NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY – VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

THE NEGLECT OF CITIES IN THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHURCHES OF SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG

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This mini-dissertation is dedicated to:

1. Prof. Dr T.C. Rabali, for his profound urban mission vision and the whole-hearted commitment to fulfil the vision in the most testing times. As married couples, we agreed that the impact of his influence in our life is outstanding. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo, whose profound urban mission vision and mission was led by Prof Dr. T.C. Rabali, also shaped my vision and ministry.
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ABSTRACT

This research reviewed the neglect of cities in the mission work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa with a special reference to churches of Synod Soutpansberg. The biblical passage, Jeremiah 29:1 – 14 was used, as a representative of other biblical passages, to shed light on the role of cities in mission work of the church while addressing misconceptions and false theology about the cities and the role they played and still play in the mission work of the church. The same biblical message is confirmed by many missiology literature, including, "Cities, Missions' New Frontier" by R.S. Greenway and T.M. Monsma (1989); "City of God – City of Satan" by R.C. Linthicum (1991) and "Discipling the City" by R.S. Greenway (1992).

The biblical message and the missiology literature mentioned above were the basis from which the neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa was studied. From these basis, the causes, implementations and effects of such neglect in the mission work of the Soutpansberg churches was studied in Chapter 3. The empirical research was conducted using the interview questionnaire in chapter 4. The empirical results and findings, which were presented in this research, can direct churches towards a remedy of the neglect of the cities in their mission work as far as the strategies is concerned.

The neglect of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa was studied with an aim that churches learn from it and hence avoid the past neglect in their present and future mission plans, strategies and programs. In other words, the lesson is important for churches to view the role of the secular cities as important instruments used by God to speed up not only the planting and growing big holy churches from those secular cities outwards, but also the biblical reformation of the rural-orientated theories, strategies and practice!

PREFACE

A Church, which keeps on reforming biblically and contextually, grows in knowledge of God and in number. Such a growth is in itself one of the manifestations of a true church. This vision urges the researcher to research the role, which was played by the Southern African cities, especially in Gauteng Province, like Johannesburg in the mission work of the church in the past and also in the present, so that the church can strategize some plan of action for its future urban mission.

As a minister of the word in Gauteng Province, particularly in Johannesburg (in Reformed Church Tshiawelo from 2001 to 2004), the researcher saw the need of deepening and furthering the vision and mission of the church so as to inform the present and future decision makers (that they test, evaluate and develop ideas, plan of actions and programs), so that the church and denominations can be benefited to be effective in urban mission plans, strategies & tactics.

As a lesson to learn from, the history of the neglect of the role of the city of Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg amongst other prominent Southern African cities in the mission work of the Potchefstroom Churches was studied particularly to help informing churches about past neglects, so that the present and future generation churches could not start from the scratch, but use the lesson on their way-forward.

With the suggested remedies to the neglect of the role of the cities in urban mission, the initiatives of the Reformed Churches constituting Soutpansberg synod could hopefully be fulfilled so that the present and the next generation Christians could be helped in planting and growing holy churches who worship and serve God as one body of Christ by preaching the Gospel and by doing good works as a way of motivating and persuading people to believe, love and obey God.

CHAPTER 1

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The decision of the Reformed Churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod (Acts of Synod, 1998:64) to find a way of doing mission work in the cities including those within the Gauteng province was at the same time an admission that the mission work of the whole denomination, the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa, revealed a neglect of many unreached people groups within Southern African cities.

This perception of a neglect of cities, if confirmed, would not be unique to the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. Missiological literatures often point out that most contemporary churches are generally not being effective in the cities and that they are accordingly neglecting today's cities (Bakke, 1987:47, 48, Greenway & Monsma, 1989:2; Conn & Ortiz, 2001:74-79).

Hadaway (1997:41) points out that the churches' urban evangelistic work and its effectiveness depend on various factors, many of which have either to do with the urban context or with the nature of the churches themselves. Bakke (1987:60) observes that although there are many barriers to urban mission work, a critical dimension of the neglect of cities has often to do with the lack of a suitable theology.

Writing particularly with reference to the Northern American scene, McGavran (1988:24,33,125) even insists that one of the reasons why many churches neglect the cities has to do with the fact that many of the theological schools which train their pastors do not have enough courses on evangelism in general, and on urban missions in particular.

1.2. PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED

Southern Africa, like all third world countries is becoming more and more urban (Bakke, 1987 82). The speed at which urbanisation is taking place in our world, including Southern Africa, has been phenomenal. This process of urbanisation has in turn resulted in growing cities throughout Southern Africa[1]. Urbanisation provides the churches with many opportunities, but it has been observed that the process of urbanisation also presents challenges to conventional mission theory, strategies and practices (Bakke, 1997:85). These challenges are due to the fact that many aspects of these missionary theories and practices were developed at a time when most mission fields were rural. It is accordingly easy for the churches to remain basically rural in outlook while their context of operation is quickly becoming urban. The alleged neglect of cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa entails that many of the sectors constituting the denomination; for example the churches of Synod Soutpansberg, still are in the process of developing appropriate urban theories and strategies of ministry in order to be effective within the urban setting, which is becoming a reality in all parts of Southern Africa. The problem that this research seeks to investigate is the extent of the neglect of cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa, as well as how this neglect affects the churches and their ministries. The research will also seek to determine the causes responsible for the neglect and will accordingly ascertain whether these have to do with the urban context or with the churches' theology or with both of these areas. Another related problem to be investigated is that of how to remedy this neglect within the present SA context.

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[1] According to Tibaijuka (2006:16), "...Africa and Asia are in for a major demographic shift. Already, with urban growth rates as high as 4.58%, Africa is urbanising faster than any another continent, and by 2030 Africa will cease to be a rural continent. In fact, with 748m urban residents, the African population will be larger than the projected total European population of 645m. The fact that Africa is on the move means that many urban centres are doubling their populations every 10 to 15 years."

1.3. THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The world is dynamic, and Southern Africa has also not been static. Indeed, the changes that have been taking place in Southern Africa with respect to general social life are quite significant. It is accordingly easy for institutions such as churches to remain behind and therefore become largely ineffective and irrelevant. The church of Jesus Christ cannot afford this because the Lord calls her to be a light and a salt of the World (Matthews 5:13, 14). Without research aimed at helping the church understand her urban context, the undesirable condition of a powerless church would be an inevitable consequence. This research is accordingly important because it partly seeks to generate information that can help the church in understanding her dynamic urban world and to evaluate herself and her missionary strategies in the light of the Bible (text) and the cities (context) in which she has to fulfil her divine calling (Kritzinger, 1994:73).

The importance and relevancy of the research also lie therein that the information it generates can help all those who plan to begin or to continue mission work in Southern African cities. It is important that those who plan working in Southern African cities know of the mistakes which others may have made as well as of pitfalls that they should avoid; while those who want to continue what they ay have already started constantly seek information that can help them to review and improve their work. The world church accordingly recognises the need for such research in view of the ecumenical nature of the missionary enterprise (Conn, 1997:28, 29).

The research is also important and relevant because it concerns aspects that have not received enough attention from previous researchers. Very few works have been written about the missionary work of Reformed Churches in Southern Africa in general, and even far less about the work of those churches constituting the synod Soutpansberg. The 1981 study by Lourens June Badenhorst entitled, *"n Histories-missiologiese ondersoek oor die ontstaan en ontwikkeling*

van die Gereformeerde sending by De Hoop in Noor-Oos Transvaal" describes some of the historical factors involved in the missionary work done at De Hoop as a mission station but does not deal with those issues that have to do with the neglect of the cities in the missionary policies and practices of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. Prof. B. Spoelstra's work of 1999 entitled, *"Sending vir Kerk of Koninkry?"* describes, analyses and criticises the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa between the years 1869 and 1994, but does not deal with the neglect of the cities in the missionary work done by all the sectors which constitute the denomination. In his Masters thesis, Nefefe (2000) deals with issues of unity between black and white Reformed Churches with regard to mission and could only touch upon some of the reasons or factors that possibly lie behind the neglect of the cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa as a whole; but did not directly research that neglect. The present research intends to focus on an aspect that has not been receiving enough attention from researchers and is accordingly important in that it makes a contribution in the area of urban missionary research involving a topic that has previously been neglected

1.4. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The investigation's purpose is to ascertain the role that has been accorded cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. It will accordingly clarify the meaning of the alleged neglect of the cities in the missionary work of the churches as well as to highlight the extent to such an alleged neglect. This entails a review of the biblical understanding of mission that has been predominant within the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa in as far as that relates to the place and role of cities in missionary work.

The research will achieve its aim by also identifying inhibiting factors accounting for the alleged neglect as well as by evaluating the attempts and strategies that have been devised to deal with them. Some of these factors may be in the form of excuses and attitudes that are associated

with perceptions about the city. The research therefore also aims to highlight some of these negative perceptions and to suggest aspects to the biblical message that should provide the churches with enough ammunition for handling them.

1.5. THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The main argument in this research is based on the following assumptions:

1.5.1. In the Old and New Testaments, God gives the missionary commission that His church is His witnesses to all nations. The Bible contains indicators that the cities have to be viewed as having a pivotal role to play in the carrying out of the commission in view of their general role in society. This entails the assumption that the churches operating from the cities can exercise greater impact on society than when operating in the rural areas of the countries alone.

1.5.2. There are certain reasons for the alleged neglect of cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. It is important to identify these reasons in order to deal with them effectively.

1.5.3. All sectors constituting the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa as a denomination can play an important role towards redressing the neglect of the cities in the missionary work of their church. Even a small section made up by churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod can make a significant contribution. The leadership of the Reformed Churches of the Soutpansberg Synod has already perceived this neglect and are looking for ways and means of overcoming it and it is therefore important that the problems involved be researched

1.6. THE DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITS OF THIS STUDY

This research is done within Theology, in the discipline of Missiology under the sub-section of Urban Missions. Further, the research focuses on an aspect of the neglect of cities in the missionary work of the one denomination, the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa. It will accordingly not involve a general review of other aspects of that missionary work. It also will focus on the missionary work of the Soutpansberg Churches and will only include aspects relating to the work of the other sections making up the denomination in as far as these are intertwined with the missionary work of the Soutpansberg Churches.

The problem with the scope as outlined above is that the study will leave out many aspects of the missionary work done by the churches involved. The outstanding work done in the Reformed Churches in the rural areas is, for example, not discredited, or considered to be unimportant, yet the point in this research is that the urban areas were and could still be neglected in their missionary efforts in spite of the missionary work at rural mission stations and areas.

1.7. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.7.1. BIBLE INTERPRETATION

The study also involves interacting with certain Bible passages. There are various ways of approaching and interpreting the Bible. In this study, the Scripture will be interpreted by following the biblical theological method. The researcher also makes use of commentaries of others but interacts with the insights from the commentaries in the same way that he does with literature in general.

1.7.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study will be conducted by means of a literature survey. Apart from general missiological literature, the study will particularly pay attention to the works about urban ministry and missionary work. Much of the literature involved has been written from outside the continent of Africa. Although their relevancy to African urban contexts cannot just be assumed, the researcher uses it and interacts with it in the light of the realities in Southern African cities.

1.7.3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This was done by means of interview questionnaires. In conducting the interviews on the basis of the questionnaires the researcher informed the participants about the aims and objectives and the methodologies of the research, and undertook to ensure the anonymity of the participants in order to establish a comfortable and non-threatening environment.

Other tools used in the empirical research include the use of a questionnaire to be filled in by those church members selected to act as representatives of groups involved in missionary work within the churches under consideration. The formulation of the questionnaire, as well as the interpretation of the various responses received through them, will be done on the basis of the insights gained from a review of relevant biblical passage(s) and a survey of the relevant missiological literature.

1.8. THE OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1

Orientation

CHAPTER 2

Review of Biblical passages and missiological literature regarding the role of cities in mission work

CHAPTER 3

The role of cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa with special reference to the churches of Synod Soutpansberg

CHAPTER 4

Towards a remedy of the neglect of cities in the missionary work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa constituting Soutpansberg

CHAPTER 5

Summary and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES AND MISSIOLOGICAL LITERATURE REGARDING THE ROLE OF CITIES IN MISSION WORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to review biblical passages and missiological literature regarding the role of the cities in mission work. The review can enhance the biblical basis on how the role of the cities should be understood in the mission work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa and elsewhere. The alleged neglect of the biblical basis of the role of the cities in mission work necessitated the review, since the role of the cities shapes or influences the structures of community life, histories, ethos, population profiles and expectations in the societies (Bakke, 1982:18).

There are many biblical passages and missiological literature that shed light on the role of the cities in the mission work done by God's people. In this chapter, the specific biblical passage, Jeremiah 29:1-14 and also three selected missiological works, namely, "Cities, Missions' New Frontier" by R.S. Greenway & T.M. Monsma (1989); "City of God-City of Satan" by R.C Linthicum (1991) and "Discipling the city" by R.S Greenway (1992) were used in this regard

One of the main questions is: can Jeremiah 29:1-14 and the selected literature shed light on the role of cities in mission work? This question arises, especially when Babylon and Jerusalem are mostly juxtaposed and contrasted by some as cities of Satan and God respectively (Linthicum, 1991:24). In Jeremiah 29.1-14, God's people were urged (Jeremiah 29:5-7) to settle in, work

and pray for peace of Babylon, which was unthinkable to Jews there and then. The question is: can God's command (Jeremiah 29:5-7) and the implied Jews' responses shed a light to the alleged neglect of the role of the secular cities of all times in the mission work of God's people?

In this study, the method of interpreting Jeremiah 29:1-14 which is followed is the biblical-theological method. Both the text and the context of Jeremiah 29:1-14 is considered so as to understand what God said and expected from His people. In that regard, the following structure is followed:

- The place of Jeremiah 29:1-14 in the context of his whole prophecy;
- The place of Jeremiah 29:1-14 in the context of Jeremiah 29;
- The essence of Jeremiah's message in Jeremiah 29:1-14;
- The conception of the city of Babylon in Jeremiah's message;
- Factors accounting for the Jews' disobedience to God's message;

The three selected missiological literatures were also used to shed the light, namely,

- "Cities, Missions' New Frontier" by R S Greenway & T.M. Monsma (1989);
- "City of God-City of Satan" by R.C. Linthicum (1991) and
- "Discipling the city" by R.S. Greenway (1992).

It should be noted that the study will focus on Jeremiah 29:1-14 and will seek to highlight what the passage teaches about the role of and appropriate attitudes about cities such as Babylon.

2.2. THE PLACE OF JEREMIAH 29:1-14 IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS WHOLE PROPHESY

Jeremiah came from a priestly family in Anatoth, a town 5 km north of Jerusalem (Smit, 1998: 58). He received his prophetic calling around the year 627-626 BC (von Rad, 1968.161). His ministry started about five years after Josiah's religious reform[2] (Bright, 1953:106). Most of the Old Testament Scholars agree that Jeremiah viewed Josiah's reforms critically as being superficial and formalistic (Helberg, 1988:222; Bright, 1953:107). In this regard, Jeremiah praised the personal qualities of Josiah without mentioning his reformation. One of Jeremiah's main messages during Josiah's reforms was summarised by Bright (1953:108), as follows: "For the heart of God's demand is not busy religion, but obedience. Only an obedient people can remain in covenant with God; only over an obedient people will He rule. As for this people, it must repent from the heart (4:14); it must circumcise itself anew into the covenant relationship from the heart – or face the fire." Even Smit (1998:66) said, "Therefore God's judgment over them was imminent and inevitable. God loved his people very dearly (31.1-3), but he also demanded obedience and commitment (7:1-15) "

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[2]The religious reforms of Josiah in Judah (2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-35) were done at a time when the Assyrian Empire was declining. It was a time of independence and growth of nationalism in Judah that could be traced back even to Amaziah and Uzziah (800-745 BC) (Hinson, 1990:126). To Smit (1998:54) the reformation of Josiah was to a certain extent inspired by "the fear of what could possibly come in the place of the Assyrians, especially in the light of the prophesies of Jeremiah about the 'danger from the north'....In the Bible king Josiah is known as a very pious king. His attempts to bring about a true religious reformation, however, did not have a great effect on the hearts of the people, the priests and on the offering places. It seems that the reason was a feeling of disappointment in Josiah in certain circles, probably also with Jeremiah." It is from this context of independence and nationalism in Judah that Bruce (1963:84) was correct to suggest that (due to the similarity of Josiah and Ahab's manner of disguising in the battle-field and the fatal wound which led both to death as a result), Josiah's death was also due to his disobedience to the prophecy which opposed his expedition to prevent Neco to support the Assyrian army against the Babylonian at Megiddo in 609 BC.

After the death of Josiah, Jehoiakim[3] was made king instead of Jehoahaz[4]-who was favoured by Jews. According to Bright (1953:110), "under Jehoiakim (609-598 BC) the last vestiges of the reform collapsed". The old idolatrous tendencies flooded back into the nation's life and hence not only were the prophets who protested against this retrograde movement disregarded, but their lives were also endangered. Early in Jehoiakim's reign Jeremiah raised his voice and proclaimed his temple address. Most Jews were shocked and regarded his prophecy against the holy house of Israel's God as a blasphemy and he was put on trial, but was acquitted[5] because the judges recognised that he had not spoken of his own volition but 'by the word of Yahweh'. Hence the confessions and symbolic actions of Jeremiah, especially in Jeremiah 11-20[6] preceded by Jeremiah 21-25 about the judgment addressed to the royal house and to the false prophets (Hill and Walton, 1994:331). From this context, Jeremiah 29 can be understood.

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[3] Jehoiakim was hated by Jews (2 Kings 23:31,36; Jeremiah 22:13-14), for he spent funds in building a new and finer palace, using forced labour to do it, even under a heavy tax to Egypt. Hence the Jews chose Jehoahaz instead.

[4] Jehoahaz was more acceptable because the political line that he pursued was anti-Egyptian. Neco realised this, however, and promptly removed him from the throne and so Neco chose Jehoiakim (Deist and le Roux, 1987:111).

[5] The secular judges cited as a precedent the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the prophet Micah in Hezekiah's day. Micah was not put to death, they pointed out, on the contrary, king and people paid heed to his words and repented, and so the threatened disaster was averted and hence Jeremiah was also acquitted, unlike prophet Uriah who prophesied in the same terms as Jeremiah. King Jehoiakim had Uriah extradited and beheaded, and his body was thrown into a common grave. That Jeremiah did not suffer the same fate was due to the protection given to him by a high officer at court (Jeremiah 26:7-24).

[6] Regarding Jeremiah's confessions in Jeremiah 11-20, von Rad (1968:170) said, his inability to continue, was not only outwards, but also inwards (i.e. no longer in one with his office and his task – at all events). So in every instance these confessions grew out of his specific situation as a prophet, what lay behind them was a call to serve in a quite particular way, a relationship of particular intimacy with Yahweh. So they have in the highest degree a typical significance for Israel. To Hill & Walton, (1994:331) these prayerful confessions and meditations (Jeremiah 11-20) reveal God's compassion, justice and sovereignty in a unique way.

Jeremiah 29 is a letter that is placed within biographical sections, Jeremiah 26-29 and 32-45. It was written by Baruch as Jeremiah dictated (Jeremiah 36:4) under God's instruction to Jeremiah to put his prophecy in writing (Jeremiah 36:1-3), which happened around the year 605 BC[7], after Jeremiah had been prophesying for more than 20 years. Smit (1998:66) summarized one of its main messages by saying, "Jeremiah persisted in preaching that the people would come under God's coming final judgment, and that the punishments of famine and pestilence were only the precursors of the actual judgment which could be realised in the coming of the Babylonians who would devastate the city and the land, and bring the people into exile. God's judgment would materialise in the destruction of the temple, the ending of the Davidic kingship and the oppression of the people by the Babylonians." It was fulfilled in 597 BC when prominent Jews were deported and in 586 BC when Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed.

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[7] In that context Hinson (1990:142) states, "Pharaoh Neco 11 of Egypt was afraid of the growing power of Media and Babylonia. He supported the Assyrians when they were close to defeat. When that failed, he tried himself to gain control of Palestine and the lands across the Jordan, but in 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonian army in battle against the Egyptians at Carchemish and severely defeated them (Jer.46.2). . .The Egyptians repeatedly promised to help the small nations of that area if they would rebel against Babylonia. But often when the time came Egypt failed to give the promised help. However, Egypt herself remained independent of Babylonian rule for another thirty-six years, and became a home for refugees escaping from the anger of the Babylonian rulers of Palestine." In the context of 605 BC, Jehoiakim, an Egyptian vassal, was faced with a desperate choice. According to Bright (1953: 112), "In that year Jeremiah made a last effort to warn his king (ch 36). Forbidden to enter the temple (vs 5), he dictated his message to his friend Baruch, the scribe, and sent the latter to read it publicly (vs 6). This Baruch did. The nobles of the king's cabinet heard of it (vs.12) and, summoning Baruch, asked that it be read again (vss 14-15). So impressed were they that they felt it their duty to call it to the attention of the king (vss.16,20). The King demanded to hear it (vs.21), but not that he might give heed to it! As each three of four columns were read (vs.23), he snatched the scroll from the hands of the reader, hacked off with a penknife the portion he had just heard, and threw it into the fire – and so on till all of it was consumed. Thus did a very little man show contempt to things far bigger than he. Had not Baruch and Jeremiah hidden as the nobles had urged them to do (vss 19,26), it would have meant the lives of both of them."

The biographical sections, namely Jeremiah 26-29 and 32-45 are connected to each other by Jeremiah 30-31, which is about the promise of future restoration and salvation of God's people, especially through the establishment of a new covenant. According to Smit (1998:67) the future restoration and salvation will be through Jesus Christ, from the generation of David (23:5-8), who would be the king of righteousness and peace (33:8-9).

Jeremiah 29 has to be understood within Jeremiah's message concerning the establishment of a new covenant (Jeremiah, 30-31). Hearing Jeremiah's message, Zedekiah should have freed Hebrew slaves (Jeremiah 34:8-11), which he did temporarily because of the Babylonian siege to Jerusalem around 589 BC (Jeremiah 34:1). Zedekiah, however, joined the anti-Babylonian coalition led by Hophra of Egypt (Bright, 1953:115). After that, Zedekiah reassumed the Hebrew enslavement against Jeremiah's advice with a hope that the Egyptians will help them against the Babylonians (Jeremiah 37:5); But the Egyptians did not and hence the city of Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed in 586 BC.

2.3. THE PLACE OF JEREMIAH 29:1-14 IN THE CONTEXT OF JEREMIAH 29

Jeremiah 29 is a redacted letter (Hill and Walton, 1991:327). It is composed of a number of letters, including: (i) the initial letter written by Jeremiah from Jerusalem to the Jewish exiles in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:1-23); (ii) the letters in response to the initial letter, written by Shemaiah from Babylon in response to its main message (Jeremiah 29:5,28) – addressed to all people in Jerusalem, including the priests and Zephaniah in particular (Jeremiah 29:25); (iii) the letter written in response to Shemaiah's letter (Jeremiah 29:24-29). That letter of response was written by Jeremiah from Jerusalem to all the Jewish exiles in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:24-32) with a particular message concerning the fate of Shemaiah's false prophesy (Jeremiah 29:30ff).

Jeremiah 29:1-14 played a central role in the initial letter, for in it God commanded the Jewish exiles to settle in Babylon until the last hour of deliverance, after seventy years. Jeremiah 29:1-14 is followed by the predicted fate awaiting those Jews who disobeyed God's will in Babylon, especially the false prophets, including Ahab and Zedekiah (Jeremiah 29:15-23) whose false predictions were based on people's rebellion against God's will. Thus to oppose surrendering to and exerting all efforts and prayers for Babylonian peace with respect to its socio-economical and political well-being was a rebellion against God's will (Jeremiah 27:11,17, 28:14) which provoked His anger and bought punishment to all involved whether in Jerusalem or in Babylon (Jeremiah 28.15-17; 29:15-23, 30-32).

The message of the redacted letter (Jeremiah 29) is part of Jeremiah's overall prophetic message, the message that urged God's people to repent from their sins and turn to God or face punishment. It was written after God had already proclaimed the means (Nebuchadnezzar) the manner (exile) and the duration (seventy years) of His punishment (Jeremiah 27:11,17; 28:14). Habakkuk (612-588 BC) who initially questioned the means of God's punishment acknowledged and confirmed it in his prophecy and Ezekiel (593-572 BC) prophesied particularly to the Jewish exiles in Babylon the same message of doom (Ezekiel 1-24).

The obedience of God's people to the main message of Jeremiah 29:4-7 was critical for the realisation of God's promises of restoration. The question therefore is: What is the essence of God's message in Jeremiah 29:1-14?

Before the role of the city of Babylon implied in Jeremiah 29:1-14 and the responses of the Jews both in Jerusalem and in Babylon with regard to God's command (Jeremiah 29.4-7), it is necessary to uncover the essence of God's message in Jeremiah 29 1-4.

2.4. THE ESSENCE OF JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE IN JEREMIAH 29:1-14

In the time between 595 and 589 BC, especially the time around 589 BC, God had a particular message to all Jews both in Jerusalem and in Babylon. God called the Jews in Jerusalem to obey His laws, especially in doing justice to the socio-economic victims while maintaining their surrender and/or support to Babylonian dominion and/or deportation strategy. This message made it clear that disobedience would mean doom to the Davidic dynasty, the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

God called the Jews exiled in Babylon to obey His will, especially by settling in Babylon while exerting their whole effort in working and praying for peace of the city of Babylon, for the Babylonian peace ensured peace of God's people. In other words, by such obedience to God they could realise God's peace and saving purpose within the time appointed by God (seventy years).

The objectives of the message of Jeremiah 29:1-14 include the fact that, it was aimed at:

- Answering excuses of God's people of why they are not supposed to live in Babylon and
- Leading them in obedience to His command (Jeremiah 29:4-7), so as to realise God's peace and saving grace in God's appointed, but limited time.

The essence of Jeremiah's message in Jeremiah 29:1-14 included the following.

- A theology (a view, knowledge and/or study of God) which emphasised obedience to God's laws in gratitude to God's saving promises and
- A theology which viewed the role of the cities as God's instruments to be used by God's people in a particular God-given time so that they may realise God's saving purpose through the city of Babylon.

The essence of Jeremiah's message in Jeremiah 29:1-14 will be discussed below, by clarifying the two theological viewpoints mentioned above.

2.4.1. A THEOLOGY EMPHASISING OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAWS

It seemed unthinkable to most Jews both in Jerusalem and in Babylon that there was a causal relationship between serving Babylon as God's command (Jeremiah 27:11,17, 28:14) and the realisation of God's saving purpose (Jeremiah 29:10-11,14). According to Greenway (1978:30), "Babylon was a wicked and idolatrous city, ultimately doomed to be destroyed. Yet it was precisely in that situation that Israel was required to fulfil its calling as a holy people, set apart from among the nations to be witnesses of the one true God (Deut.14:1,2; Isa.43:10)". The Jews were to obey God's will. In Jerusalem, the obedience to God's will was also to be seen in many ways including freeing of Hebrew slaves by the Jews themselves (Jeremiah 34:8-10). In Babylon, the Jews were not supposed to resist the fact of living there as their home (and the home of their children, where they should multiply) in God's appointed time (70 years), for such a resistance was in itself an act of disobedience to God's command (Jeremiah 29:5-7)[8].

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[8] Bakke (1987:67), also said, "In Jeremiah 29:4, the exiles were told to interpret these experiences as God's missionary call to them and not as a personal tragedy. God calls them '... all the exiles whom I have sent into exile' (RSV). God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take them to Babylon as prisoners. They were both refugees and victims, and also people who had been sent. Then they were told to invest in their new environment and put down roots there. To put it in modern terms, God said, 'Don't live as aliens in the city, with your suitcases packed ready to leave as soon as you can.' Even so, most Christians do live a temporary lifestyle, enduring cities in frustration and dreaming about leaving. The Jews were then to seek the *shalom* of the cities 'to which I carried you into exile.' *Shalom* is almost untranslatable, and the nearest we can express it in English is 'a just peace' or 'wholeness.' In the welfare of Babylon, God was saying, the Jewish exiles would find their own welfare (29:7). This is a startling command of God. The Jews hated Babylon. They were victims and their city was in ruins, and they were told to seek Babylon's welfare. Our natural impulse is to pray for our friends, families, ministers and churches. If we have any energy left over, we may pray for our city. This reverses the order of Jeremiah's letter, in which the welfare of the Jews depended upon prayers for the "Just peace" of their enemies. We are not entitled to read into Jeremiah's use of *shalom* only a reference to narrow Jewish interests."

2.4.1.1. THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED FROM THE JEWS IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The obedience to God's will in Jerusalem was to be, among others, by freeing of Hebrew slaves (Jeremiah 34:8-10). Freeing of Hebrew slaves led to the lifting of Babylon siege in Jerusalem around 589 BC. It was a sign of the realisation of God's future promises of salvation (Jeremiah 29:10-14, especially in chapter 30-31). The Jews in Jerusalem did not believe and accept God's message, hence under Zedekiah and his officials the Jews reassumed Hebrew slavery and became loyal to Hophra of Egypt and allied with the Ammonites in revolt against Babylon and against Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 37:1-8,15; 38:4-6). To Jeremiah, as to other prophets before him, like Amos (Amos 2:6-7) social injustice, including Israel's insensitivity to the poor, slaves, aliens etc is a breaking of their covenant with God and is a sin as repugnant as idolatry and adultery. It is an evidence of true heart commitment to God when God's people show mercy to the poor, slaves, aliens etc. (Isaiah 1:10-17; 58:6-7; Amos 4:1-6; 5:21-24).

According to Keller (1997:41), "When God gave the law to Moses, he was constructing a believing community in which social righteousness was as required as personal righteousness and morality". The Jews in Jerusalem were to obey God's message through Jeremiah. They were expected therefore to free Hebrew slaves in Jerusalem in Jeremiah 34:8-10. Such obedience was, on one hand, a statement of faith of accepting and realising God's future promises of peace and salvation (firstly to the Jews under Zedekiah and his officials), and on the other hand it was a model from which other nations, like Babylon could learn from, in practicing social justice, including freeing captives or slaves in their own countries. In that way God's kingdom is advanced both within and outside Jerusalem. This disobedience to Jeremiah's message of freeing Hebrew slaves in Jerusalem in Jeremiah 34:8-10, was a contradiction of the nature and principles of mercy demonstrated to Jews by God and hence an inhibiting factor against the advancement of God's kingdom inside and outside Jerusalem. Their disobedience to Jeremiah's message was short-lived (Jeremiah 34:11; 37:1-8; 38:16) and intolerable.

According to Bright (1953:115), Jeremiah "promised Zedekiah, who to the end hoped that God would intervene as in the days of good king Hezekiah (21:2), that there would be no miracles. On the contrary (21:3-7), God was actively fighting for the Chaldeans". Jeremiah's predictions that the city of Jerusalem would be burnt down in punishment was fulfilled (Jeremiah 34 22; 2 Kings 25:8-10) Zedekiah attempted to escape, but he was captured and severely punished (2 Kings 25:4-7), and many people were taken into exile. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and its temple Davidic dynasty was put to an end. Zerubbabel as one of the seven grandsons of Jehoiachin (the last king in David's line) ruled Judah after the return from Jewish exiles as a governor no longer as a king (2 Chronicles 3.15-20; Ezra 2:2).

2.4.1.2. THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED FROM THE JEWS IN THE CITY OF BABYLON

The obedience that God required from the Jews in Babylon, among others, involved that they settle while exerting their whole effort in working and praying for peace[9] of the city of Babylon (Jeremiah 29:5-7). The correct conception of the city of Babylon by the Jewish exile could have shaped and influenced how they understood Jeremiah's message in Jeremiah 29:1-14.

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[9] According to Greenway (1978:35-38), seeking the shalom of the city had some socio-political implications, including the fact that Shalom also (1) creates warm community relationships which dispel the cold loneliness of insignificance, (2) means concern about the material and physical prosperity of its citizens over against poverty, suffering and injustice, (3) means trust, confidence, and mutual concern between neighbours over against their deceit and treachery, (4) has reference to righteousness, in the sense of "just" and "fair" relationship between people (Isaiah 48 22, 57:21; 59:8); (5) above all else, means peace with God and reconciliation with the Maker and Ruler of the universe. Greenway (1978:38) said, for this reason, shalom in the Old Testament always has a messianic tone, for it points forward to the coming of the one who alone can remove the barriers between God and man and between man and man, and establish a Kingdom in which truth, love, righteousness, and joy prevail.

2.4.2. A THEOLOGY THAT HAVE A CORRECT VIEW OF THE ROLE OF BABYLON

In Jeremiah 29:1-14 many conceptions were uncovered on how the role played by the city of Babylon was to be viewed. Some of them include the fact that the city of Babylon was used as:

- A signpost of God's judgment;
- A realisation centre of God's gracious promises;
- An interculturation centre,
- A political and economic centre;
- A socio-religious centre;
- An integration and network centre;
- A transfer bridge of God's promised plan or purpose.

2.4.2.1. BABYLON AS A SIGNPOST OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

From Jeremiah 29 4, it could be deduced that God's judgment is implied when the Almighty God of Israel revealed to the Jewish exiles that He Himself was responsible in carrying them into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. So the fulfilment of the judgment predictions proclaimed by Jeremiah was realised (Jeremiah 25:8-11). He predicted that due to the Jews' disobedience to God's will, God had chosen Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon as His appointed instruments to punish Judah and the surrounding nations for seventy years (Jeremiah 27 & 29:7).

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[10]Isaiah predicted before the Jewish exile that Babylon will be a God-appointed instrument to punish His people (Isaiah 39:5-7), a foreigners' centre, a kingdoms' jewel (Isaiah 13:14,19) and a nations' queen (Isaiah 47:5). Habakkuk – Jeremiah's contemporary questioned God's instrument of punishment (Habakkuk 1:6,12), yet later acknowledged it, for God revealed himself to Habakkuk as God with unlimited control of the world and its events and remaining free to use Babylon to punish sins. However, even Babylon would be punished for her sins in God's right time (Habakkuk 3).

It is from this context that Babylon is used in Biblical times as a symbol of God's warning and judgment against sin. In many biblical passages, including in Zechariah 5:5-11; Revelation 17:2, 5,18 etc Babylon is symbolised as a woman or a collective world of evils/sins which causes many and varied oppressions and sufferings to God's people.

Jeremiah made this clear in Jeremiah 5:1ff that the Holy and Almighty God could save and protect the sinful city of Jerusalem from His punishment, if they repent and obey. The emphasis of Jeremiah's message was on the repentant/obedient hearts of His people in the city, whether in Babylon or Jerusalem, not on those cities themselves (Jeremiah 5:24). In other words, the Holy City and/or Holy Temple could not protect unholy and disobedient people.

Daniel among other exiles was also influenced by Jeremiah's prophecy (of God's judgment to the nations, including Babylon), including his letters before and during exile in Babylon (Daniel 1:1; 9:1; Jeremiah 1:5; 46-51). Babylon's powerful kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius) honoured God as sovereign above all gods and all nations and influenced the nations under their dominion to honour God (Daniel 2:47; 3:29; 4:34f; 5:18f, 6:26f).

2.4.2.2. BABYLON AS A REALISATION CENTRE OF GOD'S GRACIOUS PROMISE

Besides being the signpost of God's punishment (mentioned above in 2.4.2.1), Babylon is a realisation centre of God's gracious promise. In Jeremiah 29:10 God said that He Himself would come to the Jewish exiles and fulfil his gracious promise, which was to bring them back to Jerusalem. God's gracious promises will be fulfilled in the politically secure and economic prosperous city for which they prayed and worked during God's appointed, but limited time.

God gave them His future plan as His gracious promise (Jeremiah 29:11), which was and should be realised in the city of Babylon in God's appointed time when the Jewish exiles:

Firstly, trusted fully in, or leaned steadfastly upon, or confided firmly in God Himself and in what He graciously promised, for God is reliable[11] (He would deliver them from exile in Babylon as He planned and promised). It should be noted that no one deserved such a promise as Jeremiah 29:10 said, since they were all sinful;

Secondly, by not only exerting themselves to the utmost for the political security and economic prosperity of the city of Babylon and praying to God on its behalf (Jeremiah 29:7) as a sign of their total trust in, or steadfast leaning upon, or firm confidence in God Himself and in what He graciously promised, but also do so knowing that He was with them as their personal God who heard their prayers and needs personally (Jeremiah 29:12-13) and who would personally gather them from the nations and deliver them from wherever they were so that they would be able to return to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:14).

The issue was: in whatever they were committed to do, they had to do it not as a custom, tradition or fashion, but with full integrity and firm conviction, i.e. from the heart (Jeremiah 29:13). God's steadfast love and mercy which was revealed to Daniel among other exiles was also based on God's word through Jeremiah's prophecy, including his letters before and during exile in Babylon (Daniel 1:1;9:1ff), also led him and other exiles to understand God's gracious promises and confessions of their sins and prayerful obedience to God's will over the years. Jeremiah's letters urged the Jewish exiles to look at God's gracious promises in their situations.

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[11] According to Calvin (1852:428), God is never inconsistent with Himself and His purpose. Unlike the false prophets who inspired the Jews and their sensual dreams with a hope of speedy return contrary to God's plan or purpose, God's good word as proclaimed by Jeremiah bore God's favour to the Jews. It was that end and expectation that the Jews were deprived of and cut off from, for God had already fixed the manner and the time of punishment. They were taught that they should obey and surrender themselves to God and His will and power.

2.4.2.3. BABYLON AS AN INTERCULTURATION CENTRE

Like Genesis 1:26-28, Jeremiah 29:5-6 has an aspect of cultural mandate, which involves the freedom of humankind to shape and mould the world they live in (Gousmett, 1999:21). God willed the Jewish exile to make the city of Babylon as their home and the home of their children, where they should multiply, not decrease. The Almighty God of Israel who was (Himself) responsible in carrying them into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon commanded them to have faith in Him. An act of raising a family was to be an act of faith on God by obeying God's will for them there and then as it was clearly defined in Jeremiah 29:5-7. Their family and ethnic ties were to be based on, shaped and influenced by God's will as a means of witness the Almighty God of Israel who is above all nations, include those in Babylon (Deuteronomy 14:1,2;Isaiah 43. 10). Regardless of the circumstances, the Jewish exiles were to obey God and His will, which also means singing the Lord's songs in the city of Babylon and not refrain excuses like, "How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137:4; Greenway, 1978 30) In this regard, Greenway (1978:33) further said, "God wants His witness in the key centres of culture, commerce, politics, and communication, and without exception these centres are the great cities." Yet, like Shemaiah[12], most Jewish Exiles, were troubled on the thought of settling and raising a family in the foreign and hostile city of Babylon. According to Bakke (1987:173), a family structure of God's people is a visible sign of the power of their witness in the city. It is a God-given cultural mandate and stewardship that build a monogamous community values.

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[12] Shemaiah in Babylon responded (Jeremiah 29.28) particularly to the specific message of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29 5,6. He addressed all people in Jerusalem, including the priests and Zephaniah in particular (Jeremiah 29.25) that Jeremiah should be imprisoned because according to Shemaiah, he was mad and claimed to be God's prophet (Jeremiah 29:26). Denying Jeremiah's message, was denying God's will and hence Jeremiah made that clear by letter written by Jeremiah from Jerusalem to all the Jewish exiles in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:24-32) with a particular message concerning the fate of Shemaiah's false prophecy (Jeremiah 29:30f)

The cultural mandate given at creation was a mandate to build the city. According to Conn (1992:15) God gave the Jewish exiles the cultural mandate to transform the city of Babylon. To transform the city of Babylon there was a need of inter-culturation, whereby cultures were to be shared and exchanged (Bosch, 1991:456). In this way, Babylon was viewed as an intercultural centre which transmits cultures, as one of its roles. According to Bakke (1987:37), "There is one aspect of the form of cities which Mumford regards as unique. Cities contain and transmit cultures; by bringing together all the separate parts (as racial groups find themselves living side by side) they enable direct relationships that become engines and catalysts of cultural change". Culture is defined here as an "organized system of knowledge and belief whereby a people structure their experience and perceptions, formulate acts, and choose between alternatives" (Keesing, 1981:68). There are many examples on how culture was transmitted by some Jewish Exiles in Babylon, some of which are indicated by Monsma (1989:213f) and Bakke (1987:71)[13]. God's command through Jeremiah's letters (Jeremiah 29:5-7). Defined how the Jewish exiles should behave and conduct themselves in Babylon, if they were to transmit what God sees as valuable to transform the cultural patterns of the cities, like that of Babylon.

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[13] Bakke (1987:71) said, "Daniel – Sorting out faith from culture Daniel was a Jewish exile in Babylon and was selected by Nebuchadnezzar's court to be trained as a court official. He was taught to read and write the Babylonian language (Dan 1:4) and 'to these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds' (Dan1:17) ....Daniel moved into Babylon, learned its language and culture and became a leading political influence in the king's court. But he remained true to the God of Israel and 'resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine' (Dan 1:8) This was an issue of faith." And according to Monsma (1989:213, 214) ". . the best model of godliness is not found in isolation from the world. It is found in those who remain loyal to God while they rub elbows with those who reject him. We learn this from Daniel and Esther. . Both Daniel and Esther were in the world but not of it. They both knew where to draw the line between cooperation with the world in nonessentials and confrontation with the world in essentials. Their examples, together with other examples and instructions in the rest of Scripture, are our models for service to God in the cities of the world."

2.4.2.4. BABYLON AS A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CENTRE

In Jeremiah 29:7, the city of Babylon was God's instrumental place not only of punishing, but also of making the Jews prosper, for the city's prosperity belonged to God, not primarily and necessarily to the city (Psalm 24:1-2; 50:10-12; Job 41:11; Haggai 2:8). For their own benefit, the Jewish exiles were 'to exert themselves to the utmost' (Calvin, 1852:420) in seeking and working for the city's political security and economic prosperity[14] and praying on behalf of that city of Babylon in particular.

In Jeremiah 29:6, Jewish exiles as other exiles, though not completely free to go and do as they pleased, did enjoy relative freedom of movement, and they allowed to build houses, to marry and to let their children and grand-children marry and get married, to cultivate the soil, to trade and to grow in number. Deist and le Roux, (1987:132), stated that, "In each colony the elders came to the fore and provided the leadership according to ancient custom. It would also seem that some of the exiles grew very wealthy in the course of time." It should be noted that the Jewish exiles could hear God's word in many ways, like Jeremiah's letter correspondences.

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[14] In Daniel 1:3-4 sponsoring the academic training of the young men from the royal family and nobility so as to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's palace and kingdom, in it, was a politico-economic and socio-religious benefit not only to individual learner, but also to his family, tribe and nation in Babylon and elsewhere. This was testified by the whole book of Daniel through the gifted young men who showed their leadership potentials. They worked under and used the Babylonian policy of academic training and their prominent Babylonian positions of governance for the benefit of God's people and His Kingdom. The Babylonian policy of investing its money and efforts in the training of gifted young men who had competent leadership potentials, so as to be instruments in their positions of power and governance for the benefit of the kingdom of Babylon, also turned out to be a benefit to God's people (church) and Kingdom. This was clear when even Nebuchadnezzar praised God of the Jews and decreed that no one was allowed to speak evil against Him before the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials and those who were called together as families (people), political parties (nations) and as ethnic groups (language) in number of gatherings-in the plain of Dura (Daniel 3:28-30; cf. 2:46-48, 4:34-37)

God's word influenced the Jewish exiles. By having prominent positions in the Babylonian government, the Jewish intellectuals witnessed about God by word and deeds. They were not like passengers and spectators, but they focused on God while being involved in (not escaping) and committed to the political-economic reality of the city of Babylon – showing their integrity to God and His law by their whole life in the city of Babylon. Their daily secular job or work was to serve God and His Kingdom through serving Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom.

2.4.2.5. BABYLON AS A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CENTRE

Exile was not to be viewed as a time of "the graveyard of Israel's faith", but as a time "of great spirituality" (Bright, 1953:133). Deist and le Roux (1987:132) confirmed the statement by saying that, "The existence of colonies created favourable circumstances for the exiles to preserve their religious traditions, to reflect about the future and to work out their programmes of reconstruction in the finest detail." Hinson (1990:156) further stated that, "Centres were needed among the exiles where the traditions of the nation could be discussed, the records preserved. The first synagogues were probably built at this time, and the first Sabbath gatherings of the Jews held in them. This was a new element in the religious life of Israel, and it was to play a very important part in the lives of the Jews in the time of Christ."

In Babylon, the Laws and Psalms, the life and the teaching of the Prophets and other historical records, were remembered and passed on both orally and into more orderly collected and edited Biblical books known today (Bright, 1953:133; Hinson, 1990:156). Clearly there was some socio-religious revival among the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. Deist and Vorster (1986:162) argued that, "Since the Zadokites belonged to the cream of the nation, they were taken away into exile in 597 and 586 B.C. In Babylonia they pooled their resources, gradually forming a power bloc and so regaining control over the people; they began to make plans for the

restoration of the temple cult and the priesthood. In these difficult times the Zadokites' ideals found a remarkable expression in the writings of Ezekiel, a priest who was also a prophet. It is uncertain whether he was a Zadokite himself, but there is no doubt that the Zadokites' temple theology played a major role in his work. Ezekiel's accusations against the priests in Jerusalem were based mainly on the fact that they were tolerating all sorts of heathen practices there – which was the very reason why he saw the glory of Yahweh leave the Temple (10:18). All had not been lost, however. God's presence would return, but only if the people took utterly seriously the idea of the holiness of the cult and of the priesthood (cf, e.g.11:17-21). Ezekiel's main concerns were the restoration of the true cult and the reorganisation of the legitimate (Zadokite) priesthood. His blueprint for reform is contained in Ezekiel 40-48".

Many scholars note the fact that the exile created a new context in which the history of Israel was reinterpreted, particularly based on the growing awareness that God's judgment against Judah, especially Kings of Judah was just (Lamentation 4:6: Ezekiel 18). Even the actions of the pious Josiah were reinterpreted It is clear from the comparison of 2 Kings 23:26-27 and 2 Chronicles 20-25.

It was exactly what Jeremiah proclaimed years back. Jeremiah saw that it would take more than Josiah's reform to make Jewish the people of God. In Jeremiah 7:21-23, Jeremiah proclaimed against the external observance of cultic law and for the repentance from the heart (Jeremiah 4:3-4,14; Deuteronomy 10:16: Romans 2:25-29). The growing awareness among the Jewish exiles in Babylon was that God's judgment against Judah was just; and this awareness made their religious leaders proclaim the fact that the Jews as a nation had failed to comply with the covenant laws and hence they themselves were responsible for being taken away into exile. Hence each one of them should repent (Ezekiel 18:1ff).

It should be noted that Ezekiel proclaimed to the exiles against the belief that Judah was punished for the sins of their ancestors, not their own. Unlike the so-called "Dark Age", where many historians hold that 'Biblical Christianity was in the low ebb' for almost 1000 years from 476 to 1453 AD, a period of the Jewish exiles in Babylon was not to be viewed as a time of "the graveyard of Israel's faith". So cities like Babylon were socio-religious centres of their times!

2.4.2.6. BABYLON AS AN INTEGRATION AND NETWORK CENTRE OF PEOPLE GROUPS

The prophet Isaiah once predicted Babylon to be a centre of foreigners, a jewel of the kingdoms (Isaiah 13:14, 19) and a queen of nations (Isaiah 47:5). Babylon indeed became an integration centre of people (by family ties), nations (by political ties) and languages (by ethnic ties) under the organised leadership of the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials (Daniel 3:1-6). The organised leadership included the exiles from many countries, including those from Judah, Philistia, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Elam Media and Persia in the city of Babylon (Bromiley, 1986:388, 975).

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[15] As far as the socio-religious role of the cities is concerned, the prominent cities in the East and in Africa in particular played a socio-religious role even in the first five centuries AD under the influence of their competent urban theologians (van Wijk and Spies, 1985:10-12, 18-19, 58-59, 61-62, Walker, 1985:172) and hence the theology and creeds of those times is a testimony of that. According to van Wijk and Spies (1985:58-59), the Popes and Emperors of Rome ignored if not rejected the urban-theology and creeds of the Eastern and African theologians, due to their power and purse-monger lives in the church and civil life in the first five centuries, and especially in the Middle Ages (476 to 1453 AD) (Jeffery, 1988:72). Ironically the revival of the Latin theology (which was not born in Rome, but in Carthage led by Tertullian and Cyprian), other African Theology and creeds (in particular of the first five centuries AD of the Eastern and African cities) and also the translation of the Latin Bible into other ordinary European languages before and after the 1450s are some of the main factors which led the reformation of the Church in the 16th century (Kuiper, 1964:149, Walker, 1985:412f).

The skilled and exiled nobility were placed and elevated to the position of authority in Babylon not only to eliminate potential leaders for future uprising on the one hand and win their and their nation's loyalty on the other hand (2 Kings 24:15-17;25:18-19,27- 30; Bromiley,1986:975; Deist and le Roux,1987:132), but also to invest in the international leadership potentials (Daniel 1:3-4) for the benefit of the kingdom of Babylonia. Monsma (1989:123) concluded that, "Both flexible and productive, these networks can be used as an avenue for the spread of the gospel. People tend to trust those who are members of their networks for information about where to find work, medical help, or good housing at a reasonable price. They also lean on network members for advice on deeper needs, such as whom to marry, how to deal with marital problems, and how to handle depression. Among these deeper needs is one's religious allegiance. When people recommend Jesus Christ to other members of their networks, it is a potent endorsement."

2.4.2.7. BABYLON AS A TRANSFER BRIDGE OF GOD'S PROMISED PLAN OR PURPOSE

According to His gracious promise[16], God gave hope to the Jewish exiles in Babylon, and an expectation (Jeremiah 29:11). Matthew Henry (1961:989) stated that, "He will give them to see the expectation, which end which they desire..., .the expectation of their faith". Taetsch (1965:235) further said that God's purpose is to give them an 'expected end'; literary, an end and hope. The expected end is the 'end of days' or 'Messianic era', on which the hopes of Israel were centred (Genesis 49:18; 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 14:7; Malachi 3:1).

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[16] It is by grace that God who left them because of their sins, again promised them to live forever amongst them (Ezekiel 8-10; 43:1-12). God promised to draw the divided tribes of Israel and Gentiles in Jerusalem, due to its Temple as a missionary incentive (of drawing the people of the earth) (Ezekiel 48.35, Isaiah 2.2-3, 1 Kings 8.41-43). God's people were to witness God's glory to other nations (Psalm 47:1; 67:2; 96:3; 105 1; 117:1), for the throne and glory of Yahweh is in Zion (Jeremiah 14.21). Jerusalem was a strategic reintegration centre of nations of glorious expectation of Jesus Christ as predicted before (2 Sam.7.11,12,16,19) even by Zechariah (8.20-23,12 10,13 1,14 8ff).

2.5. FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE JEWS' DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S MESSAGE

It becomes clear that Jews were not supposed to resist to view of living in the city of Babylon as their home (and the home of their children, where they should multiply, not decrease) in God's appointed time (seventy years), for resistance was in itself an act of disobedience to God's command (Jeremiah 29:5-7).

However, most Jews disobeyed God's command in Jeremiah 29:5-7, by resisting to the view of living in the city of Babylon as their home and the home of their children, where they should multiply, not decrease. The Jews' disobedience to God's message can be accounted for by many factors. These factors include the dominance of a wrong theology, namely:

- A theology that propagated the unconditional inviolability of David's dynasty, the city of Jerusalem and its temple;
- A theology against the Babylonian deportation;
- A theology that misreads God's long-suffering in the past;
- A theology that supported Zedekiah's inconsistence foreign policy;
- A theology that enjoyed the support of the masses in Jerusalem,
- A theology that domesticated God to the nation or land and
- A theology that criticises sins of others, while ignoring own sins.

2.5.1. A THEOLOGY PROPAGATING THE UNCONDITIONAL INVIOLABILITY OF DAVID'S DYNASTY, THE CITY OF JERUSALEM AND ITS TEMPLE

Deist and le Roux (1987:129) argued that many Jews wrongly viewed David's dynasty, the city of Jerusalem and its temple as unconditionally inviolable. Those Jews believed that Yahweh had made an eternal covenant with David's dynasty and hence he would dwell in the city of

Jerusalem and its temple forever. It became a basis for their view of an unconditional salvation from God towards them as a nation. Against that theology, Jeremiah proclaimed that the obedience to God by adherence to His covenant laws would lead to the realisation of God's promises and blessings and insisted that the neglect of the law would incur punishment. Hence Jeremiah merely viewed Josiah's reforms, for according to Jeremiah the Mosaic laws were outwardly observed in Josiah's reforms (Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:14; 5:23f; 7:21f). The response of the Jews, during Josiah's reform, to Jeremiah's temple address[17] in Jeremiah 7:1-20, which is condensed in Jeremiah 26:1-6, confirmed the wrong theology. The people, especially the priests and the cultic prophets were angry. They thought Jeremiah's address was a blasphemy against the holy house of Israel's God and wanted Jeremiah dead.

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[17] Bright (1953:111) summarised Jeremiah's temple address, by saying, to "trust in the mere presence of the temple is a great lie (7.4) That temple is not so large a structure that it can hide from the eyes of God the corrupt, the un-brotherly, the unrepentant behaviour of the people who worship there (7:8-10) God is not so blinded by incense smoke that He cannot see (7 11). And if you do not believe that God can destroy the houses where men sing his praises, then go back to that other temple which once stood in Shiloh-the shrine of the old tribal league-and see what happened to it God can, in the judgment of history, destroy even churches (7:12-15; 26:6)! That, of course, was a great blasphemy, and so sooner had Jeremiah said it, than a mob, incited by the outraged clergy, rushed upon him to lynch him (26:8). Had not certain of the nobles (26:16-19) – notably Ahikam Ben Shaphan, one of the men of Josiah's reform (vs 24, cf. 11 Kings 22:12) – been possessed of the old-fashioned notion that a prophet might not be killed for speaking the Word of God, this would have been the end of Jeremiah." Even Smit (1998:66) confirmed it by saying "God's judgment would materialise in the destruction of the temple, the ending of the Davidic kingship and the oppression of the people by the Babylonians. Especially about the temple there originated a false idea of confidence, because they believed that God would never permit that this token of His divine presence would be devastated (cf. 7:10). The Davidic kingship was also in high religious esteem because of God's promises to David." So to Smit (1998:66), Jeremiah in this situation "blamed the priest, in the first place because they led the people in the keeping of the outward ceremonies while the heart of the people was not in it. The priests were responsible for the growth of the idea that the Babylonians would never be able to capture and destroy the temple A group of false prophets also deceived the people in believing this idea (23:9-40) '

2.5.2. A THEOLOGY AGAINST THE BABYLONIAN DEPORTATION STRATEGY

It should be noted that the Jews were divided into two main groups, especially after Josiah's death[18]. There were those who believed that Judah should accept Babylonian rule and others believed that Egypt could help them to break free. Many scholars indicate that Jehoiakim and Zedekiah inherited a divided people and were driven to both sides and hence their policies kept on changing (Hinson, 1990:149).

According to Bright (1953:110), under Jehoiakim (609-598) there "was a widespread popular feeling that the blessings promised had not been forthcoming. The law demanded reform as the price of putting off the doom, reform was made, but calamity came anyhow! The reform, in short, collapsed because it did not seem to have paid off; and what paganised people, ancient or modern, cares to stick with a religion that does not pay off in tangible terms? In any case the pagan cults came back in force (eg., Jer.7:16-18; cf.Ezek.8)."

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[18] With regard to the situation after Josiah's death, Deist and le Roux (1987:111), state, "Things were not going well in Judah. The glory of the Josianic era had gone for good. Judah's independence was something of the past and she was humiliated by having to pay tribute to Egypt. This taxation placed a heavy economic burden on the people and many became impoverished. Many believers could also not get over the shock of Josiah's death and the crisis of the Deuteronomic theology. The tragedy that had occurred at Megiddo caused many to doubt the significance of this theology since compliance with the requirements of the book of the law had in the end only brought disaster. Long afterwards, people still said that the reform initiative had been a mistake and had led to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. These doubts had twofold results. On the one hand the heathen practices were reassumed and public morals deteriorated. On the other hand the earlier nationalist theology was once more strengthened by the fact that the nation now depended on the unconditional salvation of the nationalist theology with even greater dedication and believed even more resolutely in the inviolability of Jerusalem, the temple and the king. The prophets and priests also continually assured them of Yahweh's eternal protection."

With the situation after Josiah's reform, the question was: is what Jeremiah proclaimed right, when he said that the Jews had to surrender to the secular and evil city and its deportation strategy[19] in the time between 597 and 586 BC in particular?

As a way of obeying God Jews were to surrender to the deportation strategy and to settle, while exerting their effort in working and praying for peace of the city of Babylon. So most of the Jews who remained in Jerusalem did not surrender and/or support it. And these actions were interpreted as a rebellion against serving the Babylonian rule for the appointed time as God had commanded (Jeremiah 27:11,17,28; 28:14).

An anti-deportation strategy was a sign of an underlying theology against what God commanded. On the surface the Jews might have been reluctant, if not hesitant to surrender and/or support the Babylonian deportation strategy, but their very attitude and action confirmed their underlying wrong view about the city of Babylon.

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[19]The Babylonian deportation strategy is a strategy of deporting the top strata (political, religious and intellectual leaders) and placing them in the city of Babylon where they were also elevated to the position of authority, not only to eliminate potential leaders for future uprising on the one hand and win theirs and their nation's loyalty on the other hand (2 Kings 24:15-17; 25:18-19,27-30; Deist and Roux, 1987:133). But also to invest in the leadership potentials (Daniel 1:3-4) for the benefit of the Kingdom of Babylonia. After Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin, he made his uncle Mattaniah (597-586 BC) a ruler and named him Zedekiah (righteousness of Yahweh-2 Kings 24:17) under the oath sworn in God's name – the oath, which he was urged to keep by serving Babylon for God's sake (2 Chronicles 36:13;Ezekiel 17:12-21). He became loyal to Hophra of Egypt in 589 BC and revolted with Ammonites against Babylon (Jeremiah 37:1-8; Ezekiel 21:18-24). Hence Jeremiah predicted the fate of king Zedekiah, his officials and the rest of the people who remained in Jerusalem or who escaped to Egypt (Jeremiah 24:8-10).

2.5.3. A THEOLOGY THAT MISREAD GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING IN THE PAST

When the Assyrian power declined during Josiah's reign (622 – 609 BC), the borders of the Judean Kingdom were extended (2 Kings 23:15, 29). It was a period characterised and dominated by a nationalist spirit with a pride in the Davidic dynasty and the religious ritual activities were centralised in Jerusalem. It was a golden age for prophets like Jeremiah and Zephaniah (Bosman & Loader, 1988:68).

According to Bright (1953:110), under Jehoiakim (609-598 BC, the context gradually changed and Josiah's reforms collapsed. The law demanded reform as the price of putting off the doom; reform was made, but calamity came anyhow! Hence, according to them, since the reform, in short, collapsed because it did not seem to have paid off, the pagan cults were revived (Jeremiah 7:16-18; Ezekiel 8).

After the deportation of prominent people from Jerusalem to Babylon in 597 BC, Jews were still hopeful and held on to the idea of a perpetual Davidic dynasty. Jerusalem had after all been able to hold its own against foreign powers for more than four hundred years.

With respect to the context of the period after the deportation, Deist and Vorster (1986:161) argued that, "Jeremiah, for all his part, was convinced that his prophecies had been fulfilled, for, as he had predicted, the people had been taken away into exile (10:18; 13:19). His hearers, however, felt differently about the matter. Contrary to the prophecy, the city had been taken without any bloodshed and had not been burnt down. Above all, the Temple had not been destroyed. Although important temple equipment had been removed, religious life went on as usual. A spirit of optimism prevailed, and the conviction grew that the Babylonians' victory would be short-lived.

The people were misreading both their context and God's long-suffering in the past and therefore also misunderstood and rejected Jeremiah's message[20]" (Deist & Vorster, 1986:160; Deist & le Roux, 1987:113-114). The deportation of the Jews to Babylon created a new context in which the Jewish' history was re-interpreted with the aim of justification of God's judgement concerning Judah (Bosman & Loader, 1988:69-70).

Hence Jeremiah's hearers may have misunderstood Jeremiah's message as a result of their theological views. They worshipped the same God as Jeremiah, but believed not only that the Lord had done wonderful things in Israel's history, but also that this guaranteed the survival of both the house of David and of the people So "Jeremiah's hearers should not be too hastily condemned for looking upon him as a 'mad-man who pretended to be a prophet (Jeremiah 29:26)'" (Deist and Vorster, 1986; 161).

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[20] In this regard Deist and le Roux, (1987:113-114), indicated some of their misreading to include: " (1) In the Syro-Ephraimitic war (734-732 BC) against Judah, Pekah and Rezin tried to force King Ahaz to form an alliance against Assyria Isaiah, however, proclaimed that trust in the nationalist God would by itself suffice to repulse the attack. In the event, the city and the temple were saved and Ahaz remained the king, (2) Jerusalem also succeeded in circumventing the onslaught of Shalmaneser V in 722 BC; (3) When the Assyrians under Sennacherib advanced upon Jerusalem in 701 BC, intent upon her destruction, King Hezekiah humbled himself before Yahweh and received a promise of deliverance which also materialised, (4) After the murder of Amon, the citizens of the country were able to secure the accession of his son Josiah to the throne and, thereby, the continuation of David's lineage; (5) Following Josiah's unsuccessful attack on the Egyptians in 609 BC, Neco refrained from destroying Jerusalem in revenge. He also acknowledged the Davidic dynasty by placing upon the throne Eliakim (Jehoiakim), a descendant of David; (6) Nebuchadnezzar did carry a number of important people off into exile in 597 BC, but the city and the temple remained intact Furthermore he acknowledged the Davidic dynasty by appointing Zedekiah." So in both of the above-mentioned cases, the Davidic dynasty, the temple and city of Jerusalem were spared, that is, they were not burned-down nor destroyed. So the patriotic spirit and nationalist optimism prevailed (Deist and Vorster, 1986:160). But the exilic re-interpretation does not hope for restoration of the dynasty, but for God's deliverance when the nation repents and demonstrates penitence (Bosman and Loader, 1988:71)

2.5.4. A THEOLOGY THAT ENHANCED ZEDEKIAH'S INCONSISTENT FOREIGN RELATIONS.

After Jehoiakim's death his son Jehoiakin ruled three months and ten days (2 Chronicles 36:9). The Babylonian king suspected him and sent an army against Jerusalem. Without resistance, Jehioakin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, who plundered the royal palace and the temple and deported the king, his mother, the princes, other officials together with thousands of soldiers and artisans, the cream of the population (Jeremiah 24:5), leaving only the lower classes.

After Jehoiakin, his uncle who was the last son of Josiah, Mattaniah, was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, who changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah pledged allegiance to the king of Babylon and ruled for eleven years, from 598 to 587 BC (2 Kings 24:17-20; 2 Chronicles 36:10-13). The deportation of the "cream of the nation" in 598 BC brought disastrous results, for it meant that the future policy of Judah was framed by men with little or no experience of statecraft in Zedekiah's rule.

In Jeremiah 28:2-4, Jeremiah reacted vehemently against the wrong optimism taught by the prophets that spread among the people. According to Bromiley, 1988:1187) the Jews' patriotic spirit and nationalist optimism were incited and they had a hope of early collapse of Babylonian dominion and a speedy return of exiles. It was intensified by internal and external revolts against Babylonian dominion and an emergence and proximity of Egypt's power around 594 BC.

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[21] According to Smit (1998:56), "One of the characteristics of Zedekiah's rule was the inconsistency in his international relations. When a rebellion was started in Babylon in the fourth year of Zedekiah's rule, there suddenly gathered messengers from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyrus and Sidon in Jerusalem to plan a conspiracy against Babylon. Jeremiah reacted vehemently against it, and also against the optimism which started among the people (Jer.28:2-4). Nothing came of this conspiracy, and Zedekiah speedy sent messengers to Nebuchadnezzar to assure his overlord of his loyalty (Jer.29:3)."

It may be noted that Nebuchadnezzar's suspicion of Zedekiah's plot should have necessitated Zedekiah's visit to Babylon in 593 BC (Jeremiah 51:59;Tenney, 1976:1048), not necessarily due to his obedience to Jeremiah's warnings not to join an alliance (Jeremiah 27:1-12; 28:1). He was to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar-who had sworn him in God's name (2 Chronicles 36:13; Ezekiel 17 13) as a king in the place of his exiled nephew Jehoiakin[22] (2 Kings 24:8-17; Jeremiah 29:3). According to Calvin (1852:417) Zedekiah did not wish to go to Babylon again, "for he thus hoped that his kingdom would be confirmed" In that way, Zedekiah have permitted his ambassadors to carry Jeremiah's letter, when he saw that the content of the letter implied that the settlement in Babylon meant that the return from exile was not going to be during his or Jehoiakin's life-time and that his kingdom would not be threatened until he died. It also explains why Zedekiah permitted his ambassadors to carry Jeremiah's letter.

It should be noted that the Jews were divided into two main groups, especially during Jehoiakim and Zedekiah's rule. There were those who believed that Judah should accept Babylonian rule and surrender to the Babylonian deportation strategy; while others believed that Egypt could help them to break free, because of the emergence and proximity of Egypt as a mighty power around 594 BC. So Zedekiah inherited a divided people and was driven to both sides and hence his policies kept on changing (Hinson, 1990:149). Hence he became loyal to Hophra of Egypt around 589 BC and revolted with the Ammonites against Babylon (Jeremiah 37:1-8; Ezekiel 21: 18-24). Jeremiah predicted the fate of king Zedekiah, his officials and the rest of the people who remained in Jerusalem or who escaped to Egypt in rebellion against surrendering to the Babylonian deportation strategy (Jeremiah 24:8-10).

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[22] Jehoiakin was the last king of David's line to sit on the throne in Judah (2 Chronicles 3:15-20). His seven sons never ruled. Only his grandson Zerubbabel ruled after the return from exile (Ezra 2:2) as a governor, not as a king

2.5.5. A THEOLOGY THAT ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF THE MASSES IN JERUSALEM

According to Deist and le Roux, (1987:118), "In the daily conversations in court, in the market places and in the streets the Babylonian dominion would be heatedly discussed." It is in this context that Jeremiah 29:8-9 has to be understood. The anti-Babylonian revolt that could lead to the speedy return of the exiles was a dream that spread far and wide in the public arena – a dream hoped to be fulfilled soon. With this, the prophets whose chief aim was to please people, to proclaim the dreams of the people as the Lord's oracles revealed to them in their dreams (Taetsch, 1965:234). Jeremiah proclaimed the fate of those prophets represented by Ahab and Zedekiah in Babylon and by Hananiah in Jerusalem who inspired the Jewish exiles to anti-Babylonian revolt with a hope of a speedy deliverance from exile, (Jeremiah 28; 29:21-22). Around 589 BC they reassumed the enslavement of the Hebrew slave against Jeremiah's advice with a hope that the Egyptians would help them against the Babylonians (Jeremiah 34:8-11, 37:5). Zedekiah refused to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 38:2,17f), but allied himself with the Ammonites in revolt against Babylon (2 Kings 25.1, Jeremiah 37:1-8; Ezekiel 21:18-24) Zedekiah became loyal to Hophra of Egypt around 589 BC and allied himself with the Ammonites in revolt against Babylon (2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 37:1-8; Ezekiel 21:18-24). Zedekiah and his officials were afraid of people that they avoided the public knowledge of their interest in Jeremiah's advice (Jeremiah 37:17; 38:5,19,24-26). Since the majority of Jews hoped for the Egyptians' help against the Babylonian rule (Buttrick, 1985:948), instead of following Jeremiah's advices, he allowed Jeremiah to be mistreated and imprisoned (Jeremiah 37:15; 38:4-6). It was Zedekiah's disobedience to God's will that brought and end to the Davidic dynasty, the temple and the city[22] in the deportation of 586 BC.

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[22] Without the Davidic dynasty, temple and city nationalist theology was baseless and empty. Yet even by then, God wanted them to obey Him by working and praying for its well-being so as to realise His purpose for them

In short through his letter (Jeremiah 29), Jeremiah spoke the truth, but it was unpopular, Hananiah spoke lies, but his deceitful words brought false hope and comfort to the people. God had already outlined the marks of a true prophet (Deuteronomy 13, 18:20-22): A true prophet's predictions always come true and his words never contradict previous revelation. Jeremiah's predictions were already coming true, from Hananiah's death to the Babylonian invasions. But the people still preferred to listen to comforting lies rather than painful truth

According to the introduction to Jeremiah in Warren's Life Application Bible (1991:1283), "What is success? Most definitions include references to achieving goals and acquiring wealth, prestige, favour, and power. 'Successful' people enjoy the good life – being financially and emotionally secure, being surrounded by admirers, and enjoying the fruits of their labours. They are leaders, opinion makers, and trendsetters. Their example is emulated; their accomplishments are noticed. They know who they are and where they are going, and they stride confidently to meet their goals. By these standards, Jeremiah spoke, nobody listened. Consistently and passionately he urged them to act, but nobody moved. And he certainly did not attain material success. He was poor and underwent severe deprivation to deliver his prophecies. He was thrown into prison (Chapter 37) and into a cistern (Chapter 38), and he was taken to Egypt against his will (chapter 43). He was rejected by his neighbours (11:19-21), his family (12:6), the false priests and prophets (20:1,2; 28:1-17), friends (20:10), his audiences (26:8), and the kings (36:23). Throughout his life, Jeremiah stood alone, declaring God's message of doom, announcing the covenant, and weeping over the fate of his beloved country. In the eyes of the world, Jeremiah was not a success. But in God's eyes, Jeremiah was one of the most successful people in all history. Success, as measured by God, involves obedience and faithfulness. Regardless of opposition and personal cost, Jeremiah courageously and faithfully proclaimed the word of God. He was obedient to his calling".

2.5.6. A THEOLOGY THAT DOMESTICATES GOD TO THE NATION OR LAND

The inviolability of the Davidic dynasty, temple and city is a sign of an underlying theology that domesticates God to the nation or land. Together with the opposition to the surrendering to and exerting of all efforts and prayers for Babylonian peace with respect to its socio-economical and political well being was due to the fact that Babylon was also viewed as Satan's city in contrast to Jerusalem that was viewed as God's city (Linthicum, 1991:24; Psalm 137:1f).

To settle in, work and pray for peace of the capital city of Babylon and similar cities were not only strange, but also evil, for God was relegated exclusively to the Jewish nation and land. That wrong theology was confirmed[24] in many ways, including the reluctance to surrender to the Babylonian deportation strategy by many Jews in Jerusalem and by reception by the Jews in Babylon of a message about speedy return to Jerusalem over against a longer settlement in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:5-7).

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[24] Even in the past, the non-Israelites' faith in and obedience to God and His word were ignored if not rejected in many ways, including, the mixed worship (Leviticus 17:8; 19:34; Numbers 15.14; 19 10; Deuteronomy 7:6; 26:12), through the Temple was meant for people from all nations who were heartily willing to be circumcised (Exodus 12:48f, Isaiah 56:3,6; Deuteronomy 10:18f; 23:7f, Malachi 3:5). It was in fact God's final purpose to bless all the people groups through Abraham (Genesis 12:3c). The pilgrim-mentality is necessary in this regard (Hebrews 11 9-10). Even Moses prepared Israelites by a song to live as strangers in the Promised Land, for as God's treasured possessions their faith should not be in the land, but in Him (Brown, 1993:296). Moses did that by reminding the Israelites of the time when Yahweh divided and separated homogenous people (sons of Adam) into nations that He fixed the boundaries of all the (that is, 70 as a complete number of) nations to all of the sons of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:7-9, Genesis 10:25; 46:27). In the book of Jonah, ironically God called the Israelites to repentance and faith through Jonah, who was seen as a messenger who knew God as gracious and compassionate, but with no love extended beyond Israel to the other nations like Nineveh (Jonah 4:2). God rebuked them for viewing His election as something that had no implications with respect also to their socio-economic and political relationships (Amos 3:2, 5:11; 8:6).

2.5.7. A THEOLOGY THAT CRITICISES SINS OF OTHERS, WHILE IGNORING OWN SINS

Jeremiah's letter (Jeremiah 29:1-14) to the captives or exiles in Babylon warned them to disregard the lying prophets that sought to inflame them with talks of immediate release, and encouraged them to settle down for a long stay. It was around that time that Jeremiah himself appeared before the conspirators in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 27:2-11) wearing an ox yoke on his neck, and told them to submit to the Yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. But if Babylonian deportation and exile is wrong according to false prophets, conspirators and the masses of Jewish people in Jerusalem and in Babylon, then they (that is those false prophets, conspirators and the masses of Jewish people in Jerusalem and in Babylon) should have also seen that any form of social injustice including slavery is wrong, especially when it is practiced by God's people in Jerusalem, whereby there were Hebrew slavery practices (Jeremiah 34:8-11).

Ironically slavery was practiced in Jerusalem by Jews to other Jews, even during the time of unrest all over the Babylonian empire, especially between 595 and 588 B.C. (Jeremiah 27:2; 28:1). The unrest and theological crisis was incited and inflamed by false prophets, conspirators and the masses of Jewish people in Jerusalem and in Babylon who advocated and propagated for speedy release of Jewish captives or slaves in Babylon. In that time of unrest and theological crisis, Jeremiah urged King Zedekiah to free Hebrew slaves for no one was supposed to hold a fellow Jew in bondage (Jeremiah 34:8-10). As God's people God promised them future salvation and restoration (Jeremiah 29:10-14; especially in chapter 30-31), Zedekiah and his officials, together with the masses of people in Jerusalem should show the sign of their repentance and acceptance of God's word and promises even freeing Hebrew slaves. Jeremiah's message in Jeremiah 29:10-14 should be understood within Jeremiah's message concerning the promise of future restoration and salvation of God's people (Jeremiah 30-31). Since the Jews did not repent from their sins as indicated by Jeremiah, God made it clear to them that He will fight actively against them using the Babylonian (Jeremiah 21:3-7).

2.6. THE CONCLUDING REMARKS

From this study it becomes clear that to obey God by recognising, accepting and enhancing the role that the Jews (both in Jerusalem and in Babylon) were urged in Jeremiah 29:1-14, so that God's gracious promises could be realised. Some of the critical roles played by the city of Babylon which were highlighted in this section of the study are:

- Babylon as a signpost of God's judgment;
- Babylon as a realisation centre of God's gracious promises;
- Babylon as a political and economic centre;
- Babylon as an interculturation centre;
- Babylon as a socio-religious centre;
- Babylon as an integration and network centre;
- Babylon as a transfer bridge of God's promised plan or purpose.

Most Jews, however, did not obey God's message. This was due to many factors including the dominance of a wrong theology, including the following:

- A theology that propagated the unconditional inviolability of David's dynasty, the city of Jerusalem and its temple;
- A theology against the Babylonian deportation;
- A theology that misreads God's long-suffering in the past;
- A theology that supported Zedekiah's political inspirations;
- A theology that enjoyed the support of the masses in Jerusalem;
- A theology that domesticated God to the nation or land and
- A theology that criticises sins of others, while ignoring own sins.

The role played by cities is also articulated by many urban missiologists, including the views of Greenways, Linthicum and Conn which are respectively and briefly discussed below

2.7. THE ROLE OF THE CITIES IN MISSION WORK: SOME MISSIOLOGICAL VIEWS

2.7.1. INTRODUCTION

Many scholars from many and varied fields of studies agree that urbanisation is also an African phenomenon and that African cities are playing and will still play a critical role in many and varied aspects of people's lives. The churches in Africa need to take these factors into consideration in their mission strategies and plans.

Though speaking from political point of view, the church can learn from what Mrs Tibaijuka (2006:16) said as others did before her, that, "urgent action is needed. Policy makers and planners need to understand that the future of Africa is urban and that this massive change will alter the pattern of politics, nature of conflicts and the overall sustainability of the continent's economic development." Mrs Anna Tibaijuka was concluding her response to the question about Africa's exploding cities, which African Bussiness editor Anver Versi (2006:16) asked, "What are the broad implications of this massive change for Africa?"

Many Urban Missiologists outside the continent of Africa had already arrived to the statements made above. Most of them had done many and varied intensive researches on the subject From their researches mission plans, strategies and programs were done and it helped and it is still helping the church. Much is expected from Africa herself by African Urban missiologists. The contribution of the western scholars is still helpful. It lays a base from which further researches could be conducted on urban missions in Africa.

In this sub-section, the views of three Western Urban Missiologists in three respective missiological literature were studied, namely, the views of Greenway R.S.& Monsma T.M. in 'Cities, Missions' New Frontier' in 1989; Linthicum R.C. in 'City of God-City of Satan' in 1991 and Conn H.C. in 'Discipling the city' in 1992.

2.7.2. THE VIEWS OF ROGER S. GREENWAY AND TIMOTHY M.MONSMA

The rapid growth of cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the internationalisation of cities in Europe and North America, led Greenway and Monsma (1989:xi), to indicate (already in the preface) some of the important factors in response to the rapid growth of the cities, namely:

(a) Cities are the new frontiers of Christian missions;

(b) Missions tomorrow will be mostly urban;

(c) The urbanisation of Christian missions is an urgent and serious need;

(d) Cities determine the destiny of nations, and their influence on everyday affairs of individuals is incalculable;

2.7.2.1. GREENWAY'S VIEWS

As far as the biblical perspective on the nature of the cities is concerned Greenway (1989:5-6) viewed the cities as:

2.7.2.1.1. The common grace centres

"By God's mercy, even pagan cities still reflect some of the greatness of the God who created the inhabitants, stamped his image on them, and restrains their worst intentions. We can call them, therefore, 'common grace' cities, because they survive and even prosper as a result of the mercy and goodness of God richly distributed to all humankind."

2.7.2.1.2. The preserving and preventing centres

"The world's cities are evidences of God's preserving and preventative grace. For the sake of His elect, He has appointed cities to preserve human life and restrain the course of humankind's self-destructive tendencies. It should not surprise us that the murderer Cain built a city, for

urban life structures protect human life. In a more formal way, the cities of refuge (Num.35) offered protection and life to people who inadvertently had killed another person."

2.7.2.1.3. Temporal centres

"Each one bears the seeds of its own downfall. The cities that are, the cities of history as we know it, are subject to decay and eventually to destruction. Perhaps the restlessness so common to urban life stems from the city's corporate uneasiness about its future, and an unconscious awareness of its vulnerability and eventual doom."

2.7.2.1.4. Administrative centres

"No longer is the city mainly a geographical centre for commerce, a marketplace to expedite the flow of the earth's abundance and the products of humankind's cultural endeavours. Rather, the city has become an administrative centre to provide welfare and relief to people in distress. It must supply police officers, courts, and prisons to protect its citizens and punish wrongdoers."

The above-mentioned biblical perspective on the nature of the cities has several ramifications:

(1) "We can see the essential nature of the religious warfare that takes place everyday in cities around the world."
(2) "Christians are very realistic about the city's essential nature and the cause of the unending frustrations that occur when citizens try to improve city life."
(3) "Instead of giving up on cities, Christians can and should affirm them and accept their share of responsibility for the cities' care. Proof is found in Jeremiah 29:7: even in wicked Babylon, captive Israel is commanded by God to 'seek the peace and prosperity of the city...Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

2.7.2.2. MONSMA'S VIEWS

In response to 'the magnitude of urban growth worldwide, and especially in the developing world' Monsma (1989:108-110) viewed Cities as.

2.7.2.2.1. Centres of service and dominance

"That is to say, cities arise and grow because they serve the towns, villages, and farms that surround them", (as):

2.7.2.2.2. Centres of government

"Government covers all people whether they live on the farm or in the city"

2.7.2.2.3. Centres of education

"Most schools of higher education are in cities, which offer libraries, part-time work for students, and easy access from the surrounding area."

2.7.2.2.4. Centres of health care

"While some medical care may be available in rural areas, more-specialized care, especially surgical procedures, can be obtained only in large-city hospitals "

2.7.2.2.5. Centres of information

"Information is provided by radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and books. All these avenues of information originate in the city."

2.7.2.2.6. Centres of entertainment

"The culture of a nation is embodied in its cities; cities usually set the pace and initiate trends. Whether it's through the fine arts, sports, rock concerts, or some other form of relaxation, people go to the city to enjoy themselves."

2.7.2.2.7. Centres of trade

"In the days when people were more dependent on shipping goods by water than we are today, cities grew by the riverside or where there were deep harbours. Later, cities grew where railroad lines and roads intersected. Now airports affect urban growth. Commerce and the transportation that it involves contribute mightily to the growth of cities."

2.7.2.2.8. Centres of Industry

"Manufacturing has given tremendous impetus to the growth of Western cities (and some cities in the developing world)."

2.7.2.2.9. Centres of Warfare

"Some cities began as military camps. This is the history of Ibadan, Pittsburgh, and all the cities whole names begin with 'Fort'."

2.7.2.3. EVALUATING THE VIEWS OF GREENWAY AND MONSMA

The pace of urbanisation is very fast in many parts of the developing world. Many researchers support the views of Greenway and Monsma. A recent World Bank report noted the fact that, "On average the population of the African region is now one-third urbanised, higher than South Asia's 28%. Africa is approaching a demographic inflection point as the numbers of new urban residents are projected to rise sharply by over 300 million between 2000-2030 – more than twice the rural population increments." (Kessides, 2006:ix-x).

While acknowledging the growing urbanisation rate of African cities, Growth and Development Strategy of the City of Johannesburg (2006 18) stated that, "However, it is very important to note that migratory flows are not only from rural to urban areas, and that a move to the city is not automatically a permanent move. Recent research indicates that the growth of many African cities, including large cities such as Lagos and Nairobi, has turned out to be far lower than that confidently predicted a decade or two."

This fact is supported by Bolnick (2006:9) who said, "....in many nations, this trend towards increasingly urbanised populations is slower than most expects had anticipated. Africa is certainly less urbanized today than the UN predicted it would be 15-20 years ago, largely because nations do not urbanise rapidly if their economies are not growing. Censuses held in the last few years show that most of the large cities had smaller populations that had been anticipated. There is also great diversity within Africa of levels of urbanisation and rates of increase in these levels."

These warnings should be taken into consideration, especially if the urban dynamics of the cities in Africa is to be understood in terms of two economic forces of push and pull. According to Kritzinger (1990 127), "The people in the rural areas are subject to two economic forces: the push of the land which no longer sustains them, and the pull of the economic opportunities in the cities. The combination of these push and pull forces are powerful enough to cause the migration to the urban areas. The counter forces are the pull back to the traditional places and ways, and the push which the city exerts on those it does not want to absorb."

The Growth and Development Strategy of the city of Johannesburg (2006:20), considered the African context, in saying, "HIV and AIDS may also have the affect of accelerating flows of people out of the city. Cities are expensive places to live. It is quite conceivable that people living with HIV and AIDS who find their limited funds strained, will be forced to return to less expensive parts of the country where they have family members to take care of them."

These points are important for Western Urban Missiologists to understand that there are a lot of factors involved in the movements back to the rural areas This can clarify why a pregnant African woman can go back to the rural areas to give birth there. It is not only the rejection of the city as a suitable place for life and progeny as Greenway (1978:33) argued. But there are many factors involved, including inability to meet hospital expenses and the care by the family relative(s) in the village. The socio-economic conditions amongst many and varied conditions in Africa are some of the factors behind the two-way forces of pull and push to and from the cities

2.7.3. ROBERT C. LINTHICUM'S VIEWS

Linthicum (1991:23-27) viewed the present cities as the locus of a great and continuing battle between the God of Israel and/or the church and the god of this world. This view led Linthicum (1991:279) to view the role of the cities:

2.7.3.1. throughout biblical history as the abode of both God and Satan

In this respect Linthicum (1991:40) argued that, "...only in understanding both the nature of the city's goodness and its evil can we truly hope to understand the city into which God has called us, His people, to minister; in other words cities should not only be understood as the place where the decisive battle has already been won in Christ and hence the church through the Holy Spirit should make Christ's victory the reality in our lives."

2.7.3.2. In Revelation, cities are presented as either God's abode or Satan's abode

In this respect Linthicum (1991.279) argued that, "the book of Revelation is built around a single premise....of two archetypal cities: Babylon – the city entirely given over to Satan; and the new Jerusalem -- the city totally committed to God. The people and the systems of those cities make that choice as influenced by their principalities and powers They will make a choice: it will be one or the other....they will choose to be either the city of Satan or the city of God!"

2.7.3.3. EVALUATING THE VIEWS OF LITHICUM

Being aware of the fact that the bible uncovered the nature of cities, including the religious warfare that rages in the city, Greenway confirmed what Linthicum (1991:40) said. Greenway (1989:7) stated what it means to Christians and churches by making three important points:

(1) "Given the truth that today's cities are the result of common grace, we can see essential nature of the religious warfare that takes place everyday in cities around the world."

(2) "Christians are very realistic about the city's essential nature and the cause of the unending frustrations that occur when citizens try to improve city life."

(3) "Instead of giving up on cities, Christians can and should affirm them and accept their share of responsibility for the cities' care. Proof is found in Jeremiah 29:7...."

At first sight Babel, which later developed as Babylon could easily be viewed literary as Satan's city as compared to Jerusalem that is viewed as God' city (Linthicum, 1991:24).

It should be clear that most of the Biblical passages like in the prophecy of Zachariah and in John's Revelation where the city of Babylon was depicted as the representative city of humankind, rebellious, greedy, violent, idolatrous, and doomed is non literal but symbolic, since what Zachariah and John of Revelation saw were visions not realities. More over, what is said about Babylon could in other scriptural portions be said about Jerusalem like in Luke13:34-35. Can we make generalizations or should we read scriptural portions within their context? The text And the context is important in understanding Biblical messages.

As one of the objectives of this study, the city of Babylon as an instrument in God's hand played an important role in the realisation of God's saving purposes and plans and hence God's people were commanded (Jeremiah 29:5-7) to view the role of the city of Babylon and act accordingly, so that through their obedience God's saving purposes and plans was realised.

The study done above (cf. 2.5.) could be of help in this regard. This could serve as an answer to Linthicum's (1991:23-24) so-called, *"essential biblical assumption: 'The city is the locus of a great and continuing battle between the God of Israel and/or the church and the god of the world'*, which led him to make many generalisations, including the fact that Baal mentioned in Jeremiah 9:11-14 is Satan.

2.7.4. HARVIE M. CONN'S VIEWS

2.7.4.1. CITIES AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES OF CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION AND CONSUMMATION

From the book, '*Discipling the city-a Comprehensive Approach to Urban Mission*' edited by Roger S Greenway, Conn (1992:15) emphasised the theological or religious significance of the cities around the themes of creation, sin and the fall, redemption, and consummation using the book of Genesis as the basis.

(1) Under *creation theme*, Conn (1992:18) concluded that security does not only stand as the heart of Genesis Eden and as the hallmark of the city in the Old Testament, but is also exemplified in the eschatological shalom of the urban paradise with open gates (Isa 26:2; 60:11; Rev 21:25), so that God's urban house is the creation itself, and we live in it in the security of shalom.

(2) Under *sin and the fall theme*, Conn(1992.19) argued that though security was shattered by the fall of Adam and Eve, 'cities, the Genesis record seems to imply, are provisions of God' common grace; they play a remedial role in human life. Through them God restrains the development of evil, blesses his fallen creatures, and works out his sovereign purpose in both judgement and grace'

(3) Under *the redemption theme*, Conn (1992:22-23) stated that, 'Alongside this dark picture of the city in Genesis is the theme of the city's part in the redemptive purposes of God, an exhibition place for God's grace. This redemptive/eschatological strand repeatedly ties the condition of the city to the mercies of Jehovah The image that brings them all together is the covenant'.

(4) Under *the Consummation theme*, Conn (1992.28), '....there are still reminders that what the

cities experienced of grace, directly or indirectly, is still incomplete without a future fullness and consummation. The blessings of grace are still incomplete; promises await further fulfilments....The good news of the New Testament is that in Jesus the redemptive expectations of the city are fulfilled'.

(5) In *conclusion* Conn (1992:32) declares that community of faith 'lived in cities of violence and Injustice, flowing from the arbitrary wills of urban kings, representations of the arbitrary gods they worshiped. Cain's path of wilfulness and Lamech's excess (Gen 4:24) were duplicated again and again in cities like Sodom and Shechem. And again, against this pattern, the people of God were called to display their faith in covenant through 'doing what is right and just' (Gen18:19). Establishing justice and peace for the cities of the earth was to be their mission Ezek. 18:5-9; 2 Pet.2:4-10). Their prayer was for righteousness (Gen 4:26; 18:22-33). As we, like the Genesis saints, await the final consummation, the same calling makes Its demands of us. .'

2.7.4.2. EVALUATION OF CONN'S CONTRIBUTION

What Conn (1992:15) emphasised as the theological or religious significance of the city around the themes of creation, sin and the fall, redemption, and consummation is agreed upon in this evaluation. However, to restrict God's overall cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 as "nothing more than a mandate to build the city" should be looked at critically (Conn 1992.15). Is the future of humankind outside the garden destined to play out only in cities as Conn & Ortiz (2001:87) said? Is this a reality on the ground?

Enough has been said (cf.2.7.2 3), when the views of Greenway and Monsma were evaluated. But it should also be noted that to view the cultural mandate as nothing more than a mandate to build the city could lead to many things, including:

2.7.4.2.1. What Keesing (1981:113-114) argued in warning against the ladder stereotype of cultural groups of people:

(i) 'If we look at this world as a ladder of progressive evolutionary stages we are prone to make spurious inferences about the ancient past from the present.

(ii) What is dangerous and misleading about images of evolutionary ladders are the implications they carry that the lower rungs on the ladder are earlier than the higher rungs, that peoples of region typically progress up such ladders, or that the task of anthropology is to clarify societies according to the level they have reached."

In conclusion Keesing (1981:15) said that, "There have been, in the tribal world, developments of more complex modes of societal organization out of simpler ones – the emergence of social classes and other forms of social stratification, the emergence of hierarchical, centralized political systems from egalitarian tribal ones...we better to examine these processes regionally, in real time and space, that in terms of ladder typologies." Though there are many differences than similarities in what Keesing said and the issue of the city and rural movements, but the common factor is that we should make sure to examine these processes, including urbanisation regionally, in real time and space classes" than making general statements.

2.7.4.2.2. What Growth and Development Strategy of the City of Johannesburg (2006:19) argued when warning that urbanisation is a fast, but also a tenuous process.

(a) "The census data from 2001 suggests that whereas 364 792 new residents moved into Johannesburg between 1996 and 2001, 194 604 moved out, leaving net of 170 188. The Census suggests that Johannesburg shed at least half as many people as it gained from More rural parts of the country like Mpumalanga, North West and the Free State."

(b) "While many of the people moving in were certainly from rural areas, especially from parts of Limpopo, many also came in from other South African urban areas, notably other Gauteng Metropolitan municipality areas, and other parts of Gauteng. Intriguingly, Johannesburg also lost large number of people to other urban areas. In fact, more people moved out to other

Gauteng metros than moved in from these areas This dynamic picture of inter-urban movement makes it even clearer that a standard perception of one way rural to urban urbanisation flows needs to be nuanced."

2.7.4.2.3. What Pali Lehohla in the Business Report of 4 May 2006 said:

(i) "Clearly, there is migration towards the larger urban conglomerations, but there are dynamic ties that keep the rural areas linked to the cities."

(ii) "At first glance the metropolitan areas are receiving a large population of in-migrants from other settlement types in the country. However, the permanence of this migration is challenged by data from the sub-district level, and the ties between urban dwellers and the rural population may ensure the sustained existence of rural settlements, despite poverty and out-migration."

The above-mentioned argument was based on the recent census information of the South African migration and urbanisation patterns. From the arguments there are many inter-urban dynamics and rural-urban inter-migration patterns to be considered even when urbanisation rate of African cities is indeed higher. This can lead to a balanced view of the role of the cities in mission work, of which all the selected experts of urban missiology agreed in principle.

2.7.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON URBAN MISSION VIEWS ABOVE

Conn (1992:13-14) correctly cautioned Scholars not to view (Old Testament cities in general and Genesis cities in particular) (i) as modern industrial centres with tremendous size and population, but as closer to those of the most ancient East that arose as cultic and market centres for farmers and herdsmen; (ii) God's people in relations to these cities as anti-urban and nomadic with futuristic eschatological redemptive outlook, (iii) their restricted passage as saying more than what they were intended by the author The outcome of this investigation could serve

as an eye-opener to doors of opportunities of reaching multi and different ethnic family group of neighbours in one's own city as a strategic mission starting point or centre in reaching people of all nations within and outside the city.

But to restrict God's mandate of Genesis 1:28 as "nothing more than a mandate to build the city" [cf. Conn (1992:15)] and destining the future of humankind outside the garden to play out only in cities [cf. Conn & Ortiz (2001:87)] could be saying what God never said in the Bible, especially if John's vision of new city is taken literary not symbolically. Though there are many differences than similarities in what Keesing said and the issue of the city and rural movements, but the common factor is that we should make sure to examine these processes, including urbanisation regionally, in real time and space classes" than making general statements. It is clear from the above arguments that there are many inter-urban dynamics and rural-urban inter-migration patterns that should be taken into considerations even when urbanisation of African cities is indeed higher. This can lead to a balanced view of the role of the cities in urban mission, (of which all the selected experts of urban missiology agreed in principle), but practically which urged experts not to generalize, but to accommodate other influences which can lead to many inter-urban dynamics and rural-urban inter-migration patterns. The balanced view helps in decision-making and formulations of policies and programs for urban missions.

2.7.6. CONCLUSION REGARDING CHAPTER 2 IN GENERAL

From the conclusion above (cf.2.5 above), it can be concluded that it is biblically valid that the role of the city of Babylon was viewed (by God through the mouth of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:9-14) as critical. Yet most Jews both in Jerusalem and in Babylon failed to see the significance of the roles of the city of Babylon It was unthinkable to them that God could make use of the city of Babylon for His saving purposes and gracious promises to be realised by his people

The wrong theology held by the Jews is one of the factors that played a critical role in neglecting God's message that urged the Jews to obey Him by obeying the role played by Babylon then and there. So the neglect of the role of the city of Babylon is not necessarily determined by the context of sufferings as a result of Babylonian deportation strategy.

From the above-mentioned fact it can be deduced that the obstacles that hindered God's people to acknowledge and enhance the role played by the cities are not necessarily determined (though influenced) by the context in which God's people find themselves in, for the context, either characterized by sufferings or peace could still not hinder the role played by cities.
For instance: the context, either characterized by sufferings or peace could still confirm the fact that cities of all times have the role to play (though vary in degree not in kind). And the role of the city of Babylon uncovered in Jeremiah 29:1-14 could therefore be applicable in varying degrees in the context, either characterized by sufferings or peace (cf. 2 6, above).
It is from this basis that in the next chapter the origin and the development of the isolation-world view of the Potchefstroom churches will be explored as one of the examples of the cause and effect of such a worldview in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches and hence how this worldview caused the alleged neglect of the Southern African cities by the role of Soutpansberg churches.

The following questions will have to be answered in Chapter 3:

- What are the causes of the neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches?
- How was the alleged legacy of neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches be implemented in their mission field?
- How was the alleged legacy of the neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches affected Soutpansberg churches?

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF THE CITIES IN THE MISSION WORK OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE REFORMED CHURCHES CONSTITUTING SOUTPANSBERG SYNOD

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, the role of the cities in the mission work of the Soutpansberg churches[25] will be reviewed by reviewing the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches. In this study, it will become clear that the Potchefstroom churches neglected the role of the cities in the history of their mission work. It will be made clear in this study that the isolation worldview is one of the causes and effects of that neglect and that it was also transmitted and transplanted by Potchefstroom churches in the planting of Soutpansberg churches. It will therefore be established as to what extent is the isolation worldview shaped and influenced the worldview of the Soutpansberg churches as far as urban mission is concerned. The review will focus on the period from the establishment of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) [25] in 1859 through the establishment of both the first Soutpansberg church in Siloam in 1949 and the first theological school for the blacks in Dube in 1961 to the present (in 2007) before the assemblies of all Reformed Churches in Southern Africa under one General synod of these three synods, namely, Potchefstroom, Midland and Soutpansberg.

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[25] In this study the names, Potchefstroom, Midland and Soutpansberg churches are used to refer to the Reformed churches constituting the respective synods, namely, Potchefstroom, Midland and Soutpansberg.

The GK is an abbreviation of the 'Gereformeerde Kerk' in Afrikaans. It will be used to mean Potchefstroom Churches.

The Gereformeerde Kerke (GK) were established on the 10th and 11th of February 1859 in Rustenburg, after fifteen prominent church leaders, including Paul Kruger conscientiously dissented the compulsory use of evangelical hymns introduced by the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk in Transvaal where they were members (Spoelstra, 1963.141; 1989:72,73; Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:114,115). Rev. D. Postma, the minister of the Christelike Gereformeerde Kerk from the Netherlands was called to be the minister of the church. After the GK Rustenburg, other Gereformeerde Kerke were also established in the same year in 1859 in Pretoria, Waterberg (Nylstroom), Lydenburg and Reddersburg (Free State). Within a few years, many Gereformeerde Kerke were established in Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony

3.2. THE ROLE OF CITIES IN THE MISSION WORK OF THE POTCHEFSTROOM CHURCHES

In this study, three cities, namely Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg were used. Cape Town was chosen, because in the 1860s, it was already a city of the Europeans, Asians and indigenous (South) Africans (Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:5; Saunders, 1994:95) and remained the largest city in South Africa until 1904 (Beinart, 1994:36). Johannesburg was chosen, with a view that Johannesburg has overtaken Kimberly as the second largest city in the 1900s[26]. Pretoria was chosen because it remained the seat of governance of South Africa since the 1860s and hence also played an important role in the mission work of the Reformed Churches. By choosing these three cities, the aim and the objectives of the research will be reached.

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[26] Van Rensburg and Oosthuizen (1986:298), summarised the urbanisation process in South Africa in the 1870s, by saying "In the 1870s South Africa was still a predominantly farming society. There were hardly twenty towns with populations of more than 1000. Of the big towns, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban and East London were ports and commercial centres, and Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria and Bloemfontein were administrative centres. By 1874, after the discovery of diamonds, Kimberly had grown into a city of some 50 000 people, making it second in size only to Cape Town. The discovery of Gold on the Witwatersrand led to the similar mushrooming of a city of miners."

Other cities, like Kimberly (as the second biggest city in South Africa in the 1880s) could have been used. Because of time and space, Kimberly and other Southern African cities were not used in this study. The attitude of Reformed Church leaders towards both the city of Cape Town and Johannesburg and the people who settled in these two cities, also consolidated the choice of the three cities in this study. It must also be noted that the relationship of Volksraad (governing council) in Pretoria towards the native tribes and Johannesburg and its inhabitants was a point of interest, for it shaped and influenced the views of most Reformed Church leaders concerning mission work. An attitude is shaped and influenced by many factors including social, religious, psychological, economic, political etc. But in this study, it was noted that these factors could be used as an excuse to neglect the role played by cities of all times in the mission work of the church of all times. In Jeremiah 29:5-7, God commanded His people to view the secular and evil city of Babylon as God's instrument used by Him for His saving purposes and gracious promises to be realised.

3.2.1. CAPE TOWN – THE FIRST CITY OF SOUTH AFRICA BY 1860s

The role played by the city of Cape Town in her initial stages of development could have been critical in the mission work of the Potchefstroom Churches, for by 1880s Cape Town (initially a refreshment station for the Dutch ships to the East Indies) was already a city and an integration centre of the Europeans, Asians and indigenous (Southern) Africans. It was already by then a thriving exportation centre of meat, hides, fish, skins, ivory and aloes (for medicine purposes), and above all of wine (Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:5; Saunders, 1994:95)

By then most European mission societies and churches, including the Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholic and Methodists were not only transplanted in the city of Cape Town (Hofmeyr, 1994:87,124), but also directed their mission work specifically to the conversion of blacks in and outside Cape Town and hence by 1910 they had

already produced a handful of western-educated African elites, and missionaries (Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:127,129,131; Elphick and Davenport, 1997:82).

In the North-eastern part of Cape Colony, the Potchefstroom Churches were established in Burgersdorp, Middelburg and Colesberg in 1860. In 1860s the Potchefstroom church members were mostly the descendents of the 'Doppers' [27] who were mostly emigrant sheep-farmers (trekboers). They had formed a close-knit community that was characterised by intermarriage and by their anti-liberal and anti-imperial stance. They moved away from Cape Colony and lived in the isolated interior areas in the North-eastern part of Cape Town (Spoelstra, 1989:64, Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:6). They were mostly self-sufficient and individualistic. According to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:5), "Such a life on the fringe of colonial society promoted a certain independence and individualism, while resulting in considerable social and cultural isolation." According to Saunders (1994:58), "The trekboers developed, in general, as a highly individual personality, to whom any matter that did not concern him directly was of little importance." [28]

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[27] Most scholars suggested that the meaning of Dopper was derived from the Dutch word domper - device used to extinguish the light of a candle (Spoelstra, 1989:62; Hexham, 1981:61).

[28] In the light of this Saunders (1995:58) further on this by saying, "Perhaps once a year the trekboers and his family would make the journey to De Kaap – to trade, sell animals, have children baptised and to stock up on essentials. These included lead and gunpowder, coffee, tea and sugar". Even Beinart (1994:40) said that by the 1860s, "Trekboers on the frontier were never completely isolated from markets; their very existence depended on guns, ammunitions, and wagons. The droving routes and outspans – a term derived from unyoking a team of oxen – were major channels of communication into the interior....As in African districts, Christianity and commerce were intertwined in the laying out of new towns, which became centres for churches and Nagmaal, the quarterly religious and social trek of far-flung farmers to a common meeting-point. Wool gave farmers cash and patterns of consumption changed as the need for self-sufficiency diminished... Bucks were shot in sheep districts for their meat and skins and also because they competed for pastures... The springbok became so powerful a settler symbol only when they came under threat. The South African rugby team adopted the name early in the twentieth century when rugby began to replace hunting as a major white sport."

Many scholars also agree that the emigrant farmers were after a 'distinct' land (free from British rule), a 'distinct' culture (including the customs of their Dutch forefathers and the pietistic "oude schrijvers" books) and a 'distinct' religion based, amongst others, on the Bible and Reformed Creed (Elphick and Davenport, 1997:123; Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:6; Kamsteeg & Dirk, 1990.17) Many scholars argue that the pietistic "oude schrijvers" books which diverged from Calvin's stance, exerted a strong influence on the formation of an inner-orientated religious individualism even to the emigrant farmers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:12,13; Malan, 1984:456). Coupled with an isolated-interior settlement, an inner-orientated religious individualism of the descendents of the emigrant farmers (most of whom were the Reformed church members) had an effect on their views concerning mission work, which was directed to the Blacks by most of the churches (and mission societies) in the 1860s.

The Potchefstroom churches lacked a systematic and methodical missionary work in the 1870s and 1880s because they were newly established churches with few ministers and that there was a political instability and military clashes of emigrant farmers and blacks because of the contest for the native land, land resources and the native labourers (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:119; Van der Walt, 1997:58-59; Schoeman, 1985:94). There was, however, a strong feeling of a guardianship or paternalism over blacks and coloured (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:119) From that context, Rev. Dirk Postma[29] led Sunday (evening) preaching to the coloureds in the 1870s in Philipstown and later in Venterstad with the help of his student, Rev Jan Lion Cachet who succeeded him as the second minister of the GK Rustenburg (Spoelstra, 1999.12,32).

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[29] Rev. Dirk Postma was a minister in the Christelike Gereformeerde Kerk, Zwolle in the Netherlands, when he was sent to South Africa in 1858. He was sent with the instructions, (1) to provide for the spiritual needs of the Transvaal Republic; (2) to concern himself with the interests of many kinsman in South Africa and lastly (3) to explore the proclamation of the gospel among the heathens (Engelbrecht, 1953:150). He became the first minister of the Reformed Church Rustenburg and the first lecturer at Burgersdorp Theological School in Cape Colony

The 'dienste-hou' initiatives of Rev. Dirk Postma (Minister of Reformed Church Burgersdorp by then) and Rev. Jan Lion Cachet to the coloured communities in Philipstown, Colesberg, Barkly-Oos, Steynsburg and Venterstad stimulated the question of equality between whites and coloured in the Reformed Churches in the 1870s.

According to Spoelstra, (1999:32), "Die gesiene oudl. T.F. Dreyer van Rustenburg was afkomstig uit dele van die Kaapkolonie waar die Britse beleid van gelykstelling verafsku is. Hy wil he dat die Sinode van 1876 n predikant van n blanke gemeente moet belet om vir kleurlinge dienste te hou en bepaal 'dat kleurlinge hulle eie leraars moet he'." [30]

According to Jooste, (1958:327), "En wat heir verder opval, is dat ons vaders reeds in 1876 duidelik gestel het dat daar net predikante moet wee swat die werk moet doen, en nie predikante vir die blankes en sendelinge vir die nie-blanke nie. So ook dat met n beroep op art.7 K.O. selfs neergele is dat elke Algemene Vergadering die reg van uitsending besit."

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[30] According to Spoelstra (1999:32), "Die Kleuringe in die Kaapkolonie was in die 19de eeu in n proses van akkulturasie en verwestering en dit moes volgens die Venters op gelykstelling uitloop wat hulle nie wou he nie. Die swaart volke het egter polities, ekonomies en kultureel in tradisionele groepsverband geleef... Die onderskeid tussen predikant vir die gemeente en sendeling vir die heidene het sterk in Transvaal geleef en die Angola-trekkers neem dit met hulle saam. In die 20ste eeu sou n kerkskeuring daar ontstaan wanneer n besoekende predikant vir die makvolk gaan preek." Jooste, (1958:327), also said, "Dit was een van die groot moeilikhede, nl.dat daar lidmate was wat beswaard was dat hulle predikant ook die evangelie aan gekleurdes moes verkondig. Later sou hierdie selfde vraag ernstige moeilikhede in een van die gemeentes veroorsaak, wat ook uitgeloop het op n skeuring in die betrokke gemeente." The Synod of 1876 decided that, "Die Sinode kan wel sommige van sy leraars benoem en stuur meer bepaald tot die diens vir die heidene s.v. Hand. 13:1-3, Ja, ag elke Algemene Vergadering in sy resort daartoe geregtig, s.v. art. 7 van ons Kerkorde. Maar kan nog mag nog wens enige leraar te verhinder om ook aan Jood en heiden te arbei tot hulle bekering, net so min sou hy hulle durf verhinder om onder die gekleurdes te preek, aangesien dit sou stry teen God se Woord (Matth. 28:19; Markus 16:15). Die Sinode verlang inteendeel dat elke geordende leraar sy bes daarin sal doen, behoudens sy plig aan sy betrokke gemeente..." (Synod Acts, 1876:221)

The lack of systematic and methodical missionary work by the Potchefstroom churches in the 1870s and 1880s had many and varied implications including, the lack of mission professor and/or missiology in the Reformed Theological Seminaries for more than six decades after its establishment in Burgersdorp in 1869. It is also not an accident that Reformed Theological School with its well-founded theological encyclopaedia had no place for mission professor and/or missiology for more than 80 years since its establishment around 1869. After emphasizing the fact that the highly educated ministers are trained to touch only a fringe of the available population, if not to maintain and improve existing churches and hence ignore the rest of the unreached populations around them, McGavran (1988:3), said, "The reason for this regrettable condition is easy to state. Protestant theological seminaries were born and their curricula fairly well established in the years 1550 – 1880." Spoelstra (1999:40) also said, "Die Gereformeerde predikant se taak is egter hoe langer hoe meer binne die eng kerkmure van gemeente en 'lidmate' en die drang om Gereformeerde kerkwees na buite uit te dra was afwesig. Selfs aan blanke mense in nood is min gedoen wanneer hulle 'aan n ander kerk behoort' is hulle totaal verbygegaan. Op straat is gese dat die GKSA en NHK teen sending gekant is."

In general, the missionaries from the other churches and missionary societies also complained about the emigrants' prejudiced and unfair attitude and conduct towards blacks and coloureds, though not as harsh as the London Mission Society (Hofmeyr and Pillay, 1994:119). [31]

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[31] Hofmeyr & Pillay, (1994:119) further said, "interesting enough, Daniel Lindley, who was an honoured and beloved minister among the Trekkers during the 1840s, also fell into this category. He continually expressed the fear that if the emigrants were to take over the regions in the interior of South Africa, it would lead to the oppression of the coloureds and blacks, which would consequently adversely affect his own missionary work. He therefore remained a supporter – he probably never proclaimed it from the rooftops – of British occupation of these regions. His American colleagues shared these sentiments. In spite of the reassurance of a Trekker deputation that he would continue with his work unhindered, he nevertheless returned to Natal at the end of 1839, after a battle between the Boers and the Zulus."

It can be concluded that the role played by the city of Cape Town could have made a lasting impact in the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches since the 1870s and 1880s onwards. The isolated-interior settlement in the North-eastern part of Cape Town coupled with both the inner-orientated religious individualism and the attitude[32] towards the blacks and coloureds are some of the reasons behind the neglect of the role of the populated Cape Town of the 1860s. The unrest stimulated in the Potchefstroom Churches due to the Church services conducted amongst the coloured communities and the controversy on the Potchefstroom Synod not only about the equality of the blacks and coloured with whites and the worship with them in the same church building, but also about whether the Potchefstroom church minister could evangelise among them, is an indication that Potchefstroom Churches were indifferent to mission work towards the blacks and coloured in the 1870s and 1880s as the mission targets of those times As a result, it is not an accident that (1) more than 80 years elapsed before a mission professor and/or missiology was introduced in the well-founded Potchefstroom Theological encyclopaedia since 1869; (2) more than 60 years elapsed before the first Potchefstroom church among the Afrikaans-speaking was established in Cape Town since 1859; (3) more than 45 years elapsed before the first "Sending Kerk" among the coloured was established in Venterstad[33] in the remote area, away from the densest areas of Cape Town

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[32] Hofmeyr & Pillay, (1994:119), further said, "Proof of the emigrants' negative attitude towards the coloureds and blacks was testimony of a public and an official 'capturing' of Zulu children in Natal in 1840. These children were then employed by an emigrant, at a maximum quota of two – as can be seen from a petition by 68 emigrants to the Council of War. . As punitive measures against cattle and horse thieves, the Boers sometimes abducted the culprits from their kraals or homes and compelled them to help on their farms."

[33] According to Spoelstra (1999.41), "Venterstad het lank die enigste; sendinggemeente' binne kerkverband van die GKSA (Potchefstroom Churches) gehuisves. Die word 'sending' is aan die gemeente gegee omdat die 'lidmate' gekleurde mense was en nie omdat hulle uit die heidendom bekeer is nie....Om die naam 'sending' aan n kerk onder mense van kleur te verbind, toon hoe sterk die naam kerk vir Westerse en sending vir gelowige Afrika mense reserveer is. Dit het die ontplooing van jong kerke in hulle eie kultuuridioom onder ander bevolkingsgroepe gestrem."

3.2.2. PRETORIA – A SEAT OF GOVERNANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1860s

Pretoria was recognized as a seat of governance even during the period between the late 1850s and the early 1860s, which was viewed by many scholars as the times of personal rivalries and hostilities if not civil war (Lamb, 1974:75: Nathan, 1942:56; Saunders, 1994:159). The three little republics, namely Potchefstroom, Zoutpansberg and Lydenburg did not only accept the new constitution as the constitution of the South African Republic (ZAR), but also elected M.W. Pretorius as their first President and Pretoria as the capital city of the republic (Bulpin, 1989:82; Nathan, 1942:59; Saunders, 1994:148).

The South African Republic (ZAR) that also had power over the mission societies' mission activities in Transvaal, not only expelled the London Mission Society (LMS) from the Transvaal, but also gave permission to the Berlin Mission Society to work among the Transvaal natives in the 1860s and 1870s (Hofmeyr, 1994:138; Nemudzivhadi, 1998:127-128).

Many scholars described that period as one of the difficult periods to the missionaries and mission societies, including Ndou, (2000:259), who said, "During the misunderstanding between the traditional leaders and Government, the missionaries were caught in the cross-fire because whichever side they took they could be blamed be either party."

It was in the 1870s and 1880s that the governing body, called the Volksraad in Pretoria had a hard time. It was in that period that the hostility was consolidated between the Volksraad and English, and also between the Volksraad and the Natives over the native land, land resources and native labour that dominated the period The Pretoria Volksraad was ruled by a small group of persons (oligarchy) led by President Paul Kruger (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:151). The Pretoria Volksraad formed "a solid block which could always count on political rivalries between their opponents to give them control." (Hexham,1981:13). It should be noted that the Pretoria Volksraad was ruling in a period characterized by many and varied consolidated hostilities, few of which will be highlighted, to serve the aim and objectives of this study.

The consolidated hostility not only affected other missionaries and mission societies, but also the Reformed Church, which was also established in Pretoria in 1859. It should be noted that it was in that period, specifically from 1879 to 1889 that the Potchefstroom church had the lowest number of local churches established in South Africa compared with all decades from 1859 to 1999 from the church's establishment in 1859. In the past and recent GKSA Almanak it could be noted that only five local churches were established between 1876 and 1889. Many factors had contributed to the consolidated hostility engendered in the Pretoria Volksraad. Some of these factors to a large extent shaped and influenced the mission work of the Reformed Church to the natives. Some of these factors include the following:

Firstly, the Keate awards of 1871, whereby the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, Keate, as a final arbitrator gave his verdict which led the Afrikaner republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State to loose 143 farms, including the richest diamond-fields in the world, as well as a large area of land extending almost to Potchefstroom (Van Rensburg and Oosthuizen, 1986:262);

Secondly, the united Afrikaner commandos under Paul Kruger's leadership as commandant-general were involved in the contest for the native land, land resources and native labourers. Kings Makhado of Vendas, Moshoeshoe of Sothos, Cetswayo of Zulus and Sekhukhune of Pedis were among the kings who resisted them on their respective mountain strongholds before the British annexed the Boer republic in 1877 (Saunders, 1994:147,160; Mason, 2003:114f).

Thirdly, the discovery of diamonds in 1867 in Kimberly and gold in 1886 in Johannesburg led not only to the movement of most African workers from rural areas and from the Landlords, most of whom were Afrikaners to the Rand lords, most of whom were Uitlanders (foreigners), but also to the outnumbering of the Afrikaner farming population by the Natives, Asians and Europeans, whom the Afrikaners regarded as, Uitlanders (Callinicos, 1985:12-14). The Star newspaper in 1880, reported that, "The anti-Johannesburg stance taken by Pretoria was no figment of the imagination. Kruger and the Volksraad simply hated the place." (Clark, 1987:7).

3.2.2.1. PRETORIA ADMINISTRATION AND ITS INFLUENCE IN REFORMED CHURCHES

The Pretoria Volksraad's rule in the 1870s & 1880s affected most of the Potchefsroom Church Leaders on many aspects, including cultural aspects. Some of the effects include the following:

1. Most fragmented Afrikaners, including most Potchefstroom church leaders were united by the emergence of the exclusive nationalism consciousness and hence they (were):

Firstly, led by Ds. Jan Lion Cachet against President Burgers' liberalism (Bulpin, 1989:149,147); secondly, supported Rev. S.J. du Toit's organisation (Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners-1875), newspapers (Die Afrikaanse Patriot) and historical books (Die Geskiedenis van Ons land in die Taal van Ons Volk) (Saunders, 1994:196, 197); thirdly, against the possible coming Uitlanders threat to their republic (Saunders, 1994:195); fourthly, won the first Anglo-Boer war (1881) and to choose Paul Kruger as their president (1883).

2. Exclusive nationalism writings, among other things, of Rev. Jan Lion Cachet between 1882 and 1899 (Hexham, 1978:23; 1981:129-133; 156-157), had a further influence on:

Firstly, the student society called "Veritas Vincent" (1903), who propagated the love of Afrikaans; secondly, his theological students, including Willem Postma and J.D. du Toit, who (later) in turn reacted against an Anglicisation of the Afrikaners by Milner and also rejected any attempt of uniting them with English under the British commonwealth by J.B.M. Hertzog.

3. Some Potchefstroom church families also moved to Angola, with their leaders' support (Ras, 1981:126-127) and isolate themselves from the 1870s' religio-political and economic context and from the republican ties and breached the Sand River Convention of 1854 (Boeyens, 1994:191,193,200; Mason, 2003:94-95) by isolated the black children from their ethnic ties, so as to let the 'Christianisation process' of the so-called less civilised by the civilised to take its course (Delius, 1983:64,80) This is one of the instances of "die drang na isolasie" referred to by Spoelstra, (1963:256-257) as "n tipiese kenmerk van die Doppers".

3.2.2.1.1. PRETORIA ADMINISTRATION AND ITS NEGATIVE INFLUENCE

The Volksraad's consolidated hostility had some effect on how the Potchefstroom church viewed the mission work to the growing influx of people in their midsts include the following:

1. The Pretoria delegates to the Potchefstroom Synod of 1869 and 1873 [Synod Act, 1869:24; 1873:120(3); Spoelstra, 1999:33,41], were part of delegates who

Firstly, questioned the issue of equality of coloureds and blacks with whites in the church;
Secondly, felt that it was inappropriate & unsuitable to worship with coloured & black converts;
Thirdly, were part of the resolution of the synod which resolved that the churches were too weak to evangelise among them, even after 14 years of its existence with 19 churches, 7 ministers and 4362 members (Jooste, 1958:167; Spoelstra, 1999:33,41).

2. There was also no mission work done in Pretoria by the Gereformeerde Kerk Pretoria for 45 years since 1859 (van der Vyver, 1951:44).
3. The general attitude of ignorance and indifference if not of ferocious resistance to mission work in some Potchefstroom local churches (van Rooy, 1997:33), including:

Firstly, at Burgersdorp, Ds. Postma once refused to minister the sacraments to those who objected to his mission work in the local jail;
Secondly, at Nylstroom he was also refused permission to minister to blacks, upon which he wrote a letter to that church, earnestly admonishing them to repent of their sin of racism;
Thirdly, In Bethulie there was a schism over the matter of mission to black people;
Fourthly, later in Angola, the church was divided in two sections, a pro-mission and anti-mission section. The latter seceded from the Potchefstroom churches and formed a Hervormde Kerk.

4. The breach of the Sand River Convention when some Afrikaners were found guilty in Court on the charges of cattle stealing and child kidnapping (Bulpin, 1989:98; Boeyens, 1994:200), caused lot of setbacks and humiliation to Paul Kruger and others (Nathan, 1942:79; Lamb, 1974:79; Boeyens, 1994:193; Nemudzivhadi, 1998:100).

3.2.2.1.2. PRETORIA ADMINISTRATION AND ITS POSITIVE INFLUENCE

It was also in this period that God also used President Kruger and his Volksraad in consolidating mission work of the Potchefstroom churches both in the rural and urban areas in South Africa and outside. There are many indications to illustrate the fact, some of which are the following:

(1) Paul Kruger's visits to Europe on behalf of the Pretoria Volksraad and/or Afrikaner republic, firstly, in the late 1870s, after Transvaal was annexed by British in 1877 and secondly, after the discovery of gold in Witwatersrand in 1886, established him not only as a skilled political negotiator acknowledged even by British government (Saunders, 1994.198), but also as a tactful recruiter of the teachers, civil officials and business people, particularly of Holland to come and work in the republic to resist the British's Anglicisation plans (Spoelstra, 1999.42)

(2) Some of Paul Kruger's European visits benefited the Potchefstroom churches, for Spoelstra (1999:42) said, Paul Kruger "het oortuigde Gereformeerde Nederlanders uit die Afskeiding en Doleansie en so nuwe denke oor sending in die Gereformeerde Kerk Pretoria gestimuleer " Some of these immigrants influenced the views of Potchefstroom church leaders regarding mission work since the 1880s.

(3) According to Spoelstra (1999:40,42), it was the Church Council of GK Pretoria led by Netherlander, Rev. Petrus Postma who (3.1.) questioned the 1888 synod on how should they expand the Kingdom of God; (3.2.) consolidated the annual collections of the churches for the synod mission funds; (3.3.) suggested that an eligible person for mission work should be carefully selected; (3.4.) influenced the 1894 synod decision to search for a missionary and a mission field; (3.5.) through their influence of the synod mission funds collections in 1880s and 1890s (3.5.1.) led President Kruger to lead by example by giving 100 pound for synod mission fund; (3.5.2.) those funds in turn, "gee doel en rigting aan die sinodale sendingideaal."; (3.6.) through their influence the Potchefstroom churches from various places were motivated or prompted on mission to the coloured and Jews;

In conclusion, the history of the successful mission work in the Soutpansberg area, in Limpopo Province (South Africa) and the establishment of the Gereformeerde Kerk in Johannesburg could not be researched and written without referring to the Reformed Churches in the city of Pretoria as one of the pioneers in that regard. It is not the aim and objectives of this study to research on that. Though it will be good that the research be done on that.

It must be noted that the church council of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) Pretoria with Rev. Petrus Postma were the pioneers[34] in the establishment of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) in Johannesburg. Rev. Marthinus Postma wrote in 1925 the history of the first GK in Johannesburg from the mid-1890s to the demarcation period in 1924. In that piece of history, Postma (1925:16)[35] highlighted many facts that implied that the Church Council of GK Pretoria with Rev. Petrus Postma was a pioneer in the establishment of the Gereformeerde Kerk in Johannesburg.

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[34] Van der Vyver (1951:46) indicated that, "Naas die belangstelling van ds. Postma, sal ons aan die sendingsaak nie reg laat geskied as ons nie hier vermeld dat ons in die opsig ook wel veel dank verskuldig is aan Nederlanders, wat hulle veral in die Gemeente Pretoria gevestig het nie. Uit die name is dit duidelik dat dit juis hulle is wat die belange van die sending gedurig op die kerkraadsvergaderinge ter sprake gebring het. Wat aksie in die saak aanbetref het dit egter nooit verder gekom as n vrye kollekte afgesonder vir die sendingwerk te Humpata en Venterstad nie."

[35] According to Postma (1925:16), "Spoedig na de ontdekking van de goudvelden kwamen alhier vele mensen uit de Kaap Kolonie om een leeflocht te zoeken. Wijlen Ds. P. Postma, toen leraar van Pretoria, maakte met de Kerkraad van Pretoria voorziening in de geestelike behoeften van de leden alhier door eenmaal in de maand alhier te preken. Later hielp wijlen Ds. Ph. Snijman hem. Het kerkje was een zink of lizeren gebouw op Van Brandis Square. In de eerste godsdienstoefening waren slechts 22 tegenwoordig, en, volgens onze Afrikaanse gewoonte, droeg elke manslidmaat een stoel op zijn rug voor hem en een voor zijn vrouw naar de Kerk. Hoe de lieve broerder, Ds P. Postma, bij al zijn drukke arbeid in de stad Pretoria en de bedizening van vele buiten gemeenten nog tijd kon vinden om Johannesburg te bedienen, wekt onze bewondering. Maar God gaf Zeerw kracht. Er was toen een ouderling en een diaken, die alle drie maanden met de koets naar Pretoria moisten gaan om in de Kerkeraadsvergadering te zitten. Ds. P. Postma heft ons dikwels verhaald van zijn eerste dienst. Hij was de eerste Hollandse leraar die hier in 't Hollands preekte. Bij zijn eerste dienst was grote nieuwsgierigheid."

3.2.3. JOHANNESBURG – A CITY OF GOLD IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE THE MID-1880s

Gold was discovered in Johannesburg in 1886 in and around the farms Turffontein, Doornfontein and Braamfontein. Randjeslaagte[36] was a state-owned triangle ground left over when those three farms had been properly surveyed on the 14th of February 1887. The original name of the Johannesburg Business District (CBD) was Randjeslaagte. Randjeslaagte included the business and residence sections and was later called Hillbrow. It was a potential urban and multi-cultural residential middle-class suburb (Saunders, 1994:212; Meredith, 1997:28)

There were many opportunities for mission work for the Potchefstroom churches in Witwatersrand, but more than thirty years elapsed without organised mission work (Kruger, 1967:96). It was only in the 1890s that the Potchefstroom churches took note of the growing population in the city of Johannesburg. There were already two Potchefstroom churches, namely, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg by 1896. According to Kruger (1967:144), "Byna veertig jaar later word die eerste twee Gereformeerde gemeentes op die Witwatersrand gestig – Krugersdorp en Johannesburg."

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[36] As far as the Randjeslaagte was concerned, The Star of 1889 according to Clark (1987:7) once reported that, "in fact Johannesburg, at no stage, was granted proper municipal status during the time of Kruger's republic –not even in 1895 when it became South Africa's most populated urban centre. The trouble was, Pretoria did not think Johannesburg would last. It believed the gold would run out, just as it had in Barberton – and then all the troublesome Uitlanders would go home to Britain, Australia, California, Germany, or wherever, and the Boers could live in peace". This revealed the general attitude of the so-called 'Burgers' towards the so-called, 'Uitlanders'. As far as Hillbrow was concerned, the suburb was viewed as the quiet, but potentially urban and multi-cultural residential suburb 'from the time of its proclamation in 1894 until the 1920s, when property speculators moved in and erected flats and five storey buildings. Unprecedented building development took place in the 1950s to cope with the post-war housing shortages . ..But then, a mass exodus of South Africans after the 1976 Soweto uprising had a negative impact on Hillbrow (Saunders, 1994:512)

3.2.3.1. THE FIRST REFORMED CHURCH IN JOHANNESBURG IN MAY 1896

It must be noted that already in May 1896 the Gereformeerde Kerk Johannesburg had 350 confessing members with five elders and five deacons. The church services were held in Mintweg 76, Fordsburg. Church members as far as Springs attended the church service. Just before the Anglo-Boers War (1899-1902) the Gereformeerde Kerk Johannesburg had 500 members and had a branch in Braamfontein (Postma, 1925:17; Coetzee, 1984:14)

3.2.3.2. THE FIRST REFORMED CHURCH COUNCIL ON THE 02 OCTOBER 1896

The first two Potchefstroom Churches, namely, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg had the first combined church council meeting on the 02 October 1896, where the elders from Johannesburg showed their seriousness by submitting the letter from their church council proposing that the two church council combined call a minister. Rev. Martinus Postma accepted the call and was ordained on 28 August 1897. He lived in Fordsburg, Johannesburg and he used the train to go to Krugersdorp and used bicycle to do house-visits (Venter, 1946:3,4,7; Postma, 1925:17)

3.2.3.3. THE MISSION WORK AMONGST THE JEWS IN JOHANNESBURG SINCE 1898

Rev. Martinus Postma led the two Reformed Churches in mission work to the Jews Funds were collected during the Holy Communion in October 1898 to be used for the distribution of the Hebrew New Testament Bibles to the Jews. The church council made an effort to send an issue of mission work to the Jews in Johannesburg to the Synod meeting as a point of discussion Whether the discussion had some fruits is not known (Venter, 1946:4). What became clear is that the mission work to the Jews was laid in the heart of Rev. Martinus Postma. According to Kruger (1967:98), "Ds. M. Postma het waarlik sy eer daarin gestel om die Evangelie onder die

Jode te verkondig. Net waar daar maar die geringste moontlikheid was, he thy die Woord van God gebring. Sy blydskap oor die verdering wat hierdie werk gekenmerk het, hoe gering ookal, is opmerklik in al die notule wat hy geskryf het."

The Ango-Boer War (1899-1902) affected the church, for most of the church leaders joined the Afrikaner commando in the war. According to Venter, (1946:4), "Min het die broeders geweet dat hulle vir die eersvolgende 18 maande nie weer so sou vergader nie; min seker het ook die leraar kon dink dat hu eers na 27 maande hierdie broeders weer sou toespreek, en dat die kerkraad in s you vorm eers in ebr. 1903 weer sou vergader." Even the mission work to the Jews was stopped and never reassumed. According to Kruger (1967:99), "Na die oorlog (1899-1902) het die sendingwerk onder die Jode heeltemaal tot stilstand gekom en sindsdien word in geen enkele notule van enige gemeentes op die Witwatersrand melding gemaak van hierdie eertyds begonne taak nie."

3.2.3.4. GEREFORMEERDE KERK JOHANNESBURG GREW UNTIL DEMARCATION - 1924

Rev. Martinus Postma worked in Gereformeerde Kerk Johannesburg from August 1897 to January 1905 and from January 1909 to January 1911. According to van der Walt (1984:14), "In 1909 kom Ds. Martinus Postma na Johannesburg. Die gemeentes het die hele Johnnesburg, ook die Oos-Rand en n gedeelte van Wes-Rand omvat. Die kerkraad het toe n tweede predikant in 1918 beroep, Ds. J.V. Coetzee van Piet Retief, en vir etlike jare is die bedizening so voorgesit. Dit het al gou geblyk dat die kerkgebou in Fordsburg nie maklik bereikbaar is vir lidmate uit die Oostelike en Noordelike voorstede nie. Daarom ontstaan die behoefte aan afstigting en eie plekke van samekomste. Dit gebeer in 1924." According to Coetzee (1984:6). "Op Saterdag-aand 1 Maart 1924, na die stigtig van die nuwe gemeente Johannesburg-Noord, kom die 2 kerkrade, nl. Johannesburg-Noord en Johannesburg, bymekaar om behoorlik afskeid van mekaar te neem."

3.2.3.5. EXCLUSIVE AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AND REFORMED URBAN MISSION

An exclusive Afrikaner nationalism is one of the factors that shaped and influenced the Potchefsroom church leaders in particular to neglect the role of the city of Johannesburg and other potential urban areas in the 1900s onwards in mission work. Some of the influences include:

3.2.3.5.1. "DIE DRANG NA ISOLASIE" IS "N TIPIESE KENMERK VAN DIE DOPPER"

Spoelstra (1963:256) summarized the politico-economic scene of 1870s and 1880s to indicate one of the reasons behind the move of some 'Gereformeerde Kerk' members to Angola, saying, "die burgeroorlog, die ontruiming van Soutpansberg, die naturelle-onluste, die verlies van die diamantvelde en uiteindelik die triomf van Burgers onder wie hulle geen seen van God verwag het nie. Die drang na isolasie was daarby n tipiese kenmerk van die Doppers."

"n tipiese kenmerk van die Doppers" referred to by Spoelstra, (1963:256-257) was "die drang na isolasie". Accodingly, to isolate themselves from their republican ties and also to isolate native children from their ethnic ties was a necessity to some Gereformeerde Kerk families who moved to and settled in Angola, with their leaders' support (Ras, 1981:126-127).

An isolation urge of the Gereformeerde Kerk was developed also within the socio-political and economic context, specifically in the contest between the Afrikaners and natives for native land in the late 1860s. In that context, it could be understood why the specific decade from 1879 to 1889 the lowest number of local churches had been established compared with all decades from 1859 to 1999 in Gereformeerde Kerk's existence. It should be noted that only five local churches were established between 1876 and 1889 (Almanak, 2006).

The so-called inferior native civilisation moved them to isolate native children from their ethnic ties and hence made part of some GKSA households for the sake of their home economy since

the 1850s. For that reason, they deemed it necessary to acquire native who were isolated from childhood from their ethnic ties so as to be with Gereformeerde Kerk households in culture and skills (Delius, 1983:64,80). The allowed the acculturation process between the so-called less civilised and civilised to take its course.

According to Spoelstra (1963:256), "Dit was of die drange van die Dopper-Trekboer, die Voortrekker en die Enslingroep hier gekombineer he tom iewers n 'Kanaan' te soek, weg van n owerheid wat in n wereldse gees opgaan en deel in ligsinnige en losbandige vermake. Hulle wou ontkom aan die topswaar finansiele las, toegee aan hulle individualisme en hulle afkeer van belastings en 'de geheele vrijmaking der gekleurden en andere onbestaanbare wetten'. Hierdie Dorsland – of Angolatrek is klaarblyklik gebore uit die materiele en geestelike depressie in Transvaal."

Ras (1981:125-126), also said, "Die Sinode van 1876 het al van voorgenome trek 'van eenigen lede onzer kerk naar Ovamboland' kennis geneem. Ds. Cachet het die Sinode versoek om aan die moontlikheid oorweging te skenk dat in die geestelike behoeftes van die Trekboere voorsien moet word. Sy gedagte was 'om de emigranten te doen stichten als eene zelfstandige gemeentes, hetzij bij of met hun vertrek, opdat er ouderlingen mochten zijn die hen kunnen bedienen' In Desember 1876 stel ds. Cachet die Kerkraad van Philipstown in kennis dat hy n beroep ontvang het van 'de menschen die de Transvaal wil verlaten'. Hierdie groep van driehondred mense was die tweede groep wat Transvaal wou verlaat (Cachet, 1909 p 154)".

According to Delius (1983:80), "The original members of these families (Oorlams) were almost certainly child captives attached to Boer households in the Pretoria – Heidelburg districts of the Transvaal. They were baptised into the Gereformeerde Kerk and took the family names of their Afrikaner masters. In the eighteen-seventies, when the Dorsland Trek away from the Z.A.R. and across Botswana into Angola took place, the Oorlams families automatically followed the Boer households on this disastrous expedition. The remnants of the Trek settled in Angola in 1880

where they lived precariously until 1929 when they sought to cross into Namibia. At this point the Portuguese authorities refused to allow the black families to depart with the white....."

Pieter Biewenga was a missionary to those Afrikanised natives called 'mak-volk' in Angola, but the church died out by the late 1920s. It also happened both to Ndebele farm-workers of Middelbult, South East of Pretoria and Bapedi farm-workers of Moelietsieskop and Uniondale that the churches respectively died out after the death of their missionary Pieter Bos in 1923 and his wife in 1949.

The lack of support from the white Local churches in the actual mission-field and the indifference of white missionaries to the natives in general could have been one of the reason of the death of churches established by those missionaries (Spoelstra, 1999 33,40f,61,65; Jooste, 1958.327, Synod Acts, 1910:47,55).

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[37] According to Spoelstra (1963:259), "Dit is byna ironies dat die Gereformeerde Kerk in Transvaal, waar Kruger die krag van dopperisme na 1877 ontvou, in dieselfde tydperk feitlik tot niks versink het. In 'De Volksstem' figurer dit nie soos die Ned. Herv. en Ned. Geref. Kerke nie. Die kerk van Lydenburg was totaal geruineer. Sonder hulp uit die Kolonie kon hulle nie meer lidmate op die diamantevelde bearbei nie. Die kerkraad van Potchefstroom handhaaf dieselfde opvattings as die Venter-groep oor die sending. In Rustenburg word in revivalistiese sin gebid 'om vergeving en om de uitstorting van Zijn Geest over zijn Kerk, over onze gemeentes....' In Pretoria openbaar n 'algemeente doodsheid' hom onder die bedizening van ds. J.S.L. Venter. Daar word nie eens meer elke Sondag kerkgehou nie. n Kommisie van die Algemene Vergadering moes 'met de verschillende gemeenten onzer kerk in dezen staat eene conferentie houde tot opwekking van het geestelijk leven – met een plechtig biduur'. Die gebrek aan Gods seen is verbind aan die traagheid teenoor die sending. Dit is duidelik dat die Geref. Kerk in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek met sy een voet reeds in die revivalisme gestaan het". In that context, Elphick & Davenport (1994:121) tried to prove that as their native Transvaal neighbours some GKSA members practised polygamy {Kamsteeg & Dirk (1990.15,22)}, folk beliefs practised even by Paul Kruger, and witch-craft was practised and hence condemned by GKSA Provisional synod of OFS (Act, 1910, art 39 and 1911, art.15).

3.2.3.5.2. THE "ISHMAEL ROAD OF LONELINESS" TO ANTI-EXCLUSIVE NATIONALISM

Paul Kruger won most of the fragmented Afrikaner's hearts and the nationalist consciousness and solidarity emerged against the possible coming Uitlanders threat to the Burgers republic (Saunders, 1994:195). It must be noted that by 1895 Johannesburg became South Africa's most populated urban centre. But the Volksraad in Pretoria had the negative attitude to Johannesburg especially its inhabitants who were called, 'Uitlanders' or foreigners.

The Star of 1889 according to Clark (1987:7) once reported that, "In fact Johannesburg, at no stage, was granted proper municipal status during the time of Kruger's republic – not even in 1895 when it became South Africa's most populated urban centre The trouble was, Pretoria did not think Johannesburg would last. It believed the gold would run out, just as it had in Barberton – and then all the troublesome Uitlanders would go home to Britain, Australia, Califonia, Germany, or wherever, and the Boers could live in peace.' This revealed the general attitude of the so-called 'Burgers' towards the so-called, 'Uitlanders'.

Hexham (1981:13) stated that, "Kruger had far more opponents than supporters, but his opponents were divided while his supporters formed a solid block which could always count on political rivalries between their opponents to give them control. Although all shades of religious opinion could be found in the South African Republic, Kruger, himself, a staunch Calvinist and a founding member of the small, but influential, Gereformeerde Kerk whose members were known as "Doppers." To an extent, Kruger's Calvinism alienated him from many fellow countrymen, but this dislike was more than compensated for by the unswerving loyalty of his own Dopper community."

Rev. S.J. du Toit questioned the exclusive nationalism of Paul Kruger and his followers, and called for a united South African (Shorten, 1970:101; d'Assonville, 1993:35,39) and predicted the coming war (d'Assonville, 1993:63-65). It led him to the lonely road of 'Ishmael' according to d'Assonville, (1993:39). The so-called 'Ishmael' road of loneliness was later on became a usual

road of all who objected to the Afrikanerdom, even when their initial contributions to it were formerly acknowledged. Those who walked such a road later on included J.B.M. Hertzog who exposed Broederbond[38] secrecy in 1935 at Smithfield and Prof.L.J.du Plessis who challenged white Baaskap[39] in the 1950s (Hexham, 1981:190-191;Serfontein,1978:80;Wilkins & Strydom, 1978:48-72). Even Jan Lion Cachet's writings between 1882 and 1899 and his leadership of the student society called "Veritas Vincet" from 1903, the exclusive nationalism was passed on to his students, including Willem Postma and J.D du Toit. Through their exclusive nationalism and their Second Afrikaans Language Movement, they reacted against the Anglicisation of the Afrikaners by Milner and hence rejected any attempts of uniting the Afrikaans with English-speaking people under the British crown led by the leaders, such as Louis Botha and Jan Smuts and British commonwealth led by J.B.M. Hertzog (Hexham, 1978:23; 1981:129-133; 156-157).

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[38]**The Broederbond** secret society was formed in 1918, with the professed aim of the promotion of all the interests of the Afrikaner nation and specifically at purifying the Afrikaans language, culture and nation (Wilkins & Strydom,1978: 59f). From the 1930s to mid-1950s it was administered in Potchefstroom by GKSA academics (Hexham,1981:189f; Ngcokoyane,1989:70, Elphick and Davenport, 1997:136,372ff, O'mera, 1985.69). The Potchefstroom Broederbond deputation dissuaded the wavering Dr. D F. Malan in the Cape in 1934 and also Advocate J.G Strydom not to join General Hertzog in the fusion with Smuts, for the sake of the interests of the future of Afrikanerdom (Serfontein 1979: 40,79-80) There was a five-page petition against the Broederbond activities in GKSA church (Wilkins and Strydom, 1978.209, Serfontein, 1982:211) which was unanimously rejected as unconvincing in the GKSA General Synod {Acts, 1964:453(4)}. Yet the secrecy of the Broederbond was already exposed by J.B.M. Hertzog in 1935 and by Ds. D.P.M. Beukes at the NGK Synod (1963) and also Broederbond secrecy appeared in the English press through Ds.J. Visser.

[39]**In White Baaskap**, blacks were viewed as whites' perpetual servants, under the pre-supposition that blacks were viewed as 'primitive', 'tribal', 'uncivilised', 'backwards', 'inferior', and/or 'second-class' as compared to whites. Hence blacks should be led to white 'Christian' civilisation through paternalism and white guardianship {GKSA, Synod Acts, 1869:24, 1873:120(3); 1876:25,58f,193, 1961 118f, 1964:265(c), 1988:153f, Prof. S. du Toit 's book (1960), "The Holy Scripture and Race Relations"}.

3.2.3.5.3. 'ISOLATION IS STRENGTH' WHICH WAS NURSED BY KUYPER'S STROOMWET

Abraham Kuyper's stroomwet found its reception in both the exclusive nationalism and the 'isolation is strength' worldview Kuyper's stroomwet is claimed to be a creation ordinance (or a natural norm according to Dooyeweerd), which determined a distinctive nature and course for each nation (Strauss, 1985:12). The stroomwet was received in the 1930s and hence influence Afrikaner's worldview, particularly the Gereformeerde Kerk leadership in many ways, including: Firstly, some GKSA scholars argue that it gave Afrikaans language, culture, history, heroes etc. its distinctiveness (Hexham, 1978:23; 1981:126f,169f; O'Meara,1983.69; Saunders, 1994:195ff). Secondly, It is also argued that it consolidated a stance in "(in) isolation (there) is strength" – the stance used both to urge GKSA members to support an exclusive republican stance especially in the early 1910s (Hexham, 1981:180; De Gruchy, 1979:28,29) and also to urge them to reject any attempt of uniting English and Afrikaners by Botha, Smuts and Hertzog respectively. Thirdly, it combined a stance, '(in) isolation (there) is strength' with Sovereignty-in-own-sphere it was argued. This combination was expressed by Jan Kamp – the former editor of Kuyper's daily newspaper, *De Standaard* who admitted in an article, *The Doppers and Politics* in *Het Western* on June 24,1914 that in isolation or by standing apart GKSA can be powerful & effective in the world where they sought to apply Calvinistic principles to all areas of life (Hexham,1981:188f).

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[40] Van Wyk (1991:181) critically said, "... die problem met hierdie seining van Kuyper (kerk as organisme en kerk as instituut) was dat dit, gekombineer met die gedagte van Soewereiniteit in eie kring, daarop uitgeloop het dat die kerk as instituut geen direkte profetiese roeping teenoor die staat en politiek gehad het nie, wat dus neergekom het op n relativering en privatisering van die kerklike verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van die politiek. Voorts was daar in Suid-Afrika die kwalike situsie dat n Christlike politiese party ontbreek he twat die profetiese funksie van die kerk as organisme moes vervul het." Concerning Kuyper's dualism, Van Wyk (1993:55) further said, "In Suid-Afrika was daar ook geen Christelike politieke party wat hierdie taak (van die kerk-as-organisme) kon volvoer nie. Myns insiens was die apartheidsidee egter lank voor Kuyper vasgele en lank voordat dit in n apartheidsideologie ontwikkel het."

Fourthly, it was applied by the GKSA Broederbond ideologists who not only reorganised and administer the Broederbond since 1927 to the Mid-1950s, before Dr. Verwoerd and his supporters wrested it from their control (Hexham, 1981:189ff), but also whose Broederbond ideology was used to criticise both the Afrikaner Nationalist dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s and the Koinonia Declaration Calvinists (Elphick & Davenport 1997:372ff, Hexham, 1981:1981: 188ff; Hofmeyr, 1991:81; A.Ie.Du Plooy in Kerkwees as getuinis in Suid-Afrika Vandag, 1991: 122ff; Algemene Kerkbode, 1998, June 12-13 & August, 14-15).

Fifthly, most GKSA theologians and members are made to believe that the stroomwet (natural law or norm) is not destroyed by the fall of human being into sin (Loubser, 1987:39; Hofmeyr, 1991:81), but it is destroyed by mixed-cultural marriages and worships, and socio-political and economical values etc. (GKSA Synod Acts, 1961:118ff; Strauss, 1985:12) It is through the stroomwet (natural law or norm) that Abraham Kuyper regarded the coloureds and blacks of South Africa as children of Ham, who lacks both natural and special grace, hence located at the very lowest level of human development and that it would be foolish to treat them as equals in family, social and political life (Strauss. 1985.8,12). Kuyper's views influenced S.J. du Toit who met Kuyper himself and hence his views were propagated in South Africa (Botha,1984:482) and in the 1930s and 1940s few prominent GKSA scholars and theologians were important trailblazers for Kuyperian in the GKSA Synod decisions in 1958 and 1961 (Strauss, 1985:8,12).

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[41] A.Ie. Du Plooy (1991:122-123) condoned the separate "nasie en Volk" by appealing to three sources: firstly, by referring to the practice in Calvin's days; secondly, by referring to the "Switserland en die Switserse nasie of staat byvoorbeeld uit Duitsers, France en Italianers bestaan..."; thirdly, by agreeing with Althusius, van Prinsterer, Kuyper and Dooyeweerd on the issue of 'soewereiniteit in eie kring'; lastly, by referring to Acts 17.26, saying, "Die Skrif openbaar aan ons dat God self bepaal hoe lank volke en nasie sal bestaan en waar hulle sal woon. Hy bepaal die woonplekke van volke en nasie (Hand. 17.26). Die handhawing en/of opheffing van volksidentiteit is geen oortreding van God se wil nie, want dit is immers God self-wat volke, tale en nasie in aansyn geroep het en steeds kan roep. Die Skrif gee egter geen voorskrifte aan n volk of nasie met betrekking tot sy identiteit, woonplek of taal nie."

3.3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEREFORMEERDE KERK MISSION WORK LEGACY IN SILOAM MISSION STATION IN VENDA

3.3.1. INTRODUCTION

The concept 'mission station' is not a new concept. Its origin can be traced as far as in the Middle Ages monasteries through to the pre-colonial missionaries[42], colonial and post-colonial era to the times of the Moravian missions and other mission societies which were transplanted in South Africa in the 18th and 19th century. The Moravian mission was the pioneer of the closed settlement system in Southern African church history and hence the model of mission work approach for other churches and mission societies since the 1740s. Though it cannot be proven in this research that there was a direct influence of the Moravian's system of close settlement with regard to mission work of the Potchefstroom churches, yet there are many factors that are common as far as mission station is concerned between them, including the following:

Firstly, the fact that in order to teach people, they had to settle them;

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[42] It should be noted that the missionaries bypassed not only the pre-colonial African Kingdoms in building their own forts and ports cities in the 15th and 16th centuries (Conn, 1997:129,130), but also the colonial African kingdoms and confined themselves in the rural interior area towards the end of the 18th century (Conn, 1997:130). According to Hofmeyr and Pillay, (1994 23, 41) and Elphick & Davenport, (1997:33), the acquired land for mission work purposes was converted into a closed settlement. The general missionary motto was: 'to convert Africans, settle them first away from their culture, and friends and relatives, and settle them in accordance to the missionary's culture abroad'. Some of these closed settlements/communities were called mission stations and farm stations. They were developed with the hope that it would become a self-supporting 'Christian' community one day. After Kritzinger (1994 118-120) typified the establishment of these expensive and paternalistic mission station by those times with its prons and cons, he concluded that, 'when the churches gradually did became formally "independent", the process of urbanization ran its course, and the governments began to take over the schools and hospitals, however, it became increasingly difficult to afford the running costs of these "mission stations".....The mission stations became liabilities'

Secondly, the mission converts were isolated from their indigenous solidarity with those of their closest cultural affinities (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:23ff; Ndou, 2000:204ff; Nemudzivhadi, 1998: 132ff). In this context, McGavran (1983:618) argued that, "Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out, or comes out of, a tightly-structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, the neighbours of that tribe are fiercely angry with him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk 'you are not of us', they say to him; 'you have abandoned us; you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods not our gods' As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly."

This background is important. Missiology was affected not only by the history of the mission stations such as those of the 'Gereformeerde Kerke' of Potchefstroom Synod, but also by the neglect of the role of cities in that history. This sub-section is important because it answers the question: how was the legacy of the neglect of the role of cities implemented in the mission fields? Other mission fields of the 'Gereformeerde Kerke' of Potchefstroom synod could have been used. The Siloam (Venda) and Soweto (Johannesburg) mission fields were used without ignoring other mission fields. They were used to represent other mission fields, though noting their unique and varied contexts. They also give the background on how the Reformed Churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod viewed the role of the cities in the mission work.

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[43] In one of his books, "A Church in Every People", McGavran (1983:617-618) against the mission station approach, he proposed seven church Growth approaches: (i) to aim for a cluster (net of natural relations) of growing (indigenous) congregations; (ii) Concentrate on one people; (iii) Encourage converts to remain with their people (how they talk, dress, eat, where they stay and move, (iv) Encourage group decisions for Christ (eg. Baptize one with the rest); (v) Aims for constant stream of new converts (trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, (vi) Help converts exemplify the highest hopes of their people (models of their people groups); (vii) Emphasize brotherhood. It should be noted that the missionaries bypassed not only the pre-colonial African Kingdoms in building their own

3.3.2. HUGO DU PLESSIS LAID THE MISSION WORK FOUNDATION IN SILOAM IN 1928

Hugo du Plessis completed his theological studies in 1927. He was called and ordained as a missionary by the GK Pretoria in 1928. He was sent to develop a new and larger mission field in Siloam on the northern part of the Soutpansberg while obliged to visit the preaching posts in Uniondale and Molietsieskop not less than four times annually. It was admitted that the two latter mission posts already shown the signs of not being successful (Jooste, 1976:13,15,18; De Klerk, 1953:15). His missionary mandate is stated in the Potchefstroom Synod mission order of the 1913 and its revision of 1924 and it includes: "Bediening van Woord en Sacrament; besoek van kranke; uitoefening van kerklike tug; kategetiese onderrig; elementere onderwys en die verlening van mediese hulp" (Synod Acts, 1913:81-83; 1924:107; Jooste, 1959:342). Four Christian families from outside Siloam – Rev. Hugo du Plessis (white), Matlakala (Tswana), Madziabada and Mamphiswana (both Venda) – formed the first formal church meeting with a sort of the first church council held with Matlakala, Madziabada and Mamphiswana while chaired by Hugo and the first Holy Communion was served on the same day, 17 May 1931 (De Klerk, 1953:17; Jooste, 1976:20; Spoelstra, 1999:105).

The GK Pretoria released Rev. Hugo du Plessis from his duties as their missionary in the Soutpansberg area in February 1932 due to the fact that the church could no longer take part in mission work. Under the leadership of Dr.P.J.S. de Klerk (Hugo de Plessis' brother-in-law) the GK Pretoria-East after it was established from the GK Pretoria, called Hugo du Plessis as their missionary to Siloam (Jooste, 1976:20). In his 1936 report Rev. Hugo du Plessis highlighted the need for medical services in Siloam as a means for the Gospel proclamation in a practical way Elim Hospital sent white and black nurses and the doctors to Siloam at two weeks interval. Even the Scottish missionary doctor, Dr.Aitken from Donald Fraser Hospital visited the mission centre for medical services on a weekly basis. Siloam Hospital was officially opened on 20 February

1940. Hugo reported to the Mission Commission after ten years of hard work in 1938 that the time is ripe for the church to be established at Siloam (Jooste, 1976:24-25). The Church was established, however, on 18 October 1942 in Siloam as the first Reformed Church among the Blacks in Southern Africa. Spoelstra (1999:139-140) noted the fact that there was not much success in the first ten years from 1928. Yet it was after the Venda chiefs, Mphephu, Tshivhase and Rambuda were informed about the 'Gereformeerde Kerk' mission intentions around 1937, that the mission work speedily expanded to other areas or posts outside Siloam, so that by 1938 there were 20 mission posts with 9 helpers (Spoelstra, 1999:142,163; De Klerk, 1953:17).

Hugo du Plessis also equipped his helpers on church matters for their services in the mission posts. Some capable helpers like Matlakala and Andries Moutluatse received special training so as to become evangelists and by July 1939 they were working as evangelists (Jooste, 1976:27) Jojakim Matlakala trained further to become a minister of the Word of God and after he was examined at Siloam by the GK SSD (Sinode Sendingdeputate) according to article 8 of the church order, he became a proponent in 1946 and was thereafter called by Reformed Church Siloam in 1947 (Jooste, 1976 27).

The ordination of Matlakala marked the end of the Du Plessis-era at Siloam. This was made a reality on 10 December 1950 after he had informed the mission committee of GK Pretoria East that he had received a call from the GK Johannesburg-North and that he was going to accept it (Spoelstra, 1999:179,183). It should be noted that with Siloam mission station as the centre, the 'Gereformeerde Kerk' mission expanded from 1939 onwards to further areas with the result that De Hoop as the next mission centre in 1944, with Rev. J F. Erasmus, who died in 1946, as its first missionary; and was then succeeded by Rev. H.A. Louw in 1949 (Spoelstra, 1999.107, 140, 163, 166ff; De Klerk, 1953:17). Prayerful outreach and teamwork efforts of Hugo du Plessis and Matlakala and others laid the foundation of further mission work expansions and successes.d-

3.3.3. THE VENDA CULTURE WAS BYPASSED IN THE MISSION WORK RESEARCHES

Much could have been achieved if the Venda culture was not bypassed. Spoelstra (1999:103) said, "Die Sinode van 1924 en dr. P.J.S. de Klerk het nie oor die kultuur of ekonomie van volke in Suid-Afrika onder wie hulle sending wil doen, gepraat nie". Strauss, (1995:8,14,19) stated reasons why the native culture was bypassed[44] in the GK mission work, by saying that according to Kuyper and his GK followers including P.J S. de Klerk God divinely ordained racial differences – a guarantee for a pure or higher Christian civilisation and so to mix the less civilised black and coloured people with the more civilised white people was regarded as an incest or as being in conflict with the word of God. De Klerk (1923:165) said that it was extremely difficult to minister to the spiritual needs of a race that it is uncivilised together with those of a developed culture. Even before Kuyper's influence, it was due to the 'uncivilised' natives that the Potchefstroom Synod {Act,1873:120(3);1876:25,58f,193) saw it as inappropriate and unsuitable for the natives and whites to be equal and to worship together in the same place.

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[44] The natives were regarded as the children of Ham – who are said to have been lacking both natural and special grace and hence they are located at the very lowest level of human development and should therefore be subservient to both the children of Japheth (who have at least benefited from common grace) and the descendents of Shem (who received both common and special grace). So the children of Ham can never attain significance. This viewpoints led some GK scholars to read prescriptions into the simple narrative statements of Genesis 10:25 and Genesis 11.9. These prescriptions include: reading (1) division willed by God into Genesis 10:25, (2) human beings' rebellion against the division willed by God (Genesis 10:25) into Genesis 11:4; and (3) God's disapproval of ethnic unity (that is 'one people with one language' in Genesis 11.6 as a reason for God's actions in Genesis 11.9. The GK Synod both of 1985 (1985.429) and of 1991 (1991:160,169,187) disapproved of that ideology and rejected it as unchristian (Strauss, 1995:21). It should be noted that the survivors of the flood were all homogenous descendents of Noah and hence one common language and dialect could be expected (Boice, 1982:339) and acknowledged (Genesis 11 6). In this way Genesis 11.1-9 is connected to Genesis 10, by additional statements about both Nimrod (Genesis 10 8-10) and Peleg (Genesis 10.25). It should be clear therefore that Genesis 11 clarified Genesis 10

3.3.4. THE VENDA RULER WAS BYPASSED IN BUYING THE FARM MISSION STATION

The GK Synod mission deputies bypassed the Venda chief of the area in buying the crown-land, called Siloam and hence preferred to buy the land in Venda from Pretoria in 1928 according to the laws of acquiring land known by then (Soutpansberg Boers' Ordinance No.40 of 1902, Hertzog's Native Administrative Act, 1927,Act No.38 of 1927). Spoelstra, (1999.103) said, "Die GKSA en SSD kry uit kroongrond die plaas Siloam Volgens Engelse reg kan hulle na die koop in Pretoria die plaas in besit neem wat voor 1902 onder gesag van die Venda-hoofmanne geval het en waaroor hulle daarna nog steeds beheer uitgeoefen het. Die SSD en sendeling was egter so wetsgetrou een met Britse kolonialisme dat hulle nie die Venda-hoofde ken, raadpleeg of inlig oor hulle sendingprojek nie. Uit die oogpunt van die Bavenda maak die sending dieselfde aanslag op hulle tradisionele grond, kultuur, selfbestuur en godsdiens as wat die koloniseerders gemaak het". It should be noted that the hostility over the land and labour between Afrikaaners and natives was there for almost seven decades before the 1930s. Such a history of hostility[45] could have influenced not only the mission deputies in an act of bypassing the Venda King in buying the land in Venda from Pretoria, but also the native kings and their followers in suspicion and hence the hostility towards missionaries, including GKSA missionaries in Venda since 1928 and hence the mission stagnation experienced during the first ten years of GKSA mission work.

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[45]Beside depression years (1932-1934), the hostility over the land issue (Spoelstra, 1999 106) could have been one of the main causes of the mission stagnation in the first 10 years of Hugo du Plessis from 1928. It could have been one of the reasons why the church in Siloam was established 4 years after Rev. Hugo du Plessis reported to the Mission Committee in 1938, proposing the establishment of the church in Siloam (Jooste, 1976 24-25) Rev. du Plessis reported in 1938 after the Venda kings Mphephu, Tshivhase and Rambuda were informed about the GKSA mission's intentions Hence mission work speedily expanded to other areas or posts outside Siloam (the church and leader's training centre by then), including Tshamulungwi, Tswera, Tshikundamalema, Vhurivhuri, Folovhodwe, Maaname, Thononda, Baobab, Mabila, Matsa, Swartfontein, Sane, Gogogo, etc (Spoelstra, 1999 142,163; Jooste, 1976.23. De Klerk, 1953 17)

3.3.5. THE MISSIONARY'S PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NATIVES WERE IGNORED

The GK Synod mission deputies bypassed even their missionary's plan (that the mission station should run the farm for the benefit of the people of the land). Spoelstra (1999:126) said Hugo du Plessis, "verklaar sy posisie as wagter oor die belange van swartmense m.b.t. lande, weiveld en watervoorsiening en hy moet waak dat die SK hulle regverdig behandel. Hy eis dat die voorman n "sendingvriend" moet wees en stem glad nie saam dat die plaas op sakebeginsels bestuur moet word. Hy meen dat die SK die plaas op "voogde" vir swartmense bestuur. Dit is die taak van die sendeling om hulle daar te leer om arbeidsaam te wees en hulle lewenstandaard te verbeter. Die sendeling moet sending, skool, hospitaal en boerdery kombineer. Hy stel hier totaal ander vertrekpunte as wat die Kerk en die Sinode van 1924 in die Sendingorde gestel het en se as "t ware die eiendomsreg van die GKSA oor Siloam op". The dualistic and paternalistic approach[46] was seen in Siloam farm's case and could have affected mission work expansion[47].

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[46]Spoelstra (1999:101, 130-134) criticised a dualistic approach, in saying that the SK (Sendingkommissie) were concerned with the "geestelike kant" and the SSD (Sinode Sendingdeputate-Ds D.P.du Plessis and Dr P.J.S de Klerk) were concerned with the "stoflike kant" Spoelstra (1999:103) also criticised GKSA paternalistic approach and also stated that, "Mugeri (a minister) ma gook gevoel het dat hy as "boy" van die SK en Oefenaar behandel is" (Spoelstra, 1999 250).

[47]With Siloam farm mission station or centre, the GKSA mission expanded from 1939 onwards to other areas with De Hoop as the next mission centre. Other areas include New England, Vyeboom, Tshino, Tshinavhe, Doli, Masia, Vhangani, Mashau, Albasini, Luvhola, Merwe C, Altein etc (De Kerk, 1953 17, Spoelstra, 1999:107, 140, 163). The GKSA missions expanded through many prayerful mission work efforts and teamwork of both missionaries and their helpers (like Jojakim Matlakala, Alpheus Madziabada, Joel Mamphiswana, Andries Moutluatse, Manasse Moshapo, Johannes Mabona, Gideon Mathobela, Ben Makwasha, Ezekiel Ramabenyane, Stefaans Mugeri, Makhalimela Raphala, Joseph Barure, Shadrack Shumba, Aaron Machaba, Aron Madilonga, Daniel Landela etc). The farm mission station or centre – De Hoop was established in 1944, with Rev J F. Erasmus as its first missionary, who was succeeded by Rev H.A Louw in 1949 Rev Erasmus died by gun accident while hunting in 1946 (Spoelstra, 1999 166-167).

3.3.6. THE NATIVES' EDUCATION POTENTIALS WERE BYPASSED

The Bantu education, whose policy was formulated in November 1948 by scholars like J. Chris Coetzee, in its article 15 it says, "we believe that the role of white South Africa with respect to the native is to Christianise[48] him and help him on culturally, and this vocation and duty has found its immediate application and task in the principles of trusteeship, distinguishing the native status from that of the white..." Ramphele (1993:6) accordingly stated that the aim behind Bantu Education was to prevent the preparation of 'the Bantu child for greener pastures' and that the results included that of impoverishing the African's intellectual capacities. The National Party's paternalistic Bantu Education policies were even approved and supported by the GKSA mission deputies like W.J. Snyman and J.H Coetzee (Spoelstra, 1999:217). It was also implemented at the Siloam farm in the education of their (own) converts. It affected the GKSA mission work, for Spoelstra, (1999:153, 196) said, "Oor die algemeen is saamgestem dat onderwys deur n Department Naturellesake behartig maar deur die sentrale owerheid gefinansier moes word Hulle was tevrede dat die staat paternalisties die onderwysbeleid bepaal....Die Sinode van 1955 het net lippediens aan die beginsel gelewer en sendingonderwys aan die staat en onderwysers oorgegee wat nie eers in die GKSA opgelei is nie. Die SSD het met groot verwagting agter die nuwe Regering ingeval".

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[48]Du Toit (1960:7-23) defined what he called a 'pedagogical process' of applying Biblical principles to natives, by saying "whites have the divine imperative to Christianise and promote culture which comprises also the principle of guardianship. The more gifted and more developed race has a duty towards the less gifted and less developed. This follows from the commandment to love the neighbour. Guardianship, however, also includes the principle of education towards maturity. It cannot and should not mean perpetual dependence and/or subjection. The great commandment contains the injunction to love our neighbour as ourselves. One also has duties towards oneself and the same applies to a nation. If, therefore, arrangements are being made to safeguard our survival, without detriment to others, no objection can be made from a scriptural point of view". So to him whenever a high cultured race blends with a deteriorated one there will be disaster.

3.4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEREFORMEERDE KERK MISSION WORK LEGACY IN SOWETO

Most blacks in the cities, including Johannesburg, were relocated far from their work place, and their residential areas were zoned along ethnic lines. This bred clashes between township and hostel dwellers in Soweto[49]. This background information is of help in trying to understand how the Potchefstroom churches in Johannesburg area conducted mission work in Soweto. What become transparent is that apartheid legacy of the government of the day was to a large extent reflected in the mission work of these churches in Soweto as in other areas. Many apartheid policies, like the native influx control laws were supported and propagated. The "ons skool vir hulle" paternalistic mentality in theological training manifested itself in the ministers' training and had a negative impact on the ministers and on the churches they led, some of which are ruined!

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[49]The name **SOWETO** is an abbreviation of South **W**estern Township (of Johannesburg) and it became an official name since 1963. The township originated in 1905. The British Government and the newly established Johannesburg City Council alarmed at the black majority who flocked and settled in and around the city centre. Though those Black unskilled labourers were needed in the city, yet by 1904 already 600 Indians and 1 358 African residents were removed from Braamfontein, where Transnet or the South African railway company stand today. They were removed by law and located far away from the city centres. They were housed separately, that is Indians in Lenasia and Blacks in Klipspruit or what is called Pimville today (Bonner & Segal, 1998:10-12) as a way of reserving job opportunities and settlement of whites in and around the city centres. The removal was intensified in 1940s, when there were about 60% of Africans who lived in white-designated areas, either in towns or on farms, while 40% were based in the reserves. In SOWETO and other townships, people were divided not only into the categories of tribal (migrant), semi-tribal (immigrant) and detribalised (urban), but also according to their ethnicity through ethnic zoning (i.e. The Township of Naledi, Tladi, Mapetla, Moletsane and Phiri were for Sotho-Tswana. Zola, Dlamini, Senaoane (Moroka), Zondi, Jabulani, Emdeni and White-city were for Zulu and Xhosa. Tshiawelo was for Venda and Tsonga. In 1956 the Urban Areas Amendment Act no. 12 of 1955 compelled cleaners on the white premises in and around the city who lived in white apartment blocks and quarters to move to ethnic hostels like Zulu hostels –Dube/Mzimhlope and Sotho Hostels in Nancefield (Bonner & Segal, 1998:43-46).

Reformed church Johannesburg North (Melville) was instrumental in the establishment of the mission work in Soweto. Their mission commission acquired a stand in Moroka Township in March 1950 (and in Jabavu, Dube and Kliptown townships both in 1952). Rev. Hugo du Plessis accepted their call as a missionary in Soweto in 1950 and worked in Moroka from 1951. The first Reformed church was established there on 18 May 1952 There were four helpers and confessing members from Moroka, Albertynsville, Kliptown and New Look. The church was called Moroka – after the name of the location where the church resided The Classis that was later constituted by the churches round Soweto was named Classis Moroka after the name of the first Reformed Church in Soweto. It was there that from 1952-1953 Hugo du Plessis trained some church leader. like Modiba, Jakobus and Dlamini. In 1956 the Theological School was built in Dube[50] and Hugo was called as a full-time lectures with 7 students, whereby 3 of them were trained to be ministers and 4 to be evangelists. In 1957 the number of students rose to 27, of whom 20 were trained to be ministers and 7 to be evangelists and, Khosa joined Hugo as a Dube lecturer from 1959 to 1961 (Schutte, 1974:22-23; Spoelstra, 1999:218).

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[50]By early 1955 Dlamini was an evangelist in Dube Location (his home location) with the later help of others Before the mission work done in Dube Location. J Molehabangoe, Motsoane, Ngcoeo, G I Mokoena and Seaedira were among the church leaders trained in Dube from 1956 onwards In 1958 there were white missionaries like P.G Geertsema who served in Dube and van der Walt who served in Javavu (Dube minutes, art 10 of 1959/12/09). There were church leaders like J S Masupa, E Mkhize, A Moremoholo, D.M. Ncube, D Gumede & Mbatha during 1958/9 and also Zondi, Thipenyane (Dube) and Jim and (later) Martin Tshabalala during 1959/60 (Dube minutes of 1957 24/01; 58/22/02 & 58/17/05, Schutte, 1974:23-24). Reformed Church Dube was established in 1961 By then Dube was composed of wards, Meadowlands A & B, Mofolo North, SARH Compounds and Diepkloof (Dube Minutes of 1959/60). The evangelists that were taught at the Dube Theological School including J Molehabangoe, Motsoane, Ngcoeo and Seaedira were also helping in Dube and its wards. But later on, Mofolo-North was put under Dobsonville (Dube minutes 1961/03/04), and Meadowlands was established as an autonomous church from Dube on 1962/11/17 (Dube minutes 1962/11/03); while Diepkloof was established from Dube on 1963/10/11 (Dube minutes 1963/10/06). Rev Matlakala was the first Black Reformed Minister in Reformed Churches in Siloam from 1947 to 1957 and the first Reformed minister to serve in Moroka from 1957 to 1959

3.4.1. THE NATIVE INFLUX CONTROL LAWS WERE SUPPORTED AND PROPAGATED

According to Bonner and Segal (1998:19), "Several factors caused more permanent family settlement of Africans in Johannesburg by the mid- 1940s. Firstly, the Second World War led to the massive expansion of manufacturing in and around Johannesburg and there were many more jobs available. Secondly, these new manufacturing jobs offered unskilled and semi-skilled African workers far higher wages than they were getting in the mining and farming sectors, which provided a minimum income on which to support a family. Thirdly, over 150 000 white men fought in the war, leaving vacancies for better paying semi-skilled jobs for black workers And, fourthly, pass laws were relaxed in the middle of the war, partly to assist the flow of black workers into town. By the end of the war, Johannesburg's black population had increased by over half a million". It is from that context[51] that the influx control laws found the biblical support in the idea of separate development of blacks and whites which was developed in the GK in the 1930s and which also found reception in the GK synods that decided on the later instituted church structures (Acts, 1961:118-119; 1964:265c). The GK synod mission deputies were given a mandate to bring the decision of the church structures to the black churches, which were called "sendingklassis" (Spoelstra, 1999:219).

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[51] The population was considered as a serious threat by the National Party (NP) - that it would swamp the white population. Smuts failed to find a strategy against the influx of Blacks in the urban areas. The NP devised a strategy, namely the influx control law. In the influx control law, section 10(1)(a) was applied to a person born in Johannesburg and had a birth certificate. It meant you got the best job, like a clerk or a messenger. A white-collar job was for 10(1)(a). Section 10(1)(b) was applied to a person who did not have a birth certificate but had enough proof that he was born and bred in Johannesburg. A 10(1)(b) was also applied to a white-collar job. A 10(1)(c) was a conditional employment-i.e. you had to work for 15 years for the same employer, then you qualified for 10(1)(b) and could apply for accommodation (Bonner & Segal, 1998:25-46). In 1956 Verwoerd, the minister of native affairs triumphantly declared that 25 331 blacks had been turned away from the Witwatersrand (Meredith, 1997:75-76).

3.4.2. THE "ONS SKOOL VIR HULLE" PATERNALISTIC MENTALITY IN THEOLOGICAL TRAINING MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE TRAINING OF THE PASTORS

The in-service training of ministers and evangelists in Dube from mid-1950s that was moved to Hammanskraal from the 1960s by white missionaries created tension and robbed them of their co-operation and unity, leadership potentials and opportunities as ministers/evangelists[52].

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[52]This included (i) the tension which was created and foreseen amongst Classis Moroka ministers back in the 1960s and 1970s for instance by ordaining ministers according to both article 4 and article 8 of the Church Order. It is clearly visible in Classis Moroka minutes of the late 1960s and 1970s. The application of article 8 by white missionaries when at the same time students were encouraged to go to Hammanskraal Theological School was repeatedly questioned in the Classis meeting (1978/11/25 art.D) even when the matter was studied and explained in the Classis meetings in the past, (ii) As a result of tension and lack of common Reformed background and doctrine, the foreign traditions and practices were introduced. For instance, over against biblical tithing and offerings, these churches introduced thanks-offerings in envelops, baptism offerings, fixed charges and specific Sunday collections (Dube Church Council minutes, 1961/01/21; 1961/12/09; 1962/03/10; 1971/06/20); (iii) These ensured a paternalistic dependency on white churches. It should be noted that even in the 1960s Classis Moroka Churches depended on white churches in payments for ministers, their pensions, travelling expenses, estimates (ramings), electricity, rent, Lord's day table. It is clear from the Dube ministers of the 1960s and 1970s (for Dube church was the only prominent church in the 1960s) Yet Rev. van der Walt and Rev Netshitangani (Dube minutes, 1961/10/14 & 1964/03/07 respectively) exhorted tithing, but in vain Classis Johannesburg deputies even started the Witwatersrand Bedieningsfonds to help Classis Moroka churches and/or ministers (Classis Moroka minutes art.3, 1991/06/22) and hence paternalism remained to this day, (iv) In the 1970s and 1980s the Classis Moroka ministers mismanaged the Classis ramings When they gave financial reports, they only indicated the churches which paid and which didn't pay, but not how the money worked (Classis Moroka minutes, art. 9, 1982/06/19 & art.18, Kagiso, 1983/11/05), in spite of questions around how the money was spent especially as far as reiskoste was concerned (Classis Moroka minutes, art.D.1, Meadowlands, 1985/04/27). Seemingly travelling expenses were spent by classis ministers also for personal matters (Classis Moroka minutes, 1983/11/05 art.3, Kagiso, 1990/04/28, Art. 8.7.(f), Diepkloof). The mismanagement was uncovered and questions were raised concerning the whereabouts of the Classis ramings and nothing was found {Classis Moroka minutes art.18.2, Kagiso (1995/10/28)}.

Behind the perpetual paternalism and/or dependency of black Reformed Churches in Soweto to Potchefstroom Churches were the attitudes and practices of "ons skool vir hulle"[53] firstly in Dube from mid-1950s and later on in Hammaskraal from early 1960s by white missionaries. Even in the recent Reformed-based in-service-training of evangelists and ministers (some of whom will be called in Reformed Churches) though it is done in the name of contextual theology, however, if the approach and the method of "ons skool vir hulle" is still used, it can bring a lack of true ministerial co-operation and unity and/or harmony. Without a multi-ethnic board of curators and training staff, the old "ons skool vir hulle" approach and/or method could still rob the multi-ethnic church of earning the right to be heard beyond the 10 years old democratic society within which the Reformed Churches operates![54]

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[53] According to the former Rector of Hammanskraal Theological School, Prof J.H. van Wyk (Jaarblad,1994:9), " . die professore, en die administrative personeel, was almal wit So n opstelling verraai tog n opvatting van, "ons skool vir hulle", n argument waaraan n dubbele kerkbeskouing ten grondslag le en wat daarvan uitgaan dat etnisiteit kerkwees (en teologiese opleiding) structureer."

[54]If Potchefstroom Theological Seminary is still operating without a multi-ethnic board of curators and training staff, the old "ons skool vir hulle" approach and/or method could still rob the multi-ethnic church of earning the right to be heard beyond the 10 years old democratic society within which the Reformed Churches operates! Usually keeping the majority of white administrators in its administrations, and majority of white in its board of curators and majority of professors in its training, it is and it will be an admission of the maintenance of not only exclusive mono-cultural theological mentality (without inclusively contending for missiological orientated approach to our multi-cultural society), but also of the approach and/or the method of 'ons skool vir hulle' (especially when there are capable administrators, curators and ministers from the black Reformed Churches competent enough for the Theological School calling, but who are technically not employed in by majority of votes against Article 84 of the GKSA CO) In this regard, Steve Biko (2004 5), in his address in 1969 as the first president of SASO (South African Student Organization) who argued against the black student representation in NUSAS (National Union of South African Students), said, "What we want is not black visibility but real black participation In other words, it does not help us to see several quiet black faces in a multiracial student gathering which ultimately concentrates on what the white students believe are the needs for the black students." This is important in selecting Theological training staff/worker!

"Ons skool vir hulle" attitude and practice is just like "our student organisation for them" which Steve Biko[55] opposed from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. It is an example of those who advocated for sayings like, "nothing about us without us" and "do not do for us what we can do for and/or by ourselves."

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[55]Steve Biko (founder of SASO-South African Student Organization and a leader within BCM-Black Consciousness Movement) argued that, "Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time. Its essence is the realisation by the black man for the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It is based on a self-examination, which has ultimately led them to believe that by seeking to run away from themselves and emulate the white man, they are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. The philosophy of Black Consciousness therefore expresses group pride and the determination of the black to rise and attain the envisaged self. Freedom is the ability to define oneself with one's possibilities held back not by the power of other people over one but only by one's relationship to God and to natural surroundings. On his own, therefore, the black man wishes to explore his surroundings and test his possibilities – in other words to make his freedom real by whatever means he deems fit. At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. If one is free at heart, no man-made chains can bind one to servitude, but if one's mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare his powerful masters. Hence thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being complete in himself. It makes him less dependent and more free to express his manhood. At the end of it all he cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood" (From, *I write what I like* by Steve Biko, 2004 edition:101-102). Steve Biko further said that Black Consciousness "is the realisation that the black man can take part in the game of power politics as well. We are no longer afraid. The man who is afraid can be overpowered. The man who has no fear cannot be conquered. We are prepared to die on our feet rather than to live on our knees. We regard ourselves now as self-contained beings and no longer as extensions of the white man's broom or lever. Now we know that the true man is beginning to shine forth from the black man.... we have reached the stage where we no longer hate white man. Instead we laugh at them because we know now that it was themselves and not us whom they destroyed by their cynicism." (From, *the missions on trial*, by Buhlmann, 1978:44ff).

As a result, many if not all Reformed churches and ministers in Classis Moroka (and in Midland Synod) were and are mostly financially and theologically dependent and supported[56] by their neighbouring white Reformed Churches. So, ministers could not fully fight foreign traditions and practices in the church, but instead they would rather maintain the number of the church members for the sake of the records and reports to the whites, while neglecting the quality of the work. Nevertheless, the love for song and rhythm filtered through since the 1960s in these churches to the present day, as a reflection of music understanding in African cultural context[57]

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[56]According to Schutte (1974:28), "In hierdie historiese oorsig verdien twee sake veral ons besondere aandag. Eerstens: Baie nuwe gemeentes het uit die twee ouer kerngemeentes, Moroka en Dube, ontstaan... Tweedens: Dit was opvallend hoe relatief afhanklik die Bantoegemeente was. Sonder die finansiele hulp van blanke gemeentes(s) was die oprigting van die kerkgebou nie op daardie stadium moontlik nie en kon die traktement van die predikant ook nie bygebring word nie. Hierdie verhouding, wat tot n' geringe mate ook op ander vlakke deurwerk, veroorsaak verleentheid en spanning in die Bantoegemeente wat in beginsel selfstandig behoort te wees"

[57]According Steve Biko (2004 46-47), "Nothing dramatises the eagerness of the African to communicate with each other more than their love for song and rhythm. Music in the African culture features in all emotional states. When we go to work, we share the burdens and pleasures of the work we are doing through music. This particular facet strangely enough has filtered through to the present day. Tourists always watch with amazement the synchrony of music and action as African working at a road side use their picks and shovels with well-timed precision to the accompaniment of a background song. Battle songs were a feature of the long march to war in the olden days. Girls and boys never played any games without using music and rhythm as its basis. In other words, with Africans, music and rhythm were not luxuries but part and parcel of our way of communication. Any suffering we experienced was made much more real by song and rhythm. There is no doubt that the so-called 'negro spirituals' sung by Black slaves in the States as they toiled under oppression were indicative of their African heritage. The major thing to note about our songs is that they never were songs for individuals. All African songs are group songs. Though many have words, this is not the most important thing about them. Tunes were adapted to suit the occasion and had the wonderful effect of making everybody read the same things from common experience. In war the songs reassured those who were scare, highlighted the determination of the regiment to win a particular and made much more urgent to the need to settle the score . . ."

3.4.3. THE RUINS OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES CONSTITUTING CLASSIS MOROKA AS A RESULT THEREOF ARE TO BE REBUILD

It is from the context of issues raised above and from Schutte's book, 'Swart doppers?' [58] that the rebuilding of the ruins of the Midland Synod churches is urgent and necessary.

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[58]With intensive study of the origin and development of the Reformed Church Meadowlands in the 1960s and early 1970s Schutte (1974,121), concluded in his book 'Swart doppers?' that, "Die gemeentes voldoen op die wyse tot 'n mate aan die behoefte aan geborgenheid wat in die tradisionele gemeenskappe beleef en ervaar is maar wat terselfdertyd by die besondere, spesifieke behoeftes wat in die stad ontstaan het, aangepas is. Sekere trekke van die tradisionele verwantskapsgebaseerde gemeenskap word aan die gemeentes oorgedra.Eersgenoemde verskynsel tree na vore in die onderskeidings wat binne die gemeentes gemaak is. Eerstens was daar die verskil in seniorteit soos byvoorbeeld onder die vroue (Die lede van die vrouevereniging was die seniors in diegemeente) Verder is daar 'n onderskeid tussen die geslagte gemaak soos weeuspieel in die patron van plekneming in die kerkgebou tydens dienste en in die afbakening van die arbeidsterreine Die onderskeiding is ook weerspieel in die tye (dae) waarop die kerkraad en die vrouevereenigings respektiewelik vergader, asook in die patroon van Nagmaalsviering. Hierbenewens speel status 'n rol in die gemeentes. Die predikant het die status van 'n nuwe sort hoofman waarin sekere tradisionele hoofmanstrekke duidelik na vore kom Dit word hom meesal toegedig maar hyself eien hom dit ook toe. Die gemeentes as "kerklike groep" is sterk groepmatig saamgestel. Die mans, vroue, kinders, belydenisklas, vrouevereniging en kerkraad kan almal as groepe duidelik onderskei word Onder hierdie groepe heers statusonderskeide. Behalwe 'n natuurlike neiging tot groepvorming, loop ook nog 'n individualiserende lyn deur die gemeentes wat dit sterk onderskei van tradisionele gemeenskappe. Lidmaatskap vandie kerk is geen vanselfsprekende saak waarvolgens 'n persoon kragtens sy geboorte lidmaatskap en die daarmee samehangende status, rand, verwef nie. 'n persoonlike beslissing moet daaraan voorafgaan Rang en status word by voorbeeld wel verkry deur sekere persoonkile kwaliteite en bekwaamhede Ons dink hierby aan die predikant, lidmaatskap van die vrouevereniging, die leier van die vrouevereniging, ensovoorts. Die kombinasie van hierdie individualiserende lyn en tradisionele neigings gee aan die gemeente'n besondere karakter. Teen bogenoemde uiteensetting kan die beswaar ingebring word dat dit alleen van toepassing sou wees op lidmate wat vir die eeste geslag in die stad is, maar die kompensatoriese neigings, hierbo beskryf, vloei voort uit bepaalde instellings en lewensbenaderinge by die lidmatewat nie met die tweede geslag in die stad afgeskud word nie

To spread the gospel in and outside Soweto is important, because this township like other townships is bringing in people from all corners inside and outside Southern Africa Planting and growing many affluent and true Reformed Churches with a visible mission program with the mission work supporting structures could be of help in spreading the gospel to the world. But the starting points should be in the existing Reformed Churches under both synods (synod Potchefstroom, Midland and Soutpansberg). The rumours of dying churches among Reformed churches under all three national synods is an indication that both churches (blacks and whites) need each other desperately, like never before. Some churches have money, properties and buildings (among other effective instruments) to enable the mission work of these churches.

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[59]According to Prof. Rabali T.C.'s letter to the Mission Deputies of the CGKN on behalf of the mission deputies of Soutpansberg churches and on behalf of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (2000/08/08), "Many of the Reformed Churches which were established during the fifties through to the seventies in the black townships such as Tshiawelo are battling to survive. Many even died out during the eighties and nineties. This is the result of many factors. Some of these factors have surely to do with the quality of church leadership developed for these churches. We are of the opinion that the concerns and dissatisfaction, which compelled us to begin the Heidelberg Theological Seminary, were genuine. It is this concern that compels us to refuse being marginalised with respect to the theological training of future ministers of our churches. Our association with Tshiawelo may therefore have, in the wisdom of God, helped to prevent the Reformed church Tshiawelo's downward spiral. Having strengthened the Reformed church Tshiawelo we now even have a church from which to operate in further church planting activities around the Gauteng province. Our work as part of the Reformed church Tshiawelo also gives us access to the churches, which are struggling to survive in the townships as well. For example, the first black Reformed church in Soweto (i.e. the Reformed church Moroka) died out. The Reformed church Tshiawelo now uses the church building that was left behind when that church died out for services aimed at planting a Reformed church that uses the Zulu language. In 1998 the Classis Moroka asked the Church Council of Tshiawelo to help in Dube where the church was almost dying out. (The Reformed church Dube was the place where what was later to become the Hammanskraal theological school started. There is a well-built church building but which is now in decay. The church which used the building has dwindled and the challenge is now to help the few church members still remaining to become once again a living big Reformed church). This process of helping to rebuild the church ruins in the townships is also an open door of opportunity which we have gained."

3.5. THE EFFECTS OF THE NEGLECT OF THE ROLE OF THE CITIES IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES CONSTITUTING SOUTPANSBERG SYNOD.

The review of the implementation of the Gereformeerde Kerk mission work legacy in the mission Fields like Siloam, in Venda and Soweto, in Johannesburg could be considered unfinished without a discussion of the effect of the neglect of the role of the cities in the Reformed Churches under the Soutpansberg Synod.

3.5.1 THE HESITATION TO DO LOCAL CHURCH MISSION WORK IN THE 1960s & 1970s.

The hesitation to do mission work in the local churches that constitute Soutpansberg Synod was evident in many ways, including the fact that (1) in the 1960s and 1970s Reformed Church members in Soutpansberg area were mostly raw and nominal and could not do mission work themselves. According to van Rooy (1997:35), "The breakthrough of the sixties was a mass movement but not a revival. The converts in many cases – probably in most cases! – remained raw, and for the next ten years almost the same number left the church as was added to it. We have the suspicion that some of the converts were more interested in the second-hand clothes which were distributed or sold cheaply to followers of the Reformed Churches, than the gospel itself -- which of course can be no sound basis for building a church. Many were also accepted into the church without real evidence of repentance, and without any change of heart and life". [60]

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[60] It was also confirmed by Rev. Netshitangani who was personally interviewed by Ndou (2000:253-254), who said that, "The Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk) had also embarked on the scheme of looking after the poor (armsorg). Financial aid and clothes were often received from Holland to cater for the needy. Unfortunately, the task of distribution of the hand-outs was entrusted to the Evangelists who distributed Mealiemeal and clothes to their so-called converts. The missionaries were under the impression that they had many converts, but when they visited the so-called new converts they hid themselves because they did not want to come into contact with the missionaries."

(2) beside the mission work revival, the local churches in the Soutpansberg area continued even in the mid-1970s to be composed of the majority of raw and nominal church families and paid officials. The paid officials included the helpers and evangelists who were mostly financially and theologically dependent and/or supported by the missionaries (Spoelstra, 1999:170)[61].

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[61]According to Spoelstra (1999:264), "Helpers het nie vrywillig gewerk soos in die vroee Kerke nie en daarom het die Bavenda die helper en predikant as werknemers van n blanke "kerk" beskou wat oor oneindige finansiele vermoens beskik en hom onder die Bavenda wil vestig". Van Rooy (1997:36) said, "a young theological student from Venda, C.T. Rabali... started witnessing to some of his young friends, and they too were converted or embraced the Christian faith according to the Reformed creeds.. ..Suddenly people started burning for the Kingdom of Christ, repentance and rejection of the pagan practices were real; many groups of young people suddenly started spending their holidays in spreading the gospel from door to door in hospitals and from home to home in villages .. .. A number of dedicated and gifted young ministers followed in the footsteps of Rabali, and today the churches in Venda are flourishing spiritually as well as numerically" Spoelstra (1999:279) confirmed that in the mid-1970s, "Teologiese studente Joseph Moshapo en Christopher Rabali van die HTS het jongmense op De Hoop saamgetrek en self daar (Olifantshoek en Masakona) voorgegaan. Dit is die eerste spontane inisiatief uit die jong Kerke wat sonder om geld te vra onderneem is. Jongmense het begin om self met konserte geld bymekaar te maak en n byeenkoms op Masakona daarmee bekostig.. . Vanaf 1980 behaal saamtrekke van jongmense en katkisasiekinders sukses onder leiding van entoesiastiese Christen-onderwysers soos Makhado en teologiese studente Christopher Rabali (he was already a minister by then) en Ruben Phaswana. Aan die begin van 1982 se Kruger dat hulle n jaar gelede met "saamtrekke" van mense in die doopklas by Tshikonelo, Ntlhaveni, Mukhomi, Merwe C, Tshinavhe, Tshivhade, Masakona en Mamaila begin het. Saam met hom het Musandiwa oor die skepping, helper Maagi oor die gee van tiendes en ander sprekers opgetree Na die "veldtogte" is n weeklikse doopklas vir belangstellende volwassenes en by skole vir leerlinge aangebied. Alles dui daarop dat die kommunale metode van selfuitbreiding die Vendas aangespreek het Groepe gaan op eie stoom met of sonder hulp van die helpers deur statte soos Sereni (Mulla), Mashamba en Magoro (Grootfontein). Hulle behaal sukses by Sereni waar helper Netshivhulana gewerk het. Helpers trek in Masakona en Magoro veral jongmense aan. Die jongmense van De Hoop onderneem n "veldtog" in Ntlhaveni in June 1983 In 1984 trek die Sendeling kinders van 12 tot 15 jarige leeftyd onder leiding van die bekwame onderwyseres Ester Mulaudzi, in n vakansiekamp by Tshivhade saam. Hy gebruik material van die Iyani-Bybelskool om Paulus as tem ate behandel Die Kinders gaan eet tuis, maar ontvang brood en tee by die kamp om onkoste lag te hou"

3.5.2. SOME OF THE NEGLECTED MISSION WORK WITHIN SOUTPANSBERG AREAS

As part of their mandate to look for mission field in and outside the Soutpansberg areas, the Soutpansberg synod mission deputies facilitated mission work in the Reformed church Hosiyata area. It come to the attention of the Soutpansberg synod, when the Hosiyata church council wrote a letter reminding the Synod meeting of 1990 to revise their request of 1988, whereby they invited churches to rescue[62] them through mission work. Gereformeerde Kerk Laeveld mission work was not effective enough (Soutpansberg synod Acts, 1990:76).

There were many reports of the Mission Deputies in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which shows that they failed to even to visit the dying Reformed church Hosiyata. There was also no urgency to rescue the situation, because according to their reports they were waiting for the issue to be done "church orderly".

Again as part of their mandate to look for mission field in and outside the Soutpansberg areas, the synod mission deputies in 1993 visited Messina and Beit Bridge (Zimbabwe) and discovered that there were more than 60 000 Venda-speaking people in need of the gospel and they saw that there was a need of Bibles in their Schools (Soutpansberg synod Acts, 1993:13). Though the Synod decided that the mission deputies should advice and encouraged the Soutpansberg churches to call and sent a minister to places like Zimbabwe (Beit Bridge). Unfortunatly, in 1994, the mission deputies reported that the synod mandate was unfulfilled (Synod, Acts,1994:45).

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[62] After Rev B.J.Maselesele turned 65 years of age in December 1987, he was released from his ministry in the Reformed Church Hosiyata. It took some years before Hosiyata could be effectively helped to be a proper Reformed church. Whether the Reformed church Hosiyata was ever a true living church when other Soutpansberg churches were transformed remained to be studied.

3.5.3. THE HESITATION TO A NATION-WIDE MISSION WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

The hesitation[63] to do a nation-wide mission work was evident in many ways, including the fact that (i) the boundaries were still viewed as 'ours' and 'theirs' even when they were declared a national synod (Soutpansberg, Acts,1995:24), where it was made clear by the synod mission deputies that, 'many areas within the boundaries of our church councils', were still in need of missionary outreach. The Reformed Churches constituting the National Synod of Soutpansberg sought also to do mission work within 'their boundaries'. But the National Synod Potchefstroom was considered to be specifically responsible for mission work, in the rest of the country together with the cities in South Africa. In this context the feeling was that the Potchefstroom churches be consulted when seeking to do mission work in those areas; (ii) when crossing the boundaries, it was done with a lot of sensitivity. It was made clear, even after the Reformed Churches under Soutpansberg Synod in 1998 made a decision to find a way of doing mission work in Gauteng Province (Acts, 1998:52, 2000:79) with two successful urban mission workshops in 2000 and 2003 conducted in Gauteng Province as a result. The comments of most Reformed Church members under Soutpansberg synod are still sensitive about the nation-wide implications of being an authorised national synod and still feel duty-bound to their assigned periphery in and around Soutpansberg areas. So the hesitations and sensitivity to cross the boundaries as far as nation-wide mission work and church planting through acknowledging the role of the cities in mission work is still alive.

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[63] It should be clear that even though there was such a hesitation to do mission work in the rest of the country, the rest of Africa was understood to be the mission field. This was indicated as a fourth motive why a theological school needed to be established. The proposal was brought forward and approved in Soutpansberg Synod of 1989. It was in that fourth motive where it was indicated that the areas within Soutpansberg Churches should no longer be viewed as mission target areas and that the Soutpansberg Churches should be pro-active in doing mission work inside and outside our country (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1989:68).

3.5.4. FEELING GUILTY IN IMPLEMENTING A NOT-YET-CHANGED DECISION OF 1961

The Potchefstroom Churches that made a resolution concerning the church structure in 1961[64] (GKSA, Acts 1961:118-119) were powerful financially and theologically. By 1962 the Potchefstroom churches had 5 regional Synods, whereas there were fewer than 36 local churches of all Reformed Churches among the blacks and coloured (GKSA, Almanak, 1961). Therefore the consultation made after the resolution took advantage of the lack of theological expertise within the Reformed Churches among the blacks and coloured. The resolution made on issues that affected other Reformed churches among the blacks and coloured was made by isolated researches for which other churches were merely contacted for approval.

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[64]The Reformed Churches structural relations were debated and researched in the 1950s in the GKSA Potchefstroom synod and the decision was reached in their 1961 synod (Acts,1961.186c) It was claimed that it was what the Bible is saying. So 'the missionaries and the mission deputies of that synod were given a mandate to bring this into being with regard to the black churches' (Soutpansberg synod Acts, 1990:41). According to Soutpansberg synod Acts (1990:42), "Separation with whites was something understandable, but separating the blacks, which in fact their synod decisions entailed, was not easy to achieve. The Black churches cherished even the unity they had in the 'sending klassisse'. The white deputies met with resistance. They insisted that it was the right way and that the black church councils send their representatives to meeting at Ikageng, in Potchefstroom to decide on the issue. This was because the blacks were insisting that they had no power from their church councils to decide on such issues. At the 1962 meeting in Potchefstroom which is called 'Algemene Kerkvergadering vir nie-blankes' in the mission deputies' report, there was resistance again. At the end of the meetings the deputies managed to achieve the present type of structure... It is interesting to note that the black churches were not the mother of the present ethnic arrangement. As already stated, the decision was taken at the 1961 white synod and it was given to deputies to implement. The churches that took the decision were then powerful with regard to the churches for whom they were deciding (in almost all respects e.g. financially and theologically). The very first Soutpansberg synod did not understand the new separate arrangement and wanted some other type of arrangement that manifested unity with other black churches in particular. The white missionaries at their very first synod advised them to appoint study deputies, but these never reported as it was not really possible for them to study the issue theologically."

Clearly, the Potchefstroom Synod in their 1961 "national" synod (the only "national" synod by then) instituted separate National Synod in one country and hence this created tensions on how these National synods should operate in one country. According to Article 51 of the GKSA Church Order the Soutpansberg Churches are National synod and hence can and should plant Soutpansberg churches nation-wide, including in the Southern African cities (and Gauteng cities in particular). The attempts not only to relegate Soutpansberg National Synod into a classis and the Midland National synod into a regional synod (GKSA, Acts,1991:547), but also to dissolve and place them into the Potchefstroom Synod structures so that they also follow the example of Suid-land National synod of the Indians and coloureds is understandable, when Soutpansberg Churches (like GKSA churches did) did not and are not planting Soutpansberg Churches nation-wide and/or satisfied in planting the Soutpansberg churches on the periphery of the country.

The delay in planting Soutpansberg churches nation-wide does not only made the argument of the Potchefstroom churches look or sound valid (that Soutpansberg churches structures are on the classis level), but will always and directly contributes to the present problem of constitution to and of the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa (General Synod, Acts 1992:48). It is in the General Synod where the controversial and recent issue of re-structuring of the Apartheid structures could be resolved finally.

The main problem is that the constitution of the General synod of the Reformed churches in South Africa remains unresolved up to this day (General Synod, Acts, 1992:48). According to one of the final resolution of the General synod of the Reformed churches in South Africa (Acts, 1992:48), "the next General Synod will be convened when problems concerning the constitution of the General synod have been solved to the satisfaction of each National Synod" In this regard, Vorster (2003:92) suggested that, "the solution to the present problematical situation in the General Synod will be reached when the National Synods Middellande and Soutpansberg follow the example of Suidland".

The spiritual gifts of the delegates from the National synods, Middelland and Soutpansberg and/or the thorough theological research of the churches should not be disregarded in solving the re-structuring problems. Otherwise the same mistake of 1960s[65] could be repeated, where the theological researches of the five regional synods of GKSA was done on behalf of less than 35 Reformed Churches among blacks and coloureds In general the genuine restructuring of the three synods should consider at least the following problematic areas at least, namely, (1) dissolution of all National Synods; (2) dissolution of all contradicting decisions; (3) creating a board of equal numbers of curators from all Reformed theological trainings under three National Synods; (4) institutions and properties should be part of the new provincial synod.

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[65]According to the Soutpansberg Synod Acts (1990.43), "The White churches in 1961 regarded their Potchefstroom synod as a General Synod. It was in terms of the Dordt church order which they used The church order knew four church assemblies for church government, namely, the local church council, the Classis, the Particular synod and the General synod. The change in 1960s which led to a fifth assembly necessitated a church order change Thus the church order was changed accordingly and then it entrenched racism and apartheid in the churches. Before then it was clear that the separation and failure to admit black converts into the existing white churches was a contradiction of the Dordt church order. After the changes, the ethnicism which looked like an abnormality was made to appear normality in the light of the church order. The changes resulted in tension in the church order articles. This is because the 'National synod which is the fourth assembly created was simply added to the other four assemblies. In fact the original General synod was renamed, 'National synod' and the new general synod was created which did not even have half the agenda the former general synod had. The tension was that the classis continued to be defined in geographical terms as a meeting of geographically neighbouring churches, while the National synod is defined in terms of national or racial terms" The resolution (for separate assemblies) of Potchefstroom Synod Acts (1961:186c), appealed by referring to the articles 51 of the Church Order Dordt. Yet in the situation where different languages were spoken like Dutch and French churches in the same area, the provision for the necessary translations was made in the church assembly and in the publication of recommendations, instructions and decisions to confirm the maintained close contact and relationship. But when the contact between these two groups of Reformed Churches was lost, when many of the Belgian churches were utterly destroyed by the fearful persecutions, the Reformed Churches in Holland applied the article for synodical regulation of the mission work of the churches among the pagans of the Dutch East Indies.

3.5.5. FEELING UNEASY IN DOING MISSION WORK IN THE DENSEST AREAS OF OUR COUNTRY LIKE JOHANNESBURG[66]

The Johannesburg metropolitan area includes the Johannesburg CBD, Randburg, Soweto, Lenasis, Alexandria and Sandton. It is adjacent to the Tswane and Ekurhuleni metropolitan areas. The metropolitan boundaries extend from Orange Farm in the South and Midrand in the North and from Witpoortjies (Roodepoort) in the west to Modderfontein/Bruma in the east. It has the smallest land area of all metropolitan areas in Gauteng, yet it has the largest population, making it the densest and most urbanised. The centrality of the location means that the country' s road, rail and air network radiate outwards to the rest of the country and indeed, to the rest of the world. It is the centre of city's economists, multi-politicians, powerful decision-makers, cultural leaders in art, fashions, trends and ideas, religious, social, (inter)national lingual and educational (with many colleges, technikon and university) institutions. It located in the centre of South Africa's commercial and industrial heartland of Gauteng Province and is the nation's main centre for world-class finance, business services, information and communications technology, with Sandton and Midland in the lead. Its metropolitan area is the hub of the country's road, rail and air infrastructure. It is a vibrant, cosmopolitan and culturally diverse city. With Hillbrow and Soweto as the densest areas, the metropolitan area of 1 626 square kilometres has more than 2.83 million people. 53% of the Johannesburg population lives in the Southern areas of Soweto, Diepkloof and Orange Farm (The Jo'burg Integrated Development Plan, 2003/4:13).[66]

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[66]According to Growth and Development Strategy of Jo'burg, 2006/11, Johannesburg has about 3.8 million residents, and will grow to over 4 million by 2007. Johannesburg stretches over an area of 1644 square kilometres, giving it an average density of more than 1962 people per km^2. This is the highest average population density of all urban areas in the country. Johannesburg is the capital of South Africa's smallest – and richest – province, called Gauteng. Johannesburg has the largest local economy in South Africa. The city contributes an estimated 16.6% of the total economic value added in the country as a whole. It is the most powerful commercial centre on the African continent.

According to Kritzinger (1990:126) rural people (on the peripheral area of SA) are both pushed out from the land, which can no longer sustain them and pulled to the economic opportunities in the cities like Johannesburg[67]. The Apartheid Laws were lifted up concerning worship in the cities (native law amendment acts, 1937); urban influx control of blacks {the black (urban area's) consolidation Acts (25), 1945}; where to live (Group Area Acts, 1950s); where to study (Bantu Education Acts,1953); on which university (University Apartheid Act, 1959) and others. So many people flock and settle even in Gauteng City centres like Hillbrow without hindrance (the Survey Of Hillbrow done by Allan Morris of the University of the Witwatersrand's sociology department (in the Weekly Mail, 1993/06/25; Barbara Quillian, in The Star of 2000/11/01; and Phaswane Mpe's book 'Welcome to Our hillbrow').

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[67]According to Monsma (1989:118) it should be noted that, 'Cities contain areas for the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor, although sometimes middle-class people are mixed in with the wealthy or the poor. While in Western cities the poor tend to congregate in the inner cities and those with the mens tend to flock to the suburbs, in the developing world these tendencies are often reversed. Those with means live in the central city not far from the downtown area, while the poor live in shantytowns built on the hills and in the ravines that surround the city. In the West the poor generally live in slums (formerly good housing that has deteriorated over time). There is slum housing in cities of the Southern World as well, but in addition there are shantytowns built by people who have recently moved to the city. The residents often experience upward mobility as they find meaningful work and as city governments, recognising their existence, provide them with electricity, water, schools, and other service ". These areas are the mission frontier centres, where God brought all nations to our doorstep to fulfil Christ's mandate (Matthews 28:19;Greenway,1978:6) where majority of its settlers are poor and non-Christian (Greenway & Monsma,1989:45) Griffiths, (1982:9), said, "the often-cited high crime rate in Hillbrow must be seen in relation to the high population density, and is not the highest in the country...because more people are crowded (by choice) into Hillbrowthan anywhere else in South Africa, there's naturally more of everything else. Hillbrow itself is never static. The first place in South Africa to reflect the changes in society, to follow the trends, it's something like a barometer of what's new in the young, free world and it reflects allthe economic ups and downs of South African society – of which, for all its differences, it's very much a part". Molefe (in the Sunday Sun, 17/03/2002) even clarified that, 'the respected American weekly news magazine Newsweek recently warned tourists and visitors to Johannesburg to avoid Hillbrow'

3.5.6. FEELING UNEASY IN DOING MISSION WORK IN THE AFFLUENT CITY NODES

It is debatable[68] as to whether the multi-ethnic church should be developed in the affluent northern city nodes like Randburg, Sandton and Midrand or in the densest Southern city areas like Orangefarm, Soweto and Hillbrow or in both. Western scholars like Greenway & Monsma (1989), Greenway (1992), Conn (1997) and Conn & Ortiz (2001) advocated for cities' densest areas and called the cities' industrial and inner city areas (where mostly the working-class and poor people live) as new frontier of Christian mission. The question is: are the affluent city nodes, suburbs and small towns (where mostly the affluent white-collar and/or higher and middle-classes people live), not also the new frontier of Christian mission?

Both, namely the densest inner city and township areas and the affluent-suburb areas should be taken into consideration. Like the inner-city and township areas, the affluent nodes like Sandton and Midrand are bringing the former distant people to be Christians' roommates, classmates, friends and relatives, therefore Greenway(1989.72-79) cautioned Christians from (being/having) (i) ambivalence towards immigrants; (ii) a negative image of the city, (iii) fear of social gospel; (vi) fleeing to the suburbs; (v) "Pith Helmet" stereotype of missions (viewing mission work as a call as long as it is directed to the rural and remote people); (vi) cultural inflexibility and (vii) an inadequate theology of the city It is because of this viewpoint that Greenway (1989:79) questions the location and relocation of theological seminaries away from ethnic neighbourhoods and urban congestion[70].

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[70]The essence of the debate comes from the economic field Economically, if the crime rate and the decline in mining industries are some of the contributors both in discouraging investors and businesses in the previously disadvantaged areas and in shifting their investments and businesses towards an affluent area, should the economic growth or the majority of voices or both come first? The Jo'burg Integrated Development Plan (2003/4 226) argued claimed to catered, in ensuring the economic development and growth that could be of benefit to all people of both areas, affluent ones and previously disadvantaged ones

In that regard, Greenway (1989:79) concluded that a well-developed theology hardly addresses the city's problems, for the Bible is read and theology is discussed in ways that filter out the city with its pressing social issues, poverty, suffering, and maze of people. According to McGavran (1988:3) such seminaries trained ministers to maintain or improve existing churches.

One of the implications of having three National synod that are to operate nation-wide is the tension in the mission field as long as all take their nation-wide operation seriously. The church planting should go on while the restructuring process of new synods is going on. The critical question is how? There are, and there could be many true Reformed churches under three synods in affluent Northern nodes of Midrand and Sandton and their surrounding suburbs (microcosm affluent nodes/ areas of cities in South Africa, the rest of Africa and abroad)[69], because of the fastest growth economic growth sectors in telecommunications and information technology and financial services which pull youths and expects from Reformed churches among the whites and blacks in the densest populated areas (like Hillbrow, Soweto and Orange Farm) and other suburbs, townships, rural and squatter camps far and near, due to many opportunities that are powerful to force them to move to and settle in these affluent city nodes

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[69]White and black Reformed Church members could be brought to these affluent nodes, due to advanced telecommunications and information technology and financial services that bring the up-dated information into their Christian homes and offices. By means of satellite TV Christians could tell what is happening on the other side of the earth and ordering, banking, arranging etc is just a computer keystroke away. Even computer microchip contains libraries accessible globally and the internet on-lines courses are accessible globally. Cellular phones, faxes and electronic mail could be means by which Christian family, friends and colleagues can now correspond anywhere and anytime on this planet at the speed of light. While worldwide travels are a matter of minutes and hours. This could be used of course for the better as well as for the worse. Clearly these are realities and a situation which effective urban ministry should look at, if really its aim is to impact modern disciples (De Jong, 2000.3)

3.5.7. CONCLUSION ON EFFECTS OF THE NEGLECT IN SOUTPANSBERG CHURCHES

In the review of the implementation of the legacy of the neglect and its effect on the role of the cities in the mission work of thr Reformed Churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod, the following aspects were considered, namely, (a) the hesitation to do local church mission work in the 1960s and 1970s; (b) the neglect of mission outreach within the areas of Soutpansberg; (c) the hesitation to do a nation-wide mission work in Southern Africa; (d) feeling guilty in implementing a not-yet-changed decision of 1961, (e) feeling uneasy in doing mission work in the densest areas of our country like Johannesburg; (f) feeling uneasy in doing mission work in the affluent city nodes, like Midrand and Sandton. From the above hesitations and tensions, it should be noted that there is a gradual growing awareness of the fact that the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa need each other to be effective in mission work in and outside the country. It is becoming necessary to spend our prayers and efforts on the unity and well being of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa (an issue which the churches under synods Midlands and Soutpansberg were crying for since early 1980s). Some white churches under Potchefstroom Synod are doing their level best in allowing their Black Reformed brothers to use their church buildings and their expertise (and other socio-religious reform institutions), and those who are in the process of doing so and it should not be taken for granted if the broader sense of the missionary mandate should be speedily and effectively reached! The Churches under the three GKSA synods needs not start from afresh when we can help each other on the ground of the same declaration of faith! The church-planting program should make it possible to speedily and effectively advance the gospel of Jesus Christ in and outside the Southern Africa region, without allowing other Reformed Churches under both National Synods to die. The proposals for joint mission work so as to speedily and effectively advance the gospel of Jesus Christ in and outside Southern Africa are needed. We have the Gospel of reconciliation to preach and to live. A practical doctrine should also be practically preached.

3.6. CONCLUSION ON CHAPTER 3 IN GENERAL

This section reviewed the role of the cities in the history of the Potchefstroom Church mission work between the time of the establishment of Potchefstroom Churches and the time of the establishment of both the first Soutpansberg church in Siloam, Venda and the first theological school for the Blacks in Dube, Soweto. Having realised the neglect of the role of cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom Churches, it was indicated in this chapter that;

(1) The isolation-worldview is one of the causes and effects of the alleged neglects of the roles of the Southern African cities in the history of the mission work of the Soutpansberg churches;

(2) the legacy of neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches was implemented in their many mission fields. In this study, two mission fields were used as the representatives of others, namely, Siloam, in Venda and Soweto, in Johannesburg;

(3) the legacy of neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom churches.

The above-mentioned issues were considered theoretically and briefly in this chapter so as to indicate the causes and effect of the legacy of the alleged neglect of the role of the Southern African cities of the Soutpansberg churches;

In the next chapter, chapter 4, the findings of the emprirical research will be reported and analysed so that the information gathered could be used for further research and decision-making. In other words, the questions to be answered are: How can the Soutpansberg churches move towards the remedy of the neglect of the cities in their mission work? What are the strategies and tactics to be used in an effective gospel spreading to ensure the planting of true Reformed churches growing in knowledge of God and in number in Southern Africa, the rest of Africa and Abroad?

CHAPTER 4

TOWARDS A REMEDY OF THE NEGLECT OF CITIES IN THE MISSION WORK OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA CONSTITUTING SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to report the findings of an empirical research done within the structures and members of the Soutpansberg churches from the 9th to the 16th of October 2004. The empirical research emanated from the outcomes of the review of the role of the cities in mission work that were uncovered firstly, from the biblical and missiological literature in chapter 2 and secondly, from the history of mission work of the Reformed Churches constituting the Potchefstroom Synod in chapter 3. In both chapters, it became clear that despite the context within and around the church, cities play important roles in the mission work of the church. The basic question underlying the reseach questionnaire used was: Are cities playing important roles in the mission work of the Reformed churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod?

In reporting the findings uncovered in this chapter, the description of the empirical research will preceed the analysis of the information that was gathered thereby and then the concluding remarks. There could have been many and valuable information to be reported from the data gathered, yet due to the aim and objectives of the reseach, the information reported is limited. The information gathered in the empirical research can help churches not only in decision-making (Engel, 1977:126), but also in an overall approach, plan or way of describing how they will go about reaching their goal or solving their problem (Dayton and Fraser, 1990:13). The information gathered can therefore also help to stimulate further investigations or researches that will enhance the urban church planting venture of the churches.

4.2.DESCRIPTION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.2.1. A QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the members of Reformed Churches constituting Soutpansberg Synod. The questionnaires (attached in Appendix A to D) was handed over personally to the pastors. Mission deputies, mission committee members and ordinary members of different Reformed Churches constuting Soutpansberg Synod by the researcher in the course of an interview. The ideal with each interview questionnaire is that all members of the initial sample should complete it while being interviewed by the researcher. The questionnaires were handed over to and completed by all 12 pastors; 11 selected mission deputies, 40 selected mission committee members and 57 selected ordinary members of the different Reformed Churches constituting Soutpansberg Synod completed while being interviewed. Out of the 150 questionnaires that were carried along, a total of 120 completed during an interview meeting. Since a minimum of 50% of the intended respondents was needed, an analysis can be made and findings be arrived at that will not be affected even if the input of all the targeted respondents had been secured.

4.2.2. QUOTA SAMPLING METHOD

The quota sampling method was used in this research. Efforts were made to survey different structures and categories of members in the Reformed Churches constituting Soutpansberg synod. Among the selected mission committee members and selected ordinary members who responded, there were men, women and youth of different age groups. Among the selected pastors and mission deputies who were all men above 25 years old, there were those who attained high level of education, (some of whom had diplomas and most had Masters degrees).

4.2.3. THE ETHICAL ASPECTS

Ethical aspects were maintained throughout this research. These included maintaining the anonymity of the participants. The participants in this research were ensured that the information that they gave will be treated confidentiality. To obtain permission for this research projects, phone calls were made to the participation to secure their voluntary participation. The participants show their voluntary participation by securing the times, places and agenda of mutual agreement. The study does not reflect or support discrimination based on race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class or disability.

4.2.4. THE PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

On hundred and twenty participants were of help in this research project. All of them were involved in mission work organized both in their respective local churches and in the Soutpansberg Synod led by synod mission deputies. The participants were mission-minded.

Most of them attended the two urban mission conferences in 2000 and 2003 respectively. They supported urban mission. It is a blessing in disguise. On one hand they are lamenting that their respective local churches are losing youths and young adults, who are going to the cities to seek many and varied opportunities that the cities offers. But on the other hand they are anticipating the day that they can be involved directly in urban mission, to them cities are playing important role. The specific problem that most of them have, especially the church leaders is how to change the mind-set from rural to urban mission.

This specific problem was uncovered by this empirical research. The findings were shared and hopefully the information will help in making plans on how to change the mind-set, starting from the theology of urban missions, especially the role of the cities in ther near urban mission plans.

4.2.5. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

I was confronted, in particular with three realities, namely, the rural, foreign and urban mission.

4.2.5.1. IN THE REFORMED CHURCH HOSIYATA (RURAL)

During my empirical research I met most respondents who knew that I was one of the theological students who had the responsibility to help in Hosiyata Church from 1993 to 1998, in Nkowankowa, near Tzaneen. The Reformed Church mission committee in De Hoop led by Rev. Nefefe and Elder, Mr Mandende (secretary) sent me with the mandate to revive mission work with the aim of church planting. The Soutpansberg mission deputies had a hard time in trying to help the Reformed Church Hosiyata (Synod Acts 1994:29). In 1993[70] the deputies organised mission work activities in Hosiyata church. But in 1994 the mission work was left in the hands of the church council Hosiyata and the Laeveld mission deputies (Synod Acts 1994:45) and hence sought the help of theological student. I was also involved via the De Hoop Reformed Church.

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[70]From the report of the Soutpansberg Synod (Acts 1993.12) it became clear that the synod mission deputies tried to arrange with Laeveld mission committee that the Laeveld committee help financially and the Synod Mission deputies help with students to rescue Hosiyata Church through mission work in Hosiyata Church boundaries. This was clear in their report of 1993 in the Synod. Which read thus,"Vhadinda vhavho vho fare nyambedzano na komiti ya vhurumiwa ya Laeveld ine ya vha na vhudifhinduleli kha vhurumiwa ya Hosiyata, vha vhona nyaluwo yaho I sa takadzi. Vhadinda vhavho vho takalela u fara nyambedzano na vha komoti ya vhurumiwa ya Laeveld Ro vhudzisa dzangalelo lavho kha vhurumiwa kha la Gazankulu. Vho ri fhindula uri vhone vha khou balelwa. Vho amba uri vhone vha vhona vha tshi fanela u ita vhurumiwa kha vhathu vha re tsini navho hu u itela u fhata kereke yavho. Ro vhudzisa nga ha pfanso ine vha fanela u i ita kha u vusa Hosiyata. Vho fulufhedzisa uri vha nga kona u nea R 500 nga nwedzi nahone tshifhinga tsha minwaha mivhili (24 months) fhedzi. Vhadinda vhavho vho humbela vhafunzi Vho Nefefe MS uri vha dzudzanye na khoro ya Hosiyata. U bva afho, ho humbelwa matshudeni mavhili a tshikolo tsha Heidelberg Seminary, vhane vha khou shuma mafheloni a vhege zwa zwino henefho Hosiyata"

4.2.5.2. CONCERNING MISSION MOZAMBIQUE (FOREIGN)

During my empirical research there were some respondents, especially who were involved in organising foreign mission, namely mission Mozambique. There were many questions, some of which were posed on me, including why was the mission Mozambique attempts stopped? Am I still convinced to be a missionary to Mozambique as I volunteered to be a missionary to Mozambique since 1993 and what is the relationship of urban mission and mission Mozambique? These questions were hard to answer and they touched my heart (being).

4.2.5.3. IN THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO (URBAN MISSION GAUTENG).

One of the reasons why I do this reaseach project was that the vision of Tshiawelo, namely, "to be a true Reformed Church growing in knowledge of God and in numbers" was to be realised in and around the cities of Gauteng Province outwards to the rest of the country, Africa and the World. I was exposed to the vision as a theological student in Potchefstroom from late 1998 and as a minister of Reformed Church Tshiawelo from 2001 to mid-2005.

I knew most of the respondents personally. It helped a lot because I penetrated in their world with ease. The respondents are indeed part of the research findings. I was informed and reformed by this research project. The information gathered confronted me in number of ways and I am happy it did. It is my prayer that this research project could instigate an interest in further research. There are number of issues raised in this research which need further research, some of which this research could not pick them up and/or fit them in because of the aim and objectives of this study. It is not because they were ignored or discredited.

4.3. THE RESULTS OR THE FINDING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.3.1. THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

TABLE 4.1.

	Pastors.	Mission deputies.	Mission committee members.	Church members	Total number	Percentage
Below 25 years old	----	----	2	----	2	1.7 %
25 – 30 years old	1	----	3	2	6	5 %
30 – 35 years old	1	2	5	7	15	12.6 %
35 – 40 years old	2	2	9	11	24	20 %
40 – 45 years old	2	4	11	14	31	25.6 %
45 – 50 years old	5	3	10	12	30	25 %
50 – 55 years old	----	----	----	8	8	6.7 %
Over 55 years old	1	----	----	3	4	3.4 %
Total number	12	11	40	57	120	100 %
Total Percentage	10 %	9.1 %	33.3 %	47.6 %	100 %	

4.3.1.1. EVALUATION

In table 4.1.above, about 50.6 % of the respondents are of ages ranging from 40 to 50 years and were led by the first generation Pastors and in turn they also led and influenced the third generation[71]. About 70.6 % of the respondents are of ages ranginf from 35 to 50 years.

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[71]The generations are counted in this research with reference to the Biblical way of defining those who are regarded as adults like in Numbers 1:1-3-where those who were 20 years old and above were regarded and counted as adults. Counting 20 years from 1942 (when the first Reformed Church constituting Synod Soutpansberg was established), the first generations are those who were above 20 years by 1962. The second generations are those who were above 20 years by 1982. The third generations are those who were above 20 years by 2002

4.3.1.1.1. CONCERNING PASTORS

In table 4.1. above, five (42%) of the Pastors are in majority and are of ages ranging from 45 to 50 years and they are part of the second-generation leaders who are still active in ministry.

4.3.1.1.2. CONCERNING MISSION DEPUTIES

In table 4.1. above, four of the respondents are who are mission deputies of ages ranging from 40 to 50 years and they are majority compared to other respondents who are in age ranges below them.

4.3.1.1.3. CONCERNING MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In table 4.1, above, 21 respondents are mission committee members of ages ranging from 40 to 50 years and they are the majority compared to other mission committee members who are in age ranges below.

4.3.1.1.4. CONCERNING OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS

In table 4.1. above, 26 respondents are church members of ages ranging from 40 to 50 years and they are the majority compared to other church members who are in age ranges above and below.

4.3.1.1.5. ANALYSIS

From table 4.1, above, 50.6 % of the respondents who are of ages ranging from 40 to 50 years constituted 50 %. These respondents are dominant in mission work. It is also clear that the majority of the pastors, mission deputies, mission committee members and church members fall in this category. These respondents were led by the first generation Reformed leaders[72] and

they in turn are still leading the 3rd generation Reformed Christians. I regard them as mission specialists because of their in-depth information, though unwritten and unpublished. They intimately lived and worked in mission work speciality for years. I was informed and reformed by these interviews.

What transpire from the empirical research as a challenge to these respondents was that there was a crisis concerning youth leaders of ages below 35. They are moving away from Soutpansberg area and they live in and around the cities like Thohoyandou, Makhado, Polokwane, Tswane, and Johannesburg and in other major Southern Africa cities.

Though they are loyal to their beloved rural areas, people and churches, yet due to many opportunities that are powerful enough to force them to move to the urban areas, they finally settle there. These opportunities included education, job, business, health, sport and recreation, the global world exposure. Thus young church leaders full of potentials have left and leave mission work responsibilities in the hands of older church leaders. Those who remain behind are mostly self-employed teachers and other government workersin the rural area and small towns. Most of these church leaders are mostly biological and spiritual parents of these young and potential church leaders, and they continually build these young church leaders during the years in their local churches However, these young people then leave them and move to the cities. It is a continuous process according to these respondents. Hence most of them admitted that they have a young leadership crisis in these churches

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[72]Revs S.M. Mugeri, S.P.M. Moshapo, B.J. Maselesele and E. Netshitangani are amongst the ministers who served in the reformed Churches in South Africa in the early 1960s and hence they are among the prominent Reformed Christian leaders who were in turn the products of the foundation builders of the GKSA mission work from the late 1920s in Soutpansberg area. The strong Reformed convictions were revived by the late group of the first generation Reformed Christians under Soutpansberg Synod in the mid-1970s onwards, who in turn in the late 1980s intensively led the 2nd generation Reformed Christian in Soutpansberg area (van Rooy, 1997:36-37)

4.3.2. THE RESPONDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN MISSION WORK BEFORE THE OFFICIAL MANDATE

TABLE 4.2.

	Pastors,	Mission deputies,	Mission committee members,	Total number	Percentage
1 – 5 years	2	------	38	40	63.4 %
5 – 10 years	6	3	2	11	17.3 %
10 – 15 years	1	6	----------	7	11.1 %
15 – 20 years	2	2	---------	4	6.2 %
Over 20 years	1	-------	----------	1	2 %
Total number	12	11	40	63	100 %
Total Percentage	19.3 %	17.3 %	63.4 %	100 %	

4.3.2.1. EVALUATION

In table 4.2, above, most of the respondents were involved at least one to five years in mission work in many ways, before they were elected to serve in the mission committees, as synod mission deputies and/or serving as pastors in their local churches[73]. About 80.7 % of the respondents were involved in mission work for one to ten years before their official mandate.

[73]In the 1970s, the Reformed Churches sent out the youth and few adults from the church to initiate the organisation called 'Saved to serve Evangelical Team' or SET. The members of other church denominations were included. Some were Lutheran Church, Apostolic Faith mission, Zion Apostolic Church, etc. They were involved in mission work in some villages by preaching the gospel from house to house. In the 1980s especially during the school holidays they organised campaigns in hospitals, i.e. Siloam, Tshilidzini and Vhufuli. During December holidays they gathered at Iyani, where they were divided into several teams and sent to different places, i.e. hospitals and villages. From the ranks of these youths came many of the present ministers and other church leaders in service in the Soutpansberg Churches.Later on, the work of SET influenced and involved most of the church members in the Reformed Churches. Wether the organisation called 'Saved to serve Evangelical Team' or SET is a para-church organisation as suggested by Mutavhatsindi (2000:11) should be left for the further research (Mutavhatsindi, 2000:11).

4.3.2.1.1. CONCERNING PASTORS

In table 4.2, above, six pastors had 5 to 10 years experience in mission work before they became pastors in their respective local churches.

4.3.2.1.2. CONCERNING MISSION DEPUTIES

In table 4.2. above, six mission deputies had 10 to 15 years experience in mission work before they became mission deputies of Soutpansberg Synod and had the most experience as compared to the involvement of others in mission work before they were elected as deputies.

4.3.2.1.3. CONCERNING MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In table 4.2.above, 38 mission committee members had 1 to 5 years experience in mission work before they became mission committee members in their respective local churches and had the most experience as compared to the involvement of other experience in mission work before they became mission committee members.

4.3.2.1.4. ANALYSIS

In table 4.2.above, most of the respondents were involved in mission work in many ways, before they were elected to serve in the mission committees, as synod mission deputies and/or serving as pastors in their local churches. About 80.7 % of the respondents were involved in mission work before their official mandate. Most of the interviewed respondents recalled their involvement in mission work during their youth days. It was not an accident that the mission deputies in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in 1992 that the advisory committee on

mission work advised the synod that mission work should be for the whole congregation and not focus on youth alone (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1992:93) The mission deputies had a tsk to "determine what the place is of the youth in the mission work of the church, and to formulate a strategy that will help to get more of the young people of our churches involved" (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1992:40). They did that because of the youth involvement in mission work during the 1980s and 1990s.

The mission work done by those youth also produced most of the present Reformed ministers, mission deputies and mission committee members who are serving in the Soutpansberg churches. Most of the (Christian) married couples and members of the church councils of the Soutpansberg churches also come from those youth involvements in mission campaigns during the 1980s and the 1990s. The youth involvement in mission work is still maintained to this day. To get adult members of the church involved in mission work remains a problem even today Mission deputies and committees devised strategies, yet they are only interested few, especially those who are there because of being mission deputies and/or in mission committees

In table 4.2, above, it is clear, from the number of those involved in mission work before they were elected as members of the mission committee of the particular local church, which nearly all active members of the church are somehow being elected and re-elected to serve in the mission committee of that local church. Because of the pile of work placed on the shoulders of those who had 5 to 15 years experience in mission work, inexperienced and potential church members, mostly youth are being encouraged to serve in the mission committees particularly in their local churches and those with 5 to 15 years experience in mission work serve in the background, mostly as advisors. Both knowledge and experience is needed to impact a much needed wisdom to potential leaders.

This is one of the strategies in the hands of Soutpansberg churches for building the continuity of church leaders who are responsible and accountable in many and varied ways in the church. It was also done so as to build growing and true Reformed churches. Such churches would then have a 'home' and foreign mission consciousness. In this regard, a focus of the mission deputies could be understood![74] During the interview, most respondents spontaneously gave more information beyond what is required. At times, most of them made a reference to Synod Acts where the mission deputies make particular proposals and recommendations.

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[74]From the extract of lessons prepared by Soutpansberg synod mission deputies (Synod Acts, 1992:40), focusing on the place of youth in the mission work of the church, it is easy to see their place through out these years which shaped and influenced also the success and leadership continuity of Soutpansberg churches. The extracts read: "

1 The task given to the committees: To determine what the place is of the youth in the mission work of the church, and to formulate a strategy that will help to get more of the young people of our churches involved

2 Concerning the youth's place in the work: The youth must of necessity be part of the work. The responsibility to fulfil the Great Commission rests on the youth, no less than on any other part of the body of Christ. Not to do it amounts to a grave disobedience. Apart from this – is it not so that youth is the time of possibilities and excitement because of all the possibilities? The body is strong and the mind awakening. Life seems to lie endlessly ahead. We can't be wrong if we claim that it is the responsibility of the church to make use of this work-force given by God, and at the same time prepare it for a life-long service rendered to the Lord.

3. Concerning the strategy that will help to get the youth involved:

3.1 The task of the different churches and the task of the Synod: It is obvious that the necessary organisation for getting more and more youth involvement in the work of evangelising will have to be provided by different Church councils, operating through their committees for missions. Planning of the where and the when and the how of the work, the job of recruiting the work, is in the last instance the responsibility of those called to lead in each church. The synod must, however, through its deputies for mission, take the lead, and inspire, and supervise ...."

4.3.3. THE RESPONDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN MISSION WORK AFTER THE OFFICIAL MANDATE

TABLE 4.3.

The mission campaign plan led by Pastors & Mission deputies	Total number			Percentage
1 – 5 years	6	4	10	45.4 %
5 – 10 years	2	3	5	22.7 %
10 – 15 years	2	2	4	18.1 %
15 – 20 years	1	1	2	9.1 %
Over 20 years	1	------	1	4.7 %
Total number	12	10	22	45.4 %
Total Percentage	54.6 %	45.4 %	100 %	

4.3.3.1. CONCERNING PASTORS

In table 4.3, above, six pastors had at least one to five years experience in mission work after they became pastors in their respective local churches and they are the largest group when compared with others, even as far as involvement in the mission work is concerned.

4.3.3.2. CONCERNING MISSION DEPUTIES

In table 4.3, above, four mission deputies had one to five years experience in mission work after they had become mission deputies of Soutpansberg synod and they are in the majority compared to the other age groups and they are also involved more in mission work than others.

4.3.3.3. CONCERNING MEMBERS OF LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS MISSION COMMITTEE

The analysis 4.3.2.1.4. of table 4.2, above, is important and applicable in the issue regarding the involvement of church members of each local church led by local mission concerned.

4.3.3.4. ANALYSIS

In table 4.3, above, the period that constitutes 78.1 % was a period ranging from 1 to 10 years. It was a period starting from the late 1980s and early 1990s. The synod mission deputies consolidated the plans and strategies of mission work outreach campaigns. In that period, the work of an organisation called SET (Saved to serve Evangelical Team) already involved lot of local churches and their respective church members (Mutavhatsindi, 2000:12).

Furthermore, Mutavhatsindi (2000:11) said by then, "all the congregations which fall under the synod Soutpansberg (namely, Soutpansberg, De Hoop, Mutale, Nzhelele, Niani, Tshitandani, Malamulele and Hosiyata) started to see their responsibility of doing mission. They mobilised the young people and started to teach them how to evangelize with the Word of God. The young people were strongly encouraged from the seminars that were held and became zealous to do mission work. Each and every congregation in Venda organises areas (mission posts) where mission work will be done during school holidays (e.g. April, June, September and December), and incorporate this in their year planning. These areas can be the place where they have wards or the place where they plan to establish new wards (church planting)."

It is interesting to note the development of the same synod mandate given to mission deputies, especially within five years since 1992. The common mandate from 1992 to 1997 included

1. To build co-operation in mission with churches that we are in correspondence with;
2. To give advises and encouragement to the church councils in mission work;
3. To look for mission field inside and outside Soutpansberg synod boundaries;

The detailed analysis will be dealt with under the respective tables below.

4.3.4. THE MISSION WORK BY CHURCH MEMBERS LED BY MISSION COMMITTEES

TABLE 4.4.

The involvement of the Local Mission Committees & Church members	Total number			Percentage
1 – 5 years	10	--------	10	10.3 %
5 – 10 years	15	--------	15	15.1 %
10 – 15 years	9	15	24	24.3 %
15 – 20 years	3	35	38	40 %
Over 20 years	3	7	10	10.3 %
Total number	40	57	97	100 %
Total Percentage	41.2 %	58.8 %	100 %	

4.3.4.1. CONCERNING THE MISSION COMMITTEES

In table 4.4, above, 15 local church committee members were involved as leaders for at least 5 to 10 years in mission work after they became members of local mission committee in their respective local churches and they are in the majority as compared to the period of the involvement of others in mission work after they had become members of their respective local mission committees.

4.3.4.2. CONCERNING MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES – WITHOUT MANDATE

In table 4.4, above, 35 local church members had 15 to 20 years experience in mission work even where they were never elected as members of local mission committees and they are in the majority as compared to the period of involvement of others in mission work of the church.

4.3.4.3. ANALYSIS

In table 4.4, above, the longest period within which the ordinary church members (ordinary in the sense of not being chosen to serve in the mission committees) in the local churches did mission work was a period ranging from 10 to 20 years and the longest period within which those who serve in the mission committee of the local churches served, was a period ranging from one to ten years. To analyse this phenomenon is important in the mission work under the local church.

In table 4.4, above, the period ranging from 1 to 10 years was the period after the mid-1990s. It was a period in which respondents reflected the shortage of the youth leaders in the post-1994 period. Relaxation of the apartheid laws gradually opened up the influx of youth and other expertise to the cities near and far. The respondents who are currently involved in mission work since the 1980s and as expressed by more than 70 % in table 4.4, above, are mostly government workers and self-employed in and near their place of residence.

In the post-1994 years, the youth from 17 years and older only spent a few months or few years as matured young leaders active in many ways, including in mission work in the local church in the rural areas. The opportunities in the cities near and far forced them to leave everything and go to the cities near. It is from this understanding that Mutavhatsindi (2000:13) appeal to the local Reformed churches that they should not only concentrate on youth, but involve also older members in mission work. However, the time and effort spent by the local church leadership on these youths is of help in the urban mission. To have true Reformed churches in the Southern African cities, especially in Gauteng Province could also help Soutpansberg churches.

It is important to note that though most of the youth go to the cities, there are regular church youths and adults who are working in and around the local places who have been involved and are still involved in mission work in the local church without being in the leadership positions and those who have remained in the leadership positions ever since. It is not true that when young

leaders are moving to town there are no active members who remain. The critical question is: what are the mission deputies and local mission committees doing in addressing the regular church members and their involvement in mission work of the church. The planning that relies on how to use all local members available is critical? That is why there are local church members who had ten to twenty years experience in mission work, who were never part of local mission committees and those who remained in the mission committee mostly for a period ranging from one to ten years.

This is a clear indication that to be involved in local mission work does not require of one to be in the local mission committees of the local church, but only to offer one's self to the mandate given by the Lord of the church. This is strategically implemented in the local church through the local church councils and local mission committees. That does not necessarily mean that building mission work leaders is not important, but the fact that the whole local church ought to get involved, so the strong leadership teams to mobilize the whole church is urgently inevitable so that strong leadership teams to mobilize the whole church are available.

Ironically urban mission is one of the aspects close to the heart of Soutpansberg churches. It was clearly revealed in the decision of the Soutpansberg synod (Acts, 1998:64), namely, "to find a way of doing mission work in the cities including those within the Gauteng province" It was considered in that Synod (1998) that the mission work in the whole denomination, the Reformed churches in Southern Africa, revealed a neglect of many unreached people groups in and outside the Southern African cities. However, in 2000 it became clear that the mandate is not yet being fully fulfilled on how they did and how to do mission work in Gauteng Province. This came through the synod advisory committee about the mandate given to the mission deputies to look for the mission field where mission work is still needed in South Africa, especially in Gauteng Province (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1998:78). Thus there is a lot to be done on how to do mission work in and outside Southern African cities, especially starting from the cities in Gauteng Province onwards and outwards to fulfil the 1998 mission mandate!

4.3.5. THE MISSION WORK INSIDE & OUTSIDE SOUTPANSBERG AREAS & DECISIONS THEREOF

TABLE 4.5.

BOUNDARIES	Number	Percentage	Decision to do mission	Number	Percentage
Within Local Church	120	100 %	Within local Church	120	100 %
Within Synod resort	120	100 %	Within Synod resort	120	100 %
Within the Province	112	93 3 %	Within the Province	120	100 %
Within the Country	96	80 %	Within the Country	96	80 %
Within SADC region	30	25 %	Within SADC region	54	45 %
Outside SADC area	-------	-------	Outside SADC area	-------	-------

4.3.5.1. THE OUTREACH WITHIN SOUTPANSBERG AREA AND DECISION THEREOF

In table 4.5, above, the 80 % of the respondents' position concerning the mission work in the rest of the country and their knowledge of the decision thereof reflect the fact that some of the respondents are still sensitive and hesitant to intrude within the boundaries of churches of other synods. This transpired even in the requests of the mission deputies made in their 1995 synod[75]. It is in line with table 4.9, below, where 56.7 % of the respondents saw the existence of National synods as the major obstacle for mission work inside and outside South Africa.

[75] The Soutpansberg synod mission deputies in 1995 (Acts, 1995:24), suggested that, "we have identified many areas within the boundaries of our church councils i.e. within the resort of synod Soutpansberg, where there is a need of the Word of God especially the Reformed faith. This is the case with South Africa as a whole. Synod Potchefstroom can play an important role in this regard. They have some experience and above all they have done some studies in this field. They can also help in identifying many areas. Together we can look at another way of spreading the gospel. Many areas of our country are urbanized. We may discuss some approaches of urban mission. This will help us to advise our church councils to do mission within their boundaries and to join hands with other church council(s) to do mission outside the church council boundary. We can do this through literature and mission conference which we can arrange together"

4.3.5.1.1. EVALUATION

From table 4.5, it is clear that according to the respondents the local churches are involved in mission work within the Soutpansberg areas. Most of the respondents regarded mission as primarily the work or activity of God. During the interview, most respondents used expressions like, 'it is God's work', 'we are mere instruments', 'we are mere agents', 'we are co-workers', 'we are junior partners in His work' etc. An impression in this is that mission conferences and workshops led by local pastors built the priesthood of believers. Most respondents are convinced that they have a part to play in the mission of God through His Church. Most local churches do mission work in the local areas. Most respondents see the area around the local church as a place where Christians constantly and daily contact "their world" (people they know and live with). It was stressed in the interview that preaching and living Christ is expected in the local community, where they are well known The local church services and activities can attract or repel the outsiders easily. Though mission dimensions and intentions in the local church services, programs and budget is not fully reflected, most of the church leaders and members were mission-minded, especially the youth. Most respondents indicated that since the local church wards are many and remote with no or one pastors, the church leadership rely mostly on mission seminars to equip church members. In most places the local mission committees take the responsibilities of facilitating and organising local mission work. In some areas, two or three local churches do mission work together in cooperation and partnership. During December holidays mostly, two to three weeks are reserved for a joint mission campaigns of all local churches constituting Soutpansberg synod. The participants firstly met at Iyani Bible School for biblical instructions and other practical arrangements. Usually a close ballot is used, so that participants could not choose friends and places they want to work. The mission leaders call it "cross-fertilisation". As a result most local church members especially the youth from different areas end up being close friends and others got engaged. Most of them were married due to it!

4.3.5.2. THE OUTREACH OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY AND THE DECISIONS THEREON

Some respondents, especially the mission deputies, referred to the Soutpansberg delegations to the REC (Reformed Ecumenical Council) both in Harare in 1988[76] and in Athens in 1992[77]. It was not an accident that the assembly conferences before the REC in Athens in 1992 focused on theology, youth and urban missions (Synod, Acts, 1993:35). These three aspects are the heart of the Soutpansberg churches. From the 1990s to mid-1995, a lot of time, theological efforts and money were invested on Heidelberg Theological Seminary, mission work and youth ministry. The point of discussion about the church boundaries (Synod Acts, 1989 66), also raised the questions about foreign mission work.

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[76] After the Reformed Ecumenical Conference (REC) of 1988 in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1989 the Reformed Church De Hoop made a request to the Soutpansberg synod that the Theological school must be established. One of the motive behind that was that of equipping those who could be sent to other countries far and near to do mission work. This was stated clearly as it appeared in the Soutpansberg Synod Acts (1989:68) that, "Arali ra nga dzhiela ntha thodea kana ndaela ya vhurumiwa, ri wana zwo tea uri hu gudiswe vhathu vhane vha nga rumiwa nnda u ita vhurumiwa e.g. Afrika. U swika zwino kereke dzashu a dzi athu thoma vhurumiwa. Ri dzhiiwa sa vhathu vhane ra wela kha vhurumiwa. Arali ri tshi nga vha na tshikolo, zwithu zwi do shanduka, lune ra do kona u gudisa vhane vha do rumiwa". The synod approved the request through the recommendations of the study committee regarding the request. It was exactly this fourth motive to the request which was regarded as the most understandable one, when the study committee (Synod, Acts 1989 75) said, "Tshiitisi tsha vhuna tsha Dehoop tsha ndaela ya vhurumiwa I a pfalesa".

[77] It was after the Reformed Ecumenical Conference (REC) of 1992 in Athens, Greece, that the synod of 1993 (synod, 1993:64), approved the adjusted request of the synod mission deputies, namely, "u tutuwedza u vhidzwa na u rumiwa ha vhafunzi nga kereke, fhethu hu nga ho Zimbambwe (Belt Bridge)". It was in 1994 that the synod mission deputies further made recommendation to the synod (Acts 1994:45) (concerning one of their mandate, namely to search for mission field inside and outside Soutpansberg synod) namely, "u sedza uri vhurumiwa vhu nga itwa hani Messina na Mozambique". When reading the comprehensive mission deputies' mission report which included also the draft of the mission survey or research thoroughly done in Mozambique, in Beira, Sofala Province and especially in Moncuba (synod acts, 1996 50-58), one becomes aware that the feeling and the mood was high around 1996

It was in 1994 that the mission deputies saw the need to do mission work in Mozambique. The Mozambique refugees, who came from Mozambique and who were in camps within the boundaries of Malamulele church, also stimulated the mission deputies to recommend to the synod to give them mandate to look for ways and means of doing mission work in Mozambique (Soutpansberg synod Acts, 1994:45). The development of the mandate to do mission work in Mozambique indicated the mission work spirit from 1995 to 1999[78] and how the Soutpansberg churches nearly ventured into the SADC region with the gospel in that period.

Reading between the lines, it seems as if there were, firstly, some changes done to the 1996 CMB drafted constitution; secondly, some revision done to the 1997 CMB constitution, especially on the question of the status of the Synod mission deputies and the CMB delegations in relation to the representation of the Soutpansberg churches in Holland (Soutpansberg Synod Acts 1996:51ff; 1997:10); thirdly it seems as if there were two mission fields {i.e in the Northern part of Mozambique as agreed with Christelike Gereformeerde Kerken in the Nederlands – Synod Acts 1998/99:49(4.1.1); and in the Southern part of Mozambique (around Maputo) as the co-operation was maintained with the Presbyterian churches in Australia and with Christelike Gereformeerde Kerken in the Nederlands – Synod Acts, 1996:51}. A thorough research is needed as to what led to the end of the Soutpansberg Mozambique mission outreach plans.

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[78] According to Mission Deputies' report (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1995.25), the synod deputies battled with the question, "....how to spread the gospel in other countries of Africa – can it be through health service or agriculture?" In 1996, the Soutpansberg mission deputies {Synod Acts, 1996:51 (4.1)} drafted CMB (Combined Mission Board) constitution and discussed further on how to do mission in Mozambique. In 1997, the Mission Deputies together with the CMB delegates concluded in their report (Synod Acts, 1997:10) that, "we realised that in Mozambique there is no need of planting new church but the need is to develop the churches which are there". This was stated after participant observations {e.g. They addressed Pastors' fraternal conference in their survey visit in Mozambique in 1996 (Synod Acts, 1996:56) and preached to more than 2000 Mozambique people the following year in 1997 (Synod Acts, 1997:9)}. That conclusion of the mission deputies formed part of the answer to the initial question, " how to spread the gospel in other countries of Africa. " (Synod Acts, 1995:25)

4.3.6. THE REASONS FOR BEING INVOLVED IN URBAN MISSION

TABLE 4.6.

Reasons to be involved in Urban Missions (specific target groups)	Number	Percentage
Our tertiary students, job-seekers and traders settled in the cities	120	100 %
Our breadwinners and influential expertise settled in the cities	120	100 %
Our country's wealth, state departments and other institutions are there	120	100 %
Our country's ethnic groups are found in the cities	120	100 %

4.3.6.1. EVALUATION

From table 4.6, it is clear that respondents agreed fully (100 %) that Soutpansberg churches should be involved in urban mission. They knew how urbanisation[79] affected their churches and they support the synod decision and mandate given to the mission deputies to find ways of doing mission work in Gauteng Province. Listening to the respondents closely, urbanisation started since the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly. Thus the neglect of the cities by the Midland and Potchefstroom Churches were a liability to all Reformed Churches and it also costed the Soutpansberg Churches dearly. So finding a way of doing mission work in the big cities of our country is n indication of the problem of neglecting the cities even to this day!

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[79]The impact of urbanisation could have been also one of the reasons why both the first GKSA missionary to Venda, Rev. Hugo du Plessis and later the first minister in the Reformed Churches among the blacks and specifically in Soutpansberg churches moved away from Venda to Johannesburg. This was summed-up when Dr S.P. van der Walt (1984:14) said, ' Ds du Plessis het op 'n keer aan my gese dat ons in die stad Johannesburg vir hom dit daar in die Noorde bitter moeilik maak. Van sy jong swart gemeentelede gaan no Johannesburg om te gaan werk. Hulle kom dan terug na hul tuisland en bring nou die groot stad se lewenswyse met hul saam. Hulle gee blyk van wereldse wysheid maar ook van wereldgelykvormigheid. Die jongmense kom onder sulke verkeerde invloed en word weggelok van die kerk af. Ek het toe aan Ds. Du Plessis gese Nou goed,kom ons keer die saak om. Jy kom na Johannesburg en vergader die getuies vir Christus hier. Hulle gaan dan terug na die tuisland en word ambassadeurs vir Christus'

4.3.6.2. ANALYSIS

The respondents were eager to help individually and via the church councils in encouraging those who are moving to the cities that they carry with them certificates of membership so that the RC Tshiawelo Church Council could supervise their faith and life in and around the cities where they will reside. They gave their full support to what RC Tshiawelo was doing and what Prof. T.C Rabali stood for, was appreciated and supported[80]! They could easily agree with what Urban Missiologists like Greenway and Monsma said about urbanisation and urban mission[81].

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[80] For according to Prof. Rabali T.C.'s letter to the Mission Deputies of the CGKN on behalf of both the mission deputies of Soutpansberg churches and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (2000/08/08). "The first important gain for us was that we were enabled to gain a foothold in the Gauteng province. Gauteng is in many ways a very important province for those who are serious about helping to advance the course of the gospel in South Africa and in the whole of Africa too. Most people from the rural areas of South Africa work in the cities of Gauteng. Even those from other African countries who are searching for a better life end up in cities like Johannesburg and Pretoria. Most of the tertiary institutions of our country that attract most of our young are found in the Gauteng Province. Spreading the Gospel effectively in the cities of Gauteng therefore means reaching people from all corners of South Africa and many other African countries. We therefore now rejoice at having bee able to gain a foothold into this important province and are determined to preserve it in using a variety of means for the spread of the Gospel"

[81] In the first two paragraph of the preface of Greenway and Monsma (1989.xi), it is said, "In view of the rapid growth of cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the internationalisation of cities in Europe and North America, it is no exaggeration to call cities the new frontier of Christian missions. For, like the world at large, missions tomorrow will be mostly urban. Christ calls the church to bring the gospel not only to tribes and villages, but also to modern, socially complex centres of population, culture and political power. The urbanization of Christian missions is an urgent and serious need. Cities determine the destiny of nations, and their influence on the everyday affairs of individuals is incalculable. As cities grow in number, size, and influence, it is incumbent on those responsible for world evangelisation, which includes the tasks of teaching, planning, and recruitment of missionaries, to focus attention on cities. Likewise, in the years ahead students of missions at Christian colleges and seminaries will need to wrestle with urban issues if they are to be prepared for ministry in tomorrow's world"

According to the research the specific target groups are the youth who are (i) in all school levels, (ii) job-creators and seekers, and (iii) traders who settled in the campuses, suburban, inner city, township and informal settlements areas of Gauteng cities. According to Malphurs (1996:105) suggest the fact that "once you have identified and then located the target group, the third step is to get to know them. To do this, you must gather information on them. The primary tool to accomplish this step is the external audit" According to Joslin (1982:6-7), "What binds people together in a 'class' grouping is not so much the type of the work they do, nor the place where they live. It is that these common external circumstances operate to produce common inward attitudes and patterns of thought. It is these attitudes, as they are passed on from generation to generation, which produce the essence and the enduring nature of a social ground". One of the ways of gathering information is by studying what they do, how they behave and how they respond to dominant trends around them (Malphurs, 1996:106). According to Mulphurs (1996:106) as far as these trends are concerned. "You must ask: What are the dominant trends affecting the target group? You should probe the following areas for the trends that affect each:

1. Social: crime, racial issues, abortion, pornography, abuse, local schools, and others;
2. Technological: computer, fax, cellular phones, and so on;
3. Economic: jobs, recession, inflation, layoffs, opportunities, prime rate, and others;
4. Political: national, state, and local issues;
5. Religious: the growing number of unchurched, the influence of Promise Keepers on men, the advance of Islam. What do people believe about the Bible, angels, prayer, and other biblical issue?"

After trying to determine how the target group respond to and how the church address these trends and related ones, the profile of each person should also be collected and synthesised, so as to up-date and remind the staff and the board about the ministry's nature, vision and the mission (Malphurs, 1996:107).

4.3.7. THE PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE TARGET ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE MISSION WORK OF THE SOUTPANSBERG CHURCHES

TABLE 4.7.

THE TARGETED ETHNIC GROUP(S)	Number	Percentage
The Vendas	------	-------
The Vendas and Tsongas	3	2.5 %
The Vendas, Tsongas and Pedis	18	15 %
The Vendas, Tsongas, Pedis, S.Sothos, Tswanas and Zulus	27	22.5 %
All language groups found within SADC region	72	60 %

4.3.7.1. EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In Table 4.7, above, it was unknown to the respondents that Soutpansberg churches targets the Vendas-spreading people only. Targeting the Venda-speaking only remained foreign[82] to the Soutpansberg churches. The respondents reflect the multi-lingual context in which the Soutpansberg churches worked and continued to work in and outside the Soutpansberg area.

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[82]Having the first multi-lingual pastors in the 1960s, namely J. Matlakala, C. Khosa, S.M. Mugeri, S.P.M. Moshapo, B.J. Maselesele and T.E. Netshitangani was not an accident. These ministers were taught theology together and hence served the Lord together in the multi-lingual context in the 1960s. It is from this context that the analysis of the Soutpansberg Synod Acts (1990:42) could be understood, that, "Separation with whites was something understandable, but separating the blacks, which in fact their synod decisions entailed, was not easy to achieve. The Black churches cherished even the unity they had in the 'sending klassisse'. The white deputies met with resistance. They insisted that it was the right way and that the black church councils send their representatives to meeting at Ikageng, in Potchefstroom to decide on the issue. This was because the blacks were insisting that they had no power from their church councils to decide on such issues. At the 1962 meeting in Potchefstroom which is called 'Algemene Kerkvergadering vir nie-blankes' in the mission deputies' report, there was resistance again. At the end of the meetings the deputies managed to achieve the present type of structure. .It is interesting to note that the black churches were not the mother of the present ethnic arrangement. As already stated, the decision was taken at the 1961 white synod and it was given to deputies to implement."

The sixteenth century Reformers preferred the vernacular languages of the people concerned. They accordingly translated the Scriptures into their respective languages so as to bring reformation even to the ordinary people For example, (1) English translation (1525) by Tyndale; (2) German translation (1534) by Luther, (3) French translation (1535) by Piere Olivetan; (4) England Refugees translation (1560) under Calvin. It was foreign in the reformation tradition of the past not to use the language of the ordinary people to whom they are called to serve.

Issues relating to ethnicity and language still affect the discussions concerning the relationships within the Reformed churches in South Africa as a whole. They are part of the agenda of the discussions concerning the restructurings of the major assemblies of these churches. It is the view of the black churches that the restructured new classis and synods should not have two agendas, namely one for the matter of common interests and another for the matters pertaining to language and culture[83]. Such a view is suggested by the Potchefstroom synod, but is rejected by many black churches because it is considered as preventing the true unity of the Reformed churches in Southern Africa in the same geographical area.

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[83] It was also argued in the Soutpansberg Synod Acts (1998/99:29), that, "This development lead to the use of the concept 'national' in the sense of 'culture' or 'ethnic' within our church polity. The 'General' synod which was organised in the sixties. All these entailed that the churches were to have their own separate churches and separate major assemblies along racial/cultural/ethnic lines with their representatives meeting to assist each other in a General synod. We have maintained from the beginning of the discussion that this arrangement is not biblical as it is among others, contradicts the teaching of bible about the church." Yet language differences as such are not as serious as in the urban set-up. Church members may speak two or more languages. If the missionary decises at the outset to work with a single language group, the language problem in its severest form can be prevented (Monsma, 1989 149). Yet in the case of church members from multi-cultural context, Monsma (1989.149) advised that, "The best way to handle this situation is to have two services in the same building, one using the ethnic and the other the national language. The services may be held concurrently or at different times. Joint services ought to be held from time to time to express the unity of the congregation. At such joint services both languages should be used. It is also important that representatives from both language groups serve on the administrative councils of the church."

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4.3.8. THE CO-OPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION WORK WITH CHURCHES OF OTHER SYNODS

TABLE 4.8.

THE CO-OPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION WORK	Number	Percentage
The Local Church involved should get permission from its synod	11	9.1 %
The Local Church involved should get permission from its mission deputies	14	12.6 %
The Local Church involved should inform its synod	33	27.5 %
The Local Church involved should inform its synod mission deputies	23	19.1 %
The Local Church involved does not have to do either of the above-mentioned	39	34.5 %

4.3.8.1. EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In Table 4.8, above, the respondents' position concerning the co-operation and partnership varied, depending on the knowledge of the church order and exposure to and knowledge of particular local and synod arrangements with regard to mission. What transpired clearly in Table 4.8, was that though co-operation and partnership of local church does not necessarily need permission nor informing the synod or synod deputies, yet for the sake of healthy relationship and unity and for the sake of advice it was felt by many of the respondents that informing its synod and/or synod's deputies is necessary.

As far as mission work is concerned co-operation and partnership with churches of other synods could be traced in the 1980s, particularly after the Soutpansberg delegations to the REC (Reformed Ecumenical Synod/Council) both in Harare in 1988 and in Athens in 1992. Ever since, such co-operation and partnership was maintained. In this regard the mission deputies were specifically given mandate by the synod that the keep ties to further build and maintain co-operation with churches in partnership relations with the Soutpansberg Synod, namely Chr. Kerk in Nederland, Christian Reformed Churches in North America, and Reformed Churches in Australia and Presbyterian Churches in Australia.

4.3.9. THE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO MISSION WORK IN THE CITIES

TABLE 4.9.

The major obstacles to mission work in the cities include:	Number	Percentage
The lack of co-operation from Pastors	11	9.1 %
The lack of financial resources	26	21.7 %
The location of the major cities outside Soutpansberg area	15	12.5 %
The existence of the Reformed Churches under three National synods	68	56.7 %
	120	100 %

4.3.9.1. EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In Table 4.9, above, 56.7 % of the respondents saw the existence of three National synods as a major obstacle for mission work in and outside Southern Africa. In this regard, the restructuring of the three National synods could be both theologically and contextually relevant![84], if the new theological and institutional centre of the Reformed churches in Southern Africa could be in the Gauteng Province, where there currently are more and affluent Reformed Churches that are associated with these three synods. Most respondents were optimistic that there are evangelistic opportunities in Gauteng Province. It is a challenge that should be faced. The respondents tended to suggest what Greenway (1989:149) suggested concerning the multi-cultural situations in the cities, saying, "The services may be held concurrently or at different times". The choice should be placed on the local churches involved, on managing the services.

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[84] In this regard, Gauteng Province is bringing the former separated people to be roommates, classmates, friends and relatives. Greenway (1989:79) warned churches about the location and relocation of theological seminaries away from ethnic neighbourhoods and urban congestion. According to Greenway (1989:79) a well-developed theology hardly addresses the city's problems, for the Bible is read and theology is discussed in ways that filter out the city with its pressing social issues, poverty, and suffering and amazed of people

4.3.10. THE RELATIONSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL SOUTPANSBERG CHURCH WITH THE CHURCH TSHIAWELO

TABLE 4.10.

The relationship was built and maintained by	Number	Percentage
Sending attestation letters to the church when members settle in Gauteng	33	27.6 %
Referring the members who will settle in Gauteng to the church in Tshiawelo	44	36.6 %
Regular contacts of or with the ministers and other leaders of the church	26	21.6 %
Sending mission work teams there to participate in the mission campaigns	17	14.2 %

4.3.10.1.EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In Table 4.10, above, the respondents reflected that there are ties of Soutpansberg Churches with Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The decisions concerning urban missions[85] of Soutpansberg churches in partnership with the Church in Tshiawelo reflect the strong ties built before 2001. Most respondents are involved in encouraging their local churches to identify youth who are going to many and different South African cities to make clear announcements on the issue of attestation. The church council is to devise some means to inform the church members the meaning of the attestation and other practical arrangements thereof. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo operating in Gauteng Province as the base was planted mainly by regular contacts between the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and the Soutpansberg Church members, especially the Pastors and other Church leaders.

[85] To find a way of doing mission work in Gauteng Province (Synod Acts 1998:52), Soutpansberg synod (Synod Acts 2000:79) decided to (i) motivate the mission deputies to work with Local Church Councils (within Soutpansberg Synod) to join hands with the church council of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo as a way of encouraging and doing the mission work in Gauteng Province (ii) mandate the mission deputies to arrange workshops concerning Urban Mission, focusing on Gauteng Province, of which both Tshiawelo and Soutpansberg Synod church councils will be invited.

4.3.11. INVOLVEMENT AT URBAN MISSION CONFERENCES IN GAUTENG IN 2000 AND IN 2003

TABLE 4.11.

THOSE INVOLVED IN 2000	Number	Percentage	AND IN 2003	Number	Percentage
Pastors	6	5 %		4	3.3 %
Synod Mission Deputies	8	6 7 %		6	5 %
Mission Committee Members	39	32 5 %		37	30 8 %
Church Council Members	18	15 %		19	15.7 %
Youth Leaders	9	7.5 %		12	10 %

4.3.11.1. EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In table 4.11, above, the respondents attended both conferences. The most respondents still recalled the teachings led by Prof. Rabali T.C. both in 2000 and 2003. Some had their notes on the teachings and we discussed them, since they were part of the empirical research. We discussed number of items based on the teachings of Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali, some of which the following :

- Encouraging prayer meetings for mission work in the cities;
- Strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders;
- Teamwork and co-operation among Pastors and other leaders;
- Monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome;
- Establishing monitoring committees on a local and synod level;
- Enlarging sphere of support and co-operation in the country and abroad;
- Encouraging researches about effective and fruitful urban mission;
- Writing and reading about the mission work in the cities,
- Involving many church members and the theological students in mission work;
- Acknowledging and appreciating those who are involved.

It must be noted that the above-mentioned summary, is a blend of what come out from the teaching of Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali and the respondents' discussions based on the teaching and on the questionnaire. It is not the summary of the teaching of Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali, though it was one of the main frames of reference.

Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali had many teachings delivered on urban missions both to undergraduates and postgraduates students in the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University and to both the Reformed Churches in Tshiawelo (Gauteng Province) and constituting Soutpansberg churches, some of which appeared in one of his recent book (2005), "Vhurumiwa na Doroboni-vho!" The book included the three urban mission teachings delivered to the leaders and other members of the Reformed Churches in Tshiawelo (Gauteng Province) and constituting Soutpansberg churches in 2000, 2003 and 2005. The researcher fortunately attended both these teachings They are very profound.

Further research is needed on Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali's influence on many and varied areas of the church of God, otherwise recent history will be treated unfairly. This research cannot do that. But the respondents' discussion is very important in this research about the teachings of Prof. Dr. T.C. Rabali. They are reported in this empirical research (below) as the strategies for effective mission work outcome.

What was challenging was that all of the respondents were in agreement of the implications of the strategies to be implemented to achieve specific outcome in the Gauteng Province, namely, planting many true Reformed Churches growing in Knowledge and in number in and outside Gauteng Province, but there was a lot of hesitations and sensitivity experienced in the empirical research. It is because of this context that in this sub-section, the discussions on the findings of the strategies for effective mission work outcome will precede the summary and the recommendations which will follow in Chapter 5 below.

4.3.12. UNCOVERED STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MISSION WORK OUTCOME

4.3.12.1. Encouraging prayer meetings for Mission Work in the cities

TABLE 4.12.1.

Involved in individual prayers	numbers	%	Involved in public prayers	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100		12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100		11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100		40	100
Other Church members	57	100		57	100

All of the respondents saw the necessity of individual and public prayers meetings. During the interview, most of them emphasised that mission work in general and urban mission in particular should not be viewed primarily as our work, but should be viewed as God's work. Through individual and organised public prayer meetings, the mission work zeal and enthusiasm can be kindled in those who are to proclaim the gospel and the receptive attitude is prepared in those who are to receive the gospel. The prayers of God's people wherever they are, are God-given means to clear the way for the deliverance and peace of those who are meant to receive the message. Every respondent agreed on the necessity of individual and public prayers. It should be noted that it was one of the mandates of the mission deputies of the Soutpansberg synod to advise and encourage the church councils that they should have mission work prayer days of their own choice and to involve their respective churches to attend[86].

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[86] It was not done well (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 1992:94;1993:12;1994:45;1995:25;1996:58;1997:10;1998/99:51) The synod's advisory committee of mission work summarised their observations in that regard by saying, "(a) vhadinda vho nea thuthuwedzo ya zwa vhurumiwa lu sa fushi dzikerekeni dzashu. Ro vhona fhedzi u tutuwedza zwituku nga Reformation Day. Mission campaigns naho dzo sumbedziwa sa zwithu zwine zwa khou bvelaphanda, ndi mishumo ya zwivhidzo. (b) Ro wana uri vhadinda vho dzudzanya Mission day kha kereke dzothe fhedzi ro kundelwa u wana zwitisi zwauri ndi ngani vho swika kha muhumbulo wonoyo" (Soutpansberg Synod Acts, 2000:79).

4.3.12.2. Strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders

TABLE 4.13.

Involved in strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents saw the necessity of strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders organised by and through mission deputies. It was mostly agreed that God's mission work must be done taking into consideration the mind and the will of God in the Bible and also the context which has to be taken into consideration in all present and future planning

Strategic planning is like a statement of faith where God's future promises are anticipated and believed that God will bring them about in a particular context, which we are also responsible and accountable to go about in bringing it into existence. So the strategic planning and workshops are viewed as a God-given means of empowerment to God's people, which give confidence and conviction based on the fact the action plan was seen to be effective, relevant and in accordance to God's will and hence it is worth dying for and lead others to join hands in bringing the anticipated outcome to existence. It was one aspect of the same mandate given by Synod to mission deputies, which was not done in a satisfactory way.

From the respondents, especially from the some Pastors and mission deputies in was made clear that there are ministers' Think Tank, Church Leaders' Course in particular, where they have already discussed number of issues concerning urban mission But hesitations and sensitivities to do start urban mission nationwide is still a problem to be overcome.

4.3.12.3. Teamwork and co-operation between Pastors and other leaders

TABLE 4.14.

Necessity of Teamwork and co-operation among Pastors and other leaders	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents saw the necessity of teamwork and co-operation of pastors and other leaders. But it became apparent during interviews that teamwork and co-operation were lacking among pastors and other leaders. Pastors and their respective leaders have their own mission plans and strategies. It was here that mission deputies failed to bring about teamwork spirit and co-operation necessary to unlock the prayer meeting and strategic workshop potentials of the churches constituting Soutpansberg churches. It was mostly in December mission campaigns that some co-operations and team-work spirit were manifested.

Each church often brings a number of people who had been prepared through the local church's mission seminars to Iyani Bible School, to receive some further instructions for one or two days, before they are selected to go and work in different mission fields chosen for that time of the year by local churches themselves.

The tradition has been in place since the late 1970s up to now that more or less the first three weeks of December are put aside by all local churches constituting Soutpansberg Synod for December mission campaigns. It was one of the successful traditions of Reformed Churches constituting the Soutpansberg churches. Good leaders and successful marriage couples testify that their skills were part of the outcomes or results of these December combined mission campaigns in which an element of cross-local church mission work is involved.

4.3.12.4. Monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome

TABLE 4.15.

Necessity of monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

4.3.12.5. Establishing monitoring committees on a local and synod level

TABLE 4.16.

Necessity of establishing monitoring committees on a local and synod level	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

4.3.12.6. Enlarging sphere of support and co-operation in the country and abroad

TABLE 4.17.

Necessity of enlarging support & co-operation sphere in/outside the country	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents in table 4.15, 4.16 and 4.17 respectively, saw the necessity of firstly, monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome; secondly, establishing monitoring committees at local and synod level and thirdly, enlarging the sphere of support and co-operation in the country and abroad. In this regard the mission deputies should have more and more not only (i) strengthened the co-operation with churches with which they were already in partnership relations with the Soutpansberg synod, namely Chr. Kerk in Nederland, Christian Reformed Churches in North America, Reformed Churches in Australia and Presbyterian Churches in Australia, but (ii) also enlarged the sphere of support and co-operation in and outside the country.

The first and the most needed support and co-operation with regard to mission have been started. There are on-going discussions on the issue of the restructuring of the churches constituting the Soutpansberg Synod, which was proposed and approved church orderly in the Soutpansberg Synod (Acts, 1998/99:25-33). The sphere of support and co-operation are being strengthened and enlarged to the Reformed Churches with whom they have co-operation agreements on many and varied aspects, including on mission work.

Unfortunately, it was not done in a satisfactory way over the years as far as strengthening and enlarging the sphere of support and co-operation right here in the country are concerned (SoutpansbergActs1992:39;1993 12-13;1994:45;1995:24-25,41,1996:51,58,61;1997:10,36,1998 /99:51). It is most unfortunate that the support and co-operation which were supposed to have been implemented in and from the approved three Classis assemblies, namely Hodeleta (consisting of De Hoop, Hosiyata and Trans-letaba), Tshiselo (consisting of Tshitandani, Nzhelele and Soutpansberg) and Mumani (consisting of Malamulele, Mutale and Niani) were not implemented (Soutpansberg Synod Acts 2000:19-22, 82-83) and now it only remained in the past as a reminder!

4.3.12.7. Encouraging researches about effective and fruitful Urban Mission

TABLE 4.18.

Necessity of encouraging researches about effective and fruitful urban mission	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents saw the necessity of encouraging researches about effective and fruitful urban mission and for more urban mission research to be done. According to Monsma (1989:61) "Effective research enables a Christian worker to achieve specific goals that promote God's kingdom in the shortest possible period of time". According to Conn (1997:34), " For that research to be effective in winning the cities for Christ, it will need to be user-friendly on three levels – that of the theoreticians, the strategist and the practitioners. Particularly the practitioner will be key, as he or she digs up the raw data and shares it with the other two sifting members of the missiological teams". Monsma (1989:135-139) mentioned four steps in good research, namely, establishing reasonable goals which are written out and clearly understood by all concerned; design a strategy to achieve the goals by answering questions: where, who, how and when; do the research on location and choosing a people group with whom to research and work and draw up an evaluative and analytic report under the guidance of their mentor or their sponsor. Monsma (1989:66) further said that certain questions are essential to good observation-interview research; how strong is the extended family in this culture? – a suitable vehicle by which gospel could be spread is needed; what is the people's economic condition? Should the evangelism campaign need complementary program?; are there linguistic barriers to the gospel spreading among the people and to the worship service and instruction?; are there religious impediments and false teachings in accepting the gospel and other biblical teachings?

4.3.12.8. Writing and reading about the mission work in the cities

TABLE 4.19.

Necessity of writing and reading about the mission work in the cities	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents saw the necessity of writing and reading about the mission work in the cities, but not much was done to mobilise the writing and reading culture about urban mission specifically!

According to Prof. Meiring (1994:48), "the following plan – the Seven I's Programme – may be used as an instrument, firstly, to diagnose the missionary quality of a church, and secondly for a prognosis, to help an ailing inward-looking church to become a dynamic missionary congregation". As far as writing and reading is concerned it could be added that the Seven I's Programme which is called thus because of the seven catchwords used, could be used also as an instrument to a diagnosis and prognosis of the writing and reading potentials of the church locally and synodically. The writing and reading of books with the guiding outcomes of the diagnosis and prognosis of the following catchwords are necessary.

1. Intercession: whereby prayer is given first, second and third places and the rest the 4th;
2. Inspiration: by pulpit, house-visits, conferences and workshops, choirs and singing etc,
3. Information: Awareness of what is God doing in the whole church and in the world around;
4. Interpretation: of the content and demand of the vertical and horizontal gospel dimension;
5. Involvement: taking a stand in living Christ and gossip the gospel of Christ 7 days a week;
6. Instruction: on theoretical and in-service training programme to address practical problems;
7. Investment: of money on missionary activities in the mission field nearer and further a field,

4.3.12.9. Involving many church members and the theological students

TABLE 4.20.

Necessity of involving many church members and the theological students	numbers	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

All respondents saw the necessity of involving many church members and the theological students. This can help both the church members and students themselves in making decisions regarding their God-given careers and how such career choices will relate to mission work. [87]

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[87] According to Prof. Meiring (1994:60-62) there are generally five categories of missionary activities from which individual members can discover their potentials in, in fulfilling his or her God-given missionary mandate

1) Missionary theologians – whose specific job is to train other categories of missionaries.
2) Career missionaries – highly convinced to serve as missionary-with or without a degree;
3) Tent-making missionaries – secular professionals with strongly missionary commitments;
4) Short-term missionaries – one or two weeks, months or years zealous missionary volunteers;
5) Stay-at-homers missionaries – witnesses of Christ in their own world seven days a week;

All in all that is needed in each category is what is called Evangelism in depth (Meiring, 1994:138), whereby by, "three pregnant ideas formed its basis

(a) to prepare and equip all believers first for an all-out effort in evangelism.
(b) to work only through the established churches and at their invitation; and
(c) to work in a united effort to take the gospel to every creatures;

4.3.12.10. Acknowledging and appreciating those who are involved by rewards

TABLE 4.21.

Necessity of acknowledging and appreciating those who are involved	number	%
Pastors	12	100
Synod Mission Deputies	11	100
Mission Committee Members	40	100
Other Church members	57	100

To uplift the potentials of those who are involved in mission work, so that they could fulfil God's command, private and public acknowledgement and appreciation of their work is necessary[88].

[88]To acknowledge and appreciate someone is related to the gift of encouragement (Roman 12:6,8), where one is motivated/called (kaleo) to God's side (para) or to do good. There are however precautionary measures to be considered in acknowledging and appreciating someone using external rewards, e.g external rewards can put pressure on someone instead of motivating someone. Hence it must done with a lot of caution. According to Silverman (1982:267), the recent studies, "differentiate between intrinsic and intrinsic motivation. When motivation is intrinsic, we perform a task because the task is rewarding in itself, when motivation is extrinsic, we require external rewards. The possibility that rewards may reduce intrinsic motivation raises an important educational issue. It suggests that we ought to use rewards very carefully". As far as rewards are concerned, Spykman (1984:129) said we do not deserve rewards for, "we have done our duty (like the servant in Jesus' parable in Luke 17:1). Our accomplishment reflects God's gifts... And that's the way it is with all good works in our Christian life. They are not showcase trophies. Nor are they conversation pieces to impress people. They are simply obedient responses to God's gifts to us in Christ. But God is generous. He not only gives, but also rewards our use of his gifts. He is not indifferent about the way we put our faith to work. In fact, in keeping his laws, there is a great reward (Psalm 19.11). God is the rewarder of all who diligently seek him (Heb.11 6). One day he will answer the good works of each of his children with a 'well done, good and faithful servant'(Matt. 25:21). For we are products of his work in us, created anew in Christ Jesus for good works, which God planned in advance for us to do (Eph.2:10). The words of Christ are clear: 'whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple... shall not lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42)".

According to Bakke (1987:192) [89], "The mere existence of models and strategies does not guarantee health and vitality. Some cities have them in place, but they are not functioning in the strong name of Jesus Christ with vision, compassion and competence. Programs are no substitute for the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit's presence will be evidenced in both persons and programs".

Bakke (1987:192-193) listed sixteen helpful strategies for urban mission.

- Arts strategies. Ministries by urban artists use visual, musical and dramatic arts to communicate the gospel
- Age-group strategies. Ministries directed of children, youth, the elderly, single people, professionals, etc
- Economic development strategies. Ministers directed to training skills in employment, house, health care, education, finance, environment etc
- Ecumenical strategies. Ministries directed at sharing evangelism, programs, leadership development events and combined worship at special seasons. Even having common political and public institutions campaigns
- Educational strategies. Ministries of lay training and college education.
- Mass-evangelism strategies. Ministries directed at massive meetings and rallies
- Institutional strategies. Ministries directed to and within hospitals, prisons, universities, secondary and professional schools, homes for the aged or other institutionalised groups
- Language strategies. Ministries directed to reach across culture and language barriers with literature or other media.
- Media strategies. Ministries directed to public communication processes in electronic and print media
- New church development strategies. Ministries directed at multiplying new ones or para-churches.
- Political strategies. Ministries directed at political issues and systems or at creating alternative ones
- Recreational strategies. Ministries using athletics and athletes in the city.
- Relief strategies. These range from local church food kitchens, clothing banks and shelter care to massive international caring programs
- Revitalization strategies. Ministries directed at catalyzing the creation or renewal of churches and Christians.
- Solidarity strategies. Ministries directed at supporting daughter or mother churches in need of support in many and varied ways.

Malphurs (1996:81)[90] also gave advises on the fact that a strategy should be shared and owned.

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[90] "The strategy, however, is not to be the product of the pastor alone, but of all who are involved in the ministry. The initial document is his, but others must get their fingerprints on the strategy, or they will never take ownership of it. 'Others' includes the board and/or other key leaders in the ministry. The pastor should submit his product to the church board for their input. The quality of their contribution depends on the quality of the board. A good board will make a strong contribution, even if it is simply recognising a good document and not attempting to add anything to it. They will know a good strategy from a poor one. A poor or nominal board will have little to contribute or may even attempt to derail the process. Next, other ministry leaders such as board chairpersons and even small group leaders need to see and interact with the strategy statement. These people often provide helpful input. They see things from a different perspective than the pastor and board. They bring insight to the strategy from the perspective of their individual ministries and the people who are part of their ministries. If possible it needs to be a 'grass roots' or 'bottom-up' process involving those who will be affected by or implementing the strategy. The size of the governing structure will ultimately dictate who reviews and is involved in the development of the strategy. In a large church, it would not be possible for everyone to provide feedback. Consequently, the statement would be the creation of the pastor, his staff, and the board. In a small church, it might be possible for the entire congregation to participate. The strategy development process may exclude the squeaky wheels. Most leaders know who they are. The wise leader or pastor will listen to the squeaky wheels of the ministry but not let them influence the entire church. It is important to the health of the ministry that the squeaky wheels not drive the wagon! Having worked as a consultant, I would highly recommend that you use one in the crafting of your ministry strategy. A consultant usually proves worth his or her weight in gold for several reasons. Firstly, a consultant informs the ministry and helps those involved to understand the entire process. A good one has been through the process and knows where the difficulties lie. Second, that he or she is an outsider satisfies the group's need for objectivity. Third, a consultant lends credibility to the pastor or point leader and the whole idea of the process. This is what I commonly refer to as 'the prophet is without honor' syndrome ... Some ministries find it valuable to use an ad hoc planning team or strategic ministry team to develop and then oversee the implementation of the ministry strategy. They would be a group of five to eight people, including the pastor, who have a strong interest in and growing expertise in strategy development. Since the strategizing process is ongoing, they might become responsible for researching the community and keeping the strategy on the cutting edge of the community. Some might serve as the strategy on the cutting edge of the community. Some might serve as trend spotters: to scan, clip, and review interesting articles on future area trends from newspapers, periodicals, and other sources."

4.4. CONCLUSION ON CHAPTER 4 IN GENERAL

This section reports and analyses the results or the findings from the empirical research project. The empirical research emanated from the outcome of the review of the role of the cities in the mission work that was uncovered, firstly, from the biblical and missiological literature in Chapter 2, and secondly, from the the history of the mission work of the Potchefstroom Churches in Chapter 3 The information gathered can lead or direct churches towards the remedy of the neglect of the cities in their mission work

The information presented in this chapter answered the question: How can the Reformed Churches under Soutpansberg Synod move towards the remedy of the neglect of the cities in their mission work? What are the strategies and tactics to be used in effectively spreading the Gospel of Christ to ensure the planting of true Reformed Churches growing in knowledge of God and in number in Southern Africa, the rest of Africa and abroad? It became clear from the empirical research that there are many and varied remedies uncovered, including:

- ✓ Encouraging prayer meetings for mission work in the cities;
- ✓ Strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders;
- ✓ Teamwork and co-operation among Pastors and other leaders;
- ✓ Monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome;
- ✓ Establishing monitoring committees on a local and synod level;
- ✓ Enlarging sphere of support and co-operation in the country and abroad;
- ✓ Encouraging researches about effective and fruitful urban mission;
- ✓ Writing and reading about the mission work in the cities;
- ✓ Involving many church members and the theological students in mission work,
- ✓ Acknowledging and appreciating those who are involved.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. SUMMARY

The mission work theories, strategies and practices of the Reformed Church in Southern Africa have for a long time been rural in orientation. As a result many of the local established churches and some of the leaders produced within them have a rural mentality, even if the world before them became and is rapidly becoming urban. The role of the cities was and is still neglected There are not enough courses on urban mission and hence there was no suitable theology on urban ministry in the theological school. With those factors, this research therefore reviewed the neglect of the cities in the mission work of the church. The Reformed Churches in Southern Africa with a special reference to the churches constituting Soutpansberg synod were used as representative of the many and varied churches, which neglects the role of the cities in their mission, work inside and outside their respective mission fields.

From the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike many and varied misconceptions and wrong theology about the cities were uncovered and addressed. In this research, Jeremiah 29:1-14 was used as a representative of biblical passages which shed light on the role of the cities in mission work of the church while addressing misconceptions and false theology about the cities and the role they played and still play in the mission work of the church. The same biblical message is confirmed by many and varied missiology literature. In this research, three amongst many and varied urban missiological literature were selected for the review of the biblical message, these are, namely, "Cities, Missions' New Frontier" by R.S. Greenway and T.M. Monsma (1989), "City of God – City of Satan" by R.C. Linthicum (1991) and "Discipling the City" by R.S. Greenway (1992)

The biblical message and the missiology literature mentioned above were the basis from which the neglect of the role of the cities in the history of the mission work of the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa was studied. From the above-mentioned basis, the causes, implementations and effects of such neglect in the mission work of the Soutpansberg churches was studied in Chapter 3. The empirical research was conducted using the interview questionnaire in chapter 4. The empirical results and findings, which were presented in this research, can direct churches towards a remedy of the neglect of the cities in their mission work as far as the strategies is concerned.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the role of the cities in the mission work of many and varied churches inside and outside their respective mission fields, the following is recommended:

- An urban mission institute in the city is necessary so as to offer informal (like workshops and seminars) and formal training (with certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded).
- For effective urban mission outreach, effective strategies are necessary including these:
  - ✓ Encouraging prayer meetings for mission work in the cities;
  - ✓ Strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders;
  - ✓ Teamwork and co-operation among Pastors and other leaders;
  - ✓ Monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcome;
  - ✓ Establishing monitoring committees on a local and synod level;
  - ✓ Enlarging sphere of support and co-operation in the country and abroad;
  - ✓ Encouraging researches about effective and fruitful urban mission,
  - ✓ Writing and reading about the mission work in the cities;
  - ✓ Involving many church members and the theological students in mission work;
  - ✓ Acknowledging and appreciating those who are involved.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS (14 PASTORS)

Complete this questionnaire and know that you will remain anonymous

1. MY AGE IS BETWEEN:

Below 25 years old ------

25 – 30 years old -------

30 – 35 years old ------

35 – 40 years old ------

40 – 45 years old ------

45 – 50 years old ------

50 – 55 years old -------

Over 55 years old -------

2. I HAVE BEEN PASTOR FOR:

1 – 5 years old -------

5 – 10 years old -------

10 – 15 years old -------

15 – 20 years old -------

20 – 25 years old -------

25 – 30 years old -------

30 – 35 years old ------

Over 35 years old -------

3. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSION WORK BEFORE I BECAME PASTOR FOR:

1 – 5 years old ------

5 – 10 years old ------

10 – 15 years old ------

15 – 20 years old -------

Over 20 years old -------

4. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSION WORK AS A PASTOR FOR:

1 – 5 years old -------

5 – 10 years old -------

10 – 15 years old -------

15 – 20 years old -------

20 – 25 years old -------

Over 35 years old -------

5. OUR CHURCH DOES ITS MISSION WORK

Within local church boundaries only ----------

Outside local church boundaries, but within the Soutpansberg areas only ----------

Outside Soutpansberg areas, within the Limpopo Province only ----------

Outside the Limpopo Province, but within the SADC region only ----------

Outside the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) ----------

6. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK WITHIN THE SADC REGION:

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

7. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK TO DIFFERENT LANGUAGE GROUPS:

THE VENDAS ----------

THE VENDAS AND TSONGAS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS AND PEDIS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS, PEDIS, S.SOTHOS, TSWANAS AND ZULUS ----------

ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS FOUND WITHIN THE SADC REGION ----------

8. FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG TO FORM MISSION CO-OPERATION & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN OTHER REFORMED CHURCH SYNODS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS APPLY:

The local church involved should get permission from its synod ----------

The local church involved should get permission from its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved does not have to get permission from its synod or its mission deputies or even informs them ----------

9. WHO ATTENDED THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000:

I AS A PASTOR ----------

THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION COMMITTEE IN THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

THE YOUTH LEADERS OF THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

10. WHO ATTENDED THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2003:

I AS A PASTOR ----------

THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION COMMITTEE IN THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

THE YOUTH LEADERS OF THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH I MINISTER TO ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH I MINISTER & REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO IS BUILT THROUGH:

Sending attestation letters to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo when members settle in Gauteng ----------

Refering church members who settle in Gauteng to Reformed Church Tshiawelo ----------

Regular contacts with the ministers and other leaders in the Reformed Church Tshiawelo ----------

Sending mission work teams to participate in the December mission campaign of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

12. REASONS BEHIND OUR CHURCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE MAJOR CITIES'S MISSION INCLUDED THE FACT THAT:

Many of our tertiary students, job-seekers and traders settled in the cities ----------

Most of our breadwinners and influential expertise settled in the cities ----------

The country's wealth, government departments and other influencial institutions are in the cities ----------

More or less all ethnic groups from inside and outside the country are in the cities ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

13. SOUTPANSBERG CHURCH MISSION CAN BE MORE POWERFUL & FRUITFUL IF THE FOLLOWING THINGS ARE DONE

Teamwork and co-operation from Pastors and other leaders ----------

Enlarging sphere of support and co-operation with other Reformed Churches inside and outside the country ----------

Encouraging researches done concerning the way in which powerful and fruitful mission work could be done ----------

To make church planting programs and to use as many church members as possible including the theological students ----------

Acknowledging and appreciating those who are participating in mission work ----------

14. THE PASTORS EVALUATE THE PROGRESS IN URBAN MISSION WITHIN THE SOUTPANSBERG CHURCHES BY THESE

Strategic planning and workshops of Pastors and other leaders ----------

Monitoring and encouraging the mission work outcomes ----------

Establishing monitoring committees on a local and synodical levels ----------

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MISSION DEPUTIES

Complete this questionnaire and know that you will remain anonymous

1. MY AGE IS BETWEEN:

Below 20 years old -------

20 – 25 years old -------

25 – 30 years old -------

30 – 35 years old -------

35 – 40 years old -------

40 – 45 years old -------

45 – 50 years old -------

50 – 55 years old -------

55 – 60 years old -------

Over 60 years old -------

2. I HAVE BEEN PART OF OUR SYNOD'S MISSION DEPUTIES FOR:

Less than 2 years ----------

Between 2 and 4 years ----------

Between 4 and 6 years ----------

Between 6 and 8 years ----------

Between 8 and 10 years ----------

Over 10 years old ----------

3. MY CURRENT PORTFOLIO WITHIN THE MISSION DEPUTIES IS:

CHAIRPERSON -------

VICE-CHAIRPERSON -------

SECRETARY -------

VICE-SECRETARY -------

TREASURER -------

OTHERS (SPECIFY) -------

4. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSION WORK BEFORE I BECAME PART OF OUR SYNOD'S MISSION DEPUTIES FOR:

1 – 5 years old -------

5 – 10 years old -------

10 – 15 years old -------

15 – 20 years old -------

Over 20 years old -------

5. WE ARE DOING OUR MISSION WORK

Within local church boundaries only ----------

Outside local church boundaries, but within the Soutpansberg areas only ----------

Outside Soutpansberg areas, within the Limpopo Province only ----------

Outside the Limpopo Province, but within the SADC region only ----------

Outside the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) ----------

6. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK WITHIN THE SADC REGION:

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

7. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK TO DIFFERENT LANGUAGE GROUPS:

THE VENDAS ----------

THE VENDAS AND TSONGAS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS AND PEDIS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS, PEDIS, S SOTHOS, TSWANAS AND ZULUS ----------

ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS FOUND WITHIN THE SADC REGION ----------

8. FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG TO FORM MISSION CO-OPERATION & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN OTHER REFORMED CHURCH SYNODS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS APPLY:

The local church involved should get permission from its synod ----------

The local church involved should get permission from its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved does not have to get permission from its synod or its mission deputies or even informs them ----------

9. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS MISSION DEPUTIES ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

10. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS MISSION DEPUTIES ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

11. OUR PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS IN PROMOTING INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN THE MISSION WORK IN THE MAJOR CITIES IN AND OUTSIDE THE SADC REGION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Holding meetings with the church councils ----------

Organising urban mission seminars and conferences for Soutpansberg churches's local mission committees ----------

By writing about the urban mission ----------

By encouraging prayer meetings for urban mission ----------

Facilitating financial resources for urban mission ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

12. AS MISSION DEPUTIES WE ARE PLANNING TO PROMOTE AN INTEREST OF THE CHURCHES IN URBAN MISSION BY:

Holding meetings with the church councils and facilitating co-operation of Pastors ----------

Organising urban mission seminars and conferences for Soutpansberg churches's local mission committees ----------

By writing about the urban mission ----------

By encouraging prayer meetings for urban mission ----------

Facilitating financial resources for urban mission ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

13. THE MAJOR OBSTACLES THAT HAD NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SOUTPANSBERG CHURCHES WITH REGARD TO MISSION WORK IN THE CITIES INCLUDE:

LACK OF CO-OPERATION FROM PASTORS ----------

LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES ----------

THE LOCATION OF THE MAJOR CITIES OUTSIDE SOUTPANSBERG AREA ----------

EXISTENCE OF THE THREE NATIONAL SYNODS THAT FORM THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA ----------

14. WE MAINTAINED THE INTEREST OF THE SYNOD IN URBAN MISSION AS MISSION DEPUTIES BY:

Reporting to ALL synod assemblies since 1998

Sought an adoption of the recommendations regarding urban missions at ALL synod assemblies since 1998

Provided information regarding problems and breakthroughs attained in urban mission at ALL synod assemblies since 1998

Monitoring the implementation of the Synod decisions regarding the urban mission when the visitation deputy reports are tabled at synod assemblies since 1998

All of the above-mentioned

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MISSION COMMITTEES

Complete this questionnaire and know that you will remain anonymous

1. MY AGE IS BETWEEN:

Below 20 years old ------

20 – 25 years old -------

25 – 30 years old ------

30 – 35 years old ------

35 – 40 years old -------

40 – 45 years old ------

45 – 50 years old -------

50 – 55 years old ------

55 – 60 years old -------

Over 60 years old ------

2. I HAVE BEEN PART OF MISSION COMMITTEE FOR:

Less than 2 years ----------

Between 2 and 4 years ----------

Between 4 and 6 years ----------

Between 6 and 8 years ----------

Between 8 and 10 years ----------

Over 10 years old ----------

3. MY CURRENT PORTFOLIO WITHIN THE MISSION COMMITTEE IS:

CHAIRPERSON -------

VICE-CHAIRPERSON -------

SECRETARY -----

VICE-SECRETARY -----

TREASURER -------

OTHERS (SPECIFY) -------

4. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSION WORK BEFORE I BECAME PART OF MISSION COMMITTEE FOR:

1 – 5 years old -------

5 – 10 years old ------

10 – 15 years old ------

15 – 20 years old ------

Over 20 years old ------

5. WE ARE DOING OUR MISSION WORK

Within local church boundaries only ----------

Outside local church boundaries, but within the Soutpansberg areas only ----------

Outside Soutpansberg areas, within the Limpopo Province only ----------

Outside the Limpopo Province, but within the SADC region only ----------

Outside the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) ----------

6. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK WITHIN THE SADC REGION:

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

7. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK TO DIFFERENT LANGUAGE GROUPS:

THE VENDAS ----------

THE VENDAS AND TSONGAS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS AND PEDIS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS, PEDIS, S SOTHOS, TSWANAS AND ZULUS ----------

ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS FOUND WITHIN THE SADC REGION ----------

8. FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG TO FORM MISSION CO-OPERATION & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN OTHER REFORMED CHURCH SYNODS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS APPLY:

The local church involved should get permission from its synod ----------

The local church involved should get permission from its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved does not have to get permission from its synod or its mission deputies or even informs them ----------

9. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBER ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

10. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBER ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

Complete this questionnaire and know that you will remain anonymous

1. MY AGE IS BETWEEN:

Below 20 years old ------

20 – 25 years old ------

25 – 30 years old ------

30 – 35 years old ------

35 – 40 years old ------

40 – 45 years old ------

45 – 50 years old ------

50 – 55 years old ------

55 – 60 years old -------

Over 60 years old ------

2. I HAVE BEEN PART OF THE REFORMED CHURCH FOR:

Less than 5 years ----------

Between 5 and 10 years ----------

Between 10 and 15 years ----------

Between 15 and 20 years ----------

Between 20 and 25 years ----------

Between 25 and 30 years ----------

Between 30 and 35 years ----------

Between 35 and 40 years ----------

Over 40 years old ----------

3. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSION WORK FOR:

1 – 5 years old ------

5 – 10 years old ------

10 – 15 years old ------

15 – 20 years old ------

20 – 25 years old ------

Over 25 years old ------

5. WE ARE DOING OUR MISSION WORK

Within local church boundaries only ----------

Outside local church boundaries, but within the Soutpansberg areas only ----------

Outside Soutpansberg areas, within the Limpopo Province only ----------

Outside the Limpopo Province, but within the SADC region only ----------

Outside the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) ----------

6. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK WITHIN THE SADC REGION:

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area within South African borders ----------

No decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

A decision to do mission work outside the Soutpansberg area outside South African borders ----------

7. SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG'S POSITION REGARDING MISSION WORK TO DIFFERENT LANGUAGE GROUPS:

THE VENDAS ----------

THE VENDAS AND TSONGAS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS AND PEDIS ----------

THE VENDAS, TSONGAS, PEDIS, S SOTHOS, TSWANAS AND ZULUS ----------

ALL LANGUAGE GROUPS FOUND WITHIN THE SADC REGION ----------

8. FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG TO FORM MISSION CO-OPERATION & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHURCHES WITHIN OTHER REFORMED CHURCH SYNODS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS APPLY:

The local church involved should get permission from its synod ----------

The local church involved should get permission from its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod ----------

The local church involved should inform its synod mission deputies ----------

The local church involved does not have to get permission from its synod or its mission deputies or even informs them ----------

9. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS LOCAL CHURCH MEMBER ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

10. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN MISSION CONFERENCE IN 2000 WAS BY:

ATTENDING AS LOCAL CHURCH MEMBER ----------

MOBILISING THE ATTENDENCE OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS ----------

SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO WANTED TO ATTEND ----------

ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ----------

11. MY PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS IN PROMOTING INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN THE MISSION WORK IN THE MAJOR CITIES IN AND OUTSIDE THE SADC REGION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Participating in urban mission seminar and conferences ----------

Mobilising the attendance of other participants in urban mission seminars and conferences ----------

By reading about the urban mission ----------

By participating in prayer meetings for urban mission ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

12. WE ARE PLANNING TO PROMOTE THE INTEREST OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES IN URBAN MISSION BY:

Participating in urban mission seminar and conferences ----------

Mobilising the attendance of other participants in urban mission seminars and conferences ----------

By reading about the urban mission ----------

By participating in prayer meetings for urban mission ----------

All of the above-mentioned ----------

13. THE MAJOR OBSTACLES THAT HAD NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SOUTPANSBERG CHURCHES WITH REGARD TO MISSION WORK IN THE CITIES INCLUDE:

LACK OF CO-OPERATION FROM PASTORS ----------

LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES ----------

THE LOCATION OF THE MAJOR CITIES OUTSIDE SOUTPANSBERG AREA ----------

EXISTENCE OF THE THREE NATIONAL SYNODS THAT FORM THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA ----------

APPENDIX E

BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE FAMILY OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

From the Reformed Church Order (RCO) of Dordt the following is explained:

1. Reformed Local Church – It is a Reformed Church in the local area composed of at least three elders (leaders) & baptised members (Reformed Church Order of Dordt article 38);
2. Classis – is a meeting of equal number of delegates from three or more neighbouring Reformed local churches in a specific municipal area and/or district for matters that are of common consent and/or which cannot be finalised in the local church (cf. RCO art.41);
3. Provincial/regional Synod–is a meeting of equal number of delegates from three or more neighbouring Classes in a specific region and/or province (RCO article 47);
4. General Synod – is a meeting of equal number of delegates from three or more neighbouring Provincial or regional synods (Reformed Church Order article 51).
5. The apartheid invented "National" synod–is a meeting of equal nember of delegates from three or more neighbouring Classes and/or Provincial or regional synods in the country (Reformed Church Order of GKSA of 1961 onwards in article 50). It was unknown in the Reformed Church Order of Dodrt of 1618/19.

There are currently three "national" synods, namely, Potchefstroom, Soutpansberg and Midland. The debate remains as to whether there should be equal delegation of thjese "national' synods to the General synod when Soutpansberg and Midland Synod were wrongly constituted in the 1960s and remained more or less the same even recentlky (2007) because since the 1960s the Potchefstroom Synod has been and is still the only "National" Synod with five Provincial Synods.

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