would usually visit on the days when the youth and women's organisations are not visiting. They will also usually start with a word of prayer, Scripture reading, a message and singing would occur in between. Some of the members available will usually talk to the bereaved and give them words of comfort. With regard to the night vigil it has been indicated that it began because of the fear that people developed during the medieval and seventeenth centuries. People were on their guard so that the deceased should not return or wake up while

they are preparing to bury him or her. It appears to have assumed a Christian character because of the prayers, Scripture readings and singing. There is nowadays many comforting words that have a strengthening effect on the heart of the people present.

Kungocha (2000:46) states that the tradition of night vigils began in the early Church, the rite of funerals began with a *viaticum* and included a night watch during which the Christian community celebrated the Word of God and prayed for the dead brother or sister. Kuypershoek (1996:254) states that the night vigil has a heathen origin. It was influenced by the fact that people believed the spirit of the departed would leave the body and hover near it. It would not leave the body until the grave has been made firm. For this to take place protection through a vigil was called for. This being the case such practices are to be abolished among the African churches, unless of course proper supervision by the minister or the church is done throughout the course of the week. This means that the Church will have to be present daily and would have to give direction on a daily basis to make this a Christian praxis. The only problem with this is that in many cases these gatherings today lack proper liturgical planning and a liturgical minister. Therefore the church has to step in and give the practice the required shape that would lead to a form of celebration that fits within the culture and the belief.

However there are some important issues to look at in order to analyse the relevance of night vigils today. Night vigils have lost their essence to a very large extent. While previously all people gathered in a house, people now gather outside in tents. The people who are being comforted sit in the house and the rest or most of the family members would remain outside the house, busying themselves with other things. The night vigil appears simply to be held to keep them busy. Church members usually comfort themselves and perhaps some of the members who are interested in what people have to say about the deceased. The situation is not pleasing. Hence it would rather be advisable to have a comforting service that would last for an hour or two at most in order to give people enough time for rest after the ups and downs of the day - this is the researcher's point of view and the matter will therefore receive more attention in the empirical part and in section C of this study. It is such a pity that the situation has changed. People no longer care about death. They no longer care

9.8.6.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives

- 9.8.6.2.1 A good and descent funeral service or burial to the African is a sign of respect to the deceased. It partly determines what kind of ancestor the deceased would become but it also shows what relationship the deceased had with the people he or she lived with. Moreover it also functions as a plea from the side of the family to the ancestral spirit to protect them. The concept of ancestral veneration leaves no room for the resurrection.
- 9.8.6.2.2 Funeral services have different customs based not only on the culture, but also on the faith of the people.
- 9.8.6.2.3 Liturgy in death situations teaches us the meaning of our death and it gives us the words, images and rituals by which to speak honestly about death and dying.
- 9.8.6.2.4 Funeral services provide us with the tools to undertake the task of "dying well".
- 9.8.6.2.5 Funeral services are strongly marked by personal life relationships, expectations and religious ways of behaviour that bring people together.
- 9.8.6.2.6 A funeral service brings people together despite the fact that it might not be in common faith as a community of believers.
- 9.8.6.2.7 Funeral services largely became commercialised as well as secularised.

9.8.7 Marriage and Wedding ceremonies

Three kinds of marriages are distinguished by the African. The first is the traditional marriage where one brings together the family of the bridegroom with the family of the groom. After the bridegroom's family has asked for a "*mohope wa metsi*" (water vessel) they would pay *lobola* and in a sense one can say the wedding is over. The second kind of marriage occurs at the magistrate's office. Even in this situation *lobola* would still apply. Almost the same procedure would follow as in the case of the traditional marriage. The only difference is that this marriage will be regarded as legal and would be finalised by the magistrate/commissioner of oath. The third kind is the Church marriage. In addition to what occurs in the other two, the minister would bless the marriage, be it at home or at church. In cases where the minister can act as a marriage officer, the second step of going to the magistrate would not be necessary because the minister may also act as a marriage officer. Each of these marriages

can prevail independently from the others as much as they can complement each other. Traditional marriages are now also viewed as legal.

It is necessary to look at these kinds of marriages to understand how the African people strategise their marriages and how the feastings are celebrated. This part of this study is more on the general knowledge as not much published material exist which specifically concentrate on the African wedding ceremonies.

To be married is very important. This explains why the typical African pattern of marriage is polygamy. Zahan (1979:10) states that celibacy (except in instances of ritual or in cases where people have been deserted by their spouses) is not viewed with any favour in the African context (see Van der Walt, 2003:70). Celibacy is an incomprehensible upsetting of the social and religious order. Sterile people are compared to unproductive earth hence many African people would divorce and remarry if there are no children in the family. If there are no children it is as if life would be extinguished. A bachelor, for instance, is placed in a false human perspective: he is seen as registering his life in linear time and follows a straight path with no possibility of returning as ancestor (this means without marriage, he would not be able to reproduce himself through children). This is where polygamy fits in. Polygamy is a defence against celibacy and sterility. Life has to continue. African culture compares polygamy to a man who digs several wells at different places to be sure of satisfying his thirst.

The procedure that is followed for the traditional marriage and marriage ceremony was the following: when *lobola* has been paid the family of the bride slaughters a cow to welcome the family of the groom and their gifts. There will be a great feast and singing which takes place all through the night, depending on different cultures. Early the next morning the bride will be called aside where she will be instructed by the elderly women how to behave in her married life and how to treat her husband. The lady will then be accompanied by the family members or/and some other women of her age. There will also be a welcoming party at the bridegroom's place. There is no specific ceremony that binds the two because, in fact, immediately after the agreement on the *lobola* and the first part of it being paid, the two are deemed husband and wife already. There is however a ceremony to welcome the woman at

the house of the husband's relatives. They call this "*go gorosa ngwets*" (to welcome the bride). This is a ceremony of welcoming the daughter-in-law by giving her food and making her feel part of the new family. Only the relatives of the bridegroom and those of the bride will attend the ceremony. Part of the slaughtered sheep will be given to the family of the bride when they depart back to their house.

If one looks at the situation and compares it with the civilised ceremonies in the townships the only differences reside in the manner of the organisation of the ceremony. The *lobola* would be paid and after the lobola has been paid the traditional ceremony is over -- leaving the legal and religious aspects. The feasting follows only once these have taken place in public. The other difference is that there is no premarital counselling for the couple who would be married. Problems that therefore need attention in reorganising this ceremony are the present situation of staying together outside marriage which is referred to in Afrikaans as "*vat en sit*" or in Zulu as "*masihlalisane*". The moment an unmarried couple stays together for three years they are deemed married by the state. If the couple already has children, it would be difficult for the church to ask them to separate. Hence, the church will have to do counselling to the couple and advice them to repent of their sin of leaving together as husband and wife even before they are married.

As far as music goes at these ceremonies: usually traditional songs are used that are encouraging to the couple. There is, however, a problem with some of the modern songs that are used at wedding ceremonies. They are more mocking and vulgar than encouraging and constructive. An example of a mocking song is: *mme Maelisa botsa Elisa hore sekolopata sena o na se thola kae, thoteng tsa mawatle *3 se ntse se ja seretse* which means: "Mother Elisa ask Elisa where she got this tortoise? At the seaside eating mud". The bride is referred to as a tortoise who was sitting at the seaside eating mud. There are also vulgar songs that will not be quoted here.

A song like "*fiela, fiela, fiela ngwanana, fiela ngwanana o se jele matlakaleng, mangwane ke seithati seithati sa mosadi, fiela ngwanana o se jele matlakaleng*". "Sweep girl, sweep, and do not eat in the dirt. Your aunt is a woman who loves herself" can be categorised under songs of encouragement and advice.

A third song I would like to quote is this: *"My sorrow, hamba my sorrow *2. Ke nyetse makoti wa dikomo tsa ntate *2. Go away my sorrow, I have married a woman of my father's cows. This song expresses joy and welcomes the new partner in the new family.*

Generally speaking, there is a reconstruction necessary with regard to singing. The Church can play an important role in such a reconstruction. It should not be done away with traditional songs, nevertheless they should have their right place and they should be analysed before they are sung. The mocking or vulgar part should not be accommodated because a wedding ceremony is to bring people together and to rejoice with them. It is to advise, support and to pray for the couple and not to break or embarrass them.

9.8.7.1 Conclusion

African marriage is polygamous. Despite the fact that there might be jealousy among the wives, they all accept each other and they get married to the husband knowing very well of the other wives. It is an honour to be married and to be called with the surname of the husband. Among other things marriage is basically for reproduction. This concept (some of the Church Fathers already had about sexuality) still exists among many African people today. *Lobola* was in fact used to guarantee the birth of children: in case there were no children from a given wife, *lobola* would be demanded back and the wife would be sent back unless the sister of the wife would also become a wife to the husband. African marriage ceremonies are ever-joyful. There are lots of gifts and words of encouragement coming to the newly wedded couple. Different parties are involved in marriage ceremonies.

9.8.7.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives

9.8.7.2.1 African marriages are always accompanied by big ceremonies of joy and gladness.

9.8.7.2.2 The ceremonies always involve different parties. Hence marriage is an issue of the family, church, society as well as the government.

- 9.8.7.2.3 African marriage is polygamous to combat celibacy and sterility and to ensure that there be children to remember you as ancestor when you die.
- 9.8.7.2.4 Marriage is a sign of maturity.
- 9.8.7.2.5 Lobola always accompanies a true African marriage as a symbol of thankfulness to the wife's family.

9.9 Final conclusion

This study has shown so far that there are basic issues acting as essentials in the African culture and the ATR. This is due to the fact that the African people are religious in essence. They always want to do their best to serve God in order to receive favours from them. They stand in such great awe before god that they are even hesitant to worship him directly. The African god is too remote for a merely weak human being to pray to him directly – hence the use of the mediators and spirits. The religiosity of the African should not be separated from the other aspects of his or her life because the African lives in fear of the spirit world. The ancestors are accountable for any wrong in the lives of the African. Whether in a situation of marriage or burial, some rituals have to be followed to remain true to the African belief and not to bring harm upon oneself. It is believed that correct rituals are efficient to solve their problem. Hence for the African it is a matter of ritualism and not liturgy as such.

The concept of fear can be very positive if the African understands his everyday activities as a service to the God of the Bible and thus lives in fear of God. This is what true liturgy is all about: to walk *cum Dei*.

The other issue that plays a positive role is the African concept of *ubuntu* (communalism). This has an influence on every aspect of the African life. The African human's existence is there *out of, because of and for* the rest or the other. It is never independent. Therefore religiosity and *ubuntu* summarise the whole of the African being. A further exploration of these two concepts must therefore contribute much in the formulation of the new praxis envisaged here and in the determination of what is relevant and irrelevant from a Christian perspective. The final meta-theoretical

perspectives will be given at the end of the next chapter once the findings of the empirical study have been rendered. The findings of this chapter will be combined with that of the next chapter (which also ties in with this chapter) to come up with a final result in terms of the relevant and necessary meta-theoretical perspectives.

Chapter 10

10. The empirical aspect of the African worship

10.1 Introduction

The second aspect of the hermeneutical circle as defined by Heitink (1999) is referred to as the operationalisation phase. The operationalisation phase of these qualitative interviews consists of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is based more on psychological than systematic considerations. However care will be taken that the transition from one aspect to the other will remain logical (Van der Ven, 1993:139).

Both Van der Ven (1993:112-114) and Heitink (1999:232) agree that if the researcher wants to acquire deeper insight into the unique character of a specific conviction he or she has to make use of a qualitative interview. The quantitative interview has its limitations because it concentrates mostly on cognitive aspect. The qualitative interview penetrates even the emotional and deeper levels of consciousness.

During the process of data collection, interviewees varied in age and gender. The selection of specific congregations was determined by the fact that differences occur in different congregations. Some congregations differ to a great extent in the way they worship. The difference referred to here, for example, is of a conservative congregation which will strictly adhere to vocal music without any accompaniment during the service itself whereas a liberal congregation will made use of “beats” and “clocks” from the beginning to the end of the worship service. An in-between congregation will have a little of both. The three types of congregations are mentioned with care because there are more elements than just the music that determine the stand of the specific congregation, to mention but a few: the preaching style, the education and the environment.

The idea with the interviews was to determine and evaluate the liturgical experience of the members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands as well as to determine the understanding and interpretation of liturgy of each congregation interviewed. The questionnaire was used mainly as a directive and for the sake of

order and formality. It should be taken into consideration that the interview questions were explained if it happened that someone did not really follow the question. However these were monitored against manipulating the person interviewed to give answers expected by the questioner. All the questions were open so that answers were allowed to be diverse and so that everyone would be free to answer the way he or she deemed fit.

10.2 Work-plan

It has been mentioned in Chapter 1 that four congregations will be visited during the interviews. In each congregation, five members of different categories were interviewed. For the sake of confidentiality and respect to the congregation and the member the names of the congregations and the members remain anonymous. As mentioned in the previous paragraph the objectives with the interviews are to come up with a diverse picture of the liturgical experience of each congregation interviewed and with a picture on how members interpret and understand the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. To achieve these two objectives this chapter will first give the information as gathered from each congregation according to the questions asked. Afterwards the same information would be given but now all the answers to each question would be compiled as from each member irrespective of the congregation from which the answer came from.

10.3 Interviews

Five people were interviewed in each congregation: one woman, one man, one Church Council member, one youth member and the minister.

The following symbols were used for the different categories:

“W” for the woman

“M” for the man

“Y” for the youth

“C” for the Church Council”

“R” for the minister

10.3.1 Interview conducted in one of the congregations in Classis Mangaung

The minister of this congregation was a young and energetic person. He tried by all means to involve his congregation members in different projects in the church. The woman interviewed was more or less in her fifties. She was an old member who had come a long way with the Reformed Churches. The man interviewed was in his late fifties: a religious man who was attending services very regularly. The youth was a young lady in her mid-twenties. She was a member of the RCYM (Reformed Churches Youth Movement). The church council member was a deacon in his early thirties. He was supportive and devoted in church work. For technical reasons, Classis Mangaung will be abbreviated with M1. The abbreviation of the name of the Classis will precede that of the person interviewed. This will help in distinguishing between the different people that were interviewed. The congregation here was largely Sotho speaking and the responses were as follows:

To question 1, which asks what the origin of worship is, M1W responded that worship originates from the Bible. M1M argues that we found it like this. M1Y answers that worship originates from humans. M1C says it is from the leaders in the Bible. M1R says God is the origin of worship.

To question 2 that concerns itself with the role of God in the worship service, the responses are as follows: M1W says that God's role is to change people during the service. God makes people understand the Word and accept it. M1M reasons that God sees us. He is present in the service. So his function is basically to watch over us during the worship service. M1Y says that God meets us during the worship service through his Holy Spirit. He is not present himself. M1C answers that God's role is to help us come to the service and so to strengthen us spiritually. He makes us to be empowered during the service. M1R states that God is present to strengthen and protect us from evil.

Question 3 that asks how God communicates with us during the worship service: M1W holds that God is invisible and does not speak to us. M1M says that God speaks with us through his Word. M1Y says that God speaks with us through the minister, gently and humbly. M1C says that God speaks through the Word proclamation. He speaks through his servants. M1R says through the Word by making use of the preachers.

The response to question 4 that defines the role of Jesus in the worship service is as follows: M1W says Jesus speaks through power and miracles. M1M says Jesus looks over us during the worship service. M1Y says that Jesus merely acts as a spectator during the service. His function is to report back to the Father and tell him how his children behave during the worship service. M1C says that Jesus' function is the same as that of the Father, leading us to the service and guiding us spiritually. M1R says Christ is the Centre of worship. His role is to sit as a King and enjoy the way people worship him.

To question 5 that deals with the role of the Holy Spirit, M1W answers the Holy Spirit changes us. He inspires us and gives us the willingness to serve God. M1M says that God tabernacles in us. M1Y says that the Spirit revives our hearts. M1C says that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Word that is proclaimed as well as the congregants. M1R says the Holy Spirit is there for empowerment.

Question 6 asks why people attend worship services on Sunday and not on the Sabbath. It enjoys the following answers: M1W has no idea about the difference between these issues. She only knows that Sunday is a day of rest. M1M says Saturday is a working day and Sunday is a day of rest. M1Y says she in fact asked herself the same question. Yet she thinks that the reason is that people are working on Saturday and are free on Sunday. Hence Sunday is the right day for worship. M1C says Saturday is a day of rest and Sunday is a day of worship. M1R says Christ resurrected on Sunday hence the day became more relevant and suitable for worship.

Question 7 asks how we participate actively in the worship service. M1W says that our responsibility is to sing, pray, confess and to be purified. M1M says our

responsibility is to pray and become actively involved in all elements. M1Y says our responsibility is to leave the world and to come and pray together at the worship service. M1C says that our task is to praise God and to make requests from him. M1R says the members sing, they listen actively, and welcome God's blessings.

Question 8 concerns the sacraments and receives the following responses. First the issue of the baptism: M1W says we have to baptise because we fear God. Baptism is an anointment and a mark. M1M argues that baptism has the function of making us God's children. M1Y says baptism is only a mark. M1C says that baptism is to add more people to the church and helps us to belong to God.

In terms of the issue of the Holy Communion the following remarks are given: M1W says that the Holy Communion is a remembrance Feast. M1M has no response. M1Y also sees the Holy Communion as a remembrance Feast. M1Y says it teaches us about the work of Jesus, what He did on the cross and his mercy on us. M1C has no response on this. M1R says the sacraments have the function of strengthening and uniting the congregation.

Question 9 deals with the place of the Word with the worship service. M1W says that the Word should only be read and proclaimed after the confession. M1M says that the Word should have the highest place in the liturgy. It must be reflected throughout the liturgy and the rest of the other elements have to be subordinate to the position of the Word. M1Y thinks that the Word should have an equal role with the rest of the other elements in the liturgy. M1C shares the same sentiments with M1Y, that the Word should have an equal role. M1R reasons that the service is non-existent without the proclamation of the Word.

The answers to question 10 that deals with the the role of music during the church service. In response to it M1W holds that music brings warmth and inspiration. M1M says that music plays a positive role. M1Y says that music gives warmth and inspires the congregation to worship God with power. M1C says that music revives the spirit and also prepares the congregation for the sermon. M1R says that music is food for the ear. Through music, God is worshipped with joy. Without music, the worship service would be boring.

The answers to question 11 -- which deals with the influence of culture on church music -- are as follows: M1W says culture has no place in the church or even in the church music. M1M says culture has a very influential role. Liturgy as whole should be cultural in some way. M1Y says culture gives us identity before God and before people. M1C thinks that culture is not good for the church. According to him culture has its own music, which has a unique place in society and not necessarily on the church. As church members we have to remain on track and not deal with things outside the sphere of the church. M1R argues that it helps in making people express themselves clearly before God.

Question 12 deals with the issue of burial. It wants to know why people are buried. M1W says: well, it is because the Word teaches like that. M1M says people should be buried so that they should no longer be seen. M1Y thinks that burial is important because there is also a resurrection. M1C argues that it is not really necessary to bury people. One can as well burn them. It will not make any difference. M1R says people should be buried because it is a biblical principle.

Question 13 inquires what the comfort is that one gets from burying people. M1W says the comfort is from the proclamation of the Word and not from the act of burial. M1M also mentions that the comfort is from the proclamation of the Word. Y argues the comfort is that the person buried is shown respect through burial and that there is peace of mind on the side of the family. M1C states that the comfort is received from the fact the family sees where the grave is and this makes it easy for them if they have to visit the ancestors and for speaking to the dead. M1R holds there is comfort in knowing where the bones of the departed are buried. Joseph in the OT made a request that his body should be laid with that of his father for him to be able to rest in peace. People can always go and clean the graveside and happily think back of the person who is sleeping in the Lord.

Question 14 deals with the importance of celebrating marriage. M1W says that marriage is a blessing and that is the reason for its celebration. People have to enjoy this. M1M says that there should be marriage celebration because God wants people to be happy. M1Y reasons that marriage celebration is merely a matter of tradition. M1C says that marriage celebration is not necessary at all. M1R states that God is

glorified through the celebration of the marriage because that a means through which He is building his Kingdom. It is also a time of celebrating the union.

Question 15 inquires about the role of Christ as a guest in a marriage ceremony. M1W says Christ has to be present to see if all are right. M1M does not see the reason why Christ has to be present at a marriage ceremony. M1Y argues that Christ blesses the marriage when He is present at a celebration. M1C also says that Christ's role is to bless the marriage itself. M1R says the presence of Christ makes the marriage to be pleasant and he prevents and expels evil spirits. Moreover through his presence He blesses the marriage.

10.3.2 Interview conducted in one of the congregations in Classis Tlokwe

Classis Tlokwe was also interviewed. The people who were interviewed varied in age and gender. W had been a member of the Reformed Church since 1987. She had been a chairperson of the Reformed Church Women's Union for the past three years and had been a very active member and executed her responsibilities with diligence. Her age was around 55. M from Classis Tlokwe had been in the Reformed Church for 16 years, serving as a deacon for 4 years and an elder for 2 – at the time of the interview had was an ordinary member aged 35. Y was a young member aged 21. C from Classis Tlokwe is a Tswana, between 20 and 30, born member of the Reformed Church. He was a kind deacon and truly loves the Lord. R was a minister since 1996. From 2000 he became a chaplain but he is now a helping-minister of the specific congregation since 2003. For technical reasons Classis Tlokwe will be abbreviated as T. The following responses on the interviews were received:

To question 1 that deals with the origin of worship TW indicates that it is from people like Abraham. TM says when he came on earth, he found people worshiping. So he cannot say wherefrom worship originates. TY responds that he found worship originating and thus has no idea where it is from. TC says Worship originates from God. TR says worship originates since the beginning with Cain and Abel who brought sacrifices to the Lord. Worship was there during the time of Enos. Moreover in Genesis 11 God scattered the people who wanted to build a tower (a name for

themselves) because He wanted them to worship him only. This is an indication that worship already existed by then.

Question 2 inquires about the role of God in the worship service. In response TW holds the Father is present with us and is giving us strength. TM says the Father is present with us guiding the service. He makes us to think only about him when we are in the service. TY says He is happy and listening. TC reasons the Father is present with us, communicating with us. TR believes the role of the Father is present through his Spirit. We call upon the name of God in the invocation. He thus supervises the whole worship service through his grace and his presence.

Question 3 asks how God communicates in the worship service. TW says that God sends his messengers to come and teach us his Word and thus speaks to us through them. TM says God communicates with us through his Word making use of his servant. TY states through his word through preaching. TC argues He speaks through the Bible making use of his servants. TR says God communicates with us through the Bible when we listen to his word. The atmosphere also indicates that something supernaturally happens. The silence when listening to the minister makes one feel that you are now in the presence of God. This is also evident when the minister is praying. One feels that you are in the presence of God. This also happens when singing the hymns.

Question 4 inquires about the role of Jesus in the worship service. TW reasons that God send him and He in turns now select people and send them to spread his Word. He is in this way present in the service and helps us understand the service. TM says Jesus Christ is send by the Father, so He is happy to attend the service and to fight against the devil for us. Jesus Christ is also the great Messenger. TY says He sanctifies the service, to unite us and to make us one in spirit and in service. TC says Jesus is also present with us. He mediates for us when we pray. TR states that Jesus Christ is to sanctify us through his Spirit. When we pray we know that He is busy interceding for us because He is our Mediator. Thus we are not alone in the worship service.

Question 5 inquires about the role of the Holy Spirit in the worship service – TW argues the work of the Holy Spirit in the worship service is to unite the congregation to make them a family. He brings eagerness, warmth and wisdom in the service. TM says the Holy Spirit strengthens us so that we should understand clearly who and what Jesus Christ is in our lives, and that we may praise God. TY reasons He strengthens and sanctifies us. TC answers that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and works in our minds, hearts and thoughts. TR believes that the work of the Holy Spirit is there to assist us to pray. When we do not know what to pray He is there to assist us in praying. He is our second Advocate and our second Comforter with Jesus Christ. He appears as the representative of Christ.

Question 6 asks why we have to attend worship services on the Sunday and not on Saturday. TR holds that the first day of the week is Sunday. Jesus resurrected on Sunday. Hence for us as Christians it is a day of hope and of glory. John in Rev 1 saw Christ on the day of the Lord. TY says we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. TC states Saturday should be the day of rest, and Sunday we to begin work by calling on the Lord. TM says it is unknown to him. TW says this is only a changing of the days, and in such a way we are mistaking the days.

Question 7 investigates the active participation of members during the worship service. TW reasons that we listen carefully to the Word. We can also pray and we have to have full concentration on the service. In prayer, one can actively involved by listening and making the prayer one's own, and through singing. TM says we listen to the sermon attentively, we pray together, we sing. TY believes that members can be actively involved through singing, listening and through praying. TC argues that we praise God through psalms, hymns. We pray. TR says we sing hymns (all must partake in this, this is not only for the choir), we participate in the Holy Communion. If there is baptism, the congregation chooses specific hymns that go hand in hand with the occasion. The same can be said about weddings, the congregation selects relevant hymns.

Question 8 wants to know the function of the sacraments in the worship service TW argues that one has to encourage people to be involved in the things that pertain to God, and to have a better understanding of them. They give us strength and energy,

new power. The Holy Communion is also there to give us blessings. TM says baptism makes you one of the members of Jesus Christ and the Holy Communion is a remembrance meal to strengthen our bodies. TY states baptism is a sign of repentance symbolising that the member who has been buried also resurrected with Christ and there became a member in heaven. The Holy Communion acts as a remembrance meal indicating that Jesus died for us. TC says the Holy Communion is to remind us about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the baptism is a reminder of the covenant (contract) with God. TR states that the sacraments are the visible signs of the grace and presence of God. Through them, we can remember the death and resurrection of Christ. In this, we remember that we will partake in the sacrament again in the Kingdom of God.

Question 9 deals with the place of the word in the worship service: TW believes that the plays of the Word are to revive the person and opens the mind of the person. TM states that the Word of God gives guidance and direction. The baptism serves as a blessing. TY mentions this is a special time. This is when God is seriously communicating. TC says the Word of God is to lead people to repentance and to comfort the bereaved. TR argues that the Word of God is the central revelation of the presence of God.

In response to question 10 that inquires about the role of music during church services, TW reasons that music is to praise God. TM holds that through music we glorify God and music revives the spirit. TY argues that we pray God through singing, we thank and pray and become through music spiritually empowered. TC says to bring joy to the Lord. TR says that music soothes and comforts the heart of the congregants. Music can act like a sermon if one analyses the words of the hymns. This is especially the case when we sing the Psalms.

Question 11 wants to know the influence of culture on church music. TW states that culture gives us identity so that we are able to serve God in our true being, knowing ourselves properly. TM says we cannot separate what we do from our culture even if this is relating to religion. TY reasons culture inspires the way we sing and behave. TC answers culture revives and strengthens the way we sing. TR says that through culture we become freer in expressing our joy.

In response to question 12 that asks why people have to be buried, TW says when God punished humans in Eden, he wanted humans to be buried in a proper way: "Soil back to soil". TM says that the bones of humans cannot be thrown away. They have to be collected and gathered. Through burial people can come together, even those who were not speaking to one another become friends. TY says he found it like that. They are taken to their place of rest and because according to the African concept, the bones of the dead are not to be eaten by dogs. TC says to show respect to the dead. A person cannot be thrown away like dog. TR says we bury people because Christ also was buried in his grave. It is like sowing seed. When the seed grows new life comes. We as Christians envisage new life after the resurrection.

Question 13 wants to know what comfort one gets from burying people. TW says the comfort comes through prayer. God knows what He is doing. TM says the Word proclamation brings comfort. And one knows that there is a resurrection. TY says the feeling of happiness that the person is safe and the knowledge that the person has been planted like seed and will be resurrected into a new body. If one burns it will become ashes. TC says burial gives rest of mind before it is accompanied by the proclamation of the Word of God that gives hope. TR says that the comfort is that the souls of these people are with God. The same body that has been buried will rise during the day of resurrection and will be united with the soul.

TW answers question 14 – which deals with the importance of celebrating a wedding ceremony – by saying that marriage celebrations are there for expressing the joy. TM says to show joy because wedding is a blessing. TY says two people are being made one since it is so hard to find your soul mate when some people believe they found each other we rejoice. TC says it is not necessary to have a marriage celebration because that is merely to make the invited people enjoy. What is important is that the minister blessed the marriage. TR says that we celebrate marriage because people who are married start a new life as one person; one flesh, one heart and one spirit.

Question 15 asks about the role of Christ as a guest in a marriage ceremony. This means that they are not alone. He was invited in the wedding at Cana. The changing of the water into wine is a representation that Christ changes the life of the couple to become a joyful life. In response to these issues as addressed by this question TW

says that Jesus is ever present; hence He should be present in the celebration to give his full blessing upon the marriage. TM says Jesus is the organiser and the arranger. He strengthens and combines the two through the celebration. TY says He gives the blessings to the couple getting married. TC says Jesus has to be in every situation and place where things have to do with the Father. He should always be there as Mediator. TR says that the role of Christ is to unite this couple and in such a way becomes their Master.

10.3.3 Interview conducted in one of the congregations in Classis Kwathema

The minister of this congregation had been serving this congregation for 26 years (since 23 Jan 1978) at the time of the interview. There was also a woman in her mid-fifties and she had been in the congregation since 1979. She was even helping as a deaconess. This appeared to the author as the first black congregation with a female member in their Church Council. For the purpose of this study she represents the women of this congregation. The next person interviewed was a young boy, aged 16 and doing his Matric. The fourth person was an elder of about 60 years of age and he had belonged in the Reformed Church for more than 20 years. He had served as an elder for more than ten years in this specific congregation. For the purpose of this study he represents the elders of this congregation. M, who represents the men of this congregation, was in his early thirties. He was serving as a deacon. For technical reasons, Kwathema will be abbreviated as "K".

To the first questions KW says it originates from the Bible while KM says worship originated from humans The feeling of worship just happened to come to mankind. KY says from God and KC says from God through Jesus Christ. KR responded that the origin of worship is Jesus Christ and he spread it through his disciples.

To the second question about God's role in worship, KW says God is Spirit. He is watching over us, from his throne. KM states that the role of the Father is to answer and to forgive us during the worship service. KY says God is there, but it depends on our faith, whether we believe or not. KC states that God is in our minds to help us

hear the word. KR reasons that God blesses his services through the Word and the Holy Spirit and he provides with the necessary gifts of the Spirit.

To the third question dealing with the way in which God communicates with us KW reasons that God speaks to us through his Spirit and disciplines us. We hear God through praying Him and through his Word. KM says that He speaks through preachers. KY states that God speaks to us through his deeds. KC has in mind that the minister brings the message of God. Nevertheless, it is not God personally who speaks. KR argues that God speaks to us through his word. We communicate with him through prayer, in the correct manner.

To the fourth question KW says Jesus is also present in the worship service. God gives Jesus the message so that He may teach us the Law. KM simply states that Christ is the living Word of God that became flesh. KY responds that Jesus is there as an example. KC says God's work convinces us of the present of God. (God does not speak to us directly). Jesus Christ blesses and makes sure that all is true. KR says Jesus is present through his Spirit. He is the Head of his Church and He is watching over his flock.

To question 5 (about the role of the Holy Spirit in the worship service) KW responds that the Holy Spirit communicates with us. KM argues the Spirit makes us believe the message and revives our heart. KC states that the Holy Spirit makes people faithful and reliable in all they do. KY reasons that we worship on the first day so that God should bless us for the rest of the day. KR believes that the Holy Spirit empowers the congregation with truth and power. He warms the cold minds and bodies.

To question 6 (as to why we have to attend worship services on the Sunday and not on Saturday) KW says: well, that is how we found matters. KM says it is because we are working with a new calendar system that differs from the ancient one. KY lacked a response to this. KC says that the Reformed Churches have changed the days. KR says that days are not an issue. What is important is to set aside the day of the Lord.

Question 7 investigates the active participation of members during the worship service. Here KW reasons that we can praise God. We sing in addition to giving

thanks and praying. KM states that we can participate actively by listening to the Word, praying and worshipping joyously through singing and through other activities. KY argues that it not about what pleases us. God has to be worshipped. We communicate with God, listen to his Word and sing praises to him. KC says we have to do all that concerns the church. Listen, and obey the message. KR says the congregation has to be involved in different elements, like having special Sundays, on which there can be rendered different items.

Question 8 asks about the function of the sacraments in the worship service. KR says sacraments are there to strengthen the faith and its part of the Church discipline, which reminds us to introspect ourselves and to remember Jesus Christ. KW states that they remind us the blood of Jesus, and the washing away of sins. KM reasons that baptism confirms the second birth and through it we promise that we will raise the children in faith. He further states that the Holy Communion is a proof that we have accepted that Christ has died for us. KY argues that baptism sanctifies us. The function of the Holy Communion is unknown to KY. KC says the sacraments strengthen the church. It also appeared from the discussion that KC does not really know what sacraments are, because he placed them under the same category of the tithing.

To question 9 – on the place of the Word in the worship service – KW answers that The Word is there to build us, to humble us and make us true Christians. KM says the Word is there to clarify the meaning and the interpretation of what God says. KY argues that the role of the Word is to guide and to instruct us. KC reasons to keep one on tract and help him do what is right in the church. KR believes that we cannot speak of service if there is no Word service, because the Word guides, cleans and exhorts us.

Question 10 inquires about the role of music during church services -- KW argues that we praise God through music. KM states that music is there for singing and to praise God. KY holds it that music is to enjoy and express ones faith in a proper manner. KC says that music confirms the whole church activities. This means that music is just a stamp on any activity that takes place in the worship service. KR says Church music has a message. Music has to be chosen in line with text to help in the

flow of the service. Music strengthens the faith and some members get healed through it. Hence, it is important to understand the message (content) of the music when singing or selecting a hymn.

Question 11 wants to know the influence of culture on church music. KR says Church music has a message, KW says we enjoy what we do and do it better through culture. KM only states that culture plays an important role. KY argues that culture is important. It has to do with faith. KC on the other hand states that one cannot separate culture from religion. KR believes that culture exists through God, although it is the human being's word. A lot beautiful things in culture can be used to contribute in music. Moreover, culture teaches one to respect. This implies that cultural religious music, can be respectful religious music. The cultural aspect of respect in music can be applied also in the liturgy, because charity begins at home.

To question 12 which inquires why people have to be buried, KW answers we bury so that the person should meet with God. This is not our culture to burn people. KM argues that the reason for burial is because we know that the person will have to be resurrected again on the last day. KY reasons that burying people grants opportunity to the bereaved to hear a sermon (God's Word). KC says it is traditional to bury people. The whole world will be rotten. KR responds that we believe in the resurrection of the dead. Black African people do not burn people. It might happen in future. At the end of the day, it becomes a family matter.

Question 13 that wants to know what comfort one gets from burying people. KW reasons that the Word of God brings comfort and the people around you. KM argues the comfort one receives in burial is the fact that one can hear the Word of God. KY argues that comfort received is from the fact that the ceremony was proper. KC argues that there is comfort because the departed feels respected and not rejoice in the fact that he/she is thrown away like a dog. The family is also comforted because they know that the departed is buried properly. KR states that we have the assurance that we will see this person again and the fact that he is buried strengthens the concept and knowledge that surely he/she will be resurrected. Jesus died, was buried and resurrected again. This is the basis of our faith.

To question 14 that deals with the importance of celebrating a wedding ceremony, KW replies that marriage is from God and we have to enjoy it. KM responds that the celebration is an indication that people are thanking the Lord for joining them together. KY answers that the celebration is there because the wedding is accepted. KC reasons that marriage celebration is a moment of joy. KR believes that marriage is between two parties. It is a family, and societal issue. Celebration is necessary for the sake of blessing. This is an event that has to be remembered and that should always be celebrated. Celebration is a moment to share the joy of the gift from God.

To question 15 that enquires about the role of Christ as a quest in a marriage ceremony KW responds that Jesus Christ brings uncountable blessings. KM argues that Christ is there to strengthen the marriage, and inspire the couple and the attendants to trust in him always in all respects of marriage. KY answers that Jesus is not present during at the celebration. KC says Jesus blesses the marriage even at the celebration. KR says that life without the Light is darkness. Without his presence, there cannot be any blessing. If Christ is present, there is no want. He fills every need.

10.3.4 Interview conducted in one of the congregations of Classis Moroka

R of this congregation was 36 years of age and had been a minister for seven years in this congregation, which was also his first congregation – the one in which he had been ordained. M of this congregation was seventy-four years of age, born on the 22nd of September and had been a member of the Reformed Churches for more or less 15 years -- for all those years he had been an elder. Y was a young lady who had joined the Reformed Church 1999. She helped with the Catechetical classes and was also a member of the finance committee. She was twenty-four years of age. C was 34 years or age and had been born a member of the Reformed Church. He had been ordained as an elder 2003. W was a woman who started with the Reformed Church in the early sixties. She was still an active member who believed that one's life was dependent on worshipping. She had just celebrated her 79th year the day before the interview and she still appeared strong and active. She was also a wife of

a late minister who had served in the Gauteng region. For technical reasons Classis Moroka will be abbreviated "M"

What is the origin of worship? MW says that God began with worship. MM says that his parents introduced him to worshipping God and he visited quite a number of churches while still young and at the age of eighteen decided to leave the church. I just realised that I have to worship God. This is important because it is the purpose of life. Worshipping God is the last option that truly gives satisfaction in life. MY answers that because all are created by God and the Bible emphasising that we have to worship God, despite the fact that we only serve God on Sundays only. MC responded that worship began in the Bible when God made covenant with Abraham and the Israelites. We continued with this. He gave us his commands. MR says that God is the origin and source of worship.

What is the role of God in the worship service? MW responds that He gives us his Holy Spirit and builds us. MM reasons that God is listening. Everyone has his own mind and God assesses the mind of each. He is there to fully exam the worship service. If the mind and intention of worship is not truly for God, He becomes aware of that, and He does not delight in such worship. He rejoices in true worship. MY states that, from the creation, one could not truly separate the work of the Trinity. However, God is protecting or looking after the service like "a hen gathering her chickens". God also instructs the Holy Spirit to inspire people to accept his Word and in this way serve him. MC responds that He is present because He promised that if two or three meets in his name, He would be present among them. MR says God is the centre of the worship service. He speaks to his children.

How does God communicate in a worship service? MW answers that God speaks with us by giving us his ambassadors who in turn edifies us. MM responds that there is always a possibility that one might be in the church but the spirit outside and in such a way one cannot hear the voice. If the person is available in all aspects, you get inspired. This is something that brings you close to God and in this way, one then discovers that God was truly present at Church. MY holds that the minute the minister speaks, he is influenced by the Holy Spirit and the message that God wants to pass through to us, comes thus through the his mouth. The message is thus God's

word. MC reasons that He speaks with us through his word making use of the ministers as his mouthpiece. MR says God makes use of the preacher to communicate with us.

What is the role of Jesus Christ in a worship service? MW says Jesus as the Son of God is sent by the Father to execute the tasks that the Father has sent him for. He also has the task of edifying us. MM responds that Jesus should be seen as the balance. He encourages those who are getting lost so that they should not become discouraged but should keep faith and follow God. MY answers that if one remembers that Jesus was sent for our sins, we will understand clearly that the role of Jesus Christ is thus to ensure that we that understand the minister to speak through the Holy Spirit. MC responds that Jesus is our salvation. He reconciles us with God. MR says that Jesus is present in the service as the living Word of God.

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in a worship service? MW reasons the Holy Spirit's function is to strengthen us. MM argues that the Holy Spirit's function is to assure us of the fact that the Father and Son is there. The Holy Spirit helps us depart from the evil ways and cleans us from them. He is there to inspire us, to show us the right way. MY reasons that He ensures that our souls become tame enough to be able to accept the Word. If the Holy Spirit is present, the mind gets open and one understands. MC responds that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and strengthens us. He strengthened the disciples when He descended upon them so that they should be able to preach well without any fear. MR says the Holy Spirit prepares and illuminates our minds to understand the message.

Why do we have to attend worship services on Sundays and not on the Sabbath/Saturday? MW says God gave us his commands, which we have to respect. MM argues, "days, months and years are difficulties to us. So one cannot say that Sunday is not right for service. For my seventy-four years of age, I realised that Sunday was the day for worship. I only learnt at a later stage that we had to attend on Sabbath, but those people cannot convince me now at this age. We must accept that minds work differently as the centre is important". MY answers that Jesus healed someone on a Sabbath. In the NT, the OT things that God decided upon as matters to be obeyed, has been cancelled to suit the situation, Therefore, whether one

worships on Sunday or Monday it does not matter, but as long as we serve God. MY remembered that this day has to do with one of the works of Jesus. MC responds, "This is an issue of faith". MR says Christ resurrected on Sunday. Hence, it was important that the day had to be changed in honour of Christ.

How do we participate actively in a worship service? MW responds one can teach the youth to become active and even encourage the women in singing by singing yourself. MM answers one has to prepare oneself for the meeting with those who pray with and pray for the self and the others. MY reasons that you have to prepare your mind and soul before service in order to concentrate attentively before you can participate in anything during the worship service. In a way you show that you are listening attentively. This will help one to respond correctly to the Holy Spirit. One will have to reciprocate at the end what you have heard. MC says, sing with the choir, contribute, active listening to the Word of God. This can make the church to be alive and show that everyone is partaking. MR had a long response on this. He argues the members actively have to accept the blessing from God. God bestows his people with blessings, but people have to be aware of that. They can boldly confess with their mouths and heart that Jesus is Lord. They sing praises to the Lord. During prayer they actively listen and make it part of themselves.

What is the function of the sacraments in the worship service? MW says one has to prepare oneself for the Holy Communion. The function of the Holy Communion is to make us remember the body and the blood of Jesus Christ and one always has to remember that this is holy. Baptism is also holy. Even Jesus was baptised, hence children have to be baptised to show that they are Christians. MM argues that in every Church, the Holy Communion is very important, to such an extent that every person wants to participate in that. One feels that God is speaking directly to you during the Holy Communion. This is thus an inspiration. In the Catholic and Anglican Churches, the Holy Communion was regular. In other Churches, only the minister drinks the wine. One would only eat bread and not even have a smell of the wine. MY states that the baptism is a confirmation that the child who is baptised will grow in the Church and the parents have to take responsibility to see to it that this child does grow in the church. The Holy Communion serves as a remembrance Feast, to help us focus on the cross. MC reasons, "the sacrament of baptism is a covenant between

God and us and the Holy Communion is a remembrance Feast of what Christ did and to revive our spirits to this activity". MR says the sacrament supplement the ministry of the Word.

What is the place of the Word within the worship service? MW states that the function of the Word is to edify the Christian and teach him/her the way he has to live and to serve God and his church. MM reasons that the Word of God binds people who are of the congregation in love and peace. This love extends even to the outside people. MY responds that the Word is basically there to prepare the mind so that one should remember that one is a Christian at home and at work and also to ensure that one has to know his/her responsibility towards God. The word is also there to feed the spirit. MC holds that the Word teaches, exhorts and leads to repentance. The Words also has the function to warn/admonish. MR holds that everything in the liturgy is around and about the Word.

What should the role of music be during the church services? MW says music is there to praise the Lord God. MM says music comforts and inspires. Music is beautiful and brings heaven closer to you. If one should happen to die at that stage you will go straight to heaven. He further sees music like the spices for the Word. MY holds that music acts like a rubber stamp to the Word. Music helps one to understand the sermon better. Music is like the dessert after the food (Word). MC argues that we glorify God through music. One becomes spiritually revives if one sings relevant hymns in accordance with the situation. MR believes that without any music in the church, the whole service is boring. However, the ultimate goal of the music should be glorify God.

What influence does culture have on music? MW argues that culture should be present but only to a certain extent. One should always remember that one is a Christian in the Church of God and should thus not overemphasise the culture. MM responds that music goes in hand with culture and is the case with the sermon. MY answers that each church has its own culture as much as a company has its own culture. We reformed people are not people of instruments. The way we sing should be relevant to the way we do things. MC believes culture reminds one of his identity

and origin. It is a matter of identity. Nevertheless, not all songs should be sung in a cultural pattern. MR says that culture helps people to express themselves better.

Why should people be buried? MW responds that according to teaching (culture), a person cannot be thrown away like a dog. MM answers, "Lesapo la motho ha le lahliwe jwaloka la ntja. Motho, re a mo phutha" (*the bones of a person cannot be thrown away as that of a dog. We collect a human being*). Burial is an old tradition, because even in the olden days, people slaughtered with the basic reason to have the skin to bury the people. If you burn someone, you give the message that everything is over with the person who died. MY states that burial is basically there for reconciliation. Even if one was not a Christian, once buried by a Christian minister, there will be reconciliation with God. MC reasons that humans are not dogs and this is an old tradition. MR argues that people have to be buried because Christ was buried. Burial is an indication that there is a resurrection. Tradition also indicates that the bones of a human being are not to be thrown away like that of a dog.

What comfort does one get from burying a deceased? MW says when we buried the departed; we know for a fact where he/she is laid. Hence if someone is lost and not buried one does not feel at peace, you would like to get the person so that one should at least bury the body and only then would there be peace of mind. MM says that one knows at least where the person is buried and one can always go there and look after the grave. We know that the spirit ascended. Hence, death is not the end of everything. Burning a person has a bad interpretation that it is totally over with the person and that there is absolutely no hope left. MY argues that the person will have rest and the Spirit of God will look after the departed. For this reason, we who remain must look after ourselves with the comfort that the departed is not lost. MC says you become comforted through the Word of God. Though it is not easy to accept death, there is comfort in knowing that the bones of the deceased are buried and thus safe and not just lost in the desert. MR states that burial comforts in that sense that it becomes clear that one knows where the bones are laid. They are not lost but in a secure place. To be burnt is a painful situation without hope.

Why is celebrating marriage an important aspect of life? MW holds that marriage is celebrated because the couple is happy that God has joined them together as one.

MM argues that celebration is there to show gladness after having taken the wedding vows. MY argues that the celebration is in accordance to the feeling of the couple. We as people invited simply attend to fill the stomachs with food. The wishes are only mouth talks. MC says marriage is from God. It was not good for Adam to be alone. Hence, God made him a partner. Celebration depends on the strength of the couple. It is not a matter of must. MR argues that marriage celebration is an expression of the inner joy of the couple that is joined together.

What is Christ's role as a guest in a marriage ceremony? MW says that Jesus is present because he is the one to bless the marriages. MM reasons that where Jesus is, there is joy and happiness. MY reasons that Jesus is there to make the joy in the celebration become continuous and peaceful. During the celebration is also where other people get partners. MC reasons that the role of Jesus is to bless. Hence, it is important for Christians to have this happiness. MR holds that Jesus unifies the marriage. He brings joy in marriage and promises that the joy would be extended even in the marriage.

10.4 Assimilation

In this part of the study, all the answers to the different questions will be grouped together and the main aspect in them will be determined. This should be viewed as the general opinion among the different people of different congregations concerning certain aspects of their liturgy.

10.4.1 Origin of worship

The answers that were received for this question were as follows: M1W answers that worship originates from the Bible, M1M argues that we found it like this, M1Y said it originates from humans, M1C said it is from the leaders in the Bible. M1R says God is the origin. TW answers that it is from people like Abraham. TM says he found worship originating. TY responds that he found worship originating and thus has no idea where it is from. TC says Worship originates from God. TR says worship originates since the beginning with Cain and Abel who brought sacrifices to the Lord.

Worship was there during the time of Enos. Moreover in Genesis 11 God scattered the people who wanted to build a tower (a name for themselves) because He wanted them to worship him only so, this is an indication that worship already existed then. KW says it originates from the Bible, KM says worship originated from humans. The feeling of worship just happened to come to mankind. KY says from God and KC says from God through Jesus Christ. KR responded that the origin of worship is Jesus Christ and he spread it through his disciples. MW says that God began with worship. MM says that his parents introduced him to worshipping God and he visited quite a number of churches while still young and at the age of eighteen decided to leave the church. I just realised that I have to worship God. This is important because it is the purpose of life. Worshipping God is the last option that truly gives satisfaction in life. Due to the fact that he wanted to worship, he again joined the church. MY answers that because all are created by God, the Bible emphasises that we have to worship God despite the fact that we only serve God on Sundays. MC responds that worship began in the Bible when God made covenant with Abraham and the Israelites. We continued with this. He gave us his commands. MR says that God is the origin and source of worship.

10.4.1.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the origin of worship:

- God is the origin of worship through Jesus Christ and through his written word.

10.4.1.2 Negative empirical results about the origin of worship:

- Worship originates from humans.
- Worship originates from historical figures in the Bible.
- Worship originates from the NT.
- The origin of worship is unknown.

10.4.2 The Father's role in worship

The responses are as follows when it comes to question 2 that concerns the role of God in the worship service: M1W says that God's role is to change people during the service. God makes people understand the Word and accept it. M1M mentions that God sees us. He is present in the service. So his function is basically to watch over us during the worship service. M1Y says that God meets us during the worship

service through his Holy Spirit. He is not present himself. M1C says that God's role is to help us come to the service and so to strengthen us spiritually. He makes us to be empowered during the service. M1R states that God is present to strengthen and protect us from evil. TW holds the Father is present with us and is giving us strength. TM says the Father is present with us guiding the service. He makes us to think only about him when we are in the service. TY says He is happy and listening. TC reasons the Father is present with us, communicating with us. TR believes the role of the Father is present through his Spirit. We call upon the name of God in the invocation. He thus supervises the whole worship service through his grace and his presence. KW says God is Spirit. He is watching over us, from his throne. KM states that the role of the Father is to answer and to forgive us during the worship service. KY says God is there, but it depends on our faith, whether we believe or not. KC states that God is in our minds to help us hear the Word. KR reasons that God blesses his services through the Word and the Holy Spirit and He provides with the necessary gifts of the Spirit. MW responds that He gives us his Holy Spirit and builds us. MM reasons that God is listening. Everyone has his own mind and God assesses the mind of each. He is there to fully exam the worship service. If the mind and intention of worship is not truly for God, He becomes aware of that, and He does not delight in such worship. He rejoices in true worship. MY states that, from the creation, one could not truly separate the work of the Trinity. However God is protecting or looking after the service like a hen its chickens. God also instructs the Holy Spirit to inspire people to accept his Word and in this way serve him. MC responds that He is present because He promised that if two or three meets in his name, He'd be present among them. MR says God is the centre of the worship service. He speaks to his children.

10.4.2.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of the Father:

- God is present through his Word and Spirit to guide and direct the worshippers.
- God watches in joy over his children worshipping him and protect them.

10.4.2.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of the Father:

- God is not personally present.
- God is a passive spectator over the service.

10.4.3 Ways in which God communicates in a worship service

As has been mentioned question 3 asks how God communicates with us during the worship service. M1W holds that God is invisible and does not speak to us. M1M says that God speaks with us through his Word. M1Y says that God speaks with us through the minister, gently and humbly. M1C says that God speaks through the Word proclamation. He speaks through his servants. M1R says through the Word by making use of the preachers. TW says that God sends his messengers to come and teach us his Word and thus speaks to us through them. TM says God communicates with us through his Word making use of his servant. TY states that God communicates with us through his preached Word. TC argues He speaks through the Bible making use of his servants. TR says God communicates with us through the Bible when we listen to his Word. The atmosphere also indicates that something supernaturally happens. The silence when listening to the minister makes one feel that you are now in the presence of God. This is also evident when the minister is praying. One feels that you are in the presence of God. This also happens when singing hymns. KW reasons, God speaks to us through his Spirit and disciplines us. We hear God through praying Him and through his Word. KM says that He speaks through preachers. KY states that God speaks to us through his deeds. KC has in mind that the minister brings the message of God. Nevertheless, it is not God personally who speaks. KR argues that God speaks to us through his word. We communicate with him through prayer, in the correct manner. MW answers that God speaks with us by giving us his ambassadors who in turn edifies us. MM responds that there is always a possibility that one might be in the church but the spirit outside and in such a way one cannot hear the voice. If the person is available in all aspects, you get inspired. This is something that brings you close to God and in this way, one then discovers that God was truly present at Church. MY holds that the minute the minister speaks, he is influenced by the Holy Spirit and the message that God wants to pass through to us, comes thus through his mouth. The message is thus God's Word. MC reasons that He speaks with us through his Word making use of the ministers as his mouthpiece. MR says God makes use of the preacher to communicate with us.

10.4.3.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the ways in which God communicates in a worship service:

- God makes use of the ministers of the Word.
- He inspires them through his Holy Spirit, to inspire, convert and discipline us.

10.4.3.2 Negative results of the empirical research on the ways in which God communicates with us:

- God does not speak to us because He is Spirit.

10.4.4 The role of Jesus Christ in a worship service

The responses to question 4 – which defines the role of Jesus in the worship service – are as follows: M1W says Jesus speaks through power and miracles. M1M says Jesus looks over us during the worship service. M1Y says that Jesus merely acts as a spectator during the service. His function is to report back to the Father and tell him how his children behave during the worship service. M1C says that Jesus' function is the same as that of the Father, leading us to the service and guiding us spiritually. M1R says Christ is the Centre of worship. His role is to sit as a King and enjoy the way people worship him. TW reasons that God sent him and He in turns now select people and send them to spread his Word. He in this way is present in the service and helps us understand the service. TM says Jesus Christ is send by the Father, so He is happy to attend the service and to fight against the devil for us. Jesus Christ is also the great Messenger. TY says He sanctifies the service, to unite us and to make us one in spirit and in service. TC says Jesus is also present with us. He mediates for us when we pray. TR states that Jesus Christ is to sanctify us through his Spirit. When we pray we know that He is busy interceding for us because He is our Mediator. Thus we are not alone in the worship service. KW says Jesus is also present in the worship service. God gives Jesus the message so that He may teach us the Law. KM states that Christ is the living Word of God that became flesh. KY responds that Jesus is present as an example. KC says Jesus' work convinces us of the presence of God. (God does not speak to us directly). Jesus Christ blesses and makes sure that all is true. KR says Jesus is present through his Spirit. He is the Head of his Church and He is watching over his flock. MW says Jesus as the Son of

God is sent by the Father to execute the tasks for which the Father has sent him. He also has the task of edifying us. MM responds that Jesus should be seen as the balance. He encourages those who are getting lost so that they should not become discouraged but should keep faith and follow God. MY answers that if one remembers that Jesus was sent for our sins, we will understand clearly that the role of Jesus Christ is thus to ensure that we understand the minister as one who speaks through the Holy Spirit. MC responds that Jesus is our salvation. He reconciles us with God. MR says that Jesus is present in the service as the living Word of God.

10.4.3.1 Positive empirical results on the role of Jesus:

- Jesus is the centre of worship.
- He speaks with power through his Word and Spirit.
- He is sent by the Father to be present in the service to encourage, edify, guide and protect us.
- As King over his flock He enjoys the worship with his children.

10.4.3.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of Jesus:

- Jesus is a passive spectator in the service, simply there to report back to the Father.
- The idea that Jesus is only present to look after us and protect us, while we are doing the service. The meeting between God and the people becomes thus inactive. What remains is only the people who came to meet inactive God.

Consider the responses to question 5 that deals with the role of the Holy Spirit: M1W says the Holy Spirit changes us. He inspires us and gives us the willingness to serve God. M1M says that God, the Holy Spirit tabernacles in us. M1Y says that the Spirit revives our hearts. M1C says that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Word that is proclaimed as well as the congregants. M1R says the Holy Spirit is there for empowerment. TW argues that the work of the Holy Spirit in the worship service is to unite the congregation to make them a family. He brings eagerness, warmth and wisdom in the service. TM says the Holy Spirit strengthens us so that we should understand clearly who and what Jesus Christ is in our lives, and that we may praise God. TY reasons He strengthens and sanctifies us. TC responds that the Holy Spirit

dwells in us. Moreover, He works in our minds, hearts and thoughts. TR believes that the work of the Holy Spirit is there to assist us to pray. When we do not know what to pray He is there to assist us in praying. He is our second Advocate and our second Comforter with Jesus Christ. He appears as the representative of Christ. KW says that the Holy Spirit communicates with us. KM argues that the Spirit makes us believe the message and revives our heart. KC states that the Holy Spirit makes people faithful and reliable in all they do. KY reasons that the Holy Spirit blesses the service. KR believes that the Holy Spirit empowers the congregation with truth and power. He warms the cold minds and bodies. MW reasons that the Holy Spirit's function is to strengthen us. MM argues that the Holy Spirit's function is to assure us of the fact that the Father and Son is there. The Holy Spirit helps us depart from the evil ways and cleans us from them. He is there to inspire us, to show us the right way. MY reasons that He ensures that our souls become tame enough to be able to accept the Word. If the Holy Spirit is present, the mind gets open and one understands. MC responds that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and strengthens us. He strengthened the disciples when He descended upon them so that they should be able to preach well without any fear. MR says the Holy Spirit prepares and illuminates our minds to understand the message.

10.4.3.3 Positive empirical results on the work of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit dwells in us as second Comforter and Advocate.
- The Holy Spirit sanctifies, strengthens and edifies us.
- The Holy Spirit makes us understand the Word better and gives power to proclaim the Word best.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to pray God correctly.

There are no negative findings with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit.

10.4.5 Worship on Sunday and not on the Sabbath

Question 6 asks why people attend worship services on Sunday and not on the Sabbath. The answers to this are as follows: M1W has no idea about the difference. She only knows that Sunday is a day of rest. M1M says Saturday is a working day

and Sunday is a day of rest. M1Y says she in fact asked herself the same question. Yet, she thinks that the reason is that people are working on Saturday and are free on Sunday. Hence Sunday is the right day for worship. M1C says Saturday is a day of rest and Sunday is a day of worship. M1R says Christ resurrected on Sunday hence the day became more relevant and suitable for worship. TR holds that the first day of the week is Sunday. Jesus resurrected on Sunday. Hence for us as Christians it is a day of hope and of glory. John in Revelation 1 saw Christ on the day of the Lord. TY says we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. TC states Saturday should be the day of rest, and Sunday we to begin work by calling on the Lord. TM says it is unknown to him. TW says this is only a changing of the days, and in such a way we are mistaking the days. KW says; well this is how we found matters. KM says it is because we are working with a new calendar system that differs from the ancient one. KY lacked a response to this. KC says that the Reformed Churches have changed the days. KR says that days are not an issue. What is important is to set aside the day of the Lord. MW says God gave us his commands, which we have to respect. MM argues, “days, months and years are difficulties to us. One can thus not say that Sunday is not the correct day for service. For my seventy-four years of age, I realised that Sunday was the day for worship. I only learnt at a later stage that we had to attend on Sabbath, but those people cannot convince me now at this age. We must accept that minds work differently as the centre is important”. MY answers that Jesus healed someone on a Sabbath. In the NT, the OT things that God decided upon as matters to be obeyed, has been cancelled to suit the situation, Therefore, whether one worships on Sunday or Monday it does not matter, but as long as we serve God. MY remembered that this day has to do with one of the works of Jesus. MC responds, “This is an issue of faith”. MR says Christ resurrected on Sunday. Hence, it was important that the day had to be changed in honour of Christ.

10.4.5.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for Sunday worship:

- Sunday is the day of resurrection referred to as “the Lord’s day”.
- Sunday is a day on which the Holy Spirit ascended upon the Church.
- Sunday became a day on which the early church gathered together for worship.
- Sunday is also a day on which John received Christ’s revelation.

10.4.5.2 Negative results of the empirical research on the reason for Sunday worship:

- Sunday and Saturday have just been interchanged because of the modern calendar.
- The issue is unknown to many.
- It is a matter of choice.

10.4.6 Active participation of the members during the worship service

Answers to question 7 – which asks how we may participate actively in the worship service – are as follows: W says that our responsibility is to sing, pray, confess and to be purified. M1M says our responsibility is to pray and become actively involved in all elements. M1Y says our responsibility is to leave the world and to come and pray together at the worship service. M1C says that our task is to praise God and to request from him. M1R says the members sing, they listen actively, and they welcome God's blessings. TW states that we can listen carefully to the Word. We can also pray and have to fully concentrate on the service. In prayer, one can actively be involved by listening and making the prayer one's own, and through singing. TM says we listen to the sermon attentively, we pray together, we sing. TY believes that members can be actively involved through singing, listening and through praying. TC argues that we praise God through psalms, hymns and by praying. TR says we sing hymns (all must partake in this, this is not only for the choir) and we participate in the Holy Communion. If there is baptism, the congregation chooses specific hymns that go hand in hand with the occasion. The same can be said about weddings, the congregation has the responsibility to select relevant hymns. KW reasons that we can praise God. We sing in addition to giving thanks and praying. KM states that we can participate actively by listening to the Word, praying and worshipping joyously through singing and through other activities. KY argues that the worship service is not about what pleases us. God has to be worshipped. We communicate with God, listen to his Word and sing praises to him. KC says we have to do all that concerns the church. Listen, and obey the message. KR says the congregation has to be involved in different elements, like having special Sundays, on which there can be rendered different items. MW responds that one can teach the youth to become

active and even encourage the women in singing by singing yourself. MM answers that one has to prepare oneself for the meeting with those who pray with other for the self and for the other. MY reasons that you have to prepare your mind and soul in order to concentrate attentively for the service before you participate in anything during the worship service. In a way you show that you are listening attentively. This will help one to respond correctly to the Holy Spirit. One will have to reciprocate at the end what you have heard. MC says, sing with the choir, contribute and listen actively to the Word of God. This can make the church to be alive and show that everyone is partaking. MR has a long response to this. He argues that the members actively have to accept the blessing from God. God bestows his people with blessings but people have to be aware of that. They can boldly confess with their mouths and heart that Jesus is Lord. They sing praises to the Lord. During prayer they actively listen and make it part of themselves.

10.4.6.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of the members:

- Members have to listen actively (the Word and prayer)
- Members have to confess with heart and mouth.
- Members have to worship (this includes singing and praising God).
- Members have to respond positively to the Word (through singing, praying, contributing and serving God).

10.4.6.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of the members:

- Different items have to be introduced for members to be able to participate.
- Members have to sing with the choir to be able to participate.

10.4.7 The function of the sacraments in the worship service

Question 8 that handles the sacraments has the following responses: (some members first concentrated on baptism then the Holy Communion. Some gave a general response on the work of the sacraments). Concerning baptism M1W argues that we have to be baptised because we fear God. Baptism is an anointment and a mark. M1M argues that baptism has the function of making us God's children. M1Y

says baptism is only a mark. M1C says that baptism is to add more people to the church and helps us to belong to God. TW argues that one has to encourage people to be involved in the things that pertain to God, and to have a better understanding of them. They give us strength and energy, new power. The Holy Communion is also there to give us blessings. TM says baptism makes you one of the members of Jesus Christ and the Holy Communion is a remembrance meal to strengthen our bodies. TY states baptism is a sign of repentance symbolising that the member who has been buried also resurrected with Christ and there became a member in heaven. The Holy Communion acts as a remembrance meal indicating that Jesus died for us. TC says the Holy Communion is to remind us about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the baptism is a reminder of the covenant (contract) with God. TR states that the sacraments are the visible signs of the grace and presence of God. Through them, we can remember the death and resurrection of Christ. In this, we remember that we will partake in the sacrament again in the Kingdom of God. KR says sacraments are there to strengthen our faith and they are part of the Church discipline, which reminds us to introspect ourselves and to remember Jesus Christ. KW states that they remind us the blood of Jesus, and the washing away of sins. KM reasons that baptism confirms the second birth and through it we promise that we will raise the children in faith. He further states that the Holy Communion is a proof that we have accepted that Christ has died for us. KY argues that baptism sanctifies us. The function of the Holy Communion is unknown to KY. KC says the sacraments strengthen the church. It also appeared from the discussion that KC does not really know what sacraments are, because he placed them under the same category of the tithing. MW says one has to prepare oneself for the Holy Communion. The function of the Holy Communion is to make us remember the body and the blood of Jesus Christ and one always has to remember that this is holy. Baptism is also holy. Even Jesus was baptised, hence children have to be baptised to show that they are Christians. MM argues that in every Church, the Holy Communion is very important, to such an extent that every person wants to participate in that. One feels that God is speaking directly to you during the Holy Communion. This is thus an inspiration. In the Catholic and Anglican Churches, the Holy Communion was regular. In other Churches, only the minister drinks the wine. One would only eat bread and not even have a smell of the wine. MY states that the baptism is a confirmation that the child who is baptised will grow in the church and the parents have to take responsibility to see to it that this

child does grow in the church. The Holy Communion serves as a remembrance Feast, to help us focus on the cross. MC reasons, "the sacrament of baptism is a covenant between God and us and the Holy Communion is a remembrance Feast of what Christ did and to revive our spirits to this activity". MR says the sacrament supplement the ministry of the Word.

10.4.7.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the function of the sacraments:

- The sacraments remind us of the work of Christ
- The sacraments strengthen our faith
- The sacraments confirm our covenantal relationship with Christ

10.4.7.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the function of the sacraments:

- One is baptised because of the fear of the Lord.
- Baptism is an anointment.
- Baptism is to add more people to the church and helps us to belong to God

10.4.8 The position of the Word

To question 9 that handles the place of the Word in the worship service KW argues that the Word is there to build and humble as well as making us true Christians. KM says the Word is there to clarify the meaning and the interpretation of what God says. KY argues that the role of the Word is to guide and to instruct us. KC reasons that the Word is there to keep one on track and help him do what is right in the church. KR believes that we cannot speak of service if there is no Word service, because the Word guides, cleans and exhorts us. M1W says that the Word should only be read and proclaimed after the confession. M1M says that the Word should have the highest place in the liturgy. It must be reflected throughout the liturgy and the rest of the other elements have to be subordinate to the Word. M1Y thinks that the Word should have an equal role with the rest of the other elements in the liturgy. M1C shares the same sentiments with M1Y, that the Word should have an equal role. M1R reasons that the service is non-existent without the proclamation of the Word. TW believes that the place of the Word is to revive the person and to open his mind. TM states that the Word of God gives guidance and direction. TY mentions that the

Word proclamation is a special time. This is when God is seriously communicating. TC says the Word of God is to lead people to repentance and to comfort the bereaved. TR argues that the Word of God is the central revelation of the presence of God. KW argues that the Word is there to build us, to humble and make us true Christians. KM says the Word is there to clarify the meaning and the interpretation of what God says. KY argues that the role of the Word is to guide and to instruct us. KC reasons to keep one on track and help him do what is right in the church. KR believes that we cannot speak of service if there is no Word service, because the Word guides, cleans and exhorts us. MW states that the function of the Word is to edify the Christian and teach him/her the way he has to live and to serve God and his church. MM reasons that the Word of God binds people who are of the congregation in love and peace. This love extends even to the outside people. MY responds that the Word is basically there to prepare the mind so that one should remember that one is a Christian at home and at work and also to ensure that one has to know his/her responsibility towards God. The Word is also there to feed the spirit. MC holds that the Word teaches, exhorts and leads to repentance. The Words also has the function to warn/admonish. MR holds that everything in the liturgy is around and about the Word.

10.4.8.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the place of the Word:

- The Word is the central element of the worship service
- The Word edifies, comforts, exhorts, instructs and leads in all truth
- The Word is above all elements but it does not make other elements minor, they all play important role in the worship service.

There are no negative findings about the Word.

10.4.9 The role of music in the worship service

The answers to question 10 that deals with the question on what the role of music should be during the church service lead as follow: M1W holds that music brings warmth and inspiration. M1M says that music plays a positive role. M1Y says that music gives warmth and inspires the congregation to worship God with power. M1C

says that music revives the spirit and also prepares the congregation for the sermon. M1R says that music is food for the ear. Through music, God is worshipped with joy. Without music, the worship service would be boring. TW reasons that music is to praise God. TM holds that through music we glorify God and music revives the spirit. TY argues that we pray God through singing, we thank and pray and become spiritually empowered through music. TC says music is there to bring joy to the Lord. TR says that music soothes and comforts the heart of the congregants. Music can act like a sermon if one analyses the words of the hymns. This is especially the case when we sing the Psalms. KR says Church music has a message. Music has to be chosen in line with text to help in the flow of the service. Music strengthens the faith and some members get healed through it. Hence it is important to understand the message (content) of the music. KW argues that we praise God through music. KM states that music is there to be sung and to praise God. KY holds that music is to enjoy and express one's faith. KC says music confirms the whole church activities. MW says music is there to praise the Lord God. MM says music comforts and inspires. Music is beautiful and brings heaven closer to you. If one should happen to die at that stage you will go straight to heaven. He further sees music like the spices for the Word. MY holds that music acts like a rubber-stamp to the Word. Music helps one to understand the sermon better. Music is like the dessert after the food (Word). MC argues that we glorify God through music. One becomes spiritually revived if one sings relevant hymns in accordance with the situation. MR believes that without any music in the church, the whole service is boring. However, the ultimate goal of the music should be glorify God.

10.4.9.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of music

- Music first has to glorify God
- Music revives, inspires, heals
- Music prepares for the Word proclamation

10.4.9.2 Negative results of the empirical research on the role of music

- If one dies while singing church music, one will go straight to heaven
- Church music brings one closer to God (this can also have a negative side) depending on ones faith and relationship with the Lord of heaven.
- Music acts as a rubber-stamp and dessert after the Word.

- Music gives taste to the worship service.

10.4.10 Influence on culture and music

The answers to question 11, which deal with the influence of culture on church music, are as follows: M1W says culture has no place in the church or even in the church music. M1M says culture has a very influential role. Liturgy as a whole should be cultural in some way. M1Y says culture gives us identity before God and before people. M1C thinks that culture is not good for the church. According to him culture has its own music, which has a unique place in society and not necessarily on the church. As church members we have to remain on track and not deal with things outside the sphere of the church. M1R argues that it helps in making people express themselves clearly before God. TW states that culture gives us identity so that we are able to serve God in our true being, knowing ourselves properly. TM says we cannot separate what we do from our culture even if this is relating to religion. TY reasons culture inspires the way we sing and behave. TC answers culture revives and strengthens the way we sing. TR says that through culture we become freer in expressing our joy. KW says we enjoy what we do and do it better through culture. KM only states that culture plays an important role. KY argues that culture is important. It has to do with faith. KC on the other hand states that one cannot separate culture from religion. KR believes that culture exists through God, although it is the human being's word. A lot of beautiful things in culture can be used to contribute in music. Moreover, culture teaches one to respect. This implies that cultural religious music can be respectful religious music. The cultural aspect of respect in music can be applied also in the liturgy, because charity begins at home. MW argues that culture should be present but only to a certain extent. One should always remember that one is a Christian in the Church of God and should thus not overemphasise the culture. MM responds that music goes hand in hand with culture and is the case with the sermon. MY answers that each church has its own culture as much as a company has its own culture. We people of the Reformed Churches are not used to instruments in the church. The way we sing should be relevant to the way we do things. MC believes culture reminds one of his identity and origin. Nevertheless, not all songs should be sung in a cultural pattern. MR says that culture helps people to express themselves better.

10.4.10.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the influence of culture:

- Culture influences the way we sing
- Through culture one's true identity is evident before God

10.4.10.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the influence of culture:

- Culture is separated from religion and thus totally excluded from the church
- Culture is something that can exist on its own without being affected by other influential dimensions of life.

10.4.11 Importance of burial

Question 12 deals with the issue on burial. It wants to know why people are buried. M1W says, well it is because the Word teaches like that. M1M says people should be buried so that they should no longer be seen. M1Y thinks that burial is important because there is also a resurrection. M1C argues that it is not really necessary to bury people. One can as well burn them. It will not make any difference. M1R says people should be buried because it is a biblical principle. TW says when God punished humans in Eden, he wanted humans to be buried in a proper way: "Soil back to soil". TM says that the bones of humans cannot be thrown away. They have to be collected and gathered. Through burial people can come together, even those who were not speaking to one another become friends. TY says he found it like that. They are taken to their place of rest and because according to the African concept, the bones of the dead are not to be eaten by dogs. TC says to show respect to the dead. A person cannot be thrown away like dog. TR says we bury people because Christ also was buried in his grave. It is like sowing seed. When the seed grows new life comes. We as Christians envisage new life after the resurrection. KW answers we bury so that the person should meet with God. This is not our culture to burn people. KM argues that the reason for burial is because we know that the person will have to be resurrected again on the last day. KY reasons that burying people grants opportunity to the bereaved to hear a sermon (God's Word). KC says it is traditional to bury people. The whole world will be rotten with stinking unburied bodies. KR responds that we believe in the resurrection of the dead. Black African people do not burn people. It might happen in future. At the end of the day, it becomes a family

matter. MW responds according to the teaching (culture) that a person cannot be thrown culture. MM answers, "*Lesapo la motho ha le lahliwe jwaloka la ntja. Motho, re a mo phutha*" (the bones of a person cannot be thrown away as that of a dog. We collect a human being). Burial is an old tradition, because even in the olden days, people slaughtered with the basic reason to have the skin to bury the people. If you burn someone, you give the message that everything is over with the person who died. MY states that burial is basically there for reconciliation. Even if one was not a Christian, once buried by a Christian minister, there will be reconciliation with God. MC reasons that humans are not dogs they have to be buried. Moreover burial is an old tradition that has to be respected. MR argues that people have to be buried because Christ was buried. Burial is an indication that there is a resurrection. Tradition also indicates that the bones of a human being are not to be thrown away like that of a dog.

10.4.11.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for burials:

- Jesus himself was buried and this is an indication that humans have to be buried
- Burial is like sowing a seed (It indicates hope for resurrection)
- Burial is very traditional (humans cannot be thrown away like dogs)

10.4.11.1 Negative results of the empirical research about the reason for burials:

- Burial is simply a choice; one can even be burned.
- People can simply just be left to rotten
- Burial is there for reconciliation among the living.

10.4.12 Comfort one gets from burial

Question 13 inquires what the comfort is that one gets from burying people. M1W says the comfort is from the proclamation of the Word and not from the act of burial. M1M also mentions that the comfort is from the proclamation of the Word. M1Y argues that the comfort is that the person buried is shown respect through burial and that there is peace of mind on the side of the family. M1C states that the comfort is received from the fact that the family sees where the grave is and this makes it easy

for them if they have to visit the ancestors and for speaking to the dead. M1R holds that there is comfort in knowing where the bones of the departed are buried. Joseph in the OT made a request that his body should be laid with that of his father for him to be able to rest in peace. People can always go and clean the graveside and happily think back of the person who is sleeping in the Lord. TW says the comfort comes through prayer. God knows what He is doing. TM says the Word proclamation brings comfort. And one knows that there is a resurrection. TY says the feeling of happiness that the person is safe and the knowledge that the person has been planted like seed and will be resurrected into a new body. If one burns it will become ashes. TC says burial gives rest of mind. It has to be accompanied and preceded by the proclamation of the Word of God that gives hope. TR says that the comfort is that the souls of these people are with God. The same body that has been buried will rise during the day of resurrection and will be united with the soul. KW reasons that the Word of God brings comfort and so does the people around you. The level of comfort will definitely differ. KM argues that the comfort one receives in burial is the fact that one can hear the Word of God. KY argues that comfort received is from the fact that the ceremony was proper. KC argues that there is comfort because the departed feels respected and not rejoice in the fact that he/she is thrown away like a dog. The family is also comforted because they know that the departed is buried properly. KR states that we have the assurance that we will see this person again and the fact that he is buried strengthens the concept and knowledge that surely he/she will be resurrected. Jesus died, was buried and resurrected again. This is the basis of our faith. MW says when we buried the departed; we know for a fact where he/she is laid. Hence if someone is lost and not buried one does not feel at peace, you would like to get the person so that one should at least bury the body and only then would there be peace of mind. MM says that one knows at least where the person is buried and one can always go there and look after the grave. We know that the spirit ascended. Hence, death is not the end of everything. Burning a person has a bad interpretation, namely that it is totally over with the person and that there is absolutely no hope left. MY argues that the person will have rest and the Spirit of God will look after the departed. For this reason, we who remain must look after ourselves with the comfort that the departed is not lost. MC says you become comforted through the Word of God. Though it not easy to accept death, there is comfort in knowing that the bones of the deceased are buried and thus safe and not just lost in the desert. MR states that burial comforts in

the sense that it becomes clear that one knows where the bones are laid. They are not lost but in a secure place. To be burnt is a painful situation, which has no room for hope.

10.4.12.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the comfort from burials:

- Burial comforts because it gives opportunity to hear the Word
- Burial comforts because it brings people together
- Burial comfort because it gives peace of mind to the bereaved
- Burial comforts because it seals contact/communication between the living and the dead.

10.4.12.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the comfort from burials:

- Comfort is received when the deceased is buried properly
- Comfort is received when one knows that he will be able clean the place of burial because he knows where the place is.

10.4.13 Importance of celebrating marriage

Question 14 deals with the importance of celebrating marriage. To this question the following responses were received: M1W says that marriage is a blessing and that is the reason for its celebration. People have to enjoy this. M1M says that there should be marriage celebration because God wants people to be happy. M1Y reasons that marriage celebration is merely a matter of tradition. M1C says that marriage celebration is not necessary at all. M1R states that God is glorified through the celebration of the marriage because it is a means through which He is building his Kingdom. It is also a time of celebrating the union. TW says that marriage celebrations are there to express joy. TM answers that people have marriage celebration to show joy because wedding is a blessing. TY says two people are being made one. Due to the fact that it is so hard to find your soul mate when some people believe to have found each other, we should celebrate the joy with them. TC says it is not necessary to have a marriage celebration because that is merely to make the invited people enjoy. What is important is the fact that the minister blessed the marriage. TR says that we celebrate marriage because people who are married start

a new life as one person; one flesh, one heart and one spirit. KW says that marriage is from God and we have to enjoy it. KM responds that the celebration is an indication that people are thanking the Lord for joining them together. KY answers that the celebration is there because the wedding is accepted. KC reasons that marriage celebration is a moment of joy. KR believes that marriage is between two parties. It is a family, and societal issue. Celebration is necessary for the sake of blessing. This is an event that has to be remembered and that should always be celebrated. Celebration is a moment to share the joy of the gift from God. MW holds that marriage is celebrated because the couple is happy that God has joined them together as one. MM is very sceptical on the matter, he argues that the celebration is in accordance to the feeling of the couple. We as visitors simply attend to fill the stomachs with food. The wishes that come from people are only mouth talks. MY argues that celebration is there to show gladness after having taken the wedding vows. MC says marriage is from God. It was not good for Adam to be alone. Hence, God made him a partner. Celebration depends on the strength of the couple. It is not a matter of must. MR argues that marriage celebration is an expression of the inner joy of the couple that is joined together.

10.4.13.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for marriage celebrations:

- Marriage celebration is an extension of the moment of joy
- Marriage celebration is a calling to people to participate in the couple moment of happiness
- Marriage celebration is a thanksgiving to God for the wonder gift received
- Marriage celebration is traditional
- Marriage celebration is not a matter of must it depends on the financial status of the couple.

10.4.13.2 Negative results of the empirical research on the reason for marriage celebration:

- People simply attend for eating and self-enjoyment.

10.4.14 The role of Christ at the wedding ceremony

Question 15 inquires about the role of Christ as a guest in a marriage ceremony. M1W says Christ has to be present to see if all are right. M1M does not see the reason why Christ has to be present at a marriage ceremony. M1Y argues that Christ blesses the marriage when He is present at a celebration. M1C also says that Christ's role is to bless the marriage itself. M1R says the presence of Christ makes the marriage to be pleasant and He prevents and expels evil spirits. Moreover through his presence He blesses the marriage. TW says Christ's presence means that they are not alone. He was invited in the wedding at Cana. The changing of the water into wine is a representation that Christ changes the life of the couple to become a joyful life. TW says that Jesus is ever present; hence He should be present in the celebration to give his full blessing upon the marriage. TM says Jesus is the organiser and the arranger. He strengthens and combines the two through the celebration. TY says He gives the blessings to the couple getting married. TC says Jesus has to be in every situation and place where things have to do with the Father. He should always be there as Mediator. TR says that the role of Christ is to unite this couple and in such a way becomes their Master. KW responds that Jesus Christ brings uncountable blessings. KM argues that Christ is there to strengthen the marriage, and inspire the couple and the attendants to trust in him always in all respects of marriage. KY answers that Jesus is not present at the celebration. KC says Jesus blesses the marriage even at the celebration. KR says that life without the Light is darkness. Without his presence, there cannot be any blessing. If Christ is present, there is no want. He fills every need. MW says that Jesus is present because He is the one to bless the marriages. MM reasons that where Jesus is, there is joy and happiness. MY reasons that Jesus' presence is to make the joy in the celebration continuous and peaceful. During the celebration is also where other people get partners. MC reasons that the role of Jesus is to bless. Hence, it is important for Christians to have this happiness. MR holds that Jesus unifies the marriage. He brings joy in marriage and promises that the joy would be extended even in the marriage.

10.4.14.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of Christ in marriage celebration:

- Christ's presence extends the blessing already received during the ceremony

- Christ's presence extends the joy and receives any want that the couple might encounter
- Christ's presence bring assurance of light, peace and happiness in the marriage life of the couple

10.4.14.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of Christ in marriage celebration:

- Jesus is not needed at the reception
- Celebration are there for unmarried people to get partners

10.5 Conclusion

This chapter gave the data as gathered from the interviews. After the data was given, all the positive and negative results of the empirical research were determined separately according to each question. This chapter clearly shows that there is a lot of misunderstanding and misinterpretation especially with regard to the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. The results show that little has been done up to this far to remedy the situation.

The following chapter will combine all the findings of this section (Section B) in order to make a comparative study between the meta-theory and the empirical theory. The aim with the comparison is to lead to a next section (Section C) that would deal with the new proposed model that would be used in the congregations to combat the underlying problems indicated in the first chapter of this study.

Chapter 11

11. Meta-theoretical perspectives

11.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review on the findings of Section B -- that section deals with the meta-theoretical principles of chapter 9 as well as the empirical results of chapter 10. The aim with these two chapters has been to make an analysis on the cultural and religious situation of the Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands. The meta-theoretical principles of chapter 9 will be indicated first, to be followed immediately by a précis to be drawn from these findings. Subsequently a précis of chapter 10 will be drawn.

The findings of the meta-theoretical guidelines in Chapter 9 that dealt with the literature study on the culture of the African are as follows:

11.2 The view on humans

- 11.2.1 Because of the pantheistic (animistic) ontology African people have got some divinity within them.
- 11.2.2 Age and gender play an important role in the status of the African.
- 11.2.3 African people are believed to have common ancestry.
- 11.2.4 Each human consists of an immortal soul and a mortal body.

- 11.2.5 Review

Humans have an immortally embodied soul that makes them partly divine. There is no clear distinction between God and creation. Age and gender play an important role in the status of the human being.

11.3 The social aspect of the African

- 11.3.1 African people are strongly influenced by the concept of *ubuntu*.
- 11.3.2 African people are human through, with and in association with other people.
- 11.3.3 African people are horizontally linked with other people and vertically with the ancestors.
- 11.3.4 The concept of *ubuntu* greatly influences the African way of worship.
- 11.3.5 Review

The being of the African is solely determined by the *ubuntu* concept. Human beings are not only linked with other humans but also with the ancestors because of their immortal souls.

11.3 The view of initiation

- 11.3.1 Initiation is a process that leads the African through a stage of growth.
- 11.3.2 Initiation also opens opportunities and accessibility to the African.
- 11.3.3 Equality in treatment is a respected concept among Africans.
- 11.3.4 Sharing among African people is part of their being.
- 11.3.5 Music and poetry play an essential even during the initiation process.
- 11.3.6 Review

To relate well to other people, the African human is complete only after initiation.

11.4 The view of religion

- 11.4.1 The ATR is a primal religion.
- 11.4.2 The ATR is an orally transmitted religion that is flexible and tolerant.
- 11.4.3 The ATR is an integral part of life in primal religions.
- 11.4.4 The ATR can be monotheistic, pantheistic or polytheistic.
- 11.4.5 The god of the ATR created everything but does not sustain it.

- 11.4.6 The god of the ATR is not worshipped but used.
- 11.4.7 The god of the ATR is approached in prayer only after failure of other intermediaries.
- 11.4.8 The god of the ATR does not demand love and does not give laws on how to be worshipped hence the tolerance and the flexibility in the religion.
- 11.4.9 The deities differ in degrees from higher deities to ordinary spirits and ancestral spirits.
- 11.4.10 In the visible world we have as mediators, kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine men, witch doctors, diviners and mediums.
- 11.4.11 Only good spirits or people qualify as intermediaries and the deceased must have received full funeral rites to achieve this qualification as ancestor.
- 11.4.12 The ancestral spirits need to be satisfied through sacrifices and prayers.
- 11.4.13 Review

The god of the ATR is remote and not directly involved in the life of humans.

11.5 *The view of music*

- 11.5.1 Music is natural to the African.
- 11.5.2 Music is found in the traditional worship of the African and accompanies rituals and ceremonies.
- 11.5.3 Music and religion are very closely connected.
- 11.5.4 Music is sufficient for expressing religious belief and feeling.
- 11.5.5 Review

Music is the sincere expression of the heart of an African in life as a whole.

11.6 The view of death and burial

- 11.6.1 A good and descent funeral service or burial to the African is a sign of respect for the deceased. (It partly determines what kind of ancestor the deceased would become but it also shows what relationship the deceased had with the people he/she lived with. Moreover it also functions as a plea from the side of the family to the ancestral spirit to protect them.)
- 11.6.2 Funeral services have different customs based not only on the culture but also the faith of the people.
- 11.6.3 Liturgy in death situations teaches us the meaning of our death. It gives us the words, images and rituals by which to speak honestly about death and dying.
- 11.6.4 Funeral services provide us with the tools to undertake the task of “dying well”.
- 11.6.5 Funeral services are strongly marked by personal life relationships, expectations and religious ways of behaviour that bring people together.
- 11.6.6 A funeral service brings people together despite the fact that it might not be in common faith as a community of believers.
- 11.6.7 Review

Funeral services are the only proper forms of expression of the separation between the living and the dead.

11.7 The view of marriage and marriage ceremonies

- 11.7.1 African marriages are always accompanied by big ceremonies of joy and gladness.
- 11.7.2 The ceremonies always involve different parties. Hence marriage is an issue of the family, church, society and state.
- 11.7.3 African marriage is polygynous to combat celibacy and sterility.
- 11.7.4 Marriage indicates that the couple is matured

11.7.5 *Lobola* always accompanies a true African marriage as a symbol of thankfulness to the wife's family.

11.7.6 Review

Marriage is a symbol of unity between families and other parties. It is a means through which the family is extended hence the approval of polygamy – to combat sterility.

11.8 *The findings to be inferred from the empirical study as found in chapter 10 that deals with the interviews, are as follows:*

11.8.1 Positive results of the empirical research on the origin of worship:

- God is the origin of worship through Jesus Christ and through his written word.

11.8.2 Negative results of the empirical research about the origin of worship:

- Worship originates from humans.
- Worship originates from historical figures in the Bible.
- Worship originates from the NT.
- The origin of worship is unknown.

11.8.3 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of the Father:

- God is present through his Word and Spirit to guide and direct the worshippers.
- God watches in joy over his children worshipping him and he protects them.

11.8.4 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of the Father:

- God is not personally present in the service.
- God is a passive spectator of the service.

11.8.5 Positive results of the empirical research on the ways in which God communicates in a worship service:

- God makes use of the ministers of the Word.

- He inspires them through his Holy Spirit to inspire, convert and discipline us.

11.8.6 Negative results of the empirical research on the ways in which God communicates in a worship service:

- God does not speak to us because He is Spirit.

11.8.7 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of Jesus:

- Jesus is the Centre of worship.
- He speaks with power through his Word and Spirit.
- He is sent by the Father to be present in the service to encourage, edify, guide and protect us.
- As King over his flock He enjoys the worship with his children.

11.8.8 Negative results about the role of Jesus:

- Jesus is a passive spectator of the service. He is simply there to report back to the Father.
- Jesus is only present to look after us and protect us while we are conducting the service. This negative view implies that the people who gathered are in a meeting with an inactive God.

11.8.9 Positive results of the empirical research on the work of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit dwells in us as second Comforter and Advocate.
- The Holy Spirit sanctifies, strengthens and edifies us.
- The Holy Spirit makes us understand the Word better and gives power to proclaim the Word best.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to pray to God correctly.

11.8.10 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for Sunday worship:

- Sunday is the day of resurrection referred to as “the Lord’s day”.
- Sunday is a day on which the Holy Spirit ascended upon the Church.
- Sunday became a day on which the early church gathered together for worship.
- Sunday is also a day on which John received Christ’s revelation.

11.8.11 Negative results of the empirical research on the reason for Sunday worship:

- Sunday and Saturday have just been interchanged because of the new modern calendar.
- The issue is unknown to many.
- It is a matter of choice.

11.8.12 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of the members:

- Members have to listen actively (the Word and prayer).
- Members have to confess with heart and mouth.
- Members have to worship (this includes singing and praising God).
- Members have to respond positively to the Word (through singing, praying, contributing and serving God).

11.8.13 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of the members:

- Different items have to be introduced for members to be able to participate.
- Members have to sing with the choir to be able to participate.

11.8.14 Positive results of the empirical research on the function of the sacraments:

- The sacraments remind us of the work of Christ.
- The sacraments strengthen our faith.
- The sacraments confirm our covenantal relationship with Christ.

11.8.15 Negative results of the empirical research about the function of the sacraments:

- One is baptised because of the fear of the Lord.
- Baptism is an anointment.
- Baptism is to add more people to the church and helps us to belong to God.

11.8.16 Positive results of the empirical research on the place of the Word:

- The Word is the central element of the worship service.
- The Word edifies, comforts, exhorts, instructs and leads in all truth.

11.8.17 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of music:

- Music first has to glorify God.
- Music revives, inspires, heals.
- Music prepares for the proclamation of the Word.

11.8.18 Negative results of the empirical research on the role of music

- Music acts as a rubber-stamp for and dessert after the Word.
- Music gives taste to the worship service.

11.8.19 Positive results of the empirical research on the influence of culture:

- Culture influences the way we sing.
- Through culture one's true identity is evident before God.

11.8.20 Negative results of the empirical research about the influence of culture:

- Culture is separated from religion and thus totally excluded from the church.
- Culture is something that can exist on its own without being affected by other influential dimensions of life.

11.8.21 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for burials:

- Jesus himself was buried and this is an indication that humans have to be buried.
- Burial is like sowing a seed. (It indicates hope for resurrection.)
- Burial is very traditional (humans cannot be thrown away like dogs).

11.8.22 Negative results of the empirical research on the reason for burials:

- Burial is simply a choice; one might as well be burned.
- People can be left to rot.
- Burial is there for reconciliation among the living.

11.8.23 Positive results of the empirical research on the comfort from burial:

- Burial comforts because it gives an opportunity to hear the Word.
- Burial comforts because it brings people together.
- Burial comforts because it gives peace of mind to the bereaved.
- Burial comforts because it seals contact/communication between the living and the dead.

11.8.24 Negative results of the empirical research about the comfort from burial:

- Comfort is received when the deceased is buried properly.
- Comfort is received when one knows that he will be able clean the place of burial because he knows where the place is.

11.8.25 Positive results of the empirical research on the reason for marriage celebrations:

- Marriage celebration is an extension of the moment of joy.
- Marriage celebration is a calling to people to participate in the couple's moment of happiness.
- Marriage celebration is a thanksgiving to God for the wonderful gift received.
- Marriage celebration is traditional.
- Marriage celebration is not a matter of obligation – it depends on the financial status of the couple.

11.8.26 Negative results of the empirical research on the reason for marriage celebration:

- People simply attend for eating and self-enjoyment.

11.8.27 Positive results of the empirical research on the role of Christ in marriage celebration:

- Christ's presence extends the blessing already received during the ceremony.
- Christ's presence extends the joy and supplies any need that the couple might encounter.
- Christ's presence brings assurance of light, peace and happiness in the married life of the couple.

11.8.28 Negative results of the empirical research about the role of Christ in marriage celebration:

- Jesus is not needed at the reception.
- Celebrations are there for unmarried people to get partners.

11.9 Final conclusion

The method that has been used for the empirical study is relevant. The researcher had the opportunity to have direct contact with every individual. (One could see the expression on the face of the interviewee during the interview). The study found, furthermore, that the liturgy of the Reformed Church in Synod Midlands is truly one of the most ignored aspects of the church. Ministers and church councils simply tend to leave matters as they have been for the past 50 years. Some of the ministers in a personal conversation agreed to the fact that the renewal of liturgy is ignored in most instances. However all interviews were a success because the ministers were really co-operative in getting their members involved. Concerning the results of the interview, the researcher did not get much substantial information from the members. This made it clear enough that members are uninformed about the liturgy. Due to this lack of information, it is clear that members who join the Reformed Churches coming from other so-called independent, or indigenous churches, would come with their own ATR background. Moreover, the members of the Reformed Churches also have direct influence from the ATR. In a subsequent chapter in which an evaluation and integration of chapter 9 and 10 occurs, this will be discussed further briefly.

11.10 Summary of empirical findings

11.10.1 The findings of the empirical study as found in chapter 10 (that deals with the interviews) can be represented in the following schematic table:

Sub heading	Positive findings	Negative findings
The origin of worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is the origin of worship, through Jesus Christ and through his written word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship originates from humans • Worship originates from historical figures in the Bible • Worship originates from the NT • The origin of worship is unknown
The role of the Father in worship service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is present through his Word and Spirit to guide and direct the worshippers • God watches in joy over his children worshipping him and protects them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is not personally present • God is a passive spectator of the service
The Father's means of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God makes use of the ministers of the Word • He inspires them through his Holy Spirit to inspire, convert and discipline us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God does not speak to us because He is Spirit
The role of Jesus Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Centre of worship • He speaks with power through his Word and Spirit • He is sent by the Father to be present in the service to encourage, edify, guide and protect us • As King of his flock, He enjoys the worship with his children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is a passive spectator of the service who is simply there to report to the Father • Jesus is only present to look after us and protect us while we are conducting the service • The meeting between God and the people becomes thus inactive because God is merely a spectator.
The role of the Holy Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit dwells in us as second Comforter and Advocate • The Holy Spirit sanctifies, strengthens and edifies us 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit makes us understand the Word better and gives us power to proclaim the Word best • The Holy Spirit helps us to pray to God correctly 	
The reason for Sunday worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday is the day of resurrection, referred to as “the Lord’s day” • Sunday is a day on which the Holy Spirit ascended upon the Church • Sunday became a day on which the early church gathered together for worship • Sunday is also a day on which John received Christ’s revelation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday and Saturday have just been interchanged because of the modern calendar • The issue is unknown to many • It is a matter of choice
Active participation of members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have to listen actively (to the Word and prayer) • Members have to confess with heart and mouth • Members have to worship (this is includes singing and praising God) • Members have to respond positively to the Word (through singing, praying, contributing and serving God) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different items have to be introduced for members to be able to participate • Members have to sing with the choir to be able to participate
The role of the sacraments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sacraments remind us of the work of Christ • The sacraments strengthen our faith • The sacraments confirm our covenantal relationship with Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One is baptised because of the fear of the Lord • Baptism is an anointment • Baptism is there to add more people to the church and helps us to belong to God
The role of the Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Word is the central element of the worship service 	

The role of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Word edifies, comforts, exhorts, instructs and leads in all truth • Music first has to glorify God • Music revives, inspires, heals • Music prepares for the proclamation of the Word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music acts as a rubber-stamp for and dessert after the Word • Music gives taste to the worship service
The role of culture in music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture influences the way we sing • Through culture one's true identity is evident before God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture is separated from religion and thus totally excluded from the church • Culture is something that can exist on its own without being affected by other influential dimensions of life
The reason for burial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus himself was buried and this is an indication that humans have to be buried • Burial is like sowing a seed – it indicates hope for resurrection • Burial is very traditional – humans cannot be thrown away like a dogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial is simply a choice; one may as well be burned • People can be left simply to rot • Burial is there for reconciliation among the living
Comfort from burial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial comforts because it gives an opportunity to hear the Word • Burial comforts because it brings people together • Burial comforts because it gives peace of mind to the bereaved • Burial comforts because it seals contact/ communication between the living and the dead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort is received when the deceased is buried properly • Comfort is received when one knows that one will be able clean the place of burial because one knows where the place is
The reason for marriage celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage celebration is an extension of the moment of joy • Marriage celebration is a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People simply attend for eating and self-enjoyment

calling to people to participate in the couple's moment of happiness

- Marriage celebration is a thanksgiving to God for the wonderful gift received
- Marriage celebration is traditional
- Marriage celebration is not a matter of obligation: it depends on the financial status of the couple

The role of Christ in the reception

- Christ's presence extends the blessing already received during the ceremony
- Christ's presence extends the joy and supplies any want that the couple might encounter.
- Christ's presence brings assurance of light, peace and happiness in the married life of the couple

• Jesus is not needed at the reception

- Celebrations are there for unmarried people to get partners

11.10.2 A picture of the worship of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands:

There are different opinions about worship services in Synod Midlands. It is clear from the information gathered and discussed here that people are not sure what worship in the Reformed Churches is all about. People do go to church but there they simply follow the status quo that has been inherited from the missionaries. The sad thing is that even among some of the ministers it was evident that some of the responses were merely guesswork. The "practical" side of worship in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands seems outstandingly good to many people. However there is a serious problem when it comes to the "theoretical" aspect. Church

members do not truly understand why they do what they do. The interviews make it abundantly clear that a number of members...

- Do not truly know the origin of worship and why we have to worship.
- Do not understand why we worship on Sundays, for instance.
- Do not understand why they have to worship.
- Do not comprehend the role of the triune God during the worship service.
- Do not understand the order and the sequence of the liturgy. (Whether one starts by preaching and interchanges the sequence as it suits you, it will not matter, as long as this interchange is done by the minister)
- Do not know their roles during the worship service. (Members always expect something new to be introduced by the liturgist knowing that they do not have any say on it, because the whole liturgy is like a one-man game.)
- Do not clearly understand the sacraments.
- Do not see how they can glorify God through their own culture.
- Do not understand why people have to be buried from a Biblical perspective.
- Do not understand why God should be present during wedding celebrations.

It has to be concluded that the liturgy of the worship service is a matter of formalism. The members simply do things because they have been done like that for the past years. The procedure and order of the worship service are also not explained to the members. Thus they simply worship to fit into the structure of worship practised by the specific congregations.

The context and the content of the worship service do not truly count. The general standard to measure the quality of a worship service is the music in the church as well as the sermon. The sermon's standard in most of the congregations is measured not in terms of the message as such but rather in terms of the tone of voice in which the sermon is delivered. The voice and the noise seem to make the sermon very powerful and beautiful. The result is that worship is seen from below to above. Worship is viewed from the perspective of what members do and have to do for God -- and not the perspective of what God does and wants them to do for him. The basic

problem with this kind of worship is that it lacks backbone and a true basis. It is worship for its own sake and not really to the glory of God.

11.10.3 A different picture of worship appeared mostly from some of the ministers:

Worship originates from God and it is for God. God Triune is present in the liturgy and every person in the trinity has his role to play. The Father is present through his Word and Spirit. The Son is the Centre of worship and the King of his flock. He is present to guide, encourage and protect his children as well as to enjoy the worship service. The Holy Spirit dwells in the congregation as second Comforter and Advocate for sanctifying, strengthening and edifying them. The ministers cannot understand the Word if not illuminated by the Holy Spirit. There are different elements in the worship: the Word, prayer, hymns, confession and contributions. The Word is the most important. This means that the minister does not really make it his duty to communicate the liturgy to the congregation members. He does not walk along with the congregation during the service. He moves alone, only he understands what is happening at a specific element in the worship liturgy. The members simply become followers.

11.11 Data analysis and comparison of the meta-theoretical and empirical findings:

11.11.1 The liturgy of the worship service

11.11.1.1 The origin of worship

From the interview-analysis it is also clear that most of the members have a problem with the very first question about the source or origin of worship. People are unsure whether worship originated from humans, Biblical figures, Jesus or from the beginning of creation by God Triune. This is influenced by the fact that the god of the ATR god is not truly involved in his creation. People of different cultures serve him differently according to their liking. He does not have prescriptions on how people have to do things – instead the people prescribe how and when he has to be

worshipped. He is a god too remote and too high, to such an extent that people prefer to approach him via the ancestors and other intermediaries. To try to address him directly is only the very last resort. Many members of the Reformed Churches still strongly believe in ancestral worship and thus believe that in some of the issues it still true that *Modimo ha o fe ka letsoho* (God does not give by hand). For this reason there has to be contact with the ancestors or higher powers to receive blessings. As a result of this belief people hold that worship originates with humans. Humans have to design worship in such a way that it does please God eventually.

11.11.1.2 The role of the Father

It is accepted in the liturgy by some that God is not personally present and that He is a passive spectator of the service. The ATR makes it evident that its god is not worshipped but used. The gathering is seen as a gathering of the people (congregation) -- not so much to worship God but rather to bring their problems there so that God should help them in their needs. God is far away, there in the distance, being manipulated through music and gifts. The expectation is that God would be happy and thus grant them all their requirements. It is also not surprising that the ZCC would sing: "*Ka lefu la ka ... le bolele moruti le re, ke ne ke le modumedi ... le ditekete tsa kereke le mpoloke le tsone..., ka mehla ke tla phomola ho Jehova*". This can be translated as follows: "When I die ... tell the minister that I was a believer ... and bury me with the tickets of the church (tithing) ... and I will rest with the LORD." The belief is that because the individual served God with his/her tithing and that the minister at Church knows very well about the individuals good deeds. For this reason God would have to accept this person. God would not have a choice because the individual was His good servant and did things to that were pleasing to God.

The second argument from the ATR would be that its god does not prescribe how he wants to be worshipped. Hence whatever manner appears pleasing to the African is regarded as acceptable to the Christian God, too.

11.11.1.3 The means of communication

Due to the fact that the African God is distant, it is also believed by some that God does not speak to us because He is Spirit. The word that is heard is that of the minister. He is simply a messenger who would inform members how to communicate with God and about the God's needs in order to be pleased so that He in turn may give heed to our shortcomings. The minister is a kind of a channel between humans and the distant god/God. As an authoritative leader he speaks on behalf of God and what he says should be heeded or else God will not be pleased. This is also where position and status in life plays an essential role. The minister receives a high status not only at church but even in society.

11.11.1.4 The role of the Son

Jesus is Biblically understood as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Without him no one can approach the Father and no one can enter heaven. The African sees him as one of the mediators through which one goes to God. In fact they do not have a very clear understanding of the Trinity. This is too big a concept for most of them. Due to the fact that Jesus is one with God they directly pray to Jesus and communicate with him as if they speak directly to the Father. At times they even interchange the names because for them it does not make a difference.

An example is an introduction to a prayer one often hears: "*Jehova Modimo, Konyana ya ho loka*" Lord God, good Lamb" or "*Ntate, Messia wa ho loka*" Father, good Messia.

Christians usually conclude their prayer in the name of the Son. But the prayers of people who do not know the difference between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, usually conclude their prayer in "three names, the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

It is therefore understandable why some members consider the Son as simply in the worship service as one who has to report back to the Father. Or: like the Father He would just be a passive spectator.

In comparing Christianity with the ZCC (Zion Christian Church, an indigenous church) De Visser (2000:136) states that they have a weak Christology. Their faith is inclusive in the sense that they have room for both Christ and Lekhanyane (their founder). However their view of Christ has faded and Lekhanyane has come increasingly to the fore. Lekhanyane is more visible than Christ. Christ is associated with the forgiveness of sins (which is not a priority) and Lekhanyane is associated with protection, healing and earthly blessings. This again testifies the argument that African people adhere more to the divinities closer to them than to "the remote God". The African people want to experience and have contact with what they believe to be true. Faith must be abstract. They would even ask you the question, "what will God do for me?" or "what does God do for me?"

11.11.1.5 The role of the Holy Spirit

It appears that many people do not have any problem with the role of the Holy Spirit. African people are in a sense very spiritual people. The "spirit" controls many African people be that "spirit" ancestral or "holy". The spirit is believed to direct the person to speak words which he or she takes from the higher powers or from God. The tendency of many to want to "preach" during the worship service is said to be under the control of the "spirit". Some youths in their conferences would even cry if they were not granted an opportunity to "preach".

11.11.1.6 The reason for Sunday worship

The fact of Sunday worship does not truly matter to the African people. For them it is just a matter of an interchange of days. The fact is that Sunday received a new meaning because of the fact that it was the day on which Jesus was resurrected and when the Spirit descended upon the disciples. This day received a special meaning in the NT. Yet in the African context this day became more of a day when most would meet early in the morning for "*mpho badimo*" (sacrifices made for the ancestors). Why they choose Sunday morning for this purpose needs to be researched. Sunday morning is also used in most instances for the unveiling of tombstones. The reason for this also calls for further research. It is as if people believe that these things have to happen on a Sunday morning and not at any other day.

11.11.1.7 Active participation of members during worship service

It is generally accepted that members have many activities to conduct during the worship service. Yet the reality denies this. Most of the members are not truly aware of the different activities in which they can be involved actively. The following can serve as examples of this observation:

- Members do not know that listening is an activity.
- They want to pray for themselves in the Church because they feel that they are truly addressed in the minister's prayer.
- They do not understand that they can respond to God through singing because singing is only to praise and worship God.
- Listening every Sunday to the Ten Commandments is simply of matter of formality. Their attitude seems to be: God spoke to the Israelites and what has this to do with us now?

Things that would be expected in the service include the following: choirs that sing separately, people other than the minister should pray, people other than the minister should come forward and testify. This is what happens in the worship services of indigenous churches. Things are very spontaneous there. The minister does not have to announce when and what to sing. The congregation members are part of the liturgy. They know when to interrupt the minister with a song that is relevant to the situation. Everyone is given opportunity to testify and say something in accordance with how the "spirit" directs him or her.

11.11.1.8 The role of the sacraments

Many people have false views of the sacraments. For instance, to them baptism is simply a means of adding more people to the church. Baptism is also there for other reasons like a means through which one becomes accepted in society. It is a pity to mention here that people baptise their children so that they should be registered at the Home Affairs and so that they can be accepted at school. Many become members of the Reformed Churches because of the favours they get in return for membership.

The Holy Communion is used differently. Many people come to the Holy Communion for different reasons. According to some it is a kind of magic meal for good luck, healing and fortune. It is no wonder that many people do not like to miss this kind of a meal. Even when you explain the formula to them many would still attend because they see in it more blessings than the cursing that may arise from misuse. This is the reason why even those people who have been sitting and not attending the worship services will not make the mistake of staying away services where the Holy Communion is administered.

11.11.1.9 The role of the Word

The Word receives a high status among African people. It does not truly matter who brings the word and how the word is interpreted, it remains God's Word for them. They have high regard for the fact that the Word is proclaimed. The problem at stake is obeying the Word. Everyone hears the Word but not all live according to the instructions of the Word. Moreover, even though African people have great respect for the Word of God, one should mention here that because of the belief in the ancestors people have more regard for what the *sangoma* or *inyanga* would say than for what the minister would say. The *sangoma* would concentrate on earthly matters while the minister of the Word would concentrate on heavenly matters which according to the listeners are not of such great priority for this life here and now. People listen to the Word in as far as it is not contrary to their cultural belief. Many church members would say "even if the Word of God is against *mpho ya badimo*, "gifts to the ancestors" they would not cease from such practice". It is so obvious that people fear the ancestors more than they fear God.

11.11.1.10 The role of music in worship service

It has been mentioned in chapter 10 that African people live music. They sing out of the depth of their heart and if there is no music nothing really happens there. Even in case of death, African people sing. Music has a healing and changing effect. It empowers, prepares, acts as a "seal"/confirmation. Through music one worships and glorifies. This is the best way through which the African expresses himself or herself.

11.11.1.11 The role of culture in worship music

To most respondents, culture is seen as something that has nothing or little to do with the Christian religion. It is seen as a non-Christian practice. In chapter 1 it has been mentioned that people always see their way of worship as heathen and the way they have been taught to worship in the church as Christian. This is the reason for the double life that is so evident in the lives of the African people.

11.11.2 The liturgy of the funeral services

African people feel great honour for the dead. They believe in the immortality of the soul and the new status of divinity that the deceased will receive after death. This concept influences their belief about the liturgy of the funeral service. The better the funeral service, the happier the deceased becomes and the more pleased the other ancestors will be. A good funeral service clearly indicates the relationship that existed between the deceased and the living. Due to this view African people strongly believe that a human being is not a dog and can in no way be thrown away. Their liturgy is more based on the African concept than on the Christian point of view about the resurrection. The African will try his outmost best to give a good funeral service and ensure that the deceased is buried properly, else the spirit of the deceased will not find rest and will haunt the community. This is also the reason why the African people will want to fetch the body of a person who has not been buried at the right place, i.e. someone who was involved in an accident or who has drowned in a river. They will search for the body until they find it because of the belief that the spirit will be haunting about, looking for the right place and for rest. In case of conflict among the families funeral services bring these people together irrespective of their differences. All the people present desire peace with the deceased else they might encounter from problems from the side of the ancestors. It is thus very clear that the African concept has a strong impact on the liturgy of the funeral services.

Among the points mentioned there are positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect centres on co-operation and unity among the family members. In the OT we are also reminded of Jacob who requested that his body be buried at his place of origin in the land where his fathers were laid (Gen 49:29). For the African it is

important to know where the bodies are buried. Nevertheless one sits with a problem of how to make a burial service a kind of a mission service and a liturgy of hope, so that the minds should not focus so predominantly on the deceased but on the future (resurrection). It should also be noted that African people bury the deceased with a blanket or the skin of the slaughtered animal -- and if it is a child died from illness it will be buried together with its medication. It is thus evident that African people do have hope for the future life. Yet an important difference resides in the African's conceptualization of this: the ATR believes in the spirit that dwells and rules while the Christian believes in the rest and resurrection of the body.

This calls attention to the issue of the night vigil. This issue has been introduced in some detail in chapter 6 (that deals in detail with the aspects of the funeral services). African people strongly hold on to night vigils simply as a tendency. It also appears that most of the churches are actively involved in this procedure to the extent that members of a family would feel offended if there were no evening prayers. They would feel even more offended if there were no night vigil on the last evening before the burial. It flows in the minds of such people that it would be better if they could hear more about the life of the person than the fact that he or she is deceased. The basic comfort appears to be in knowing how good this person was and that such a person has left a name behind and will not easily be forgotten. This could also act as comfort to the family: to know that they will in fact have a great ancestor, especially if such a person was an adult male. While the night vigil is such an important aspect among the African and most of the different denominations there should be a new praxis developed so that the focal point can shift to future hope instead of the current predominant focus on the deceased. Moreover this praxis is necessary so that the glory and honour will go to God, not predominantly to the deceased.

11.11.3 The liturgy for the marriage ceremony

African people are very sensitive to and about their tradition. For most of them it is not about being legally married but about being traditionally married. *Lobola* stills plays a very essential role in African traditional marriages. It appears very funny that

parents would allow their children to stay together with “*vat en sit*” while they would nonetheless deny them marriage simply because the *lobola* was not paid and the African way of asking for a woman was not practiced.

The traditional way takes place in the following manner: The fiancé’s relatives/delegates have to go visit those of the woman to be married and they have to undergo some negotiation. Only after this procedure may the marriage take place. Marriage is there to bring families together mainly with the idea of extending them. There has to be children in a true and typical African marriage. People only see the role of the church as a means of blessing the marriage so that the marriage should be known at the church, and not truly to make the Lord a direct part of marriage. This is a matter that has to receive attention in the next chapter. The question that will have to be answered is as follows: how can the liturgy be constructed in such a way that Christ can truly be made part of the message? This should be a liturgy that is not only about preaching the message but a liturgy that in a way also helps the couple to focus on God and realise their full dependence upon the Lord.

Due to the fact that liturgy is not only about the order of worship service but centres on all the activities of the believer, the preparation and the reception should also form part of the marriage ceremony. It has to begin somewhere. Hence one can make mention of the form of the premarital counselling, the process of the ceremony itself from the home of the bride and that of the bridegroom to church building or the place of blessing, depending where it would be. The reception and the form it takes should also be considered. For instance personal experience has shown a few wedding ceremonies in the resort of Synod Soutpansberg (among the Bavhenda and Shangaan) that had a different structure than those of in the resort of Synod Midlands. The people of Soutpansberg Synod are more religious in their wedding ceremonies. They would not sing any traditional or cultural songs but only religious choruses and songs. In other words their wedding ceremony becomes a religious ceremony. The character of joy, dancing and praising God remains in the centre of the whole occasion. This is only in the case of the weddings of the Reformed Churches. The traditional weddings have a different character. The issue is that among the Churches in Synod Midlands there is no distinction between traditional

and religious marriages. The two are combined to make a total and often rather tasteless mixture. A new model will thus have to be developed for the Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands, a model that will strike a better balance between their culture and their religion.

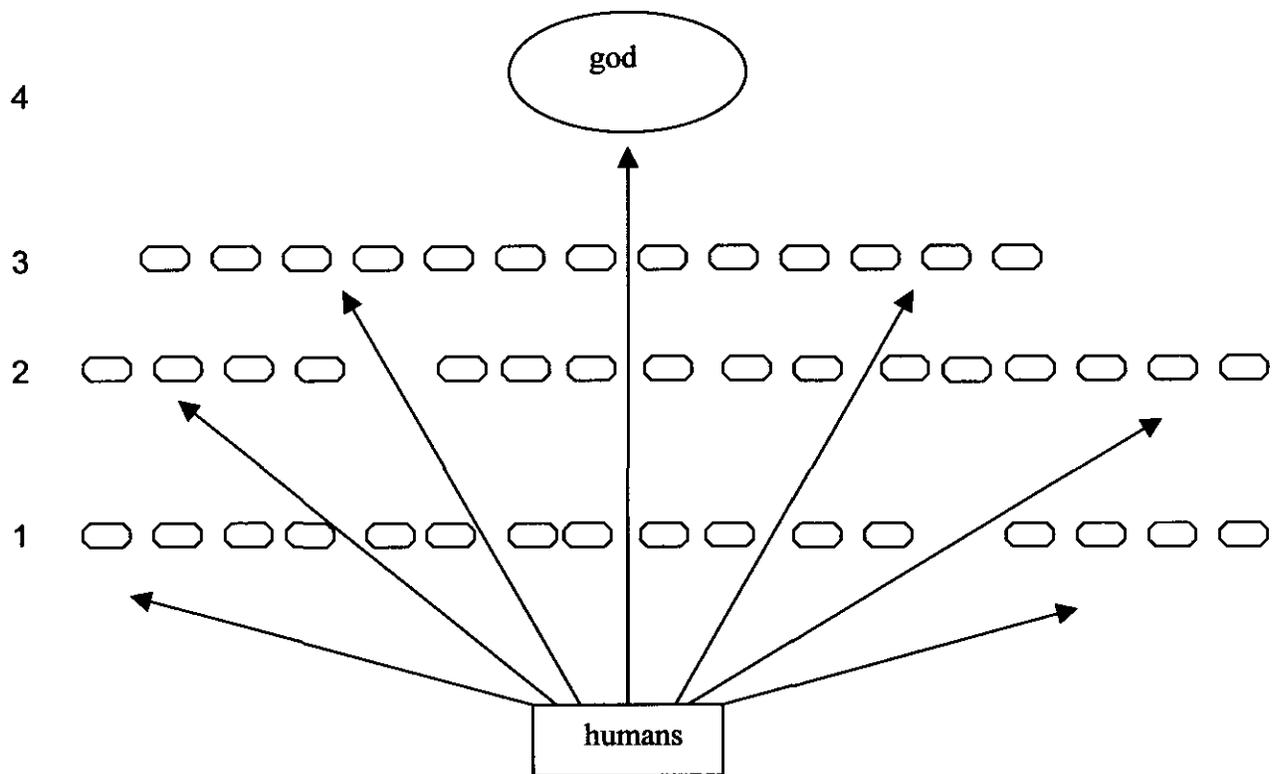
11.11.4 Concluding remarks

The people who play the leading role in the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands and even in South Africa are men. They decide what God says about worship and they have the final word on that. The women simply have to follow and abide by the decisions. In the African tradition women still do not have a say in most matters. This is the case especially with regard to the Reformed Churches within the resort of Synod Midlands. No member questions the decision taken by the Synod, especially those who are not in any position to do so. It should also be noted that people who truly have a say are those who have high positions, businesses, money and a status in life. If one looks at most of the Church Council members such people are more influential in meetings. Their word is heeded in most cases. In some instances even after a decision had been reached by the council it would still be pending on what a person with status who has not attended the meeting will say.

Culturally this is simply an acceptable procedure. There are people whose voices count more than those of others. A decision does not always depend upon the value of argument but more on who argues: *Lentswe la kgosi le ahelwa lesaka* which means "we build a kraal around the king's word". Such a person's authority is not easily questioned because of his status and influence. It should also be noted that majority rule is still functional among the members of the Reformed Church in the resort of Synod Midlands. The *ubuntu* concept plays an important role. People do not want to do things that will hurt other people intentionally. There might arise two groups in the church which are against each other when it comes to certain issues. What remains is that many people will simply join the one or the other without truly understanding what the conflict is all about. "We do things because others do it. We have to be uniform." This is a basic concept among the African because they are

taught in initiation to share even in the suffering of the other. The concept of equality and sharing is still a basic concept.

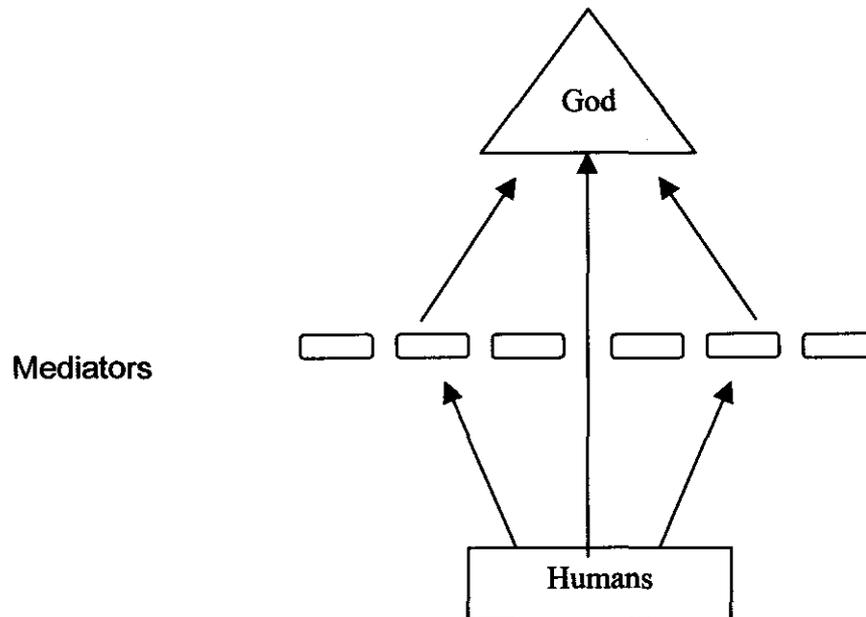
11.11.5 Inferred picture of the African worship service:



There are different levels that humans use in communication with divinity. The first level will be that of the living divinities (this *inyangas*, the prophets, the *sangoma*, the chiefs and kings). The second level is that of the ancestors. This first department is also largely dependent on the second level, that of the ancestors. After a problem has been identified the first level will consult the second level together with the people involved from the lower level. If no response comes forth, the gods third level of the demi-gods or eventually the fourth level – that is god/God? – will be consulted. When an offering is made to one of the levels it all depends on whether the offering is accepted or not before consideration is given as to whether to take the issue up to a higher level. The further the level the more remote the divinity becomes from the people. Humans nevertheless enjoy access to all these levels on his or her own

without having first to go through any of the other lower ones, despite the fact that humans would pay more respect to the level of the ancestral spirits, which they believe to be closest.

11.11.6 Inferred picture of the Reformed worship service as reflected in the information empirically gathered:



The first picture (of African worship) appears very direct and simple. However it has its own complications. In the first place it indicates that the worship flows from humans to God. God is therefore only the object and in this regard do give direction in worship. Humans should be pleased in how they worship God. It is one-directional worship.

The other problem with this worship is that it is not complete because it flows indirectly to God, especially in critical moments. In very serious moments even members of the Reformed churches people would still want to pray through the ancestors because at such times they are not that sure whether God does hear them directly or not. It thus becomes a moment of doubt and insecurity; hence they fall back on the idea that the best will be to speak to God through the ancestors. Many confessed Christians still use the confession, "God and the ancestors helped me".

Apparently if they do not add, "and the ancestors" the ancestors will feel unhappy and would not help them in future troubles.

11.12 Conclusion

It has been clearly indicated that the worship service of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands need serious remedy or else the damage will be increasingly harmful – especially in this time of religious pluralism and relativism which also has an impact on how people worship God. Many people believe that you can serve God in any way because all roads lead to him. Hence one sits with the problem of syncretism which has a negative influence and secularism which makes the worship of God very worldly. The intention with the next chapter is to come up with a new model that will be functional as a remedy and a replacement of the existing one.

Section C: Praxis-theory

Chapter 12

12. Hermeneutical critical integration of the basis and meta- theories to infer practical theoretical guidelines

12.1 Introduction

Section A has dealt with the basis-theory which centres on the principles that were derived from Scripture, history and tradition. Section B has dealt with the empirical theory which included the meta-theory which, in its turn, centres on the information gathered from literature dealing specifically with culture and inculturation. It has also arrived at the empirical guidelines that were gathered from the interviews that were conducted in four congregations in the resort of Synod Midlands. This section -- Section C -- is the last and it attempts to construct a new praxis of theoretical guidelines as well as a new praxis as such for the congregations in the resort of Synod Midlands as found in the next chapter.

12.2 Method

The method that will be used here is to be found in Zerfass as specified by Heyns and Pieterse (1998:35-36). This is where a critical hermeneutical interaction takes place between the basis- and the meta-theories. This model leads one from a particular praxis to a new theory. Such a new theory is open to amendment and new theological concepts may be generated in this process of incorporation. Yet a theory has to become a new praxis. Thus the aim will be to produce a theory that is true to Scripture and which nonetheless remains in touch with the cultural setting. This new theory will be placed into the context of the worshippers of today in the Reformed churches in the resort of Synod Midlands with the intention to focus, improve, support and direct the new praxis that will be introduced (see Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:81).

This section will also describe the strategy that will be utilised to implement this new praxis.

To understand this better Heitink (1999:202) argues that the Christian faith works from the presupposition that people can indeed be changed and that our society can be renewed from the eschatological perspective of God's Kingdom. Heitink takes his approach from Calvin's viewpoint on the church. Calvin states in his *Institutes* (IV.1.4ff) about God's work that *the church must be the mother for those who have God as their Father. There is no other way to enter into life unless that mother conceives His children in her womb, gives His children birth, nourishes His children at her breasts, and lastly, unless she keeps His children under her care and guidance*". Calvin further states that "...our weakness does to allow His children to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives".

Having this in mind members have to explore the different talents God has given them. The church should not be like the servant who knew that he had a hard master, who reaps where he did not sow and who gathers where he did not scatter seed but even so decides to hide his talent underground to rust and does not make business out of it (see Mt 25:14-30).

12.3 Work plan

The first thing that this chapter will attempt is to analyse the data gathered from Section A and Section B. The basic - and meta-theories as found in the materials of these sections will be linked so that a critical hermeneutical interaction may be made in order to formulate first the praxis theory and then the new praxis.

12.4 Data analysis and interpretation from the basis principles

It has been mentioned in this study that liturgy has the function to transform culture. Hence this section will also amend the findings of the meta- and empirical theories in

line with the basis-principles, showing the weak- and strong points in the present situation.

As has been mentioned in chapter 8 the basic principles are as follows:

- 12.4.1 God initiates worship and stands in the centre of liturgy.
- 12.4.2 A worship service is a meeting that takes place between God and his people, the people and God and the people mutually -- all this happens in the exalted Christ.
- 12.4.3 God's Spirit and Word direct all liturgical aspects.
- 12.4.4 The sacraments always accompany the proclamation of the Word as a symbol and sign of God's grace.
- 12.4.5 God's holy presence fills his congregation with glory. Hence worship has to be in truth and in Spirit. Praise, adoration, humiliation and awe accompany every aspect or element of worship.
- 12.4.6 Liturgy is an earthly activity with a divine nature symbolising a heavenly liturgy that will be perfect. Hence liturgy always has to strive for this perfection. In this way culture should be transformed fully by the liturgy in order to reach this divine nature.
- 12.4.7 Liturgical music is a Spiritual, verbal and emotional element that proclaims, exalts, rebukes, comforts, motivates and inspires.
- 12.4.8 Funeral services are used to comfort and encourage people about the future hope for a new life.
- 12.4.9 God who instituted marriage also gives guidelines on the order of wedding ceremonies because they take place in his presence.
- 12.4.10 Christ not only always accepts wedding invitations but is also prepared to become the main host in the wedding ceremony (forever).

Each of these principles will be related first and once more to the other principles that gave rise to it. After this the meta-theories and empirical perspectives that correspond with each of these basic theories will be made clear.

12.5 Critical hermeneutical interaction

12.5.1 God initiates worship and stands in the centre of it.

12.5.1.1 Basis-theoretical principles that gave rise to this:

God stands in the centre of all worship. He gives the blueprint of worship. He is the Initiator of true worship. It is thus clear that worship does not originate from humans. Hence worship is about and centres on God.

12.5.1.2 Corresponding meta-theoretical perspectives

The ATR is a primal religion, orally transmitted, flexible and tolerant. It is an integral part of life in primal religions. The ATR may be monotheistic, pantheistic or polytheistic. The god of the ATR created but does not sustain the universe. He is not worshipped but used. He is approached in prayer only after the failure of other intermediaries (see 9.8.4.2).

12.5.1.3 Corresponding empirical perspectives

The positive findings from the interviews indicate that God is the origin of worship through Jesus Christ and through his written word. God is present through his Word and Spirit to guide and direct the worshippers. God watches in joy over his children worshipping him and thus protects them.

The negative findings from the interviews indicate that God is not believed to be personally present. He is a passive spectator of the service. Worship is viewed by some as originating from humans, by other as originating from historical figures in the Bible and by still others as originating from the New Testament. For another group the origin of worship is unknown (see 10.4.11 and 10.4.12).

12.5.1.4 Interaction

Ecclesiastes 12:13 states: "Fear God and keep His commandments: For this is the whole *duty* of man". No human can ever understand God unless He reveals himself unto such an individual. God had to reveal himself to Moses in a bush of fire and in different ways. He revealed himself to the prophets in different ways. God reveals

himself to His children through his Son Jesus Christ. When Philip in John 14: 8 requested from Jesus to reveal the Father to them, Jesus responded that whoever saw him, saw the Father. We know Jesus through His Word and Spirit. Through the proclaimed Word the Spirit teaches us about and reminds His children of everything that Jesus has taught (John 14:26).

Unless the Spirit reveals God to His children it would be impossible to know the origin of worship or even to understand the role of the Father within worship. It is essential that humans should look at themselves from above. A human being cannot understand himself or herself well unless he or she examines himself or herself from the light of Scripture. Calvin's view in his (*Institutes* Vol.1.15; Online) is correct here: that humans can only understand themselves well if they look at themselves as God looks at them. With this in mind it becomes very clear that a human being is not divine: he or she is mortal and sinful and God is immortal, divine and righteous (see 11.2.1). Hence a human being is not autonomous and does not deserve worship. God is the only one due to true worship. Humans have to worship God as He desires and not as humans choose for him. Moreover there is no other god than the God of the Bible. The ATR is a distortion of the true God and the true religion. So is every other religion that teaches against the Christian faith.

12.5.1.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

12.5.1.5.1 God should stand in the central place of worship as the Alpha and the Omega of all worship.

This guideline may be applicable within various elements of worship such as the following:

- *Votum*: The *votum* is the congregation's proclamation and confession of its full dependence upon the Lord who created heaven and earth and who remains true and faithful to eternity. The *votum* in every instance in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands is carried out solely by the liturgist. Consequently it is regarded as a mere formula with which to begin the service. To bring God back to the centre of worship it will be necessary to make the *votum* belong to the people and

not to the minister alone. This can be done by interchanging the method of speaking the *votum* with singing it. This implies that the *votum* may sometimes be chanted or sung by the congregation and other times spoken by the liturgist. This interchange will prevent formalism in the liturgy and thus contribute to make it dynamic. Through the method of singing the whole congregation would participate in calling upon God's sole presence in the worship service. All members would thus confess God as Creator and through this confession acknowledge that there is no one else from whom or from which they can receive help.

- **Blessing:** God also honours himself by the blessing that follows the *votum*. This blessing is an immediate response from God in which He promises that
 - His grace will save the congregation.
 - He will give them peace of mind.
 - He will have mercy on them.

- **Announcement of the Law (Ten Commandments):** The unique character of God that further motivates why only He deserves the central place in worship may be emphasised before reading the Law, or just after the reading of the introductory part of the Law. God is unique in the sense that He is unconditional. God's imperative always rests upon His indicative. Consequently the indicative -- namely that God takes initiative and that His Commands follow only on account of what He has already accomplished -- should be emphasised. For this is opposite to how the African gods operate in most instances. They operate on a *do ut des* basis (I did so that you may do). Africans first have to serve their ancestors (see 11.2.4.6 and 11.2.4.12) so that they may win the favour of their gods or ancestors.

One may therefore rightfully argue that while the African lives in fear and in suspension on what to expect from spirit world, the Christian lives in thanksgiving of what God has already done in his or her live. Christian worship is thus a true response to God as the Object of worship. Such worship is what Paul refers to as "living self-sacrifice" (see Rom 12).

- Music: to fix the focus in worship songs must be made only to God. It should be kept in mind that God is a jealous God. He claims supreme and sole worship. It is a tendency of many African people nowadays to use the same choruses used to praise God for mortal human beings. Two songs may be used as example: *Morena Jesu, ha ho na ya tshwanang le wena* "Lord Jesus, there is no one like u". This chorus was referred to the ex President Mandela as follows: Nelson Mandela, *ha ho na ya tshwanang le wena*" *Morena Jesu* was replaced with Nelson Mandela. This simply equals Jesus to Nelson Mandela because this song makes no distinction in quality or character between the two. Jesus and Mandela are simply placed under the same category.

The second example is that of Hymn 17 in the *Lifela tsa Sione* verse 1 which states: *Ea itšepelang Molimo le botšepahi ba Oona. A ka hla lula ka khotso, hara tšiu tsa mefuta. Mookameli ya renang o tseba seo re se hlokang.* The word "Mookameli" is replaced by the IPCC (International Pentecostal Church Choir) as "moemedi". *Mookamedi* means "the one who is above" and *moemedi* means the "representer/mediator". In Southern Sotho "the Mediator" is translated as "*Moemedi*". The IPCC calls their founder "Ntate" (father) or "Moemedi". Where the Christian hymns refer to Christ, they make the same hymns to refer to Modise, their founder.

12.5.1.5.2 Quality time should be spent with God

God should be approached at any time, anywhere and in any situation. He should not only be served on Sunday at church but every day in life and in all life's spheres. He should be worshipped at home, in the market place, in the taxi, on the sports ground and everywhere. God should be the first priority in worship.

To apply this guideline in a practical situation one may think of the following instances:

- Prayer: Quality time for prayer should be made during the worship service as well as at home. Two ministers once complained that I my prayers during the church

service were too long. Truly speaking these prayers were not long for most of the congregation members. The problem was that they had some other matters to go and complete after the service and for this was the reason why every liturgical element seemed too long for them. Because African people enjoy what they are doing, they should be left to communicate to God freely and not in a hurry. In church every necessary aspect should be touched through prayer and in this way all problems should be addressed.

The method through which God is approached is prayer (see 2.4.1). Communication with divinity is not a strange situation to the African people. They have various ways of approaching the divinity, either through sacrifice as Israel or through verbal communication which can be viewed as prayer. In the traditional and typical way of communication, the person who makes the sacrifice in the family will lead the communication and the rest will simply assent to what has been said. Hence it is not African that all communicate simultaneously. All of course sing together. The prayer of the individual is the plea for the whole. Members have to attempt to experience the presence of God in the worship service. In this manner a true, divine meeting between God and His people becomes facilitated. He is prayed to through His Son Jesus Christ and not through the ancestors. He listens when the Holy Spirit prays with and for His children and when He teaches them to pray correctly.

In addition to what has been mentioned about prayer as communication the element of thankfulness also occupies an essential place in prayer (2.4.1.6). Every good that happens in the life of the African is allocated to ancestral intervention. God is far off. This element of thankfulness shows that African people are a thankful people and they know that communication with the divine is part of their existence (see 9.8.4). The challenge that is placed on the church concerning this is that it should teach more about the contents of prayer. People do not understand how, why and to whom to pray. When communicating with the ancestors they open their eyes. They fail to understand why they have to close their eyes when speaking to God. They are not sure whether they can pray anywhere and how they should go about this. True teaching on prayer can be

very advantageous to African people as they are acquainted with the practices that accompany prayer.

- Devotion at home: During the devotion at home, things should not be done quickly in order for the family to watch TV programmes. Most of the TV programmes should be replaced with prayer time and communication among family members should be promoted. In the devotion as well as the family gatherings it would be fine to focus on God's honour.

12.5.1.5.3 God should receive sole worship and honour

Worship should bring delight primarily to God and secondly to humans. Worship should not be structured in such manner that humans become excluded from finding happiness in its aesthetic nature. Yet the argument holds that a human being can only enjoy worship when God delights in it. The opposite is not a condition for a true and acceptable worship. Simply to worship and make it a matter of take it or leave it will be mere self-flattery. True worship seeks to honour God as the only God. Christianity as a unique religion has no room for multi-religiosity and plural religions.

In a practical situation one may think of the following:

- Sacrifices to ancestors: Because a great number of Christians still adhere to practices of ancestral worship, members should be taught to worship and fear the living God only. During the June school holidays of the late eighties the researcher used to sit with his parents around the fire. Out of interest he inquired of his parents whether ancestors truly come and partake of that brought to them in sacrifice. Both parents were merely speculating: they were not convinced of how that could happen. He further inquired about the necessity of bringing such sacrifices to the ancestors and even here the response simply rested on tradition.

If the ancestors cannot eat what is brought to them, the possibility of their assistance to the worshipers can be doubted. God does not need animal

sacrifices. His Son was sacrifice enough on our behalf. He delivers salvation through faith. Indeed conferences should be held to debate this issue. Teaching will be one of the greatest methods to combat this problem of ancestral veneration. Sermons should help put the attention of the members on honouring God.

Hence, the ATR in the real sense cannot be accommodated among Christianity. Jesus Christ is the only Way, Truth and Life, no one has access to the Father except through the Son (Jh 14:6). In comparison with the ATR god, the Christian God is not remote and only present after other intermediaries have failed. He is a God of love and who commands on how to be worship. He reveals himself through his living Word. For this reason God should be approached from the onset and one should trust him at all times and in all conditions. God is complete and does not need help from the ancestors or the dead. This idea that God has to be helped and that He does not help his children directly should be preached against. The administration of the sacraments with their wonderful promises may also contribute in combating ancestral veneration because they focus us on the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. During the administration of the sacraments it is essential to highlight the once and for all sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

12.5.1.6 Conclusion

Only God deserves true worship. He is the alpha and the omega of worship. True worship is only as He prescribes. Worship that becomes human-oriented swiftly turns into formalism, pluralism and confusion.

12.5.2 A worship service is a meeting that takes place between God and his people, the people and God and the people mutually -- all this happens in the exalted Christ.

12.5.2.1 Discussion on the basis-theoretical principle about the meeting between God and His people.

God called His church into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9). Jesus Christ is the Head of his church. He stands in the centre of the NT worship and the

worship of the present time. The NT Church always gathered in the name of Jesus Christ. Miracles were done in His name, baptism was performed in His name and even demons were exorcised in His name. The resurrection of the Lord is like the pivotal point in the Theology of the NT. This gave the disciples and the NT church more reason to worship God and to believe in his promises (see 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.6 and 8.4.7).

12.5.2.2 Meta-theoretical guidelines

People of the ATR like the Christians also make use of intermediation. The god(s) is (are) usually the last resort after failure from the rest of the deities. According to the ATR the deities enjoy differences in status on various levels. They range from higher deities to ordinary spirits and ancestral spirits. In the visible world they exist as mediators, kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine men, witch doctors, diviners and mediums. With regard to the position of the deceased they believe that only good spirits or people qualify as intermediaries and the deceased must have received full funeral rites. All these deities receive the status of Christ. They are saviours, protectors, helpers and mediators. In the syncretistic ATR Christ is simply viewed as one of these mediators and He does not enjoy a special place (see 9.8.4.2.9-9.8.4.2.12). God does not save his children on ground of their good acts. He saves his children by grace through faith. And this is a gift from God lest anyone should boast (Eph 2:8-9). The ATR teaches that one has to do favours unto the deities in order to receive good luck or fortune from them. The Christian religion differs from this: God saves through grace alone. All that people have to do is to live lives of thanksgiving unto the Lord for his grace and mercy. No human being can in fact pay God back for all His riches unto His children (Rom 11:33-36).

12.5.2.3 Empirical perspectives

Positively viewed, Jesus is the Centre of worship. He speaks with power through his Spirit and Word. He is sent by the Father to be present in the service and to encourage, edify, guide and protect His children. As King of his flock He enjoys the worship with his children (see 10.4.11).

Negatively, Jesus is viewed as a passive spectator in the service who is simply there to report to the Father. This implies that Jesus is only present to look after His children to protect them while they participate in His service. The consequence of this view of Jesus as a passive spectator is that the relationship and the meeting between God and the people turns inactive (see 10.4.12).

12.5.2.4 Interaction

It is evident that most of the members of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands only have a formalistic liturgy without clear understanding of its contents. This is one of the reasons why even the role of Jesus Christ within the worship service is not understood. Christ can in no way be equalled with the ATR deities. He is the only Way, Truth and Life. There is no other access to the Father but him (Jh 14:6).

Jesus is also the resurrection and the life for his church. This gives his church a guarantee of everlasting life. He is the chief cornerstone and he is elect and precious and he who believes in Him shall not be confounded (1Peter 2:6). He is there to reveal the Father to His children. He is in the service to lead His children because we are in fellowship with him. He is there to pray for His children as He has been praying for his disciples in Jh 17 (see Rom 8:34). He is in no way a passive spectator who is present simply to report the service occurrence to the Father. There is no need for Christ to report the service to the Father because the Father is present with His children in the worship service.

12.5.2.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

12.5.2.5.1 Jesus Christ should remain the only means to the Father

Hebrews 2:17 states that Christ had to become like His brothers and sisters in every way in order to be a faithful and merciful High Priest in His service to God so that the people's sins should be forgiven. A striking issue of this verse is that Jesus is referred to as our Brother. He differs with us in the sense that He never sinned. He was faithful and merciful to the end and for this reason He differed from other high

priests: He did not have to sacrifice animals to save God's children, much less himself. To the contrary: he became a sacrifice and as a result He was given a name above all other names and it is only through him that there can be true communion and communication with the Father. God has called the church into fellowship with him. We thus stand in fellowship with Jesus who is both human and God. He understands God well and He also understands humans very well. There could not be any better way of reconciliation between a human being and God than through Jesus Christ.

Practical application:

- Ancestors as mediators: Jesus Christ should not be approached as a far-off God who is only a spectator during the worship service. This can be corrected in sermons, catechetical instructions and the usage of hymns that proclaim Christ as the only means to the Father. It is evident that many cannot distinguish between the persons in the Trinity. They all accept that there is one God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- but for most of them there is no distinction between the persons.

This problem in identification complicates matters. If Jesus is the Father as well as the Son then there must be another means through which God can be approached and that will be through ancestors. Hence the teaching of the Trinity which is totally ignored in sermons should be re-emphasised. This also gives more motivation for the church to train ministers of the Word to teach people to truth and not mislead them any further.

The new experience in Bible instruction will change the life-view of the members and distract their minds from ancestral veneration. Personal experience shows that many people are very willing to attend Bible studies and learn more about biblical truths. People are tired of a cheap-line gospel. Ancestral veneration should be crushed to the bones: straight-forwardly and without reservations. One cannot serve two gods simultaneously. For this reason members who practice or even partake in matters related to ancestral veneration should be placed under church discipline. The Biblical doctrine that fights ancestral veneration should not be compromised (see Colossians 2:20-3:4).

12.5.2.5.2 Worship services should be carried out in Jesus' name: he is the Head of the Church. All members should recognise that no meeting can take place outside Jesus Christ. This means that as much as the New Testament did everything in the name of Jesus, the church in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit still has to glorify Jesus and deem him as the only hope of the church.

Without a head there is no direction. African people are used to leadership. They have great respect for good leaders. They are loyal to them in most respects. Hence the saying *lentswe la kgosi le hahelwa lesaka* ("we build a kraal around the word of a king"). If Jesus Christ can be acknowledged and accepted as the only Head drastic changes would take place in the lives of people. Members would experience Jesus' presence in the worship service and in their life-liturgy.

Application:

➤ Status in the church:

In most of the Church Councils there are senior elders who are regarded as *hoof ouderlinge*. This concept of *hoof ouderling* gave rise to an inferiority complex among other elders who are "junior". An equally vexing problem is that of status in church offices. The minister is regarded as the highest with the highest authority, followed by the elders in rank. The elders are above the deacons and the deacons assume the lowest status. If the *hoof ouderling* fails to attend a meeting, in most instances the decision taken would be invalid until they come and receive his approval.

The responsibility of the minister is to teach Christ as the only Head of the Church. He should also teach what it means to be Head in a working relationship, in marriage and in all spheres of life. This should happen in conferences and camps. It is wise that even the minister should assume a humble position so that his status should not be questioned. He has to be a humble potential follower even though he is a leader. Members should be taught to respect their leaders and leaders should be taught to treat the flock of the Lord with care and respect. The relationship has to be reciprocal so that it should not be a boss-servant relationship.

12.5.2.5 Conclusion

There is no church meeting where Jesus is absent. Holy believers only meet God and each other in the exalted Christ: that is, no Christ, no meeting with the Father! Any other gathering with a different intention and motive is not a holy gathering of holy believers (see Belgic Confession 27, H.C. Lord's Day 21). The Church of Jesus Christ can still boldly move forward like a mighty army without fear of the enemy. As Head of His Church, Jesus Christ is still in full control. He promised that He will take care of His Church and will not let the devil snatch from him what the Father has given him.

12.5.3 God's Spirit and word direct all liturgical aspects and provide direction

12.5.3.1 Basis-theoretical principles

Prophecy (proclamation of the Word) receives a greater emphasis in the New Testament (3.12.15). The Word always had to stand in the centre of worship (8.1.2.7 and 8.1.6.3). The Word of God should stand above ostentation, pomposity, aesthetics and other things (8.1.2.7, 8.1.6.3, 8.1.7.1). The moment anything becomes lifted above the word, the church loses its true mission. This has been clear in the medieval period. It remains a very important aspect that the word of God should have its rightful place in the worship service. God's Word leads people to praise and worship. It makes people to pray. In relation to the working of the word it has to be clear that the Holy Spirit leads the church to true confession. No human being can say Jesus is Lord unless he or she is inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). The word of God also calls people to true confession. Confessions were important for they gave rise to the doctrine of the New Testament worship and belief (3.12.16).

12.5.3.2 Meta-theoretical principles

The god of the ATR does not demand love and does not give laws on how to be worshipped hence the tolerance and the flexibility in the religion. The African people

decide how they have to worship god. The pattern of worship depends largely on the situation and the deity involved as well as the requirements for the specific worship or sacrifice. Everything is a matter of oral tradition. Children grew up with this religion as part of their culture. Hence it is not always possible to distinguish among Africans what is religion and what is culture (see 9.8.4.2.5-9.8.4.2.8).

12.5.3.3 Empirical perspectives

Positively seen, God makes use of ministers of the Word. He inspires them through his Holy Spirit, to inspire, convert and discipline the church. The Word is the central element of the worship service. The Word of God edifies, comforts, exhorts, instructs and leads in all truth. The Word is above all elements but it does not make other elements minor: they all play a role in the worship service. In fact the Word of God gives direction on the place and function of the other elements of the liturgy (see 10.4.25).

12.5.3.4 Interaction

The word of God serves the church. It guides her through the Holy Spirit in all aspects. God chose to lead the church through the Spirit and word. If only the word is emphasised the church will still encounter problems because no one is able to understand the word unless God illuminates minds through the Holy Spirit. The reading of the word of God should be emphasised from childhood. Children growing up in houses should know that it is God's principle for every family to read the word of God and live by such instruction. If this is not the case families will be disasters – as is the situation among many today.

12.5.3.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Sola Scriptura should be re-emphasised in the Reformed Churches. God's word has to assume its rightful position, namely to exhort in and out of season. God's word should be used properly to address all issues that are contrary to the will of God and that are against His truth. God's word should be the sole measure of discipline in the Church.

Implementation:

- Honour the word of God. For the word of God to maintain its rightful place it is wise that people should be well-trained to understand it. The basic problem is that most of the elders are allowed to preach their own sermons when ministers are not around. The majority of these elders are not well trained and have little understanding of the word of God. The tragedy is that they are allowed to proclaim the word even under such conditions. This is the cause of great harm in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. The more the minister equips people in all truth with the word, the more they become untrained. The situation is at times worsened when the minister is called by a combination of churches and he only becomes available to a given church once a month.

Ministers have to take the word of God seriously and equip their elders well in proclaiming it. Moreover the Church Council should be taught the seriousness of the word of God so that they should stand in awe and fear of the word as holy. Elders should be more and more encouraged to make use of sermons that are already available although many hold the argument that they are also led by the Holy Spirit and therefore they do not need a minister of the Word to help them. This argument causes many churches to be without a minister and some of them even go further: they do not intend to call one soon. If only people would have honoured the richness of the word of God they would have understood the need for someone well-trained to feed them with spiritual food.

God's word occupies an important place in the church of Jesus Christ even today because its revelation gives light (Ps 119:130). It is a lamp unto our feet and a light in our path (Ps 119:105). However one can only have true insight of the God's word if He illuminates it through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the primary Author to guide and lead His children in all truth and He is the only one to remind His children of the teaching of the great Master Jesus Christ (John 14:26).

12.5.3.5 Conclusion

Put the word of God aside and you will have chaos, darkness and trouble in the church. Nothing can replace the word of God. The word of God is a two-edged sword which just knows where and how to cut. Moreover the Word of God should not be diminished to fit the desires of people. It has to be proclaimed in and out of season. Everyone has the task to witness but there are people called for the proclamation of the word (Rom 10:14-15). This is the only means for the church of God to remain standing.

12.5.4 The sacraments always accompany the proclamation of the Word as a symbol and seal of God's grace

12.5.4.1 Basis-theoretical principles

Sacrifices were replaced by prayer and the breaking of the bread which was regarded as essential for the early meetings (3.12.11). In the New Testament the breaking of the bread is not easily separated from the Word service: the two form an inseparable unity (3.12.14). In the Reformed tradition two sacraments are recognised, namely the sacrament of the Holy Communion and that of the Holy Baptism. The sacraments play an essential role and have to be honoured. However they never have to replace the proclamation of the Word (8.1.5.4 and 8.1.6.4). The function of the sacraments is to give flesh to the word.

12.5.4.2 Meta-theoretical guidelines

In the ATR ancestral spirits need to be satisfied through sacrifices and prayers. They are addressed through prayer, snuff, African beer and animal sacrifices. This is what the Southern Sotho, the Tswana and the Pedi refer to as *mpho ya badimo* or "gifts to the ancestors". Elderly people are the ones who usually do the communication with the deceased. The slaughtering is mainly for the deceased on behalf of the living. No sacrifices are made to the living. These sacrifices are made in order to appease the departed and this will make them gain their favour (see 9.8.4.2.7 and 9.8.4.2.12).

12.5.4.3 Empirical perspectives

Positively, the sacraments remind His children of the work of Christ. The sacraments strengthen our faith. The sacraments confirm our covenantal relationship with Christ (see 10.4.22)

Negatively viewed, one is baptised because of fear of (not to be confused with holy reverence for) the Lord. Baptism is an anointment. Baptism is there to add more people to the church and helps His children to belong to God (see 10.4.23).

12.5.4.4 Interaction

When coming to issues of sacrifice the first thing that comes to the mind of the African is ancestral sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ is not regarded as different from sacrifices for the ancestors. The sacrifice of Christ may be seen as a sacrifice for sin that deals with heavenly issues. But the sacrifice of for the ancestors is for daily issues, things that happen here and now. These sacrifices have to protect one against evil spirits and give the family fortune and take away bad luck. The sacrifice of Christ is not understood in this context among the African.

One may reason that African people ascribe a certain function for each and every element or ritual. For instance the sacrament of baptism will be conducted to make the child a church member and to make him accepted. The Holy Communion has the magic function of blessing people. The real functions of the sacraments are either unknown or disregarded because of ignorance.

The fact that African people ascribe meaning for every sacrament or ritual in the church emphasises the issue that African people are more ritualistic than liturgical. This fact also gives more reason why make African people to adhere to the ancestral venerations. It is evident that African people have no problem with syncretism. They easily accommodate these practices in the church, at home and in society. They do not draw a straight line when it comes to these issues.

12.5.4.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Sacraments remain holy and visible signs and seals instituted by God so that through their use Christians may have a better understanding of the promises of the gospel. The function of the sacraments is to seal these promises unto them. Sacraments help Christians focus on the once-and-for-all nature of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who forgives sins and grants everlasting life.

Traditional Africans very rarely do things on their own. They always contact others and thus work in groups. For instance when they make a sacrifice to the ancestors it always takes place after consultation with some of the family members (see 11.2.4.9 and 11.2.4.10). African beer and snuff accompany the sacrifice. Some are poured out to the ground to *ba fatshe* “those under the ground” and this is followed by a plea for help and words of thanks. The ancestors are not personally present but it is believed that they consume some of the elements sacrificed to them and that they delight in that.

One learns from this that African people have no problem in issues of faith and they truly uphold this to such an extent that if anyone teaches against ancestral veneration he or she becomes an outcast in the African context. The motivation for this is that such a person is seen as disloyal to his tradition and culture. Such a person will always be viewed as one with lots of misery and woe.

Application:

Followers of the ATR forget the Bible teaching that those who are alive know that they will die but the dead know nothing: they have no further reward and even their memory is forgotten. Their love, hatred, and jealousy have long since vanished -- never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun (see Ecc 9:5-6). (A solution to this problem is discussed in paragraph 12.5.2.5.1.)

God gave the church his Word. The church has to proclaim the Word to the world. In particular the promises from the word have to be sealed. The function of the sacraments is exactly that. God through his Son Jesus Christ instituted the

sacrament of the Holy Communion to help His children on the way (see 12.1.4). People do get hungry and tired. God always feeds His children with spiritual food to keep His children going -- we do not need to go to the ancestors for help but rather believe in the spiritual food God gives his children. The bread reminds His children of the body of Christ that was shed and the wine reminds His children of his life-giving blood. God's children remain strong on the journey and they can always go an extra mile through the strength their heavenly Father gives them through his Son.

Approach to sacraments:

- Sacraments should be approached with conscience. The sacrament of the Holy Communion should be approached with uplifted hearts so that our minds should be where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father and to which the confession of our faith points us. To achieve this the sermon should be so easy that even younger children should be able to understand it. Many of the members still need to be fed by milk and are not yet ripe for spiritually tough food. Consequently one should read a formula in an instructive manner: analyse all its basics, ask questions about it and explain it. Experience shows that this method is exceedingly better than simply rushing through the formula only to invite the members to the table afterwards. It is better when people understand the reason for the table before they approach it.

God is against people who use the holy sacraments and still hold on to their traditional beliefs that are contrary to the His word. Paul says in 1Cor 10:20 that sacrifices that are offered on pagan altars are offered to demons, not God. One cannot eat at the Lord's Table and also the table of the demons. And one cannot drink from the Lord's cup and also the cup of the demons. This is to make God jealous and no one can stand his anger (1Cor 10:21-22). These arguments testify all the more that the church has to proclaim against unbiblical behaviour seriously.

Another potential means of remedy to this problem is by forming Bible Study groups and through house visitations. If sufficient time is spent to discuss these

problems regarding the sacraments people will learn to fear God increasingly and become wise in religious matters.

In the Reformed Churches children are not yet allowed to partake in the sacrament of the Holy Communion. Children have to be prepared to have a clear conscience before they partake of this sacrament. They have to be taught and guided in truth and in faith while they grow. The African way of helping one to pass from one stage to another is referred to as initiation. Initiation is more than just a cultural issue. Biblically one would also speak of initiation when one refers to the process of a person who becomes converted to Christianity. Initiation may be viewed as a process of moving from one stage to another from childhood to manhood (see 9.8.3).

In the context of the Reformed Churches the process of initiation may refer to Bible -, Catechetical - and Confessional instruction. Catechetical and confessional instruction receives very little attention among the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. This is one of the reasons why people show so much misunderstanding of what worship means in truth and Spirit (see 12.4.5). Most of the ministers in Synod Midlands pay little or no attention to children. They are more concerned with elderly people. Some of the ministers will focus more on the confessional class which only takes place for one year after which the catechumen becomes a full member upon confession.

In the Afrikaans-speaking Churches the catechumen goes a long way before confession. He or she has to go through intensive catechetical instruction which is more about the whole Bible and Church history and the teachings of the Church. Among the Churches in Synod Midlands nothing or truly very little is taught about Church history or the doctrines of the church. From the early stages only the Bible is taught and in most cases by someone who also has very little knowledge about the Bible. In most churches there are no prescribed books or lessons for the catechism. Everyone is free simply to teach what he or she thinks to be best for the children. It is evident that this is not only the case in the Reformed Churches but also in many other denominations. This surfaces clearly when one listens to the "Sunday School Programme every Sunday" on *Lesedi FM*, 08h50. It is always

a Scripture portion that is read followed by a few questions. There is a no teaching or issue that the child may take home with him or her.

It is thus obvious that much still needs to be done regarding church initiation. Church initiation should help people grow from spiritual immaturity to maturity, from a secular view on mankind to a divine view and it should focus solely on this important duty.

One realises one's newness in Jesus Christ the moment one understands oneself in the light of Scripture. The implication is not that one should learn nothing about one's culture. The argument is rather that in his preparation the liturgist should construct his liturgy in such a manner that it would transform culture and yet also leave room for the effect of the culture on the liturgy. This means that people should not be channelled in how they should worship. Worship should be free. The minister must preach the gospel in such manner that members should hear God speaking to them directly (see 12.1.3).

The correct biblical teaching and the right approach will overcome wrong teachings that emanate from African concepts about ancestral spirits and witchcraft and the initiation school (also referred to as mountain school or *bergskool*). However it would not be advisable to throw away the baby with the water. For instance one may make mention of the concept of sharing that is taught in the initiation school. Sharing is a biblical teaching. The OT prophets taught it. Jesus gave His life on our behalf. It is the task of the church to revive the concept of sharing and respecting one another as brother and sister (Acts 4:32). There need not be suffering people among fellow believers. In Sotho they say, "*bana ba no motho ba arolelana hlooho ya tsie*" which means "the children of a man shares the head of a locust". The implication is that if there is not enough food in a house, whatever is available for the children to eat should be shared, even if it is as small as the head of a locust.

This is an example of how culture may contribute positively towards religion. In circumcision one speaks of *mophato*. The *mophato* is a group of youth of more or less the same age taught to live together, survive together, share together and

even fight together at the circumcision school. In a similar vein the church may make use of cell groups with people of the same age. They should be given certain projects to run in the church, under supervision. Such projects should be viewed as part of their initiation. It should teach them co-operation and working together. If possible some of these projects have to be carried out in such a manner that success should be dependent on solely on co-operation. In this way the church can teach in a positive manner the African concept of "*motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*".

However the emphasis in this kind of church-initiated cultural activity should differ from the norm. It should be based on the fact that humans love each other because God loves them first. God loved His children first so much that He sent his only-begotten Son to die for them (Jh 3:16). Hence God's children cannot do otherwise than to love one another as Jesus loves them (Jh 13:34 and 15:12). This love should be shown irrespective of one's own clan or tribe. It should accommodate people of different colours, tribes, clans and nationalities without any reservations. In a practical sense one may think here of instances of welcoming visitors and new members. One may also think of organising camps and conferences. Each of the members of a group should have a task and each task must be essential for the success of the trip or the conference. This would teach youth members to be responsible so that when they are mature they should not come with excuses for their failures. Instead they should be brave to face challenges and to know that they are all recognised and equal. The moment emphasis is placed on one individual the rest would suffer from an inferiority complex.

If African people grow up in the true biblical initiation and are indoctrinated in this truth they will die for their Christian faith since they do indeed die with and for their African faith. There will then be no reason to go for sacrifices knowing that there was one sacrifice done once and for all for all our misery and woes. The advantage is that African people are a religious people and it is easy for them to be guided to grow in Biblical truth (see 9.8.4).

To return to the sacraments like that of the Holy Communion at this stage: it could be understood in a better context when one thinks of the bread and the cup in terms of sharing. African people do not have a problem with sharing. Hence the Holy Communion would seal their unity in Christ in a better manner.

Concerning baptism, many members view it as a means of getting true membership in the church. Through the same approach of proper teaching and training a problem such as this can easily be overcome. The Son seals through baptism that He has washed the member and that he or she is sinless before the Father. The Holy Spirit says that He sanctifies God's children and He will dwell in them to guide, comfort and lead them in all truth (see 12.1.4). For this reason it remains essential that the Word should always precede the sacraments, to give them true meaning. Sacraments should thus never stand independently of the Word. They are there to seal and confirm the Word of God in our minds and hearts. One may argue that sacraments both supplement and complement the Word of God.

12.5.4.6 Conclusion

It is very good that God did not leave humankind on his own. He also opens a means of communication with him. One no longer has to approach God with animals but even the poorest among the poor can bring a sacrifice to God – this is the body as a living sacrifice. Everyone can open his or her mouth and praise God through Jesus Christ. The comfort is that Jesus Christ always prays for His children. The Holy Spirit prays with His children to help us in our weaknesses when we do not know what really to pray.

12.5.5 God's holy presence fills his congregation with glory.

Two of the final basic theoretical principles are treated together here because they cannot be separated readily.

12.5.5.1 Basis-theoretical principles

In true worship God's presence and glory are experienced by his people. When this takes place fear and adoration accompany worship and prayer. These two elements of fear and adoration always accompany gladness, joy and happiness in true worship. If there is no fear God is not worshipped because it would mean that God's glorious presence is not experienced. Through his servants God himself communicates with his people. This means that He makes himself audible through them and makes His presence known in this manner. The element of joy and gladness remains continuous in NT worship (3.12.5). NT worship shows much fear and awe regarding God. The fear of the Lord gives boldness to proclaim the word. The disciples deem it preferable to die in honour of the Lord rather than in fear of humans.

12.5.5.2 Meta-theoretical guidelines

African people have different experiences in their encounter with divinity. There are different kinds of mediators in the visible world. We have kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine men, witch doctors, diviners and mediums as mediators. These mediators have their own and different experiences in their encounters with the spiritual world. All these encounters are accompanied by fear.

The doctors, diviners and mediums will usually go into some kind of trance. Some would get into deeper trances and others not, depending on what kind of divination the individual practices. *Sangomas* (doctors) will get into a very short trance when they call upon the spirit of the ancestors to reveal to them what they have to say concerning their patient. The *dinohe* (diviners) and *mathuela* (mediums) do not throw bones, unlike *sangomas*. They work from the state of being in a trance before they can say something. All they would need is a profusion of music and dancing. They have special students who carry out these tasks.

12.5.5.3 Empirical perspectives

Positively viewed, the Holy Spirit dwells in His children as a second Comforter and Advocate. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, strengthens and edifies His children. The Holy

Spirit makes His children understand the Word better and gives power to proclaim the Word best. The Holy Spirit helps His children to pray to God correctly (see 10.4.14).

Furthermore, also positively viewed, members have to listen actively to the Word and prayer. Members have to confess with their hearts and mouths. Members have to worship God with singing and praising. Their response for what God does and did unto them should also have among other elements those of singing, praying, contributing and serving God (see 10.4.19).

There are no negative findings with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit. In relation to the word the only negative aspect is that God does not speak to His children because He is Spirit. A spirit cannot speak (see 10.4.14).

Negatively viewed, when it comes to the role of members: some of the members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands do not yet recognise that they are actively participating in the church. Hence they recommended that various incongruous items have to be introduced for members to be able to participate in the service. For example they may insist that members have to sing with the choir to be able to participate (see 10.4.20)

12.5.5.4 Interaction

The church, like the Samaritan woman who was with Jesus at the well, seeks a place at which to worship instead of struggling for the right manner of worship. However the manner of worship occupied a significant place in the NT worship. Places of worship were not as such a subject of concern because they could easily utilize houses for this purpose. While the OT Israelites highlighted the place of worship Jesus emphasises the manner of worship. In the instances of the place and the manner of worship a key aspect remains: both entail the "presence of Lord".

People worshipped in Jerusalem because they believed that it was the place where God was. Jesus clarified the matter that it is not about Jerusalem but that wherever

people worship, they should do it in the Spirit and in truth. In a situation where worship is practised in the Spirit and in truth God's glory fills the place.

When God's glory filled the Temple in the OT worship people knew that He was present. Whenever God's presence was experienced in the OT signs of fear and adoration were evident. When God gave His Ten Commandments people asked Moses to be the one to speak to them, not God. They could not stand His glory. During the transfiguration in the NT Peter, James and John became dumb-founded when they experienced the glory of the Lord. Peter spoke words which he himself could not understand. The Holy Spirit of God eliminates the self from people and makes them immediately take cognisance of God's presence in their midst. The joy and happiness that are experienced in the worship service is never without the fear and adoration that accompany them. If God's glory is not encountered no one will confess that God is present.

The Holy Spirit brings life into the worship service. He revives dead bones and makes the service to take on a transformed pattern that brings glory only to God. God has to be praised in all respects. Music, dancing and freedom in the service are aesthetic elements in a worship service. They are elements that bring life to the worship. They are excellent for complementing the worship service. The qualities of adoration and awe indicate that people truly marvel at what God is doing. This makes them humble and not proud. A worship service that goes with pride also lacks God's presence. God is not impressed by lip service but by service of both lip and heart.

A true worship service would have order and time for everything. There would be time for prayer, singing, listening, responding, requesting and for confession. These periods within the liturgy should assume their right places to the honour and glory of the Lord.

In the African context people want to experience the presence of the Spirit. When one visits some of the Pentecostal churches one finds great emphasis on the presence of the Spirit. People would go into trances, some would shout and some would fall. It is believed that because God is there, the situation can no longer be the same. However much depends here on whether one refers to the Holy Spirit or

“spirit” when speaking of these instances. The biblical teaching is that the Spirit is of order. Nevertheless His work cannot be limited or channelled to work only in a specific way. He can make people cry, shout and scream. In most if not all the reformed churches it is the case that if someone should fail to control his temper when the Holy Spirit functions in his heart during the worship service and happens to scream, such behaviour would be described as misbehaviour and unchristian. Things in the reformed tradition should be very calm and sober as if nothing great is experienced.

Due to this tranquillity and control in the worship service many members of the Reformed Churches doubt the presence of the Holy Spirit in their denomination. It could be for this very reason that they visit or even join other churches that claim to work with the Spirit. It is evident that more has to be done in the context of the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the lives of people.

12.5.5.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Members should attend worship services being prepared to meet the King in truth and in the Spirit. The Spirit calls upon true worship. It is crucial for a dynamic liturgy to make members aware of God’s presence in their midst. A dynamic liturgy must make people confess according to 1Corinthians 14:25: “Truly God is here among you!” Members have to learn to seek for God’s presence during the church service and be prepared to worship God truly. As unfortunate as it might sound many members go to church for different reasons: to be buried by the church when they die or so that the church may help them get ID’s or so that their children may be baptised -- or simply to impress other people. This problem is what the researcher encounters regularly in the congregations he serves and it is also what is encountered by many other ministers.

Application

➤ Service of preparation:

Members have to be taught to introspect themselves before every worship meeting. This introspection should not only be done in preparation for the Holy

Communion but in fact for the every service. People have take cognisance of the fact that they are about to meet God and to stand in His glorious presence. This should call upon the individual to have a different approach to meet God. This approach is accompanied by joy and adoration. The fear is a holy fear and the joy is an expression of the excitement caused by the knowledge of meeting him (Ps 122: 1): *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the Lord's house'"*.

Before the service commences there should be a service preparation. Members should come at least half an hour before the worship service begins. During this period, under the guidance of the Church Council, they should praise and worship God. This service should include songs of praises and prayer requests for God's blessing and guidance in the service. There should also be prayers in which the Holy Spirit is summoned to be present in the service and to fill the whole service so that there should be a spiritual encounter with God.

Nothing in the worship service would be for the self. God would be glorified from beginning to end. The liturgy would become dynamic because God would be speaking to His children. It would be of no value if the service begins while members are still in an unprepared condition to meet with God. It would be like gathering for a war unprepared or guiding people on a journey not knowing where they are going to: they just follow because they heard that the ship is moving. This will be a so-what journey. Through regular teaching members have to know that the worship service is not an ordinary meeting. It is primarily a meeting summoned by God to meet his children. Therefore it is a holy gathering of holy people to meet the holy God in the exalted Christ.

This spiritual experience has to be visible in the expression of all the members: this includes the liturgist. The liturgist has to be wounded by the word and touched by the Spirit. He cannot uphold his feelings forever. Whatever the heart is full of the mouth should run over with. On the one hand ministers should learn to be part of the congregation and not to act as merely unaffected messengers between God and His people. The emphasis should be on God. On the other hand members should stop being mere spectators during the worship service. They should become active participants. They should not be ashamed of the

Lord. They should fear God more than humans and thus worship him in the Spirit and in truth. A true worship service is characterized by one of the following two responses: either "these people are all mad" or "surely, God is here among these people!"

12.5.5.6 Conclusion

The Church cannot worship God in the Spirit and in truth unless they experience the glorious presence of the Lord. If the Spirit is not functional in the church then we have a church without a soul. The church of God cannot be separated from the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit keeps the church moving. The church of God is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. When one stands in God's presence one cannot be the same again. God is not just nobody. He is Almighty, He is King of kings and he remains forevermore. Hence fear and adoration remain outstanding characteristics of a true encounter with God.

12.5.6 Liturgy is an earthly activity with a divine nature symbolising a heavenly liturgy that will be perfect.

12.5.6.1 Basis-theoretical guidelines

The holy Kiss became introduced as a symbol of solidarity (3.12.18). The worship services began with a salutation and ended with a benediction (3.12.19).

12.5.6.2 Meta-theoretical guidelines

Chapter 9 has provided a detailed discussion on the culture of the African people. *Ubuntu* is one of the concepts that received attention. *Lebollo* (circumcision) was also mentioned. The *mophato* (initiation group) was also discussed. African people enjoy sharing and living together. There is no problem for a whole family of ten to share two rooms. The bedroom becomes a dining and sitting room during the day. The concept of unity among family members and members of the same clan becomes over-emphasised and would be protected by all means. Other cultural phenomena to bou

found among most African people when they come together for worship are greeting and communicating. Greeting is significant: if one does not greet it would be believed that something is wrong. In most instances men would shake hands and hug and women would kiss. Because common people are known among each other it is very easy to recognise a new face. The process of greeting therefore grants efficient time to introduce and welcome guests and strangers. (see 9.8.2).

12.5.6.3 Empirical perspectives

Positively seen, culture influences the way the African people sing, talk and behave. Through culture one's identity becomes evident before God as well as for one's fellow men (see 10.4.29).

Negatively viewed, culture is separated from religion and is thus totally excluded from the church. Culture is something that can exist on its own without being affected by other influential dimensions of life (see 10.4.30).

12.5.6.4 Interaction

One cannot speak of worship outside culture. It has been the aim of this study to indicate that such worship is artificial. True worship accepts the worshipper as he or she is. Worship should transform the worshipper within his or her culture. Culture, however, should also have an influence on worship. The two give shape to each other.

One thing that may really give further strength to the African culture is the concept of *ubuntu*.

A clear understanding of the concept of *ubuntu* is therefore necessary (see 11.2). "*Ubuntu*" is a positive matter yet people have to guard against tribalism and they should have respect for individuality. It does not mean that if an individual achieves good things in life and becomes prosperous and successful he or she is a witch or uses witchcraft and is thus egocentric. One also has to learn to accept that God blesses people differently and that everything one possesses comes from grace.

Communalism can be as bad as individualism. Nothing should be over-emphasised above the other. Individuals should be able to make independent decisions and should be able to live in close co-operation with society so that the decisions made should also benefit society. The Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 becomes very applicable here: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets". To those who applied the Golden Rule in their lives the King would reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). If as African people we treat one another equally and not racially and nationally we would truly live out the *ubuntu* and give glory to God alone (12.4.1) and not to God and the ancestors (see 11.2.2.3)

12.5.6.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Culture should be promoted in the church. Members should practice *koinonia* for the well-being of the church. Members have to learn to be themselves and not put on a different blanket which hides their identity. True *ubuntu* must be embedded in the love of Christ. When practised in the church it should cross the boundaries of race and tribe. Culture should have a positive role in transforming worship as much as worship can transform culture. God rejoices in true and not artificial worship. African people are to become *au fait* with the fact that to have respect for the deceased is biblical. However worshipping them is sinful because God is a jealous God and does not tolerate idolatry (Ex 20).

Application

➤ Prayer:

African people can be said to live very close to God. Children grow in respect and they are taught to have respect for the elderly. Hence, a child will not speak to his father or mother in a standing position. That would show disrespect. One may thus argue that regarding prayer, it would be more appropriate to sit or kneel, when communicating to God. Moreover, contrary to the Pentecostal way of praying it is advisable to maintain the style of a single person praying on behalf of the rest or allowing more than one person to pray but one after the other. When

kids address their father they would not all speak at the same time, but one after the other or the other would simply assent to what the one has already mentioned.

Another aspect that has to receive attention is that of humility when praying. It is a tendency nowadays that many African people think that when you expect God to listen to your prayers then you have to shout or scream. God is holy and Almighty and whoever approaches him must do it in fear and respect. If one would make a humble request to an earthly king how much more to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

➤ *Ubuntu.*

The concept of *ubuntu* may be applied to the diaconry. Because African people enjoy sharing they should be allowed to give freely in the church. The concept of brotherhood should be promoted. For instance after the service or even before service there should be a group that will take special care of the needs of people. They should be members who help the deacons in identifying the poor and the needy and in this way promote *koinonia*. It should not only be the task of the deacons to look after the needy and those in prison. It should be the task of the whole church, i.e. every individual. Mt 25:31-46 is a clear indication that all would be answerable before Jesus on the judgment day regarding their love of and care for their fellow beings. Practising *koinonia* would contribute in fighting individualism and would encourage people not only to meet during church services but also during the week or at least to give a call during the week for good wishing.

➤ *Sharing:*

Sharing cannot be separated from the African because even at home and funeral services most family members still prefer to eat together from the same plate. Point 12.5.4.5 indicates that African people do not have a problem in sharing with special reference to the Holy Communion cup. It is evident that culture also transforms liturgy. Heaven would be more interested to African people if all would

share together and no one would look down on the other because of his or her race and status in life. Failing to share with your fellow brothers is usually an indication of rejecting them. It is for this reason that the *initiation* teaches that African people have to learn how to share. This sharing is more than sharing material things. This kind of sharing includes the pain and the hardship the fellow brother or sister is going through. This becomes more relevant when one thinks of sharing Christ's cup of suffering. Members would understand better that they share in Christ's suffering when they all drink from the same cup. If individual cups would be used the whole idea of sharing would be lost.

➤ Preaching:

The method of preaching in the African context differs from the Western pattern of preaching. The Western approach is more systematic and tends to lead from one point to the other. The African way of preaching forms more of a cyclical or a spiralling pattern. Many examples are used to emphasise a specific point that has to be reached at the end of the sermon. This causes the sermon to have a number of repetitions so that people should clearly follow the matter. With regard to this there might be differences because of the education system. Nevertheless many of the too-academic sermons go unheard. People enjoy a good sermon that is approachable and accessible. For instance because of its oral tradition a story-like sermon is more easily understood by elderly as well as younger members. It is advisable for the preacher to be aware of this when preparing and delivering his sermon.

12.5.6.6 Conclusion

Even the few examples illustrated here indicate that it goes without question that culture forms an integral part of worship. Culture becomes better and good when shaped by worship. In the same breath worship is more beautiful if it is shaped by culture. Worship is an expression of the shaped culture and this is where the beauty lies. Ample room should be left for the gospel to preach to culture and transform it. God enjoys worship and can only enjoy it more if people approach him in an original and not an artificial manner.

12.5.7 Liturgical music is a spiritual, verbal and emotional element that proclaims, exalts, rebukes, comforts, motivates and inspires

12.5.7.1 Basis-theoretical principle

Church music must be faithful to the Bible (5.12.1). It has to glorify God in a manner pleasing to him (5.12.2). It must edify the congregation. It should not be individualistic and driven by feelings and emotions. The Word and Spirit should direct it. The edification that comes through it could be by means of sung confessions (5.12.3). The unity of the congregation should be maintained and be evident in the process of the singing (5.12.4). The language should be understandable. The music should be made in such a way that people should sing by heart through the Spirit and with understanding (5.12.5). Church music should have an effect on the one singing or listening. It is not a dry poem recited without comprehending the mind of the poet (5.12.6). Church music should not replace the Word but should provide an atmosphere suitable for the Word (5.12.7). Singing in church should indicate that people are Spirit-filled and because the singers are Spirit-filled it should fill the house of God with glory (5.12.8).

12.5.7.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives

Music is natural to the African. Music is found in the traditional worship of the African and accompanies their rituals and ceremonies. Music and religion are very closely connected. Music is also efficient to express religious belief and feeling. African music is frequently accompanied by body movement and dancing. Without music, dancing and instruments African liturgy is as good as dead. Emotions cannot be raised. Dancing does not only express joy but also pain in crisis. Music accompanied by dance is in most instances an expression of the emotions and experience. Dancing can also be performed for aesthetic reasons and so can the music. In order for the dancing and the music in the church not to turn into mere aesthetic performances it is essential that they have to be oriented toward communal prayer and praise and that they be made responsive to the word and sacraments. In this way congregational music can be integral to a blessed life and provide a foretaste of heavenly bliss. This can contribute to *shalom* ("peace") which at its highest is enjoyment of living before God with one's neighbours and in nature (see 9.8.5).

12.5.7.3 Empirical perspectives

Positive results of the empirical research on the role of music:

Music first has to glorify God. Music revives, inspires and heals. Music prepares for the proclamation of the Word. It gives taste to the worship service (see 10.4.27).

Negative results of the empirical research on the role of music:

If one dies while singing church music one will go straight to heaven. Church music brings one closer to God (this can also have a negative side) depending on one's faith and relationship with the Lord of heaven (see 10.4.28). The devil can also sing and is believed to be one of the greatest musicians but the problem is that he does not believe. It was also mentioned that music acts as a rubber-stamp and dessert after the proclamation of the Word. The word rubber-stamp usually have a negative connotation. If music should be a like rubber-stamp it would imply that the Word is been misused or comes with lies and therefore music is used as a rubber stamp to confirm that. Music should be understood also to have an independent role and not only as confirming the Word.

12.5.7.4 Interaction

There is no doubt about the effect that music has on a person. Studies have made it clear that music has an emotional effect on people. In the empirical study conducted here two of the ministers also mentioned that if there were no music in a worship service it would be very boring [see 10.3.1 (M1R) and 10.3.4 (MR)]. The criteria for most congregation members for evaluating a church service is the quality of the church music sung in that worship service. To some of the preachers music even determines the power of the sermon. If the music is not good it would follow that the sermon could also not have been good enough. Enjoyable music makes a delightful service.

Seeing what effect music has on the church members and especially the youth one has no choice but to reconsider the way the congregation sings or worships God. The fact that most of the African youth today would go for the "vibe" would not

necessarily mean that God is more pleased. Trampling in the courts of the Lord, spreading out hands in prayer, the noise of songs, assemblies and music of harps and the like can be very boring to the Lord (see Isaiah 1:10-15 and Amos 5:21-23). It is thus very important that we do not worship God as we desire but rather as He commanded His children (see 12.1.1).

12.5.7.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Church music should bring glory to God. It should help to re-establish a Reformed identity of singing and improve the quality of singing. Church music should contribute in promoting unity. All members have to be encouraged and motivated to sing together in the Church during worship services. When church music is promoted it would bring harmony in the music. Church music should be of such quality as to encourage members who have left the church because of music and/or singing patterns that were not truly uplifting to return. Music should be doctrinal in order to teach, spiritual to encourage and inspirational to strengthen and edify.

Practical application

Culture plays an important role even in giving music the right tune (see 12.1.7). To set specific criteria for the tunes of music is indeed difficult. The youth have their way of singing and their own music. Elderly people also have their own way of singing and their own music. Every individual has a different taste of music. In this regard it may be agreed that one man's goose is another man's gender. That which is best for the one might not even be considered by the next person.

➤ Glorification of God:

One of the criteria when it comes to the evaluation of music is that it should glorify God, be understandable and be in the Spirit (see 12.1.8). Roughly speaking the youth no longer use the *Lifela tsa Sione*. They only sing common songs and in most instances even if they should use the *Lifela tsa Sione* they only sing the first one or two stanzas. It is deemed fortunate if they know the whole song because they hardly carry Bibles and hymn books to the church service. They no longer

memorise long hymns. They simply go for short and easy choruses that everyone can sing. The instruments they use are considered more important than the words. The song or hymn must be sung in a tune that will be in harmony with the “bit” and the “clock” (bell) they use as instruments (see 1.2.1). These instruments have become very common among the African people to that extent that they are used in most of the mainline churches. The “charismatic” churches make use of “keyboards”, bands and guitars and some other noisy instruments. The Zionist churches, except ZCC and IPC, make use of a drum which they refer to as “*sgupu*”.

It is beyond doubt that not all of the older generation is pleased with the “bit” and “clock” used during the worship service. Drums and bits are common among African people. Yet for the past years they have not been used to accompany music in the main-line churches. The use of instruments made a number of people uncomfortable in worship services. As a result of these various factors and considerations there is now a new development in most of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands. The youth have introduced choir groups in the congregations. These youths prefer to make music solely with their voices. Many of the parents find themselves within these groups because they grew up with this kind of music, referred to as *monyanyako*. These youths can bring back the typical Reformed Churches’ way of singing. The difference will be that songs will be sung with enthusiasm, according to the traditional tunes that make use of bodily movements and loud voices without instruments that overpower the voices to that extent that the words are not heard.

➤ **Choirs:**

The best advice will be to help these groups develop so that every congregation should utilise choirs. These choirs should not be used in the sense that only they would sing in the Church. They should be employed as organisers of music and as people who will take the lead in the Church music to be of a high standard. The ministers of the congregations can have contact with the conductors or music committee and advise in choosing “Psalms” and construct good tunes that may be used in worship and in worship services (12.1.8). This should be a joined

effort. Choirs would not only bring back the “Psalms” to the Reformed Churches but they would even become a vehicle of the proclamation to the world. It would be equally good if the Churches would then record music so that the gospel could be promoted via radio and television transmission. It is very painful for ministers of the Reformed Churches who preach on Radio not to be able to call on any Reformed Church congregation for a hymn as ministers of the Methodist, Anglican, Catholic Churches and many other churches do.

This research does not wish to demote the music of the “bit” and the “clock”. It simply calls for a balance between the two. This “bit” and “clock” music can as well be recorded on CD or DVD for proclamation. Yet it also needs serious attention. The youth have to be taught to distinguish between what is right and wrong. They have to be taught how to select music and in what way to sing. The researcher has seen on several occasions how members of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands would behave if they visit a church where other instruments are used. Most of them would not feel at home. Therefore the “bits” and “clocks” should be used in a balanced manner. They should be used in such a way that would not lead to disorder in the worship or to making so much noise that the “mind”-aspect becomes lost in the process. The spiritual aspect should not be emphasised beyond the rational part so that balance should be maintained. It is very easy for the whole service to become bizarre and make most of the members feel uncomfortable. If there is a clear balance between the different ways of singing all would feel welcome and at home in the church of Jesus Christ and all would sing to the glory of the Lord.

This research holds that Church music, which glorifies God and goes hand in hand with the criteria set in 5.12, is welcome in the Church of Jesus Christ. Hence strict measures should be taken to monitor the music because through it is very easy for wrong doctrines to be promoted through it. The classis and the Synod will have to sit and discuss this matter once more because church music has run out of the hand of the Church council members straight into the hands of the members. The members choose what to sing and they choose what instruments to use. The council together with the minister simply follow without trouble. This does not imply that members should not have a say with regard to church music

but it remains the task and the calling of the council to maintain order and discipline in the church, to guard against any heresy and to see to that the truth is taught.

12.5.7.6 Conclusion

Music in the Reformed churches can become recognised and unique when it sticks to and upholds the Biblical truth. We also have to teach and give the world the riches we possess and not only take from it and hand it over to the church of Jesus Christ. It should be a matter of transforming the world and not conforming to it. Music has to be promoted and given character. As much as music proclaims the gospel it should also be ministered to especially in a time when all sing whatever the mouth can utter. Members have to learn to evaluate music so that not only the members have to enjoy the music but God himself.

12.5.8 Funeral services are used to comfort and encourage people about the future hope for a new life.

12.5.8.1 Basis-theoretical principles

Burial was considered to be essential in the Old and New Testament. Not to be buried was a curse (6.5.1). Mourning at the funeral service is permitted on the grounds that hope accompanies it (6.5.2). The funeral service (death) should remind people of the joy and new life awaiting them in the New Jerusalem (6.5.3). The proclamation that accompanies funerals should not only be about the new life with God and but also about comfort in lost (6.5.4). The funeral must be a triumphant march to express the joy of the victory of the deceased (6.5.5).

12.5.8.2 Meta-theoretical guidelines

A good and descent funeral service or burial to the African is a sign of respect to the deceased. It partly determines what kind of ancestor the deceased would become but it also shows what relationship the deceased had with the people he or she lived with. Moreover it also functions as a plea from the side of the family to the ancestral spirit to protect them. Funeral services have different customs based not only on the

culture but also on the faith of the people. Liturgy in death situations teaches Christians the meaning of death and it gives them words, images, and rituals by which to speak honestly about death and dying. Funeral services provide God's children with the tools to undertake the task of "dying well". Funeral services are strongly marked by personal life relationships, expectations, and religious ways of behaviour that bring people together. A funeral service brings people together -- despite the fact that it might not be in common faith -- as a community of believers (see 9.8.6.2).

12.5.8.3 Empirical perspectives

Positive:

Jesus himself was buried and this is an indication that one has to be buried. Burial is like sowing a seed: it indicates hope for resurrection. Burial is very traditional: a human being cannot be thrown away like a dog (see 10.4.36).

Negative:

Some of the points mentioned under this category are not totally negative but they may be either negative or positive.

Burial is simply a choice: one may as well be burned. People can simply be left to rot. Burial is there for reconciliation among the living. Burial comforts because it gives an opportunity to hear the Word. Burial comforts because it brings people together. Burial comforts because it gives peace of mind to the bereaved. Burial comforts because it seals contact/communication between the living and the dead. Comfort is received when the deceased is buried properly. Comfort is received when one knows that he or she will be able to clean the place of burial because he or she knows where the place is (see 10.4.7).

12.5.8.4 Interaction

Death should be seen in the Christian context as a passage rite. It is a departure from the land of the living to the land of the dead. This death is not eternal. To the contrary: there is resurrection after death (see 6.5.2 and 6.5.3). The fact that African people view death with fear in their heart is because of their opinion about death (9.8.6). It is difficult for most of the African people to accept the concept of resurrection. They are home and secured in the knowledge that the deceased are just in a different world of the spiritual beings. For them it is a total separation with no hope of meeting again in life unless perhaps in the world of the spirit beings.

It would be unfair to blame the church as having done little in teaching people about death and resurrection. The African churches do a lot in teaching people about the resurrection and the new life in Jesus Christ. There are night vigils and the daily evening comforting services on the last week before the burial. Yet people still fail to comprehend the mystery of the resurrection. They would still espouse their cultural beliefs. In a recent youth conference in Zamdela (18-20.06.2004) questions like the following were heard: "how can it be guaranteed that nothing would go wrong to a Christian who does not follow specific cultural demands?" Here follows some further concrete examples among the many beliefs: it is believed that a newborn baby has to be shown to the moon to wake it from the sleep (*go kuruetsa*). This is a very important rite which means "to show the baby its mate". The moon is regarded as the mate of the new born baby. Moreover if there is no sheep slaughtered for the newborn baby introducing it to the family and ancestors, the child will grow up abnormally and would have a lot of bad luck. This rite is conducted three months after the birth of the child and is called *go ntsha ngwana mo tlung* or *ho ananela* which means "to bring the child out the house" Alternatively: if the family members of a deceased were not purified after some time great bad luck would follow them in life. Despite the fact that these people are confessional Christians they have great fear for the ancestors. They fear them more than they fear God. They do not have a problem following Christ as long as He does not interfere in their relationship with the ancestors. When people confess they simply answer the questions that they are told to answer by the minister. They say "yes" because they are told to. They do not truly understand what it means to get rid of the past sins and to live a new life that is

pleasing to God. Pleasing God only has to do with attending church regularly or belonging to a certain group within the church.

12.5.8.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

Funeral services should always focus on hope for the resurrection of the body. They should give comfort to the bereaved and to the church. They should be used to make it clear that it pleased God to give His children rest from earthly responsibilities and hardships. The liturgy of the funeral service -- through its words, symbols and images -- should help the bereaved and the church to have an experience of the heavenly joy that waits after the resurrection. The proclamation of the Word should maintain or even improve their focus on the victory of Christ over death and His resurrection. During funeral services people's focus on ancestral veneration should be diverted so that God's word should have the final say.

Practical application

➤ Correct teaching:

Upon welcoming new members in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands they are simply taught a few basics or nothing at all about the Reformed faith: they learn nothing or very little of what it means to be a true Christian. It is not surprising to see many Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands growing in number but not really in quality and in faith. Most of these African people hold on strongly to their culture and tradition. It is not enough simply to teach the catechism only. Instead there should be more emphasis on the real issues affecting the African people directly. One has to understand that the Heidelberg Catechism was written within a certain context for specific people. There is no doubt or question that it summarises the whole Biblical truth -- nevertheless African people have their own spiritual issues that are burning and strongly affecting their relationship with God. These issues seriously have to receive immediate attention. They are issues like Christian worship versus ancestral worship, Christian marriage versus African marriage including issues on "*vat en sit* and *lobola*", Christian faith versus African faith and other religions including the issues of sects and indigenous churches,

Christian worship versus African worship, Christian death versus African death and related matters. These kinds of problems have been made evident in chapter 10 where the interviews have been discussed. The teachings should be placed within context: it will not make sense simply to teach about the good of the Christian faith without at the same time being apologetic and polemic. One has to teach the doctrine, defend the faith and attack wrong teachings. African people can be won in this way for the Lord. All members have to be taught these truths and the church council should take it upon their shoulders to see to it that even new members are taught these truths regarding the Word of God. The church should not be about numbers but rather about quality-believers in the Lord.

With regard to the burial ceremonies it must be stated that there will not be any problem provided that the wrong concept of death changes. In fact African people truly know how to bury their beloved ones. They give the world's respect to the deceased. Even poor families try to give a descent burial to their beloved ones. The problem encountered is not that of burial but the beliefs that accompany them. One may mention here the fact that if a baby dies having used some medication it would be buried with the medication in the hope that it would use them beyond the grave, or the fact that many of the elderly people are buried with expensive new blankets in the belief that they would need them beyond the grave. Through the correct teaching these problems would no longer be problematic because people will understand that there is no life in the grave as the Bible teaches. Instead, there is rest. Hence there is no cold or heat or trouble or pain or sickness in the grave (see Ecclesiastes 9:5 that states, "for the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward and even the memory of them is forgotten").

If the teaching about death were correct there would be no necessity for slaughtering after the burial for purification after a month or three (*dithhapiso* or *horo la thapo*) because Jesus Christ overcame death and has conquered it. The powers of darkness have no effect and strength over His children. It is evident that it is not enough simply to concentrate on issues of death during a situation of death. The teaching should be there at the right time when people can fully concentrate and understand it. It is also important to give individual attention to

the bereaved. The general comforting services and night vigils are in most instances missed by the bereaved family themselves. They are usually busy with arrangements for the funeral service and still very stressed. Some of the family members because of the ups and downs associated with the proper burial might not even be at home when the church members arrive for the comforting service. It is good to pray with those few available but those who are busy with preparation also need counselling and prayers to give them strength. There is no use to hide behind work and not truly wanting to face the problem.

It is good that the church sets a specific time for visiting bereaved families. Yet is more important to make special appointments with individuals to understand what impact death had on them individually. Personal experience shows that many of these people sit with terrible pain. When it happens that another family member passes away they start developing hatred and anger against God. The comforting services should thus not be used to replace pastoral counselling to the family. Comforting services should be viewed as supplementary to individual - and family counselling to be done by the pastor.

If one follows this procedure the true meaning of burial would be accommodated. Death would not be a threat to members any longer but they would look forward to dying like Paul, knowing that it would be of profit to them (Phil 1:21). Burial would be like planting a seed that will get rotten in order to give birth to new growth in Jesus Christ upon the resurrection. The joy experienced in heaven would be experienced here on earth for the person who has reached the last mile of the way, waiting at the close of the day. Christians can see funeral services as a gathering bringing them together to come and rejoice in the triumph of the Saviour over death in the expectation of the resurrection.

12.5.8.6 Conclusion

Burial has been practiced in the OT as well in the NT. Burial is like planting a seed and it helps Christians focus on the future hope of the resurrection. Faith plays an essential role during the funeral and in a death-situation. Without faith in Jesus Christ every liturgical aspect will be used in vain.

12.5.9 God who instituted marriage also gives guidelines on the order of wedding ceremonies because they take place in his presence.

12.5.9.1 Basis-theoretical principles

God instituted marriage and takes delight in it hence marriage ceremonies have to glorify God (7.9.1). Marriage is a symbol of Jesus Christ in relation to his church (God in relationship to Israel). Christ accepted an invitation to the wedding ceremony at Cana (7.9.2). As much as wedding ceremonies are family issues they need the church for blessing and the state for legalising marriages (7.9.4). Wedlock binds two people together in Christ and he, who is the guest, becomes the host in the wedding ceremony (7.9.3).

12.5.9.2 Meta-theoretical perspectives

African marriages are always accompanied by big ceremonies of joy and gladness. The ceremonies always involve different parties. Hence marriage is an issue of the family, church, society and government. African marriage is polygynous to combat celibacy and sterility. The reason for combatting celibacy and sterility is to ensure that there will be children to remember them as ancestors when they die. Marriage is a sign of maturity. *Lobola* always accompanies a true African marriage as a symbol of thankfulness to the wife's family (see 9.8.7.2).

12.5.9.3 Empirical guidelines

Positive:

Marriage-celebration is an extension of the moment of joy. It is a calling to people to participate in the couple's moment of happiness. It is a thanksgiving to God for the precious gift received. It is traditional. It is not a matter of must-do. It depends on the financial status of the couple. Christ's presence extends the blessing and the joy of the couple. He supplies the couple with all their needs. Christ's presence brings assurance of light, peace and happiness in the married life of the couple (see 10.4.39).

Negative:

People simply attend for eating and self-enjoyment. Jesus is not needed at the reception. Celebrations are there for unmarried people to get partners (see 10.4.40).

12.5.9.4 Interaction

The main problem encountered today with regard to marriage is the issue of *lobola*. *Lobola per se* is a good thing. It is the pride of every man to pay the bride's price. However: due to the economical context of South Africa today it is not always possible for all young men to afford the *lobola*. Hence this matter will have to be reconsidered. The sad thing is that parents allow *vat en sit* but do not allow marriage by the church or the magistrate if no *lobola* is paid. The problem with the *vat en sit* is that more and more children are born illegitimately. The irony is that the parents accept these children and the situation without any problem while they refuse a legalisation of the marriage. One may ask whether this is not the fulfilment of the prophecy of Paul to Timothy when he says in 1 Tim 4 that the Spirit speaks expressly that in days to come people will depart from faith... and they would forbid marrying...

12.5.9.5 Praxis-theoretical guidelines

As a minister in one of the congregations in Synod Midlands I had the opportunity to wed a couple who had been staying together for more than twenty years and who were above fifty years of age with children of above thirty. Truly speaking the church has to play a greater role in encouraging members to legalise their marriages and have them blessed.

Application

➤ Correct teaching:

Teaching on the importance of marriage may be done through preaching, catechism and conferences. Mention of this should be made especially in catechetical instruction so that the youth may be proud of their virginity. The church has to raise its voice with regard to abstinence from sex before marriage. This is mentioned due to the fact that people enjoy that which was meant for marriage before marriage. Hence after they have tasted and have received the

green light from each other they no longer see the reason for waiting for the appropriate time to enjoy their consummation in a proper way as God has planned it to be. This fact of not respecting each other's body has led to disrespecting the purity of marriage. In most instances people who failed to respect their bodies before marriage fail as much to respect their bodies in marriage. They still play around because they are used to that. Tradition indicates that the wedding veil was used to prove or to testify that the woman to be married was a virgin. It is such a pity to realise that this is rarely the meaning nowadays. It is simply there for beauty and as part of a wedding tradition which has turned meaningless. Even this symbol of the veil over the face of the bride has to be re-emphasised. In this way people will be ashamed to indicate to the public that they did not look after themselves.

It is so unfortunate to see that most young women and men live together as husband and wife in a *vat and sit* relationship with a very clear conscience. They have great children and some even grand-children but it does not come to their conscience that they live in a sinful relationship before God. Some of these people mentioned here are members of church councils. They are leaders in the churches. The church does not pay much attention to this and in some way promotes it. Children of these couples are being baptised and the church does not fight enough against this. Hence many people do not regard this as sinful because the church does not live by the Book in all respects. This problem can be overcome if the ministers uncompromisingly teach the truth and begin with their church councils. In this way one would correctly speak of a life liturgy and not only a worship liturgy. People's lives and relationship should be correct. They should live what they preach. This is the truest expression of liturgy. In addition to other reasons the wedding ceremony actually also calls upon the state, congregation and society to come and witness together with the family that the couple who involves themselves in marriage has taken a vow always to be together and never to leave each other, in richness and in poverty, in prosperity and hardship, to hold and to cherish each other until death do them part. Hence wedding ceremonies should not simply be seen as a feast organised for the couple, it should be seen as a summons to people to come and pray, share and celebrate together with the couple which God joins together.

The church also has the role of accentuating the sanctity of marriage by manifesting God's presence. The wedding ceremony and the blessing that accompanies it should help people to discern the sanctity of marriage. God instituted it for a purpose. God blessed marriage in the beginning and still blesses every marriage that occurs in His name. The implication is that the blessing aspect in marriage should not be perceived as the alpha and the omega of the marriage ceremony as if God will have no further interest in what would take place afterwards and in what preceded. Every aspect should glorify the name of the Lord. Marriage ceremonies should be conducted in such a way that the Spirit should not be extinguished during the ceremony and that the Son should not be blasphemed as Host of the ceremony through unwelcoming behaviour from either the couple, family or the guests. The reception should be likewise. The A and the Z thereof should give honour to the majesty of the Lord. This can be done if God's presence is recognised in every aspect of the wedding. When all people would have departed and would have gone back to their different destinations God would be the one remaining with the newly wed couple.

12.5.9.6 Conclusion

Marriage is holy. It is instituted by God for a purpose. Marriage is also very complex. It has many difficulties. For it to be recognised by the church, the state and society it would go with a ceremony. The ceremony indicates the belief and character of the people. Non-nominal Christians would seek to glorify God in the whole process of the ceremony. Nominal Christians would only care for the blessing aspect of the ceremony. Whatever follows have their final word and there would no longer be a need for biblical principles. Ceremonies that involve God from the beginning to the end always have happy endings. God ever remains present even in times of difficulties when it goes tough in the marriage and in times of joy when the marriage prospers.

12.5.10 Summary

God is the A and the Z of worship. One is a respondent to the worship of God and is fully dependent upon God in every respect. This dependence should be confessed and proclaimed in the *votum* and should be recognised when God blesses his people after the *votum*. God's greatness should even be emphasised when reading the Law or before so that the focus should be upon His delivering power as sole deliverer through His Son Jesus Christ. God's greatness should become evident even in the church music. The liturgist has to select music with understanding so that every liturgical element may contribute to form a unity. The moment the congregation recognises the greatness and the centrality of God they will call upon worship and prayer. This would lead the congregation to have a better recognition of quality time with him in prayer and in devotion. This would also cause the congregation to grant sole worship to him and no longer bring sacrifices to the ancestors.

Jesus is the Head of the Church and its Shepherd. The Head gives direction hence the words of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". There is no way to the Father except through Jesus Christ. There is thus no worship that can please the Father if it does not occur through the Son. The Son carries the prayers of the Church to the Father. Jesus still has full control of the Church and He does not need dead ancestors to help in mediating. Ancestral veneration thus has to be fought against and church discipline should be strongly applied. The church will have to stop compromising with sin and will have to live what it preaches. If Jesus receives the necessary honour as Head people would stop fighting for status because all would know that the Kingdom of heaven is only entered by those who accept it like children. This further implies that the church has to honour and value the name of Jesus. There is no name above His name in heaven and here on earth.

God gave His church the Word and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the primary interpreter of His word. He guides the church through the word in all truth and reminds us all that Jesus has taught it. The Word can thus be seen as the only true measure of discipline. The Word of God has to be honoured. People should not take it for granted. They have to study it and interpret it in the correct manner. Hence people who want to preach the Word should know that they deal with God's Word and not a human's word. Therefore they have to be true ambassadors and speak as if God directly speaks to His children.

God did not give an empty Word to His church. He gave the church His living Word. To seal and to confirm His Word in our hearts he also instituted holy sacraments that may be used by the Church. These sacraments are there to serve the Word and has thus to be used for their reason of institution. Jesus has a special purpose for every sacrament instituted. The sacraments should not be viewed as miracle-carriers. Wrong use of the sacraments can be very fatal to the member as Paul states in the letter to the Corinthians.

Members should worship God in truth and in the Spirit. Worship services should maintain a holy character and should always be Spirit-filled. Where God's glory is experienced members cannot do otherwise but respond with fear and honour. These characteristics have to be evident and help members to maintain a holy sense and to not to get so excited that they even forget that they stand in God's holy presence. This implies that when people pray they would not shout at God because of the fear. They would remain calm and humble. When they sing they would do that with understanding and of course with emotions. But the two would go hand in hand.

The purpose of church music should therefore be to give support to the worship service. Church music should seek to glorify God. It should have a character of edifying the members, indoctrinating them in the truth, exhorting and inspiring them. Worship should have a transforming impact on culture as much as culture should have a transforming impact on worship. Their function should be reciprocal.

Culture should not be separated from religion since the two are inseparable. Culture should , in fact, give shape to the liturgy in the Church. Culture should be visible in prayer, in preaching, in singing and in ways of addressing certain aspects of the service. Respect and *ubuntu* should become more evident in the church. Due to the fact that culture has its black spots, the function of the liturgy should be to clear those black spots and to make it of service to God.

Regarding funeral services the Church should be able to console the bereaved by proclaiming the Gospel. The aspect of resurrection should be emphasised. Funeral services should help the bereaved and the church to focus on the New Jerusalem.

Mourning is good but it should not be without hope for the resurrection. After-tears should be discouraged in all respect and deemed as a heathen practice.

Marriage ceremonies should also remind the church of her relationship with her Husband Jesus Christ. The ceremonies should assume a character that seeks to glorify God. Jesus should be the Host in every wedding ceremony so that His presence should be everlasting.

12.5.11 Final Conclusion

The aim with this chapter has been to emulate an interaction between the various principles, guidelines and perspectives that has been unearthed in this study. That interaction should lead to a new theory that would be used to solve the various problems indicated here. The following chapter will focus on a model for a new liturgical praxis.

Chapter 13

13. A proposed model for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands

13.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a proposed model that can serve as a guideline to churches in Synod Midlands. It would be necessary to keep in mind to which extent and level previous work has been done. The implication of this will be to provide a basis for discussions on the liturgy of the church. This can be accomplished by means of conferences, writing of articles and invitations to different congregations.

13.2 Work-plan

This chapter could be understood in the context of the preceding chapter. Chapter 12 analysed and systematised the information from Sections A and B and by means of a critical hermeneutical interaction it was possible to present a new theory. In this chapter a new model, that will basically be deduced from Chapter 12, will enjoy attention. To put this chapter into perspective the general pattern as followed in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands will first be described. The proposed model will follow and be framed in correlation with the praxis still in use. This is done so that it should be easy to scrutinise the differences and observe the impact of the proposed model on the praxis that is still in use.

13.3 Method

The method that is followed is simply to make use of the order of the praxis still in use. Mention will be made of the elements and a discussion on this will follow, with the proposed model incorporated. At the end of this chapter the model will be indicated in an orderly way. However the sequence of the order will mainly be for guidance and should not be regarded as a fixed prescription. It should be kept in

mind that order is good but should not be fixed to such an extent that flexibility would not be permitted. A non-flexible liturgy would quickly lead to formalism.

13.4 *The praxis in use*

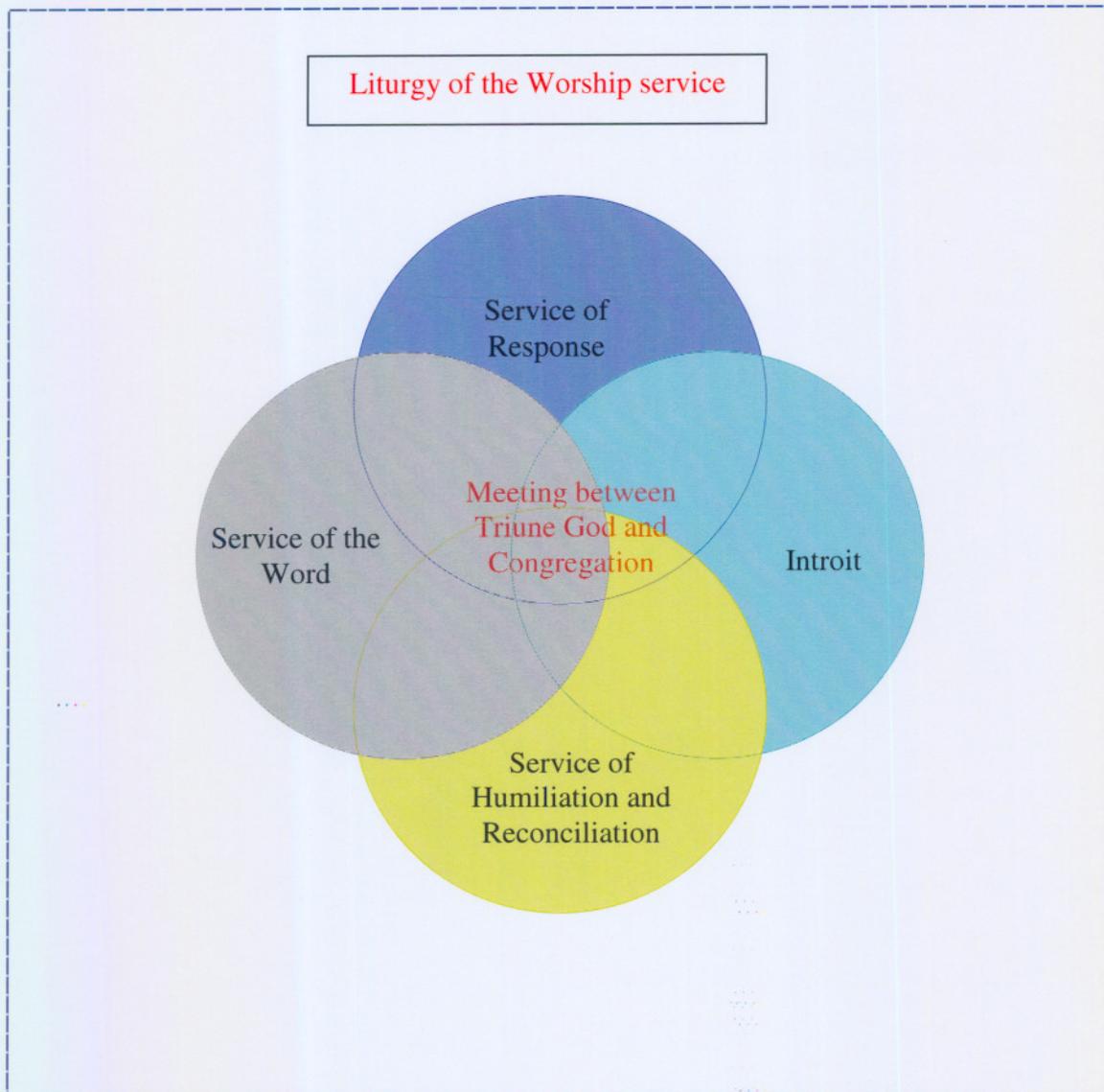
- 13.4.1 Votum
- 13.4.2 Blessing (Greeting)
- 13.4.3 Song of praise
- 13.4.4 Confession of faith
- 13.4.5 Hymn
- 13.4.6 Reading of Ten Commandments
- 13.4.7 Hymn
- 13.4.8 Reading from Scripture from which sermon will follow
- 13.4.9 Prayer
- 13.4.10 Hymn
- 13.4.11 Sermon
- 13.4.12 Prayer
- 13.4.13 Hymn
- 13.4.14 Gifts of love
- 13.4.15 Sending-away greeting

When one looks at this liturgical order one can immediately identify certain shortcomings. In the first place, it does not have subdivisions. It simply follows sequentially and does not follow a dynamic interaction between God Triune and the congregation. This lack of interaction can easily result in formalism, as is the case in the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. To most of the members, as has been indicated according to the interviews discussed in chapter 10, such formalism is in truth non-communicative and thus followed by little or no understanding. One would be hesitant to use the word 'meaningless' to describe this liturgy. Nevertheless, because of the way it is being practised, this is how it is experienced by most of the members.

Different to the division described above, a new division, consisting of subdivisions, is proposed. The subdivisions shape the liturgy and give it a character of communicative interaction, which brings it in line with the core of the definition of Practical Theology. While the above-mentioned liturgy does not follow a dialogue pattern, the proposed one claims to have a dialogue nature.

The 15 elements that form the complete liturgy are divided into four subdivisions. The first is the entrance service (*introit*), the second is the service of humiliation and reconciliation, the third is the service of the Word and the fourth is the service of response (*responsoria*). The Introit comprises normally of the *votum*, greeting, song of praise, and confession of faith. The service of humiliation and reconciliation comprises of acknowledgement of sin, request for pardoning, absolution and instruction in truth. The service of the Word comprises of a prayer for illumination, reading of independent Scripture-reading, hymn, Scripture reading and sermon. And the service of response comprises of a prayer of thanksgiving, mediation, supplication and honouring God. After the prayer a hymn may follow, gifts of love may follow and a sending-away greeting. With such a division in mind, the following model may be proposed:

The diagram below defines the worship liturgy as a meeting between Triune God and His congregation. The meeting has a dynamic communicative interaction. It composes of different services and all these services interact. These services, unlike the traditional liturgy with a non-communicative approach, do not follow in sequential order but are characterised by communicative interaction. This means that these services communicate with one another and call upon one another for action. There could be an interchange of elements. To quote but one example, the reading of the Law can precede or follow the absolution, the confession of faith can either be read during the administration of the Holy Communion, or during the introit service. It depends where and when it would be more appropriate.



13.5 Proposed model

13.5.1 Entrance service (Introit)

13.5.1.1 Before the entrance service

It might be suitable to have a worship team which will focus on the liturgy in co-operation with the liturgist and the choirs. This group could be functional especially in the part of service before the entrance service. One of the worship team leaders might take the lead before the entrance service commences. It could be done in the following manner:

We are here because we are called by God. God wants us to meet him because He came to meet us. But He also wants us to meet mutually in the exalted Christ. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. It is only through him that we would meet the Father and the Holy Spirit.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the LORD's house, and now we are here..." (Ps 122:1-2). Who has the right to go up the LORD's hill? Who may enter His holy Temple? Those who are pure in act and in thought, who do not worship idols or make false promises. The LORD will bless them and will save them. God will declare them innocent. Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors, and the great King will come in, who is this great King, he is the LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, victorious in battle (Ps 24:7-10).

Hymn or chorus: *"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps 118; 24).*

The hymn or chorus may be followed by a prayer that recognises God as the Supreme King who deserves sole worship. One of the members who had been requested to prepare in advance may pray or read a Psalm like Ps 99:1-9.

After this a hymn like Psalm 100: 1-4 may be sung just before the entrance service commences.

13.5.1.2 Entrance service

The schematic presentation in 11.3.1 indicates that worship has its origin from God. He sets the blue print for worship and it is for God in the exalted Christ through the Holy Spirit. If one has prepared oneself well for the worship service before the commencement of the entrance service, i.e. during the preparatory service, one will be well prepared for the meeting with the triune God. In this way the work of the Holy Spirit revealing the Father as Abba would be experienced (Rom 8:15) and Jesus as Lord (1Cor 12:3). The Holy Spirit is also helping God's children in their weaknesses, pleading for them before the Almighty God.

13.5.1.3 Votum

The function of the *votum* is efficient to convince God's children of their absolute dependence on God. Through the *votum* members can confess in a prolific way by singing, for singing is an effective means of expression for the African and not just another method of doing things. The posture that may be used for this might be in a sitting position, rather than in a standing position. In the true sense of the word, African people show respect by sitting or kneeling before elderly people, or people of high status, when greeting or addressing them.

"I look to the mountains, where will my help come from? Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Ps 121:1-2).

Because of the respect and fear in the African, on approaching someone with bigger status, all honour and respect are given such a person. This attitude makes the African fully dependent upon the person high in status. This fits in well with the *votum* and it thus has a place within the African liturgy. The more Christians pursue God's majesty and greatness, the greater becomes our strength to live victoriously. Each day the members of the church need to take time to look away from themselves and their petty complaints and focus their attention on their Creator God. Someone has observed that it is usually not so much the greatness of our troubles as the littleness of the spirit that makes people disgruntled complainers. A worthy starting point is to find inspiration from some part of God's creation. For the psalmist, it was looking at the hills all around him, reminders of God's power and authority. In another portion the psalmist reminds us that in time of need we should flee like a bird to our mountain and there find rest and security (Ps 11:1). Yet the instruction is clear that though we receive inspiration from observing the majesty of creation, our real source of help must ultimately come from a personal relationship with God Himself, "the Lord, who heav'n and earth hath made" (Osbeck, 1990). With God on our side, the perils are unknown but the security is certain.

13.5.1.4 God's greeting and the congregation's response

The liturgist may then do the greeting on God's behalf:

God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ gives you His grace and peace through the mighty work of the Holy Spirit.

Greeting is such an important aspect in the African tradition. It is an indication that one is welcomed and that one has peace with the person greeting. To have a greeting from one in high position even has a greater effect because it is a favour to have access to God. God bestows His children with gifts to be able to have a blessed encounter with him. A beautiful response from the congregation may be to sing this in song of praise indicating full dependence upon God, for example hymn 20 of the *Lifela tsa Sione*

“Rea o boka Morena, re ntse re thabela wena, re sa phela ha monate ka paballo ya hao Ntate. Re pholositswe ka mohau, ka dineo tsohle tse ho wena, reko la hao le leholo le re thabisitse pelo”. “We thank you Lord, we rejoice in you, we live well through your protection. We are saved by grace, with all your gifts (blessings). Your abundant mercy brought joy into our hearts”.

Many other suitable hymns and Psalms may be selected for this element. In most of the congregations visited by the researcher and known to him the confession of faith is said by all as a unity; either led by the liturgist or on their own. This manner of confession would be further recommended in this study because through it the congregation confesses with its own mouth and believes by the heart through the Holy Spirit (Rom 10:9-10). A confession carries more power if it becomes words of a group of people rather than an individual speaking on behalf of people. It may also be done through chanting, which is also very common among the African Churches, like Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic.

13.5.2 Service of humiliation and reconciliation

13.5.2.1 Humiliation

In addition to many functions of the Holy Spirit, He also convicts us of guilt with regard to sin, righteousness and judgement (Jh 16:8). This aspect is very important when we approach the holiness of God because it would lead the congregation to

confess. One may wonder if the whole ignorance on the richness of the Reformed liturgy is not based on the fact that people do not truly experience the working of the Holy Spirit during the worship service. With His presence the congregation would be unable to remain silent about the greatness of God and about their sinfulness before him. Because of man's sinful nature he/she cannot love and serve God in truth unless the Holy Spirit initiates this in him/her. Paul says in Eph 2:8-10 that we are saved by faith through grace and this is a gift from God. No man can boast about it. All of us are sinners by nature and we do not even deserve the grace God grants us. In verse 10 He states that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. This means that even the good works we do, this will include the acknowledgement of our sinfulness, is through grace. God is the one who imparts faith into our hearts so that we may believe. The truth is, being children of God; we would always humble ourselves whenever we stand before the majesty of God.

The liturgist may begin the service of humiliation by reading from one of the following pericopes; Ezr 9:5-10; Is 59:1-3; Jm 4:3-10, 1 Pt 1:13-25, 1 Jh 1:5-2:5 or 1 Jh 2:15-17.

One of the relevant hymns that may be used for this part of humiliation is hymn 86 of *Lifela tsa Sione* stanza 1 and 4:

"Libe li teng, rea li bona. (There are sins that I see)

Libe li re ja lipelo. (Sins that destroy our hearts)

Re llisoa ke libe tsa rona. (These sins make us cry)

Ka bohloko bo boholo. (In very great pain)

Tlosa libe, tlosa litšila. (Remove the sins, remove the evil).

Moea oa ka, o be motle. (So that my spirit/soul should be clean)

Lintho tse mpe kea li ila, (Evil things, I hate)

A 'ko li lahlele kante'. (Throw them far away from me)

Or hymn 408:1 and 3

“Tumelo ke na le eona, (I have faith)

Empa leha ho le joalo (But even so)

Ke ntse ke rapela ke lla (I keep on praying)

O ntotisetse tumelo (Strengthen my faith)

Morena, kea dumela (Lord, I believe)

Fothola ho se dumele (Eradicate my unbelief)

Ntlhahole pelo ka matla (Clean my heart)

Mphe tumelo ya sebele! (And give me bold faith)

There are also a number of relevant Psalms that may be sung interchangeably along in this part of the service: Like Ps 32, 38, 51 or 130.

13.5.2.2 Announcement of the Law

Having sung this, the congregation may then listen to the announcement of the Law as a rule of thankfulness or as directive to Christ or to convince us of sin from Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5 or other Scriptural portions like Ephesians 4:25-5:3, Romans 12:9-21 or portions from the Sermon on the Mount (cf. 12.6.2.2). When reading the Ten Commandments, it would be suitable by way of introduction to emphasise the indicative, viz. *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery”*. Words like these, might be appropriate, *“The LORD introduces himself as our God. He is the one who took the initiative in delivering us from bondage and giving us freedom. He acts first. On ground of what he has done, He gives his commands. This does not work the other way round as with the African tradition. Traditional African Religious people serve their gods or their ancestors, so that these gods may serve them. With God it differs. He first served us so that we may serve him. The African gods or ancestors are served mainly in request for something, but Christians serve God in thanksgiving and never so that they may gain his favour. Now on ground of what God has done, He now gives us his commands...”*

It has been evident to the researcher that most of the members of the Reformed Churches, in which he has conducted services and which he has visited, do not know the sequence of the Commands as they follow each other. It would therefore be appropriate to mention the number of the Law when reading the Law, for example: *“the first Commandment, ... the second Commandment, ...”* In this manner even the children would grow up understanding the Law better. People would also understand better when it would be said of someone; *“s/he has trespassed the seventh Commandment”* or *“s/he has broken the ninth Commandment, when s/he remained quiet while knowing the truth that could have saved her/his neighbour.”*

13.5.2.4 Prayer for the forgiveness of sins

To confirm the announcement of the Law in our hearts, after a moment of silence, Hymn 12:3 of the *Lifela tsa Sione* may be sung as a united congregational prayer:

Khanna joale bana ba hao (Lead now your children)

Ba ee ka taba tsa molao (That they may live according to your commands)

Ebe joko e bobebe (That it may be a light burden)

E sikarolang ka sebetse (Which may be carried undauntedly)

One of the members with prearrangement may be requested to lead in prayer or any other relevant hymn or psalm may be used in this part of the liturgy.

13.5.2.5 Absolution

Something that is truly missing in the liturgy, as it is been conducted in the worship services, is the element of reconciliation, especially the part of absolution. This element of absolution may either follow or precede the reading of the Law. Should the Law be read a rule of thanksgiving, the absolution would precede it. Should it be read to convince us of sin or as a directive to Christ, then the absolution would follow it. This also shows how dynamic the liturgy is in its communicative interaction.

In the traditional liturgy, commonly, immediately after the reading of the Law, a hymn is sung and after that, the next service begins, i.e. the Word service. One should not take the elements of absolution for granted because the knowledge of reconciliation

with God brings great joy in the heart of the congregation. The congregation through reconciliation knows that its case with God is now well because it now has peace with God. Absolution evokes a positive attitude in the worship service. It makes the congregation worship God with a changed heart, a heart of peace, joy and reconciliation. The element of absolution also prepares the mind to listen to the Word in a refreshed way. Scripture portions like Rom 8:1,2; 1Jh 1:9; Ez 36:26,27 may be read for this purpose and as a warning when this grace is not accepted Jh 3:18, 36; Heb 10:28,29 (cf. Acta, 1997).

This may be used as an example to declare the absolution: *listen now what God says to us after confessing our sins before him from Ps 32:1-2, "blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit".* This may immediately be followed by Romans 5:1 *"therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into his grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God"*.

But for all those who live in pride of their sin and who ignore the judgement of the LORD the LORD says to you from Hebrews 10:28ff " He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God".

13.5.3 Word service

The service of the Word comprises basically of an epiclesis, reading of the Word, preaching and prayer. Nothing would stop the Word service to follow immediately after the entrance service because after the greeting from the Lord, one may listen to the message from the Lord. Yet, due to the fact of recognising one's feebleness

before the majesty and the holiness of the Lord, one cannot but stand in great humiliation before him and beg for reconciliation. For this reason the Word service in most instances finds its place after the second subdivision of humiliation and reconciliation. Once more the dynamic communicative interaction is realised here.

13.5.3.1 Epiclesis

Epiclesis is the prayer for illumination, not only for the sermon but also for the reading and the hearing of the Word. This prayer is essential and may be done by any member in the congregation who has been pre-consulted by the liturgist, the Church Council or the committee that has been nominated for the liturgy. It is not always advisable to call upon people unprepared to do activities in Church during the worship service. Another point is that the epiclesis may also be done by mouth of the congregation through music.

One of the relevant songs that may be used is hymn 362 of *Lifela tsa Sione*

Lentsoe la hao ke lebone (Your word is light)

Le letle le benyang (Beautiful and shining)

Ha lefifi le thibane (When the darkness disturbs)

Ke seli le kganyang. (It becomes a bright light)

Ke le mponisetsang tsela (It shows me the light)

Le nthutang tšoanelo (It teaches me what is right)

Le nkhanang ha ke kheloha (It directs when I get astray)

Le ntjesang letsoalo. (It burns my conscience)

Ha ke santse ke hlahlatha (When I'm busy getting lost)

Ntate o khutsitse (And the Father remained quiet)

Ke mang ea neng a ka nthusa? (Who could have helped?)

Ke se ke tsietswe. (when I was in serious trouble.)

Oho Ntate tlosa lera (Oh Father, who's the distortion)

Le mphifatsang mahlo (Which darkens my eyes)

Ke tseba ho le latela (So that I may follow)

Sedi le mohlolo! (The miraculous light)

Chorus

Ke letlotlo le lekaakang! (Oh what a wonderful treasure)

Ke le thabetse! (I rejoice in it)

Ke monono o fetisang (It is a joy surpassing)

Ntho tsohle tse ling. (All other things).

Or hymn 85:1 which goes like this:

Moren'a ka Lentswe la hao (My Lord, your Word)

Na ke tla le leboha ka'ng? (How could I thank it?)

Le lokile le molemo (It is good and kind)

Ho tsohle tse ka boleloang; (Compared to all other things)

Theko ea lona e feta (Its value surpasses)

Ea silevera le gauda. (That of silver and gold).

Such hymns may be used in the place of the epiclesis. They contribute to preparing the members to listen to God when He communicates with His congregation through His Word, this being the Word that is read as well as the proclaimed Word. When the Scripture reading has been announced, it is important to give the congregation time to search for the Scripture portion(s) as it is disturbing to read while the members are busy paging through their Bibles. It is equally important to allow time for silent prayer in preparation for the Scripture reading. The Word of God is holy and written to the congregation of God. This congregation likewise has to be holy.

13.5.3.2 Independent Scripture reading

In case of the Independent Scripture reading it may be good to make use of different members who are very good at reading. They have to prepare this specific portion in advance and prayerfully. The fact that everything has to be done by the minister alone is not applicable in this kind of liturgy. The liturgy should not be a one man show and the minister should not feel intimidated by the reading capability of the

individual even if it might be the case that people would follow much easier when Scripture is read by one of the members. This should be considered as a means of executing one's gift to its best. God has given his people many gifts and thus the fact that every member has a different gift should be respected.

Nevertheless, the Independent Scripture reading has an important place in the liturgy. Not all people read the Bible at home. Not all people can read the Bible at home even if they are in possession of one because of illiteracy or because of eye problems. Some might not even have access to a Bible at home. There might also be visitors who are not used to the Bible. Having all this in mind, it becomes more evident why the Bible has to be read independently because it is also sufficient and efficient for people to understand. The Holy Spirit might work through the hearts of people through the portion that is read.

It would however be advisable that the independent Scripture reading should be in harmony with the liturgy of the day. The argument that may be used for this is that despite the fact that God communicates with people differently and with different Scripture portions, liturgy forms a unity. It is in harmony and it flows together. Although every element is independent, it does not run independently and separately from the rest of the elements. As music composed from different voices and instruments and yet being in harmony with the tune, so does the independent Scripture reading fit within the liturgy.

The following introductory words may be used;

Hear the Word of God, simple and easy for everyone to understand. I mine with riches un-counted, a fountain with living water un-measurable. God speaks to us by mouth of

13.5.3.3 Scripture reading and sermon

It may be suitable to thank the Lord for his Word through prayer and also to ask him to still open more the heart of the congregation when now approaching the reading of Scripture on which the sermon will be based. Paragraph 12.5.3.3 explains the role of the sermon. The preacher as well as the congregation should humble themselves for

the exposition of the sermon. The Word should touch the congregation and the Word would thus work changes in the hearts and minds of those who are attending the sermon.

The Scripture reading that leads to the sermon may be introduced by words from Ps 119: 130 *"the unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" and therefore let us hear what God says in ...*

For African people to comprehend and follow the sermon, the preacher should efficiently make use of metaphoric language, examples and direct application. Storytelling also plays an essential role because of the fact that many African people grew up in a storytelling tradition and are good at detecting the moral teachings from such stories.

13.5.3.4 Sacraments

13.5.3.4.1 Holy Communion

Regarding the sacraments the following may be mentioned: In most congregations there is the tendency towards congregational singing during the administration of the Holy Communion. Personal experience indicates that two things done simultaneously are usually not done equally well. To eat bread and simultaneously sing while remembering what Christ has done for one is easier said than done. It would take a genius to hold the cup, drink the wine, sing and remember Christ. The advice with regard to this would be to prescribe silence during the administration of the Holy Communion with some reading from the Bible inbetween.

At the last table it would be a good gesture to do the thanking whilst the members and the minister are still at the table. The posture of sitting could be regarded as being appropriate, because it is a customary African gesture to say thanks while being in a humble position. The most suitable manner to deal with the form will be to explain important aspects with different emphasis with each celebration of the Holy Communion. Simply reading the form is of little value to most of the members. It is difficult to understand, especially for the children and the elderly people, because of

its length and theological jargon. *Koinonia* would be a suitable expression for the *ubuntu* if practised on the Holy Communion day. Sharing the bread and the wine also symbolises *ubuntu* and in this way people feel at home.

There are a number of hymns that may be used during the intervals when one group exchanges with another at the table. A few may be mentioned here. These intervals may also be used for reading specific parts from the Bible.

13.5.3.4.2 Baptism

When a young boy undergoes initiation, he moves from one stage to another. Baptism also moves the child from one stage to another, from a child born in sin to a child born in Christ. It is a movement from Adam to Jesus see 12.5.4. Concerning the Holy Baptism, when the form is explained, the whole congregation has to actively listen. The parents of the children who are to be baptised should only be called when they have to come and answer the questions that have to be asked. It could be a good gesture to face the congregation during the ritual of baptism.

Some of the children sitting in front may be summoned to come forward and witness at closer range what is taking place. This could also serve to remind the parents that their children have undergone a similar ritual. In a personal experience in one of the Reformed Churches in Amsterdam one of the ministers, after having called them together in front, held a cup in his hand. A name had been engraved on the underside of this cup and when asked to whom the cup belonged they responded by saying that it belonged to its maker. With this picture, he explained that God in such a way also engraves His name upon His children. The ritual of baptism was thus simplified so that even the children could be accommodated in the message and the meaning.

A relevant hymn may follow the ritual of baptism, like hymn 196:2,3 and 6:

Ngoana enoa wa Adama (this child of Adam)

O tsoaletsoe libeng (Is born in sin)

Jesu, u tle ho mo ama (Come Jesus touch him)

Mo hlatsoe selibeng! (Wash him in the river)

Seliba ke mali a hao (This river is your blood)

A lefang melato (That washes away guilt)

Ea bohle ba tlotseng melao (Of all those who trespassed the commands)

Ea 'Mopi wa batho (Of the Creator of man)

U ngole lebitso la hae (Write his name)

Bukeng ea bophelo (In the book of life)

Mohla a shoang a kene hae (When he dies let him enter home)

A pheme timelo! (and escape destruction)

Another relevant hymn that may be used, especially when baptising elderly members, is hymn 105: 1, 3, 5 and 7 that says:

Ke ngoan'a hao, bitso la hao le roko (I'm your child, let your name be glorified)

Morena, ke ineela oela (My Lord, I commit myself to you)

Ke ngoan'a hao, kea o rata, kea o boka (I'm your child, I love and I praise you)

Ke ngoan'a hao, ke ngoan'a hao (I am your child, I am your child)

Khale ke ne ke busoa ke lefatshe (I've been controlled by this world for long)

Ke sa kholoe, ke lebella tsuo (I didn't believe and judgement was waiting for me)

Seli la hao la ba la mpontša tsela (But your light has shown me the way)

Ke ngoan'a hao, ke ngoan'a hao (I am your child, I am your child)

U ntlimile ha ke sa le hole (You saw me while I was still far off)

Ua nkahlanyetsa ka rato la hao (You met me with your love)

Ntate, joale ke re, ak'u ntsoarele; (Father, I ask you to forgive me now)

Ke ngoan'a hao, ke ngoan'a hao (I am your child, I am your child)

Bitso la ka kajeno u le ngole (Write my name today)

Le se ke la tloha bukeng ya hao (Let it not be removed from your book)

Nako ea ka ha e fihla u nthole (When my time comes, fetch me Lord)

Ke ngoan'a hao, ke ngoan'a hao (I am your child, I am your child)

13.5.4 Service of Response

The service of response is called upon by the Word service. This service is the congregation's response to the Word of God and to the service as a whole. The congregation came into the presence of the Triune God. They confessed their dependence upon him as well as their belief. Having realised their sinfulness before the Holy God, they confessed their sin and reconciled with God through absolution. They listened to God's Word and now they give their response to all the liturgical activities. The service of response is thus not independent of the preceding services. It gently flows from them.

This service belongs mainly to the congregation. The congregation's activity should dominate that of the liturgist. He should lead the response and yet let it over to the congregation how to respond. The Holy Spirit should be allowed to take control and no one has to stand in the way of the functioning of the Spirit.

If people need to confess, let them confess. If they have to praise, let them praise. If they have to repent, let them repent. If the Lion roars, who cannot but fear! The tendency in the Reformed Churches in South Africa is to limit the work of the Holy Spirit when coming to the service of response. The hymn that may be selected in response should for instance be selected by one of the members in response to the Word. More than one prayer may follow from among members of the congregation. The prayer may either be from one member from the youth, one from the elderly men and one from the elderly women. This would help the congregation not to be channelled and every member would learn to attend service and participate positively in order to experience the presence and the working of the Holy Spirit in the church service.

13.5.4.1 Prayer of thanksgiving

Concerning this part of the prayer nothing more may be added to the present practice except just making mention of the fact that such prayers have to include all elements of prayer as already mentioned in 12.5.4.1.

13.5.4.2 Congregational singing

Congregational music is also an essential part of the service of response. It is not, as many people view it, time for entertainment or a means used for passing from one element to the other. It has an important role to play in the liturgy because it flows from the beginning of the liturgy to the end. Through congregational music the members worship and praise the almighty God in adoration and fear, experiencing His presence among them. They praise and thank God who has forgiven them their sins. They confess through singing and they pray through singing.

As they now approach the final response to everything, much time should be devoted to this part. More than one psalm or hymn may be used during this part of the service. This is now the best time for the congregation to express their innermost feelings to God and ample opportunity should be granted for doing so. The joy and humiliation accompanying this, in fact would even call for better gifts of love that follow the part of singing (Paragraph 12.5.7).

13.5.4.3 Gifts of love

The part of the gifts of love should be seen as important and not merely as performing another of the elements. Traditionally, deacons would move around with bags or plates to collect money. In many congregations nowadays people prefer to bring the gifts to the front while coming in groups. For instance women first, followed by men and then the youth followed by the children or vice versa. Experience shows that this is more successful than the traditional way of collecting gifts. Announcing the amount after service during the announcements helps to motivate the congregation. Gifts of love are collected while singing songs that express joy. African people do not give with sad faces, unless they are obliged to give against their will. A happy and positive attitude can be displayed immediately after the collection by means of a special prayer to thank God for the gifts and the hands that have contributed.

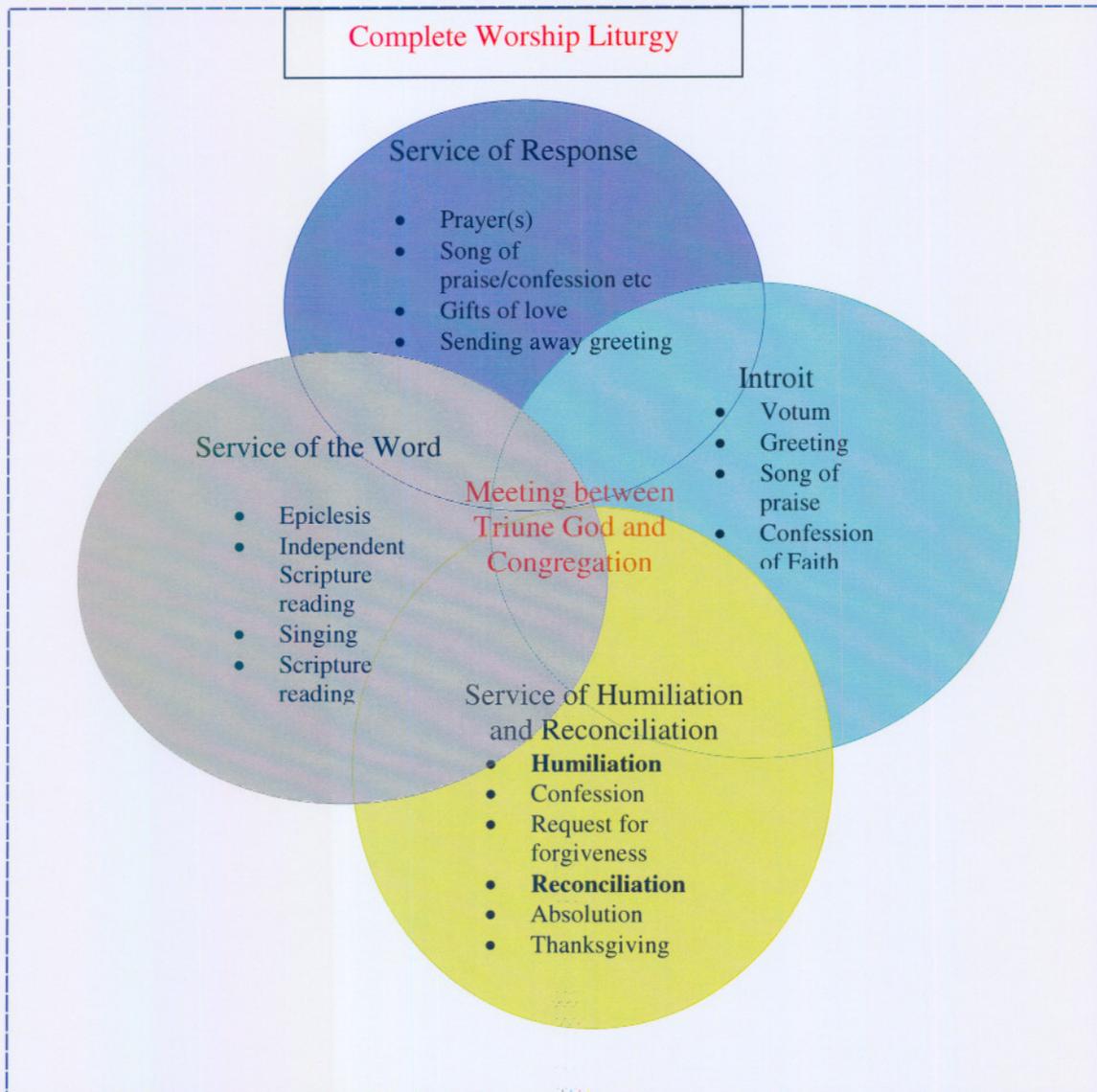
13.5.4.4 Sending away greeting

The sending away greeting may then follow. There is still a tendency to regard this as a prayer and most, if not all, of the members of the congregation still close their eyes. It is beautiful to see how the Lord is blessing his congregation for the rest of the week

and the days ahead of them in all spheres of life. This act of blessing should not be strange to African people because after every funeral service, the family member who would be summoned to give words of thanks, always expresses good luck wishes to the nation with words like: *pula* (rain) and the people would respond by *nala* (fruitfulness/abundance of food). Or when someone greets by saying *kgotso* (peace), the response would be *ha e ate* (let it spread). It is also common when someone embarks on a long journey. People would always express good wishes like: *A Modimo a be le wena hohle moo o yang*. "May God be with you wherever you go!"

13.5.5 Summary

This model is specifically for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. However, the principles may be used in different cultures by different people. The model fits the culture and the understanding of these people well. It is designed in such a way that even visitors will easily follow what is taking place. Different people of different cultures may follow the principles and apply them in their own situations. In this way this proposed model will be of more benefit to the Church and in the Kingdom of God. Below follows a complete diagram of the Liturgy for worship service.



A liturgy like this does not end in the church building. It extends communicative interaction to home, the work sphere, the sports ground and all life's spheres. It renews, instructs and prepares the member for new challenges faced during the course of the coming week. This liturgical structure gives direction in the pattern that funeral services, wedding ceremonies, as well as devotions at home would follow. All these functions would comprise of an element of meeting with God, humiliation and reconciliation with God, reading and listening to the Word as well as a response to God whether it would be only in prayer or in song.

13.6 Proposed model for the liturgy of the funeral service

13.6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was indicated that most funeral services bear little relation to that sense of victory, which has been throbbing on every page of the New Testament since Christ rose from the dead. It was also mentioned that numerous voices proclaimed that the funeral no longer had meaning for our time. A funeral could be regarded as a vestige of past eras, an anachronism, a wasteful, unneeded empty ceremony that has outlived its usefulness long ago. Some stubbornly insisted that the funeral should be preserved intact without question. It therefore remains a question whether the funeral is vestige or value. Other matters that were mentioned were that one of the basic reasons for attending church services was to be buried when one dies and that in a situation of one who did not attend church services, a lay minister or some of the churches would be paid some money to bury the deceased. Chapter 6 gave a detailed study on the whole issue of interments and funeral services as well as mourning and night vigils.

As it was the intention of this study to look into the background of funeral services and to analyse them, the aim is now to come with a model on how funeral services may be conducted so that they should help focus on the resurrection of the body and the new life waiting ahead and not on ancestral veneration.

13.6.2 Proposed model

Burial was essential in both the Old and New Testaments. Not to be buried was regarded as a curse. Mourning is permitted on ground that hope accompanies it. Funeral services should not be draped with the medieval imagination of hell and purgatory as well as the terrors of dying unprepared. Burials and funeral services should not be seen as an opportunity of scaring hell out of people. It is not the right time. It may be mentioned that there is a curse for people who would not die in the Lord. However, it should not be viewed as the sole and main reason for funeral services. Funeral services and burials should be viewed as an opportunity to proclaim a message of hope. There is also no time for absolution, if people did not

serve God whilst they were alive; there is no salvation beyond the grave. There is also no time for superstitious acts like kneeling before the corpse, dressing the corpse with animal skins and burying the deceased with utensils as if he or she would use them in the grave. There should rather be a shift in focus. People should also no longer deem death as a curse upon the family and think that the death of a beloved one brings *sefifi/senyama* “bad-luck” to the family and for this reason they should first have to be purified from that *sefifi/senyama*. Death should remind people of the joy and new life awaiting them in the New Jerusalem. The proclamation that accompanies funerals should be about the new life with God and not only about the comfort in loss. The funeral must be a triumphant march accorded to the victorious generals on return home. Christian death should be viewed as a “new birth”.

If these principles are put into practice then the following liturgical inputs may be expected from the funeral services:

Liturgy in death situations teaches people the meaning of death. It provides words, images, and rituals by which to speak honestly about death and dying. They also provide tools to undertake the task of “dying well” and would better be marked by personal life relationships, expectations, and religious ways of behaviour that bring together people. They bring people together in common faith, as a community of believers, all expecting the resurrection of the dead.

With this in mind, the following useful model may be constructed to achieve the above mentioned ideals. This model comprises of a liturgy for mourning service, funeral service as well as a graveside service:

13.6.3 Liturgy for Mourning service, Funeral and Graveside Service

13.6.3.1 Liturgy of the Mourning service (Night Vigil)

It has been indicated several times that African people including Reformed members in the resort of Synod Midlands are dearly fond of night vigils before the day of the burial. Various reasons have been indicated for the practice of night vigils, see 6.3.7 and 11.4.2. Yet, what is important is the fact that night vigils provide opportunities to

help the family deal with the death although the word “night vigil” might have a negative connotation to some people. There is some time to focus on the life of the person, to be reminded what an asset the person was to the community and to the family. This helps the family to have a farewell with the departed knowing that God made good use of this person. This is an opportunity for the community and the church to say to the family: “We understand your pain, we share in it. We also would cherish the reminiscence of the good of so and so.”

The important thing is to give order to this and to distinguish well between what is referred to as words of encouragement and preaching. The author here is not of the opinion that night vigils should simply be done away with. Perhaps one should speak of “memorial service” rather than night vigil. This might give it a better connotation. Much can be learnt from such services. God can work among people by making use of different people, other than the minister. to strengthen his children. The different gifts of the Spirit to the church should not be limited in times of death. A mere hymn sung by a congregation member can have a very great impact on the lives of the bereaved. One should not underestimate what God can accomplish through other people, “*motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*”.

The important directives are that there should be order. For order to exist there should be one who would lead the whole service, preferably a member of the Church council, who would understand what is expected of the Reformed Churches. The liturgy itself should have divisions, starting with the Word of God, followed by words of encouragement from the church members, from family members and from friends. After this there should be encouragement through singing. It is important that time stipulations be given, so that people would be able to continue in their preparation for the next day and there should also be time granted for people to have a good rest for the pending work of the next day. For this reason the following new praxis will be suggested:

13.6.3.2 Liturgy of funeral service

Part A: Word service

1. Prayer for enlightenment/illumination
2. Scripture reading and sermon
3. Prayer

Part B: Words of encouragement from church members, either a church council member or youth member of one of the women, depending on the person who died.

Every member may come with a hymn, as it is the custom. The member should not speak for longer than five minutes because people are not able to listen to one person for too long during such times of pain.

Part C: Words of encouragement from a family member

Part D: Words of encouragement from a friend

Part E: Songs of encouragement from all who are present or from choirs that have come to comfort.

Part F: Closure: A hymn, final words to the family to prepare them for the funeral and grave yard service the next day and a prayer of closure.

The liturgy of the funeral service may follow this pattern

1. Opening Scripture: Psalm 91 entirely
2. Opening Hymn
3. The family of the deceased normally chooses hymns
4. Opening Prayer
5. Welcome and statement of purpose of service

“We gather here today to honour the memory of (deceased). We also gather to comfort those of his family by our words and by our presence. And finally, we are here to hear what God would say to us through His Word about the realities of life, death, and eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ.”

6. **Brief acknowledgement of relatives and friends of deceased**

(Name of deceased) leaves behind his wife/her husband (name), and his children, parents, brothers, sisters, grandchildren (names). Our sympathy and prayers are certainly with you in this time of loss. But we must remember that (deceased) also leaves behind all the rest of us who knew him/her. But his/her life has not ended. He has entered into a new dimension of life eternal. Life does not end in death. The Bible teaches us that we who believe in Jesus Christ shall never see death. They are resting from their work.

We are going to miss (deceased). As individuals, I think there is no more difficult time than a time like this to express our true feelings. Some of us would like to bring tribute to him/her on this occasion.

7. **Tributes to deceased**

Here follows tributes to the deceased that may be read or brought by those who wish to do so personally or they may be read by the liturgist on behalf of the family and friends of the deceased.

8. **Bridge statement between tributes and Scripture readings**

The liturgist may further say: *"To find the proper words is so difficult and at a time like this words seem so inadequate, so incomplete. But I am reminded again that what we need at a time like this is revelation, not only words. We need something that speaks of certainties, not only hopes. We need something that speaks with authority. We need something that provides true comfort and that gives reason for hope, trust and faith. We need more than sincere expressions of sympathy and concern, as wonderful as they are, in a time of sorrow and death. We need the authoritative; comforting "Thus saith the Lord!"- the revelation of Scripture. May your listening to the Word of God be a great comfort to you."*

9. Independent Scripture reading(s)

These may be read by the minister, or better, still, by members of the family or congregation.

Psalm 145:18-19

The LORD is nigh unto all of them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. (KJV)

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear. (KJV)

Isaiah 41:10, 13

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. (KJV)

Psalm 23:1-6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear not evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (KJV)

2 Corinthians 4:16-15:8

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So

we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

10. Hymn

Chosen by the family

11. Scripture reading and Message

The message should be brief, but clear and should help people focus on the resurrected Jesus Christ.

12. Prayer

14. Bridge statement between memorial service and graveside ceremony

(If graveside ceremony follows *after* memorial service)

This is normally a statement by the representative of the funeral directors, and gives instructions to the attendees with regard to procedure to and at the graveside.

13.6.3.3 Graveside Service

The graveside service may precede the memorial service at the church, if the family so wishes. It is not yet a custom among the members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. Nevertheless, in many ways this makes more

sense than the other way around. To highlight two benefits of this order of things:

- The consolation from the word and people of God follows after the harsh reality of the graveside ceremony.
- The impression is more adequately left with the family and friends of the deceased that life continues for those left behind and it continues in the fellowship of God's people.

1. Opening prayer

2. Suitable Hymn

3. Scripture Reading

Relevant Scripture portions may be read here with a short sermon or words of encouragement to the bereaved.

4. Interment

The following words may be said before the interment: *"In the light of these promises of God in His Word, and because it has pleased the Lord in His divine wisdom and purpose to take from our midst one whom we have loved; we commit the body of (deceased) to its final resting place to await the fulfilment of these marvellous and comforting promises of the Bible".*

While the body descends, all together may make their public Confession of our infallible faith. The "Our Father" can also be chanted immediately after the confession of faith.

5. Closing of the grave

African people are very hesitant to leave the grave if it has not yet been covered. While people are waiting for the grave to be covered suitable hymns or psalms may be sung.

6. Blessing/send away greeting

Blessing plays an important role because life continues after this. To leave the grave-site with greetings from the Lord truly encourages the bereaved for they will have received the assurance that indeed God is present and is with them.

7. Word of Thanks

It has become the custom for the family of the deceased to summon one of the family members to thank people for their ministry and care to the deceased in time of sickness, and for their ministry and support in the funeral service itself.

8. Invitation to fellowship at a previously set venue

“After tears” is not recommended. It is a secular practice with no biblical support. Christians hope on the resurrection of the dead. Their joy is in the Lord, for life that He has borrowed to His church. They do not share in the secular joy which indicates that it is finally over with the departed and there is no further hope of meeting again, even in the afterlife. It is for this reason that “after-tears” was never regarded as a church issue, but rather as a secular issue.

13.6.3.4 Conclusion for the model of a complete funeral service including the memorial and the graveside services

It is rare for people to attend funeral services with a smile. In most instances, people are in pain or sad when attending funeral services. They are in need of special comfort. Many things go through their heads on what the future holds in for them. There are also questions about the hereafter. The church has thus an important role to walk with the bereaved this path of sadness. The church has a message of hope to proclaim and has to bring comfort to the family.

In this kind of service the role of the Holy Spirit as Comforter is of major importance because no one can comfort better than the Holy Spirit. The church thus has to stay on its knees to call upon God's holy presence in the midst of the bereaved family, so that death should not lead to distrust and anger towards God but should instead show people how dependent they are on God. God's people are dependent on him for life, hope, peace, survival, protection and comfort. The church therefore should not only bring comfort till the day of the funeral service but even afterwards when there will be no-one around to help and support.

If God is not present during a funeral service, there would surely be no true comfort. People would cry like those without hope for resurrection. Death would be a very great loss to them. *Ubuntu* is needful in such moments. The bereaved need support and care and this is where African people should consistently keep on expressing their support and care to them.

13.7 Proposed model for the liturgy of the wedding ceremony

It has been indicated in previous chapters that wedding ceremonies underwent different procedures. The intention here is not to discuss those procedures but rather to consider possibilities and practicalities. From examples in the OT and NT wedding ceremonies took several days before they ended. Preparations were made on a huge scale. One can refer to the parable of the ten virgins as told by Jesus in Mt 25. After the 2nd century wedding ceremonies were treated outside the church as secular matters and later on in the medieval period the priest became responsible. After this, in the time of the Reformation, both the state and the church dealt with issues concerning marriages. The church-related involvement rested on the belief that God instituted marriage, yet the state had to oversee that the ceremonies took place in a proper manner and to the advantage of society. Families, as well as the community to a certain extent, were also involved because they had to act as witnesses. Such procedures are more often than not part of wedding ceremonies nowadays. It is therefore important to briefly revise the important principles.

13.7.1 Proposed model

The marriage ceremony begins at home and not at the church. It begins with counselling and planning. The minister has to be informed well in advance so that he may correctly guide and counsel the couple as well as pray for them. Before the two partners take the marriage vows, they have to walk a road together and should be helped to understand each other in a better and proper manner. This procedure would help them settle matters much better and even help them know whether they would take their vows in truth or not. Marriage celebration can be said to begin during the counselling process, because this is where the preparation for the wedding begins.

The second issue is that the minister has to discuss the liturgy that would be followed at the place of wedding well in advance with the couple in order to spare them any embarrassment. The couple must be at ease and must know exactly when to expect what. The bride's maids and men, as well as some of the family members who will be involved in the organisation, should be called together and the procedure should be discussed with them. It is not wise to assume that people will know when to do what.

When the bride and groom arrive at church or the place where the wedding ceremony will take place, a few things have to be taken into consideration. According to the African culture both the bride and the groom have members of their own family to accompany them. Each group has its own songs and each group tries by all means to compete with the other group. The reason for their separation is to remind the couple that they are not yet one until after they have taken the vows. Usually, after the newly-weds have taken marriage vows, the two groups would unite in singing and what a wonderful thing to see!

The following have to be considered: The people who accompany the bride and the bridegroom into the church or the place of wedding are elected from each one's family. The father usually accompanies the bride. He leads her only to a certain point in the church building and the following is suggested: The minister should be there to wait for the couple. The bridegroom would usually arrive first so that he would be able to welcome his wife to be. This is a reminder that Eve was brought to Adam, and Adam performed the task of receiving. It is also very symbolic for the minister to take the bride by the hand and give her to the husband; a reminder that it was God who gave Eve to Adam.

13.7.2 Service before the solemnisation

As soon as both the bride and the groom have arrived at the appointed place of the wedding, the task of the minister/liturgist would be to welcome all those present and pronounce the reason for the meeting. The next step would be for the minister to call upon those present to testify whether there is any valid reason for preventing the

marriage from taking place. The same question should also be put to the couple so that they can stand before each other each with a clear conscience.

If no objection is offered, the wedding may continue. If the response includes an objection, the couple should be called into the consistory and the matter be cleared before the ceremony can continue. While family and friends are singing, the minister approaches the pulpit and the couple remains standing. The minister will then call upon the Name of the Lord. The sermon should be kept reasonably short and to the point because the couple will be standing. The sermon should be focused on the couple, because it is God speaking to this couple about his purpose with their marriage life. Yet, the sermon should communicate with all those who have already taken vows so that they can, in retrospect, determine whether they are still on the right tract. The sermon should however also have those in mind who still intend to tie the knot. To have a "short" sermon does not mean to have a "non-communicative" sermon.

13.7.3 Solemnisation of the marriage

After the sermon it would be time for the minister to read the marriage form to the couple and this should not be the first time for the couple to listen to it. Time should have been taken with them prior to the ceremony to explain it to them so that they will know when to give each other the right hand, when to exchange rings and when to exchange vows. There should also be cushions available for kneeling on. It is thus important to organize these things well before the procession. It is advisable that while this part of the ceremony is being performed, there should be no intervention from the congregation because this is a very special moment in the life of all present. Marriage is a once off matter and should thus be honoured and kept holy. People should already learn from this that they should not intervene in the marriages of other people unless asked to do so when giving positive advice.

After the vows have been taken, the minister may pronounce the couple husband and wife and welcome them into the world of the wedded people. The married couple may then kiss each other, the veil having been removed from the face of the bride. This will then call upon the congregation and those present to joyfully sing for the

couple and praise God for having brought these two people together. After this complete ceremony, the fathers of the husband and the wife may be called forward to extend words of blessings to the couple, followed by a member of the church council to give them blessing on behalf of the church.

13.7.4 Photo sessions

The wedded couple may now leave the church building for photo sessions. Arrangements are usually made for members of the congregation to pass the time, for example to wait inside the church building while singing songs or to depart to a place of reception. Such arrangements depend on what the families have decided and planned.

13.7.5 Reception

The reception usually begins during the evening after everything has taken place. The basic guidelines should not be ignored during the reception. God should be present during the wedding for He instituted it and only He can give it His true blessing. It has been pointed out that Christ is the host as well as the main guest. This means that it is essential to invite God to the wedding ceremony. He is there to give pleasure and bring happiness in the marriage. He is present at the wedding ceremonies to give surplus, more than what is needed and to give that in abundance. It is an unceasing situation and for this reason His presence should be acknowledged throughout by all those who are present. It should be remembered that the marriage is from God and has to be to his honour. One cannot really write a liturgical order for the reception function because this will depend on decisions and plans made by the couple and will therefore differ from couple to couple. The important matter to consider is that people should remember the presence of the Lord and honour that.

The sequential order during the service at church, after all arrangements had been finalised and realised, will be determined by the liturgist and may consist of the following:

- A. Word service
 - 1. Open declaration
 - 2. Song/Hymn
 - 3. Prayer and Word service
 - 4. Song/Hymn
- B. Solemnisation
 - 5. Blessing ceremony and exchanging of vows
 - 6. Song/Hymn
 - 7. Good wishes from parents and church elder
- C. Photo session
- D. Reception

13.7.6 Conclusion on a model for marriage

Despite the fact that marriage ceremonies are free in the manner they are conducted, they have some guidelines which they have to follow. The following guidelines should accompany every wedding ceremony: As Triune God He attends marriage ceremonies and promises to be ever present throughout the time of being married till death does part them, when one of the two passes away. For this reason His presence has to be acknowledged. God is Holy and therefore people have to bow down before Him. Not every marriage is bound in the Lord and for marriage to be bound in the Lord does not happen automatically. It is the presence of God that affirms that the marriage is bound in the Lord.

For marriage to stand firm the celebration in Christ always has to take place, for Christ is ever present as a host to the couple. Christ would protect the couple and never leave them on their own. In addition to the acknowledgement of the presence of God in the wedding ceremony, two different families are also brought together. The state is also involved in this. These realities give enough reason to celebrate in the knowledge that the wedding took place in the presence of witnesses and would thus be protected as far as possible.

Marriage ceremonies should thus take place in such a manner that the name of the Lord is not dishonoured in any way. Moreover even the receptions should give

honour to God in the way they are celebrated. Ceremonies should not be used to achieve only personal satisfaction but all people who attend should benefit and God's presence should be acknowledged by all who are present in all respect.

13.7.7 Final conclusion

The church liturgy is complete when it has an introit, a service of humiliation and reconciliation, a service of the Word and a service of response. In such a service there is time for joy and time for sadness. There is time to cry and time to sing. There should be enough time for everything. The emphasis largely depends on the working of the Word on the congregation.

A funeral service would also have the same principles but the part of humiliation is more evident in this kind of a service whereas a wedding ceremony would be more highlighted by joy. In all these services dynamic interacting communication should clearly be expressed. The liturgy should in all regards be flexible and be able to interact by taking from and giving to other elements in the liturgy. This means that the order should not be rigidly sequential but should instead bring harmony and flow with the rest of the liturgy. The liturgy of the worship service should give shape to the liturgy of life. It should help people to relate well to God and live in peace

The Africanness of this liturgy lies in the interaction of it. African people are spontaneous and do not always work things in sequential order. The manner of running the liturgy should thus be flexible and fit within the context of the people. Music should be sung with great enthusiasm and people should be allowed to express their inner feelings in line with the guidelines and the principles for the liturgy.

Chapter 14

14. Conclusion

14.1 Introduction

The main focus with this research was to focus on the liturgy of Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands. A few problems were discovered with regard to this liturgy, which mainly had to do with the culture of the members. Hence, the big question was, "How can these members serve God in a Christian reformed manner and still remain African people with their own unique identity?"

The research study was divided in three sections. Section A dealt with the basis theory. Section B dealt with the meta-theory and empirical study and Section C dealt with the Praxis-theory. Section A has eight chapters. Section B has three chapters. Section C also has three chapters including the conclusion.

The intention with Chapter 1 was to give background to the problem statement and to pose a problem for the study. A few questions came to the fore:

The main question:

"How could the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands come to a liturgy that is Biblical and contextual"?

This question can be expounded as follows:

- What Biblical guidelines does the Bible provide for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands to solve the problem of secularism and syncretism in the liturgy?
- How should the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands be modified to fit within its culture?
- How can this new liturgy be developed to serve the church and the Kingdom of God?

These questions gave rise to the following aim and objectives:

The aim of this study was to develop a Christian liturgy for the worship services for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands, with special emphasis on the music, the funeral services and the wedding ceremonies. This liturgy would be biblical and contextual and would be used to the glory of God, the growth of the congregation and the strengthening of the members.

In order for this to be a success, the following objectives were focused on:

1. An analysis of the basic theoretical aspects in order to determine the positive contribution that could be provided for the development of the liturgy of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands, answers to the following questions given:
 - What does Scripture teach about liturgy?
 - What historical development took place during the years that has to be taken into consideration for modern liturgy today?
 - What cultural aspects or philosophical ideology influenced these different traditions?
2. To determine the meta-theoretical aspects of the Christian liturgy the following questions will be considered:
 - Through the eyes of culture and inculturation, it was briefly determined what influence liturgy had on the culture of the African people in their living environment, when singing in services, at wedding ceremonies and at funerals in a multicultural context.
 - Under the empirical part of this study a few members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands from different congregations were questioned on how they evaluated their own liturgy. The interviews were qualitative.
3. In developing a practical theory for Christian liturgy the following question was answered:

From the guidelines of Scripture, history, tradition, culture and the information gathered through interviews, what model can be developed for a Christian liturgy for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands?

14.2 Basis-theoretical findings

14.2.1 Findings from the Old Testament

Chapter 2 sought to find answers from the Bible as well as from history and tradition. Intensive exegesis was done of most of the verses that refer to the issue of the worship of God. This chapter focussed specifically on the Old Testament. Analyses were conducted with the intention to come up with principles. This Chapter first gave a clear background on the origin and reason for worship. It then looked at the Sinai event, the Temple, Festival, Synagogue worship and the liturgy of the home and the individual.

The following basic theoretical principles were derived from OT worship

- God stands in the centre of all worship. It is about, around and concerning him.
- God is the initiator of true worship. Worship does not originate from man.
- God also gives the plan and the manner of worship.
- In true worship God's presence and glory is experienced by his people.
- Fear and adoration accompany worship and prayer.
- Gladness, joy and happiness in other instances also accompany true worship.
- These never go without adoration and fear. If there is no fear, God is not worshipped because his presence is not experienced.
- God himself communicates with his people through his servants. This means that He makes himself audible in his presence. They listen actively and respond to prayer, confession, praise and worship.

14.2.2 Findings from the New Testament

Chapter 3 followed the same pattern as Chapter 2. It however concentrated on the New Testament. It first determined the essence of the New Testament worship. It then looked at the characteristics of the NT worship. In this research the liturgical components of the service with special emphasis on prayer, worship service, breaking of bread, baptism, confessions of faith and responsive exclamations were analysed.

Basic principles that developed from this study are given here in a summarised form:

- God is always present in the worship among his people.
- The risen, exalted Christ stood in the centre of NT worship as Lord.
- The Holy Spirit permanently dwelled in the church and guided in all elements of worship.
- The Word of God is read and proclaimed.
- Sacraments replaced sacrifices and prayer continued.
- God met his people in the exalted Christ and the people met with God in the exalted Christ and with one another in a mutual relationship.

14.2.3 Findings from Church History and Tradition

Chapter 4 specifically focused on the study of worship in history and tradition. This was basically a literature study that concentrated on the development of worship from the second century through the time of the Reformation till the liturgical movement of the twentieth century. The similarities and the differences were analysed and some perspectives were determined from this study. The intention with these perspectives was to gain insight on how the Holy Spirit led the churches throughout the ages.

The following guidelines were derived from this chapter:

- The Word must always stand in the centre of worship.
- The sacraments play an essential role and must not be dishonoured. However they never have to replace the proclamation of the Word.
- Prayer has an outstanding role in worship.
- Worship is centred on and initiated by God. Once this principle is broken, worship becomes miserable.
- Neither the congregation, nor the individual can come with his or her own institution of worship. Worship is God-centred.
- Liturgy lives within culture and among the people. Nevertheless it is there to transform culture and give it a biblical shape.

14.2.4 Findings from the study of liturgical music

Chapter 5 dealt with the study of liturgical music. Taken on its own as one of the case studies, it was researched from the Old Testament, through the New Testament into its history from the second century until the time of the Reformation. This study was also mainly a literature study, which was both exegetical and analytical.

The following inferences were derived from this chapter

- Church music must be faithful to the Bible (point 5.2 and 5.3).
- It has to glorify God in a manner pleasing to him (point 5.2 and 5.3).
- It must edify the congregation. It should not be individualistic and driven by feelings and emotions. The Spirit and the Word should direct it. The edification that comes through it could be by means of song-confession (point 5.3).
- The unity of the congregation should be maintained and it should be evident in the process of the singing (point 5.3 and 5.8).
- The language should be understandable. The music should be made in such a way that people would sing by heart, through the Spirit and in understanding (point 5.8).
- Church music should have an effect on the one singing or listening. It is not a dry poem without any message (point 5.3).
- Church music should not replace the Word but should provide an atmosphere suitable for the Word (point 5.3).
- Church music when sung should indicate that people are Spirit-filled and because the singers are Spirit-filled it should fill the house of God with glory (point 5.3).
- Instruments that are used with church music should be used as accompaniment and not to dominate (point 5.1).

14.2.5 Findings from the study on funeral services

Chapter 6 was about the study of funeral services. Attention was paid to the Old and New Testament exegesis of sections in the Bible that deal with funeral services. The two Testaments were not studied separately with regard to the study of funerals. Attention was paid to what happened during the interval between death and interment. The different stages of post-death circumstances were identified, namely the stage of a funeral service and the preparation for the burial. The whole concept of mourning was also studied through the OT and the NT. After this a church historical study from the second to the third centuries was done. After analyses some principles and perspectives were derived from this study.

The following Inferences were detected from chapter 6:

- Burial was essential in the OT and in the NT. Not to be buried was a curse.
- Mourning was permitted, provided that hope accompanied it.
- Death had to remind people of the joy and new life awaiting them in the New Jerusalem.
- The proclamation that accompanied funerals also had to be about the new life with God and not only about the comfort in loss.
- The funeral had to be a triumphant march to express the joy of the victory of the deceased.

14.2.6 Findings from the study of the liturgy of wedding ceremonies

Chapter 7 in turn had a deeper look into the liturgy of wedding ceremonies in the Bible, from the OT to the NT. The research on this was carried on to include different eras up to the time of the Reformation. This Chapter first looked at the preparation for the wedding ceremony in the OT. After this it referred to the wedding ceremony and the week of marriage celebration in the OT. Then marriages and wedding ceremonies in the NT were investigated. History and tradition were also taken into consideration.

The following Inferences were derived:

- God instituted marriage and takes delight in it and therefore wedding ceremonies have to glorify God.

- Marriage is a symbol of Jesus Christ in relationship with his church (and of God in relationship to Israel). Christ accepted the invitation to a wedding ceremony.
- Wedlock binds two people together and Christ who is guest becomes the host in the wedding ceremony.
- As much as wedding ceremonies are family issues, they equally invite the church for blessing and the state for legalising marriages.

14.2.7 Final findings from the basis theoretical study

Chapter 8 was basically a compilation of all the principles and perspectives as well as guidelines that were determined in Section A. It could be viewed as the main conclusion of Section A.

The following Inferences were derived:

- God initiates worship and stands in the centre of liturgy.
- Worship service is a meeting that takes place between God and his people, the people and God and the people mutually, all this happens in the exalted Christ.
- God's Spirit and Word direct all liturgical aspects and provide direction.
- The sacraments always accompany the Word proclamation as a symbol and sign of God's grace.
- God's holy presence fills his congregation with glory.
- Praise and adoration, and humiliation and awe accompany every aspect or element of worship.
- Liturgy is an earthly activity with a divine nature symbolising a heavenly liturgy that will be perfect. Liturgy always has to strive for this perfection. This infers the role of culture.
- Liturgical music is a Spiritual, verbal and emotional element that proclaims, exalts, rebukes, comforts, motivates and inspires.
- Funeral services are used to comfort and encourage people about the future hope for a new life.

- God who instituted marriage also gives guidelines on the order of wedding ceremonies because they take place in his presence.
- Christ not only always accepts wedding invitations but is prepared to become a host at the wedding ceremony, and into eternity as well.

14.3 Meta-theoretical findings

14.3.1 Findings from the study on the relationship between liturgy and culture

Section B, Chapter 9 focused on the present relationship between liturgy and culture. It focused on the necessity of studying the relationship between culture and liturgy. It gave a description of the garment worn by theology when it approached the African culture. It nevertheless looked deeper into the issue because it also provided an antidote for the garment with which African culture was approached. The impact of this antidote was also determined in this section. All this was done so that it should be clearly understood what the African culture looked like when theology came into first contact with it. A few matters were researched concerning these issues related with the first contact and they are the following: The African Anthropology and social ethics, family life, rites of passage, worship of God and veneration of ancestors, music and dancing, death and funeral services, marriage and wedding ceremonies.

This chapter was summarised in the following manner:

The African heritage is big and much can be written about it. There are thus basic issues, which act as essentials in the African culture and the African Traditional Religion. This is due to the fact that African people are religious people. They always want to do their best to serve God. They stand in great awe before God that they are even hesitant to worship him directly. God is too holy for a sinful mere human being to pray directly to him; hence the use of the mediators and spirits. The religiosity of the African should not be separated from his/her other life aspects because the African lives in fear and would not want to do anything wrong. Whether in a situation of marriage or burial, some rituals have to be followed to remain true to the African belief and not to bring harm upon oneself. This can be very positive if the African understands his everyday act as service to God and thus lives in fear of God. This is what true liturgy is all about, to walk *cum Dei*.

The other issue that plays a positive role is the African concept of *ubuntu*. This has an influence on every aspect of the African life. The African man's existence is there out of, because of, and for the rest of the community. It is never independent or individual. Therefore the religiosity and the *ubuntu* summarise the whole of the African being. These two concepts will always contribute greatly in the formation of a praxis and in the determination of what is relevant and irrelevant with regard to the Christian religion. The final meta-theoretical perspectives were presented at the end of the next chapter after the empirical study has been completed. The findings of this chapter were combined with that of the next chapter, which also formed part of this chapter to come up with a final result on the meta-theoretical perspectives.

14.3.2 Findings from the empirical study

Chapter 10 described the different interviews from four Classes that were visited. They were Mangaung, Tlokwe, Kwathema and Moroka.

The method that was used for the empirical study was quite relevant. The researcher had the opportunity to have direct contact with every individual. One could see the expression of the face when they responded. He also realised that the liturgy of the Reformed Church in Synod Midlands is truly one of the most ignored aspects of the church. Ministers and church councils simply tend to leave matters as they had been for the past 50 years. Some of the ministers in a personal conversation agreed to the fact that liturgy was ignored in most instances. However, all interviews were successful because the ministers were really co-operative in getting their members involved. Concerning the results of the interview, the researcher did not truly get much or perhaps sufficient information from the members. This made it clear enough that members were uninformed about the liturgy. Due to this lack of information, it was clear that members who joined the Reformed Churches coming from other independent churches, or indigenous churches would come with their own ATR background. This would have an effect on the way they viewed the Reformed liturgy. This was also indicated in the next chapter, including that an evaluation and integration of chapters 9 and 10.

14.3.3 Final findings from the meta-theoretical study

Chapter 11 dealt with the meta-theoretical perspectives. It attempted to focus on different aspects of man.

It has been clearly indicated that the worship service of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands would need some serious remedy, else the damage will be more harmful especially in this time of religious pluralism, which also has an impact on how people worship God. Many people believe that you can serve God in any way because all roads lead to Rome. One consequently has to cope with the problem of syncretism, which has a negative influence and secularism, which makes the worship of God very worldly. The intention with the next chapter was to come up with a new model that would be functional as a remedy and a replacement of the existing one.

The following summary was done in chapter 11:

Different congregations meet at funeral services and none or very few among these congregations still care about pure teaching. Any song is welcome and any one who has a word to say is called upon to speak. One can speak in the same voice with regard to wedding ceremonies. Despite the fact that only the minister will do the preaching, so many other people are invited to make speeches and jokes, and most of them are uncontrolled. In the year 2000 when I conducted a wedding service, all things ran well in the programme until the time of the reception when totally different people were involved in mastering the reception ceremony. Some of the worst jokes were told and when listening to them one rather wished that one could have avoided being part of such a ceremony.

14.4 Practice-theoretical findings

14.4.1 Findings on a new theory for liturgy in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands

Chapter 12 endeavoured to give a new theory that may be used in the churches. It first concentrated on the liturgy in the church service, including church music. Then it

concentrated on two case studies, namely that of the funeral service as well as of the wedding ceremonies.

God is the Initiator and Object of worship and man is a respondent to the worship of God and is fully dependent upon God in every respect. This dependence should be confessed and proclaimed in the *votum* and should be recognised when God blesses his people after the *votum*. God's greatness should even be emphasised when reading the Law or before so that focus the would upon His delivering power and as sole deliverer through His Son Jesus Christ. God's greatness should become evident even in the church music. The liturgist has to select music with understanding so that every liturgical element may form a unity with the rest of the elements. The moment the congregation recognises the greatness and the centrality of God, they will call upon worship and prayer. This would cause the congregation to have a better grip of quality time with God in prayer and in devotion. This would also lead the congregation to grant sole worship to him and no longer bring sacrifices to ancestors.

Jesus is the Head of the Church and its Shepherd. He, as Head, gives direction; hence the words of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". There is no other way to the Father except through Jesus Christ. There is thus no worship that can please the Father if not through the Son. The Son carries the prayers of the Church to the Father. Jesus still has full control over the Church and He does not need dead ancestors to help in mediating. Ancestral veneration has thus to be fought against and church discipline should be strongly applied. The church will have to stop compromising with sin and will have to live what it preaches. If Jesus receives the necessary honour as Head, people would stop fighting for status because all would know that the Kingdom of heaven is only entered by those who accept it like children. This further implies that the church has to honour and value the name of Jesus. There is no name above His name in heaven and here on earth.

God gave His church the Word and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the primary interpreter of His word. He guides the church through the word in all truth and reminds it of everything that Jesus has taught it. The Word can thus be seen as the only true measure of discipline. The Word of God has to be honoured. People should not take it for granted. They have to study it and interpret it in the correct manner.

Hence, people who want to preach the Word should know that they deal with God's Word and not man's word. Therefore they have to be true ambassadors and speak as if God directly speaks to His children.

God did not give an empty Word to His church. He gave the church His living Word. To seal and to confirm His Word in our hearts he also instituted holy sacraments that may be used by the Church. These sacraments are there to serve the Word and have therefore to be used for the reason of institution. Jesus has a special purpose for every sacrament instituted. The sacraments should not be viewed as miracle workers. Wrong use of the sacraments can be very harmful to the members.

Members should worship God in truth and in Spirit. Worship services should maintain a holy character and should always be Spirit-filled. Where God's glory is experienced, members cannot but to respond with fear and honour. These characteristics have to be evident to help members to maintain a holy character and to not to get so excited that they even forget that they stand in God's holy presence. This implies that when people pray, because of the fear they would not shout at God. They would remain calm and humble. When they sing they would do that with understanding and of course emotions. But the two would go hand in hand.

The church music should serve the purpose of reinforcing and supporting the worship service. Church music should seek to glorify God. Church music should have a character of edifying the members, indoctrinating them in the truth, exhorting and inspiring them. Worship should have a transforming nature to culture as much as culture should have a transforming nature to worship. The function should be reciprocal.

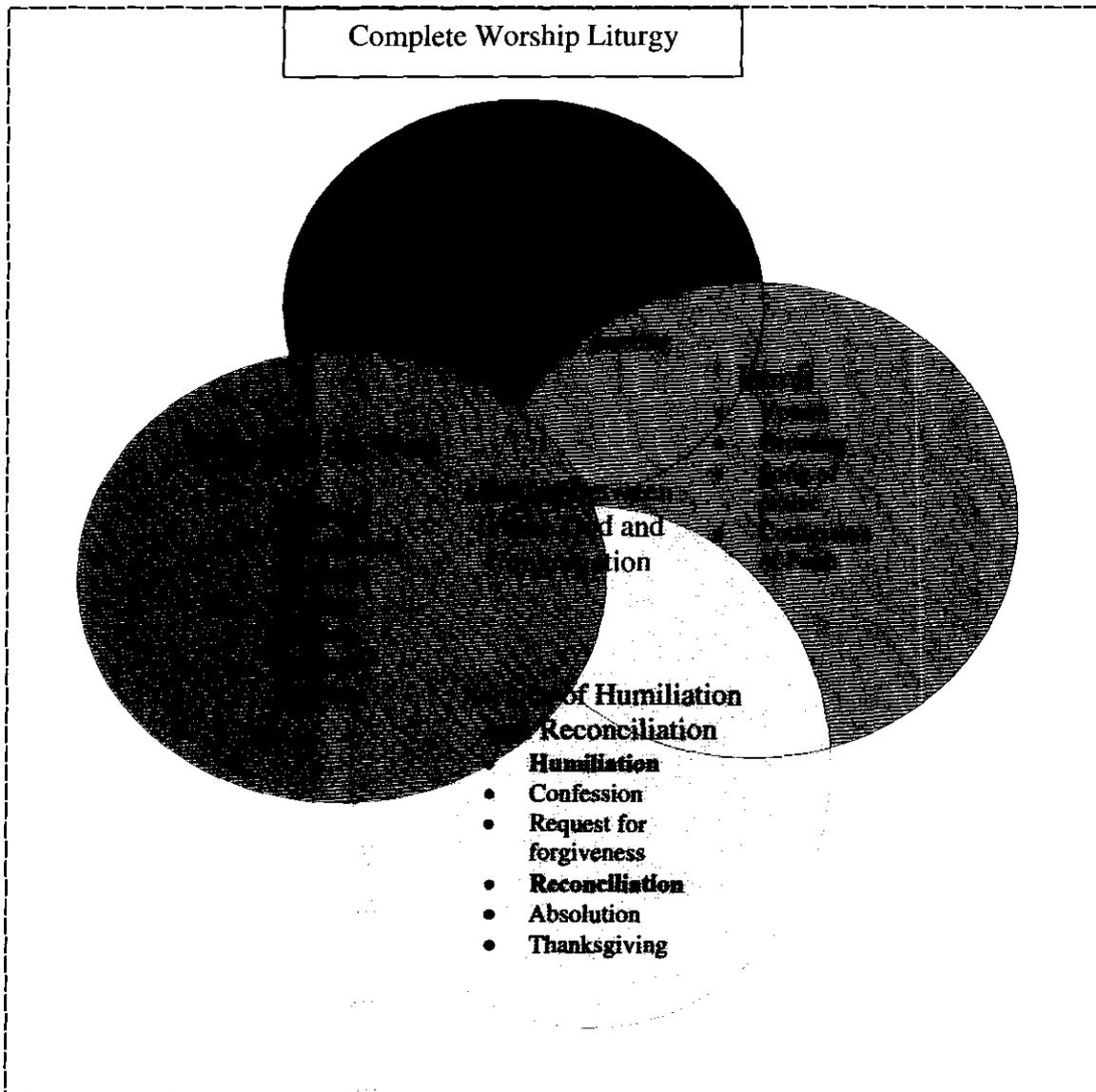
Culture should not be separated from religion as the two are inseparable. Culture should in fact give shape to the liturgy in the Church. Culture should be visible in prayer, in preaching, in singing and in ways of addressing certain aspects. Respect and *ubuntu* should become more evident in the church. Due to the fact that culture has its black spots, the function of the liturgy should thus be to clear those black spots and to make it of service to God.

Regarding funeral services, the Church should be able to console the bereaved by proclaiming the Gospel. The aspect of resurrection should be emphasised. Funeral services should help the bereaved and the church to focus on the New Jerusalem. Mourning is good but it should not be without hope for the resurrection. 'After tears' should be discouraged in all respects and deemed a heathen practice.

Marriage ceremonies should also remind the church of her relationship with her Husband Jesus Christ. The ceremonies should assume a character that seeks to glorify God. Jesus should be the Host at every wedding ceremony so that His presence should be everlasting.

14.4.2 Findings on a new model for liturgy in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands

Chapter 13 proposed a new model that may be implemented at the different congregations of the Reformed Church in Synod Midlands.



These models may be implemented during visits on invitation to these congregations. They may be taught during conferences and articles could be written and made accessible to these congregations. Moreover, this study would be proposed to Synod Midlands in one of its meetings.

Chapter 15: Final conclusion

Despite the fact that it is argued that African people are religious people, all human beings are religious. Everyone is born to know that there is a God whether he/she wants to acknowledge God as his/her Creator or not. The religiosity of the African people seems however to be more outstanding probably due to the fact that to most, it is only now that rationalism, modernism and post-modernism take effect upon their lives. History has shown that the moment people become exposed to these trends there is a paradigm shift that takes place. This gradually becomes evident among African people. One cannot argue that all African people still adhere to their culture.

As a result of their religiosity most African people are in search of the truth. This renders them susceptible to almost any religion or teaching and they could end up being led to syncretism and secularism. African people have to be taught to accept themselves as people who are also created in the image of the Triune God, who is the one and only God. They should also be taught that culture in itself is not perfect and thus has to be preached to. These issues called upon this study.

It was indicated in this study that, for African members of the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands to fit well into the Christian religion, a suitable liturgy would have to allow liturgy to transform culture. They have to accept that culture also has an effect on the liturgy. The level of influence totally differs. Culture cannot transform liturgy else liturgy would be filled with syncretism and would be secularised. One would rather say that culture gives shape to the form liturgy takes.

It is also evident that in the Reformed Churches of Synod Midlands little has been done with regard to the study of liturgy. Hence the implementation of this study would exercise a great impact on these churches. This study attempted to study worship in the Bible as well as in the history of the church and came up with principles and guidelines. After this a study on culture was done and the aim with this study was to come up with principles and guidelines that would be suitable for the church of Christ but specifically for the Reformed Churches in Synod Midlands. The reason for doing such an intensive study was that there should be enough ground work for future and

further studies on liturgy. The study has been written in such a way that it calls upon future study on some of the elements of the liturgy.

African people are spontaneous in their liturgy and thus liturgy has to be more flexible and communicative. African people are fond of responding to indicate that communication continues. It is therefore important that the liturgy should not be a one-man show as it has been in the past. People should not feel that their problems have not been addressed before God when they leave service. They should also not feel that they have been passive during the service. They should ultimately feel that they were fully involved and that they formed part of the liturgy. Active participation is what would make the liturgy dynamic.

The liturgy should be presented in such a way that people become aware of the presence and greatness of God. This realisation of God as Initiator and Object of worship should help to maintain order in the service so that it would not turn into a show. Such a service where God's presence is realised is characterised by a humiliation and a quest for reconciliation. It is recognised by a service that allows God to communicate and it has a positive response. God's Word has an impact in the lives of people like a double-edged sword cutting from both sides. The Word of God closes and opens the Kingdom of God for people. Whether the response would be negative or positive, or whether His Word would simply be ignored, there would nevertheless have been a reaction - and a reaction is something one can work with!

Liturgy should not only end in the worship service. African people should not only be Christians on Sunday during worship service. The function of the sending away greeting should be to give the members God's blessing for the rest of the days that lie ahead. The whole liturgy should be implemented in the entire sphere of life and should transform the lives of the congregation members. The worship should function like a refuelling tank. Every time when the members leave the place of worship they should be strengthened to face all challenges. This would call upon the liturgist or the team of liturgy to complete an intensive preparation for the liturgy so that it would be effective and to pray for guidance so that God's presence would be realised.

When members are sent home to implement this dynamic liturgy they will be able to face even challenges of death, enabling them to handle the liturgy that accompanies funeral services in a proper manner. Wedding ceremonies would also have a different shape because in all activities, ceremonies and functions in life, God's holy presence would be realised and people would know how to respond in different situations.

Regarding church music, members would no longer sing for the sake of singing but would also focus on God when singing. They would learn how to evaluate music on their own so that they would want to stop singing every song the world has to offer. A liturgy cannot be truly dynamic if the Word proclamation does not reveal the true message of the Bible. A dynamic liturgy in the African context calls upon teaching and not merely reading the forms. It should be kept in mind that still many people are illiterate and cannot read on their own. It became evident that most members do not understand the forms when read only, because of the complex theological language used in them. Hence the liturgist should be able to explain this properly so that people would follow the flow of the liturgy without disorder.

The fields for further study

1. The liturgical necessity of laying hands upon the sick/bereaved during worship service.
2. How and when should anointment with oil take place in the Reformed Churches: Is it an issue?
3. Does the posture of prayer have an effect on power of prayer?
4. The danger of channelling/limiting the work of the Spirit during the worship service
5. What, where and when is the place for prophecies and prophesying during the worship service?
6. The place of speaking in tongues in the Reformed Churches in South Africa.
7. The usage of Christian jargon during worship services.
8. The freedom and the bondage of liturgy.

Keywords / sleutelwoorde

Liturgy, culture, inculturation, funeral service, marriage ceremony, music, sacrament, introit, service of response, service of the Word, service of humiliation and reconciliation

D. Questionnaire for liturgy as addendum

All questions are based on the general basis-theoretical principles that have been determined with regard to the OT, NT and the history of the liturgy. The questions are focussing on the present situation, with some reflection on the basis-theoretical principles that have been determined. The function of these questions is to determine how far people understand worship services and God's position within worship.

1. What is the origin of worship?
2. What is the role of God in the worship service?
3. How does God communicate in a worship service?
4. What is the role of Jesus Christ in a worship service?
5. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in a worship service?
6. Why do we have to attend worship services on Sundays and not on the Sabbath/Saturday?
7. How do we participate actively in a worship service?
8. What is the function of the sacraments in the worship service?
9. What is the place of the Word within the worship service?
10. What should the role of music be during the church services?
11. What influence does culture have on music?
12. Why should people be buried?
13. What comfort does one get from burying a deceased?
14. Why is celebrating marriage an important aspect of life?
15. What is Christ's role as a guest in a marriage ceremony?

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