

***Towards an Appropriate Model of the Local Church
In the Vaal Triangle***

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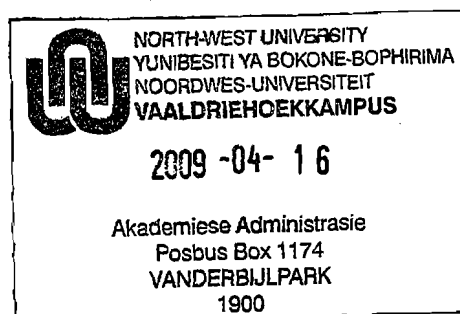
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my parents

Cornelius Moagi and Sophia Mamphai

And our son

Mokgethi Elias Mohapi

Ke Bataung ba Rampai oa Mathibeli,

Ke Batho ba ha Sobi le Thekiso...

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- God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us, spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere.

M.P Mohapi

Abstract

This study seeks to discover more specifically how the Bible, rather than traditions, comfortable habits, or past practices, should guide us in achieving qualitative and quantitative church-growth in the Vaal Triangle, and in doing so to investigate different models, with the view of suggesting one typical to the conditions in the area.

The literature review revealed that the local churches as they exist today are in disrepute. Together with other societal institutions, they are suspect, distrusted and no longer accepted at face value. Moreover, different societies or associations of Christians are found claiming to themselves and denying to others, the character and privilege of a Christian church; and opinions widely differing from each other are held as to the meaning of the word *Church*. In our time the word *church* has assumed various contemporary uses: the place of worship, a particular denomination, an area or nation, the universal body of believers, a local group of believers. Recourse to Scriptures must be sought for ecclesiastical formulations.

The contextual study has revealed that the Vaal Triangle is characterised by differences in ethnic origin, language, and religion. Another feature about the Vaal Triangle is that some families are religiously bi-cultural i.e., members of the same family unit belong to different religious persuasions. In other instances the members of the same family unit belong to different denominations. This difference in church affiliation is as a result of various (and often confusing) church practices in the area. Moreover, there are a number of groups in existence in the Vaal Triangle called 'the Church' but certainly are not what the Lord said he would build, nor do they measure up to what the New Testament means when it speaks of the Church.

This study endeavours to think afresh biblically and theologically, about the nature, structure and dynamics of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle. The model proposed in this study namely, the Pastoral Family Model (PFM) seeks to integrate the whole life and witness of the Local Church in a balanced and co-ordinated way. This model uses all members of the *household of God* who can contribute to the growth of the Local Church by penetrating the community in other ways.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie poog om aan te toon hoe spesifiek die Bybel en nie tradisies, gewoontes of vorige optredes nie, ons moet rig om kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe kerkgroei in die Vaaldriehoek te bewerkstellig, en om sodoende ondersoek in te stel na verskillende modelle met die doel om een tipiese model, geskoei op die uitdagings wat hierdie gebied stel, voor te stel.

Die literatuuroorsig het aangetoon dat die plaaslike kerke wat tans bestaan, grootliks berug geraak het. Saam met ander instellings in die samelewing word die kerke verdink, gewantrou en nie meer op sigwaarde erken nie. Verder is dit so dat verskillende Christelike verenigings of assosiasies vir hulself die karakter en voorregte van 'n Christelike kerk opeis, terwyl ander instansies soortgelyke aansprake ontsê word. Terselfdertyd word wyd uiteenlopende opinies gehuldig met betrekking tot die betekenis van die woord *Kerk*. Vandag neig die woord *kerk* om verskillende eietydse betekenis aan te neem: 'n plek van aanbidding, 'n spesifieke denominasie, 'n gebied of nasie, die universele liggaam van gelowiges, of 'n plaaslike groep gelowiges. Daar moet dus na die Skrif terugverwys word vir ekklesiologiese formuleringe.

Die kontekstuele studie het aangetoon dat die Vaaldriehoek gekenmerk word deur verskille in etniese oriëntasie, taal en religie. 'n Verdere verskynsel in die Vaaldriehoek is dat sommige gesinne religieus bi-kultureel is, d.i. lede van dieselfde gesin het verskillende religieuse oortuigings. In ander gevalle behoort lede van dieselfde gesin aan verskillende denominasies. Hierdie verskil in kerklike affiliasie is die gevolg van verskeie (en dikwels teenstrydige) kerklike praktyke in die gebied. Daar is ook 'n aantal groeperings in die Vaaldriehoek aanwesig wat die naam "Kerk" dra, maar wat beslis nie is wat die Here gesê het dat Hy sou bou nie, en wat ook nie ooreenstem met die betekenis wat die Nuwe Testament aan die begrip "Kerk" heg nie.

Hierdie studie poog om opnuut Bybels en teologies na te dink oor die aard, struktuur en dinamika van die *Plaaslike Kerk* in die Vaaldriehoek. Die model wat in hierdie studie voorgestel word, naamlik die Pastorale Gesinsmodel (PGM) streef daarna om die hele lewe

en getuienis van die Plaaslike Kerk op 'n gebalanseerde en gekoördineerde wyse te integreer. Dit maak gebruik van alle lede van die *Huisgesin van God* wat kan bydra tot die groei van die plaaslike kerk deur die gemeenskap op ander wyses te bereik.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Orientation

1.1 Background and Expounding the Problem

[Keywords: Appropriate Model; Local Church; Vaal Triangle; Missiology]

This research seeks to discover more specifically how the Bible (rather than traditions, comfortable habits, past practices) should guide us in expanding and improving the ministry of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle, and in doing so, to investigate different models, with the view of developing an appropriate one specific to the conditions in the area. In order to form a logical argument, this chapter is organized in the following way: the first part of this chapter deals with the introduction of the research that serves as its background, the statement of the problem, aims and objectives, the central theoretical argument, methods of the research, and chapter division.

Conn (1985: 95) describes models as our spectacles through which we scale down reality so that we can understand it. The model becomes a paradigm, a normative illustration of proper method of how we handle new as well as old cases of data. Gyger (1987: 150) identifies a multi-dimensional or integrated model that seeks to integrate the whole life and witness of the church in a balanced and co-ordinated way. This model uses lay people who can contribute to the growth of the church by penetrating the community in other ways (Bucy, 1978: 18; Clarke, 2000: 233; Faivre, 1990: 4; Hayes, 1999: 61-67; Kraemer, 1958: 95; Loffler, 1962: 7; McGavran, 1988: 50; Millard, 1994: 142; Mouw, 1980: 20-23; Smith, 1988: 645).

Conn (1985: 98) has identified five ways in which models affect our biblical vision:

- *Models explain*

They explain how and why things got to be as they are and, how and why they continue or change.

- *Models evaluate*

They judge other customs as inferior or at least inappropriate and reaffirm the inherent rightness of their own patterns and modes of expression.

- *Models provide psychological reinforcement for the group*

The model provides security and support for the behaviour of the group in a world that appears to be out of control.

- *Models integrate*

They systematize and order their perceptions of reality into an overall design; and they filter out those glimpses of reality that do not conform to the beliefs concerning the way reality should be.

- *Models are adaptable*

If our vision of ministry is threatened by conflict or cultural dissonance, the models seek to accommodate the dissonance, rather than reorganize itself to face the new conflict.

McNair & Meek (1999: 10-12) are of the view that God has furnished us with a model and a manual. Christ is the model. The Bible is our manual. Jesus' example of selfless and compassionate service has set a pattern for ministry for all times (Hayes, 1999: 59). To look at Christ is to look at a perfect spiritual health, and this is something that the individual Christian and the Church as a body (the *household* of God) should emulate (cf. Snyder, 1996: 196). McNair & Meek (1999: 10) also suggest the following healthy practices to serve as a manual for the Local Church:

- The church must maintain its commitment to the Holy Scripture without compromise.
- The church must engage in regular, vibrant worship to God as ultimate motivation for personal and corporate growth.
- The church must continually train and implement shepherd leadership.
- The church must have a mechanism for utilizing gifted member initiative with ordained accountability.
- The church must have a continually modified vision and plan, unique to that church body (the *household* of God) at that time and in that community, which focuses and implements its purpose and mission.
- The church must prayerfully seek the grace of God to build commitment to biblical health.

Although the churches may claim to be practicing all or even more of the above, they often display an array of institutions, organizations, denominations, architectural structures, missions and agencies commonly included under the umbrella *church*. The question is how these structures relate to the church as God's community, as His household. Snyder (1996: 168) contends that all such structures must be viewed as *para-church* structures that exist along side of, and parallel to the community of God's people, but are not themselves *the church*. These structures are useful to the extent they aid the church in its mission, but are human inventions, culturally determined.

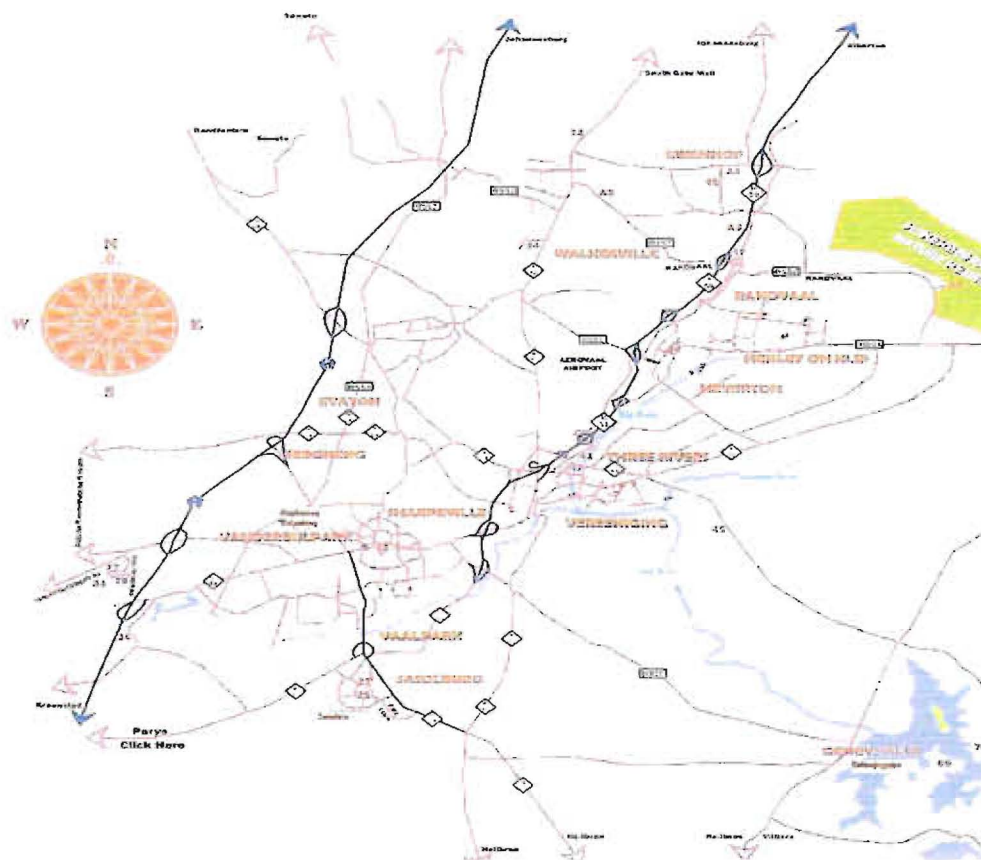
Kritzinger (1989: 98) maintains that whatever model may be used, two things must be clear: the world of labour is a primary context for the future mission of the (local) Church, and the scope of this mission is very comprehensive. Nothing less than a holistic approach is necessary. Greenway (1999: 7) also indicates that discipling is a very comprehensive term embracing all that Jesus meant when he commanded, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19 NIV).

It is evident from the foregoing, that we need to carefully study Scriptures in order to find an appropriate model of the Local Church. This study intends doing this with regard to the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The area commonly referred to as the Vaal triangle is home to towns and townships of Boipatong, Bophelong, Evaton, Palm Springs, Refengkgotso, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Meyerton, Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging and Zamdela. Its location is the southern part of Gauteng province, about 60 km from Johannesburg on the Johannesburg-Bloemfontein highway (N1). It is situated at the confluence of the so-called *three rivers*: Suikerbos, the Klip and the Vaal Rivers. The Klip-river and Suikerbos flow into the Vaal River at Vereeniging.

Figure 1: Towns and Townships of the Vaal Triangle



Source: Adapted from www.vaalmeander.co.za 2008/04/04

The discovery of coal in the region generated numerous changes in economic practices. It speeded up the breakdown of the old agricultural-based economy to deep-level

mining. The new industry expanded rapidly and it needed a massive labour force. The Iron and Steel Corporation (Iskor), which has been established in 1927, continues to produce iron and steel for the fast-growing engineering sector (Duggan, Baker & le Roux, 1988: 346).

The Vaal Triangle is characterized by differences in ethnic origin, language and religion (Kwang-Sun Kim, 1999: 23; Ross & Oliver, 1999: 129). A further interesting feature about the Vaal Triangle is that some of the families are religiously bicultural. In other words members of the same family unit belong to different religious persuasions (Thema, 2002: 64).

The researcher's experience with the families in the Vaal Triangle has revealed that some members of the same family unit belong to different denominations. This study will argue that this difference in church affiliation is as a result of various (and often confusing) church practice in the area. Lacey (1985: 11) points out that confusion developed regarding the understanding of the concept of the Local Church because of among others, the appearance of the Christian Societies, Christian Unions, Para-church Agencies etc, that have no doubt been greatly used of God but have not placed adequate emphasis on the New Testament teaching about the Local Church.

Conn (1985: 9) correctly argues that the word "church" has evidently lost most of its meaning today in comparison to what it originally meant in the Early Church. It is a word that needs to be re-defined in our modern society because there are a number of things and groups in existence today called "the church" but certainly are not what the Lord said he would build, nor do they measure up to what the New Testament means when it speaks of the Church. It could therefore be safely concluded that the word "church" has a certain meaning; creates a certain image in our minds, but the image is not the same for everyone.

The combined effect of these and other present-day circumstances is to encourage contemporary Christians to question the importance of the old-style Local Church. When one adds to this many obvious imperfections that are to be found in even the best local churches, the problems and questions increase in intensity. Although some studies have been done recently on some topics in Missiology and Practical Theology in

Informal Settlements around the Vaal Triangle (see Ntshumayelo, 2001; Mohapi, 2002; Senkhane, 2002; Thema, 2002), it is the researcher's observation and concern that little or nothing has been done towards suggesting a model that will be appropriate to the conditions in the Vaal Triangle.

In view of the above, this research project intends to investigate various models of the Local Church in the light of socio-economic and historical realities in the Vaal Triangle, and finally, to suggest a model that would be appropriate in the area. The problem as highlighted above can be brought to light by the following questions:

- What are the predominant conceptions of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle and how do these conceptions affect the desired *church-growth*?
- Do these conceptions measure up to those suggested in the *Gospels* and the *Epistles*?
- What role does the Local Church play in the community of the Vaal Triangle and how does this role impact on the qualitative and quantitative church-growth?
- What strategy can be proposed to local churches in the Vaal triangle?

1.3 Aim of the Research

In exploring the problem framed above, the general aim of this research project is to investigate how various dimensions of the local church affect quantitative and qualitative church-growth among local churches in the Vaal Triangle. To consummate this general aim, the specific objectives of this study are:

- To study predominant conceptions of the Local Church.
- To review images of the Local Church in the New Testament.
- To explore various models of the Local Church.
- To propose a model for the local churches in the Vaal Triangle.

1.4 The Central Theoretical Argument

Church models are often developed from three primary building blocks, the *Bible*, *traditions* and *context*. This study will focus attention on the New Testament in an effort to evaluate models so as to suggest an appropriate one for churches in the Vaal Triangle. The assumption is that the Bible, the New Testament in particular, is a critical building block for the church models.

1.5 Methods of Research

This missiological study is from within the Reformed Paradigm and the following methods will be used:

1.5.1 Literature Review

A literature study will be used to clarify the concepts of the Local Church. The available primary and secondary sources will be consulted, analyzed and interpreted. In doing so, an effort will be made to expose the essential characteristics and contextual nature of the Local Church. The literature will focus on:

- The New Testament Data
- Conceptions of the Local Church
- Images of the Local Church in the New Testament
- Exegesis of selected texts in the New Testament
- The state of the Local Church in the in the Vaal Triangle
- Models of the Local Church
- Proposed Model of the Local Church

1.6 Empirical Study

The essential aspects of the Local Church as established through the literature study will be taken up in structured questionnaires. The study will be based on quantitative and qualitative data. A random sampling of respondents of a number of the members of the congregations will be surveyed.

In addition, focus groups will be convened with five groups of 8-10 members in the selected congregations to clarify those nuances and idiosyncrasies that could not be captured through structured questionnaires. Closed and open-ended questions will be used to capture a cross-section of opinions. Field notes will be written verbatim.

1.7 Chapter Division

- Chapter One provides the research problem, the aims of the research and the method to be used.
- Chapter Two reviews the literature and builds a conceptual framework about the role of the Local Church.
- Chapter Three surveys the state of the church in the Vaal Triangle, its present-day context, culture and tradition.
- Chapter Four deals with the design of the research method.
- Chapter Five deals with data collection and analysis.
- Chapter Six focuses on research results as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. The Nature of the Church

2.1 Introduction

The doctrine of the Church has been one of the most important issues in contemporary theological debates. It is one of the few aspects of Christian theology which *can* be observed. For many persons, it is the first point, and perhaps the only point, where Christianity is encountered. Yet, the Church is a very misunderstood topic (Erickson, 2003: 1036).

In this chapter an effort will be made to explore the *meaning* of the concept Church; to identify some aspects and *distinguishing characteristics* of the true Church; to investigate the *images* of the church that Paul uses; to identify special *problems* and *issues* related to the Church; to describe the major *functions* of the Church; to identify and to evaluate *various models* of Church.

In defining the term *Church*, the section that follows will focus on the semantics of the term Church, especially its use in secular Greek as well as the *Septuagint*. An appeal will be made to Etymology in an attempt to shed more light on the use of the term *ekklesia*. It will be the purpose of this section and the rest of this chapter to use Scriptures as the main source, along with other available resources in the field of critical and theological research.

2.2 Defining the word *Church*

The New Testament word for “Church” features prominently in the New Testament. It has a double background as will be clear as this section proceeds. The English word “Church” with the Scottish *Kirk* and the German *Kirche*, is thought by most to have been derived from the Greek adjective, *Kyriakon*, the “the Lord’s” or “belonging to the Lord” (cf. Erickson, 2003: 1041; Hayes, 1999: 3; Saucey, 1972: 11). These words are, however, to be understood in the light of the New Testament term *ekklesia*.

2.2.1 The use of the word *Church* in Secular Greek

According to Saucey (1972: 12) the term *ekklesia* was used by the early Greek-speaking people with its full meaning of those called forth (Nygren, 1952: 3-6). Saucey (1972: 12) maintains that the term was used for the assembly of citizens summoned by the crier, the legislative assembly. Saucy (1972: 12) indicates further that: “the idea of summoning, however, soon passed away in usage; and that in Athens, *ekklesia* signified the constitutional assembly which met on previously fixed dates and need not be specifically summoned, much like the modern day legislature, while special assemblies summoned to deal with special matters were called *sunkletoi*, in distinction from the ordinary *ekklesia*.” The word came to stand for any assembly, regardless of its constituents or manner of convening. This broad use is evident even in the New Testament where a confused mob which had rushed into the theatre at Ephesus is twice called *ekklesia* (Acts 19: 32; 41), and in the same context the term is used for “a lawful assembly” (v. 39).

Conner (1989: 23) maintains that *ekklesia* consisted of all citizens who had not lost their civil rights. Conner points further that, apart from the fact that its decisions had to conform to the laws of the State, its powers were to all intents and purposes unlimited. It:

- elected and dismissed magistrates,
- directed public policy of the city,
- declared war, made peace, contracted treaties and arranged alliances,
- elected generals and other military officers,
- assigned troops to different campaigns and dispatched them from the city,
- ultimately, was responsible for the conduct of military operations, and
- raised and collected funds.

In view of the foregoing, it is questionable whether *ekklesia* was ever used in the Greek society for a religious group. The secular use, therefore, provides little for an appreciation of the rich meaning of the New Testament term outside the formal analogy of an assembly of people meeting for a particular purpose (Saucey, 1972: 13).

According to Saucey (1972: 11) the application of the word “Church” denoting locality stems from its use by early Christians for, the place they met together, denoting it as a place belonging to God, or God’s house, *His household*; with the realization that the place had significance *only* because of the people of God who met in it, the term applied to the assembly itself.

Saucey (1972: 10) correctly concludes that from this, its meaning has extended to various contemporary uses:

- a place of meeting,
- a particular denomination,
- an organization of believers related to a particular area or nation,
- the universal body of believers, and
- a local organization of believers.

It may therefore be correct to conclude that it is impossible to co-ordinate all this diversity of conceptions regarding our understanding of the church and come up with the *ideal church*. Our only choice is to return to Scriptures for guidance and direction in the use of the term *Church*.

2.2.2 The Use of the word *Church* in the Septuagint

The word *ekklesia* occurs a hundred times in the Septuagint and always translated the Hebrew *qahal* or a word of the same root (Conner, 1989: 23; Saucey, 1972: 13). Although *qahal* is also rendered by seven other Greek words, including *sunagoge*, which indicates its breadth of meaning, *ekklesia* is the preeminent translation (Saucey, 1972: 13). Saucey also suggests that *qahal* simply means an assembly, convocation or congregation and can be used for almost any type of gathering of people. It is used for:

- assemblies of evil council (Genesis 49: 6; Psalm 26: 5),
- civil affairs (1 Kings 12: 3; Proverbs 5: 14),
- war or invasion (Numbers 22: 4; Judges 20: 2),
- company of returning exiles (Jeremiah 31: 8),
- a religious assembly to hear God’s Word (Deuteronomy 9: 10),

- worship Him in some way (2 Chronicles 20: 5; Nehemiah 5: 13),
- the congregation of Israel (Micah 2: 5; Numbers 16: 3),
- angles (Psalm 89: 5) and,
- simply for assembled multitude (Genesis 28: 3; 35: 11).

This varied use indicates that no technical meaning was attached to *qahal* in the Old Testament or to its Septuagint Greek translation, *ekklesia*. Saucey (1972: 13) is of the view that: “the use of the word *ekklesia* as it appears in the New Testament was apparently in the interest of demonstrating *continuity* between Israel and the Church.” This meaning therefore provides the real background for the New Testament use of *ekklesia* as the early disciples saw themselves as the *new* Israel of God, the continuation of the Old Testament Israel.

Before we finally appeal to Scriptures in our effort to understand the concept and nature of the Church, it may be appropriate to make reference to etymology in order to shed light to the meaning of the word “church”.

2.2.3 Etymology of the word *Church*

The Longman’s *Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines etymology as the scientific study of the origins, history, and changing meaning of words. Etymology is concerned with the derivation of words. It studies the past of a word. It is a historical study (Barr, 1961: 107). Over the ages many scholars, as well as ordinary people, have believed that the original meaning of a word gave rise to its present form: hence the study of word-history was called ‘etymology’ meaning “the study of true form” (Allan, 1986: 94).

In the study of languages a distinction is made between diachronic and synchronic linguistics. The former, also referred to as *evolutionary linguistics*, and has to do with the historical origins of words, while the latter, also referred to as *static linguistics*, has to do with the present state of language (cf. Silva, 1994: 35-38; Lyons, 1977: 243).

A further distinction is made between *etymology* and *semantic change*. The former refers to that area of linguistic study that seeks to determine the origins of particular words; by the latter is meant the analysis of semantic developments, beginning with words' attested meaning. Silva (1994: 39) is of the view that: "This distinction, however, cannot be pressed, particularly since the former is so often dependent on the latter."

Silva (1994: 39) further distinguishes between four levels of etymological investigation:

- The investigator may simply be interested in the *component parts* of the word,
- Etymological study may involve determining specifically the *earliest attested meaning* (from which, one may speculate, that all other meanings were subsequently derived),
- The researcher may be interested in the pre-historical stages: what meaning did a particular word have prior to its earliest attestation and finally,
- Etymological study may lead to the reconstruction of the form and meaning of the word *in the parent language* by careful examination of the cognate languages.

Lyons (1977: 243) asserts that a study which resulted from such an approach is concerned with the nature of the history of words – in particular the question of where the words came from. Lyons further indicates that it was believed that the real or "true" meaning of a word was usually established by means of an examination into its history within the language. This was done in such a way that the oldest meaning was considered to be the "true meaning." Silva (1994: 51) however, maintains that modern studies compel us to reject this attitude and distrust a word's history; but at the same time, we must use the past history of a word in co-ordination with its present meaning.

In this regard Svensen (1987: 190) also correctly warns that etymology which mentions only the original form of the word is rarely very helpful. It is important to specify the meaning of the original words in such a way that the connection with the present-day meaning is clear; this is the aspect of the etymologies the user will probably find the most interesting. Ullmann (1962: 109) supports this view and adds that for the descriptive linguist, these etymologies are irrelevant; whether the two terms go back to the same root or not, the ordinary speaker is unaware of any connection between them. Nida (1975: 13) also adds that in the analysis of meaning it is not relevant if the sense of the relatedness has been lost. Diachronic connections, that is, etymological relations are always interesting, but they cannot be employed as the basis for the treatment of synchronic semantic structure. According to Silva (1994: 51), “synchronic view predominates because it is the true and only reality that the community of speakers have. The speaker is only aware of the present state of language.”

Barr (1961: 107) argues strenuously that, “the damaging thing about etymologizing is not that it attempts to make historical statements about the words, but that it is worked into arguments in which something seems to depend on these words, and commonly give spurious twist to the meaning of a word at some crucial point in an argument.” A great harm of such obsession is when it happens not in lexicography but in theological argument as will be demonstrated with the word “Church” (*qahal-ekklesia*) in the next paragraph.

Barr (1961: 107) indicates that knowledge of the past history of usage of a word is rather different from an emphasis on its ultimate etymological origin. The main point is that the etymology of a word is not a statement about its meaning but about its history; it is only a historical statement and it should be responsibly stated. It is quite wrong to suppose that etymology of a word is a guide either to ‘its proper’ meaning in a later period or its actual meaning in that period. Silva (1994: 38) is also of the view that historical considerations are irrelevant to the investigation on the state of the Koine at the time of Christ, for example.

Silva (1994: 52) summarises the danger of etymological work by quoting a highly regarded Indo-Europeanist, J. Vendryes, who sees the value of studying roots but is careful to add: “Etymology, however, gives a false idea of the nature of a vocabulary for

it is concerned only with how a vocabulary has been formed. Words are not used according to their historical value. The mind forgets the semantic evolutions through which the words have passed. Words always have *current* value, that is to say, limited to the moment when they are employed, and a *particular* value relative to the momentary use made of them.”

An example of the dangers involved in etymologizing interpretation may be illustrated with the word ‘church’. Barr (1961: 119-128) clearly demonstrates the etymological fallacy with *qahal-ekklesia*. In the following paragraph only some of his arguments are used and adapted for the purpose of this study.

2.2.3.1 *Qahal-Ekklesia*

Behind the Greek *ekklesia* there lies the Hebrew *qahal*. In the Old Testament as a rule, both are translated at different times by two Greek words, *synagogue* and *ekklesia*. While the Old Testament writers prefer the term *qahal*, usually rendered by *ekklesia*, Judaism preferred the term *synagogue*. Thus when the Christian Church came to refer to itself as the *ekklesia* rather than *synagogue*, it was clearly claiming to be the ‘Israel of God’ in distinction from the *synagogue* (Barr, 1961: 119).

Barr (1961: 119) draws attention to two further elements in the concept of *qahal-ekklesia*:

- The fact that *qahal* comes from the same root as *qol*, the word for ‘voice’, suggests that the Old Testament *qahal* was the community summoned by the Divine Voice, by the Word of God. Of that, *ekklesia* is a very apt translation indicating, as it does, the community as “the called” of God. *Ekklesia* is Church not in any sociological or political sense of assembly, and not therefore in any sociological or political continuity with Israel. It is Church as an act of God, as the community called into being and created by God’s word,

- In line with that is the fact that the Old Testament *qahal* was first established at Sinai when God came and spoke, when His voice was heard by all Israel and His word founded by the covenant-community.

The main point of interest here is the conclusion drawn from the fact that *qahal* comes from the same root as *qol*. Barr (1961: 120) disputes this assertion on the following grounds:

- “First, assuming that *qahal* is in some way connected etymologically with *qol*, this is a purely historical statement and has no value whatever as a proof that the semantic value of *qol* in classical Hebrew is in a way influential in the meaning of *qahal* in the same period. All cases of *qahal* fit perfectly well with the sense of ‘assembly’, ‘group’. It may be that some such semantic history as ‘speak’, ‘call’, ‘summon’, ‘assembly’ has led to this sense, but *there is no reason to suppose that the earlier element in that historical sequence are still alive in the semantic value of the word.*” (Italics added).
- “Second, even if *qahal* is connected with *speaking, calling, voices*, and the like, it is quite unrelated to the linguistic realities to go on to identify this with the ‘Divine Voice’. If ‘calling’ is to be taken as part of the semantic development, it is clearly the calling of the person who summons the ‘assembly’; and that the derivation from *kaleo* ‘call’ or any association with ‘called out’ (in the theological sense) had no importance. *There is therefore no reason to suppose that use of qahal is in any special way derived or determined by the speaking of God.*” (Italics added)

Barr (1961: 122) further states other reasons to add to those he has given:

- “Firstly, *qahal* is used for groups and assemblies of nations, namely where their numerousness and their power is in view, and for groups of the wicked and the enemies of God. This usage affirms that, even if there is some truth in some historical connection with the root to ‘speak’,

this has nothing to do with the Divine Voice or Word of God. ” (Italics added)

- “Secondly, Barr detects a fault which he calls ‘unjustified determination’. This is when the trace of the sense ‘voice’ having been detected behind *qahal*, this quite indeterminate voice is at once given the definite article and becomes ‘*the* Voice’ or ‘*the* Word’. By means of this determination a sense ‘voice’, which may at most be something quite particular related only to a particular stage in the history of the word *qahal*, *is integrated into a coherent and overarching theological usage.*” (Italics added)

In conclusion, it may be argued that the position adopted by some scholars against the etymological approach so far, seems too extreme. The question is: does it mean that the history of the word is of no use at all? Silva (1994: 47) adopts a moderate stance in his response to this question and states that, “that some diachronic developments help explain certain synchronic fact or vice versa, is no argument for fusing the two approaches into one. Some judicious combining of the two methods to the mutual advantage of both is suggested. For example, the root of a word may indeed be of value in determining its meaning.” Silva (1994: 47) is of the view that in order to satisfy the principle of *synchronic priority*, it must be shown that the speaker’s consciousness is stimulated by that root. In other words, historical considerations may be of synchronic value, but only if we can demonstrate that the speaker was aware of them. For example, if the New Testament writer using the word *ekklesia* could be shown to have made conscious reference to the root of the word, then the idea of ‘calling out’ may be taken into consideration.

Having explored the implications for an etymologically oriented approach to the meaning of the word Church, we now consider its biblical usage.

2.2.4 Biblical Usage of the word Church

Bannerman (1974: 3) asserts that: “Different societies or associations of Christians are found claiming to themselves, and denying to others, the character and privileges of a Church of Christ; and opinions widely differing from each other are held as to the

meaning of the word.” In such circumstances we must have recourse to the Word of God, in order that, by an examination of the statements, we ascertain in what sense, or in what senses, the word is to be understood by us.

2.2.4.1 The Old Testament Background of the word *Church*

Clowney (1993: 12) maintains that the great and definitive assembly of Israel was the assembly at Sinai. It was the actual gathering together of Israel “in the day of assembly” (Deuteronomy 4: 10; LX 9: 10; 18: 16) and, according to Clowney, that marked the climax of God’s redemption and constituted the people as the people of God. God commanded Moses: “Gather the people to me” (Deuteronomy 4: 10). This assembly at Sinai was the immediate objective of the exodus (Exodus 5: 1).

Clowney (1993: 12) indicates further that: “the assemblies of Israel for worship, for war, for triumphant march through the desert, all had sacral character. They too, were solemn assemblies for worship. Later renewals of the covenant were made by an assembled Israel for example, Joshua 9: 2.” The people were directed to assemble three times a year for the feasts of the sacred calendars (cf. Leviticus 23).

When the restoration of the people is promised by the prophet Joel, the image of the assembly is used again (Joel 2: 15-17). The prophets tell of the ingathering of the Gentiles to the great festival Assembly of God (Isaiah 2: 2-40; Psalms 87). The sacred assembly includes heaven as well as earth. God was present at Mount Sinai in the midst of the heavenly assembly of His holy ones and with the earthly assembly at His feet (Deuteronomy 33). Those who stand in God’s assembly are ‘all His holy saints’ (Deuteronomy 33; 3). The festival assemblies on Mount Zion are used by the author of the Hebrews in the twelfth chapter to describe the New Testament Church (Clowney, 1993: 13).

From these assertions it could be concluded that the word ‘assembly’ is used by the writers of the Old Testament to refer to different gatherings or congregations of the people of Israel for a number of reasons.

2.2.4.2 *Ekklesia* in the New Testament

The Apostle Paul frequently uses *ekklesia* for gatherings in a particular place, such as a house. He speaks of ‘the church in your house’ (Philemon 2); he sends greetings ‘to Nymphia and the church in her house’ (Colossians 4: 15) he employs the word also of a group of Christians assembled for worship (1 Corinthians 11: 18; 14: 19). But Paul also uses *ekklesia* for all Christians in a city. In Thessalonica, for instance, there were no doubt a number of house churches. He speaks of these together as ‘the church of the Thessalonians’ (1 Thessalonians 1: 1; 2 Thessalonians 1: 1). In the Acts of the Apostles *ekklesia* is also used for both believers in a single locality and believers everywhere. The *ekklesia* in Jerusalem was the ‘*Local Church*’ in the city, but originally it was the ‘*whole church*’ (Acts 5: 11). As the gospel advances beyond Jerusalem and Judea we find *ekklesia* used in two ways: of the *brotherhood* and, the *local community* (Meeks 2003: 75).

Thus, a point to be emphasized here is that there is no tension between the *Local* and *Universal* sense. Each church or congregation is the church in its *own setting*, and each a manifestation or concretion of the *whole church*. This means that there is scope for flexibility in organization and structure according to varying needs. Varying degrees of integration are possible at national, provincial or municipal levels. But the basic unity is always the *Local Church*, not in isolation or as parochially-minded body, but as a concretion of the universal fellowship with a strong sense of belonging to it. Meeks (2003: 75) adds in this regard that: “The local structure of the early Christian groups was thus linked with what was commonly regarded as the basic unit of society.” Meeks further indicates that it is thus the ‘basic cell’ of the Christian movement, and its nucleus was often the existing *family* or *household*.

The word “household” comes from the Greek *oikos*, which can mean either a dwelling place (“house”) or an immediate family (“household”). Meeks (2003: 75) indicates that: “The household was much broader than the family ... including not only immediate relatives but also slaves, freedmen, hired workers, and sometimes tenants and partners in trade or craft.

According to Mack & Swavely (2006: 21) no single verse proclaims the importance of the Local Church more powerfully than 1 Timothy 3: 15. Paul says to Timothy: “I write to you that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the *household* of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” The word *Church* needs further to be explained:

- *The Church is God’s Dwelling Place:* This statement testifies to the fact that God Himself lives in and among His Church. The Church itself is the house of God. This does not refer to the building. The term is an allusion of the Old Testament tabernacle and temple which are both often called by that name in Scripture (e.g., John 2:16; Acts 7: 47). It therefore refers to the fact that, throughout history, God has chosen to dwell with groups of people and to manifest His presence in a special way when they assemble together. This implies that if we want to be where God is, we need to be in His church, for that is where He dwells.
- *The Church is God’s Family:* The Church proceeded from God and belongs to God. We seldom (if ever) do think of that family as the Local Church, but that is what the phrase means in this verse. Paul used that phrase to convince Timothy of the importance of right conduct in the Church. If elders and deacons are required to have their households in order (vv. 4, 5, and 12), how much more does God’s own household need to be in order.

2.3 Summary

From the foregoing exposition, it has become evident that the term *Church*, meant (and still means) to different people different things, at different times. The following could be concluded:

- The literature review has revealed that it is not possible to co-ordinate the diversity of conceptions about the Church and come up with ‘ideal church’.

- It is questionable whether *ekklesia* was ever used in the Greek society for a religious group. The Greek secular use therefore, provides little for an application of the rich meaning of the New Testament outside of the formal analogy of an assembly of the people meeting for a particular purpose (Saucey, 1972: 13).
- The varied use of the term *ekklesia* in the Septuagint indicates that no technical meaning was attached to *qahal* in the Old Testament.
- Reference to etymology for the understanding of the term *ekklesia* does not seem to reveal much towards our present understanding of the word *Church*.
- In our time the word church has tended to various contemporary uses:
 - A place of worship, e.g. the church building
 - A particular denomination, e.g. Methodist, A.M.E etc.
 - An area or nation, e.g. the Provincial or National Church
 - The universal body of believers e.g. all Christians in the World
 - A local congregation of believers e.g. the Local Church
- The use of the term Church in the Old Testament revealed that the first assembly of Israel was at Sinai.
- The New Testament use of *ekklesia* indicates that the *ekklesia* is among others, God's dwelling place; it is His *family*, His *Household*.

In the light of these multiple understanding and use of the concept church, it is helpful to inquire more closely into the characteristics or marks of the Church as well as its missionary nature, in order to arrive at a biblically informed understanding of the word *Church*.

2.4 Some Characteristics of the Church

When one reflects on the Church, on her reality and character, one is bound to come face to face with a long series of varied questions, all closely linked to the fact that there are so many churches as well as differing views on the essence of the Church. For

example: may any arbitrary group of people gathered together lay claim to the title 'church'? Bannerman (1974: 54), points pertinently to the fact that some people have formed organizations that consciously perverted Christian teaching and never were churches of Christ. He also maintains that some were once Christian, but have departed from faith; but more confusing, he believes, are the churches whose faiths are in flux. Some are designed to supplement and assist the churches, while others appear to be churches in all but name.

In this welter of missions, house churches, fellowships, crusades and denominations, as well as differing views about the Church, are there any criteria, characteristics or marks that will help us to distinguish true from false churches (Bannerman, 1974: 24)? Would such marks or norms help us relate other Christian groups to what we may properly call *The Church*? (Clowney, 1993: 51; cf. Bannerman, 1974: 24)

In an effort to distinguish true from false Church, this section will focus on three aspects (traditionally known as the marks of the church), first: the ministry of the *Word*, the administration of the *Sacraments*, and the exercise of *Church Discipline*. To this list, must be added the current debates on the *Missionary Nature* of the Church. Second, attention will be given to the attributes of the Church i.e. Oneness, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity, or in theological language; *Una, Sancta, Catholica, Apostolica*. Finally some categories often employed in theological discussions about the Church, will be explored. These include: the church *Invisible* and *Visible*, the church *Universal* and *local*, and the church as an *Organization* and *Organism*, the church *Militant* and *Triumphant*.

2.4.1 The Ministry of the Word

Bannerman (1974: 59) states that the ministry of the word is critical to the continued existence of the Church. He indicates very succinctly that: "the Church was, established first and foremost, to glorify God for the salvation of sinners; and to this end the gospels (and epistles) bear testimony." Bannerman (1974: 59) further indicates that: "for as long as the church accomplishes this grand object of its existence, that it serves the proper and primary purpose of the Church at all."

Heyns (1980: 108) also concurs with this notion and adds that central to the life of the Church is preaching the Word of God. Heyns (1980: 108) very eloquently observes that all services in the Church is service of the Word: “God gives His Word to the Church, which receives it, confesses it, guards it, teaches it, and proclaims it – before God, before one another, and before the world”. He concludes therefore that “the only, all-inclusive, decisive characteristic of the gathering of believers is the *Word*,” and goes on to say that: “God’s people cannot be without his Word, but vice versa, his Word cannot be without his people either.”

Moreover, Jesus taught that the true discipleship is holding to His teaching (John 8: 31). Hearing and believing the liberating Gospel, is the litmus test identifying a believer from unbeliever (Hayes, 1999: 21). Furthermore, obedience to Jesus’ teaching marks those who say they love Him. Early Christians were warned not to believe every messenger, but to test the spirits (preachers). If they preach that God was come in the flesh, in other words, in the incarnation of God in Christ, they are from God. If they did not preach this message, they were not from God (John 4: 1-3).

In view of the foregoing arguments, we are warranted to agree with Bannerman (1974: 59), and other scholars, in saying that: “to hold and to preach the true faith or doctrine of Christ, is the sure and infallible note or mark of a true Christian Church, because it is the one thing for the sake of which the church was instituted on earth.”

2.4.2 The Administration of the Sacraments

The next mark of the church is proper administration of the sacrament. Kerr & Owen (1988: 154) define sacraments as: “outward signs by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promise of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord and his angels and before men.” Hall (1973: 123) adds that: “it is through symbolic rituals (sacraments) that disciples are initiated and confirmed into the life with Christ and the Church and are nourished by the Lord’s presence in communal liturgy.” It should however be noted that the elements of the sacraments i.e. water, bread and wine, in themselves have no power; it is only their faithful use that matters.

We have in the sacraments another aid to our faith related to preaching of the gospel. The audible Word is followed by the visible Word of the sacraments. Although both point back to Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Heidelberg catechism, Question 67), faith is made effective in our hearts solely by the proclamation of the Word. Heyns (1980: 108) indicates that: "whereas the sacraments do not make our faith effective, but strengthen it." Even the way the ordinances are administered is to be rightly governed by the Word of God (Matthew 28: 19; Acts 2: 42; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-30) (Hayes, 1999: 22). We now consider the third mark of the Church namely, the exercise of Church Discipline.

2.4.3 The Exercise of Church Discipline

The third *notae ecclesiae*, is discipline. To the preaching of the doctrine and the observance of the sacraments is added admonitions, corrections, and other aids of the sort that sustain the doctrine so as not to let it idle (Hall, 1973: 152). The Church is a confessing Church; that is to say, in their speech and actions believers are not free to believe or to do what they like. Hayes (1999: 109) adds that "They are bound to the Church's confessions, to which they have submitted of their own free will. To maintain this commitment to the confession is of course, first and foremost the responsibility of each member. But the Church itself has to ensure that its confession is preserved."

Hayes (1999: 22) asserts that: "The word *discipline* carries with it a breadth of meaning ranging from commitment to excommunication. Reformers and other Church leaders believed that while a church consists of believers voluntarily joined together, the exercise of discipline is essential to maintain purity of witness."

The early Church faced the need for discipline, as evidenced in the example of Ananias and Sapphira's deceit (Acts 5: 1-11) and the example of incest in 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5. The principle of 1 Corinthians 14: 40 sets the pattern for discipline in the Church: "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way". Revelation 2: 14-15, may also be cited as evidence of discipline: "I have things against you", are the words of "him which has a sharp, double-edged sword". No church is exempt from the discipline of our Lord.

It could be concluded that if the *notae ecclesiae* supply the essential requirements for the Church, then, they are also basic to its attributes. The Church and its attributes may never be separated; at any rate the attributes cannot exist apart from the Church. If, then, the *notae ecclesiae* are fundamental to the church's attributes, it follows that *unity*, *holiness*, *catholicity*, and *apostolicity* are to be found only where there is a pure ministry of the *Word* the *sacraments* and church *discipline*. And where this ministry is lacking, the attributes in their pure form cannot be present. But before we discuss the attributes of the Church, it may be useful to add the *Missionary character of the church* to the list of the marks of the church because its missionary character also identifies it as the true Church of Christ. To this we now turn.

2.4.4 The Missionary Character of the Church

Mission is usually understood as something Churches support that takes place somewhere else through specially trained professionals known as missionaries. Evangelism is often seen as something a few persons do in a local congregation through a committee, or as one of the programs of the Church, or something done in and through a para-church organization (Van Gelder, 2000: 28). Van Gelder disputes these views on two grounds: First, they fail to relate missions and evangelism adequately to the larger framework of the mission of God. And second, because of this, they fail to recognize the relationship between the life and ministry of the Church and God's mission in the world.

Moreover, there are a number of reasons why people engaged in or writing about mission are hesitant to give the Church too central a role. Kirk (1999: 205) has identified two reasons for not laying adequate emphasis on the missionary character of the church, thus failing to confront the world with the gospel:

- First, what he terms '*the Church's own self-consciousness*.' According to this perception the Church has often used inappropriate models or methods in an effort to explain herself and to those outside. One such model is what Kirk calls '*the ark of salvation*.' According to these perceptions the church is viewed as a *safe haven* (a religious ghetto) into which people may escape from challenges of the hostile and dangerous world.

- Second, ‘*uncritical compliance with the church particular teaching.*’ According to Kirk (1999: 205) some people finding intellectual problems (for example in the sphere of science and faith) or moral issues too difficult to cope with, they compliantly submit to the church’s official teaching. In this way they are rescued from the threat of being submerged by the beliefs and practices of the culture they do not understand or care much about.

Kirk (1999: 30) is clearly on target when he writes: “Mission is so much at the heart of the Church’s life that, rather than think of it as one aspect of its existence, it is better to think of it as defining its essence.” The Church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of its tasks, but it has ceased being church. Thus, the Church’s self-understanding and sense of identity (its ecclesiology) is inherently bound up with its call to share and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and the end of time.

Without a strong sense of vocation to its missionary work, the Church cannot consider itself either Catholic or Apostolic. Cervin (1977: vii) in the introductory chapter of his book, *Mission in Ferment*, asserts that: “the missionary character of the Church is not peripheral or optional; it is its essence.” Also, the great number of good books and articles on mission theory and practice produced in recent years give testimony to the validity of the missionary character of the Church.

Honig (1982: 10) also adds that mission is a term from the doctrine of the Trinity: “The Father has sent the Son, the father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit.” This happened very concretely in the life of Jesus and in the out-pouring of the Spirit over and into the congregation at Jerusalem (Acts 2: 1-4). In this *Missio Dei*, God realizes his plan of salvation. This research assumes that the concepts of the Church and mission are two important ways of thinking about God’s work in the world.

The distinction is therefore made between *mission* (singular) and *missions* (plural). The first refers primarily to the *Missio Dei* (God’s mission), that is, God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the Church and the world, and in which the Church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a

God-for-people. Bosch (1991: 398) maintains that: “this is not primarily the activity of the Church, but an attribute of God.” God is a missionary God. Mission is thereby seen as the movement from God to the world; the Church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is Church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people since God is a foundation of sending love. Missions (the *missiones ecclesiae*: the missionary ventures of the Church), refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in *Missio Dei* (Bosch, 1991: 10). The definition of missions has also been adequately summed up by Vatican II in the decree on missions: “Missions is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel are sent out by the Church and go forth into the world to carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ” (art. 6).

The notion of the *missionary nature* of the Church is widely accepted by missiologists of our time. In his penetrating book, *The Essence of the Church* (2000: 30 ff.), Graig Van Gelder emphasizes Mission as inherent in the church’s nature. In the paragraphs that follow, we refer specifically to some of his views on this aspect.

2.4.4.1 Mission as Inherent in the Church’s Nature

The word *Mission* comes from a Latin word meaning a sending off. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (New Edition) defines mission as: “A military duty or purpose for which people are sent somewhere ... a place run by religious organization where medical services, teaching, etc. are provided for the local people.” It connotes an assignment.

In support of the notion of *Missio Dei*, Van Gelder (2000: 30) adds that: “God’s missionary character is expressed first of all, in the work of creation. God formed a world in which human beings became participants in creation’s full development.” Van Gelder (2000: 30) maintains further that: “after the fall, God’s missionary character is again expressed in the work of redemption. God sent Jesus into the world to restore the right relationship with all that was lost in the fall. God’s missionary character is also

expressed in the work of consummation. God will act in history to bring all creation to a new fullness and to completion.”

From this perspective, the Church, as the people of God in the world, is inherently a missionary Church. The Church must participate fully in the Son’s redemptive work as the Spirit creates, leads, and teaches the Church to live as the distinctive people of God. With this understanding, mission shifts from naming a *function* of the Church, to describing its essential *nature*. This has direct implication for all aspects of the Church’s ministry. It shifts our understanding of both *Missiology* and *Ecclesiology*. It reshapes our understanding of the nature, ministry, and organization of the Church (Van Gelder, 2000: 32).

According to this view, the *Church* and *Mission* are *not* two distinct entities. They speak about the same reality. Whenever Church and Mission are presented as distinct entities, we tend to end up with dichotomies between ministry and functions, and competition among organizational structures (Van Gelder, 2000: 32).

Church and Mission need to be merged into common concept. Ecclesiology and Missiology are not separate theological disciplines, but are, in fact, interrelated and complementary. They start at the same point, with the Triune God in mission to all creation. They speak of the same reality. Van Gelder suggests that we need to integrate our understanding of the Church and Mission and to develop a ‘*missiological ecclesiology*’ (Van Gelder 2000: 32).

2.4.4.2 The Implication of Missions for the Local Church

Arguing for the role of the Local Church in missions, Beyerhaus and Lefever (1964: 31) assert that although its missionary origin shows that the Universal Church existed prior to the Local Church, nevertheless it has its first genuine experience of the nature of the Church in the Local Church. They further state that it is in the worship, fellowship, and witness of the local congregation, and not in the administrative super-structure created by missionaries, that the true nature of the Church is seen (cf. Toon, 1980: 86). Here (in the Local congregation), the *priesthood of all believers* is made effectively visible.

It could also be argued in this regard that the Local Church has a key-role in missions. The Local Church should not consider missions as a hobby or pastime in which to be involved occasionally when it can spare time (cf. Watson, 1979: 298). It is not just a once-a-year preoccupation characterized by an annual Mission Sunday or Missionary Conference. Nor should it be regarded as one of the many interests and departments of the Church. Mission is not an option; it is a mandate. The whole Church must be involved in it. Watson (1979: 229) further believes that our task is to lead the whole Church to make it available to the Lord of missions. This, he believes is not a structural issue, but a spiritual one. He cites Andrew Murray as saying, "The missionary problem is a personal one ... only men, and a Church in which spiritual men have influence, are capable of rightly carrying out Christ's commands".

In speaking about missions Williams (1972: 229) employs three concepts, namely *instruction*, *inspiration*, and *information*, and thereby provides valuable insights on how the Local Church can be made missionary-minded.

First, *instruction*: The missionary responsibility of each member of the Local Church must be clearly set forth from the Word of God. Thus there must be consistent education of the entire congregation regarding their responsibility. The pastor is the key-person in the programme of missionary education in the Local Church. He must be convinced of the following four principles:

- Mission is the chief end of the (local) Church.
- The chief end of the ministry is to guide the (local) Church in its work and equip her for it.
- The chief end of preaching to a congregation ought to be to train it to help to fulfil its destiny.
- The chief aim of every minister in his congregation ought to be to fit himself thoroughly for his work of instruction (Williams, 1972: 229).

Mack & Swavely (2006; 47) who strongly advocate the image that the (local) Church as the household of God, in a rather different context, also assert that: "membership (in this household) provides an opportunity to educate people (its members) about the nature and distinctiveness of the church ... this will keep members from being ignorant of

matters such as church discipline and spiritual gifts, even when they are not frequently discussed from the pulpit.” Membership (in this household) is therefore viewed as a vital ingredient in the attempt to be “admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Colossians 1: 28).

Second, *inspiration*: The Church in Antioch is a good example for a missionary Church. We see that it was an instructed Church because of the prophets and teachers who are mentioned in Acts 13: 1. This church also worshipped, fasted, and prayed (Acts 13: 3). A worldly church that does not know self-denial or total consecration cannot have sincere missionary concern. The Local Church therefore must:

- Be taught and trained in the missionary intercession. It must know how to pray for the needs of the lost world, for those who have not heard the gospel and the missionaries working among them.
- Be a Church of faith and consecration to the Lord. God has used the *Faith Promise* system of giving to teach many local churches great lessons on faith. In this plan the members are taught to pledge the amount of money that the Lord would lay upon their hearts though they may not have this money or have immediate access on it. They trust the Lord to provide this money and to give it to mission as he provides.
- Be Spirit-filled and Spirit-controlled. The Spirit prepared Christ to offer Himself as a sacrifice to fulfil God’s purpose. The same Spirit should prepare the Local Church and the believer to fulfil God’s redemptive purpose today (Williams, 1972: 229).

Third, *information*: Missionary information is as much part of the missionary education of the Local Church as instruction and inspiration are. Missionary ignorance is one of the major hindrances to the missionary involvement of the members of the local congregation. Many do not know the missionary needs of the world. The following methods may assist in this regard:

- Missionary magazines, books and pamphlets describing the activities of various missions and the needs of particular areas or people groups should be made available to the whole congregation (Williams, 1972: 229).

- The church should have a bulletin board prominently displayed on which maps, magazines, newspaper cuttings of missionary interest, pictures of missionaries and different people of the world, factual information about the unreached, etc. can be pasted (Williams, 1972: 229).

2.5 Summary

To arrive at a more biblically informed ecclesiological formulation, some aspects of the characteristics of the church have been investigated. Although this section has no doubt revealed that the Church becomes visible in the ministry of the Word, the administration of sacraments, and the exercise of discipline, it is evident that the church (especially the local congregation) becomes even more visible in its mission to reach out for the world. This notion is alluded to and supported by Pentecost (1982: 57) when he writes: “By nature the Church is a witnessing body, empowered to witness by the Holy Spirit; alert to witness by its nature; and able to witness because of its own spiritual life.”

In view of the foregoing arguments, this research assumes that the characteristics thus mentioned, as well as the missionary nature of the church can only find expression in the local congregations. This implies that every member (young and old) of the local congregation must be engaged in some form of missionary work in their daily life.

Having briefly explored the main characteristics of the true Church, it may now be appropriate for the purpose of this study, to look into the attributes of the true Church. In the paragraphs that follow, we will investigate four of these, namely: Unity, Holiness, Catholicity, and Apostolicity – *Una, Sancta, Catholica, Apostolica*.

2.6 The Attributes of the Church

Over the ages, the Church confessionally designates herself in such exuberant terms as *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*. However, according to Berkouwer (1976: 10), these attributes are unreachable and unfulfillable norms. Hence it has almost always been admitted that the Church does not (or did not) measure up to this ideal in all aspects and that her appearance is not in harmony with what Christ wanted, i.e., “the absolute and perfect image” of the Church (Berkouwer, 1976: 11). As a consequence,

and because the empirical Church is not *ipso facto* the true Church, the reformers of the sixteenth century introduced a critical yardstick known as *notae ecclesiae*. In speaking about the *notae ecclesiae* the Reformation introduced a criterion by which the (local) Church could be tested as to whether she were truly *The Church*. Via the *notae ecclesiae*, the Reformers wanted to indicate from the Word of God, the characteristics of the true Church, since all sects which are in the world, assume themselves the name of the Church (Berkouwer, 1976: 14).

Timiadis (1983: 91) indicates that: “Ever since the Council of Constantinople in the year 381, four attributes are confessed by the members of the Church of Christ: Unity, Holiness, Catholicity, and Apostolicity. Facing a variety of Christian communities, each which pretended to be a genuine one, they sought the authentic marks, which differentiated the Church from schismatic bodies.” Timiadis (1983: 91) further states that: “The Church fathers were extremely scrupulous in distinguishing the true Church from pseudo-ecclesiastical groups.” Hayes (1999: 20-21) also remarks that: “Today we can no longer designate the Church by the name of the town. Letters cannot be addressed, as the apostle Paul addressed them, ‘to the Church of God in Corinth’. Obviously the sign at the entrance of the Church does not signify the Local Church to be called the Church of Christ.”

The Apostles’ Creed also acknowledges the ‘one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church’. Berkouwer, (1976: 12) is of the view that this formulation is so exuberant that one may wonder whether this is not some idealistic, romantic, picture of the Church, in which scarcely any attention is paid to the things that contradict this wealth and perspectives. He refers in this regard, pointedly to the past history of the Church – her divisions and strife, her failings, her assurance, her irritating pronouncements, and her frequently impotent silences. In the light of these defects and negative image, are the attributes, one, holy, catholic, apostolic, not merely a way of empirical Church for hiding behind unreachable ideals and unfulfillable norms (Berkouwer, 1976: 10)? Although the Church has been expressed in such exalted language as the people of God, the disciples of the Lord, the flock of the sole shepherd, the city on the hill, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, it has almost always admitted that the local churches do not measure up to this ideal in all respects.

However, it is in the light of the failure on the part of the empirical church to live up to the expectations, that Kung (1976: 263) remarks: “it is precisely this empirical, visible church – and not the invisible Church, but the Local Church too – that has to ask itself, must ask itself what makes it legitimate.” He believes strongly that: “because it is the People of God, the church is essentially *a people* and visible. Precisely because it is the body of Christ, the Church is truly *a body* and as such, visible.” Kung finally asserts that faith in the Old and New Testament senses does not exclude the visible, but prove itself in the visible. Being the People of God, a Spiritual building, and the Body of Christ, the Church can be recognized as *The Church*.

Clowney (1993: 99) also supports this view and indicates further that to define the attributes of the Church we must assume that the Church has a visible form, organized on earth as an observable society, that is, at the level of the local congregation. The marks can, however, only make sense if we see them in the context of divine history in which the acknowledgement of the Triune God puts it. They are not the characteristics of an object *per se*; they are characteristics that this object receives through a history external to itself. The Church receives the attributes named from the activity of Christ in the working of the Spirit (Moltmann, 1977: 338). These attributes not only offer a factual description of the situation in which the Church finds itself, but also set ideals to be realized, objectives for which the Church must strive. They are a gift and a mandate, indicative and imperative, factual and normative (Hayes, 1999: 112; Kung, 1976: 263).

In the following paragraphs we will attempt to unpack the statement: ‘One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic’. It must be equally emphasized that these attributes must manifest themselves in the Local Church; otherwise they will remain only colourful statements about the church. Each local Church must live out these attributes (cf. Clowney, 1993: 99).

2.6.1 The Church is *One*

Hoyer (1971: 16) indicates that: “the Creeds of Christendom were developed in times of intense theological controversy, and unity was one of the issues in those controversies among the various church communities.” Hebblethwaite (1995: 148) maintains that the empirical church is split into numerous denominations and other splinter groups. He

indicates further that even where Christians rediscovered the great ideal that they have in common, most of the major denominations (to say nothing about smaller groups) remain out of communion with one another. The Roman Catholic, for example, leaves very little room for the possibility of regarding individual Protestant believers as Christian brothers, while the distinction between Visible and Invisible Church enables Protestantism to be more generous. Brunner (1964: 127) however indicates: “the Protestants are equally faced with the same difficulty. Their union is made difficult because they embody irreconcilable, antithetical formative principles. It is for example, difficult to unite Baptists or the Congregationalists with the Episcopalians. This is because in the one case, the principle of *autonomous congregation* is accepted, while in the other, a diametrically opposed principle of the Church under *central leadership* is upheld.”

Moltmann (1977: 35) correctly posits that: “the unity is not primarily the unity of its members, but the unity of Christ who acts upon them all, in all places at all times, thus in all local churches. The Spirit’s work of creating and building up one communion of saints goes on despite the weakness and sinfulness of individuals and despite the perverseness and intransigence of the denominations.”

In the light of the foregoing, Timiadis (1983: 93) correctly concludes that the oneness of the Church in every locality is the first concrete embodiment of that unity which forms the nature of the Church; it is the unity of believers regenerated into new life by Christ, who have one *Lord*, one *faith*, one *baptism* (Ephesians 4: 5). On the divisions of the world, the Church counterpoises the unity of God, which surpasses all social, national, or linguistic differences. For the early Christians, the unity of the Church was a fact not merely a dogmatic definition with no outward expression in life of the local churches. It may also be added here that according to writers of the New Testament, the early Christians made no differentiation between Local and Universal Church.

2.6.2 The Church is *Holy*

This might well seem just as implausible as the claim that the Church is One. Hebblethwaite (1996: 150) argues strenuously that: “One of the commonest objection to Christian belief comes from the fact that, far from fostering the holiness and fellowship

and love that is supposed to flow from the life in the Spirit, the churches have been responsible for the wars of religion, persistent inter-communal hostilities and much persecution and intolerance.” This is evident also among the local congregations. It may be stated further that this hostility is also evident among members of the same congregation. Moltmann (1977: 353) rightly explains this sinful history of the Church by arguing that: “holiness does not divide the Church and Christians substantially from sinful humanity, and does not remove it from to a position above the mass of sinners.” In fact, he argues: “The Church is holy precisely at the point where it acknowledges its sins and the sins of mankind and trusts justification through God.” This does not merely apply to individual Christian; it is true of the Church as a whole. According to Moltmann (1977: 353): “The public admission of guilt made by the Protestant Churches in Germany and Japan after the Second World War, and the public admission of guilt made by the churches in the former colonial countries, and, in countries where there is slavery and where racism was practiced, are to be viewed as signs of the Church’s sanctification.” To this list, may be added the denunciation of apartheid by the N.G Kerk after the establishment of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994.

Heyns (1980: 126) is also of the view that: “Just as the Church’s unity is intrinsic to the very concept of the Church, so is holiness not a qualification to be ascribed to its *post eventum*. From the outset the Church is holy, though that is not to say that this is merely a condition in which it lives and moves.” It could be concluded here that the holiness of the Church is not initially the holiness of her members or the cultic assemblies; it is the holiness of Christ who acts on sinners. Moltmann (1977: 338) concurs with this notion and adds that: “Christ sanctifies his Church by justifying it. Consequently the holiness of the Church lies in his sanctifying activity.” The result of justifying activity is the ‘communion of saints’ (Moltmann, 1977: 338).

Hebblethwaite (1996: 152) adds that this theological perception of the Church’s essential character (holiness) would, of course, be hopelessly idealistic and unconvincing if there were no empirical signs of the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in Christian individuals and in local congregations. He indicates for example, that every Christian will be aware of many ordinary people who have been an inspiration to them in their own spiritual journey, men and women unsung and unpublicized, in whom something of grace and love of God is clearly discernable, often

despite adversity, and whose faithfulness helps us to sustain one's own Christian commitment.

2.6.3 The Church is *Catholic*

'Catholic' means, first all, what is general, linked with everything, compared with the particular and individual. Brunner (1964: 122) contends that this concept has from the beginning suffered from ambiguity: "Does it actually mean that it is *spread over the whole world* or *intended for the whole world* or *for humanity*?" (Emphasis added). Applied to the Empirical Church, it meant the main Church, the bishop's Church in the province, compared with the local churches. Qualitatively, the Church's catholicity means inner wholeness, compared with the splitting of individual elements of truth, which are then given an absolute validity of their own. Being entirely related to Christ, it is related to the whole world, for whose reconciliation Christ was sacrificed by God, and for whose liberation and unification Christ died. All power was given to him in heaven and on earth (cf. Ephesians 1: 20 ff.). That is why when, in the conflicts of the Reformation period, the concept 'catholic' became the party name for one particular church, the Reformers also replaced the word "Catholic" in the German Creed by "general" or 'Christian Church' (Moltmann, 1977: 350).

Kung (1976: 300-302) argues persuasively that if we take 'Catholic Church' to mean basically the whole, entire, universal church, we can establish some negative proportions. First, spatial extensity alone does not make a church catholic; catholicity is not primarily a *geographical* concept. There is no point in having a church which is more widely spread than any other, if it has become unfaithful to its own nature. An international empire, built up by purely secular techniques of ecclesiastical politics, or even by a kind of spiritual imperialism, may be imposing, but is not itself of value; the question is: does this universal Church still continue to make manifest the one entire Church, the Catholic Church?

Second, Kung (1976: 300-302) states that: "numerical quantity alone does not make a church catholic: catholicity is not primarily a *statistical* concept. There is no point in having a church with the largest numbers of members, if it has resulted in its being unfaithful to its own nature. Maximum membership, bought at the price of spiritual

devaluation and a resultant Christianity of tradition and convention is of no value; the question is, does this mass-church still genuinely realize the one entire Church, (the Catholic Church)?" Moreover, Tanburn (1970: 31) suggests that the optimal size of the group, if the individual is to neither be swamped, nor be too prominent, is twelve. Jesus, for example, formed and chose a group for intensive training – particularly for training in living together and it numbered twelve.

Third and finally, Kung (1976: 300-302) argues that cultural variety alone does not make a church catholic: catholicity is not primarily a *sociological* concept. There is no point in having a Church which embraces the widest varieties of cultures and societies, if precisely the varieties of culture and language, or race and class have resulted in its being unfaithful to its own nature, if, instead of living in and with them, it becomes dependent on these forms and allows them to prescribe its laws, so that it develops into an instrument of power of a particular culture, race or class. The Church that has been absorbed into a variety of communities, at the cost of degenerating into syncretistic construction full of paganisms, is of no value; the question is: does this type of composite Church truly represent the one entire Church, the Catholic Church?

Moltmann (1977: 351) however points to the positive side of the concept catholicity. He maintains firstly that, if the Church, being catholic, 'therefore all' it will be inclined to keep out of conflict between one person and group. It will either confine itself to a purely religious ministry addressed to people of whatever party, or will offer itself as a 'third power', as a neutral platform or as a meeting point in the conflict. It will admonish the warring parties to peace and reconciliation but will remain above the conflict and will not intervene itself. Secondly, if, on the other hand, the Church sees its catholicity in its apostolate, it can serve the universality of God's kingdom in a different way. The goal of the church's mission remains universal. In the new people of God the divisions that destroy mankind will already be deprived of their force here and now. The barriers which people set up against each other will be broken down through mission and fellowship (Moltmann, 1977: 351).

2.6.4 The Church is *Apostolic*

In Ephesians 2: 20, the apostle Paul writes: "... (The church is) built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone." (cf. Acts 2: 42). From this statement, the apostolicity of the Church is viewed by authors such (Brunner, 1964: 117; Hebblewaite, 1996: 338; Moltmann, 1977: 35) to have two meanings:

- That the Church is apostolic because it stands in historical continuity with the early Christian Church.
- That the Church is apostolic because its character rests primarily upon the fact that it is primarily concerned with Christ.

These two views are aptly summed in the words of Moltmann (1977: 3580) when he writes: "... therefore, the historical Church must be called apostolic in a double sense. Its gospel and doctrine are founded on the testimony of the first apostles, eye-witnesses of the risen Christ, and it exists in the carrying out of the apostolic proclamation, the missionary charge. The expression 'apostolic' therefore denotes both the Church's foundation and mission."

Moltmann (1977: 359) however adds a historical dimension to the apostolicity of the Church. He maintains that; "In conflict with the heretics and schimatics, the word acquired the character of legitimation of the doctrine, the whole unadulterated gospel became a category of tradition." Moltmann (1977: 359) disputes the idea and notion that the bishops were successors of the apostle, thereby meaning 'those who were appointed bishops in the Church by the apostles and those who are their successors down to our time'

In this study we assume strongly that apostolicity of the Church means the claim to unbroken, unaltered and unadulterated bond between the present Church and the apostles in faith and practice. In this sense therefore this study takes the view that even the present local churches are *apostolic* in their own right.

Having made a brief exposition of the attributes of the true Church we now give a summary.

2.7 Summary

In conclusion, Heyns (1980: 112-114); cf. Moltmann (1977: 338-339) may be briefly summarised in the following statements:

- Church's *unity* is not primarily the unity of its members, but that of the Son with the Father and the Spirit, as revealed in his unitive acts with respect to the Church.
- The Church's holiness is not, in the first place of its members, but the holiness of Christ's act with the Church.
- The Church's *catholicity* is not, first and foremost, the spatial distribution of its members, but the world-embracing acts of Christ regarding his Church.
- The Church's *apostolicity* is not to be understood as primarily the task of its members in the world, or the successors of Peter through the ages (as Roman Catholics would want us to believe), but as a mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the world. Because the (local) church shares in this mission, or has been given as a share in it, it is apostolic.

Having discussed the attribute of the true Church of Christ namely, unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, we now look briefly into some categories often discussed about the Church.

2.8 Categories often featuring in the Debates about the Church

While the four attributes: unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity characterize what we may correctly designate as the true Church of Christ, there are some categories which feature prominently in theological debates about the true Church of Christ. These include among others, the Church as visible and invisible, the Church as local and universal, the Church as organization and organism, and the Church militant and triumphant.

2.8.1 The Church Visible and Invisible

A distinction is often made between the *visible* and the *invisible* Church. Kuiper (1966: 26) and Bannerman (1974: 29) warn however that, it must not be supposed that there are two Christian churches, the one visible and the other invisible. It is a simple distinction that should remove, rather than create confusion. It means just this: we cannot see the Church as God sees it. The Church as *invisible* means the Church as God sees it. The Church as *visible* is the Church as we see it. It may be safe to say that the Church visible is the local Church. However, there is only one Church of Jesus Christ, for he has but one body. This one Church has different aspects, and two of them are wont to be as visible and invisible.

2.8.1.1 The Visible Church

The following characterize the visible Church:

- It consists of all who are enrolled as Church members. It is not difficult to determine who they are, for their names appear on the registers of the local churches.
- Among them there may be nominal Christians. These are members who are unregenerate. They are members of the Local Church in all but name.

It is our view that nowadays membership in our local churches is very crucial. Sometimes big numbers might have positive effect on the finances of the church: like any other institution, the costs of running and maintaining the local church demands adequate financial support. Tanburn (1970: 29) indicates that in such instances the clergy and ministers are also judged by the same standard as commercial promoters. Some churches however, have a tendency of inflating the numbers of their membership simply because to them size means success. This practice is however in bizarre contrast with Early Church practice. Kuiper (1966: 26) remarks in this regard that this camouflage is not hard to see through.

Kuiper (1966: 26) has indicated that membership of the Visible Church coincide with that of the Invisible Church. He argues that: “since the Invisible Church consists of the regenerate, only they rate as members of the visible Church.” It is however true that within the Visible Church there are also merely professed or nominal Christians. This should not be seen as anything strange, because as Kuiper puts it: “The little circle of the twelve apostles, which was the nucleus of the New Testament Church, contained the traitor Judas Iscariot. The Church at Jerusalem, upon which the Holy Spirit had recently been poured out, harboured such ‘pious’ frauds as Ananias and Sapphira.”

Membership in the Visible Church does not guarantee eternal life. Kuiper (1966: 27) however rightly expresses concern that in our day and age with such lax membership requirements, as well as neglect of church discipline, there may be very few regenerate persons within the Visible Church – Local Church.

It is however the view of the researcher that the very situation where the Visible Church is dominated by unregenerate persons, should be regarded as a challenge by the regenerate, few as they may be. Strengthened and guided by the power of Holy Spirit, they should be able to turn the situation around.

2.8.1.2 The Invisible Church

Scripture affirms that the Invisible Church consists only of the regenerate persons. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: writes: “... for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as the children of light (5: 8).” The same notion is expressed by Peter in his first epistle: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people ... that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (1 Peter 2: 9-10).

Clowney (1993: 105) however, argues that the invisibility of the church can sometimes be used to escape responsibility for obedience to Christ in the Visible Church. It is also true that in some cases the church has convinced the people that membership in the church is inherited with citizenship. For this reason therefore, the citizen (even though not confessing members of the Local Church) expect their children to be baptized and

married, and their dead to be buried with Christian rites. In this regard, one is reminded here of the 'National Church' such as the Church of England.

This research supports the view that although the distinction is made between the Church Visible and Invisible, an impression should not be created that there are two different churches, the one Visible and the other Invisible. It is perhaps this wrong view of the Church that has led some local churches not to keep some kind of membership register because 'the Lord knows those that are his.' Secondly, if the notion of the Invisible Church is pressed too hard, there may be a tendency among some local churches to tolerate association and fellowship with persons (and 'churches') who are not faithful to Scripture. It was against such deviants as Hymenaeus and Alexander that Paul warned Timothy against (1 Timothy 1: 20).

We now consider the second category namely, the *Universal* and the *Local* Church.

2.8.2 The Church Universal and Local

The Christian Church may be regarded as Local and Universal, - local, as limited to one spot, and separated by distance of place and other obstacles from visible ordinary communion with other societies; and yet universal, as possessing a high unity in the faith or profession of one Lord and Saviour. According to the New Testament, the true Church is both the Universal and the Local, i.e., the total number of those called, are also the manifestation of the Universal Church, however small and weak. Tanburn (1970: 61) defines the Local Church as "a group of all believers in one place, committed to Christ in faith and obedience, to each other in caring fellowship, and to their neighbourhood in witness, evangelism and service." Beyerhaus and Lefever (1964: 151) rightly maintain that there is nothing in the New Testament to justify the distinction between the local congregation and the Church Universal.

Bannerman (1974: 42) however explains the apparent difference between the local and universal Church, by contrasting the Church under the Jewish dispensation and the Church under the Gospel. In the first place, he correctly indicates that the visible Church of Christ, made up of the whole number of true believers throughout the world, is universal, or, in other words, not confined to any place or people. In this respect, it

stands contrasted with the limited and local economy of the Church under the Jewish dispensation. From his arguments the following can be enumerated about how he views the Church under the Jewish dispensation and therefore typifies it as a local Church:

- It had a centre in Jerusalem.
- It had one local temple for worshippers.
- It had one altar for their gifts.
- All members were bound to come to Jerusalem thrice a year to observe solemn feasts on the Jewish calendar.

While it cannot be denied that the aforementioned were part of Jewish worship practices, this manner of contrasting the Local and the Universal Church, cannot be accepted. The four points may be disputed on the following grounds:

- It is true that Jerusalem was the main worship centre. However, there were similar centres in the form of synagogues in many of the Roman cities. It is at these synagogues where Paul during his missionary journeys used to begin his missions.
- It is also possible that these synagogues had the necessary facilities where the Greek-speaking worshippers could bring their offerings.
- These synagogues served as places of worship for those Jews in *diaspora*.
- It was only tradition that Jews must go to Jerusalem to observe three solemn feasts every year.

Matthew 16: 18, 19 especially, refer to the Church Universal: 'My Church' – not 'churches'. The Book of Acts shows clearly how the early believers accepted this concept. The Early believers counted themselves as part of the Universal Church, wherever they were, in whatever locality they lived (Conner, 1989: 50). The earthly Jerusalem, where the Church began after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, symbolized this truth: They were 'added to the Church' Acts 2: 47; Christ was the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1: 22); the wisdom of God was known by the Church (Ephesians 3: 10); the Church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 5: 23-32); Colossians 1: 18, 24).

The Universal Church spoke of the mystical union in a spiritual Body of the habitation of the Spirit, having Jesus as its Head, of all believers everywhere at all times. It is not spoken of in a visible sense but in an invisible union of all true believers in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3: 21; 19-22; Hebrews 12: 22, 24).

However, within this one Universal Church, there are many churches in many and various localities, all part of the whole. This concept emphasizes the unity of the Universal and Local Church (Conner, 1989: 50). As the Church in Jerusalem began to fulfil the Great Commission, then the Church spread into many localities. We see the development of many local churches, yet each counting themselves as part of the whole. It is for this reason perhaps, that Kuiper (1966: 194-195) and Kirk (1999: 217) argue strongly that the Local Church or particular church, instead of being a small part of the mystical body of Christ; it is a manifestation of that body in its entirety. The believers were connected in Spirit, not to earthly cities, but with the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the earthly Jerusalem was but a symbol (Conner, 1989: 51). It is in this light that the Pauline corpus and other writings of the New Testament understand the Church.

2.8.3 The Church as an Organization and Organism

Kuiper (1966: 114) defines an organism as “a body of parts performing special functions that are mutually dependent and essential to life”. He defines organization as “the systematic union of individuals in a body whose officers, agents and members work together for a common end”. He notes further that an organism is something that is alive, as a plant, animal, or the human body. An organization, though consisting of living beings, is not itself alive (cf. Snyder, 1996: 117-118).

However, the Bible speaks unmistakably of the Church as both an organism and an organization. The apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Rome: “So we, being many, are one body in Christ and every member of another” (Romans 12: 5). To the Church at Corinth he wrote: “For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body: (1 Corinthians 12: 13). In these and many other passages, Scripture likens the Church to a living human body. Obviously it conceives of the Church as an Organism (Kuiper, 1966: 114).

Kuiper (1966: 115) asserts that: "Scripture is not at all careful to distinguish between the Church as an organism and the Church as an organization; Scriptures often speak in one breadth for both capacities". For but one example, Church members are told: "ye, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2: 5). As a stone house the Church is an organization, as a spiritual house, consisting of lively stones, it is an organism.

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, there have been people who strongly believed that the church is an organism; the result was that they deliberately excluded the fact that the church was also an organization. Those who support this view suggest that the only binding element between the churches was their faith in Christ (Kuiper, 1966: 117). If this view is pressed to its limits, the danger can exist that the church becomes only a loose association of believers with nothing to tie them together. In such a situation even Church Government will not be necessary, to say nothing about Church Discipline. Scripture suggests that all believers are one in Christ; they constitute his body. Kuiper (1966: 116) maintains that: "Ideally this unity ought to manifest itself in the oneness of organization." It could also be concluded therefore that this oneness must manifest itself in the Local Church – the Local Congregation.

The view that the Church is both an organism and an organization is accepted in this research. The Church is an organism because its members are committed to one Lord Jesus Christ. And it is from this common commitment that they are joined to his mystical body. Being joined to his body therefore their view of life will be the same: they will be a loving fellowship; *a family* that shares their material possessions (cf. Acts 2: 45). On the other hand, the church is an organization consisting of a visible community of believers whose lives are governed according to biblical rules within their congregations. In such a situation Church Discipline will be administered by the elders of the Church to those who need admonition (cf. Acts 5: 3ff.). This implies that there will be some kind of a structure in the Church. This is not foreign to Scripture. Even a cursory reading of the letters of Paul to Timothy suggests that Timothy worked as an ordained minister in an organized congregation in Ephesus.

2.8.4 The Church Militant and Triumphant

While there are many local churches, in another sense there is only one true Church of Christ. The distinction is often made between the *Church Militant* and the *Church Triumphant*. The Church Militant refers to the visible church on earth. Some of its features are the buildings to which its members go for worship on certain days of the week. The Church Triumphant on the other hand, is the Church of all ages. Its membership comprises all the saints of the past and present, and those who are still to come. It is rightly called the *Church in Heaven*. According to Hayes (1999: 7ff.), “the militant church describes the world-wide church facing its daily spiritual battle and advancing the gospel witness. And the triumphant church designates all the believers in heaven.” Those who have fallen asleep in the Lord (Thessalonians 4: 5) comprises the Church Triumphant.

The (militant) Church must always be in conflict with the Gates of the enemies (Genesis 22: 17; cf. Conner, 1989: 26; Leslie, 1960: 41). He further indicates that the gates are always symbolical of where the ancients held their meetings for council, business, amusement, etc., at their city. They were to them Law-courts, as Town Halls are for us today. The Church needs the armour for battle (Ephesians 6: 10-20). The Church’s weapons of warfare are not carnal but mighty, through God (11 Corinthians 10: 1-5). Our Kingdom is not of this world system; hence we do not fight physically. The warfare is spiritual, with principalities and the powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits (John 18: 36 & 37; Revelation 12: 10; Psalm 9: 13; Isaiah 38: 10; Matthew 7: 13; Genesis 28: 17; Isaiah 26: 2).

Membership in the Church Triumphant is not yet complete. It will never be complete until the last believer enters glory. Then, and only then, will its perfection be realized.

Conner (1989: 27) asserts that the Church Militant must have authority. The Church must have the keys of the Kingdom. In Matthew 16: 19 we read: “I will give you the key of the Kingdom of Heaven.” The key is significant of power and authority. We note the following keys in Scripture:

- The key of Knowledge – Luke 11: 52
- The Key of David – Revelation 3: 7; Isaiah 22: 21,22
- The Key of Death and Hades – Revelation 18
- The Key of the Bottomless Pit (Abyss) – Revelation 20: 1-3
- The Key of the Kingdom of Heaven – Matthew 16: 19

For example Peter opened the door of faith to Jews at Pentecost, and then to the Gentiles in Acts 10-11. Conner (1989: 27) maintains that: “The one holding the key holds authority of the kingdom. These are not the keys of the Church, but the keys of the Kingdom.”

Having explored the major aspects that characterize the true Church, we now conclude by providing a summary of this section.

2.9 Summary

The categories featuring in the debates about the Church have been briefly explored namely, the Church Visible and Invisible, the Church Universal and Local, the Church as an Organism and Organization, and the Church Triumphant and Militant.

First, the Church Visible and Invisible should not be regarded as implying that there are two types of churches. It only means that the Church Visible is the Church as we see it. This consists of members whose names appear in the registers of the different congregations. On the other hand, the Church Invisible is the Church as God sees it. However, the members of this Church, coincides with that of the Visible Church. And since the Invisible Church consists only of the regenerate, only they qualify as the members of the Visible Church.

Second, there is in effect, nothing in the New Testament to justify any distinction between the Local Congregation and the Church Universal. According to the New Testament, the true Church is both Local and Universal. The Universal Church is the mystical union in a spiritual body of the habitation of the Spirit, having Jesus as the Head of all believers *everywhere at all times*. However within this Universal Church, there are many churches in many localities and these are replicas and part of the whole.

The first century believers were not connected in Spirit with earthly cities, but with the heavenly city Jerusalem, of which the earthly Jerusalem was only a symbol. This means that the Universal Church manifests itself in the Local Church.

Third, the Church may be defined as organism. The Church is a body composed of many organisms or parts performing functions that are mutually dependent and essential to life. Equally the Church may be defined as Organization. An Organization is a systematic union of individuals in a body whose officials, agents and members work together for a common end. An organism is something alive, e.g. plant, animal and human body whereas an organization, although consisting of living beings, is not itself alive. Scripture make no distinction between the Church as an Organization and the Church as an Organism. It teaches that all believers in the world-over are one in Christ. They constitute His body.

Fourth and finally, we have the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. The first designates the worldwide Church facing the daily, spiritual battle, while the second refers to all believers in heaven.

Turning our consideration from these categories and characteristics of the true Church of Christ, we now inquire what images are employed by Paul to illuminate our understanding of the concept *Church*.

2.10 Some Biblical Images of the Church

The New Testament uses many images or pictures to discuss the concept of the Church. Many of these are drawn from the Old Testament themes and metaphors. Paul S. Minear (1977) in his tome, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* has identified ninety-six images and analogies that are used in the New Testament to refer to the Church. It could therefore be correctly concluded that the New Testament is not a textbook of dogmatic theology about the church. Minear (1977: 25) also indicates that images are more effective than formal assertions. Images such as ‘the people of God’; ‘the temple of the Holy Spirit’; ‘the body of Christ’ and many others, are used by the writers of the New Testament to refer to the Church, thus indicating the variety of ways in which the concept Church can be interpreted.

Clowney (1976: 67) maintains that: “the fictional model of people being organs in a physical body, offers a new way of interpreting how they relate to one another in the Church.” Clowney further indicates that when considering spiritual metaphors for the Church, we find that they continually relate to the Triune God. For example the Church is not simply a body; but it is the body of Christ. The Church is not just a temple or house, but it is a dwelling of God, His habitation in the Spirit.

The use of the images should also indicate to us the richness of the biblical teaching about the Church. Toon (1980: 12) asserts that “all too often we tie ourselves down to one or two images. While there usually appear to be good reasons for our limited usages, God wants us to hear as much as possible of His portrayal of his Church.”

In the section that follows, we will first consider three images that Paul used namely: the *People of God*, the *Body of Christ*, and the *Temple of the Spirit*. As indicated elsewhere in this section, there are a number of images used by the writers of the New Testament to refer to the Church. Our only reason for the choice of these three is because there is an implicit trinitarianism in Paul’s use of these images. Beyerhaus and Lefever (1964: 151) concur with this notion and add that: the theological imagery applied to the Church: people, body, and temple, almost invariably refer to the local congregations in the world. It is the way Paul understands the Church, for he describes it as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. Erickson, 2003: 1045).

Minear (1977: 223) also asserts in this regard that the study of these images reinforce the conviction that the reality of the Church is everywhere anchored in the reality of God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ. He further maintains that to give greater precedence and weight to the *Theological*, *Christological*, and *Pneumatological* elements in the life of the Church, is to move in the direction of recognizing that the Church is a divine mystery that cannot be circumscribed by doctrinal or institutional measurement.

In the latter part of this section, an exposition of some relevant New Testament passages in which the three images are, will be employed in order to illustrate the use of these metaphors by means of which we can ultimately arrive at a biblically informed ecclesiological formulation. For this purpose Paul S. Minear’s tome, *The Images of the*

Church in the New Testament, will be substantially cited and adopted for the purpose of this study.

2.10.1 The People of God

Paul wrote of God's decision to make believers his people: "I will live with them and walk among them, I will be their God, and they will be my people." (2 Corinthians 6: 16). The Church is constituted of God's people. They belong to Him and He belongs to them.

Erickson (2003: 1045) has also argued that the concept of the Church as the people of God emphasizes God's initiative in choosing them. He indicates further that: "in the Old Testament, God did not adopt as his own an existing nation, but actually created a people for Himself. He chose Abraham and then, through him, brought into being the people of Israel." In the New Testament, this concept of God's choosing a people is broadened to include both Jews and Gentiles within the Church. So, Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "But we always ought to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2: 13-14; cf. 1 Thessalonians 1: 4).

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the proof of divine ownership. It was required of the male children of the people of Israel, as well as all the male converts and proselytes (Genesis 19: 23). It was also a subjective sign of the covenant in that it was performed individually to each person (Joshua 5: 2-15), whereas the Ark of the Covenant served as an objective sign for the group (Joshua 4-9).

In the New Testament, we find explicit references to 'circumcision of the heart'. Paul, wrote, "No, a Jew is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code" (Romans 2: 29; cf. Philippians 3: 3; cf. also Deuteronomy 10: 16; 30: 6). Whereas in the Old Testament, under the old covenant, the people of God had been national Israel (cf. Saucey, 1972: 69-72), inclusion among the people of God was not, in the New Testament, based upon national identity: "For not

all who are descended from Israel are Israel” (Romans 9: 6). It is inclusion within the covenant of God that distinguishes the people of God; they are made up of all those “who He called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles” (v. 24). It is clear that the promises associated with the Abrahamic covenant are fulfilled through the new covenant wrought and established by Christ (2 Corinthians 3: 3-18).

2.10.2 The Body of Christ

Perhaps the most extended image of the Church in Paul’s letters is its representation as the body of Christ. Erickson (2003: 1047) warns however, that while it is a full and rich statement, it is not the whole account. The body is used by Paul exclusively in speaking of the Church as the body of Christ. The term, “body of Christ”, when applied to the Church denotes “a spiritual living, ever new and ever surprising manifestation of Christ to the Church, in the Church and by the Church (Hall, 1973: 53).

Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26, in his booklet, *Spiritual Gifts in the Apostolic Church*, Rowland S. Ward (1972: 8-9), very aptly indicates that to be a member of the body of Christ implies a spiritual relationship. A body is not just different parts, but different parts which form a common life. Christ is the Head of the Church, and all members of His body are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Ward further indicates that 1 Corinthians 12 verse 13 does not make direct reference to Christian baptism and the Lord’s Supper, by which our entry and continuation in Christ’s body are signified. Nor does it refer to something that only happens to some Christians. Rather, it teaches that all believers, regardless of their racial or other earthly status (regardless, too, of any extraordinary gift or office), are animated by the one Spirit. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they – and only they – are the sons of God” (Romans 8: 14). It is common life which makes different individual members of one body. The true Church is one and undivided, having one Head and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Ward (1972: 8) also correctly observes therefore, that denominational differences, as such, do not divide this spiritual unity, although to some degree they obscure its reality as far as men can see.

Another characteristic of a body is that it has member organs which perform different functions. A human body that is all ‘eye’ is not a body, and therefore the tendency of

some of the Corinthians to place excessive importance on only one of the gifts, indicates they were not mature in the Holy Spirit Who leads each Christian to have sympathy with all the brethren. People with ordinary gifts are to use them, and not to despise the wisdom of God by enviously seeking more gifts. People with extraordinary gifts are to remember that “ordinary” members are just as essential even if their gifts are not so important to the body. Ward (1972: 9) observes that: “In the human body the animation by one principle of life ensures that we do not despise any part of our body.” He further indicates that “some of the weakest and least attractive organs have functions of the most vital nature.” He concludes that “If it were possible for one part of the body to be unconcerned about another, it would prove that that part is dead, not part of the body at all.”

2.10.3 The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Filling out Paul’s Trinitarian concept of the Church is the picture of the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (Erickson, 2003: 1049). It is the Spirit who brought the New Testament church into being at Pentecost, where He baptized the disciples and converted three thousand. And He has continued to populate the Church: “For we were all baptized by the one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12: 13).

Erickson (2003: 1049-1051) indicates the following as the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

- First, dwelling within the Church, the Holy Spirit imparts life to it. Those qualities which are his nature and which are spoken of as the “fruit of the Spirit” will be found in the Church: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5: 22-23).
- Second, it is the Holy Spirit who conveys power to the Church. Jesus so indicated in Acts 1: 8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit came on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”.

- Third, the Holy Spirit will also bring unity within the body. The early Church is described as being “one in heart and mind” (Acts 4: 26).
- Fourth, dwelling within the Church, also creates sensitivity to the Lord’s leading. Jesus had promised to continue to abide with his disciples (Matthew 28: 20).
- Fifth, as the Spirit indwelt Jesus’ disciples, he brought to their remembrance the Lord’s teachings (John 14: 26) and guide them to all the truth (John 16: 13).
- Sixth, the Spirit is in one sense the sovereign of the Church. For it is He who equips the body by dispensing gifts, which in some cases enables persons to fill various offices, and in other cases decides when a gift will be bestowed, and upon whom it is to be conferred. Paul writes, “All these [the several gifts] are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Corinthians 12: 11).
- Finally, the Holy Spirit makes the Church holy and pure. For just as the temple was holy and sacred place under the Old Covenant because God dwelt in it, so also are the believers sanctified under the New Covenant because they are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20).

2.11 Summary

In conclusion we may summarise the three images as follows:

- The Church is God’s New Covenant people. (Isaiah 43: 21; Exodus 6: 7). The natural Israel were cut off because of unbelief, except for a remnant (Romans 11: 15, 20). Gentiles are grafted in by faith and grace.
- What God did in the physical and natural body of Jesus, he desires to do in the spiritual body, the Church. Every member will ultimately be sinless, immortal and incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15: 54; 1 Peter 1: 23).

- The Church is now God's Temple, His habitation, His *Household*. The believer individually and believers corporately are the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20). The Church is to be indwelt by the Spirit.

2.12 An exposition of selected Biblical Texts

With the use of different images (metaphors) to refer to the Church, the writers of the New Testament intended to indicate what light these images cast on the nature of the Church. In his book Minear (1977), uses three broad categories according to the basic function indicating the context within which the Church is viewed, namely:

- The images that gravitate around the concept of the Church as the People of God.
- Images that gravitate around the activity of God in creating humanity.
- Images that gravitate around the concept of the Church as fellowship.

In the paragraphs that follow an exposition of three biblical passages will be made, namely, 1 Peter 2: 9-10; 1 Corinthians 12: 14-20; and 1 Corinthians 12: 13 because, as indicated earlier, implicit in of the images is the doctrine of the Triune God.

2.12.1 The Church as the New People of God (1 Peter 2: 9-10)

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2: 9-10 RSV).

In verse 9 Peter uses phrases which indicate the functions of the Church. He calls the Christians “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people dedicated to God a nation specially for Him to possess.” These phrases probably come from two main sources. In Isaiah 43: 21 Isaiah hears God say, “This people have I formed for myself.” But even more, in Exodus 19: 5, 6, the voice of God is heard: “Now, therefore, if ye obey my

voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” The great promises which God made to His people Israel are being fulfilled to the Church, which is the new Israel. These titles mean the following:

- Christians are *a chosen people*. God approached the people of Israel with the offer that they should be specially His people, and that He would be uniquely their God. But the whole relationship depended on the acceptance of the conditions of the covenant and keeping the law by the children of Israel. From this then we learn that the Christian is chosen for the following reasons: First he is chosen for *privilege*. In Jesus Christ there is offered to him a new and intimate relationship of fellowship with God. Second, he is chosen for *obedience*. The privilege brings with it the responsibility. The Christian is chosen in order that he may become the obedient child of God. He is chosen not to do as he likes, but to do as God likes. Third, he is chosen for *service*. His honour is that he is the servant of God.
- Christians are *a royal priesthood*. This means that every Christian has the right of access and approach to God; and that every Christian must offer his work, his worship and himself to God.
- Christians are *a holy nation*. The word *holy* is *hagios* and means being different. The Christian has been chosen that they may be different from other men. That difference lies in the fact that he is dedicated to God’s will and God’s service.
- Christians are *God’s special possession*. A Christian may be an ordinary person, but he acquires a new value and dignity and greatness because he belongs to God. The greatness of the Christian lies in the fact he is God’s.

God has therefore (according 1 Peter 2: 9), appointed the disobedient to destruction, but on the contrary, believers are “a chosen people” – *ekkleton genos*. They belong to God’s people because they are elected, chosen for him (Leslie, 1960: 741). The closest parallel to what Peter said here is in Isaiah 43: 20, a context in which God promises to accomplish a second exodus for his people by bringing them out of Babylon. Peter saw these promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and God’s elect nation is no longer coterminous with Israel but embraces the Church of Jesus Christ, which is composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

The imagery in this passage highlights the dignity of the community that is built on Christ, “elect and precious stone.” Perkins (2007: 44) asserts that by emphasizing God’s mercy and election, we should understand the hostility shown by outsiders as a sign that others have not been chosen to receive this precious gift. According to Perkins (2007: 44) this passage also points to the obligation that flows from being God’s people, “declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into light” (v. 9). The expression to “declare the wonderful deeds of God” can refer to singing God’s praises in worship (Psalm 118). It can also mean that the lives and words of the chosen will have to be testimony to outsiders so that they too might glorify God. Schreiner (2003: 116) concurs with this notion and asserts that declaration of God includes both worship and evangelism, spreading the God’s News of God’s saving wonders to all people.

These images however have impact on our behaviour and relationship in the Local Church. The ongoing conflict in the Local Church between those who want silence before worship is pitted against those who are outgoing; who want to meet friends, exchange news, etc. One group thinks of the Local Church as a place where the mystery and awe of God ought to be respected, hence silence. The other group thinks of the Local Church as a large, extended family where people are happy together, they will express it in exchanging greetings.

Perkins (2007: 44) correctly concludes that while we try to build quiet time into the service, we must also consider the noisier crowd prevailing outside.

2.12.2 The Church as a Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12: 14-20)

Our investigation of this image will be confined to the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians chapter twelve, from verse fourteen to twenty. The reason for this choice is because in this passage, is the Church explicitly described as “the body of Christ.” Because of its length, only verse fourteen to nineteen will be cited here.

“Now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of

the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body." (1 Corinthians 12: 14-20 NIV).

Here we encounter what is probably Paul's best known image of the church: The Church is the body of Christ. Paul draws a picture of the unity which should exist inside the church if the Church should fulfil its proper function.

The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume X (2002: 947) makes the following reflections on this passage:

- First, the image is not Paul's only one for the Church. There are many others such as building, temple, field, etc.
- Second, this image is used by Paul only when there are problems of disunity (cf. Romans 12).
- Third, Paul starts with the assumption that the Church is the body of Christ simply because the believers die with Christ in their baptism and are raised with Christ. Paul exhorts the believers to relate to one another in a manner appropriate to what they already are.
- Fourth, the individuality is honoured in that each believer serves the body in a distinct – neither less nor greater – way. Christian unity neither requires uniformity nor encourages it.
- Fifth, all the members are equally important to the well-being of the body of Christ. No one is less important. No one brings less to the body of Christ.
- Finally, Paul's purpose and use of the image here in 1 Corinthians affirms the closest possible identification of Christ and his believers. The believers and Christ belong to one another, and the believers are members of the body of Christ.

From this picture we have to see certain attributes that must exist in the Church, the body of Christ:

- We ought to realize that we *need* each other. Far too often what happens is that people in the Church become so engrossed in the bit of the work that they are doing or so convinced of the importance of the side of the work to which they have given themselves, that they neglect or even criticize others who have chosen to do other work. If the Church has to be a healthy body we need the work that everyone can do.

- We ought to *respect* each other. In the body there is no question of relative importance. If any limb or any organ ceases to function the whole body is thrown out of gear. It is so with the Church. Whenever we begin to think about our own importance in the Christian Church, the possibility of real Christian work is gone.

- We ought to *sympathize* with each other. If any part of the body is affected all others feel it; they suffer in sympathy because they cannot help to do so. The Church is a whole. The person who cannot see beyond his or her own organization, the person who cannot see beyond his or her own congregation, worse still, the person who cannot see beyond his family circle and connection, has not even begun to grasp the real unity of the Church.

For the last person of the Trinity we once more consider 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20, especially verse 19 where Paul asks a rhetoric question: “Do you not know that your *body is the temple of the Holy Spirit* within you, which you have from God?”

2.12.3 The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12: 13)

It must be indicated at the outset that in this passage Paul does not speak directly of the Church. However, this pattern of thought is not absent because he speaks so strongly about the bodies of all believers as members (*mele*) of Christ. It is impossible to visualize members apart from the body to which they belong.

Paul makes an appeal. Just because God’s Spirit dwells in us we have become a temple of God; and if that is so, our very bodies are sacred. Moreover, Christ died to save not a bit of man, but a whole man, to save man in his body and soul. Christ gave his life to

give man a redeemed soul and pure body. And because of that a man's body is not his own to do as he likes with; it is Christ's and he must use that body, not for the satisfaction of his own lusts, but for the glory of Christ. Paul stresses two thoughts in this regard:

- The great fact of the Christian faith is, not that it makes man free to sin, but that it makes a man free not to sin. It is so easy to allow habits, practices, ways of life to master us; but the Christian's strength enables us to must them. When a man really experiences the Christian power he becomes, not a slave to his body, his instincts, his desires, but their master.
- Paul insists that we are not our own. There is nothing we can do for which we alone will suffer. The Christian man is a man who thinks not of his rights but his debts. He can never do what he likes, because he never belongs to himself; he must always do what Christ likes, because Christ bought him at the cost of His life.

It may be concluded that the Church is a membership organization; that is, persons become members of it. In Paul's thought, Christ (as body) has members, that is, men and women whom he has incorporated within himself as belonging to him. Only as a corollary of this basic image, could they be individualized as members of the Church.

2.13 In Conclusion

Nowadays many professing Christians think only of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, consequently wander loosely without regard to the relationship with the church.

God has designed that we be joined not only to Him, but to His church as well. The New Testament metaphors that depict the church are richly instructive. God has called and placed all the redeemed into His Church, which He has defined, among others, as:

- A chosen race belonging to God.
- A body of which the Lord Jesus is Head.
- The Temple indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Implicit in these metaphors is the common characteristics of the unity and shared life and fellowship. The “church” in Scripture is not a building, a denomination, or an activity – is a group of people. This is true of both the universal church, which is the group of people throughout the world who believe in Jesus Christ (Matthew 18: 17; Corinthians 1: 2) and the local group of believers. The word *ekklesia* is used both ways in the New Testament, but the latter meaning is much more prevalent.

So throughout this study we will be referring to the “church” in the latter sense – the local body of believers who meet together to worship God and serve one another. Meeks (2003: 73) correctly points out that: “The letters (of Paul) reveal that those groups (local body of believers) enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion ...” As already indicated, the meeting places of the early believers were private houses. According to Meeks (2003: 75) the local structure of the early Christian groups was thus linked with what was commonly regarded as the basic unit of the society – *household* or the *family*.

Having explored the images that Paul used to describe the Church, the question may arise: Is the Church in our day portraying the images as the Scriptures suggest? From the paragraphs that follow it will be evident that *this* has not always been the case in the history of the Church. It is therefore useful to identify and explore some of the special problems and issues related to the present state of the Church. To this end, we have selected only the following problems and issues, namely: *dispensationalism*, *pluralism* and *relativism*, and finally *indigenization* and *contextualization*.

2.14 Special Problems and Issues

In the opening paragraph of his booklet, *The Importance of the Local Church*, Daniel E Wray (1981: 4) writes: “The Church of the living God from past to present is glorious in his sight. There is no group, no movement, no institution of any kind in the world

which can even approach to the glory, the splendour, the honour, the beauty, the magnificence, the wonder, the dignity, the excellence, the resplendency of the Church of God.” This is clearly how God sees His Church. However, Kuiper (1966: 13-15) seems to paint a very gloomy picture of the Church when he writes: “Today the glory of the Church is thickly veiled ... It seems despicable rather than glorious.”

In this paragraph an effort will be made to probe some of the factors that may have contributed to this apparent sad state of the present-day church. First, some of the problems emanating from the church’s own household namely *dispensationalism*, *evangelism and social action*, and the *clergy laity issues* will be explored. Second, some external issues facing the Church will be examined namely, *pluralism and relativism*, and finally, *indigenization and contextualisation*.

2.14.1 The History Dispensationalism

The dispensationalism teaching today as represented for instance, by the *Scofield Reference Bible*, can be traced back directly to the Brethren Movement which arose in England and Ireland about the 1830 (Allis, 1945: 9). Its adherents are known as Plymouth Brethren, because Plymouth was the strongest of the early centres of Brethrenism. It is also called Darbyism, after John Nelson Darby (1800-82), its most conspicuous representative (Allis, 1945: 9).

2.14.1.1 Etymology of the word *Dispensation*

The Longman’s Dictionary of Contemporary English defines *Dispensationalism* as a particular religious system especially controlling human affairs during a period. The English word ‘dispensation’ is an anglicized form of the Latin *dispensatio* which the Vulgate uses to translate the Greek word. The Latin word is a compound meaning “to weigh out or dispense.” Ryrie (1965: 24-25) distinguishes three principal ideas connected with the meaning of the English word: 1) The action of distributing, 2) the action of administering, ordering or managing the system by which things are administered, 3) The action of dispensing with some requirement.

The Greek noun for dispensation in the New Testament is *oikonomos*. The Greek word *oikonomia* comes from the verb which means to manage, to regulate, administer and plan. The word itself is a compound whose parts mean literally “to divide, apportion, administer or manage the affairs of an inhabited house.” In the *papyri* the officer (*oikonomos*) who administered a dispensation was referred to as a steward or manager of an estate or as a treasurer. Thus the central idea in the word dispensation is that of managing or administering the affairs of a household (Ryrie, 1965: 25).

2.14.1.2 Propositions of Dispensationalists

Mathison (1995: 17-18) summarises the essential features of dispensationalism under following seven propositions:

- God has two distinct programs in history, one for Israel and one for the Church.
- The Church does not fulfil or take over any of Israel’s promises or purposes.
- The Church is a ‘mystery’ and thus no Old Testament prophecies foresaw it.
- The present Church Age is a “parenthesis” or “intercalation” during which God has temporally suspended his primary purpose with Israel.
- The Church Age began at Pentecost and will end at the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church before Christ’s second coming.
- The Church, or body of Christ, consists only of those believers saved between Pentecost and the rapture.
- The Church as the body of Christ therefore does not include Old Testament believers.

Very basic in the teaching of dispensationalism is its recognition that God’s plan for Israel is swallowed up in this program for the Church. Israel and the Church are understood as separate entities, and God will restore national Israel under the earthly rule of Jesus as the Messiah.

2.14.1.3 Scriptural use of the word *Dispensation*

Ryrie (1965: 25-31) identifies various forms of the word “dispensation” that are used in the New Testament. Some of these are the following: First, the word *ekonomeo* is used in Luke 16: 2 where it is translated “to be a steward.” Second, the noun *oikonomos* is used in Luke 12: 42; 16: 1; Romans 16: 23; 1 Corinthians 4: 1, 2; Galatians 4: 2; Titus 1: 7; 1 Peter 4: 10, and in all instances it is translated as *steward* except chamberlain in Romans 16: 23. Third, the noun *ekonomia* is used in Luke 16: 2, 3, 4; 1 Corinthians 9: 17; Ephesians 1: 10; 3: 2,9; Colossians 1: 25; 1 Timothy 1: 4. In all these instances, it is translated variously, *stewardship*, *dispensation*, and *edifying*.

2.14.1.4 The word *Dispensation* Defined

The most popular definition of the word *dispensation* used by dispensationalists goes: “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God” (Gerstner, 1982: 17; cf. Allis, 1945: 9; Bass, 1977: 29). A concise definition of a dispensation is this: A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose. Ryrie (1965: 30) argues that in using the word economy as the core of the definition, the emphasis is put on the Biblical meaning of the word itself. He further indicates that economy also suggests the fact that certain features of different dispensations might be the same or similar.

To summarize: Dispensationalism views the world as a *household* run by God. In this household-world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to His own will and various stages of revelation in the process of time. These various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of His total purpose, and economies are dispensations. The understanding of God’s differing economies is essential to a proper interpretation of His revelation within these various economies (Ryrie, 1965: 31).

2.14.1.5 Dispensationalists' Interpretation of Scripture

Gerstner (1982: 2) indicates that a central text of the dispensational theology is 11 Timothy 2: 15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

From the beginning, dispensationalists have interpreted this statement to mean that the Bible is presented in sharply divided parts called dispensations. Correctly interpreting the Bible is correctly dividing these dispensations from one another, according to the dispensationalists. Unlike traditional interpreters, dispensationalists "divide" these sections (Old and New dispensations) sharply into areas or eras that conflict with one another. This feature is confirmed by Ryrie and he uses Gaebelien's argument as a basic test whether or not a man is a dispensationalist: "The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved with Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives, which is Christianity (the Church) ..." (Ryrie, 1965: 42).

This brings us to the dispensationalist's basic theological distinction between Israel and the Church. Mathison (1995: 8-9) concludes that "dispensationalism may, therefore, be defined as that system of theology which sees a fundamental distinction between Israel and the Church." Mathison (1995: 9) maintains that "This distinction is a cornerstone of dispensational theology and that "with this definition clearly in mind, much of the confusion that often surrounds this topic may be avoided."

2.14.1.6 The Distinction Between Israel and the Church

The dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church implicitly repudiates the Christian way of salvation. The dispensationalists make a qualitative distinction between Israel and the Church. They are two different peoples, not the same people of God. They have different relationships to Him in this life and a different future (Gerstner, 1982: 17).

Gerstner (1982:17) has a very strong case against the dispensationalists' understanding of salvation and writes: "If these are two types of people, how can they have the same salvation? If, as dispensationalists maintain, Israel as well as the Church is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, can there be this qualitative difference between them as a people? His salvation is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It may be administered in somewhat different ways, or different contexts, but what is administered the same: redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ."

Moreover, the Bible teaches that the people of God are the same in all dispensations. They are, as Ephesians 2: 20 says, built on the same foundation, "the prophets and the apostles." The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament are together a foundation of the Church of God. The apostle Peter uses the same language for the New Testament Church of God that was used for the ancient people of God in the Old Testament, calling them a royal priesthood, a holy nation: "But ye are the chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, that ye should show forth the praise of him who hath called you ..." (1 Peter 2: 9).

In Paul's famous metaphor, the Jews were the original olive tree into which the Gentile believers were grafted (Romans 11: 17 ff.). They are the same plant; they have the same source of life, there is no difference between them except a temporal one. In the Pauline corpus and in the spirit of the writings of the New Testament, unlike the view and the position of dispensationalists, the Church is unified for all ages because its members are saved by the same undivided Lord Jesus Christ.

2.14.2 Summary

It is impossible to divide the one people of God. The Church is one in all ages. Those redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ are the one body of Jesus Christ, the Church which is the *household of God*. The olive tree is the same olive tree. All the redeemed will come to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as Jesus says. There is but one Royal Priesthood, one Holy Nation in all ages. Whatever the differences there may be in time and condition under which the people of God live, they are re-united in the world to come, everlastingly one in the divine presence of the glorious redeemer of God's elect of all ages.

The second problem within the Church has been the constant shift in emphasis on the part of liberal churchmen, away from dealing with the spiritual need of man toward meeting his physical, economic, and social needs. In the following paragraphs we consider the question of evangelism and Social Action.

2.15 Evangelism and Social Action

Hodges (1977: 98) maintains that the Christian institutions, in the form of hospitals, schools, and so on, were the first evidence of the Church's social concern. These were considered by-products of the work of evangelism. According to Hodges, this approach was later felt to be too limited in its scope and it was urged that Christian concern be directed to the "whole man" in a comprehensive approach. Now liberals are proposing that even this effort is insufficient and the answer is social activism, in which the Church must join forces with revolutionaries to overthrow economic and political structures which they may consider to be the basic causes of man's ills.

This latter aspect will not be considered any further in this chapter because while there are positive aspects of the theology of liberation, this study concurs with the view of Hodges (1977: 111) when he writes that: "true liberation comes in the realm of the Spirit in the heart of man than in the political realm. To look for a *new application* of the Gospel to meet the social ills of the world, is false." It may indeed, also be useful to remind ourselves of the words of J.R Cochrane *et al* in their book, *In word and Deed* (1991: 54): "The Church has its own belief and its values that impel it to become involved, alongside other organizations, in God's course of liberation for the oppressed. The Church will have its own way of operating and it may sometimes have its own special political programmes and campaigns but does not have its own political blueprint for the future, its own political policy, because the Church is not a political party." Therefore only the growing tension between the liberal and evangelical wings of the Church will come into focus in this section.

Christians today find themselves forced to choose between evangelism and engagement in social action. And within the evangelical community, it is a choice for evangelism (Conn, 1985: 73). The question of how to deal with poverty and the numerous related problems of our day, has divided the Church into two camps. On the one hand

evangelicals see evangelism as the solution to the problem; on the other hand, the ecumenicals (liberals) prefer to engage in social action in dealing with the problem.

Many in the evangelical camp maintain that the Christian has but one task – that of winning souls to Christ. Such Christians pay little attention to social problems. They believe among others, that the problems people face will drive them to Jesus Christ, who has the answer to all personal and social ills. Moberg (1977: 23) is also of the view that some evangelicals believe that: “If men only put their trust in Him, He will make all things work together for good.” He further notes that: “The social involvement camp, on the other hand, believes that Christians as citizens and children of God should step instead into the political and social arena to cope with the problems of injustice and suffering. They maintain that washing one’s hands of God-given social responsibility violates the stewardship trust that dates back to the Garden of Eden.”

Grappling with the same problem, Padilla (1974: 19) identifies two positions with regard to the present world. The one conceives of salvation as something that fits with the limits of the present age, in terms of social, economic, and political liberation. This position views the world, according to Padilla, as all there is and the fundamental mission of the Church is accordingly often conceived of in terms of transformation of *this* world through *politics*. At the other end of the scale, is the view according to which salvation is reduced to the future salvation of the soul and, the present world is nothing more than a preparatory stage for the life hereafter. According to Padilla, in this view “the social dimension of salvation is thus completely or almost completely disregarded and the Church becomes a redeemed ghetto or “the Ark of Salvation” charged only with mission of rescuing men from the present evil world.”

This study views both positions as incomplete understanding of the gospel. On the one hand, the gospel cannot be reduced to social, economic, and political categories or the Church to mere agency for human improvement. Even less, can the gospel be confused with a political ideology, or a *Political Party*. As Christians we are called to witness to the transcendental, otherworldly Christ through whose work we have received forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God. On the other hand, there is no biblical warrant for viewing the Church as an otherworldly community dedicated to the salvation of souls or to limited only the preaching of man’s reconciliation to God

through Jesus Christ. As Padilla (1974: 21) has put it: “A genuine gospel will always be concerned with human justice rather than with mere cultivation of a warm inner glow.”

Fackre (1974: 6), in his article, “*Evangelism and Social Action: Either/Or?*” rightly remarks that the wedding of the two views (evangelism and social concern) sounds like anachronism because the divorce of the two has become commonplace in much contemporary Church life. Therefore, in order to have a better understanding of the two concepts, it will help first to try to find the meaning of, and motivation for evangelism and social action, and second, to consider some biblical foundation for evangelism and social action. To these we now turn.

2.15.1 The Meaning of Evangelism

The meaning of the word *evangelism* has been adequately captured by the International Congress on Evangelization that met in 1974 in Lausanne. This is the definition given by the Lausanne Covenant (Paragraph 4):

“To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scripture, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose it is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and to be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up the cross, and identify themselves with the new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world.”

Watson (1979: 6) has captured the sense of the concept of evangelism brilliantly in the following words: “The word *evangelism* is the verbal communication of the gospel. As such, it derives its meaning from and imparts integrity to everything else that the Church is called to be in service (*diakonia*), in worship (*leitourgia*), in teaching (*didache*), in

fellowship (*koinonia*), and in the building of its members (*oikodome*), to the furtherance of God's work of reconciliation and liberation (*therapeia*) and the coming of God's justice and order (*oikonomia*)."

2.15.2 Motivation for Evangelism

The New Testament is replete with incentives for evangelism. To begin with, there is simple obedience to the Great Commission, and to the Lord of the Great Commission, to whom all authority has been given (Matthew 28: 18-20). Then there is the terrible knowledge we have that human beings without Christ are lost or "perishing" (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 1: 18), and our earnest desire in love should be to reach them with the gospel before it is too late. Another powerful motive is zeal or 'jealousy': for the glory of Christ, whom God has super-exalted in order that every knee should bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord (Philippians 2: 9-10).

Yet the most basic of all motives lies in the very nature of God himself, and his saving work by which he revealed himself (Scott, 1982: 14).

- *God is a Missionary God*

He created all mankind, is "the God of the spirit of all flesh", and when calling Abraham promised through his posterity to bless "all the families of the earth".

- *Jesus sent his disciples*

During his public ministry Christ sent his disciples to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and subsequently commissioned them to go and make disciples of all nations.

- *The Holy Spirit is a Missionary Spirit*

Pentecost was a missionary event. He gave his people power for true witness, as Jesus Christ promised, and thrust them out to the ends of the earth as Jesus foretold (Acts 1: 8).

This Trinitarian basis for mission is *primary* and *mandatory* – not an after-thought. It is the missionary heart of God himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If he yearns in love for his lost world, we, his people must share his yearning. Commitment to the world mission is unavoidable, and indifference to it inexcusable (Scott, 1982: 15).

2.15.3 What is Social Responsibility?

Paragraph 5 of the Lausanne Covenant of the International Congress on Evangelization affirms our social responsibility:

“We affirm that God is Both the Creator and Judge of all men. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for liberation of men from every kind of oppression. Because mankind is made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex, age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvements are both part of our Christian duty...” (Scott, 1982: 16).

This section was clear affirmation that the gospel comes down on the side of the human dignity, justice, and reconciliation and against oppression in all its forms. Commitment to Christ involves having God’s concern for justice throughout human society and for the liberation of men. Price (1974: 24) writes in this regard: “With this general thrust for mission, the internal feuding about whether Christians should take stands on particular social issues can be put aside. No issue where people are hurting is outside the sphere of Christian concern.”

2.15.4 Motivation for Social Responsibility

Once more we discern the fundamental basis for our social action in the character of God Himself:

- *God is the God of Justice*

The Lord watches over sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin (Psalm 146: 5-9).

- *Christ reflected as the loving-kindness of the Father*

He had compassion on the hungry, the sick, the bereaved, and the outcast. He had compassion on the crowds because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And always his compassion issued in appropriate action.

- *The first fruit of the Holy Spirit is love (Galatians 5: 22)*

It is he who gives his people a tender social conscience, and impels them to immerse themselves in humanitarian relief, development, and the search for justice (Scott, 1982: 17).

2.15.5 Some Biblical Foundation for Evangelism and Social Action

According to Scripture, the gospel is addressed not to people as isolated beings called to respond to God with reference to their life context, but rather to people in relation to the world. The gospel always comes in relation to the world of creation, the world that was made through Jesus Christ and that it is to be recreated through Him. Padilla (1974: 22) is here on target when writing: "It comes within the present order of existence, immersed in the transient world of material possession. It comes to people as members of humanity - the world for which Christ died but, at the same time, the world hostile to God and enslaved to the powers of darkness."

The answer to the social and political needs of men is given by Jesus in his work and in the Church. Jesus takes seriously the problems of property and power relationships, which are essentially the problems that cause social and political maladjustment and injustice (Escobar, 1974: 34).

The biblical model of evangelism includes the radically different community that calls men of faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ that has transformed their lives, and the new life in the Spirit that enables them to follow the example of Christ. Such a

community has a revolutionary effect in changing society. In this community there is a new attitude to money, and property; there is a new attitude to power and its exercise, and it is a community where human barriers and prejudices have been overcome under Christ's rule (Escobar, 1974: 34). These attitudes are discussed in the paragraphs below:

- *A New Attitude to Money and Property*

In Acts 2: 44-45 we read that, "And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as every man had a need." In James 2: 15-16, we read, "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled" without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" These passages indicate a new attitude towards money and property.

- *New Attitude to Power*

In Luke 22: 25, 26 (and parallels in Matthew and Mark) we read, "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." These passages indicate a new attitude towards power and its exercise.

- *Human Barriers and Prejudices have been Overcome*

In Galatians 3: 38 we read that there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for all are one in Christ. It is clear here that categorizing people in terms of race, standing in life, or sex, no longer has relevance when attitude has been changed

- *A Community Ready to Suffer for Justice and Good*

In Matthew 5: 10-12 we read, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."(RSV)

Jesus creates a new people, a new community, where social problems are dealt with under the Lordship of Christ – a community distinct from the rest of society, that we find around Jesus first, then growing in Jerusalem, and then expanding into the world (Escobar, 1974: 34).

To summarize: The seeming confusion that exists between evangelism and social concern presents the Church with constant temptation of regarding evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. On the one hand, there is a tendency to dissociate the gospel from the world, declaring God's salvation to be spiritual and transcendent, thus denying the incarnational essence of the faith. On the other hand, there is the impulse to seek for the fullness of the New Age through endeavours of worldly involvement, by implication confining the promise of eternal existence.

The issue of evangelism and social action have been explored; now it is fitting to provide a conclusion.

2.16 Conclusion

From the foregoing exposition, it is evident that the Church serves people by bringing to them the message of Christ, but bringing it to them in the way Christ did, serving them in their bodily needs as well as their spiritual needs, indeed in all their needs. There is a preaching of the Gospel which cannot be separated from social service. Yet not everybody can do everything. Not everything is in order at a particular time and in a particular place. This difficulty could be resolved in part if we accepted that even the same society, in the same place, and at the same time, different people can have different vocations. One can be called to preach the Gospel, to direct evangelization more fully and primarily, while another can be called to social service, to understanding and serving the social needs and thereby giving effective witness to Christ. Neither one of these can do without the other, and above all, neither one may despise the other.

Both should help and support each other and be supported by their institution in fulfilling their different vocations.

2.17 Clergy-Laity in Present-day Church Life

The role of the laity in the Church is one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted subject in Christian theology because of the difference that seem to exist between the *laity* and the *clergy* regarding Church matters. To refer to laity and clergy is to foster *dualism*. We are the members of the *laos*; God's people. We must not give the impression that there is a divide between the ordained and non-ordained members of the community of the people of God. Mouw (1980: 15) believes that: "This dualistic approach to ministry will only truncate our effort to evangelize. This polarization simply compartmentalizes the Church and weakens our battle."

However, it is unfortunately true that the Church means, in public opinion, mainly the ministry of the clergy (Kraemer, 1958: 17). As consequence of this climate of thinking, the laity in the churches regards itself as of minor and subsidiary significance. Non-church people share the same impression. The reasons are obvious, representatives of the ministry figure, by the nature of the case, as rulers and administrators of the Church, to the public eye. They are, as a rule, the spokesmen of the Church, or are considered to be really authentic spokesmen.

To serve as an ordained minister in the Church, is generally considered to be the highest calling. But reflecting on what it really means to be the laity, it becomes clear that the ministries available to lay persons as they pursue their different callings outside the walls of the institutional Church are at least as exciting and are at least as deserving of being called "ministries" as those tasks associated with the ordained pastorate (Mouw, 1980: ix). The laity or the body of lay-membership of the Church has never in the history of the Church enjoyed the distinction of being treated with care and thoroughness as a matter of specific theological importance or significance. It has been discussed in passing, by stray remarks or generalities as, for instance, the *Universal Priesthood of Believers* (Kraemer, 1958: 9).

Reflecting on the subsidiary role of the laity in the Church, Braun (1971: 8) believes that the experience of the Church, both in success and failure, teaches that not only is it essential for some laymen to be recruited and trained to assist professional clergy in leading the churches, but that large-scale growth depends upon mobilizing as far as possible the entire believing community for the task of evangelism.

Bucy (1978: 18) is of the view that only if and when the *laos* as a whole discovers and recovers its identity as a Priesthood unto God for the sake of mediating ministry to the world, will its service become genuinely extroverted and authenticated. There is one body and many parts. All the parts are independent. No part has greater honour than the other. Mouw (1980: 20-23) correctly asserts that in order to adequately understand the theology of the laity as the *laos* of God, the required theological discussions must encompass at least three aspects: theology of the laity, theology for laity, theology by the laity. To this list, may correctly be added, *anticlericalism*, the place of the clergy, *ecclesiasticism*, and *patterns of discrimination*. The latter now receive attention.

2.17.1 A Theology of the Laity

This involves the questions such as who the laity is in the Church scheme and what their calling is in the context of the mission of the Christian community. Rather than having a theological discussion in which the laity is a subsidiary topic or a theological afterthought, the standard issues of theological discourse - church, sacraments, mission, salvation, liberation, eschatology, anthropology, doctrine of God - must be examined with a central focus on questions concerning the status of the laity.

2.17.2 A Theology for the Laity

It must be a theological engagement in which the agenda is set by the needs, dilemmas, and problems of the laity. It must also be carried on with the clear goal of building up laity for their ministries in the world.

2.17.3 A Theology by the Laity

The theologizing that takes place in the Christian Church has been overwhelmingly a clergy-orientated activity. Theology has been taught and written by the people who are very closely tied to the interests of the clergy; theological issues have been formulated and explored from *that* point of view, from within *that* context.

Lane and Young (1977: 29) also confirm this reality and observe that the theology of our tradition has usually been done by priests and academicians, who had vested interest in the existing structure of the Church. Lay people, who might well have a vested interest in change, have seldom had a part in doing theology. But theology ought to reflect the lives of people and their own understanding of their relationship with God.

2.17.4 Anti-clericalism

One of the more passionate outbreak of anti-clericalism occurred in North America shortly after the American Revolution. The clergy were labelled ‘hireling priests’ and ‘tyrannical oppressors’ interested in accumulating power and prestige. It is understandable that some Christians would have carried the revolutionary spirit over into the life of the Church in this way, thus issuing their own “declaration of independence” from clerical control (Mouw, 1980: 20).

Today, it is understandable that disillusionment with bureaucracies and “big government” along with the undercurrent of anti-institutionalism should result in some animosity towards Church leaders. But when it takes the form of anti-clericalism, it is not justified. Mouw (1980: 27) concludes by correctly pointing out that proper antidote to clericalism is not “pro-clericalism” in the sense of exalting the clergy. But he warns that we must recognize the place of the clergy, and we must not overrate or underrate that place. Beyerhaus and Lefever (1964: 151) concur with this notion and add that the special offices of pastor, elder, deacon, and other church-workers, must however, be emphasized. But these offices are conferred by ordination and should not take the place of the spiritual ministry of the whole community.

2.17.5 The Place of the Clergy

Ministers and priests have special and unique functions in such areas as preaching and sacraments. But even here, it is not necessary to view such matters as ones in which they alone are involved. The opening of these areas to some degree to lay participation has been one of the healthy dimensions of liturgical reforms in recent years. Other areas such as *visitations of the sick, counselling, and youth-work*, among others, are perhaps even more susceptible to lay involvement and direction (Mouw, 1980: 29). But this must have the sanction, approval and blessing of ordained clergy to prevent lay enthusiasm from waning.

Braun (1971: 45) – who is himself a salaried clergyman – observes that what is deplorable is not the use of salaried clergy, but its abuse that limits pastoral care and ministerial service to professionals. He further observes that if unpaid men from small congregations are assigned responsibility for the pastoral care of the congregation, they eventually come to feel the need of the help and instruction of trained professional clergy. It is essential that the trained professional clergy act as *paraclete* to those unpaid lay people.

2.17.6 Ecclesiasticism

Ecclesiasticism involves an overrating not only of the clergy but also of the institutional Church itself. When this occurs, the dangers of clericalism are intensified; the clergy are accorded a much too prominent a place. It was against this ruling of a separate class of the clergy in the Church that the Reformers of the sixteenth century objected and also the dualism of lay and clergy – one being secular and the other spiritual. These Reformers taught that Christian *tailors, cobblers, stonemasons, carpenters, and innkeepers* have all been consecrated like priests for their ministry. They viewed vocations as callings as much as separate priesthood (Hayes, 1999: 146).

Reber (1988: 402-403) is on target when he says, “... usually when lay persons talk about their ministry they generally talk about their volunteer activities inside some church building. Rarely do people talk about where they spend most of their time and energy: *job, family, neighbourhood, or community.*” Church members speak freely

about what they do in ministry “outside” the Church. There are notable exceptions, but most Church members would be hard pressed to see how their involvement in the local Church has much to do with what they face on Monday morning. Church members must be encouraged to take their ‘inside ministry outside’.

Often we take a simplistic view of the ministry of the laity, seeing it as limited to “church” work, support of the clergy, or use of religious language on appropriate occasions. If ministry does not involve those areas of life where we spend our time and energy, surely we relegate it to periphery of our lives and deny what the Gospel is all about. Mouw (1980: 16) supports this argument and writes that the laity has, for all practical purposes, if not in principle, been distinguished from ‘the Church’ – where the latter term was used to refer to ordained leadership of the institutional Church. And even the term Church was used to cover both the clergy and the laity, laypersons were discriminated against and often treated as weaker partners in the relationship.

2.17.7 Patterns of Discrimination

Mouw (1980: 16) maintains that the patterns of discriminations have not disappeared completely; indeed, they can often be found today existing in pure form. He points to the fact that in recent times at least two other sorts of discriminatory ways of viewing matters have emerged. One is the perspective wherein the laity is split into two groups: the church laity and worldly laity. The *Church laity* is those who are willing to commit much of their time and energy to maintaining the institutional Church. They function in various Church offices and/or serve in the choirs, the Church educational programmes, and in various Church-related societies and organization. These laypersons are often dear to the hearts of the clergy. They are the ones who regularly receive praise as “active laity”.

The *worldly laity* is those who perceive their primary Christian ministry as taking place in the context of their daily work, beyond the borders of the institutional Church. Often they have a sincere desire to allow their Christian commitment to influence their secular activities. These must also be given their praise due them as the clergy draws the attention of other members to model their example.

Diehl (1982: 196) captures this notion of worldly laity very brilliantly when he writes, “It is in the *Monday* world that God’s creative process continues daily. It is in the *Monday* world that God has called us to do productive work. It is in the *Monday* world that the hungry are fed, the sick are restored to health, and the disposed given homes. The *Monday* world is where God’s concern for love and justice is demonstrated. It is the *Monday* world that gives purpose to lives.” (emphasis added)

Conn (1985: 219) is very emphatic – and may be pushing the point too far - about the discriminatory way of perceiving the laity and the clergy. He writes that the clergy and the laity distinction must be scrapped, not only in our theological functions, but also in actuality. He sees no room for allowing people to simply attend Church and watch the performance of the “full time” chosen ones. He maintains that all gifts must be employed for the advancement of God’s kingdom. This, he believes, is clearly one definite way to demonstrate the priesthood of all believers. He feels strongly that there is no place for professional ministries in the Church. All clergy must be laity, and all laity must be clergy. God *does not and never* has called anyone to the “full time” ministry. Stevens and Collins (1993) in the introductory paragraph of the book, *Equipping Pastor*, however adopts a moderate stance on this issue and persuasively suggest the model of equipping lay people.

2.17.8 Conclusion

To get underemployed laypersons and overemployed pastors together, Stevens and Collins (1993: xii) believe that we need a systematic solution to the problem and highlight the following:

- Overfunctioning Leaders. Pastors and lay Leaders feel stuck with all the responsibility for the Church.
- Unmotivated laity. Pastors introduce lay training programs but cannot motivate people to get involved. Laypeople are passive receivers, the object of the pastor’s ministry rather than the subject of ministry themselves.

- **Standardized Pastoral Roles.** Churches view pastors as replaceable parts in a machine and compare the incumbent with the previous pastor or measure a pastor's performance by standardized criteria. Many pastors feel called to a congregation even though they can see that it is not a good fit.
- **Leadership Burnout.** Pastors blame themselves when they burnout. Congregations also blame pastors, the discouraged pastor may be a symptom of a problem in the Church. The pastor has become the "identified burnout".
- **Maintenance Focus.** Most congregations are inward looking, focused on self-preservation rather than mission. Mission is the special interest of a few highly motivated members of the congregation.

Having dealt with three of the many problems facing the Church *internally* in this present age, namely, dispensationalism, evangelism and social action, and the clergy-laity issue, we now consider some the *external issues* facing the Church namely, pluralism and relativism, indigenization, and contextualisation.

2.18 Pluralism and Relativism

Pluralism refers to a diversity of religions, worldviews, and ideologies existing at one time in the same society. We are socially heterogeneous, it is often argued. One religion or philosophy doesn't command and control the culture. Instead, many viewpoints exist. We have Buddhists and Baptists, Christian Reformed and Christian Scientists – all at the same block, or at least in the same city. This can have a levelling effect on religious faith (DeMar, 1994: 67).

Allan (1986: 1) also concurs with this notion and adds that we live in a pluralistic world with a number of different views of reality and apparently no *rational* means of telling which view is most likely to be true, and secondly, where it is said that all views are historically relative and mere reflections of social structures. Even scientific laws and theories are to be held tentatively.

However, as we enter a Postmodern or Post-enlightenment world many people, including theologians, are becoming distressed by the plurality of worldviews. Allan (1986: 9) maintains that many people have been driven to relativism by the collapse of the Enlightenment's confidence in the power of reason to provide foundations for our truth-claims and to achieve finality in our search for truth in various disciplines. Enlightenment had already discarded Christianity and left it outside the intellectual stream. Allan (1986: 9) therefore correctly concludes that: "For sometimes Christianity has been a stepchild in our universities and research centres, irrelevant to their inquiries, and explicitly excluded from them in Marxist countries."

Christianity came on the scene with Jesus saying, "I am the way truth and the life; no one comes to the father but by me" (Jon 14: 6). This statement is often used to indicate the arrogance of Christianity – How intolerant of Him to exclude Mayan spirits, the Buddha, and just plain decent folk! The assumption is that Jesus just couldn't have claimed to be the only way; that's undemocratic! So, instead of facing Christ's challenge as it stands, the whole idea is dismissed as un-pluralistic, and closed-minded (DeMar, 1994: 67). There can be no true religion over against all false religions. Christianity is *a* religion but not *the* religion, it is argued. It is further argued that the Bible can sometimes be taught as fictional literature like Shakespeare, but it cannot be taught as the Word of God. This would offend Moslems, Buddhists, Mormons, and almost certainly, atheists.

Similar arguments would lead unsuspecting Christians open to *any* and *all* philosophical gurus who are ready, willing, and seemingly able to lead the way to a 'new' vision of reality. Those able to express their views get the greatest following.

2.19 Conclusion

For many people Science stands for *rationality, evidence, knowledge, and enlightenment*. Religion stands for *backwardness, conservatism, authoritarianism*, and is regarded as an enemy and rival of science. These are extreme characterizations, but however much these extremes are toned down, the general impression is that some hostility, some incompatibility, and some rivalry exist between Science and Religion (Allan, 1986: 23).

Allan (1986: 23) believes that this is, in fact, a question of attitude. Christianity has the right attitude. This is because of its strong conviction and belief in the “other world”. It believes that the entire universe depends on the perfect being, but it also believes that nature is good, or more specifically, matter is good. Genesis 1 makes it abundantly clear that the creation is good. Christians also believe that nature is orderly; that it behaves in a consistent and rational way. This is because nature is created by the good and rational God. If we therefore, as Christians exhibit this rationality of Christianity, we can render service both to those who are still captives of enlightenment and think that belief in God as a Creator and Redeemer in Christ, is impossible for the educated mind, and to those who are free of those assumptions but are disillusioned by the plurality of religions. An exhibition of the rationality of Christianity can enable us to live in a postmodern world – the world ravaged by plurality of worldviews and thus driving people towards relativism – and to hold Christian claims with all our heart and with all our mind.

Having explored the factors that have contributed to the decline in the mission of the Church, namely, dispensationalism, evangelism and social action, and the clergy-laity issues, as well as the world views such as pluralism and its resultant relativism, it is important to consider contextualization as a way of translating the unchanging content of the gospel of the kingdom into verbal forms meaningful to people’s respective cultures and within their particular existential situations. But first, a few remarks on indigenization.

2.20 Indigenization

The Longman’s Dictionary of Contemporary English defines the word “indigenous” as originating, growing or living naturally. The word *indigenous* means “native to” or “belonging naturally” (Joslin, 1982: 192). Every Christian community must experience Christ – not as a foreigner who somehow after two thousand years has appeared in the community’s midst, but as “one of us” or as someone sharing the community’s culture and therefore possessing its very soul (Luzbetak, 1988: 134).

However, the history of missions shows a great diversity in motivation for spreading the gospel. Some missionaries were motivated by an ascetic view of life, and chose

missions as a form of self-denial; others were stimulated by a desire to hasten the return of Christ; and frequently missionary work has been connected with a tendency to spread Western culture, regarded as far superior to all other forms of life. At times missionary activity became part of Colonialism, a task of the government more than of the Church (Joslin, 1982: 192). But for all these motivations, Luzbetak (1988: 133) correctly asserts that mission consists in incarnating Christ in a given time and place, allowing him to be reborn in the given life-way.

According to 'Nevius' or 'indigenous' principle, it is believed that when a Church has been planted and established according to the New Testament pattern (and within a particular cultural setting), then it will, in God's time, face up the full responsibilities of a mature Church and aim to become self-supporting, self-governing, self-educating, and self-propagating.

Joslin (1982: 193-197) therefore discusses the four indigenous principles, namely, self-supporting, self-governing, self-educating, and self-propagating. In the following paragraphs Joslin's comments on these principles will be adapted with the view to understanding why the Local Church ought to be an indigenous church.

2.20.1 Self-support

Self-support means that the Local Church must eventually reach a stage in its development when it is able to assume full responsibility for all its financial commitments. Where this responsibility is not faced with realism, there can be at least two detrimental effects on the group of Christians concerned, i.e. the Local Church.

Firstly, if the local Christians find it convenient to have their work subsidized indefinitely, this will retard their spiritual growth. If the obligation to face up to the realities of church-life is postponed and the demands of responsibility are gently cushioned, this will produce nothing but a flabby faith. This *must* be avoided.

Secondly, the 'parent church' or denominational body will continue to retain a measure of control over that group of believers (Local Church) for an indefinite period. This is not good. The parent church may be well equipped to provide money for a developing

cause and at the same time it may be ill-equipped to influence or advise on certain aspects of church policy in a community which, socially, may be in marked contrast to the area in which it is located.

Beyerhaus and Lefever (1964: 151) maintain that financial resource of the Local Church will determine whether it has to rely on unpaid voluntary service of its officers. At the same time, the Local Church must be conscious of its responsibilities beyond its immediate sphere, and that for two reasons: First, the Local Church must actively acknowledge its share of responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel, not only within its own confines but throughout the whole world; it must not only join in prayer for others, but must, from the start, offer material gifts for this wider work. Second, there is nothing to prevent the Local Church from receiving assistance from the whole Church in case of emergencies, such as those caused by sudden disasters or by sudden developments in Church's work. The demand for self-support must never turn into a demand for financial autonomy, under all circumstances, either in the case of the Local Church or that of the Regional Church (Joslin, 1982: 193).

2.20.2 Self-government

Paul and Barnabas, on their return to Antioch from their first missionary journey, visited the places where the seed sown by them had borne fruit. On these visits they made provision from within the local fellowships for their future leadership. "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church" (Acts 14: 23). Paul's letter to Timothy and Titus deal with the appointment of elders and indicate that such men are to come from within the local churches they serve. Only within the life of the Local Church can the prospective elders reveal their character and develop their spiritual gifts in such a way that the church members will be able to observe and assess their ministry and, in due time, ratify their appointment to the leadership (Joslin, 1982: 194).

The time which lapsed between the gathering of the first converts and the appointment of the first leaders, under the direction of the apostles seems to have been comparatively brief. Recent converts were however not eligible for appointment to the leadership.

2.20.3 Self-education

The New Testament provision for the instruction of believers in the whole knowledge of God is quite plain. Timothy is directed by Paul to ensure that he trains others who can continue this teaching ministry. He says, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." (2 Timothy 2: 22). In the first letter to Timothy and in the letter to Titus the character and abilities of elders are defined. Apart from Godly life, such men must also have the aptitude to teach. 'He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it' (Titus 1: 9).

2.20.4 Self-propagating

All church members are to be the principal ambassadors of the gospel, and not the pastor-preacher alone. His task is to preach the gospel and to equip the church members to witness and to be able to give a reason for what is within them. The best people to reach the working-class, for example, are the working-class people themselves. They have proved that it is possible to lead a normal and consistent Christian life in a working-class community (Joslin, 1982: 197).

2.21 Contextualization

Luzbetak in his book, *The Church and Cultures* (1988: 192) defines contextualization as: "the translation of the unchanging content of the gospel of the kingdom into verbal forms, meaningful to the people in their respective cultures and within their particular existential situations." More pointedly, he describes contextualization as a process by which a local Christian community (the Local Church) integrates the Gospel message (the "text") with the real-life context, blending text and context into that single, God-intended reality called "Christian living." He further explains "Christian living" as "living as Christ would live *here and now* - that is, as he would behave, what he would teach *here and now*, and what his values and emotions, his underlying premises, attitudes, and drives would be if he belonged to the particular community we are dealing with."

Contextualization involves all aspects of the church, but especially the integrative process by which a Local Church integrates the Gospel message with its understanding of its culture.

2.21.1 The Local Church: the Primary Agent of Contextualization

Traditionally, the focus in mission was placed primarily on outsiders – on the missionary and the institutional and universal church. It was the *sending* church that “from the abundance of its heart,” so to speak, “accommodated” or “bent over backwards” to adjust to local ways and values, while the receiving church had really only a secondary listening and learning role to play (Luzbetak, 1988: 70). In a contextual model, however, the two most important and immediate agents involved in mission are the Holy Spirit and the local people of God.

2.22 The Function of the Church

The praxis is church-oriented, that is, it is directed to creating and developing membership of the Local Church. Cochrane (1991: 51) sketches three scenarios: First, due to *clericalism* which often dominates, the minister is called upon to perform a wide range of tasks: preaching, celebrating of the sacraments, administration, counselling, visiting, education, social work etc. Second, denominationally based Churches impose further layer of responsibility: meetings; committees and fraternal; regional and denominational structures make further demands of a minister’s time, and tend to focus the effort and praxis of the Church on its own institutional life. Third, in *poorer communities* even more time is taken up in making the Church financially viable – in fund-raising events and campaigns often absorbing a substantial proportion of the minister’s and members’ time and commitment. Day to day concerns make it difficult to reflect theologically on the Church’s praxis.

To be sure, the Church was not brought into being by our Lord simply to exist as an end to itself. Rather, it was brought into being to fulfil the Lord’s intention for it. It is to carry on the ministry in the world – to perpetuate what he did and to do what he did were he still here (Erickson, 2003: 1061). Clowney (1993: 139) is correct when he writes that the Church is not just another voluntary organization set up to accomplish

whatever ends its organizers think most appropriate. The Church is the community of God's saving rule, and the goals and forms of its ministry are determined by God. The Great Commission is very clear in this regard: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." (Matthew 28: 19-20).

The Church witnesses corporately to the world when it meets in worship. The primary end of coming together as the body of believers is '*God-ward*' - in praise and adoration, and then *towards itself*, in edification as the various ministries of the Spirit are manifest, especially in the preaching and the teaching of the Word. Finally, the congregational meeting serves as a witness *to the world*.

In this section, the major functions of the Church will be brought under focus namely, *evangelism*, *edification*, *worship*, and *social concern*. But since evangelism and social concern have been discussed in paragraph 2.15, only edification and worship will be considered in the next paragraph.

2.22.1 Edification

The second major function of the Church is the edification of believers. The edification of the Church is primarily concerned with building and developing of the community itself in the life of faith (Ephesians 4: 16; Jude 20; Colossians 1: 24). Erickson (2003: 1064) correctly maintains that the potential for edification is the criterion by which all activities, including speech, are to be measured: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building up (edifying) according to their needs, that may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4: 29).

There are several means by which members of the Church are to be edified. Only three are mentioned for the purpose and scope of this study. These are:

- First, through *koinonia*. Koinonia literally means having or holding things in common. In Acts 5, the members of the Early Church held their material possession in common. Paul speaks of sharing one another's experience: "If

one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.” (1 Corinthians 12: 26).

- Second, the Church also edifies its members through instruction and teaching. One of Jesus’ commands in the Great Commission was to teach converts “to obey everything that I commanded you.” (Matthew 28: 20). To this end, one of God’s gifts was to prepare and equip the people of God for service.
- Third, preaching is also another form of edifying the members of the Church. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul asserts that prophesying is of greater value than speaking in tongues, because it edifies or builds up the Church: “But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the Church.” (vv. 3-4).

2.22.2 Worship

Another activity of the Church is worship. Whereas edification focuses on the believers and benefits them, worship concentrates on the Lord. Glory is first brought to God in the Church through a thankful response to His grace: “He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honours me.” (Psalm 50: 23; cf. Hebrews 13: 15-16). He is further glorified through the lives of believers as they advertise His mighty acts (1 Peter 2: 9), yield fruits of righteousness in their lives (Philippians 1: 10-11), and wholeheartedly devote themselves to the ministry committed to them (1 Peter 4: 1). Good works and the presentation of new converts are also sacrifices well pleasing to God and resounding to His glory (Hebrews 13: 16; Philippians 4: 18).

The Church as the habitation of God (His household) through the Spirit is the temple in which His glory now resides on earth. As this glory shines forth through the transformation of each member into the glorious image of Christ from glory to glory, the Church fulfils its highest purpose.

2.23 Summary

The Church was not brought into being by our Lord simply to exist as an end to itself. Rather, it was brought into being to fulfil the Lord's intention for it. It is to carry on the ministry in the world – to perpetuate what he did and to do what he would do were he still here. The Church is not just another voluntary organization set up to accomplish whatever ends its organizers think most appropriate. The Church is the community living according to God's love and goals, and the form of its ministries is determined by God. The major functions of the Church are evangelism, edification, worship, and social concern.

In conclusion, this study contends that for the Church to fulfil its duty (evangelism, edification and worship), the (local) Church must have some form of government. In the paragraphs that follow, we consider different forms of Church Government.

2.24 The Government of the Church

The Church is the organized community of believers in a particular place. Church polity concerns the organization of the Local Church and the fellowship of churches in major assemblies in order to realize the rule of Christ as the Head of the Church according to the Word of God (Vorster, 2003: 1). Church polity deals with the arrangement of ministry in the Church with the aim to build the Church in an orderly and sound fashion. It also focuses on the way in which the Church should fulfil its function, i.e., worship, edification, and evangelism.

2.24.1 The Early (apostolic) Church

In his book, *A Theology of the New Testament*, George Eldon Ladd (1993: 388) suggests that in examining the organization of the *ekklesia*, we must trace the emergence Church leadership beyond the most primitive period. He maintains further that the earliest Church consisted of a free fellowship of Jewish believers who had in no way broken with Judaism, who continued in Jewish religious practices and worship. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah and had inaugurated the Messianic era, and they gathered together in homes (apparently) in the upper rooms for common meals and the

celebration of the Lord's Supper, for praise and worship, and to listen to apostles' teaching. Their only leaders were the apostles, whose authority was apparently spiritual but not legal. There was no organization and no appointed leaders. The Church was not what it is today: an organized institution. It was a small, open fellowship of Jews within Judaism. Of the twelve, three – Peter, James and John – filled the role of prominence as leaders over the nine (Acts 1: 13).

Ladd (1993: 389) further observes that aside from the apostles, the first formal leadership was chosen when internal problem arose within the Church. For example, Greek-speaking Jews who had returned to live in Jerusalem from the Diaspora had begun to complain because the widows of the native Hebrew-speaking Jews seemed to be favoured in daily distribution of food. Apparently the distribution of food had been under the direct superintendence of the apostles, and the task had become so unwieldy that they were laid open to the accusation of partiality (Acts 6: 1-2). To solve the problem, the twelve called a meeting of the Church and had seven men chosen to superintend this ministration. Possibly this is the source of the office of the deacon. Paul's instruction for qualifications for this position suggests financial responsibility (1 Timothy 3: 8; cf. Philemon 1: 1). One of these, Stephen, proved to be a very gifted in ministry of the Word (6: 8 ff.); but for the most part the Church had no well-defined form.

However, the (institutional) Church must have form; in fact it always does. The question remains: which form is prescribed in Scripture? Some argue that the method of Church organization and the office of the Church are not prescribed, and therefore not essential. Witherow (1978: 12-14) however discusses the essentials and non-essentials in religion, and indicates very pertinently and in no uncertain terms that: "though we may not regard the polity of the New Testament Church as essential to human salvation, we do not feel at liberty to undervalue its importance." Support for the freedom of form is sometimes taken from the fact that Christ gave no specific directions concerning the government of the Church. But R.L Saucy in his book, *The Church in God's Program* (1972: 105) correctly disputes this notion and asserts that the New Testament Church was not in existence at that time, and that Christ *did* promise to give additional truth through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, those downplay the importance of Church Government argue that the Church was made up of groups of believers scattered throughout the Mediterranean world from Antioch to Rome with no external or formal organization binding them together that the only obvious point of external or formal organization binding them together was Apostolic Authority (Ladd, 1993: 576). Paul, however claimed authority, especially in the teaching, and he insisted that his authority be recognized by all the churches. This authority was that of spiritual and moral persuasion, not formal and legal. For example, Acts pictures Paul exercising his authority at the Jerusalem Council in terms of persuasion rather than official authority. The final decision was made by the “apostles and elders, with the whole Church” (Acts 15:22 ff.).

However, the New Testament, recording as it does, the life of the Church from its inception through the apostolic period, presents a certain amount of variety in the Church form, due at least partially to the transitional nature of the period (Saucey, 1972: 105). Tanburn (1970: 29) concurs with this notion and adds: “The structure of the Apostolic Church must have been organic; there is no trace at first of any ‘given’ institutional pattern. Quite possibly, different forms of Church life evolved in different places and in different times.”

There have been elaborate controversies on the topic of Church Government. However, a common premise seemed to prevail throughout the debate that there is only one Scriptural system of Church Government and that system is mandatory for all times and places. The practice of the Church in the apostolic times, particularly as reflected in the New Testament, provides us with details of this mandate.

Finally, Erickson (2003: 1080) – like many ecclesiologists – correctly observes that throughout the history of the (institutional) Church, there have been several basic forms of Church Government. The various forms of Church Government that we find existing at present in the Christian world, may broadly be classified under the following heads: Prelacy (episcopal), Presbyterian, and Independency (congregational). These three forms of ecclesiastical polity are at this moment extensively prevalent in Christendom. Indeed, every other organization, that any body of Christians has adopted, is only a modification or mixture of some of these systems (Witherow, 1978: 15).

In the following paragraphs, we will begin with the most highly structured (Episcopacy) and move on to the less structured (congregationalism). Thereafter, an attempt will be made to determine which one is *scripturally* the most adequate than the rest.

2.24.2 Episcopacy (Prelacy)

Witherow (1978: 14) defines Prelacy or Episcopacy as that form of Church Government which is administered by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical office bearers, depending on the hierarchy.” In the episcopal form of Church Government, authority resides in the bishop. The name is derived from the Greek term for bishop, *episcopos*, meaning “overseer”. There are varying degrees of episcopacy, that is to say, the number of levels of bishops varies. The essential concept of this government is that the right to consecrate other bishops and ordain priests and deacons belongs only to the bishop. This provides for a succession of bishops and their rulership over subordinate ministries.

Erickson (2003: 1080) is of the view that the simplest form of episcopal government is found in the Methodist Church, which has only one level of bishops. Somewhat more developed is the governmental structure of the Anglican Church or Episcopal Church, while Roman Catholic Church has the most complete system of hierarchy with authority being vested especially in the supreme pontiff, the bishop of Rome, the pope. The genius of the episcopal system is that authority is fixed in a particular office, that of the bishop.

The succession of bishops is sometimes traced back to the apostles and thus termed “apostolic succession”. Others, denying that any continuous line can be traced all the way back to the apostles, prefer simply the term “historic episcopate” while still others, such as the Methodists, practice government by bishops, with no claim of historic succession (Saucey, 1972: 105).

One particular power of the bishop is ordination of ministers and priests. In laying hands upon a candidate for ordination, the bishop vests in the candidate the powers that are attached to the ministry. The bishop also has the authority of pastoral placement. In theory, this is absolute power to place a minister in a particular local parish. In practice,

however, the episcopacy has tended toward a greater democratization in recent years; the bishop or his representative usually consults the local congregation regarding their wishes and sometimes even permits the congregation a considerable amount of initiative in the matter (Erickson, 2003: 1082).

The most highly developed episcopal form of government is that found within the Roman Catholic Church. Here the bishop of Rome emerged as the supreme bishop and came to be known as the Pope or father of the entire Church. He governs through the archbishops, who superintended large areas. Beneath them are the bishops, to whom the priests are responsible. Until the Vatican 1 (1861-70), the Pope was viewed as having supreme authority only when he acted in concert with other bishops. At that council, however, it was decided that he has the supreme and virtually unlimited authority in his own right. Vatican 1 declared that when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* (in his official capacity) in matters of faith and practice, he is infallible. The exact character of his authority was never fully defined, however, for immediately after the decision was made, the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and the council had to adjourn before it could elaborate upon infallibility. In a sense, Vatican 11 (1962-65) was an attempt to take up and complete the unfinished business of Vatican 1 (Erickson, 2003: 1083).

Erickson (2003: 1083) enumerates three arguments made by those in support of episcopal form of Church Government:

- First, the case usually begins with a declaration that Christ is the founder of the Church. He provided it with an authoritative governing structure. For immediately after asserting that all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28: 18) he sent forth the eleven apostles in that authority (vv. 19-20; Acts 1: 8).
- Second, The position held by James within the Church in Jerusalem. His authority was similar to that later held by bishops. Here then is precedence for the episcopal system.
- Finally, there is the historical argument that there is a line of direct succession from the apostles to today's bishops.

2.24.3 Presbyterian Form of Church Government

Presbyterianism may be described as a confederation of Churches united under a common confession of faith. It advocates a hierarchy of ecclesiastical assemblies, or courts, in which a careful balance is maintained between clerics and lay people. The nature and range of jurisdiction as well as the form of procedures are carefully established in the Church Order.

The Presbyterian system of Church Government places primary authority in a particular office as well, but there is less emphasis on the individual office and officeholder than on the series of representative bodies that exercise authority. The key officer in this system is the elder, a position with a background in the Jewish synagogue. The Presbyterian form of Church Government consists of rulership by elders (*presbuteros*) as representatives of the Church. The Local Church is governed by the session which is composed of the ruling elders elected by the membership, with the preaching elder or minister as the presiding officer. The next higher-ranking body is the Presbytery, which includes all ordained ministers or *teaching elders* and one *ruling elder* from each local congregation in a given district. Above the Presbytery is the Synod, and over the Synod is the General Assembly, the highest court. Both these bodies are also equally divided between the ministers and the lay ruling elders (Saucey, 1972: 112).

Although both classes of elders (teaching and ruling), have equal authority, a distinction is usually maintained between their ministries, making the teaching elder the principal order. Teaching elders are ordained by other ministers, while the ruling elders are ordained by the local congregation. Furthermore, while ruling elders assist in the government of the Church, the ministry of the Word and sacraments belong to the teaching elder. It is of utmost importance, however, according to Presbyterianism, to maintain the parity of ministers. They are of equal ministries and there is no third order of ministry above them (Saucey, 1972: 112).

The Presbyterian system differs from the episcopal in that there is only one level of clergy. There is only the teaching elder or pastor. No higher levels such as bishop, exists. Of course, certain persons are elected to administrative posts within the ruling assemblies. They are selected (from below) to preside or supervise, and generally bear a

title such as clerk of the Presbytery. They are not bishops, there being no special ordination to such office. No special authority is attached to the office. The only power these officers have is an executive power to carry out the decision of the group that elected them. Thus the authority belongs to the body that elected them, not to the office or its occupant. Moreover, there is limited term to serve, so that occupancy of the office depends on the continued intention and will of the body (Erickson, 2003: 1087).

In the Presbyterian system, there is a deliberate coordinating of the clergy and laity. Both groups are included in all the various governing assemblies. Neither has special powers or rights which the other does not have. Saucey (1972: 155) however warns that the more rights of the individual local congregation are emphasized, the closer we get to independency, the system in which no jurisdiction can exist over the Local Church.

2.24.4 Congregational Form of Church Government

A third form of Church Government stresses the role of the individual Christian and makes the local congregation the seat of authority. Two concepts are basic to the congregational scheme: *autonomy* and *democracy*. By autonomy is meant that the local congregation is independent and self-governing. There is no external power that that can dictate courses of action to the Local Church. By democracy is meant that every member of the local congregation has a voice in its affairs. It is the individual members of the congregation who possesses and exercise authority. Authority is not the prerogative of a lone or select group (Erickson, 2003: 1088).

In this form or system of Church Government the distinctive principle is, that each separate congregation is under Christ subject to no external jurisdiction whatever, but has within itself – in its office-bearers and members – all the materials of government; and is such as it is at present in practical operation among Congregationalists and Baptists (Witherow, 1983: 14).

In this system, the congregation remains at all times free to take any decision it pleases, subject to its by-laws. (A violation of the by-laws might be appealed to a secular court). Matters in which the Church cannot function in isolation, such as ordination of

candidates for the ministry are accomplished by recourse to other independent churches with which there is an *association*.

This relationship however, does not curtail somewhat the autonomy of the local Church by conferring on a higher assembly some jurisdiction over it. Limited to a process of advice and fellowship, such a relationship may be terminated at will by an appropriate vote of the congregation. Since ordination is not meaningful if it does not involve recognition outside the Local Church, the need of some concurrence at this level tends at times to infringe on independency. The establishment of funds vested in the association rather in the local congregation, also acts as a centripetal force making association more difficult. On the one hand this approach has certain looseness that makes safeguarding the accountability by the individual ministers or congregations difficult. On the other hand, when the larger body is not in good spiritual health, it does ideally preserve the rights of the local congregation to keep free from infection.

Several arguments are advanced for making congregational system the normative form of Church Government. Erickson (2003: 1090) mentions some arguments:

- First, in the earliest days of the Church, which are accounted in the book of Acts, the congregation as a whole chose persons for office and determined policy. They chose Judas' successor (Acts 1). They selected the first deacons (Acts 6).
- Second, Jesus' teaching seems to be opposed to the special leadership positions found within the Episcopal and Presbyterian schemes. When his disciples dispute which of them was the greatest, Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not like that. Instead the greatest among you shall be like the youngest, and the one who rules like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22: 25-27).

- Third, another consideration is that both Jesus and Paul assigned the responsibility for discipleship to the group as a whole. In Jesus' discussion of the treatment of brother who has sinned, the final agent of discipline is the Church. If the offending brother refuses to listen to the Church, he is treated like a pagan or a tax collector (Matthew 10: 15-17). Paul instructed the Corinthian congregation as a whole (1 Corinthians 1: 2), not merely the elders, to put out of their fellowship the man who was living immorally with father's wife (1 Corinthians 5).

Beyond *independency* there are various forms of Church order that may generally be described by the term *anarchy*. When this occurs, a strong personality frequently takes over where constituted order should preferably prevail. This state of affairs then rejoins the principle of papacy, but often without checks and balances found in the Roman Catholic Church.

Non-government: A final view needs to be considered briefly. Actually, those who hold it do not advocate a particular form of Church government as much as what they advocate might best be termed no-government. A classical example is the Plymouth brethren. They deny that the Church has a need for a concrete visible form. Accordingly, they have virtually eliminated all government structure. They stress the inner working of the Holy Spirit, who exerts his influence upon and guides individual believers in a direct fashion rather than through organizations and institutions.

The Plymouth Brethren virtually eliminate the visible church. They hold that the Church exists on earth primarily in its visible form, which is made up of all true believers. Thus, there is no need for organization involving specific office-bearers as such. The presidency of the Holy Spirit is the ruling force.

Having given a broad overview of the three form of Church Government, it is appropriate to determine which of the there has more scriptural warrant, that is, whether it is close to the Apostolic Church, in terms of Church Government than others.

2.24.5 Evaluation of Different Church Governments

To evaluate the forms of Church Government as described in the previous paragraph, we will apply the *Six Principles* as suggested by Witherow (1983) namely:

- The office-bearers were chosen by the people.
- The office of bishop and elder was identical – that is, of a plurality of elders.
- There was a plurality of elders in each Church.
- Ordination was the act of the Presbytery.
- There was a privilege of appeal to the assembly of elders and the power of government was exercised by them in their associate capacity.
- The only Head of the Church was the Lord Jesus Christ.

The principle embodied in these six facts cover the whole platform of Church Government, each rising in importance above that which precedes it, in an ascending series, from popular Election up to the Headship of the Lord (Witherow, 1983: 58).

We proceed to bring the three present system of Church Government to the test of apostolic standard. We begin with the two extreme systems of Church Government namely, Prelacy or Episcopacy, and Independency or Congregationalism. The Presbyterian system of Church Government will be treated last, because this study sincerely and strongly believe (as will be evident in the following exposition), is the closets system of Church Government to that of the Apostolic Church and therefore the most biblical. As a result, the office of Presbyter and Deacon deserves closer scrutiny.

2.24.5.1 Prelacy

As already indicated, Prelacy is that system of Church Government which is dispensed by archbishops, bishops, priests, deans, and other office-bearers. It is exemplified in the Church of Rome and the Church of England, both of which are prelatic in their government; the difference being that the prelacy of Rome vests the ecclesiastical supremacy in the Pope, while the prelacy of England vests in the reigning monarch.

Taking the Church of England as an example, Witherow (1983: 61-77) further distinguishes the following features in the Church of England and compares them with those of the Apostolic Church:

- In the Apostolic Church office-bearers were chosen by the people; but in the Church of England, archbishops and bishops are chosen by the crown, and the subordinate clergy are appointed to their charges either by the diocesan, or by the landed superior, or by civil corporation. The people of the Apostolic Church exercised the privilege of electing an apostle as evidenced by the election of Matthias in the place of Judas (Acts 1: 21-26).
- In the Apostolic Church, the office of bishop and elder was identical; the elders of Ephesus were bishops of the flock; but, in the Church of England, it is very different. The rector wields the jurisdiction of a parish; but the bishop governs a diocese, that equally includes a whole multitude of parishes.
- In the Church of England ordination is an act exclusively performed by the prelate; he may ask others to unite with him, but it is his presence not theirs that is essential to the act, whereas in the Apostolic Church, it was the practice to ordain men to the office of the ministry with the laying of hands of the Presbytery.
- In the Church of England, no matter what ecclesiastical grievance may exist, there is no power of appeal except to the courts of law, the Queen's Privy Council, or some tribunal. The practice is unknown in the denomination of bringing any matter for consideration before the assembly of elders for them to decide upon, in accordance with the apostles' word. But this was the mode in which affairs were managed in the Apostolic Church.
- In the Church of England the monarch is, by act of Parliament, head of the Church, whereas, in the apostolic times, the Church had no head but Jesus Christ.

In the light of the foregoing comparison, it may be safe to conclude that none of the great principle of the Apostolic Church are met by the ecclesiastical scheme of Episcopacy.

2.24.5.2 Independency

Witherow (1983: 62) correctly observes that it is difficult to ascertain the particulars of ecclesiastical order approved by Independents as every congregation stands apart from any other and may differ sometimes widely on important points. However, its characteristics are compared with those of the Apostolic Church:

- The principle of popular election existed, as we have already mentioned, in the Primitive Church, and had the sanction of the apostle of the Lord. Among the Independents this principle is preserved in its integrity: with them every ecclesiastical office-bearer is chosen by the people.
- In the Apostolic Church the office of bishop and elder was identical: the bishop did not exercise any authority over the elder; on the contrary, every bishop was an elder, and every elder a bishop. So it is with the Independents. With them a bishop and elder are only different names for the same office-bearer, as it was in apostolic days.
- As regards the principle of plurality of elders, the Independents fail. With them there is only one minister, or bishop, or elder, in each congregation.
- The office-bearers of the Apostolic Church were set apart to the discharge of their particular duties with the laying of the hands of the Presbytery. Among Independents, however, ordination of any sort is not essential; frequently it is counted unnecessary. Ordination is not required by the system. With them it is mere matter of taste, left in each case to the individual choice. If the newly-elected pastor chooses to have himself ordained, it can only be done in a way inconsistent with independent principles.

- In the Apostolic Church there was the privilege of appeal to the assembly of elders. Among the Independents nothing of this kind exists. The distinctive principle of their system precludes all appeal. The decision of the pastor, and deacon, and people assembled in a church meeting is final in every case. No matter how partial or unjust their decision is left to be, there is no power of bringing the sentence under review of a less prejudiced and more enlightened tribunal.
- The Headship of Christ was a principle of Apostolic times. Independents acknowledge this principle in all its integrity.

2.24.5.3 Presbyterianism

The term *Presbyterian* is derived from the word *presbytery*, because the leading characteristic of this form of Church Government is, that it entrusts the duty of ruling the Church to the Presbytery – that is, to the presbyters or elders of the Church in their assembled capacity. We also bring this system of Church Government to the standard of the Apostolic Church.

- In the Apostolic Church, we have mentioned frequently already, that popular election was an admitted principle. So it is with Presbyterianism. In this system, the members of the congregation invariably elect their own office-bearers. This privilege has unfortunately often been abused. However, it is a scriptural privilege that the Apostolic Church bequeaths us, and Presbyterians have often shown that they count it more precious than gold.
- In the primitive age, the office of bishop and elder was identical. It is so in the Presbyterian Church. Every elder is a bishop, or overseer of the flock. There are two departments in the office of the elder – that of teaching, and that of ruling; but the office itself is one.
- There was a plurality of elders or bishops in each congregation of the Apostolic Church. Such is the practice in every Presbyterian Church at the

present day. There is in each of their congregations a number of persons ordained to the office of the eldership, one of whom at least gives himself to the work of ministry in its various departments, particularly that of instruction, while the others give their principal attention to ruling the Church of God.

- Presbyterians, therefore, maintain a plurality of elders in every Church; and as it was in the apostolic days, it is customary among them to rule who do not labour in Word and doctrine. Any unprejudiced person may see from 1 Timothy v. 17, that the office of the leadership divided itself into two great departments of duty in primitive times, even at present. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in word and doctrine.”
- Office-bearers were set apart to their distinctive spheres of duty in the Apostolic Church with the laying of hands of the Presbytery. The Presbyterian Church, in its several branches carries this Scriptural principle invariably into practice.
- In the Apostolic Church, the Lord Jesus alone was King and Head. This is a truth acknowledged by all Presbyterians. All Presbyterian Churches rank among their most cherished, as well as distinctive principles, that Christ alone is *King and Head of the Church*.

2.24.5.4 The Result

On comparing Prelacy with the standard of the Divine Word, it is found that not one of the apostolic principles of government is recognized or embodied. Among the Independents, three of the apostolic principles are exemplified in practice; the remaining three are nowhere to be found. Among the Presbyterians, these six principles are all acknowledged, and every one of them is a major feature of the Presbyterian system. It may be safe therefore to conclude that in point of government, the Presbyterian System is the only one that upholds the principle of the Apostolic Church (Witherow, 1983: 58).

2.25 Conclusion

Churches have historically chosen different kinds of governance. Because practices vary and the Bible does not require one form, one cannot be overly dogmatic as to what type is biblical and which is not. Certainly in administering governance, churches may err and even reflect corruption. The Reformers of the sixteenth century pointed out this corruption. Each form of Church Government has strengths and weaknesses. As a result, and because of a wide range of images or pictures available in the Gospels and the Epistles from which Church Models are derived, it may be useful and this final stage of the literature study, to briefly navigate some of the Church Models which, in the words of Conn (1985: 98 ff.) explain “how and why things got to be as they are and, how and why they continue or change” (cf. paragraph 1.1, page 1).

2.26 Church Models

Wagner (1999:85) in his book, *Churchquake* observes that the traditional view of the role of the pastor as ‘elder’ sees the pastor as a servant whose main task is to enable members to accomplish what they desire. This role, he believes, is inadequate and limiting in terms of evangelism. The emerging new-style apostolic church sees the pastor as an ‘equipper’, one who actively sets goals for the congregation, based on his understanding of God’s will and then obtains goal-ownership from the people (see also Stevens and Collins 1993). According to Stevens and Collins, the pastor ensures that every member is properly motivated, mobilized and equipped to his or her part in accomplishing the goals.

While lay people feel underemployed, doing ‘busy-work’ in the church, pastors feel over-employed, trying to shoulder the impossible burden of being a minister of the church. Getting under-employed laypersons and over-employed pastors together is therefore not an easy task.

Stevens and Collins (1993, in the introductory chapter of their book, *Equipping Pastor* observe that releasing the people of God for ministry involves more than distributing the work of the church equitably. They identify the following problems with regard to the issue of equipping the laity:

- ***Over-functioning leaders***

Pastors and lay leaders feel stuck with all the responsibility for the church – from dreaming up new programmes to locking up at night.

- ***Unmotivated laity***

Pastors introduce lay training programmes but cannot motivate people to get involved. Lay people are passive receivers; the object of the pastor's ministry rather than subjects of ministry themselves.

- ***Standardized pastoral roles***

Churches view pastors as replaceable parts in a machine and compare the incumbent with the previous pastor or measure a pastor's performance by standardized criteria. Many pastors feel called to a congregation even though they can see that it is not a good gift.

- ***Leaders burnout***

Pastors blame themselves when they burn out. Congregations also blame the pastor, but the discouraged pastor may be a symptom of a problem in the church. The pastor has become the identified 'burnout'.

- ***Recurring problems***

Decade after decade, generation after generation, the same problem surface, even though there has been a change of actors in the play, and 'new blood' has been introduced. A church born of a split keeps splitting. The polluting negativism of significant members lingers long after they had left or died.

- ***Maintenance focus***

Most congregations are inward looking, focused on self-preservation rather than mission. Mission is the special interest of a few highly motivated members in the congregation.

The reason for the unreleased congregational potential is firstly, the problem of *clericalism* – pastors protecting their turf. Lane and Young (1977:25) give the following as some of the possible descriptions of clericalism:

- Clericalism is giving lip service to the importance of lay leadership while refusing to surrender authority.
- Clericalism is that system which leaves priests, set apart, separated, isolated, alone, lonely and often feeling very unsupported.
- Clericalism is asserting the value and importance of lay participation but limiting or prohibiting them the task of adult education, preaching and pastoring.
- Clericalism is a system of power relations in which status, hierarchy, pecking orders, authority and control have become to be regarded as the ‘good order of the church’.
- Clericalism is priests coming to symbolize power and authority and being set apart in the church rather exemplifying openness, vulnerability and identification with the weak and the powerless.

The second is *ecclesiology*: our focus is on institutional church. Ecclesiology is one area in which lay opinion, especially on the practical level, will be important. Dixon and Hodge (1979: 150-167) discuss five models of the church without trying to defend or refute one or the other. They are the church institution, as mystical commission, as herald, and as a servant.

2.26.1 The Institutional Model

This model stresses the hierarchical authority in its role of teaching and governing the laity. It sees the purpose of the church as teaching, ruling, and sheltering its members and seeking to save outsiders by bringing them into the institution.

2.26.2 The Mystical Model

This model stresses strong community relationships with God and with one another in Christ. It sees the purpose of the church as establishing rich personal relationships through which individuals can find communion with God.

2.26.3 The Sacramental Model

This model is a synthesis of the institutional and mystical commission models. The Church is itself a sacrament, signifying in a tangible form the redeeming grace of Christ. As a sign, it must connect itself with apostolic times and it must demonstrate to all persons the redeeming love of Christ. This model sees the purpose of the church as bearing witness to the true nature and meaning of grace as God's gift in Jesus Christ. The sacraments are important in its life.

2.26.4 The Herald Model

This model stresses the Word. It sees the church as a herald coming to proclaim God's Word to the world through its preaching. Therefore the church has no particular eternal form, but exists wherever the Word is preached and believed. This model has been central to Protestantism.

2.26.5 The Servant Model

This model is distinctive in that it focuses outside itself. It stresses that the church must be the body of Christ, the suffering servant. The church must give itself to serving the broken world without thought of itself. This model stresses service to the whole man, not just the spiritual side of man. The church must be prophetic as well as pastoral; it must engage in serious social action as well as preaching and administering sacraments.

The last two models have been more prominent in recent decades than earlier, and they have a more Protestant flavour than others. Research on lay members' view of the church is imperative in order to be able to adequately equip them in their various ministries.

2.27 Summary

In this chapter various aspects of the church were explored with the aim of providing an occasion for a re-think (biblically and theologically), about the shape, structure and dynamics of the Local Church.

Throughout this chapter the Scriptures (as the main source), along with other available resources in the field of critical and theological research was used to probe the perceptions about the concept *Church*. The following received attention:

- Definition of the concept Church. The Biblical use of the concept was discussed and substantial reflection on etymology was done with the view to shed more light on the definition of the concept *church*.
- Characteristics of the Church. Four requirements for, or marks of the Church of Christ have been investigated in this chapter, namely the preaching of the *Word*, the administration of *sacraments*, the exercise *Church Discipline*, and lastly, the *missionary nature of the Church*. It was established that that these characteristics can only find expression in the visible Local Church.
- The Attributes of the Church. Four attributes of the Church, namely, Unity, Holiness, Catholicity, Apostolicity, have been discussed. It was established that although the Church has been expressed in these exalted terms, it has almost always been admitted that the local churches did not measure up to these ideals in all respects. These attributes, must manifest themselves in the Local Church, otherwise they will remain only colourful statements about the Church.
- Some categories in the discussions about the Church. Categories which feature prominently in the theological debates about the true Church of Christ have been explored. These are: the church as *Visible* and *Invisible*, the church as *Local* and *Universal*, the church as *Organization* and *Organism*, and finally, the church *Militant* and *Triumphant*. This varied use of these concepts in the Bible provides us with a balanced view of the (local) Church.
- Images of the Church. The three images that Paul uses, namely, the people of God, the body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit have been considered. All these images almost invariably refer to the local churches.
- Problems within and outside the Church. Issues such as dispensationalism, evangelism and social concern, the lay-clergy issues, emanate from within the

Church. From the discussions about concepts such as pluralism and relativism, indigenization and contextualization, it is however evident that factors outside the Church can also contribute towards the decline in the mission of the (local) Church.

- **Functions of the Church.** In this chapter the major functions of the Local Church were investigated, namely, evangelism, edification and social concern. It was once more established that these functions must be performed by the Local Church.
- **Church Government.** Various forms of Church Government were discussed in this chapter. These are: Prelacy, Presbyterianism, and Independency. These three forms of ecclesiastical polity (or at least a mixture of them) are, at this moment, exclusively prevalent in the local churches.
- **Church Models.** Five models were discussed, namely, the church as institutional, mystical, sacrament, herald and servant.

Having given a summary of the contents of this chapter, it is now important to provide a conclusion.

2.28 Conclusion

The theoretical framework of this research has been established in this chapter. This entailed how scholars have theorised and conceptualised on the research topic. The assumption was that the Bible, (rather than traditions, comfortable habits, or past practices) should guide us in expanding and improving the ministry of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle.

Having explored how the Bible should guide us in our ecclesiastical formulations, Chapter Three will consider the final component for the building of a model of the Local Church for the Vaal Triangle, which forms the study area for this research project. In this research, the Vaal Triangle constitutes the environment within which the Local Church must function. This chapter will deal with some of the following aspects:

- the early history of the Vaal triangle
- its location
- socio-economic developments
- industries
- some institutions, and finally
- the major political events in the area.

It is hoped that this approach will provide adequate information that will serve as the necessary material for designing a relevant research method in Chapter Four, and for eventually proposing a Model of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle which will be appropriate for the conditions in the area.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The Vaal Triangle as Context of the Church

3.1 Introduction

Hiebert *et al* (1995: 369) maintains that mission (and therefore the ministry of the Church) is more than a text. It takes flesh in human *context*. *The Longman Dictionary of Cotemporary English* (new edition) defines context as the surrounding conditions in which something takes place. Hiebert *et al* (1995: 369) suggest that we must make the gospel known *not* to humans in general, but to real people who live in particular times and places in history, who are members of real societies and share common languages and cultures. We *must* therefore proclaim divine revelation to people in their diverse settings. Just as Christ chose to live in a particular time and setting, so we must incarnate our ministry in the context of the people we serve.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to discuss the Vaal Triangle as *that* context within which the church must function. To achieve this objective, an overview of the history and the establishment and development of the towns and townships comprising the Vaal Triangle will be discussed. The discussion will also include aspects such as *population growth, economic realities, health services, educational institutions, church communities* and the *major political events* in the Vaal Triangle. These aspects, we believe, will influence the type of ministries of the Church in the area. Hofmyer and Pillay in the foreword of their book, *A History of Christianity in South Africa* (1994) are also of the view that these aspects would influence the inner life of the church, its worship, liturgy, doctrine, and mission.

However, in describing the history and urbanization of the Vaal Triangle as the context in which the church functions, it must be stated at the outset, that the discussion of the major towns of the Vaal Triangle, namely Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton, and Sasolburg, will each be followed immediately by the township(s) which were prior to 1994, mainly populated by Blacks. The reason for this approach is simply because historically, the white towns and black townships differed, and still differ significantly

from each other in terms of socio-economic, political, as well as infrastructure and service delivery, to mention but a few (cf. Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 31-37).

3.2 The Early History of the Vaal Triangle

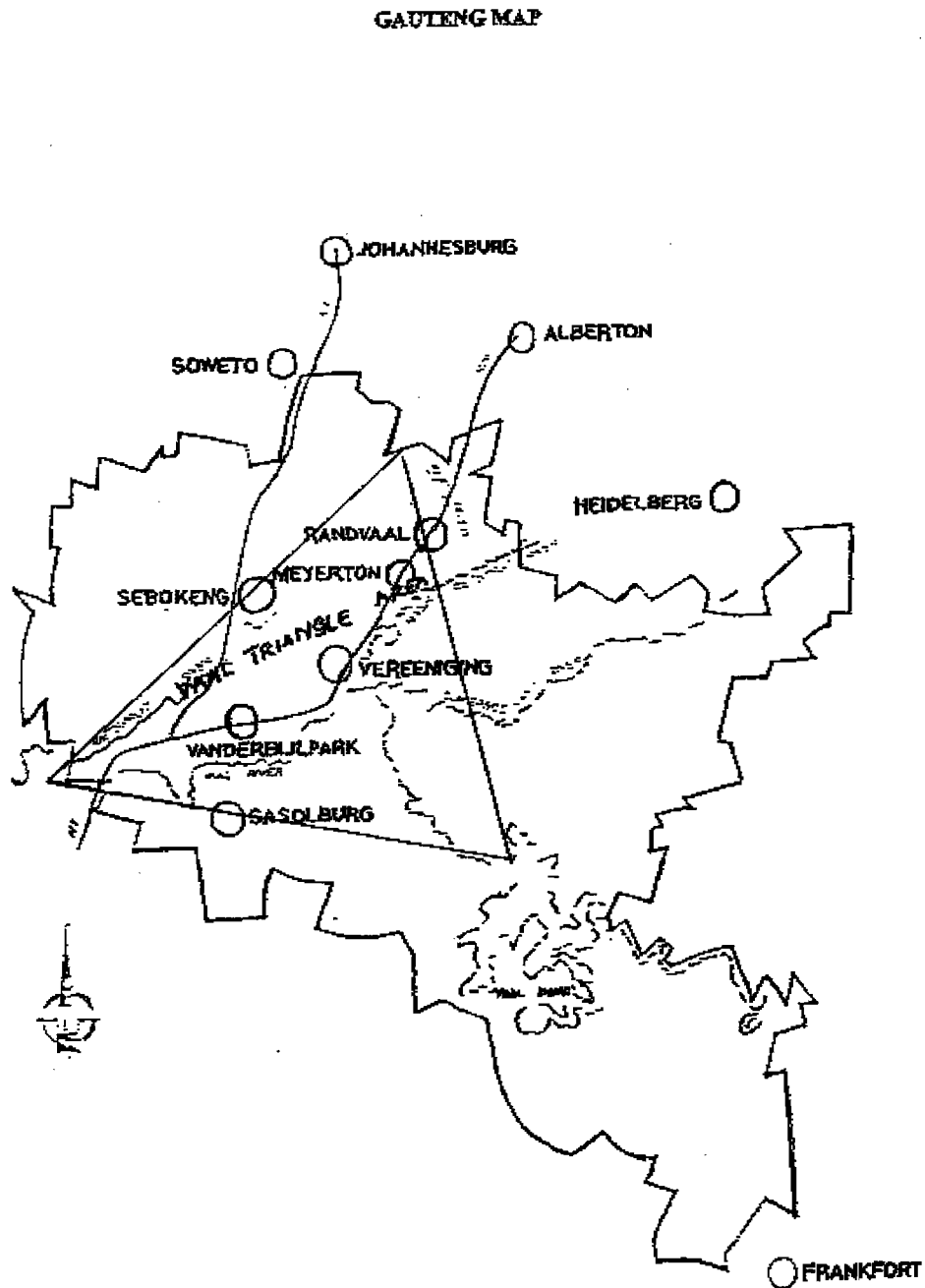
Plaatjie (2002: 1) states that this area which is now called the Vaal Triangle was originally called *Lekoa*. He indicates further that according to oral history, Moshoeshoe called this place Lekoa when he referred to the end of the natural boundary of Lesotho: *Le Koa*, meaning that Lesotho is, or stretches that far. As a result the river *Lekoa* became known as that natural boundary of Lesotho and became known by that name. With the arrival of the Afrikaners, the river was called the *Vaal River* which means *grey*. Plaatjie further reminds that Moshoeshoe frequently waged fights with the Batlokoa people who were led by Queen Manthatise who was a regent for her son Sekonyela. What is now called Potchefstroom was, in the days of Moshoeshoe, called Tlokoeng and probably formed part of Lesotho (Plaatjie, 2002: 1).

Van Zyl (1993: 56-58) is of the view that the process of urbanization started in the early 1880's after coalfields were discovered in 1879, next to the Vaal River. He further indicates that the exploitation of coal and the development of industries made the recruitment of African workers a necessity. The continuous shortage of labour was worsened by the poor living conditions as well as the death rate among the African workers (Van Zyl, 1993: 56-58).

The industries in Vereeniging (and later Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton and Sasolburg) made use of Migrant labour System (most people from Lesotho) as well as Circle-of-labour System. According to van Zyl (1993: 2) the industries preferred migrant labourers rather than the permanent residents because migrant labourers adapt themselves far more readily to their peculiar industrial conditions. Migrant labourers were housed in compounds and consequently the Corporation was able to exercise some control over them, but more significantly, they were less prone to be exposed to any form of political agitation and subversive activities. They were more readily accepting to the types of work which, among others, involved heavy physical labour (*Ibid*).

3.3 Towns and Townships Constituting the Vaal Triangle

Figure No. 1 The Vaal Triangle – Orientation in relation to the rest of South Africa



Source: Mahlasela, E.R. Dissertation for magister Commercii (2000)

The name *Vaal Triangle* was given to the towns of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg, each with its own suburbs. Meyerton later became part of the Vaal Triangle. This region was part of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) area. The African townships of the Vaal Triangle, namely, Evaton, Sharpeville, Bophelong, Boipatong, Sebokeng, as well as Zamdela and Refengkgotso in the Free State, formed part of the Vaal Triangle. Rus-ter-Vaal and Roshnee in Vereeniging belonged to the Coloureds and Indians respectively (cf. Prinsloo, 1994: 21-22). Rev. A.E Kharoli (of the Uniting Reformed Church, and former resident of Meyerton) confirms that the name “*Me-r-to-ne*” as it was popularly known and used by black residents for the township, was derived from the name of the town *Meyerton*.

In addition, in around all the black townships of the Vaal Triangle, many informal settlements mushroomed in recent years. Mohapi (2002: 78) also alludes to the existence of informal settlements when he writes, “... the primary motivation for moving to informal settlements were just to have somewhere to live, to be independent of extended families, to escape paying rent, or poor relationships with the landlords in their previous homes.” As a consequence of the mush-rooming of these informal settlements, the Vaal Triangle has a diverse structure, ranging from urban conditions to rural setting. This has made parity in terms of infrastructure and service delivery, very difficult for the local authorities (Sedibeng – IDP Report, 2006/2007).

3.3.1 Vereeniging

3.3.1.1 Location and Establishment

Vereeniging is situated at the confluence of the famous “three rivers” namely, the Vaal, Suikerbos and Klip Rivers, and 60 km south of Johannesburg. In 1878 the pioneer geologist William Stow, who was prospecting on behalf of the government of the Orange Free State, discovered coal on the Leeukuil farm near Vereeniging. The Orange Free State Republic felt that the discovery was of little value, but Stow succeeded in interesting Samuel Marks who commissioned him to ‘purchase and develop all the farms on which he judged coal exists’. This Stow did, and Samuel Marks formed a company called ‘*De Zuid Afrikaansche en Orangje Vry Staatsche Kolen en Mineralen Vereeniging*’, for the purposes of mining the coal and developing the area (Vereeniging,

Year Book, 2002-2004: 316). In 1882 the company applied for permission to establish a township on Leeukuil farm. It was only seven years later, that President Kruger approved the application for the establishment of a village at Vereeniging. By 1892, the area had been surveyed and stands were sold by public auction in Johannesburg. The name 'Vereeniging', given to the new town by the Transvaal Government, was taken from the name of the company (Vereeniging, Year Book, 2002/2004: 316).

Very important in the history of Vereeniging is the fact that in May 1902, Samuel Marks offered the Boer and British generals a meeting place at Vereeniging to discuss peace terms at the end of the Anglo-Boer War. The terms were drafted there, though the actual signing of the peace treaty took place in Pretoria on 31 May 1902. City status was acquired during 1902, ten years after its founding (Vereeniging, Year Book, 2002-2004: 316). Thus Vereeniging, which would later be known as the industrial giant of the Vaal Triangle, came into existence.

Equally important in the history of Vereeniging, is the signing of the new constitution into law of the new democratic South Africa in December 1996, in the nearby Sharpeville by the newly elected president Nelson Mandela.

3.3.1.2 Industrial Development

Vereeniging is primarily an industrial town. Its development as such is assured because of the abundance of the main requirements of industry, namely water, coal and electricity. The Rand Water Board (RWB) supplied water from the Vaal River to the surrounding area. Heavy deposits of coal were discovered at Viljoensdrift and Coalbrook along the Vaal River in the Orange Free State, and Escom supplied electricity to the gold-mines as far as Klerksdorp in the West and Springs in the far East Rand. As a result of the abundance of these important industrial materials, since 1912 a number of important industries were established in the Vereeniging industrial township, Duncanville. These industries included among others, the manufacturing of iron and steel products, steel tubes, steel wire, bolts and nuts, electrical cables, glass, agricultural implements, bricks and tiles, and oxy-acetylene. The town has excellent opportunities for angling, rowing and aquatic sports on the Vaal River. The Maccauvlei near

Richmond (in the Free State), is a well know 18-hole championship golf course (Potgieter *et al*, 1974: 310).

Potgieter et al (1974: 310), indicates that: “The industries created jobs for many people in the area, with the resultant urbanization, population growth and its concomitant unemployment, poverty and crime”, among others.

In the paragraph that follows, a brief overview of the black townships of Vereeniging namely, Evaton, Top Location and Sharpeville, is presented.

3.3.1.3 Evaton

Evaton (the oldest of the six townships of Vaal Triangle) is situated approximately 50 km south-east of Johannesburg, within the Vereeniging region. It was established in 1904 and was one of the few remaining townships in which land tenure or property rights were formerly restored to Africans. Evaton was originally a freehold township and, although most owners were forced to sell their properties when government policy opposed freehold in the townships, a few residents still own the plots on which their houses are built (Mashabela, 1988: 79).

Van der Westhuizen (1997: 2) indicates that the farm Wildebeesfontein No. 406 in Evaton was subdivided into plots for sale to both Whites and Blacks. To this effect, Landjobber Easton & Adams divided the farm Wildebeesfontein into 2 633 one acre stands. Of these stands, 833 were bought by Whites and 1 800 by Blacks. The area set aside for Blacks at that time (1905) was sold out during the 1920s. The plots in Evaton were originally sold at 20 to 25 pounds per acre. In 1938 a further 400 acres were sold to back people for 50 pounds per acre. In 1930s the residents depended on wells for their water supply.

In 1918, the Native Land Commission of the West Transvaal visited the area and recommended that the stands belonging to indigenous people and the surrounding area known as *Small Farms* should become a propriety area. Thus, Evaton was the only place in Vereeniging region where Blacks could have property rights (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 2).

Many black families who lost their place of residence in Vereeniging (and also when Top Location residents were forcibly moved to Sharpeville) went to Evaton (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 2; cf. Molibeli, 2000: 5). Even as Apartheid displaced millions of black people, robbing them of land, Evaton was never completely disposed. While properties belonging to individual families were seized, much of the community still retained their properties and, were to bear witness to the political changes of post 1994 in the Vaal Triangle and the country as a whole (Vaal Weekly, 2004: 4-10). Evaton essentially developed as an axis for a new reality for the indigenous people of South Africa. It acted as a transit point for the movement of people across socio-economic boundaries. People from rural areas across Africa sought refuge in Evaton, as it was close to the cities where they were employed. Evaton's proximity to the Johannesburg mines and industries made it an ideal settlement for workers from as far north as Malawi, right down to the Cape Peninsula (Vaal Weekly, 2004: 4-10).

Over the past century Evaton has also been home to some of South African Africa's most outstanding achievements across a broad spectrum of social, economic, political and sports endeavours. For example, business leader Sam Motsuenyane, Cabinet Minister Ben Skhosana, President Robert Mugabe and the late Elijah Mokone (regarded by many as South Africa's greatest boxer), are all among the luminary products of Evaton. Evaton is also well-known because of the existence of the famous Wilberforce Institute which trained teachers and clerics and which is currently being developed as Wilberforce Community College (Vaal Weekly, 2004: 4-10).

3.3.1.4 Top Location

Top Location is the second oldest township in the Vaal Triangle. In 1911 the Union Steel Corporation (a scrap metal company), was started in Vereeniging and spawned Top Location about three years later. In the original planning of Vereeniging, 24 stands were set aside for a black settlement. Indians and Coloureds also lived on these stands. Blacks settled informally in areas that belonged to Vereeniging Estates. In 1912, Vereeniging Estates gave permission that the local authority may have the right to plan residential areas for Blacks and Indians. Top Location was proclaimed as a black location in 1914 (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 2).

The name *Top Location* was for the first time officially used in the 1940s. Before this period, documents refer to it as Vereeniging Location. By 1919, Top Location had 576 residents. Top Location was enlarged in 1925 and 1927. The enlargement seemed inadequate as in 1931 the Top Location area scaled up. In 1932, 772 additional stands were made available for residential purposes. The City Council obtained a loan to build two-roomed houses on 36 of these stands (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 3).

Accommodation for unmarried men and women was built. In 1936, six three bed-roomed houses were built by the Council. The Council rented the location houses out, and taps were placed at central points in the location (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 5).

From 1932 until the relocation of the people of Top Location in 1959, residential stands were no longer available to black people of Vereeniging. The size of Top Location however remained 61 morgen. In 1935 the population of people in Vereeniging was estimated at 12 000 in total, and 6 400 of them lived in Top Location. In 1938 Top Location had more or less 10 000 residents, and in 1942 the number had increased to about 12 259 (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 3).

Between 15 and 20 people lived on a single stand. In some cases up to 45 people lived on one stand. Overcrowding was the order of the day. Despite the number of black people arriving in Vereeniging, nothing was done to enlarge the residential area for Backs. Most of the people were placed under the class of lodgers. Stands in Top Location were small (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 3).

Top Location, popularly known as Topville, was a fenced-in permit-controlled migrant settlement with Sophiatown-type personality adjoining the area today known as Duncanville. In Top Location people of different races lived and socialised together (Profile Frame: History of Sharpeville, 2007: 1-2). Between the forties and late fifties, because of the implementation of the Group Areas Act, the residents were moved to a new township, Sharpeville. Residents from Top Location resented Sharpeville. To them Sharpeville was unattractive and boring; it did not have famous shebeens. The social fabric of a new place was incongruent and incoherent. Sharpeville was constantly and strictly under the vigilant control of the Town Council. To this end, sporadic police raids were launched into Sharpeville to weed out Tsotsis, rent defaulters, prostitutes and

those who had no Lodger's permits and passes (Plaatjie, 2002: 3; cf. Molibeli, 2000: 5). Moreover, people were terrified over the years with the threat of losing their homes and others lost their citizenship as boundaries were drawn to incorporate them into Bantustans (areas designated for Blacks according to their language and culture). People of mixed blood from Top Location were moved to Rus-ter-Vaal and the Indians to Roshnee (Profile Frame: History of Sharpeville, 2007: 1-2).

However, in 2004 the present government compensated residents from Top Location for the loss of their properties and land. An amount of R 60 000 was paid to all former residents or their dependents (Profile Frame: History of Sharpeville, 2007: 1-2).

3.3.1.5 Sharpeville

The next oldest township in the Vaal Triangle is Sharpeville. Sharpeville was named after John Lillie Sharpe. Sharpe was born in Glasgow, Scotland and came to South Africa to become the secretary of Stewards and Lloyds, a company which still exists in Vereeniging. He was elected to the Town Council of Vereeniging in 1932 and became the mayor of Vereeniging from 1934-1937. He involved himself with the plight of African people in Vereeniging. He died in 1937 (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 1; cf. Leigh, 1968: 91-99).

Vereeniging Estates owned ground on which a newly planned black location for Vereeniging was to be erected. Negotiations between the Town Council and Vereeniging Estates regarding the property started in 1935. According to the 1912 agreement between the local authority and Vereeniging Estate, 1 000 morgen of land was set aside for the future settlement of Black and Indian community (Plaatjie, 2002: 3).

The main reason for the establishment of Sharpeville was because of the removal and relocation of the Blacks from Top Location to an area away from Vereeniging. Top Location was seen to be "too close" to Vereeniging. To be sure, by 1945 Top Location was surrounded by white residential and business areas (Plaatjie, 2002: 3).

The plan with the establishment of Sharpeville was that it should provide an answer to the housing problem of Vereeniging's black community. During the first years, the area was called Sharp Native Township. During the 1950s the name was changed to Sharpeville. It was envisaged that it should take five years to resettle the Top Location people in Sharpeville. It took over twenty years to move the people (Plaatjie, 2002: 3).

During the 1930s, a small squatter community settled at the area where Sharpeville later developed. The company, Brick & Tile (later called Vereeniging Refractory) in Vereeniging employed some of these black people and also provided houses for them. When the City Council bought the area earmarked for Blacks from Vereeniging Estates, about seven families were living there already. Some of them had already built brick houses (Plaatjie, 2002: 3).

When the second phase of the first houses in Sharpeville started in 1942, another squatter developed. The effects of the Second World War caused delays, especially with obtaining of building material. The City Council issued an eviction order. In April 1944 the number of families squatting in Sharpeville had risen to 83. The name used by residents for this squatter was Shanty Town (Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 3-5).

In those days, urban housing was the responsibility of the White Municipality and it is said that Vereeniging was one of the first municipalities in South Africa to provide better housing for Africans compared to most townships around the country. Most of these houses consisted of two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen; with the whole house covering about 45 square metres. The roofs were made of asbestos with no ceiling and no bathrooms, but with a toilet in the yard. For the number of residents living there, Sharpeville was poor indeed, but it was also rich in the detail and buzz of day-to-day existence.

It was at Sharpeville where the fateful events of 21 March 1960 took place (Profile Frame: History of Sharpeville, 2007: 1-2).

3.3.2 Vanderbijlpark

3.3.2.1 Location and Establishment

The next very important and big town in the Vaal Triangle is Vanderbijlpark. Vanderbijlpark is situated on the north banks of the Vaal River and very close to the Golden Highway from Johannesburg to Bloemfontein, 65 km South-West of Johannesburg and 13 km West of Vereeniging.

The town owes its establishment and growth to the development of the iron and steel industry under the leadership of Dr. H.J van der Bijl. The South African Iron and Steel Industrial Corporation (ISCOR) had been producing steel in 1934; and when the steel plant in Pretoria could not be expanded any further, ISCOR purchased nearly 10 000 hectares of barren land on the Vaal River on the recommendation of Dr. Van der Bijl in order to build new factories and housing. He wanted the industrial workers to live in an environment that would contribute to the happiness of their families and their social and moral well-being, and he also insisted on a town laid out according to the most modern concepts of urban planning. For this purpose ISCOR's own town planning company, the Vanderbijlpark Estate Company (Vesco), was established in 1944. The outcome was the steel town, Vanderbijlpark, the largest of its kind in Africa, proclaimed in 1959 and named after the man whose far-sightedness it owes its existence. Simultaneously with the opening of the steel works by the Governor General, Dr E.G Jansen, on 20 October 1952, the town achieved full municipal status. The town's coat of arms bearing the motto *Nostri cura futuri* means "our care is for the future" (Potgieter et al, 1974: 131).

Dr. Van der Bijl's vision for the town is clearly stated in his credo: "I shall probably not live to see the coming of the full realisation of the ideals I cherish for this place, but when it comes I hope it will be a model, a place where people from the highest to the humblest can say '*its good to be alive*' (Prinsloo, 1994: 2).

3.3.2.2 Later Developments

Vanderbijlpark is a model town in which industrial and residential areas are separated, yet easily accessible. Each residential area has its shopping centre, and traffic flows easily on the network of double-track boulevards. The streets are named after scientists, engineers, composers, medical men, authors, and poets. Adequate provision is made for parks. Vanderbijlpark probably has the largest cosmopolitan community of any town in South Africa. The rapidly increasing industrial population in 1973 necessitated a building programme which required 1 600 dwellings and 300 apartments to be built for the next five years (Potgieter *et al*, 1974: 420).

Areas for light and heavy industries have been provided and, apart from the steel works built in 1947-1951, and considerably expanded since then, several other metal-processing industries have been developed. One of these, the subsidiary company Vanderbijlpark Engineering Corporation (Vesco), is the biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. It manufactures the largest castings in the country, as well as equipment for mines, power stations and factories. In the beginning of Vanderbijlpark provision was also made for the establishment of black townships.

The two black townships were to be situated near the workplace of the residents. But, they were planned in such a way that the residents were not to walk through the white residential areas on their way to and from work. The Health Committee was responsible for the establishment and development of the townships namely, Bophelong and Boipatong (Prinsloo, 1994: 151). To these we now turn.

3.3.2.3 Bophelong

On 21 May 1948, NW 2 (93.3086 morgen) was proclaimed as a black residential area and the Health Committee obtained permission to establish a township that would later be called Bophelong. The Native Advisory Board initially suggested the name of the new location to be "Celampilo". On the recommendation of Professor J.T Jabavu of Fort Hare, the name *Bophelong* was chosen and approved by the Native Advisory Board. By 30 June 1949, 534 two bedroom houses with electricity and sewer system were completed (Prinsloo, 1994: 154).

Attention was also given to names of streets. A proper research was done and a number of people were consulted to make their recommendations. Recommendations were subsequently received from Mr. R.V Selepe of the Bantu Press and Paul Mosaka, a member of the Advisory Board. It was finally decided that the twelve streets be given the following names: Dube, Jabavu, Plaatjie, Moroka, Thema, Vilakazi, Xuma, Mqhayi, Bokwe, Mofolo, Matthews and Mosaka (Prinsloo, 1994: 156).

The churches were also allocated sites. Stand No. 778 was offered to the Nederduitse Hervormde or Gereformeerde Kerk of Vanderbijlpark on condition that the building would begin within the twelve months of the signing of the contract. The same conditions were given to the Methodist's Johannesburg Diocesan Trustees. In the building and development of the township land was also made available for soccer grounds, Community Hall and a Post Office (Prinsloo, 1994: 156).

The name Bophelong suggests "life" or "liveliness" or "vitality" (Noonan, 2003: 281). Muvhango, a newly established extension of Bophelong, is situated North-West of Bophelong. Muvhango has now been developed, with proper brick houses and tarred streets along the main taxi and bus routes. Other infrastructural developments include electricity and water borne system.

During the apartheid era, housing development was limited because government policy decreed that Africans should not enjoy permanent residence in urban South Africa, and partly on account of fears that a proposed highway would cut through the township. But towards the end of 1986 (the highest point ever in the state security activity) the State President Mr. P.W Botha, announced that the black townships would not be moved unless it was absolutely necessary (Noonan, 2003: 281).

3.3.2.4 Boipatong

Boipatong, which is one of the six townships of the Vaal Triangle, was established in 1953 to supply labour force for Iscor steel works at nearby Vanderbijlpark and also for families who lived on farms but worked in town. The name "Boipatong" means "the place of refuge" or "hiding place" (Noonan, 2003: 281).

Prinsloo (1994: 157) indicates that in 1949 Vesco was requested to provide another land for the establishment of the second black township in Vanderbijlpark. The area allocated for this purpose was NE 2. In 1953 the development started and in 1956 already 844 houses were occupied while 147 were still under construction. Provision was made for the building of a crèche, schools, churches, a community hall, administration building, a clinic, a Post Office and recreation facilities such as sports grounds. In the initial planning of Boipatong provision was made for a business centre comprising of a butcher, shoemaker, barbershop, a general dealer, a cafe and a fruit and vegetable shop (Prinsloo, 1994: 157). Los-my-cherie, further South of Boipatong was established later as an extension of Boipatong.

In September 1987, the minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr. Chris Heunis, said in parliament that 430 ha of land between Boipatong and Sharpeville were being developed for the purpose of linking up the two townships. This was aimed at addressing the housing problem in Boipatong and Sharpeville. This led to the establishment of Tshepiso between the two townships. By 2003, Boipatong had an estimated 27 000 residents (Noonan, 2003: 281).

3.3.2.5 Sebokeng

The word *Sebokeng* means “the gathering of people”. The township is characterised by many different cultures and languages. It is situated on the Golden Highway about 65 km from Johannesburg and 20 km North of Vanderbijlpark. The residents of Sebokeng work all over Gauteng Province. By 2003, the population of Sebokeng was estimated at more than half a million (Noonan, 2003: 280).

The Township was established as the result of the recommendation of the Mentz-Commission in 1954. This commission recommended the establishment of a central Black residential area. The area would extend from Evaton in the North, the Vereeniging-Langlaagte railway line in the West, the Parys-Vereeniging national road (R 21) in the South, and the Johannesburg-Orange Free State (N 1) in the West (Prinsloo, 1994: 165). This new black township would be called Sebokeng.

From 1965, a large scale settlement of black people from Sharpeville, Bophelong, Boipatong, and some backyard tenants from Evaton, as well as people from the neighbouring farms of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton moved to the new area. Me-r-to-ne, the black township in the district Meyerton was completely demolished and the residents finally moved to Sebokeng in 1967 (cf. 3.3).

When the township was established in 1965, 18 772 houses were built on the site of the present township. Later people built shacks in and around Sebokeng, which were progressively developed with proper dwelling houses and infrastructure. The biggest among these are Polokong and Boitumelo which developed as part of Mayibuye Programme (MP) from an informal settlement called 'Golden Store' besides a small shopping center called Golden Store on the Golden Highway West of Sebokeng (Stevens and Rule, 1999: 110). Kairo on the Eastern side of Eatonsite railway station has now been developed with complete infrastructure such as running water and electricity and tarred main roads. Potomaneng next to Houtheuwel railway station however still remains an informal settlement with no infrastructure at all.

Huge single-men hostel with a total of 19 504 beds situated just outside Zone 14 township, has now been converted into family residents. Kwa-Masiza further South of Sebokeng is a modern hostel built for the male employees of Iscor. Mphatlalatsane in Zone 14 is a modern community hall where social activities in Sebokeng take place (Noonan, 2003: 2981). Saul Tsotetsi Sports centre in Zone 14 was built recently for various community activities.

3.3.3 Meyerton

Meyerton is situated along the railway line from Germiston to Vereeniging district, 16 km North-West of Vereeniging. The town was established on the farm Rietfontein on 6 July 1891 and was probably named after J.P Meyer, a field-cornet and a member of the Transvaal Volksraad. It was proclaimed in November 1891. A Village Council was established on 28 October 1953 and in 1961 the town became a municipality. Meyerton is an industrial town with a number of factories and a shunting-yard on the mail railway lines to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Germiston. Water is obtained from the Rand Water Board and electricity from Escom.

In 1891 with the establishment of Meyerton, provision was made for “Indierlocatie”. This was not the case with the black people. It was only later, with the efforts of Elias Shapiro that eventually in 1937 a location for the Blacks – which was simply called “Me-r-to-ne” - came into existence. As early as 1905 the town council of Meyerton was opposed to the establishment of a black location. Blacks were only allowed to remain in the plots belonging to Whites around the town or live in their backyards.

With the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the administration of Blacks resided with Central Government. It was the Department of Native Affairs that was responsible for the administration of the Blacks. On 20 July 1973 the location was handed over to the white local administration within the municipal area. It was only in 1982 that the black township in Meyerton was finally handed over to the Blacks.

On 30 March 1937, the Health Committee in Meyerton was advised by the health official in Johannesburg to consider the formal establishment of the black township in Meyerton. The health Committee acceded to the request and finally in October the first Me-r-to-ne was formally handed over to the Health Committee and Mr. CW Blake became the first superintendent of the location. The Blacks remained under the control of the Health Committee until 1950 with the enactment of the Group Areas Act.

Ever since its inception, there were problems about Me-r-to-ne. Among others, the Health Committee complained about pregnant black women from other places that came to their family members for maternity and as a result, the Health Committee would be indebted with medical costs. Secondly, the illegal brewing of sorghum beer continually created problems. There was also a problem about defining the boundary of the white residential area. With the proclamation of the location, the boundary of white residential areas was only half a mile from the location. In the West there was a railway line and in the North industries were developing. In the South there was Kaalfontein farm. As a result, a suitable place had to be found for the Blacks. The Mentz Commission had also in 1952 revealed that the conditions in the location were unacceptable and that the place was overpopulated. The only solution was that a new locality had to be found. It was only on 4 August 1967 that the location was finally moved to a new residential area for Blacks in Sebokeng.

3.3.4 Sasolburg

Sasolburg is situated 80 km by road south of Johannesburg and 10 km south of Vanderbijlpark. Sasolburg railway station (formerly Coalbrook) lies 5 km to the south-east on the Bloemfontein-Johannesburg main railway line. The model town of Sasolburg was laid out in the northernmost tip of the Orange Free State on land which in 1950 was still a featureless veld. The town was to serve SASOL (South African Synthetic Oil Limited) and its employees. Its position was determined by the occurrence of vast deposit of low-grade coal near the Vaal River, which supplies the large quantities of water required in the conversion process, and by its proximity to the Witwatersrand, the largest consuming area for petrol and oil.

The town was established by SASOL Townships Ltd., a subsidiary of SASOL, and proclaimed on 8 September 1954. Progress was rapid and Sasolburg is now the third largest town in the Orange Free State. Municipal status was achieved on 12 May 1967. Water is led on from the Vaal River and electricity is supplied by Escom. The township was laid out in 7 residential units, which by 1972 had increased to 20, interspersed with open park strips, with radials reaching the town centre. Nowhere less than 30 metre wide, these open spaces frequently broaden out into bays for children's playgrounds. At the same time they afford pedestrians access to schools and shopping centres, isolated from vehicular traffic. In the central business area are found a shopping centre, administrative buildings, a town hall, library, banks, and private office buildings. When it was established there were four primary schools and three nursery schools, a high school and a technical institute where adults attend evening classes, and eight churches. Recreational facilities are provided by the SASOL Recreation Club with its affiliated sporting clubs and cultural societies. The swimming-bath is of Olympic standard, with internal heating during winter months.

Although SASOL was established mainly with the object of producing petrol, this made possible the production of so many semi-processed raw materials for the chemical industry that SASOL before long, became the centre of petrochemical industry in South Africa. The demand for by-products led to the establishment of a number of major industrial plants. The wide range of chemical products include fertilisers, synthetic rubber, polyethylene plastics, phenol for nylon industry, cyanide for the gold recovery

process, and synthetic detergents and propellants for aerosol. This rapid process has not been uninterrupted. On 16 November 1964 a fire raged 140 metres below the surface in the Sigma coal-mine and caused the death of 23 miners (Potgieter *et al*, 1974: 420).

An important addition to the factory complex in 1971 was the refinery of the national Petroleum Refiners of South Africa Pty. Ltd. (Natref). It produces petrol, diesel oil and tar products from crude oil pumped to Sasolburg from the coast by pipeline (Potgieter *et al*, 1974: 420).

The whole area covers 1002 sq km. In the north is bounded by the Vaal River with Transvaal district of Vanderbijlpark beyond. Sasolburg is mainly an industrial area, with a number of coal-mines. Sasolburg was proclaimed a separate district in 1957. The black location of Zamdela was founded to accommodate the black employees of Sasol and the surrounding industries. The small villages of Deneysville and Refengkgotso fell within the magisterial district of Sasolburg. Vaal Dam on the Vaal River and Groenpunt prison (formerly Stofberg Gedenkskool) lies within less than 10 km from each other.

3.3.4.1 Zamdela

Mofokeng (1997: 1) maintains that: “the founding of Zamdela was the result of a number of wide ranging factors which all interacted in various ways to contribute to its development. Among these factors were, Steenpan quarry, Coalbrook mine as well as factories around Zamdela such as SASOL, Sigma Collieries, African Explosives and Chemical industry (AECL) to name but a few.”

The first community in the area was settled at Steenpan. According to Mofokeng (1997: 1) this area was called Steenpan because of the abundance of the stone that was found in the area. Right from its founding the community had a building which was used as a school during week days and for church services on Sundays. The first principal of the school was Mr. S.P.S Tantsi.

Whilst in the early days people were attracted for employment at Steenpan, the situation soon changed in 1974. The South African Synthetic Oil Limited (SASOL) got a licence

to manufacture oil from coal. Mr. Andrew Faickney was appointed as managing director of the project. In 1952, the project was implemented. Coal mining operations then started at the place called Belina Sigma Colliery. Many people now flocked to Belina Sigma Colliery for employment and were accommodated in the compound (Mofokeng, 1997: 2).

When Zamdela location was started in 1954, four-roomed houses were built, fully equipped with electricity, water and sewer system. At that time a few people started moving from Steenpan to Zamdela and Belina. The industry at Steenpan was beginning to go into decline. Between 1954 and 1955, SASOL constructed temporary houses in the extension of Zamdela known as Protem. The township accommodated the white workers of SASOL. After the completion of a new part of the town of Sasolburg in 1956, the Whites were removed from Protem to Sasolburg (Mofokeng, 1997: 5).

According to Mofokeng (1997: 6), after the Whites vacated Protem in 1956, the homeless Blacks pleaded with Mr Griessekke to allow them to occupy the vacated houses in Protem permanently. At first Mr. Griessekke refused. After threats of strike action he however allowed them to occupy the houses permanently.

At first local factories provided accommodation for their workers at the municipal hostels. Later, there were complaints that the hostels were old and dirty. The municipality then gave them permission to construct hostels for their workers. As a consequence, Umgababa, Thembaletu, Lerato, Kwa-Zola and other hostels came into being. These hostels played an important role in providing accommodation for single residents of Zamdela (Mofokeng, 1997: 7).

From the 1970s to the late 1980s, finance institutions such as Allied and Permanent Building Society, in collaboration with the factories of the greater Sasolburg area, financed housing for Blacks. During this time the houses numbering 3001 to 5400 in Taylor Park were completed. The extension called Belina Park started from house number 4800 – 4900. The extension started from house number 4901 to house number 5001. In 1994, temporary structures called Chris Hani (squatter camp) were put up. The structures started from house number 9900 (Mofokeng, 1997: 8).

3.3.4.2 Chris Hani

Chris Hani is situated at the intersection of the main roads to Heilbron and Koppies east of Zamdela. The development of this squatter camp was the result of the housing shortage which existed after the election of April 1994. Most of the people came from nearby areas. Others came from nearby places such as Sebokeng, Deneysville, Heilbron, and as far as Sharpeville in Gauteng. Most of the people had hoped that they would get jobs in the nearby factories and as the result improve their lives. This was not to be, as they soon realised that there were few job opportunities in the factories. Most people in the squatter camp are still jobless (Mofokeng, 1997: 10).

3.3.5 Deneysville

Deneysville Estate Ltd. was a company run by people (known as Greinmann) from Johannesburg. After the founding of Deneysville, they operated as estates agents and, among others, they built a town. The Greinmanns from the onset did not plan their development properly. Firstly, they did not start with one section (for example Section A or Section B) and develop it properly, and then go to the next section). Their problem was that they constructed on the entire town and this resulted in inadequate development (Meyer, 1996: 3). Chase and Sons, one of the Vaal Triangle's most well known property agencies came to Deneysville after the Second World War. It was in 1946 that Mayor Chase and his two sons, Tony and John founded Chase and Sons (Pty) Limited (Ster, 14 October 1996).

In Deneysville, Chase and Sons did not develop the town like Greinmann Brothers. Instead they were mainly concerned with the selling of the properties (Vereeniging, II February 1996). Deneysville came into being as a result of the construction of the Vaal Dam. The construction of the Vaal Dam commenced during the depression of the early thirties and was completed in 1938. The project of constructing the wall was used specifically to create work opportunities for people. During the construction of the Vaal Dam many people were employed, particularly white people. As a result accommodation was required for the employees. Many people decided to settle near the dam, thus Deneysville came into being (Deneysville, 29 June 1996).

3.3.5.1 Refengkgotso

Refengkgotso was established around 1930. According to Sekete (2002: 41) it was proclaimed a permanent black township on 10 November 1940. Sekete further indicates that the township was initially situated on the road to Orangeville and was very small. The houses were made of mud and bricks.

From 1946 the township was moved to where it is presently located. In early 1947 Mr. L. Mahlasela became the first 'block-man' or councillor of the township. Gradually people from the neighbouring farms came to settle permanently in the township. These people brought their live-stock with them.

In 1976 the township was administered by Lekoa Town Council. The Lekoa Town Council replaced the mud houses with approximately 200 four-roomed brick house each provided with a tap for running water. As a result even more people from the farms flocked to the township. Because of housing shortage, people started building shacks in the open spaces in and around the township. By 1997 even people from as far as Heilbron, Frankfort, and Orangeville and the neighbouring farms had moved into the township with the result that the supply of water and electricity became a problem.

Refengkgotso Primary was the first primary school in the township. When it first started it was known as the Native Community School. It was founded in 1939 and the first teacher was Mrs. M. Mokgobu who was shortly succeeded Mr. J. Hlabahlaba in 1940. The school was registered under the auspices of the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) with the Department of Education. This school which started as a mud structure initially went up to standard 4; catering also for children from the neighbouring farms. Later there was a need for a secondary school. In 1992 secondary school classes were introduced in the existing Refengkgotso Primary School building. The secondary school was named after Mr. L. Notsi and was soon followed by Nomsa Secondary School.

In Refengkgotso there is scarcity of job opportunities. Apart from the people who are employed at Groenpunt Prison, most of the residents are employed at Sasolburg firms.

Some even are employed as far as Vereeniging. Other people, especially women are employed as domestic workers in Deneysville (Sekete, 2002: 41).

The first church to be established in 1930 was the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. Church services were held in the school buildings until the present church building was erected. Other churches were the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. According to Sekete (2002: 41), the Roman Catholic Church also played an important role in the area. Other churches found in Refengkgotso are the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and African Apostolic Church.

A clinic was established in 1976. By 1980's the health services became inadequate because of the mushrooming of informal settlements in and around the area. In the early 1990's the construction of a new clinic got underway and was completed in 1993. This clinic was provided with consulting rooms, dentist room, duty rooms, and a labour ward (Sekete, 2002: 41).

By 1990, Refengkgotso still lacked proper sanitary services. The bucket systems were still used. Still another problem was that 50% of the residents still used wood and coal for their energy needs (Sekete, 2002: 43).

Like in other townships shebeens are very popular in Refengkgotso. Many people operate shebeens because it is the only way of bringing some income for their households. Although these shebeens are used by some as places for relaxing and socializing, they are often responsible for violent crime in the area.

The towns and townships of the Vaal triangle have been surveyed in this section. In the following section the present socio-economic and political conditions in the area will receive attention. For this purpose the IDP document of the present Sedibeng Municipality District will be interrogated.

3.4 The Present Sedibeng District Municipality

In the paragraphs that follow the details contained IDP Report (2006/2007) of Sedibeng Municipality District will be used. Although the Sedibeng District Municipality is not

equivalent to the Vaal Triangle, it is used here to refer to the territory of the three local municipalities of Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi which covers most of the towns and townships of the Vaal Triangle. The Sedibeng District Municipality will obviously exclude Mestimaholo Local Municipality, which now falls under Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State. This document will also be used because it depicts the present socio-economic realities within which the local churches must function in the Vaal Triangle.

3.4.1 Background

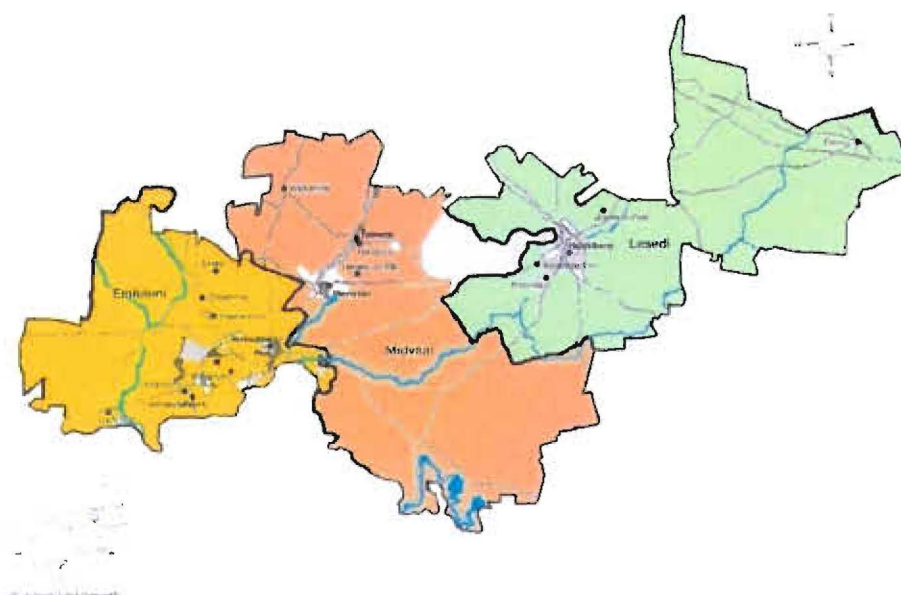
Sedibeng District Municipality is located on the southern edge of Gauteng Province and consist of three local municipalities namely, Lesedi, Midvaal, and Emfuleni. Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM). Previously known as *Lekoa Vaal*, it found its name from the Vaal River which is the greatest natural resource and an asset which has the potential to attract local, national and international tourists. The Sedibeng IDP Report 2006/2007) indicates that: "Sedibeng district is primarily an eco-tourism and heritage destination because of the massive Vaal River, as well as the well known historical events that took place in the area."

The Sedibeng District was established in 2000, six years after the democratic elections in South Africa. Major towns and townships that constitute Sedibeng District include Evaton, Sharpeville, Bophelong, Boipatong, Sebokeng, Ratanda, Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Heidelberg, Vaal Oewers, Meyerton, Vaal Marina, Suikerbosrand and other interesting sites (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 31).

3.4.2 Study Area

The judicial area of Sedibeng District Municipality covers the entire southern area of Gauteng Province, extending along a 120 km axis from east to west. The total extent of the Sedibeng area of jurisdiction is 4630 square km [22,5%] of which Emfuleni takes up 1276 square km [27,6%], Midvaal takes up 2312 square km [49,9%], and Lesedi takes up 1042 square km [22,5%].

Sedibeng District Municipality as indicated in the diagram below, is located on the southern edge of Gauteng Province. The following diagram illustrates the three local municipalities, namely Lesedi, Midvaal, and Emfuleni.



Source: Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007

3.4.3 Socio-Economic Overview

The total population size of the Vaal Triangle increased with 233 452 inhabitants from 1985 (540 142) to 1991 (773 594), representing a growth rate of 6,2%. When this rate is determined for the black population for the 1991-1993 periods, however, it seems that the growth is more than 25% per annum. This figure does not, however, take into account those people on farms, domestic workers in backyards, etc. When the growth rate is determined for the period 1991 (official figures) to 1992 (Vaalgro figures), it reflects an increase of 94,6% per annum, with Vereeniging district showing the highest growth. This growth could mainly be attributed to the rapid expansion of the Orange Farm/Poortjie areas which places enormous pressure on: (i) the provision of infrastructure; (ii) the local treasury; and also (iii) negative influence on viability (expressed in terms of GGP per capita) of the area. The high growth rate of the Vaal

Triangle is especially significant when compared to the estimated growth rate of 2% per annum of the PWV area.

The urban population (semi-urban plus urban) increased from 1985 (472 522) to 1991 (716 043) at the rate of 7,2% per annum. In contrast, the non-urban population decreased in this period by 10 069. This constitutes a decreasing rate of 2,6% per annum (Bos Report, 1991: 1).

The composition of the 1991 population was as follows: Blacks 71%; Whites 24%; Coloureds 3%; and Indians 1%. According to Vaalgro figures, however, Blacks already constituted 84% of the total population in 1992 (Bos Report, 1991: 1).

3.4.4 Demographic Profile

The following table indicates the Demographic profile by Local Municipalities.

Table 1

Municipality	Population	Area Population Annual Growth Rate	% of Total Population
Emfuleni	658421	4.6%	83%
Lesedi	71542		9%
Midvaal	64642	3.5%	8%8
District Total	794605		100%

Source: Stats SA (2001), Local IDP's 2005/2006

3.4.5 Population Distribution

It is expected that the broad distribution pattern is not significantly different from 2001 census. This is characterised by over 83% of Sedibeng's total population being located in Emfuleni in an area which comprises 27,6% of the total district area. This population is concentrated within a number of urban complexes (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 33).

The remainder of the population is largely rural in character and is located in smaller, low density settlements or rural areas, except for a relatively higher concentration in Heidelberg/Ratanda in the east. Particularly high densities are apparent in the urban areas of Vanderbijlpark/Sharpeville and Sebokeng/Evaton (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 33).

An average family size of around 3.92 people per household has been calculated for the whole Sedibeng. Highest household size is in Lesedi with an average figure of around 4.21 persons. This suggests that there are at least 212 009 households within the whole district (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 33).

3.4.6 Population Composition

The racial composition of Sedibeng District is indicated in the table below and geographically most of the African population is concentrated in townships throughout the district. This illustrates the entrenched racial divisions within the area and pattern of access to services (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 32).

MUNICIPALITY	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN/ ASIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Emfuleni	553305	7011	5892	92213	658421
Lesedi	57429	594	620	12899	71542
Midvaal	38169	888	290	25295	64642
DISTRICT TOTAL	648903	8493	6802	130407	794605

Source: Stats SA (2001).

3.4.7 Economic Activity and Unemployment

The Sedibeng District represented somewhere in the region of 10% of Gauteng's formal employment in 1966. Unemployment in the district is a serious factor. According to census figures of 2001, 34% of the economically active population was unemployed. Likewise the Municipal Structures Report of 1999 put the unemployment of the Lekoa-

Vaal Municipal Council (LVMC) area which includes the major areas of economic activity in the new Sedibeng District at 37.3% (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 35).

This represented the highest unemployment percentage for Gauteng indicating a declining economy and job losses. It is possible that the figures are even higher today, with general industrial decline and restructuring, and increasing numbers entering into the economic active age group (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007: 35).

Table 3

Area	Economic Active %	Unemployment Rate
Emfuleni	66.71%	38%
Midvaal	65.18%	9%
Lesedi	65.6%	27%
Sedibeng	65.83%	34%

Source: Stats SA

The 2001 census puts Economically Active population as follows:

Table 3

Subheadings	Emfuleni	Lesedi	Midvaal	District's Total
Unemployed	137110	10949	7370	155429
Not Economically Active	172877	17890	14192	204959
Total Labour Force	290765	31301	32176	354242

Source: Stats SA (2001)

Unemployment figures vary according to source, but the overriding trend is increasing unemployment - from 37% in 1996 48% in 2001. Surveys by the Vaal Research Group (VRG) indicate higher unemployment figures, for example 55% in 2001 and 61% in 2004. The population growth rate (2%) continues to outstrip the average annual economic growth of (0.5%). Moreover, between 1996 and 2003, unemployment was significantly higher for women (58%) than it was for men (24%), affirming gender differentials in respect of poverty. The potentially economically active population is youthful although as Global Insight notes, this is declining possibly as a result of the impact of HIV/AIDS (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007).

3.4.8 Health Services

Three hospitals serviced by Gauteng are located in the District, namely Kopanong Hospital in Vereeniging, Sebokeng Hospital in Sebokeng and AG Visser Hospital in Heidelberg. Primary health care is rendered through clinics located in urban and service centres, while rural areas are serviced by mobile clinics as indicated in the next table.

Table 4

Local Municipality	Number of Clinics
Emfuleni	27
Midvaal	4 Clinics and 1 mobile Clinic
Lesedi	7 Clinics, 1 Satellite and 6 mobile units
District's Total	38 Clinics, 1 satellite and 6 mobile units

Source: Sedibeng IDP 2006/2007

There is an oversupply of health facilities in urban areas as opposed to newer settlements and rural areas (Sedibeng IDP Report, 2006/2007).

3.4.8.1 The Impact of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has a significant impact on poorer communities. It not only reduces productivity but also significantly increases vulnerability and dependency levels. The pandemic affects largely economically active or potentially economically active individuals and has a significant negative impact at household and societal levels. Caregivers are faced with additional responsibilities and HIV and AIDS related deaths often increase the vulnerability of children as they are orphaned or become *de facto* household heads in the absence of healthy adults (Sedibeng IP Report, 2006/2007).

3.4.9 Crime and Violence

The Sedibeng IDP Report gives the following Crime Statistics:

Violent Crimes	2003	2004	Declined By
Murder, Robbery and Hi-Jackings	8322	6118	2204
Social Fabric Crimes	2003	2004	Declined By
Assault, Rape, Domestic Abuse	15134	14058	1076

Although the figures given above indicate that between 2003 and 2004 there was a significant decline in violent crimes, the area cannot be declared a crime-free area. Moreover, there are many incidents of violent crimes that take place in this area which are not reported to the police by the victims. This happens quite often with domestic violence, where the perpetrators are the bread-winners in the households.

3.5 Some Industries in the Vaal Triangle

The industries in the Vaal Triangle owe their growth to the availability of abundant natural resources such as coal and water. In this paragraph an overview of only some of the industries in the four major towns of the Vaal Triangle is given. These will include Anglo American Coal Corporation Limited, Emsa, Rand Water, Sasol Infrachem, Mittal Steel and Samancor.

3.5.1 Anglo-American Coal Corporation

In 1878, the geologist George Stow discovered the Vaal River coalfield. The coalfield extended from the confluence of the Vaal River and the Taaiboschspruit, to Maccauvlei in the east and the Leeuwspruit in the west. Sammy Marks, a diamond magnate, saw the possibilities of supplying the Kimberly diamond fields with coal and hired Stow to buy all the available land which had coal reserves. Mining, under the management of Stow, began in 1880 and in August 1897, the Vereeniging Estate (VE) was listed. The new company had broadened its trading base and encompassed not only coal mining, but agricultural ventures, timber plantations and a brick and tile company. In 1910, Vereeniging Estate signed a coal supply contract with the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power, which undertook to build a power station on the Vaal River at Vereeniging. The contract was for 200 000 tons of coal per annum for 14 years. The power station became operational in 1912 (VT Info CC, 2005: 1).

By 1926, Vereeniging Estate had produced over two million tons of coal and the company had acquired additional coal fields in Springs and Witbank. By 1928 Vereeniging Estate acquired Coronation Collieries together with the assets of the Transvaal and Natal Collieries company. By 1941, the group had produced five million tons of coal and was supplying around one third of South Africa's coal requirements (VT Info CC, 2005:1).

In September 1945, Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Limited (AAC) bought a controlling interest in Vereeniging Estate. In January 1975, various AAC coal operations companies were merged into Vereeniging Estates and the company was renamed Anglo American Coal Corporation Limited (VT Info CC, 2005:1).

Anglo Coal, a subsidiary of Anglo American plc, has been mining coal at its New Vaal Colliery south of the Vaal River near Vereeniging since 1985. It supplies the nearby Lethabo Power Station with 15 million tons of coal per year. The current life expectation of the mine is until 2029. Extra coal requirements for Lethabo Power Station will be achieved through an expansion of the present 3 956 ha mining lease into an area called the Maccauvlei West Area where another 100 million tons of reserves are available (VT Info, 2005: 1).

3.5.2 Vaal Dam (1933-1938)

The Vaal Dam was constructed in the Vaal River 32 km south-east of Johannesburg. The concrete wall is only 10 km north-west of the infall of the Wilge River into the Vaal, so that the storage basin extends up both rivers for long distances (Young, 2001: 1-3).

The selection of this site on the farm Vaalbank followed extensive surveys of the Vaal River down to Christiana. The final choice rested on two important considerations, viz. the suitability of the basin and the foundation, and the fact that the dam would be so placed as to enable the Rand Water Board to draw a large water supply. In 1933 interest in the harnessing of the water resources of the Vaal River for large-scale irrigational development, reached a climax and in 1934 the government promulgated the Vaal River Development Act, No. 38 of 1934 which, among other things, provided for the construction of the Vaal Dam. Construction commenced in January 1934 and the dam was completed in 1938. A number of towns and some very important industrial installations could draw assured supplies from the river. Among the most important are the petrol from coal industries in Sasolburg, the iron and steel industry at Vereeniging, and several Escom power stations, the Orange Free State gold mines around Welkom, and municipalities as far as Parys, Klerksdorp and even Kimberly (Young 2001: 1-3).

The construction of the Vaal Dam provided jobs during the depression. The large team of workers employed for the construction of the dam led to the formation of two small villages of Deneysville and Refengkgotso. The former was named after Deneys Reitz, the son of Francis William Reitz who was the President of the old South African Republic (Young, 2001: 1-3).

3.5.3 Rand Water

Since 1903, Rand Water has been a bulk water supplier to the Gauteng area. Rand Water purifies raw water from the Vaal Dam at its two treatment plants situated at Vereeniging and Suikerbosh before pumping it to Local Authorities reservoirs and Rand Water reservoirs for domestic, industrial and public use by about 10 million people (VT Info, 2005: 1).

In 1923, the Vaal Development Scheme was completed which included the impoundment of water in the Vaal River Barrage and the purification and pumping of water from Vereeniging to Johannesburg. Rand Water is the only water supply utility in the world that has to provide water to a major industrial and urban complex that is not situated on a major river or waterway. Rand Water's supply system runs from Vereeniging to Pretoria and from Krugersdorp to Springs. Water is lifted about 380m from the Vaal River to higher areas of the Witwatersrand (VT Info, 2005: 1).

3.5.4 Sasol Infrachem Industries

Sasol Infrachem Industries (SII) is a specially designated company with R2 billion a year budget to provide utilities and on-site infrastructure and support services at Sasolburg. The company abstracts river water, treats sewage, purifies effluent and reticulates electricity (VT Info, 2005: 1).

The Company pumps some 60 million litres of water per day from the Vaal River of which half is returned after treatment to the river below the barrage. Water is used mainly for cooling of the chemical processes, but also raises high temperature steam for use not only by Sasol operations but for other companies which include Dow Plastic, Omnia, synthetic rubber manufacturer Karbochem, carbon dioxide producer Afrox and a host of others. The company also generates and reticulates electrical power for its own use and for the use of all of the chemical industries in Sasolburg as well as running the town's sewage works and treating both community sewage and effluent from the heavy industrial area as well as recovers water for recycling back into the industrial complex (VT Info, 2005: 1).

Together with the Metsimaholo council and the Free State Provincial Government, Sasol Infrachem builds community houses in Sasolburg, promoted entrepreneurship in the local Zamdela Township and is also involved in the rejuvenation of the local area (VT Info CC, 2005: 1).

3.5.5 Emsa (Elektrode Maatskappy van Suid Afrika)

Emsa was established in October 1965 in collaboration with Amcor and two German firms (Hoechst & Siemens). The Meyerton company produces graphite electrodes, the heating “prongs” which conducts the electrical charges that melts scrap iron to make steel. Today, Emsa is wholly owned by Ucar International Inc., an American group with global interests. It supplies South Africa’s total demand for graphite electrodes and exports to several African countries (VT Info, 2007: 2).

The company’s manufacturing range includes speciality in graphite products, graphite refractory furnace linings, graphite, and carbon particle powders. A graphite electrode is a device to conduct electricity down into an electric arc furnace which generates sufficient heat to melt scrap steel. They are presently the only products available that have the high levels of electrical conductivity and the capability of sustaining the extremely high levels of heat generated in this demanding environment. Graphite electrodes are also used to refine steel in ladle furnace and other smelting processes (VT Info, 2007: 2).

3.5.6 Mittal Steel

On 5 June 1928, the South African Iron and Steel Corporation Limited (IsCOR) was founded and within six years IsCOR tapped its maiden steel in Pretoria from iron ore mined at Thabazimbi. During World War II, the global conflict created a new and more pressing need for steel that would require expansion plans at IsCOR’s Pretoria mill. By 1943, construction began to establish IsCOR’s second fully integrated steel mill at Vanderbijlpark. Initially this was only as a plate mill erected as part of a wartime programme for ship repairs and armaments. Within a few years, however, the desolate Vanderbijlpark landscape was transformed into vibrant, industrial hub, attracting thousands of workers and their families to the area (VT Info, 2007: 1).

The company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on 8 November 1989, is the first South African parastatal to be privatised. In 1991, IsCOR gained full control of the USCO steel works and renamed the facility “IsCOR Vereeniging Works”.

South Africa's democratisation in 1994, brought about profound political and economic change, and unprecedented globalization for industries operating in the country's protected economy. For the first time in its history, Iscor had to fight for its share of the steel market both at home in South Africa and abroad. The stark reality now facing Iscor was to embrace change or perish (VT Info, 2007: 1).

The challenge was no longer to make South Africa self-sufficient in steel – as this had been achieved many years before – but to transform an industrial mammoth into an efficient, globally competitive player. Anglo-Dutch steel producer LNM Holdings N.V., the world's second largest steel producer controlled by Indian steel baron Lakshmi Mittal, bought a 10% stake in Iscor in 2002 leading to its first name change to Ipsat Iscor Limited. For the first time in its history, Iscor has an international partner providing it with access to a global marketing and procurement network, product research and development and state-of-the-art technology. Through rigorous benchmarking against the world's leading steel producers, Iscor re-invented itself by closing inefficient operations, curbing excess production capacity, modernising its plants and equipments (VT Info, 2007: 1).

3.6 Conclusion

The big industries in the Vaal Triangle have been discussed. While the presence of these big industries is a major boost not only to the local economy of the Vaal Triangle, but also to that of the country as a whole, there are however also adverse consequences. Among others, is the question of pollution.

3.7 Pollution

Several Studies conducted in the Vaal Triangle have revealed that poor air and water quality have a direct impact on the health and well-being of people living in the area. On the one hand air pollution is caused by among others, heavy industrial activities, several commercial operations, millions of people using motor vehicles, and many households utilising coal and wood as energy source. These studies indicate that respiratory ailments and diseases, including early morning coughing, wheezing and asthma are common irritations that people in the area suffer.

On the other hand, chemical waste products released by industries and mines in Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging, cause water pollution in the area. In addition, some agricultural farms release chemical waste into the water which eventually ends up in the Vaal River. And finally, boats used by residents and tourists often spill oil into the river (FPBMLE . FBP . VDK . PUKNET, 08-01-17).

It is evident that a situation existed which was, and is, causing a significant negative impact on air and water quality in the area.

3.7.1 Background

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that citizens have the right to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being. This is also captured in the objectives of national Environmental Management Air Quality Act (AQA) (No. 39 of 2004).

In an effort to prevent further air pollution, the Vaal Triangle – which includes municipalities of Emfuleni and Midvaal in Gauteng, and Metsimaholo in the Free State – has been declared a National Air Pollution Priority Area (SH & Environmental Brief, September, 2006). Whistleblowers within Iscor and communities (especially in Steel Valley in Vanderbijlpark) have constantly alerted and sought government intervention regarding water pollution in the area.

For the purpose of this study, in this section only two types of pollution will be discussed namely, *household fuel burning* and *effluent water* from the industrial operations of ISCOR in Vanderbijlpark. The reason for this choice is prompted by the fact that first, it is mostly the black communities (therefore also church communities) in the Vaal Triangle that are mostly affected by ambient air pollution caused by fuel burning, and second, the Steel Valley community provides a good example of communities in the rural areas of the Vaal Triangle that are severely affected by effluent water pollution. It is hoped that these will be sufficient in illustrating some of the trying conditions under which the church in the Vaal Triangle has to minister to the communities.

3.7.2 Indoor Air Pollution

Despite widespread electrification, over half of South African households are still primarily dependent on solid fuel for cooking and space heating, resulting in levels of indoor air quality that often exceed international guidelines.

The continued use of coal and wood in the large section of the population within the Vaal Triangle represents a cause for concern with regard to air pollution and health risk potentials. Fuel burning areas include Boipatong, Bophelong, Evaton, Orange Farm, Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Zamdela. Fuel burning continues to be used for two reasons:

- Rapid urbanization and the growth of informal settlements has exacerbated backlogs in the distribution of basic services such as electricity and waste removal, and,
- Many electrified households continue to use coal due particularly to its cost effectiveness for space heating purposes and multifunctional nature (supports cooking, heating and lighting). Coal is relatively inexpensive and is easily accessible due to the proximity of the region to coal mines and the well-developed local coal merchant industry.

The estimation of domestic fuel burning is challenging given that the amount of fuel being consumed is not known with certainty. The average coal usage per household varies depending on:

- the type of house (formal house, planned shack, unplanned shack or backyard shack),
- whether or not a household is electrified,
- the number of people living in the house,
- the season,
- the availability of coal, and
- the price of coal and the household income.

Barnes *et al.* (2004: 543) also indicate that indoor pollution is responsible for the deaths and illness of millions of young children in developing countries. They maintain further that Acute Lower Respiratory Infections (ALRI) account for approximately 14% of deaths among children less than 5 in South Africa and are ranked together with diarrheal disease, as one of the top killers of young children.

3.7.3 Effluent Water Pollution

Since its opening in 1952, Vanderbijlpark Steel Works, the effluent dams and the canals discharging effluent in water from works are unlined (Cook & Munnik, 2006: 11). In addition, the Steel Works were deliberately positioned on a slight elevation above the rest of the landscape to allow for water to drain away effortlessly. Much of this water escapes through unlined effluent dams into ground water. Ground water pollution affects boreholes on the farms in adjacent community like Steel Valley. The main drainage canal goes past smallholdings in Linkholm until it empties into the Rietspruit, which in turn enters the Vaal River at Loch Vaal.

In August 1984, the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) complained in a letter that several smallholdings at Steel Valley had become polluted to the extent that the groundwater was “neither suitable for domestic use nor garden irrigation”. In August 1985, a parliamentarian reported that the local communities were “up in arms” about ISCOR’s pollution and they wanted compensation for their plight.

ISCOR subsequently sought and secured a gagging order in February preventing the plaintiffs from speaking publicly to the media about the case. However, the order was lifted on 12 September 1984, much to the delight of the community (amazon.co.uk, 2008/01/17:1-4).

According to ecologist Dr. Pieter van Eden, ISCOR is “cynical, arrogant” and “not serious about environmental issues.” In an interview in Kemptonpark on May the 8th 2005, Van Eden expressed the view that ISCOR was not only making steel, but killing people as well. Van Eden worked at ISCOR Vanderbijlpark from April 2000 to October 2001. His departure was sped up by his unhappiness over the testing methods of ISCOR

and pressure from ISCOR after he blew the whistle on their environmental practices and made public some pollution reports.

In the paragraphs that follow we consider the local economic development of the Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) in the Vaal Triangle. To achieve this goal some of the objectives of this municipality as stated in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of 2006/2007 will be mentioned.

3.8 Local Economic Development

The local economic development in the Vaal Triangle is clearly stated in the key development objectives of Sedibeng District namely:

- *To contribute towards the growth and development of the District's economy:* Conduct comprehensive research into current economic profile, constraints and opportunities of the district; Develop the terms of reference for research into the current economic profile of the District; Find a provider for the service.
- *To promote a vibrant local economy, create employment opportunities and attract investment:* Enhance the tourism potential of the area; Create an entry level into the market system for emerging businesses, the informal sector and small, medium and micro enterprise; Promote a diversity of economic activities; Maintain and improve development standards; Create a safe and secure environment.
- *To support and facilitate skills training within the district:* Identify specific skills training projects; Identify organisations that provide skills training and facilitate contact; Identify skills training proposals that may qualify for funding; Include capacity building skills training as a component of the procurement system; Facilitate economic development within the area; Create opportunities for residents to earn income via clean-up projects; support home industries.

3.9 Educational Institutions

In the paragraphs that follow we consider the location and number of schools in the Vaal Triangle, as well as other educational institutions like Wilberforce Institute and Stofberg-Gedenkskool, including the two institutions of higher education namely, North-West University and the Vaal University of Technology.

3.9.1 Schools in the Vaal Triangle

In Emfuleni alone there are 203 schools. These schools are situated in Bophelong, Boipatong, Evaton, Houtheuwel, Loch Vaal, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging. In Midvaal schools are more in number because the area is mostly rural in setting. There are 53 schools situated in Daleside, Henley-On-Klip, Meyerton, Rand Vaal and Walkerville.

In Metsimaholo Municipality which covers, Coalbrook, Vijoensdrift, Deneysville, Oranjeville, Sasolburg, Vaal, and Wolwehoek there are 73 schools.

3.9.2 Wilberforce Institute

Wilberforce was originally founded in 1908 under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church by Charlotte Maxeke (and others) the first President of the Women's League of the African National Congress. This institution was founded, staffed and occupied almost exclusively by persons of African descent. There was little or no government involvement in the early years. The meagre funds that were garnered from various congregations across the United States were spent to put up the first buildings, establish curriculum and generally fulfil the mission of the institution, referred to as "Unity with the Community". Wilberforce enjoyed many successes in the early years. In fact, for nearly fifty years it maintained an excellent record of providing some of Africa's leaders with undergraduate education and preparing them for matriculation at some of the leading universities in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Africa (Unpublished Pamphlet – History of Evaton, p. 1).

In 1953, under the Apartheid regime, South Africa instituted the Bantu Education Act. This resulted in the demise of many missionary sponsored institution like Wilberforce. The AME church resisted the idea of totally relinquishing Wilberforce Institute but opted rather to lease the school to the government. While the decision was not altogether popular or understood, it proved to be a decision of wisdom and value for in 1995, when the new government was in place, the AME Church was able to reclaim its land and buildings. Through the Service And Development Agency (SADA) – a private, voluntary organization - a series of grants totalling 5.1 million dollars was secured from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) to fund the construction and equipment for several new buildings that are now the home of Wilberforce Community College. In addition, the AME Church donated 42,8 hectares of its land in Evaton to SADA. With the 5.1 million dollars and the land, SADA re-activated the old Wilberforce Institute to what is now Wilberforce Community College (Unpublished Pamphlet – History of Evaton, p. 1).

Although the dominance of the National party in government rendered a devastating blow to Wilberforce Institute, as it did to all mission schools, already the institution had made its mark. First, as stated previously, Wilberforce Institute was one of the few institutions that was founded, staffed and occupied almost exclusively by Africans, born on the soil of the continent, in partnership with persons of African descent. Second, Wilberforce prior to its demise had produced an array of graduates some of whom helped to liberate various African nations. Wilberforce Institute proudly counts among its graduates the likes of:

- Nimrod Sejake – a pioneer of the Black Workers Union of South Africa
- “Elis brown” Mokone – one of South Africa’s greatest boxer
- Ben Skosana – minister of Correctional Services
- President Robert Mugabe – the current President of Zimbabwe
- The late president Samora Machell of Mozambique (Wilberforcean, 1994: 5)

3.9.2.1 Teacher Training and Jordan High School

In the 1908, the General Conference held at Norfolk, Va., assigned Bishop John Albert Johnson to the supervision of the work of the A.M.E Church in South Africa. Among the achievements were the establishment of the Lilian Derrick Institution, which later became known as Wilberforce Institute (The Wilberforcean, 1964: 5).

The early years of Wilberforce Institute were very difficult. There were no washing or bathing facilities for students. This had to be done outside, and could only take place at night in the open air. There was no money, the students were few and there were no hostels. There were also frequent changes of principals (Wiberforcean, 1964: 5).

In 1914, World War 1 broke out and the Bishop decided to suspend the higher classes in the institution. On the 5th February, 1917, Wilberforce Institute was re-opened. The Reverend Edward Tolityi Magaya became the principal of the Institution. Since then many principals succeeded one after the other. In 1960 Mr. Rabotapi was appointed both Boarding Master and Superintendent of Wilberforce Institute. In 1963 Rev. T.R.J Thatelo, who was appointed pastor of Trinity A.M.E Church in Evaton was appointed superintendent of Wilberforce Institute, while Mr. Rabotapi remained the Boarding Master. At the beginning of the same year Mr. Fred W. Matjokana took up the principalship of Wilberforce Training Institute (Wiberforcean, 1964: 7).

By 1964 the enrolment of student and the staff members were as follows:

	Training School	Jordan High School
Boys	71	218
Girls	100	193
Total	171	411
Grand Total	582	
Borders	142	165
Day Scholars	29	246
Total	171	411
Grand Total	582	

Members of Staff

	Principal – 1	
	Training School	Jordan High School
Vice Principals	1	1
Females	3	3
Males	4	12
Total	8	16
Grand Total		8 + 16 = 24

Including Principal 25

Source: G.Z. Lethoba, B.A., Dean, R.R. Wright School of Religion.

3.9.2.2 Wilberforce Today

Wilberforce Community College (WCC) is located in Evaton a township about 50 km south of Johannesburg. While WCC serves the entire nation, most of the students come from the surrounding areas of the Vaal Triangle Area for example, Palm Springs, Lakeside, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Bophelong, Boipatong and other townships of the Vaal triangle. Like its predecessor, Wilberforce Institute, WCC is committed to bringing educational opportunity to the doorsteps of the residents of Evaton and its surrounding neighbourhoods. The College focuses on providing quality education that prepares the citizenry to meet the challenges facing the South African nation now and in the future (Unpublished Pamphlet – History of Evaton, p. 2).

Furthermore, like its predecessor WCC is committed to the economic and social development of the community in which it resides, hence the reason for the 5.1 million dollars investment in infrastructure along with an annual infusion of over 200 000 dollars to cover the operating expenses of the College (Unpublished Pamphlet – History of Evaton, p. 2).

WCC has a two-pronged mission. On one leg stands the commitment to improve economic and social opportunities of the previously disadvantaged. On the other is the

provision of sound educational experiences for all enrolees (Unpublished Pamphlet – History of Evaton, p. 2).

3.9.3 Stofberg Gedenkskool

Stofberg Gedenkskool (Stofberg Memorial School) was a theological seminary established on 1 October 1908 near Viljoensdrift in the Northern Free State, after the synods of the federated Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa had unanimously resolved to establish a training-school for black ministers of religion, evangelists and teachers (Potgieter *et al* 1974: 310; cf. Sekete, 2002: 46).

The class of evangelists started with one lecturer and one student. The lecturer was Rev. A.M. Hofmeyr, the first head of the institution, who remained as its head until December 1934, when he was succeeded by his son, the Rev. H.M. Hofmeyr. A large institution with several subdivisions developed. Early in 1956, when the Government took over the normal college in terms of the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953), there were 16 staff members and 364 students in this section; and in the primary school, which served as teaching school for the normal college, there were 60 teachers and 326 pupils. At the end of 1959, when the institution had to be moved, there were 4 lectures and 120 students in the theological department. Until the end of 1959, 84 ministers, 651 evangelists and about 1100 fully qualified teachers had been trained (Potgieter *et al* 1974: 310). The students who attended at the Stofberg Gedenk-skool came from South Africa and the neighbouring countries of Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia. The local students were from the black population i.e. Sotho, Xhosa and Coloured people (Sekete, 2002: 46).

The report of the of the Synodical Commission of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk of Transvaal held on Wednesday, 14 March 1956 at Belfast indicates that since 1954 no students were registered for matriculation certificate. The final closing down of Stofberg Gedenk-skool is recorded in this commission's rather moving report recorded at its session in Potchefstroom on the 22nd March 1960: "Dit is nou 'n uitgemaakte saak en Stofberg Gedenk-skool word verskuif na Turfloop...".

As the Stofberg Gedenk-skool had to be moved from a White area to a 'Bantu' area, the professional training of 'Bantu' ministers and evangelists has since 1960, been continued at four places. The theological department of the original school has been transferred to Turfloop, near Pietersburg; a new seminary has been established at Witsieshoek (Orange Free State); and seminaries at Dingaanstat (Natal) and Decoligny at Umtata (Cape) have been incorporated in the new scheme. These four institutions were controlled by a central management board on which the original synods of the Ned. Geref Mother Church and of the mission churches were represented. Each institution also had its own local committee (Potgieter *et al* 1974: 310).

In 1972 the number of students was as follows: 37 at Turfloop, 55 at Witsieshoek, 20 at Dingaanstat, and 24 at Decoligny. The rectors were respectively: Proff. A.S. Van Niekerk, A. A. Odendaal, P .P Stander, J.J. and du Preez. At the Turfloop institution, the Ned. Geref. and the Hervormde churches co-operated. At all the institutions a std. 6 Certificate was required for admission to the course for evangelists and, for minister's course, a matriculation certificate or its equivalent (Potgieter *et al* 1974: 310).

3.9.3.1 Groenpunt

After the mission school was moved to the University of the North Pietersburg in 1959, Stofberg Gedenkskool was turned into a prison. After Groenpunt Prison was started people gradually came and settled in the vicinity of the prison.

Buildings were constructed and the prison grew. More and more people, both Whites and Blacks got jobs as prison warders and prison personnel. As a result houses were built for both White and Black personnel by the government. Groenpunt had its own residential area. The residential area was divided into sections. One section was for Black personnel and one for the White personnel (Refengkhoto, 7 May 1996).

Gradually when Groenpunt grew there was a need for a school. First of all a Black primary school was built by the prison authorities. The primary school from the outset allowed only the pupils from Groenpunt, but later pupils from nearby farms were allowed to attend. The primary school was from Sub A to Standard 5. After standard 5 the prison authorities provided a bus for the learners to go to Sharpeville to complete

their secondary schooling. Prison authorities also provided a bus for White children. After primary school these children were compelled to go to Sasolburg for secondary education.

The residents of Groenpunt, particularly Blacks, relied on Refengkhoto Location as far as religion, school and transport were concerned. As Groenpunt is situated on the road to Vereeniging, people had to use taxis as the means of transport. Refengkhoto Location benefited from Groenpunt because its people worked there as prison personnel.

Groenpunt as an institution of the Department of Correctional Services plays an important role in communities of Vaal Triangle. The Spiritual Care Policy has been adopted by the prison authorities. Various church and faith based programmes have been introduced for the offenders. Some of these programmes are run by the ministers for their incarcerated members.

3.9.3.2 Spiritual Care Policy

At Groenpunt (presumably at all institutions of Correctional Services) the Approved Spiritual Care Policy is implemented. Every offender's constitutional right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion is recognised and respected because it is believed that the offender's religion is one value that remains constant in his/her life and it is imperative to ensure that the offender's spiritual needs are adequately met (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

The policy creates an opportunity and encourages offenders to practice their religion according to the specific prescriptions of their religion, subject to administrative practicability of facilities and the maintenance of good order and security in Correctional Centres (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

Spiritual care forms an integral part of the rehabilitation programme for the offender and aims at contributing to the change of the offender's behaviour, based on the acceptance of a life style which is in accordance with the dictates of their faith/church (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

Spiritual Care Services takes place in partnership with different churches/faiths and Faith Based Organisations. Chaplains, Spiritual Workers and controlling bodies of different churches/faith regularly liaise with one another for the provision of integrated and holistic services to offenders (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

Access is granted to local ministers/religious community to render services to their incarcerated members/adherents with a view to promote societal responsibility towards the rehabilitation of the offenders (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

Furthermore, rehabilitation should not be seen as a tool to help offenders to return to life in the community, but as a means to long-term crime prevention. To be effective, rehabilitation must incorporate all aspects of the offender's life and offer opportunities for education and training, personal development, personal well-being – socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

Therefore, this policy is designed to facilitate the provision of need-based Spiritual Care service to offenders towards their rehabilitation and successful reintegration as well as building their moral and ethical values acceptable to the society (Approved Spiritual Care Policy, 2005-2007: 2).

3.9.4 North-West University (Vaal Campus)

The Vaal Triangle Campus of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education was established in the Vaal Triangle at the request of business leaders in Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg and Meyerton (Van Eeden, *et al.* 2006: 444). The Vaal Triangle campus is at present one of the three campuses of the North-West University namely, Mafikeng, Potchefstroom, and the Vaal Triangle.

A permanent office and library was established in 1973 in the Vaal Triangle and the student numbers increased 385 (*Ibid*). In 1984 the activities of the Vaal Triangle campus were transferred from the Goodyear street building to the riverside campus where the student numbers increased to 1 140 by 1984 and during which the Student Council was granted autonomy. The first graduation ceremony for 99 graduates was held in 1984. In 1997 the transformed Student Council declared 1997 a “Year of

Learning”. The Council of the University approved a building programme of approximately R 7 million that included a telematic learning centre.

In 2003, student numbers increased to 2 247. In the same year the Minister of Education announced the restructuring of the higher education sector, which implied that the Sebokeng campus of Vista University was to be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle campus of the North-West University. The newly incorporated campus now remains one of the three campuses of the North-West University.

In 2004 the Vaal Triangle campus became part of the first truly diverse multi-campus university in South Africa. The North-West University (Vaal campus), initially consisted of four campuses namely, Mafikeng, Mankwe, Potchefstroom, and the Vaal Triangle campus had increased its student numbers to 3 038.

3.9.4.1 Vision, Values, and Mission

The vision, values, and mission of North-West University is clearly stated in the Institutional Plan of this University for 2006 – 2011. These will be cited verbatim in this paragraph.

Vision: “To be a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation” (Institutional Plan 2009 – 2011)

Values: “The North-West University subscribes to the values of human dignity, equality, freedom, integrity, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and justice” (*Ibid*).

Mission: “The North-West University’s mission is to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university and implement its expertise in an innovative way” (*Ibid*).

This institution will achieve as it lives its values, strive for sound management and pursues transformation, while being locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognized (*Ibid*).

3.9.4.2 Mission Elements and Objectives

The mission is made up of the following elements:

- “Develop, educate and empower through quality teaching and learning, well-rounded graduates who are able to think literally and critically in their service to the country and its people” (Institutional Plan 2009 – 2011).
- “Develop and sustain high-quality, relevant and focussed research, supplying innovative solutions to challenges faced by scholarly community, the country, the continent and the world” (*Ibid*).
- “Expand the implementation of expertise, both commercially and community-directed, for the benefit of the province, the country, the SADC region, the continent and ultimately the world” (*Ibid*).
- “Be value-driven University, striving to make a difference in the pursuit in its mission” (*Ibid*).
- “Aspire to be recognized internationally as well-managed and innovative University, with a client focus embedded in quality. This, the University seeks to achieve by creating an enabling environment that will enhance and improve its core business and financially viable” (*Ibid*).
- “Transform continually in terms of positioning, academic profile, unity, equity and redress. In doing this, contribute to the transformation of the South African Higher Education system to help meet the country’s social, economic, developmental and environmental needs” (*Ibid*).

3.9.5 Vaal University of Technology

In the 40 years of its existence, first as a College of Advanced Technical Education (1966-1979), Vaal University of Technology has grown in stature as a higher education institution, drawing students from all over the country. It is one of the largest residential

Universities of Technology, with about 17 000 students. This position enables it to make a substantial contribution to the development of human resources in the region and country (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).

The campus boasts of excellent facilities conducive to learning, research, recreation and sport, art and culture, and community engagement. Lecture halls, laboratories, a number of auditoriums offices are situated on 4.6 hectares. Four satellite campuses extend the services of the University, at Secunda, Kempton Park, Klerksdorp and Upington. An extension to the main campus is located in Sebokeng on the campus of the previous Vista University. Besides the four faculties, various departments serve the students, catering for their various needs (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).

3.9.5.1 Vision

To be a dynamic centre of technology leading in quality education for the nation.

3.9.5.2 Mission

The Vaal University of Technology is committed to the development of higher education through:

- 1) ***Teaching and Learning:*** To achieve excellence in teaching and learning endeavours by developing entrepreneurial, technological and cognitive skills; to create an environment conducive to development of behavioural, attitudinal competencies and social skills through cultural, sporting and personal development activities (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).
- 2) ***Research:*** To generate innovative and relevant research to solve the problems of industry and the community (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).
- 3) ***Community Service:*** To create a culture of Lifelong Learning to empower our communities by sharing knowledge skills and resources (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).

All these functions will be enhanced by national and international partnerships in order to meet the needs of stakeholders of a democratic society (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).

The emphasis on career-focused diploma and degree programmes is designed to prepare students for the world of work. Many programmes include practical experience in the work-place, so that students “hit-the-ground running” when they begin their working lives. Because of this practical approach to teaching and research, involvement in the community, transfer of knowledge and technology, and entrepreneurial emphasis, Vaal University of Technology endeavours to educate people for the real world (About VUT, 2007: 1-7).

3.10 Church Communities in the Vaal Triangle

In the paragraphs that follow, the major churches will be discussed. It must be mentioned at the outset that because of the scope of this study only a few of these churches will receive attention.

3.10.1 Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk was one of the first Afrikaans-speaking Churches in the Vaal Triangle (Prinsloo, 1994: 454). The “NGK-Moedergemeente” was established on 16 March 1912 in Vereeniging. The first minister of this congregation was ds. H.E Steyn. The congregations in Vereeniging and De Deur were part of the Heidelberg congregation while those in Houtkop, Vlakfontein and Evaton were under the Potchefstroom congregation. New congregations were later established and these were situated 25 to 30 km from the town. Initially, membership comprised mainly farmers in and around the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark area.

On 11 June 1949 the NGK in Vanderbijlpark congregation became independent from the Vereeniging congregation. The unveiling of the corner stone took place on 2 December 1961. Other congregations in Vanderbijlpark were established (Prinsloo, 1994: 454).

3.10.2 Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK)

The Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk was established in Vereeniging in 1913. 37 years later during 1950, the Vanderbijlpark congregation became independent from that of Vereeniging. Later the following NHK congregations were established in the area: Meyerton (1950), Duncanville (1954), Vanderbijlpark-Oos (1958), Drie Riviere (1961), Rietspruit (1965, Vanderbijlpark-Suid (1975), Drie Riviere-Oos (1983), Meyerton-Suid (1983) and Sonlandpark (1983) (Prinsloo, 1994: 455).

3.10.3 Die Gereformeerde Kerk (GK)

Like all other Afrikaans-speaking churches, the Gereformeerde Kerk also was established in Vereeniging in 1927. The unveiling of its building took place in 1931. The Vanderbijlpark congregation of this church became independent on 21 April 1952. From this congregation two more congregations were established namely, Vanderbijlpark-Suid (1962) en Vanderbijlpark-Oos (1972).

3.10.4 The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church was established in Vereeniging in 1898. In 1904 the first church building was erected. The members of this church in Vanderbijlpark belonged to The Vereeniging congregation. The Vanderbijlpark congregation was later declared independent and opened its church building in October 1950 (Prinsloo, 1994: 455).

3.10.5 The Anglican Church

Initially, the members of the Anglican Church who lived in Vanderbijlpark were incorporated in the congregations in Vereeniging. Already in 1948 there were 100 families in Vanderbijlpark who belonged to the Anglican Church (Van Zyl, 1983: 208).

In 1949 it was decided to establish an Anglican Church in Vanderbijlpark and Father. Richardson became the first minister of the congregation (Van Zyl, 1993: 208).

3.11 Church Communities in Black Townships

Church communities already existed in Vereeniging in 1915 and were lead by their black ministers. These included the Nederduitse Gereformeerde or Hervormde Kerk, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion Church, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church of South Africa (Wesleyan) and the Apostolic Faith Mission Church (Van Zyl, 1993: 208).

Churches like the Roman Catholic and the Anglican initially allowed their members to attend services with their white counterparts. But with the establishment of Top Location in 1932 sites were made available for the building of black churches. The sites for the building of the black churches were given on condition that the blacks would no longer be allowed to attend services in the white areas (Van Zyl, 1993: 208).

Between the years 1946 and 1952, ds. J.P.J Zeeman became the first missionary of the NG kerk in Sharpeville. Ds. A.M Hofmeyr of the NG kerk church built a Church in Sharpeville between 1953 and 1956 (Folscher, 1991: 16). The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in Sharpeville was built with funds raised in the township and in the United States of America (Leigh, 1968: 98).

Mrs Nku founded St John Apostolic Church in Evaton after a spiritual call that she must heal the sick. People from all over South Africa came to Mme-Manku for health purpose and as a result the church expanded. After realising that there were no schools in Evaton Mme-Manku and her husband Archbishop Nku opened a school under the auspices of the church. Due to its spiritual power the church spread all over South Africa. Today the church has more than 10 congregations all over South Africa (Evaton 100 years: 2005: 5).

McCamel Church played an important role in spiritual healing for the sick. People would travel from all over the country to be healed at the church. Besides the healing ministry, the church also played an important role during the 1980s. Many political activists sought asylum in the church building. As the director of the church, Rev. Lord McCamel acted as a nucleus that held together the shattered lives of hundreds of people in the Vaal Triangle (Evaton 100 years, 2005: 12).

3.12 Major Political Events in the Vaal Triangle

The Vaal Triangle has been the centre of major historical events that gave birth to a new South Africa: Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the Soweto uprising in 1976 both shocked and inspired as they resounded throughout South Africa. The effects of the Vaal uprising in 1984 were destined to seep through South Africa, culminating eventually in a new South Africa. The Boipatong massacre in 1992 literally stalled the negotiations at Codesa. During all of these events, the Church and other formations such as the Vaal Council of Churches were on the spot. It ministered to the people who were hurting, provided asylum for the political victims, and allowed their buildings for political meetings where inflammatory speeches were made. Its ministers attended their trials, gave assistance to the widows and children of those who have been killed or put on trial or indefinitely detained. They invited journalists from within and outside the country to report on shootings, torture and acts of revenge committed by vigilantes in collaboration with the police (Noonan, 2003: 9).

In the paragraphs that follow, an overview of the events of 1960, 1984-1986, and 1992 in the Vaal Triangle will be given. It must be mentioned at the outset that the researcher's intention is not so much to give an accurate account and an exhaustive history of these events, but rather to give an indication as to what kind of context the church in this area functions.

3.12.1 Sharpeville Massacre (1960)

Since he had become prime minister, Dr H.F Verwoerd had had to deal with serious disturbances in black areas in different parts of the country. During the course of 1959 rioting and violence had occurred at Lady Selborne location in Pretoria, Cato Manor near Durban, Maritzburg, Paarl and Windhoek (Liebenberg, 1993: 368).

The year 1960 was a turning point in South Africa. It started inauspiciously for Verwoerd when the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan visited the country and warned the Nationalists that an irreversible 'wind of change' was blowing through Africa. The gathering shift to independence in Africa had begun three years before, in Ghana, and would continue through the 1960s as former colonies gained self-rule.

Against this background, South Africa was the glaring exception. In the month after Macmillan's cautionary speech, Verwoerd's police earned South Africa shocking headlines for an event that radically altered the nature of the country's political battle (Ministry of Education: HSRC, 2004: 175).

Sharpeville became internationally known on account of disturbances which took place there on 21 March 1960, attended by heavy loss of life. Although similar riots have occurred in other places in the country, with greater casualties, the circumstances were such that the obscure township of Sharpeville became a new concept in the world's political vocabulary. This was mainly because the time coincided with the wave of Black Nationalism in Africa and the withdrawal of Britain, France and Belgium as colonial powers. Stirred by the reports of independence granted to States with black inhabitants, the pan-African Congress (PAC), launched a campaign in 1960 in different parts of South Africa for the abolition of passes (identity documents) (Noonan, 2003: 61).

As chairman of the PAC, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe started the campaign on 21 March by inviting arrest at a police-station in Johannesburg with 50 of his supports. Similar demonstrations took place in Cape Town, but no arrests were made there. No demonstrations took place in Port Elizabeth or Bloemfontein, while only 12 blacks came forward in Durban and 5 in Pretoria. In Evaton, near Vereeniging, about 10 000 Blacks gathered and were persuaded to disperse only when several military aircraft flew over them at low level. Another crowd, 4000 strong, marched to the police-station in the near-by industrial town of Vanderbijlpark, where one person was shot dead, while in the neighbouring black township of Bophelong an attempt to loot a bread van resulted in one more death (Noonan, 2003: 76).

Trouble at Sharpeville began late in the evening of 20 March when a group of supporters of the PAC marched through the township and urged people to join the procession. The police were sent out and toward midnight a group of several hundred young men were dispersed by the police at baton charge. From 5 a.m. on 21 March crowds gathered to wait for buses that did not arrive. Between 5 000 and 7 000 people gathered slowly outside the Sharpeville police-station and demanded arrest.

Here there were conflicting versions of what then happened. The police account stresses the hostility of the crowd, but according to witnesses among others, the former Sharpeville librarian Mr. Nkadimeng Leutsoa, Mr. P.A Nthoroane, the former inspector of schools and his colleague Mr. Nehemiah Mokone, Ntate Phara, one of the oldest residents of Sharpeville and a member of the URCSA, as well as the reporters, are of the view that many of the people were at the police station *simply out of curiosity*. The people were relaxed and came and went during the whole morning. The chairman of the Wessels Commission, Justice Wessels, tasked with the investigation of the Sharpeville shooting, later found that it was *not an armed or threatening crowd*, but rather a rowdy crowd who were singing and shouting political slogans.

When the police tried to arrest one of the leaders, there was a struggle and the crowd surged forward at the fence. Despite the fact that no order was given to fire, the police fearing the crowd was becoming hostile, panicked and opened fire. People ran in all directions to save themselves from the bullets.

It is believed that the firing lasted about forty seconds. When the guns stopped, there was silence. Bodies of victims were lying all over the streets. Eventually, sixty nine people were killed and one hundred and eighty were wounded. Eighty percent of those shot were shot from the back as they fled.

In his book, *Compromise and Courage* (2005: 243-245), Peter Lee tells how Rt. Reverend Reeves of the Anglican Church visited the injured in Baragwanath hospital in Johannesburg the next day and discovered youngsters, women and the elderly among the injured. Talking to the wounded he found that everyone was stunned and mystified by what had taken place. They had certainly not expected that anything like that would happen (Lee, 2005: 243-245).

Mr. Leutsoa also recalls how families of the victims were provided with food and other needs by the members of the Anglican Church. Prayer meetings were also held in many churches in Sharpeville and preparations were made for the burial of the deceased. The bodies of those who had died were brought from Johannesburg to Vereeniging for burial. The burial took place under heavy police guard. Many ministers of the churches around country attended the burial, while the Defence Force was keeping a low profile.

3.12.2 Vaal Rent Boycotts (1984-1986)

Between 1984 and 1986, urban African townships were the scene of intense conflict between the government and its extra-parliamentary opponents. In townships throughout the country, civic, student and youth groups, most of them affiliated either to United Democratic Front (UDF) or linked to Black Consciousness Organisations, sought to mobilise residents against the official local government system and in support of other demands. In several townships, the local authority collapsed and groups opposed to the system set up alternative structures to represent residents, in some areas, to administer parts of the township (Mashabela, 1988: 1).

The conflict rarely moved out of the township, but as it posed a clear threat to the government's control of urban areas steps were soon to be taken to defuse the situation. In the first place, the government attempted to use its security machinery to stifle those organisations which were believed to be responsible for the conflict. In 1985 and 1986, emergency restrictions were imposed and scores of activists were detained without trial. Security forces moved into many townships in an attempt to re-impose "order" (Mashabela, 1988: 1).

Secondly, the government acknowledged that the conflict had been partly prompted by township residents' material grievances. Government spokesmen recognised that poor facilities, severe housing shortages and widespread unemployment were constant features of township life; they argued that prospects for stability would partly depend on improving conditions. In an attempt to deal with residents' grievances, the government embarked on upgrading programmes in many urban townships. These were designed to provide the services, jobs and houses which would give the residents a reason to opt for stability (Mashabela, 1988: 1).

The 1983 Constitution was one of the causes of the unrest. This Act, which granted voting rights to Coloureds and Indians, caused great dissatisfaction among Blacks. The outcome of that dissatisfaction was the establishment of two anti-apartheid organizations: the National Front (NF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). The NF strung together organizations supporting black consciousness as embodied in the Azanian Manifesto, while the UDF did the same for those that sprang out of the

Freedom Charter. Both the UDF and the NF rejected the 1983 Constitution and urged Coloureds and Indians to boycott the August elections. Through its campaigns the UDF aroused a strong spirit of resistance to apartheid. Resistance to the 1983 Constitution came into force on 3 September 1984; rioting burst out in the Vaal Triangle that same day (Liebenberg, 1993: 500).

In September 1984 large scale disturbances erupted in the black townships of the Vaal Triangle and speedily spread to other parts of the country. This unrest lasted longer, cost more lives and caused great material damage than any previous black uprising in South Africa (Liebenberg, 1993: 498).

In July 1984, when the Lekoa Town Council in the Vaal Triangle decided to raise tariffs for municipal services in the townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong, and Zamdela by about R5 a month, there was immediate dissatisfaction. It was fanned by agitators and also by news papers for black readers in which various reports concerning the reaction to the rent increases were featured. It was consequently decided to make a protest march to the offices of the Lekoa Council. This led to a confrontation with the police and to a large scale rioting in the course of which shops were plundered, buildings set alight and members of the Lekoa Council murdered (Liebenberg, 1993: 499).

When the council refused to cancel the increases, the Vaal Civic Association organised a stay-away, a school boycott and a march for 3 September 1984. On this Monday morning black workers in the Vaal Triangle observed a stay-away. The stay-away was undisputed and no public transport operated. Protest marches took place in all the townships of the Vaal Triangle, but it was in Sharpeville that things took a horrific turn with the killing of Councillor Khuzwayo Jacob Dlamini (Noonan, 2003: 47).

Two months went by without any arrests for the murder of Dlamini. Initially there were 8 people arrested in connection with the murder but later, two of the accused, Christian Mokubung and Gideon Mokone were sentenced to eight years and did not receive the death penalty, hence the remaining six were to be known as "the Sharpeville Six" (Noonan, 2003: 54).

The Sharpeville Six drew national and international headlines when they were sentenced although they all maintained that they were not even anywhere near the scene of the murder when it happened. Many countries threatened South Africa with further sanctions if the six were hanged. Human Rights activists around the world, particularly in Europe and the US marched in protest to their Governments to support the Six and to put pressure on the South African Government.

The disturbances spread from the Vaal Triangle to other districts; to Thabong near Welkom, to Thembisa near Kemptonpark and to Mamelodi outside Pretoria. On the 12 September 1984 youths began committing arson in Soweto as well. A few days later the Release Mandela Committee organized a stay-away in Soweto to protest against the presence of the police in the area. Supporters of the action tried to compel workers to stay at home, which led to black on black fighting (Liebenberg, 1993: 501).

3.12.3 Boipatong Massacre (1992)

Since the massacre on the night vigil in January of 1992, where 38 people were killed, there have been ongoing incidents of violence in the Vaal Triangle. These incidents were characterised by the fact that they were random insofar as they were perpetrated against the residents of the Vaal townships in an indiscriminate manner. For example, numerous attacks by gun-wielding men have taken place at shebeens and railway stations where patrons and commuters were killed indiscriminately. During the course of 1991 and 1992 it became apparent that the perpetrators of these attacks were living in the Kwa-Madala Hostel situated in the ISCOR Compound in the Vaal Triangle. No efforts were made to prevent the attacks emanating from this hostel.

The Vaal Council of Churches, as the recipients of complains from victims of violence perpetrated by the residents of the Kwa-Madala Hostel had consistently approached the local police to investigate the individual complaints. The police's consistent response to the approaches for assistance and action by the Vaal Council of Churches was that there was not sufficient evidence for them to respond.

In addition numerous representations were made to the ISCOR management to ask them to act decisively to ensure that they were not housing perpetrators of violence in the

Kwa-Madala Hostel. Again the Vaal Council of Churches repeatedly approached the Kwa-Madala residents. While the ISCOR management initially appeared to accept the representations that the Kwa-Madala Hostel constituted a threat to the safety of residents of Boipatong, Sharpeville and Sebokeng communities, they subsequently denied and rejected the submissions of the Vaal Council of Churches that the acts of violence were planned and executed from the Kwa-Madala Hostel.

The field workers of the Vaal Council of Churches continued to receive reports from the residents of Boipatong, Sharpeville and Sebokeng of the violence and intimidation perpetrated by the residents of the Kwa-Madala Hostel. In addition to approaching the police to intervene and protect the residents of the townships, they decided to approach the ISCOR management. On the 15th August 1992, Rev. Moerane accompanied a delegation of women from Boipatong Township to Mr. Viljoen, a manager of ISCOR. The delegation handed him a letter wherein they stated that they believed that the perpetrators of numerous incidents of violence in the Vaal Triangle were residing in Kwa-Madala Hostel. ISCOR responded in a letter wherein they denied that the violence is executed from the Kwa-Madala Hostel. They stated that “all allegations have been thoroughly investigated by ISCOR and no evidence could be found to convince management that the Kwa-Madala Hostel should be managed differently to that of ISCOR’s other hostel Kwa-Masiza.”

Eventually on the night of Wednesday, 17 June 1992 the defenceless families were trapped in their homes as crazed night marauders exploded in their living rooms with blood-stained hatchets, pangas, knopkieries, and home-made spears held aloft to destroy whatever stood in their way. It is reported that the following morning, 21 people were found dead.

3.13 Conclusion

In this Chapter the Vaal Triangle as the context within which the church must function has been discussed. The early history of the Vaal Triangle revealed that urbanization in this region started as early as the 1880s with the discovery of coal along the banks of the Vaal River. This discovery necessitated labour, and the migrant labour system seemed, to have been the answer to this problem. But as industries developed, many people from

the rural areas came to settle more permanently in the area. This resulted in the establishment of the black townships around Vereeniging. Top Location (and later Sharpeville), was a direct result of the development of Union Steel Corporation (a scarp metal company) which started in Vereeniging in 1911. Similarly, Bophelong and Boipatong owe their establishment to the labour force needed for development of Iscor in Vanderbijlpark.

With the implementation of the Group Areas Act, many black people were removed from Sharpeville and other existing townships of Vaal and re-settled in Sebokeng. The events of 1960, 1984 and 1992 in the Vaal did not only shock the world, but also led to the present democratic Government in South Africa in 1994.

In spite of these unfortunate incidents the Vaal has grown in almost all facets of life. Vereeniging is rightly called the Industrial Giant of the Vaal Triangle. Iscor in Vanderbijlpark and Sasol in Sasolburg are counted among the biggest of their kind in the continent. The area can boast of the existence of two campuses of higher education i.e. North-West University and the Vaal University of Technology. The Vaal River and the Vaal Dam are famous tourists' destination, to mention but a few.

Yet for all this success, there is also the down-side. Unemployment, poverty and crime have adversely affected the residents of this region. Social services which are provided by local municipality are not adequate, especially in the peri-urban areas. Moreover, while the residents are hurting about the after-effects of the massacre of the people in Sharpeville and Boipatong, HIV/AIDS is also claiming many lives among the young and old. It is within this environment that the Church must proclaim the Good News. Genuine Christian service in socially deprived areas compels the Church to get involved in the fight against social ills.

In the chapter that follows some of the issues that were raised in the literature review in Chapter Two will be taken up in structured questionnaires. The questionnaires will also include the information that was gathered in the survey of the Vaal Triangle in Chapter Three namely, the conditions in the towns and township, issues about crime, poverty, provision of services, infrastructure, among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Empirical Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The literature review in Chapter Two and the historical background (the contextual study) of the Vaal Triangle in Chapter Three formed the bedrock of the structured questionnaires that were used to probe the perceptions of the members of the Church and the Community in respect of the *Local Church* in the area. The specific aim of this research was to highlight the *role* of an appropriate model for the *Local Church* in the Vaal Triangle and its implication for *qualitative* and *quantitative* Church-growth.

This chapter outlines the research design methodology used in this study. The following aspects will be briefly discussed:

- review of literature;
- research design;
- questionnaire as a research instrument;
- sampling;
- pilot and pre-testing;
- administering of questionnaires;
- response rate;
- statistical technique;
- ethical aspects; and
- chapter summary.

The next section presents the research design and methodology.

4.2 Research Design and Methodology

The research design outlines the process taken in conducting this research. This is because conducting research needs the creation of a framework within which the

research project is to be conducted, so as to ensure that the research follows a direction that will be focussed in terms of the research inquiry.

A research design provides the overall structure for all the procedures the research follows and the data collection and analysis, which in effect means planning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:85). Delport (2002:159) concurs with this assertion and adds that the research design is the plan, recipe or blueprint for the investigation, and as such provides a guideline according to which a selection of data-collection method(s) that are most appropriate to the researcher's goal and to the selected design, can be made. In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2005:32) point out however that due to many factors that must be considered in planning the research, *inter alia*, time and costs, it is imperative for researchers to select and utilise those research methods that would permit better, convenient and successful attainment of specific research aims consciously and purposely. There are two broad approaches commonly used by researchers to collect data. These are the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 140).

Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 133) state that: "the word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and no process and meanings that are *not* experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency". *Qualitative* researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researchers and what they studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry and emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry (*Ibid*). According to Gay and Airasian (2003: 13), qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the research setting to obtain a deep understanding about the way things are and how participants perceive them, provides insights into what people believe and feel about the way they are, allows researcher to maintain a physical presence in the research setting and involves texts of written words and the analysis of collected data.

In contrast, *quantitative* research is defined as a formal, objective and systematic process where data are used to obtain information about study phenomena (Stubbs, 2005:47). A quantitative research approach uses descriptive statistics as a method of organising data, facilitating the organization and the interpretation of numbers obtained from measuring a characteristic or variable (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:30; McMillan &

Schumacher, 2001:191). Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 180) contend that the focus in quantitative research is typically one aspect of behaviour which is quantified in some way to determine its frequency. According to Vockel and Asher (1995:192), quantitative research involves the use of questionnaires. To this end, this study makes use of questionnaires as quantitative research instruments because they would facilitate the quantification of the perceptions of the members of the church regarding the role of the Local Church in enhancing qualitative and quantitative church-growth.

In this research, the quantitative research method was used predominantly.

4.3 Research Method

Mouton (2001: 86) is of the view that every research project begins with a review of the existing literature. This, he believes, is the first phase of an empirical study. The method of research in this study included the literature review and empirical research.

4.3.1 Literature Review

According to Dane (1990: 61) the review of the literature is a process that continues throughout the research effort. A great deal of information exists about phenomena researched and a good literature review should comprise the following three goals, viz. obtaining scientific perspective, avoiding duplication and avoiding conceptual and perceptual problems (*Ibid.*).

Mouton (2001: 86-87) however argues persuasively that the term “literature review” does not, in fact encapsulate all that we intend to convey by the term. He correctly points out that when one embarks on a study, one should first find out what has been done in one’s field of study, not merely a collection of texts. He suggests that one should start with a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that one is interested in.

The following salient aspects concerning the review of literature are crucial:

- Reviewing literature offers the researcher the opportunity to avoid mistakes made by others, and contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation.
- Relating the existing research to the topic intended for investigating and helping with the interpretation of the data.
- Making use of textbooks, journals, and review books.
- Consulting abstracts to gain access to additional data relevant to the project at hand.
- Consulting key authors on the topic you intend studying.
- Locating articles related to your topic to ease the research.
- Being meticulous when taking notes from sources.
- Organising the introduction to the research project from general to specific and interpreting the responses to questionnaire items.

In Chapter Two of this study an effort was made to learn from other scholars: how they have theorised and conceptualised on the *Local Church*. To this end, primary and secondary literature sources were used to elucidate elements such as definitions, different theories, models and hypotheses in the field of ecclesiology. This critical literature review led to a more precise problem statement, demonstrating as it were, the specific area that needed to be explored as well as formulating an appropriate empirical research design.

4.3.2 Empirical Research

Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 2) define empirical research as a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomena about which we are interested or concerned. This study was intentionally set out to probe the church community's conception of the Local Church and its role in enhancing qualitative and quantitative church-growth in the Vaal Triangle.

4.3.2.1 Aim of Empirical Research

The aim of empirical research is to collect information from samples of respondents about their attitudes, values, habits, ideas, demographics, feelings, opinions, perceptions, plans and beliefs. Cohen *et al.* (2001: 169) assert that surveys are “set out to describe and to interpret *what is*.”

In this research the aim was to gather information about the perceptions of the Church Community of the Vaal Triangle regarding the role of the Local Church in ensuring qualitative and quantitative church-growth. To this end questionnaires were used.

4.3.2.2 The Questionnaire as a Research Instrument

A questionnaire is used in a survey where participants in a study respond to a set of questions or statements. In this research, a survey by means of questionnaires was used because of the following reasons (Creswell, 1994: 1):

- A questionnaire is a convenient way to reach a geographically dispersed sample of a population.
- Its distribution facilitates quick data collection, often as little as six weeks from the distribution to the conclusion of the data collection.
- A distributed questionnaire is very cost effective because it involves only duplication and distribution expenses.

Added to these reasons, the choice of a questionnaire as a data collecting instrument has the advantage that respondents are able to complete questionnaires anonymously (Delport, 2002: 172). However, the following disadvantages of a questionnaire as a data collection instrument were noted by, *inter alia*, Best and Kahn (2003: 307):

- Respondents who do not have an opinion of or the knowledge concerning the subject, will answer the questions instinctively or respondents might have little interest in a particular problem and therefore might answer the questionnaire indiscriminately.

- As motivation of the respondents is difficult to check, the researcher might receive misleading responses and misinterpretations can occur.
- The respondents can be forced to give simple answers to complicated issues.
- Questionnaires that do not probe deep enough may not reveal a true picture of opinions and feelings of respondents.
- The length of a questionnaire can give cause to inaccurate responses and a low percentage of feedback.

In this research, it was decided however, that the advantages of the use of questionnaires far outweighed the disadvantages, especially if the necessary procedures such as pre-testing (piloting) to ensure validity and reliability, are followed. Three questionnaires were developed, with each targeting a stratum of the population.

▪ **Structure of the Questionnaires**

Three questionnaires were designed and each divided into Section A and Section B. *Section A*, covered biographical information of the respondents. This included details such as gender, home language, age, marital status, number of children (where applicable), residence, among others. The demographic data intends to give an overall picture of who the respondents are. In data analysis, this information can assist in determining relationships (if any), between responses and respondents' demographics. In this way inferential statistics are used to arrive at conclusions. *Section B*, for all the three questionnaires consisted of items relating to the respondents' perceptions, attitudes, values, habits, ideas, feelings, opinions, plans and beliefs regarding the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle.

Questionnaire 1 targeted selected ministers, pastors, bishops, archbishops as well as all other church leaders in the Vaal Triangle. Questionnaire items assumed that this section of the population is more knowledgeable than the rest especially with regard to the doctrine of the church and its mission.

Questionnaire 2 consisted of statements related to the congregants' views about the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle, as well as the extent to which the members relate to each other within the congregation.

Questionnaire 3 consisted of items related to the views of the members of the community (mostly public servants such teachers, nurses, policemen/women, social workers, etc.) about the living conditions in their neighbourhoods.

It is the researcher's assumption that the Local Church functions within a certain environment and as such, the conditions (as gleaned from the perceptions of the Church Community) will influence the inner life of the church – its worship, liturgy, doctrine, mission, among others.

▪ **Construction of the Questionnaire in this Study**

Three sets of questionnaires were developed to collect data from respondents. The following guidelines as suggested by Miller (1980: 78-79) were considered when questionnaires were constructed:

- The language that was appropriate to the level of the respondents was used.
- An effort was made to choose words that have the same meaning for everyone.
- Long and ambiguous statements were avoided.
- All biased and leading statements or questions were avoided.

A list of statements for all three samples of the population focused on the role of the Local Church in respect of qualitative and quantitative church-growth. In this study the Local Church is defined as a group of Christians at a certain place, committed to Christ in faith and obedience, to each other in loving and caring fellowship, and to their neighbourhood in witness, evangelism and service (cf. 2.8.2). The statements in the questionnaires therefore covered the following categories:

- **Category 1:** *Members' commitment to Christ and His Church.* Questionnaire items in this category were aimed at testing the respondents' perception and understanding of the Local Church as well as their commitment in faith and obedience to its head, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 2.8.2).
- **Category 2:** *Members' commitment to each other.* Questionnaire items in this category included statements indicating the relationship between the members of the congregation i.e. the loving care and fellowship among themselves as congregants (cf. 2.8.2).
- **Category 3:** *Members' commitment to their neighbourhood.* Questionnaire items in this category included statements indicating whether or not, and to what extent the Local Church is committed to its neighbourhood in evangelism, witness, and service (2.8.2).

The statements representing these categories did not follow any order but were randomly placed in the questionnaires.

4.3.2.3 Administering the Questionnaire

In administering the questionnaire, the following procedural aspects were taken into cognisance:

- **Questionnaire Reliability and Validity**

The validity of a measuring instrument is determined by whether the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Delpont, 2002: 166). There are, however, different types of validity but for the purposes of this research only content and construct validity will be clarified. A measuring instrument has content validity to the extent that its items represent the content that it is designed to measure (Borg, *et al.* 1983: 120). Content validity is not a statistical property; it is rather a matter of expert judgement. Several ministers and different leading members of the congregations reviewed the questionnaire to judge the relevancy of each item. The Statistical

Consultancy Services of the North-West University (Vaal Triangle Campus) was consulted for further scrutiny and refinement, as well as the standardizing of the items in the (self-developed) questionnaires to ensure reliability and validity of this research instrument.

The reliability of a measurement procedure is the stability or consistency of the measurement. This means that if the same variable is measured under the same conditions, a reliable measurement procedure will produce identical (or nearly identical) results. In other words, it refers to a measuring instrument's ability to yield consistent numerical results each time it is applied; it does not fluctuate unless there are variations in the variable being measured (Delpont, 2001: 162-163).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 92), content validity is the extent to which a measuring instrument is representative of the content or domain being measured, that is, the extent to which the content of the instrument appears to logically examine and comprehensively include the characteristic it is intended to measure.

▪ Questionnaire Distribution and Administration

Appointments were secured telephonically with ministers and members of the congregations for a briefing session on the research project. During these sessions the purpose of the research was explained in detail. Aspects such as quality of the research, confidentiality and anonymity, and the right to withdraw from participation (cf. Loock, 1999: 41; Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290) were dealt with. Finally, permission was granted to participate in the research project (cf. Burns and Grove, 1999: 446), and the dates were set for the delivery of the questionnaires. A period of one week was considered adequate by both the researcher and the participants for the collection of the completed questionnaires.

4.3.2.4 Population

The population comprised the following categories:

- Ministers and pastors of the churches in the Vaal Triangle, which consisted of the towns of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton, Sasolburg and Deneysville and the townships of Evaton, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Bophelong, Boipatong and Refengkgotso (cf. Chapter 3). Due to the expanse of the Vaal Triangle, it was decided to demarcate the research area to the Emfuleni Municipality, which comprises townships of Evaton, Sharpeville, Boipatong, Bophelong, and Sebokeng. Enquiries from the Emfuleni Municipality indicated that there are 140 churches registered with the Council, which translates to a population of $N = 140$ ministers and pastors.

- Congregants of the churches in the Emfuleni Municipal townships. A snap survey of 10 churches indicated an average of 80 members of the congregation. This was translated to an estimate of a population of $N = 1120$ church members.

- Community members living in the vicinity of churches in the demarcated townships. The population of the township adult inhabitants by the Bos Report (www.vaal.co.za/info/bos_report/the_vaal_triangle_a_socio-eco.php) indicated a population of $N = 629000$ people. This was considered to be the population for this research.

4.3.2.5 Sampling

A sample is a subset of the population consisting of a predetermined number – the sample size – of randomly selected sampling units from the population. The sample frame was identified from the population which comprised the church communities in the Vaal Triangle. The following categories comprised the sample for this research:

- **Ministers and Pastors**

Since the population of ministers and pastors was found to be 140, it was decided to survey the entire population. This is in line with Leedy and Ormrod (1995:56), who suggests that the entire population is surveyed.

▪ **Congregants**

The population of congregants was estimated at 1120 congregants for all the churches in the research area. In line with Cohen *et al.* (2001:94), for populations of 1000, the suggested sample is 285. It was decided in line with this guideline, that a simple random sample of $n = 300$ congregants would be used.

▪ **Members of the Community**

The population for community members in the vicinity of the churches was found to be 629 000. It was decided that the sample for this population would be $n = 400$. This was considered in line with Cohen *et al.*'s guideline which stipulates a sample size of 384 for populations between 75 000 and 1 000 000. It was therefore decided in line with this guideline, that a simple random sample of $n = 400$ community members would be used.

4.3.2.6 Response Rates

Table 4.1

Population category	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires returned	% returned
Ministers and pastors	140	84	60
Members of the congregations	300	178	59.3
The community (Public Servants)	400	187	46.75
Total	840	449	53.5

Although the ideal is to have 100% return rate, 50% as minimum return rate is considered quite acceptable for analysis and interpretation. However, this rather low return rate indicates a decline in the activities and influence of the Local Church in the area, which therefore makes this study a necessity.

4.3.2.7 Statistical Analysis and Techniques

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University was approached for the processing and analysis of the collected data. This was done by means of Cronbach's Alpha programme to determine frequencies and percentages.

Descriptive statistics such as means, variance, standard deviation and frequency distribution were used to describe the respondents.

4.3.2.8 Ethical Aspects

The following ethical aspects were considered throughout this research project:

- **The quality of Research:** According to Looock (1999: 40) this aspect entails maintaining the highest possible standards in planning, implementation and reporting. This research was approached with integrity – the researcher endeavoured to report honestly and fully about responses of the respondents.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** It was the responsibility of the researcher to maintain anonymity of the institution and the participants. According to Burns and Grove (1999: 163) the participants have the right to remain anonymous and to ensure that the information that they give will be treated confidentially.
- **Permission:** According to Burns and Grove (1999: 446) agreement to participate must be made with the participant after he or she has received the basic information about the research project. To obtain permission for this

research project, a letter was given to the participants to secure the voluntary participation (Annexure E).

- **Withdrawal from Participation:** It remains the right of the participant to withdraw his or her participation despite the fact that he or she initially agreed to participate. The research project should also be ended if it no longer maintains the initially set standards. During this research project the participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from participation in the research project at any time if they have any reason for withdrawal.
- **Relationship with Participants:** In this research project the researcher endeavoured to ensure that the spirit of co-operation existed between the researcher and the participants.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the research design was presented and outlined with regard to the research method, the development of the research and pilot study description. The questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection because it would be easy to collect information provided by respondents on their own, easy to distribute and to collect personally.

The data analysis and interpretation will be dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four dealt with the empirical research and design. In this chapter the report on the empirical research using questionnaires will be presented. The intention of this chapter is to attach meaning and interpretation to the collected data. This report will reflect on the perceptions and attitudes of the Church Community in the Vaal Triangle regarding the role of the Local Church in enhancing qualitative and quantitative church-growth. It will also be the aim of this chapter to comment on the respondents' response to each questionnaire item.

5.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a set of information obtained through systematic investigation and refers to information that is numerical or narrative (De Poy & Gitlin, 1998: 305). Neumann (1997: 271) asserts that data analysis is a technique for gathering and explaining the context of the text. The content refers to words, meanings, ideas or any messages that can be communicated. The text is anything written, visual or spoken that serves as medium of communication.

This chapter assumes the quantitative method of data analysis with narrative reporting and interpretation of results. According to Monnette, Sullivan and Cornell (1991:11) analysis of data in quantitative research involves inferences which, in this study implies that judgement is passed, reasoning is used and a conclusion is reached based on evidence.

In this study the analysis and interpretation of data on the demographic details of ministers/pastors, members of the congregations, as well as members of the community (which includes teachers, nurses, police men, other public servants such as social workers etc.) will be presented. This will be followed by the analysis and interpretation of questionnaire items.

5.3 Biographical Information

Respondents' demographic data indicate information relating to their backgrounds and provide the opportunity to get insight of who they are in terms of their biographical details. The data are represented by means of frequency counts (f) and percentages (%). Tables are used for this purpose.

5.3.1 Gender of Ministers and Pastors

Table 5.3.1 depicts data on respondents' gender.

Table 5.3.1 Gender

Variables	f	%
Male	81	96.4
Female	3	3.6
Total	84	100

The majority of respondents (96.4%) were males while females accounted for (3.6%). The data indicate that males are strongly represented in the ministry of the churches in the Vaal Triangle which implies that ministry is a male-dominated profession although some ministers and pastors are female. This situation is not contrary to that of the Early Church where some women were for example, among Paul's "co-workers". Although these women were not pastors, they ministered to the churches that met in their homes; they prophesized, spoke in tongues, corrected and instructed ill-informed evangelists like Apollos, and served as deaconesses.

Women do not only help to transform the structures of the Local Church in ways that would allow it to grow in grace, but should also be involved in the ministries of the church as mature and full church members in accordance with the traditions of the particular Local Church.

5.3.2 Home Language

Table 5.3.2 illustrates data on home language of respondents.

Table 5.3.2 Home language

Variables	f	%
Sesotho	34	40.5
IsiZulu	11	13.1
Tshivenda	1	1.2
IsiXhosa	15	17.9
Sepedi	8	9.5
Setswana	12	14.3
Other	1	1.2
Total	82	97.6
Nil responses	2	2.4
Total	84	100.0

From the data in table 5.3.2, it would seem that the majority of ministers and pastors in the Vaal Triangle (40.5%) are South Sotho speaking. This is in agreement with the language demographics in the area. IsiXhosa, Setswana and IsiZulu are also home languages of some ministers and pastors (17.9%, 14.3%, and 13.1% respectively). It would seem that there is no language crisis in the area. This was the situation in the Early Church. The spreading of the gospel on the day of Pentecost was made possible because many people heard the gospel for the first time in their own native languages. It would seem that ministers and pastors in the Vaal Triangle are able to reach the community with the gospel in their own languages. This situation can facilitates the spreading of the Gospel, with the resultant desired church-growth in the area.

5.3.3 Age

Table 5.3.3 illustrates data on age of respondents.

Table 5.3.3 Age

Variables	f	%
Younger than 19 yrs	0	0
20-30 yrs	4	4.8
31-40 yrs	6	7.1
41-50 yrs	36	42.9
51-60 yrs	31	36.9
61-70 yrs	6	7.1
Older than 70 yrs	0	0
Total	83	98.8
Nil responses	1	1.2
Total	84	100.0

The data in table 5.3.3 indicate that there are no ministers/pastors under the age of 19 and above the age of 70. The majority of ministers/pastors (36%) fall between the age range of 41 and 50 years. Only 6% of the ministers/pastors fall within the range of 61 and 70 years. This is a very encouraging situation because the congregations are not served by ministers who are both *too young* and inexperienced, or *too old* to cope with the demands of our modern-day ministry.

5.3.4 Marital Status

Table 5.3.4 illustrates data on the marital status of respondents.

Table 5.3.4 Marital Status

Variable	f	%
Married	72	85.7
Unmarried	3	3.6
Divorced	0	0
Total	75	89.3
Nil responses	9	10.7
Total	84	100.0

The data above indicate that the majority (85.7%) of ministers and pastors are married. Only 3.6% indicated that they are unmarried. No respondents are divorced. This indicates that the congregation in the Vaal Triangle are served by ministers and pastors whose marital status is “acceptable”. This situation could have a positive influence on the families in their congregations. Ministers and pastors as heads of their families would possibly be in a position to deal with family problems and issues that may arise in the homes of the members of their congregations regarding the raising of children.

5.3.5 (a) Male Children

The data in the next two tables (table 5.3.5 (a) and 5.3.5 (b)) will be analyzed and interpreted jointly. Table 5.3.5 (b) appears on the next page.

Table 5.3.5 (a) illustrates data on male children of respondents.

Variables	f	%
One male	27	32.1
Two males	26	31.0
Three males	11	13.1
Four males	6	7.1
Total	70	83.3
Nil responses	14	16.7
Total	84	100.0

5.3.5 (b) Female Children

Table 5.3.5 (b) illustrate data on female children of respondents.

Variables	f	%
One female	41	48.8
Two females	18	21.4
Three females	10	11.9
Four females	3	3.6
Total	72	85.7
Nil responses	12	14.3
Total	84	100.0

From the data in table 5.3.5 (a) and 5.3.5 (b) it is evident that all ministers and pastors (except for 3.6% in table 5.3.5.) have children in their families. This situation will possibly enable them to minister to the children and youth in their congregations. Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3:21 give guidance as to how the members of the family should relate to one another.

5.3.6 Residence

Table 5.3.6 illustrates data on residence of respondents.

Variables	f	%
In the Township	62	73.8
In the Suburbs	22	26.2
Total	84	100.0

The data in the table above indicate that 62% of ministers and pastors live within the communities they serve. This situation may promote the desired *incarnational ministry*. However, 26.2% of them live in the suburbs and this could imply that they may not be readily available when their services are needed by the members of their congregations. This may have a negative impact on the desired qualitative church-growth. On the other

hand, this situation may promote *lay ministry* - lay people would realise that evangelism is every Christian's business. They too are equipped by the Spirit to advance God's Kingdom within the local churches and in the community at large.

5.3.7 Church Building

Table 5.3.7 illustrates availability of church building.

Variable	f	%
Available	77	91.7
Missing	7	8.3
Total	84	100.0

From the data indicated in table 5.3.7, it is commendable that many of the registered churches (91.7%) have church buildings. It is however worrisome that some congregations still have no church buildings. Such churches could remain small and less effective in their evangelistic missions because of the lack of church buildings. However, this situation is not contrary to that of the Early Church. The apostles did not have a church building; they met wherever they could, in the open air, by the riverside and in another's home; occasionally there would be a large upper room which had space enough for a good number. In addition, in the days of persecution in early Rome, Christians met in catacombs, the tombs and tunnels under the city. But it did not matter to them. The church was not a place where they had to meet, it was the people.

5.3.8 Church Attendance

Table 5.3.8 On the next page) illustrates data on church attendance of respondents.

Table 5.3.8 Church Attendance

Variable	f	%
Attends church regularly	83	98.8
Does not attend church regularly	1	1.2
Total	84	100

Nearly all respondents (98.8%) indicated that they attend services regularly. It is however a concern that some respondents (1.2%) indicated that they do not attend services regularly. This situation may be attributed to the fact that some of these respondents have more than one preaching points, and cannot always be with all their congregations. It is crucial that in such instances, the deployment of *every member* to the task ministry implemented. All-member-ministry is desirable and encouraged among the churches of the Reformed faith.

5.3.9 Position in Church

Table 5.3.9 illustrates data on position in the church held by respondents.

Table 5.3.9 Position in Church

Variable	f	%
Minister/Pastor	81	96.4
Elder and other	3	3.6
Total	84	100.0

While most respondents (96.4%) designate their position in their congregations as that of pastor and minister, it is interesting that some (1.2%) prefer the title elder and bishop. The latter group may be insisting and upholding the New Testament teaching of the *plurality of elders*. The pastor is the most important leader in the church, but he is not the only spiritually gifted person. According to Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 the body of Christ as a whole has been gifted to carry out ministry. The goal should be to mobilize the entire church community (Ephesians 4: 11-13).

5.3.10 Transport to Church

Table 5.3.10 illustrates data on the need for transport for going to church.

Table 5.3.10 Transport to Church

Variables	f	%
Transport needed	75	89.3
Transport not needed	9	10.7
Total	84	100.0

From the data in table 5.3.10 respondents indicated that many ministers and pastors (89.3%) travel long distances to their congregations and as such, may not be readily available when their services are needed. On the other hand, this situation may offer an opportunity for *all-member-ministries*. More responsible lay leaders may continue with the task of shepherding, both under the minister's supervision and in his absence. This idea of delegation is not foreign to Scripture. On the advice of Jethro, Moses delegated his work to other tribal elders (Exodus 18: 20).

A frequency analysis of the ministers and pastors' responses is undertaken in the next section.

5.3.11 Frequency Analysis of Responses of Ministers/Pastors

Data was analysed and interpreted in terms of qualitative and quantitative church-growth identified through literature review in Chapter Two and the contextual study of the Vaal Triangle in Chapter Three.

Table 5.4 illustrates data collected from the responses of ministers and pastors. For the purpose of analysis in this study, the "agree" and "strongly agree" responses are

combined to denote “agree”, while the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses are combined to denote “disagree”.

Table 5.3.11 on pages 193 and 194, illustrates the frequency analysis responses of Ministers and Pastors.

Table 5.3.11 Data on Ministers'/Pastors' Responses

	Questionnaire Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The Local Church is an environment where members can grow spiritually	40	47.6	44	52.4	0	0%	0	0%	84	100
2	We should not be surprised to find inconsistencies even in good local churches.	37	44.0	43	54.8	0	0%	1	1.2	84	100
3	The ordination of ministers is the responsibility of the whole congregation	34	40.5	38	45.2	3	3.6	9	10.7	84	100
4	Commitment to the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation.	36	42.9	43	51.2	3	3.6	2	2.4	84	100
5	The ministry of the Local Church is the work of the laity in the world with auxiliary help from the clergy.	35	41.7	38	45.2	8	9.5	3	3.6	84	100
6	The success of the Local Church can be measured by the growing number of its members.	17	20.2	43	51.2	17	20.2	7	8.3	84	100
7	The Local Church provides the opportunity for co-operate efforts in ministries of mercy and evangelism.	37	44.0	46	54.8	1	1.2	0	0%	84	100
8	Church-growth can be achieved by extending works of charity to the entire community.	15	17.9	44	52.4	20	23.8	5	6.0	84	100
9	A good Local Church is characterised by administering Church Discipline.	25	29.8	54	64.3	5	6.0	0	0%	84	100
10	A person becomes a member of the Local Church when he knows a certain amount of facts about Christ.	2	2.4	18	21.4	38	45.2	26	31.0	84	100
11	To achieve church-growth the Local Church must relax Church Discipline.	0	0%	8	9.5	39	46.4	37	44.0	84	100
12	The Local Church should take part in ecumenical ("merger") talks, movements, councils, etc.	15	17.6	60	71.4	6	7.1	3	3.6	84	100

	Questionnaire Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
13	Qualification for church membership is divine regeneration.	15	17.9	64	76.2	5	6.0	0	0%	84	100
14	The Local Church is a group of Christians so small as to be accommodated in a dwelling house.	23	27.4	55	65.5	3	3.6	3	3.6	84	10
15	The Local Church is a society so big as to include the whole nation.	2	2.4	5	6.0	46	54.8	31	36.9	84	100
16	The ministry of the Local Church is the work of clergymen with auxiliary aids among the laity.	3	3.6	3	3.6	44	52.4	34	40.5	84	100
17	Some Christians are members of the Local Church and others are members of the Universal Church.	0	0%	5	6.0	41	48.8	38	45.2	84	100
18	The Local Church comprises of all Christians in the city.	0	0%	6	7.1	44	54.2	34	40.5	84	100

On whether the Local Church is an environment where members can grow spiritually (table 5.3.11, item 1), the majority of the respondents (47.6% and 52.4%) agreed. It is a good sign that almost more than half of the respondents agreed with this statement. None of the respondents disagreed with the statement. It could be concluded therefore that respondents view the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle as a divine institution that can promote qualitative church-growth.

Responses on the question whether there are inconsistencies even in good local churches (table 5.3.11, item 2), indicated that the majority of the respondents (37% and 44%) are of the view that the Local Church cannot be perfect. This is in agreement with the biblical perception that the Local Church is the *Church Militant* (not yet the Church Triumphant). It will only be perfect at the Second Coming of Christ. It is interesting however that there were respondents (1.2%) who are of a different opinion. It could be concluded that this difference is as a result of these respondents' high expectation in terms of spiritual growth of the members of the Local Church.

The majority of the respondents (40.5% and 45.2%) indicated that the ordination of ministers and pastors is the responsibility of the whole congregation (table 5.3.11 item 3). This situation is good for the Local Church in the area because it is commensurate with the teaching of the New Testament that those who serve must be chosen by the whole congregation (Acts 6: 1-7). There were however respondents (3.6% and 10.7%) who held a different view. This difference could be attributed to the fact that such respondents may be members of the churches that have unbiblical high positions of "power" and "influence" such as those of archdeacon, and archbishop, cardinal, or even pope.

Most of the respondents (42.9% and 51.2%) indicated that commitment to the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation (table 5.3.11 item 4). It would seem that the respondents believe that Christ is still in the process of building his Church (Matthew 16: 18) and that He will eventually present it without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5: 27). A few respondents (3.6% and 2.4%) believed that commitment to the Local Church does guarantee spiritual life or salvation. This situation could be indicative of the fact that such respondents have a very high view of the Local Church and expect its members to conform to high moral standards.

86.9% of the respondents (41.7% and 45.2%), indicated that the ministry of the Local Church is the work of the laity in the world with auxiliary help from the clergy (table 5.3.11 item 5). This is a crucial finding, because according to biblical teaching there is no class or caste among the members of the Local Church; all members are Holy nation and Priests unto God (1 Peter 2: 9). In the doctrine of *Universal Priesthood of Believers* there is an attempt to put right the distorted relation of “secular” and “religious” vocation.

On whether the success of the Local Church can be measured by the growing number of its members (table 5.3.11 item 6) the respondents (20.2% and 51.2%) indicated that the growing numbers in the Local Church do determine its success. This situation could be attributed to the fact that respondents believe that the growing numbers imply that many people have been reached with the gospel. This is unfortunately not the real test for the success of the church. Pews may be filled with individuals who are merely nominal Christians. The concept of ‘Mega Churches’ and ‘Community Churches’ have Scriptural warrant.

94.8% of the respondents (44.0% and 54.8%) indicated that the Local Church provides the opportunity for co-operate efforts in ministries of mercy and evangelism (table 5.3.11 item 7). This is a positive indication for the Local Church because the respondents seem to realize and accept the biblical principle of *all-member-ministry* which involves all members in evangelism and social action.

On whether church-growth could be achieved by extending works of charity to the entire community (table 5.3.11 item 8), 81% of the respondents (29.8% and 52%) indicated that the works of charity must be extended to the entire community. This is once again a positive indication for the Local Church. The Local Church must endeavour to reach out to all members of the community through *word* and *deed*; evangelism must include both the preaching of the gospel and service to the community. However, 6% of the respondents indicated that works of charity must be limited to members of the congregation. This indicates that the Local Church still has to teach its members that quantitative church-growth can be achieved by extending its works of charity to non-members in the community. This is, however, not an alternative for preaching the Gospel: it is a demonstration of the reality of God’s love.

Nearly all respondents (29.8% and 64.3%) indicated that the Local Church must administer Church Discipline to its offending members (table 5.3.11 item 9). The respondents seem to accept the *Regulative Principle of Scripture* i.e. how members should behave in the household of God. It is however informative that some respondents (6%) feel that it is not necessary to apply discipline among the members of the Local Church. This could be attributed to the fact that some members believe that applying strict Church Discipline might have a negative impact on the desired church-growth, because offending members would simply leave the church.

From the response of 76.2% of the respondents (45.2% and 31.0%), it is evident that knowing some amount of facts about Christ (table 5.3.11 item 10) does *not* make an individual eligible for membership in the Local Church. This implies that anyone is eligible for membership. This may result from the fact that some churches do not have any admission policy and procedure for new members. However 2.4% and 21% of the respondents agreed that members should know about Christ on admission to the Local Church. This means that a would-be member *must* in some way, show his commitment to Christ. This may be the reason why some churches insist on public confession as condition for admission to the Local Church.

From the responses to item table 5.3.11 item 11, it is clear that there is divided opinion on whether Church Discipline must be relaxed in order to enhance the desired church-growth. Nearly half of the respondents (2.4% and 46.4%) agree with the statement. The other respondents (44.0%) strongly disagree. Conclusions made about responses in questionnaire table 5.4, questionnaire 9 above, may also apply here.

The majority of the respondents (17.9% and 71%) indicated that churches must unite at denominational level (table 5.3.11 item 12). Only 7.1% and 3.6% disagree with the statement. It is a concern to note that some churches will associate with any church or churches without considering whether or not those churches are faithful to Scripture. It may be in the interest of the Local Church that merger should not compromise the autonomy of the Local Church and its sound doctrine.

Nearly all the respondents (17.9% and 65.5%) indicated that the only qualification for membership in the Local Church is divine regeneration (table 5.3.11 item 13). This

implies that members must publicly make their confession when joining the Local Church. However 6% disagreed with the statement, thereby implying that their churches' interest is only quantitative church-growth. The Local Church in the area must therefore seek Scriptural guidance regarding church membership.

From the data collected, it seems that the majority of the respondents (27.4% and 65.5%) agreed that the Local Church is a group of Christians so small as to be accommodated in a dwelling house (table 5.3.11 item 14). No respondents indicated anything to the contrary. This is good for the Local Church. This situation is in agreement with the practice in the early church. Some households in the early church would have an upper room where members would gather for worship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.

The data collected indicate that the majority of the respondents (54.8% and 40.5%) disagreed with the perception that the Local Church is a society so big that it includes the whole nation (table 5.3.11 item 15). Only 2.4% and 6.0% seem to agree and strongly agree with statement. It appears that the respondents are aware of the autonomy of the Local Church and that there is no such thing as a *national church*. It is also unbiblical to claim that because one belongs to what is believed to be a "Christian Country", one automatically becomes a Christian.

From the data collected it would seem that the majority of the respondents believe that the ministry of the Local Church is not the work of the clergy with auxiliary aid from the laity (table 5.3.11 item 16). Conclusion made about the responses in table 5.4 questionnaire item 5 may also apply in this case.

The majority of the respondents (48.8% and 45%) indicated that there is no division among the Christians, i.e. some belonging to the *Local Church* and others to *Universal Church* (table 5.3.11 item 17). Qualification for membership in both the Local and the Universal Church is divine regeneration. This means that there are no two churches, one local and the other universal. Members of the Local Church also belong to Universal Church and the same principle for membership applies for both.

From the data collected, it would seem that the majority of the respondents (52.4% disagree and 40.5% strongly disagree) are of the view that the Local Church includes all the Christians in the city (table 5.3.11 item 18). Conclusions made from table 5.3.11 questionnaire item 15 above, may also be applied here.

5.3.12 Summation

The analysis of responses of ministers and pastors regarding qualitative and quantitative church-growth seems to indicate adequate biblical understanding of the Local Church on the part of these church leaders. This could be seen as a positive sign for qualitative and quantitative church-growth. Most importantly, these responses indicate that there is indeed potential for church-growth in the Vaal Triangle. However, it is also noted that there are still challenging constraints because of lack of biblical understanding of the Local Church on the part of some church leaders. Clearly, there is a need for a model of the Local Church as will further be evident with the analysis and interpretation of other sample groups.

5.4 The Demographic Data of Members of the Congregations

In this section the demographic details of the congregants is presented. This data relates to the background of this sample of the population. Data are presented by means of frequency counts (f) and percentages (%). Tables are used for this purpose.

5.4.1 Home Language

Table 5.4.1 illustrates home language of respondents.

Table 5.4.1 Language of the respondents

Variable	F	%
Sesotho	85	47.8
IsiZulu	34	19.1
Tshivenda	2	1.1
IsiXhosa	30	16.9
Sepedi	3	1.7
Setswana	10	5.6
Other	5	2.8
Total	169	94.9
Nil response	9	5.1
Total	178	100

From the data in table 5.4.1 it would seem that the majority of the respondents (47.8%) are South Sotho speaking. This is in agreement with language demographics in the area. Other languages that are used in significant numbers are IsiZulu (19.1%) and IsiXhosa (6.9%). It is important that the congregants hear the gospel in their own languages. Ministers and pastors must know the languages of the members of their congregations. On the day of Pentecost the crowd that listened to the apostles heard them speak in their own languages.

5.4.2 Age

Table 5.4.2 illustrates data on the age of respondents.

Table 5.4.2 Age of respondents

Variable	f	%
Younger than 19 years	71	39.9
Between 20 and 30 years	29	16.3
Between 31 and 40 years	20	11.2
Between 41 and 50 years	32	18.0
Between 51 and 60 years	21	11.8
Between 61 and 70 years	5	2.8
Total	178	100

From the data in table 5.4.2 it is evident that the majority of the respondents (39.9%) are younger than 19 years. It is assumed that most of them are students. This means that the Local Church must ensure that there are youth programmes in its ministry. It is also clear from the data that all age groups are represented. The sermons during worship services must cater for all these age groups. Special attention must also be given to the aged. Home visits must be conducted on a regular basis. The sick must be visited at the hospitals.

5.4.3 Marital Status

Table 5.4.3 illustrates data on the marital status of the respondents.

Variable	F	%
Married	50	28.1
Unmarried	108	60.7
Divorced	13	7.3
Total	171	96.1
Nil response	7	3.9
Total	178	100

Data in table 5.4.3 indicate that 28.1% of the respondents are married people. It is assumed that these respondents have children in their families. It is the duty of the parents to ensure that their children are also members of the Local Church. It is unfortunately so, that in some instances children are left to decide for themselves which religion to follow. Whilst it is a good thing to allow children to make their own choices in life, it is even better to guide them in making these choices. It will be in the best interest of the Christian family to worship at the same place. The Local Church will therefore become a *Household of God*, a dwelling place of God.. This will enhance the desired unity in this household.

5.4.4 Male Children

Table 5.4.4 depicts male children of the respondents.

Table 5.4.4 Male children of respondents

Variable	F	%
1 male	42	23.6
2 males	20	11.2
3 males	6	3.4
4 males	5	2.8
5 males	1	.6
6 males	1	.6
Total	75	42.1
Nil response	103	57.9
Total	178	100

The data in the two tables (table 5.4.4 (a) and 5.4.4 (b)) will be analyzed and interpreted jointly. Table 5.4.4(b) appears on the next page.

5.4.5 Female Children

Table 5.4.5 illustrate female children of respondents.

Table 5.4.5(b) Female children of respondents

Variable	f	%
1 female	50	28.1
2 females	21	11.8
3 females	7	3.9
4 females	5	2.8
5 females	1	.6
6 females	1	.6
Total	85	47.8
Nil response	93	52.2
Total	178	100

Data in tables 5.4.4 (a) and 5.4.4 (b) indicate the number of male and female children of the respondents. This data shows that in the families there are both male and female children. This means that parents are faced with the God-given task of raising these children. The Local Church as a Christian family must help the parents in this task. The ministry of the Local Church must provide, among other things, information on problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, prostitution. And at the same time, the local Church must provide the youth useful information on issues around basic health care, study methods, among others. Professionals both from among the members and outside may be very useful in this regard.

5.4.6 Residence

Table 5.4.6 illustrates the residence of the respondents.

Table 5.4.6 residence of respondents

Variable	f	%
In the township	133	74.7
In the suburbs	38	21.3
On the neighbouring farms	2	1.1
Total	173	97.2
Nil response	5	2.8
Total	178	100

Data on table 5.4.6 indicate that the majority of the respondents (74.7%) live in the townships. In some of these areas community services are not adequate, and in informal settlements in and around these townships, services are very poor. The Local Church must take cognisance of the conditions in which its members live. Works of charity must be extended to these areas. The data also indicate some members (1.1%) live in the neighbouring farms.

In these areas health services are either very poor or do not exist at all. The people living on the farms are often very destitute; they lack basic necessities such as running water and electricity. The Local Church must take up these issues with the local authorities.

The data also indicate that some members live in the suburbs. This situation existed after 1994. Members living in these areas often travel long distances to the churches in the townships. Ministers and pastors living in the townships also find it difficult to minister to these members. In such cases it would be better that these members join the churches in their neighbourhoods.

5.4.7 Church Building

Table 5.4.7 illustrates availability of the church building.

Table 5.4.7 Church Building

Variable	f	%
Church building available	127	71.3
Church building not available	46	25.8
Total	173	97.2
Nil response	5	2.8
Total	178	100

From the data in table 5.4.7 it is encouraging for the Local Church that 71.3% of the respondents have indicated that their congregations have church buildings. These are churches that are registered with Emfuleni Municipality. It is however worrisome that 28.8% of the respondents have indicated that their congregations have no church buildings. These congregations normally hold their services in classroom at the nearby schools or in homes of members. Such congregations may remain small and ineffective in their evangelistic mission.

5.4.8 Church Attendance

Table 5.4.8 depict church attendance of respondents.

Variable	f	%
Attend regularly	110	61.8
Do not attend regularly	65	36.5
Total	175	98.3
Nil response	3	1.7
Total	178	100

From the data in table 5.4.8 the majority of the respondents (61.8%) indicated that they attend church regularly. The other respondents (36.5%) are not regular in their attendance. This means that the Local Church still has to reach out to these members.

5.4.9 Position in Church

Table 5.4.9 indicates position held by members in the congregation.

Table 5.4.9 Position in Church

Variable	f	%
Elder	9	5.1
Minister/pastor	3	1.7
Class/cell leader	25	14.0
Sick comforter	19	10.7
Bible Study leader	6	3.4
Choir Conductor	10	5.6
Other	51	28.7
Total	123	69.1
Missing response	55	30.9
Total	178	100

The data in table 5.4.9 indicate that most respondents have some kind of responsibilities in their congregations. This is good for the Local Church. An ideal situation would be where all members are involved in some kind of ministry. It is true that the minister is most important member of the congregation, but he is not the only endowed with spiritual gifts. *All-member* ministry involves every member of the congregation in its mission in the neighbourhood.

5.4.10 Transport to Church

Table 5.4.10 illustrates the need for transport to church.

Table 5.4.10 Need for transport to church

Variable	f	%
Need transport to church	81	45.5
Does not use transport to church	95	53.4
Total	176	98.9
Missing response	2	1.1
Total	178	100

Data in table 5.4.10 indicate that the majority on the congregants (53.4%) do not need transport for going to church. However, 45.5% of the members need transport for going to church. This could mean that the members do not live in the vicinity of their churches. The Local Church should urge such members to join the churches near their homes. This will solve the problem of transport. More importantly, this will make it easy for them to bring their children along when they come to church.

Frequency analysis of responses of members of the congregation is undertaken in the next section.

5.4.11 Frequency Analysis of Responses of Members of the Congregations

Data was analysed and interpreted in terms of qualitative and quantitative church-growth identified through literature study in Chapter Two and contextual study of the Vaal triangle in Chapter Three.

For the purpose of this study, only questionnaire items 2, 6, 13, 14, and 15 in table 5.4.11 on pages 210 and 211 will be analysed and interpreted. The reason is that the rest of the questionnaire items feature in the questionnaires for ministers/pastor as well as for

the members of the community. These questionnaire items will be indicated with asterisk (**) in table 5.4.11

The “agree” and “strongly agree” responses are combined to denote “agree” while the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” are combined to denote “disagree”.

Table 5.4.11 on pages 210 and 211 illustrates the frequency analysis of responses members of the Community.

Table 5.4.11 Data on Congregants' Responses

Questionnaire Item		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The Local Church must join the community in political events, e.g. rallies, marches, boycotts, etc.	48	27.0	82	46.1	30	16.9	18	10.1	178	100
2**	The family members (household) must be members of the same Local Church.	50	28.1	58	32.6	49	27.5	21	11.8	178	100
3	The Local Church must join structures and organizations that seek to combat poverty and homelessness.	112	62.9	54	30.3	9	5.1	3	1.7	178	100
4	It is not necessary to join the Local Church because one can listen to sermons in the radio.	12	6.7	28	15.7	68	38.2	70	39.3	178	100
5	The Local Church must encourage its members to join civic formations, e.g. street committees, CPF's, etc.	44	24.7	80	44.9	40	22.6	13	7.3	177	99.4
6**	The Local Church must administer Church Discipline to offending members in the congregation.	56	31.5	83	46.6	27	15.2	11	6.2	177	99.4
7	The Local Church must discourage its members to join fund-raising efforts e.g. stokvels, kitchen parties, etc.	31	17.4	25	14.0	57	32.0	64	36.0	177	99.4
8	The Church must prescribe social events to be attended by congregants, e.g. jazz festivals, shebeens, picnics etc.	17	9.6	25	14.0	62	34.8	73	41.0	177	99.4
9	The Local Church must not get involved in environmental issues such as pollution in its neighbourhood.	13	7.3	36	20.2	51	28.7	77	43.3	177	99.4
10	The Local Church must limit its works of charity to its members.	16	9.0	37	20.8	56	31.5	68	38.2	177	99.4
11	The Local Church must be a mouth-piece of those who are wronged against.	49	27.5	79	44.4	34	19.1	15	8.4	177	99.4
12	The Local Church must extend its spiritual services to offenders in the local prisons.	63	35.4	89	50.0	18	10.1	7	3.9	177	99.4

13**	The only qualification for membership in the Local Church is confessing that Jesus is Lord.	46	25.8	48	27.0	54	30.3	29	16.3	177	99.4
14**	The members of the Local Church must love and care for each other as brothers and sisters in a family.	121	68.0	43	24.2	10	5.6	3	1.7	177	99.4
15**	Membership in the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation.	46	25.8	66	37.1	46	25.8	19	10.7	177	99.4

The response in table 5.4.11 questionnaire item 2, indicates that the majority of the respondents (28.1% and 32.6%) agree that the members of the same family unit (household) must belong to the same Local Church. This is an important finding for the Local Church because ministers and pastors will be able to serve all the members in the household. A worse scenario is where members of the same family unit belong to different religious persuasions. In such cases ministers and pastors should continue ministering to their members in that household.

On whether the Local Church must administer Church Discipline to its offending members (table 5.4.11 questionnaire item 6) the respondents (31.5% and 46.6%) indicated that the Local Church must administer Church Discipline to its offending members. This is a good indication for the Local Church. It is however a concern that some respondents (15.2% and 6.2%) do not see the need for Church Discipline. This situation demands that the Local Church must apply discipline in a loving manner, just like the head of the household would lovingly discipline an unruly member of the family. Excommunication should however be considered when all other forms of discipline have been exhausted. It is untypical of households to disown wayward members. Christ came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15: 24).

Responses in table 5.4.11 questionnaire item 13 indicate that slightly more than half of the respondents (25.8% and 27.0%) are of the view that the only qualification for membership in the Local Church is confessing that Jesus is Lord. To be consistent with Scripture, the Local Church must start from the point that membership of the visible church is open to all who are members of the invisible church and that membership is a work of the grace of God through faith. To add any other requirement as an absolute necessity is to make church membership a matter of works and not of grace. It is however worrisome that some respondents (30.3% and 16.3%) do not agree with the statement. This situation may be based on the wrong perception that good works may earn a person salvation. This is one clear indication that a model based on sound principles of Scripture is necessary for the Local Church in the area.

On the question whether the members of the Local Church must love and care for each other as brothers and sisters in the household (table 5.4.11 questionnaire item 14), the majority of the respondents (68.0% and 24.2%) agreed with the statement. It is

encouraging to note that the respondents perceive the Local Church as an institution where members are committed to each other in loving care and fellowship. The fact that some respondents are of a different opinion, is once more indication that there is still a need for biblical teaching on the Local Church.

Responses in table 5.4.11 questionnaire item 15 indicated that over half of the respondents (25.8% and 37.1%) agree with the view that membership in the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation. To be consistent with Scripture, the Local Church must start from the point that membership of the Visible Church is open to all who are members of the Invisible Church. To add any other requirement as an absolute necessity is to make church membership a matter of works and not grace.

5.4.12 Summation

The analysis of the responses of members of the congregations regarding qualitative and quantitative church-growth seems to indicate a fair amount of biblical understanding of the Local Church on the part of these members. The members of the congregations seem to understand that members of the same household must be members of the same Local Church, and that the Local Church as a Christian family must exercise loving and corrective Church Discipline to its offending members. It was also evident that all members of the Local Church must be confessing members who must love each other as brothers and sisters in the household of God. The members understand too, that membership in the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation.

However, it was also noted that there are many challenges still facing the Local Church in the area because of lack of biblical understanding of the Local Church on the part of some members. There evidently is a need for a biblical model of the Local Church in the area.

5.5 Demographic Details of Community Members

The aim of this section is to record and interpret the demographic data from the members of the community. This background will provide the opportunity to get insight

of the conditions of the people among whom the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle operates so as to finally suggest a model that will be typical of the conditions in the area.

5.5.1 Gender

Table 5.5.1 Depicts the Gender of Respondents

Variables	f	%
Male	61	32.6
Female	114	60.9
Missing	12	6.4
Total	187	100

Data in table 5.5.1 indicate that the majority of the respondents (60.9%) were female. Males counted for only 32.6% of the respondents. The reason for this difference could be that women usually show more interest in church matters than men.

5.5.2 Home Language

5.5.2 Depicts the Home Language of respondents

Variables	f	%
Sesotho	93	49.7
IsiZulu	21	11.2
Tshivenda	3	1.6
IsiXhosa	28	15.0
Sepedi	12	6.4
Setswana	18	9.6
Other	5	2.7
Total	187	100

From the data in table 5.5.2 it would seem that the majority of the members of the community in the Vaal Triangle are South Sotho speaking (49.7%). This situation is

good for the Local Church if it is compared with the language demographics of ministers and pastors (see table 5.3.2). The ministers and pastors can reach the community with the gospel in their own languages. The other languages represented by significant numbers are IsiXhosa and IsiZulu (21 and 28% respectively).

5.5.3 Age

5.5.3 Depicts the Age of respondents

Variables	f	%
Younger than 19	55	29.4
Between 20 and 30	19	10.2
Between 34 and 40	31	16.6
Between 41 and 50	45	24.1
Between 51 and 60	34	18.2
Between 60 and 70	2	1.1
Total	186	99.5
Missing	1	.5
Total	187	100

The data in table (5.5.3) indicate that a wide range of respondents were covered in the survey. It is however evident from this data that very few respondents over the age of sixty are represented. This could be as a result of language problem; many elderly people were reluctant to participate in this study because the questionnaires were worded in English.

5.5.4 Marital Status

5.5.4 Depicts the Marital Status of Respondents

Variables	f	%
Married	79	42.2
Unmarried	92	49.2
Divorced	9	4.8
Total	180	96.3
Missing	7	3.7
Total	187	100

Table (5.5.4) above indicates that the majority of the respondents (42.9%) were unmarried people. It may be concluded that these respondents were readily available because they have fewer family responsibilities than married people (42.2%). The low percentage of divorced people among the respondents may be attributed to the fact that quite often people would not be so willing to disclose that they are divorced.

5.5.5 Male and Female Children

5.5.5 (a) Depicts Male children of respondents

Variables	f	%
One male	44	23.5
Two males	32	17.1
Three males	13	7.0
Four males	2	1.1
Six males	1	.5
Eight males	1	.5
Total	93	49.7
Missing	94	50.3
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.5 (b) depicts female children of respondents

Table 5.5.5 (b) Female children of respondents

Variables	f	%
One female	42	22.5
Two females	31	16.6
Three females	7	3.7
Four female	6	3.2
Five females	2	1.1
Six females	1	.5
Total	89	47.6
Missing	98	52.4
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.5 (a) and 5.5.5 (b) indicates that the number of children of respondents range from one to eight. It could be assumed that the Local Churches have a good number of youth among the congregants. This means that the Local Church must have adequate

youth programmes in its ministries. These programmes should covers aspects such as education, sports and recreation, information and counselling on drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sex-related diseases, among others. It could also be recommended that in well resourced congregation, services of ministers and pastors appointed specifically for youth ministries could be engaged.

5.5.6 Residence

Table 5.5.6 Depicts the Residence of Respondents

Variables	f	%
In the township	141	75.4
In the suburbs	34	18.2
Neighbouring farms	1	.5
Total	176	94.1
Missing	11	5.9
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.6 above indicates that most of the respondents (75.4%) reside in the townships. Only 18.2% of the respondents indicated that they live in the suburbs. A further .5% of the respondents live on the neighbouring farms. The Local Church in this area must cater for life style and the needs of the members of their communities. Works of charity for example should be targeted at members in the neighbouring farms because of poor social services in these areas.

5.5.7 Dwelling

Table 5.5.7 Depicts the Registration of the dwelling of respondents.

Variable	f	%
Own name	104	55.6
Others name	77	41.2
Total	181	96.8
Missing	6	3.2
Total	187	100

More than half of the respondents (55.6%) indicated that the houses are registered in their names. However, 41.2% of the respondents' houses is not registered in their names. This could mean that these respondents are backyard tenants. This phenomenon is very popular in the townships perhaps because this means extra income for the landlord. When the backyard tenant is no longer able to pay rent because of retrenchment for example, he or she is evicted. The result is that such victims move to informal settlements in the area. The Local Church cannot relinquish its evangelistic mission in these areas. It is obliged to take cognisance of the spiritual as well as social questions and problems.

5.5.8 Infrastructure

Table 5.5.8 (a) Availability of Electricity

Variable	f	%
Available	95.2	
Not available	4.8	
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.8 (b) depicts the condition of the streets

Table 5.5.8 (b) Streets

Variable	f	%
Tarred	131	70.1
Not tarred	53	28.3
Total	184	98.4
Missing	3	1.6
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.8 (c) Running Water

Variable	f	%
Available	151	80.7
Not available	34	18.2
Total	185	98.9
Missing	2	1.1
Total	187	100

Tables 5.5.8 (a, b, and c) depicts the infrastructure (electricity, tarred streets, running water) in the areas.

Whilst it is commendable that the majority of the respondents indicated that there is electricity, tarred streets, and running water in their areas (cf. tables 5.6.8 a, b, c above), it is still a concern that in some areas these are not available. In these areas evangelism should not be given priority over the social needs of the people. Many people are destitute, lacking basic necessities for survival. They can only be described as “oppressed”. This is caused by inequality from which they suffer and the diverse economic systems that cause and perpetuate it.

5.5.9 Employment

Table 5.5.9 Depicts the employment status of respondents

Variable	f	%
Self-employed	12	6.4
Unemployed	25	13.4
School teacher	32	17.1
Clerk	12	6.4
Housewife	9	4.8
Factory worker	10	5.3
Student	52	27.8
Other	33	17.6
Total	185	98.9
Missing	2	1.1
Total	187	100

Table 5.5.9 indicates that most of the respondents (27.8%) are students, while 13.4% of the respondents indicated that they are not employed. It is also important to note that 4.8% of the respondents were housewife. These samples of the population do not earn any salary. The Local Church must therefore ensure that its works of charity are extended to this section of the community. While the Local Church cannot do much to change the economic inequalities that exist because of the injustices of the past, it can

do a lot to change the attitudes of its members towards wealth, power, and appropriation of resources.

5.5.10 Level of Education

Table 5.5.10 Depicts the Level of Education off Respondents

Variable	f	%
Primary	13	7.0
Secondary	106	56.7
Tertiary	63	33.7
Total	182	97.3
Missing	5	2.7
Total	187	100

The majority of the respondents (56.7%) indicated they have attained secondary school education. However, there are 7.0% of the respondents who only have primary school education. This implies that the Local Church must consider these differences in its sermons.

5.5.11 Frequency Analysis of Responses of Community Members

Table 5.5.11 illustrates data collected from the responses of the members of the community as a sample of the population.

For the purpose of this study, the “agree” and “strongly agree” responses are combined to denote “agree” while the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses are combined to denote “disagree”.

Table 5.5.11 on pages 223 and 224 illustrates the frequency analysis of Members of the Community.

Table 5.5.11 Data on Community Members' Responses

	Questionnaire Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The Local Church must join the community in fighting against social problems e.g. maladministration and housing problems.	96	51.3	71	38.0	10	5.3	10	5.3	187	100
2	The task of the Local Church is to prepare its members for the life hereafter.	67	35.8	75	40.1	29	15.5	16	8.6	187	100
3	The Local Church must discourage its members to take part in political events e.g. boycotts, rallies, marches, etc.	25	13.4	33	17.6	68	36.4	61	32.6	187	100
4	The Local Church must provide spiritual services to offenders in the local prisons and those who are on parole.	78	41.7	82	43.9	12	6.4	15	8.0	187	100
5	The Local Church must preach sermons that encourage its members to be good citizens.	100	53.5	70	37.4	7	3.7	10	5.3	187	100
6	The Local Church must extend its evangelistic mission to the schools and tertiary institutions in its neighbourhood.	92	49.2	66	35.3	18	9.6	11	5.9	187	100
7	The Local Church should co-operate with the police by reporting crime in its neighbourhood.	85	45.5	74	39.6	17	9.1	11	5.9	187	100
8	The Local Church must provide asylum for political refugees in its buildings.	26	13.9	69	36.9	52	27.8	40	21.4	187	100
9	The responsibility of the Local Church is only to report the homeless to the Social Workers.	21	11.2	41	21.9	80	42.8	45	24.1	187	100
10	The Local Church has a social responsibility only to its members.	8	4.3	27	14.4	71	38.0	81	43.3	187	100
11	The Local Church can assist in the plight of the homeless by praying for them.	53	28.3	79	42.2	33	17.6	22	11.8	187	100
12	Church leaders must discuss environmental issues such as pollution with authorities and offending companies.	51	27.3	89	47.6	32	17.1	15	8.0	187	100

13	The Local Church should encourage whistle-blowing among the workers.	49	26.2	70	37.4	50	26.7	18	9.6	187	100
14	The Local Church should extend its works of charity to the members of the community.	87	46.5	84	44.9	10	5.3	6	3.2	187	100
15	The Local Church should discourage the workers to join unions at their place of employment.	34	18.2	40	21.4	49	26.2	64	34.2	187	100

On whether the Local Church must join the community in fighting against social problems such as maladministration and housing shortage (table 5.11, item 1) the respondents (51.3% and 38.0%) agreed, while only 5.3% disagreed. While it is encouraging that most of the respondents agreed with the statement, it is a concern that some respondents indicated that the Local Church must not get involved in the fight against social ills. This is contrary the teaching of Scripture. The Local Church should evangelize through *word and deed*.

Data in (table 5.11, item 2) indicated that 75.9% of the respondents (35.8% and 40.1%) agree that the task of the Local Church is to prepare its members for the life hereafter. It is good for the local Church that some members (15.5% and 8.6%) do not agree with the statement. The Local Church must get involved in the daily life of the community. This is however not an alternative for preaching the gospel, but it is the demonstration of the love of its members for their neighbour.

Responses on the question whether the Local Church must discourage its members to take part in the political events such as boycotts, rallies, marches (table 5.11, item 3) indicated that 69% of the respondents (36.4% and 32.6%) disagreed. This could be attributed to the fact that boycotts, rallies and marches are commonly perceived as violent actions for political solutions in the community. The events of Sharpeville in 1960, Sebokeng and other areas in 1984, and Boipatong in 1992 where many residents lost their lives, could be the reason for this type of response. However, some respondents (13.4% and 17.6%) indicated that the members must be discouraged by the Local Church to take part in these events. It could be concluded that, while the Local Church must not encourage violence, it must also not preach non-involvement in the current political events of the community among its members. The Local Church must therefore rather teach its members to be responsible citizens.

Data collected in table 5.11, item 4, on whether the Local Church should provide spiritual services to incarcerated members of its congregation indicated that the vast majority of the respondents (41.7% and 43.9%) agree. However, some respondents (6.4% and 8.0%) disagreed. This could be attributed to the fact that some people believe that incarcerated members deserve their punishment because of the crimes they committed against the members of the community. The Local Church could remind its

members that the offenders, after serving their sentences must again be part of the communities. The local Church must therefore take part in their rehabilitation process.

Responses on whether the Local Church must preach sermons that encourage its members to be good citizens (table 5.11, item 5) indicated that the majority of the respondents (53.5% and 37.4%) are of the view that the Local Church must encourage good citizenship. Conclusions made in table 5.11, item 3 could also apply here.

Over 80% of the respondents (49.2% and 35.6%), indicated that the Local Church must extend its evangelistic mission to the schools and tertiary institutions in its neighbourhood (table 5.11, item 6). This is a very important finding because while there are many schools in the Vaal Triangle, the area can also boast of two very big campuses namely, North-West University and Vaal University of Technology. Many students in these institutions reside in the neighbouring residential areas of Bedworthpark and Sharpeville. The Local Church must cater for the spiritual needs of these students whilst they are away from their homes. The Local Church must be *home-away-from-home* for these students

The vast majority of the respondents (49.2% and 39.6%) indicated that the Local Church must encourage its members to co-operate with the police and other law-enforcement agencies in their neighbourhood (table 5.11, item 7). The Local Church must make its members aware that criminals often come from members of their households. It is however a concern that some respondents (9.1% and 5.9%) indicated that it is not necessary to co-operate with the police. This could be attributed to the fact that some family violence such as common assault and sexual abuse, are often perpetrated by members of the households. This is often the case when the perpetrators are breadwinners in the households.

From data collected in table 5.11, item 8, the respondents (13.9% and 36.9%) have indicated that the church buildings must not be used for providing shelter for refugees. This could be attributed to the general attitude of communities towards immigrants. The communities hardly take notice of them, they pretend that they are not part of the communities, and they sometimes label them as aliens. Whatever else the communities may think of them, the fact remains that they are in our midst. The Local Church, like

all other societal institutions is in one way or the other affected by the presence of these people, and must therefore minister to them.

Most of the respondents (42.8% and 24.1%) indicated that the responsibility of the Local Church is only to report the homeless to Social Workers (table 5.11, item 9). This may be attributed to the fact that the problem is of such magnitude that it is left to social structures that are designed specifically for this purpose. Sometimes it is simply the question of indifference – it must be attended by them, and we ourselves must do nothing except to lament the situation. The Local Church must not adopt this stance. It should rather assist the structures that are responsible for dealing with this matter.

From the data collected in table 5.11 item 10, it would seem that the majority of the respondents (38.0% and 43.3%) are of the view that the Local Church does not have responsibility to its members only. The works of charity must be extended to the entire community. This may be a strategy to win more converts. On the other hand, these works of charity must be accompanied by the gospel.

On whether the church should assist in the plight of the homeless only by praying for them (table 5.11, item 11) the respondents (28.3% and 42.2%) indicated that the Local Church can only pray for them. This could be attributed to the fact that often the churches are not well-resourced to handle the problem on a large scale.

On whether the Local Church must discuss environmental issues such as pollution with authorities and offending companies (table 5.11; item 12), most of the respondents (27.3% and 47.6%) indicated that this is the responsibility of the Local Church. This response may result from the fact that as the Vaal Triangle is predominantly an industrial area, the residents know the results of water and air pollution. The other reason could be that many residents in the area are still dependent on coal for cooking and warming their dwelling especially during the winter months.

Responses in table 5.11 item 13 indicate that the majority of the respondents (26.2% and 37.4%) are of the view that the Local Church must encourage whistle-blowing among the workers in the congregation. This may be because the workers are often ready to

report malpractices on the part of the employer. Workers need also to understand that they too have responsibilities to report malpractices done by fellow employees.

On whether the Local Church must extend its works of charity to the entire community (table 5.11 item 14), over 90% of the respondents (46.5% and 44.9%) agreed with the statement. Conclusion made in item 10 above may also apply here.

Responses for table 5.11 item 15 indicates that the majority of the respondents (26.2% and 34.2%) disagree with the statement that the Local Church must discourage its members to join the unions at their work place. This could be attributed to fact that more and more people are becoming aware of their constitutional rights. The Local Church must however make their members aware of their rights, but also of their responsibilities at their places of employment.

5.6 Summation

The analysis of the responses of the members of the community indicates that living conditions in some townships are poor. Many people are destitute. They can only be described as “oppressed” by the economic inequality from which they suffer and the diverse economic system that cause and perpetuate it.

The Local Church cannot, however, relinquish its evangelistic mission in these areas. It is obliged to take cognisance of the Spiritual issues as well as social questions and problems. Genuine Christian service in the socially deprived areas compels the Local Church to get involved in the fight against social ills such as bad housing, maladministration and unemployment, among others.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data analysis of this research. Biographical data and frequency analysis were interpreted and reported. The next chapter concludes the study by focusing on the summary of findings and suggesting an appropriate Model of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study. The focus is on important aspects that were found from the literature review and contextual study regarding the biblical nature of the Local Church and its context in the Vaal Triangle, and how it can enhance qualitative and quantitative church-growth. This chapter also presents the findings of the empirical study regarding the current Local Church practices in the Vaal Triangle. Finally, recommendations for an appropriate Model of the Local Church for the area are presented.

6.2 Summary of the Study

Chapter One presented an outline of the study. The problem statement related to the misconceptions regarding the understanding of the concept of the Local Church because of among others, the appearance of the Christian Societies, Christian Unions, Para-church Agencies that have not placed adequate emphasis on the New Testament teaching about the Local Church. It was pointed out that some families are religiously bicultural, that is, some family units belong to different religious persuasions, while in other instances members of the same family unit belong to different church denominations.

Chapter Two presented the literature review on the definition of the word 'church', some characteristics of the church, its attributes, categories that feature in the debates about the church, the images of the church, some problems and issues, evangelism and social action, and the government of the church.

Chapter Three presented the contextual study of the Vaal Triangle. This included an overview of the historical development of the towns and townships, as well as the major political events in the area.

Chapter Four and Five presented the empirical research design and analysis and interpretation respectively. Chapter Four detailed the research design including the method, research instrument and its development, population and sampling, response rate and the administration procedures.

Chapter Five outlined the data analysis and interpretation. This included a discussion of the demographic data of the members of the Church Community, and the frequency analysis of the responses.

Chapter Six concludes the study by presenting the summary, findings and recommendations of this research project. The next section presents the findings with regard to the research aims, and finally suggests a model for the Local Church in Vaal Triangle.

6.3 Findings of the Research Aims

Research findings presented in this section relate to the research aims as stated in Chapter One (cf. 1.3)

6.3.1 Findings From Research Aim 1: The Biblical Concept of the Local Church

In the differing views about what the Church is, as well as the existence of missions, house churches, fellowships, crusades, the following criteria or characteristics can help us to distinguish *true* from *false* church:

- ***The ministry of the word:*** To hold and to preach the true faith or doctrine of Christ is the sure and infallible note or mark of the true Christian Church, because it is the one thing for the sake of which the Church was instituted on earth (cf. 2.4.1).
- ***The administration of Sacraments:*** It is through sacraments that disciples are initiated and confirmed into the life with Christ and the Church and; are nourished by the Lord's presence in communal liturgy (cf. 2.4.2).

- ***The administration of Church discipline:*** The members of the Church are bound to the Church's confessions to which they have submitted of their own free will. It is both the responsibility of individual members and the Local Church to ensure that this confession is preserved (2.4.3).

These marks or norms will help us relate to other Christian groups in the area, and to what extent the local Church associate with other Christian groups and to identify what may properly be called, *The Church*.

6.3.2 Findings From Research aim 2: Review of Images of the Local Church in the New Testament

The New Testament uses many images or pictures to discuss the concept of the Church. Images such as 'the people of God'; 'the body of Christ' and 'the Temple of the Holy Spirit' indicate a variety of ways in which the concept Church can be interpreted.

- ***The People of God:*** Whereas in the Old Testament the people of God had been national Israel, in the New Testament the people of God includes all those who are called – ekklesia, *The Church* (cf. 2.10.1).
- ***The Body of Christ:*** Christ is the Head of the Church, and all members of the Church are part of the mystical body of Christ. Denominational differences, as such, do not divide the spiritual unity, although to some degree they can obscure its reality as far as men can see (cf. 2.10.2).
- ***The Temple of the Holy Spirit:*** It is the Spirit who brought the New Testament Church into being at Pentecost, where He (the Spirit) baptized the disciples and converted three thousand – *The Church* (cf. 2.10.3)

The study has established that implicit in all these three images that Paul uses to refer to the Church, is the biblical principle of the Triune God. The Local Church in the Vaal Triangle should be the household of *God* where *Christ* is the Head of the members who are indwelt by the *Holy Spirit*.

6.3.3 Findings From Research Aim 3: Various Models of the Local Church

This study has established that the following principles (so-called Nevius principles) will guide the Local Church to face up the full responsibilities of a mature Church:

- ***Self-Support:*** This means that the Local Church must eventually reach a stage in its self development when it is able to assume full responsibility for all its financial commitments. Where this responsibility is not faced with realism, there can be detrimental effects on the group of Christians concerned, i.e. the Local Church (cf. 2.21.1).
- ***Self-government:*** Only within the life of the Local Church (the household of God) can the prospective elders reveal their character and develop their spiritual gifts in such a way that the members will be able to observe and assess their ministry and, in due time, ratify their appointment to the leadership (cf. 2.21.2).
- ***Self-education:*** Apart from Godly life, such men (elders) must also have the aptitude to teach others. ‘He (the elder) must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it is has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it’ (Titus 1:9) (cf. 2.21.3).
- ***Self-propagating:*** All members are to be the principal ambassadors of the gospel, and not the *pastor-preacher* alone. The pastor’s task is to preach the gospel and equip the members to witness and to be able to give reason for what is within them. The best way for people to reach the working-class, for example, are the working-class themselves (cf. 2.21.4).

When a Church has been established according to this New Testament pattern within its cultural setting, then it becomes an autonomous, *Local Church*.

6.3.4 Findings From Research Aim 4: Proposed Model for the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle

From the contextual and empirical study, the Local Church could be defined as: ‘A group of believers in a certain place, committed to *Christ in faith and obedience*, to each other in *loving and caring fellowship*, to their *neighbourhood in witness, evangelism, and service*’ (cf.4.3.2.2). Based on this definition as well as the responses of the Church Community, the following findings were established:

- ***Commitment to Christ and His Church:***
 - A person becomes a member of the Local Church when he knows some facts about Jesus (cf. table 5.4, item 10). When joining the local Church a would-be-member must state his confession in public i.e. in the presence of God and the congregation (cf. table 5.4, item 10).
 - Qualification for membership in the Local Church is divine regeneration (cf. Table 5.4, item 13). Nominal Christians do not qualify for membership in the Local Church (cf. table 5.4, 13).
 - The Local Church is an environment where members can grow spiritually (cf. table 5.4, item 1). The Local Church is a divine institution which promotes qualitative (spiritual) growth of its members (cf. table 5.4, item 1)
 - We should, however, not be surprised to find inconsistencies even in good Local churches (cf. table 5.4, item 2). The Local Church is a Church Militant, it will only be Triumphant and Perfect at the *Parousia* (cf. table 5.4, item 2).
 - The ordination of ministers is the responsibility of the whole congregation (cf. table 5.4, item 3). The Local Church must maintain the *plurality of elders* (cf. table 5.4, item 3).

- The Local Church must administer Church Discipline to its offending members (cf. table 5.4, item 9). The Local Church must maintain the *Regulative Principle of Scripture* (cf. table 5.4, item 9).
- Family members (household) must belong to the same Local Church (cf. table 5.7, item 2). Both parents and their children must be members of the same *household of God*. This will facilitate pastoral work by elders.
- ***Commitment of members to each other:***
 - The family members must be members of the same Local Church – the same household of God (cf. table 5.7, item 2).
 - The Local Church must administer Church Discipline to its members (cf. table 5.7, item 6). Loving admonition must be exercised to offenders.
 - The only qualification for membership in the Local Church, thus in the household of God, is regeneration (cf. table 5.7, item 13).
 - The members of the Local Church must love and care for each other as brothers and sisters in the family (cf. table 5.7, item 14).
 - Membership in the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation (cf. table 5.7, item 15).
- ***Commitment of members to their neighbourhood:***
 - The Local Church must provide spiritual services to offenders in the local prisons (cf. table 5.10, item 4).
 - The Local Church must preach sermons that encourage its members to be good citizens (cf. table 5.10, item 5).

- The Local Church must extend its evangelistic missions to schools and tertiary institutions in its neighbourhood (cf. table 5.10, item 6).
- The Local Church must encourage whistle-blowing among its working members (cf. table 5.10, item 13).
- The Local Church must extend its works of charity to the members of the community (cf. table 5.10, item 14).
- The Local Church must encourage the workers to join unions (cf. table 5.10, item 15).

From the findings above it could be established that the Local Church is a concretion of the fellowship with a strong sense of belonging, where all members are committed to Christ in faith and obedience, to each other in loving and caring fellowship, and to their neighbourhood in witness evangelism and service.

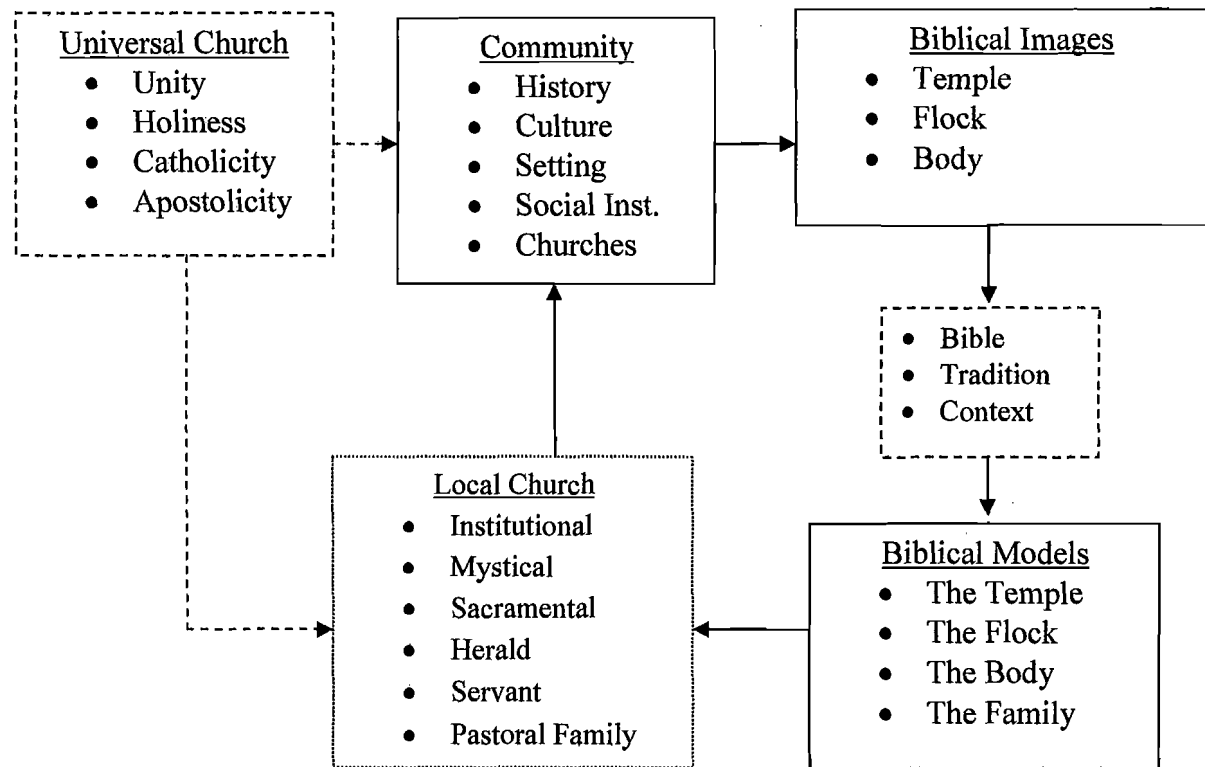
The Local structure of the early Christian groups was linked to what was commonly regarded as the basic unit of society, which was the household – the family (cf. 2.2.4.2).

In this last section a model is presented within a framework that will fit the conditions in the Vaal Triangle as portrayed in the literature review, the contextual and empirical study.

6.3.5 The Pastoral Family Model

The Pastoral Family Model (PFM) as suggested in this study, advocates two important aspects of the Local Church namely, to engage human and material resources at its disposal to ultimately getting its members to help and care for each other, by attending to both spiritual and physical needs of their fellow congregants. In the following section the development of Pastoral Family Model for the Vaal triangle will be presented.

Figure 6.1 The Pastoral Family Model



Explanation of Biblical Models

- The Universal Church is characterised by four attributes namely, unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. These attributes are the acts of Christ in the Church and must find expression in the Local Church.
- The community within which the Local Church exists has its history, culture, and is also situated within a particular setting. All of these features will determine the nature and practice of the Local Church.
- However, within the community there are also other societal institutions whose primary aim is also to address the problems of the members of the community. These are however not the Church; but are only human inventions culturally determined. They can only assist the Local Church in its evangelistic mission.
- Church models are often developed from three building blocks, namely, the Bible, tradition, and context. The Vaal Triangle provides that context.
- The four very prominent biblical images used for the members of Local Church in this study are: the Temple, the sheep, the body, and the family. Each image emphasizes one aspect of the Church.
- From the many biblical images found in the New Testament, various models of the Local Church can be developed. Some of these are: the church as an institution, a mystical body, a sacrament, a herald, a servant, and a pastoral family. The Local Church must decide which model to adopt.

The Church as a Pastoral Family which is suggested for the Vaal Triangle is based on the fact that the family is *the basic unit of human life* as created by God. To be a member of the family is to belong to a community bound by a common fatherhood. If God is the Father of each one who believes in Jesus Christ, then together we form His family, His household. Everyone enjoys being part of a family bound by love. Everyone grieves over the hurt that marks a divided family.

In this study, the Local Church as a Pastoral Family (PFM) is suggested as an appropriate model for addressing the problems emanating from the history, culture and setting of the Church Community in the Vaal Triangle.

6.3.6 Implications of PFM for the Vaal Triangle

In the next section, the implementation of the Pastoral Family Model (PFM) in the Vaal Triangle is presented. To this end, and because of the scope of this study, only certain features that characterize the Vaal Triangle will be considered as examples for implementing the PFM namely, political events, population/institutions, migration into the Vaal Triangle, church unity, incarcerated members, and industries.

6.3.6.1 Political Events in the Vaal Triangle

The political events of 1960, 1984 and 1992 affected the community of the Vaal Triangle in various ways. First, many people are hurting because of the loss of their loved ones, while others have to cope with family members who are crippled for life. Second, there is also division among the members of the community because some individuals were viewed as collaborating with the system, and as such helping to perpetuate the *status quo*. Third, there is now also the pride in having contributed to the liberation of South Africa through these sacrifices.

It is this context that the Local Church must minister to the community as a Pastoral Family. The following are suggested in this regard:

- In its teaching, the Local Church must give *a message of hope* to those who lost relatives and friends in these unfortunate events.
- The gospel of hope must also be accompanied by the *good deeds*. Works of charity on the part of the Local Church must be extended to those who have been incapacitated as the result of these events. Where the task is of such magnitude that the Local Church cannot cope, government institutions, NGO's, and business community, should be approached for assistance by the leadership of the Local Church.

- The Local Church as a Pastoral Family must not only join the community in celebrating the historical events in the area, but should actually initiate and organize these celebrations during which the *message of reconciliation* among the members of the community can be preached, thus addressing the problem of division that may have been caused by these unfortunate events.
- Among its many programmes the Local Church should also include *political education* for its congregants and the community. Workshops on voting and the knowledge of the constitution for example, can be organized in the church during which experts from within the congregation and outside, can teach the congregants as well as the community on these subjects.
- At family level, the Local Church should act *in loco parentis* in those cases where parents died during these events. The Local Church should ensure, for example, that children are registered at nearby schools; that the government grants benefit the recipients in the family; that family members join the Local Church, among other things.

6.3.6.2 Population in the Vaal Triangle

Apart from many primary and schools in the Vaal Triangle, the area also boasts of Sedibeng College and two big campuses of the Vaal University of Technology and the North-West University. These institutions have attracted many students from all over the country. The Local Church must minister to these students in such a way that the Local Church becomes *home-away-from-home* for these students.

The following ministries are suggested:

- The Local Church as a Pastoral Family should develop youth and children and youth programmes with the view of addressing problems such HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, basic health care, among others.

- Pastors and elders of the Local Church can arrange with principals of local schools in the neighbourhood to hold morning devotions during which learners can be instructed in Christian values such as respect, promptness, tolerance, diligence, empathy, good citizenship, among others.
- The Local Church should also take into account the fact that the youth is endowed with spiritual gifts and that they too can be engaged in *youth ministries* to advance God's Kingdom. To achieve this objective, youth camp can be organized by the Local Church during which gifted youth (under the guidance and wisdom of experienced elders) can confront their peers with the gospel.
- The Local Church can utilize the skills acquired by the students in their different fields of study to assist the learners with their school work and also to help the community in fighting illiteracy.
- Churches that cannot afford to pay for the services of bookkeepers for example, can also utilise the skills of students who are studying in this field for keeping good financial records for their churches.

6.3.6.3 Flooding into the Vaal Triangle

After 1994, many people from the rural areas and other provinces came to settle informally in the Vaal Triangle. This resulted in housing shortages and related problems. The Local Church as a pastoral Family should clearly demonstrate a welcoming attitude towards these newcomers and strive towards assimilating them in the communities in the Vaal Triangle. It is also the duty of the Local Church to inform the newcomers about their responsibilities. The following are suggested:

- The Local Church must know where these people stay in order to be able to reach them with the gospel.
- The Local Church must take note of their living conditions and report to the authorities problems such as unhealthy and unsafe dwellings, poor sewer system, non existence of running water, etc.

- The Local Church must encourage these people to attend community meetings so as to be informed about the latest developments in the areas of their residence, and also to take part in the decisions of the members of the community.
- The Local Church must provide the newcomers with information about social services such as schools, clinics, administration offices in the area, etc.
- The Local Church must encourage these people to pay for the services that are provided by the local municipality.

6.3.6.4 Environmental Issues

As a pastoral Family the Local Church has a responsibility towards the health and safety of the community in the Vaal Triangle. Air and water pollution are some of the major health hazards in the area. This is because of the heavy industrial activities in the area. The Local Church as a Pastoral Family should make the community aware of the importance of a clean, safe, and healthy environment. The following are some of the ways to achieve this objective:

- The Local Church must speak out on behalf of the community of the Vaal Triangle against pollution caused by the activities of companies such as SASOL, ISCOR (now Arcelor Mittal), Lethabo, among others.
- In its many programmes, the Local Church must include health issues such as proper sanitation, handling of refuse, recycling, cleaning campaigns, etc.
- Above all, the premises of the Local Church and its surrounding must be clean, healthy, and safe. This will demonstrate the presence of God where people can grow spiritually and glorify God.

6.3.6.5 Church Unity

As a pastoral Family the Local Church must protect its members against false teaching and unbiblical practices that are common among church members in the area. The Vaal Triangle is characterised by differences in religion and church denominations. The Local Church should discourage association with “churches” that have departed from Scripture. At the same time it should, as a Pastoral Family, encourage spiritual unity among Christians. Examples in this regard may be drawn from the practice in the Early Church.

- *Mutual help:* The principal example of this is the case of the support given by other churches to the poverty stricken Jerusalem Church. Mutual financial support was an expression of their unity. Mutual help should spring from the possession of a common spiritual life, acceptance of true faith, and the exercise of the love of Christ.
- *Movements of preachers and teachers.* This is not foreign to Scripture. The Apostles who were leading teachers of the Early Church, moved about among the churches teaching the one true gospel of Christ (cf. Acts 11). In moving about from church to church, the preachers should however not impose their authority, but must be ‘helpers’ in true faith.
- *Sharing of Scripture.* The letters of Paul for instance, although directed firstly to one local church, were passed around the churches and became well known and accepted as Scripture (cf. 2 Peter 3: 15 and 16). This was only possible because there was a working unity between those local churches.
- *Sharing of news and greetings.* This hardly needs quotation to support it. Peter in his first letter says, “The church that is in Babylon elected together with you salutes you” (1 Peter 5: 13). John in his second letter writes, “The children of thy elect sister greet thee.” This is surely evidence of the close unity there was between these local churches of the Early Church. They were in touch with each other; they shared news with each other and prayed for each other. The Local

Church in the Vaal Triangle should emulate and practice this unity among the communities in the area.

6.3.6.6 Incarcerated Members and their Families

Groenpunt as an institution of the Department of Correctional Service plays an important role in the communities of the Vaal Triangle. Various church and faith based programmes have been introduced for offenders by the Department of Correctional Services. Some of them are run by ministers for their incarcerated members. The Local Church as a Pastoral Family should minister to its incarcerated members and their families. This could be done by:

- Visiting these members in the prison
- Paying regular visits to members on parole
- Holding prayer meetings with families of incarcerated members
- Providing counselling for members released from prison
- Preaching sermons on good citizenship

6.3.6.7 Some Industries in the Vaal Triangle

Industries in the Vaal triangle owe their growth to the availability of abundant natural resources such as coal and water. Many members of the local churches are employed at factories in the area. The Local Church must formulate a general policy for industry. The following principles may be helpful in this regard:

- The Local Church must be vocal about companies that act irresponsibly by polluting the atmosphere or water or ruining amenities of the neighbourhood, irrespective of how good the product is.
- The Local Church must speak out against employers who exploit workers by denying them their right to annual leave, or underpay them, or make them work under unacceptable working conditions.

- The Local Church must impress upon the workers to be as efficient as possible in their work, since to work well is to serve their fellows. Devotion to duty is not a specifically Christian attribute, but one common to all who approach their life's work with a sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, it is essential that the Christian should show willingness to do his best, to submit to the discipline of the task, and to subordinate the selfhood to the requirements of the working group.

- The Local Church must teach workers that they have a responsibility towards those with whom they work. Industry requires the closest co-operation of man with man.

- The Local Church should teach workers biblical insights such as the tithe and the doctrine of usury which teaches about the use of money in business. To give away a tenth of the workers' subsistence, is to recognize that money is a means, not an end.

6.4 Application of PFM in the Local Church

In this last section, an attempt will be made to suggest some practical guidelines for the implementation of the PFM within the Local Church. To achieve this objective, various structures in the Local Church will be considered in the application of this model. It should however be noted at the outset that these structures (and their names), will differ from one Local Church to the other. And, in some churches these structures are not so well delineated with the result that one structure may be responsible for more than one function.

The following structures are considered to be very generic and will probably be found in every Local Church. These are: the *Church Council*, *evangelization committee*, *financial committee*, *building committee*, *men's guild/forum*, *women's movement*, *youth movement*, *church choir*, *catechism class*, *Sunday school*, etc. Care must however be taken that these committees and movements, do not function independently of the Church Council, and to the extent that they override the decisions of the Local

Church Council which is the highest decision-making body within the Local Church. The abovementioned structures are now discussed separately.

6.4.1 The Church Council

If the local Church (congregation) seeks to be governed biblically, it must be ruled by a plurality of elders. The evidence of Scripture is overwhelming; one-man rule in the church is not what the Scripture teaches. The Church Council represents this plurality of elders.

The pinnacle of the Church Council is that of rule. Now the Church Council which rules for Jesus must be under the rule of Jesus. The following three may be considered as the major functions of the Church Council in the household of God:

- The supervision of sound biblical doctrine
- The administration of sacraments and ceremonies
- The administration of Christian discipline

6.4.2 Evangelization Committee

The task of the Local Church as Pastoral Family is that of preaching the gospel and winning the world for Christ. But this task of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom includes everything, even the socio-political responsibility of the Local Church and its members. The mission of the Local Church is thus that of fulfilling the biblical mandate to evangelize the poor as well as relieve their physical needs.

6.4.3 Financial Committee

The Local Church as the household of God must be self-supporting. It uses its members (the financial committee) who are endowed with the gift of managing its finances. Failure in this regard will result in dependency. Where the financial responsibility is not faced with realism, the members of the local Church will not grow spiritually; and will produce nothing but a flabby faith.

6.4.4 Building Committee

A healthy household is measured among others by a proper and safe dwelling. The members of the Household of God must have a place of worship where God is glorified and the members are edified. This is not foreign to Scripture. At the instruction of God, Solomon was burdened with the task of building the temple, God's dwelling place. The Local Church must utilize the skills of some of its members to build and maintain its church building.

6.4.5 Men's Forum

Fathers in the Local Church have a very important role to play. They are in a better position to mentor the young boys in the Local Church. Moreover, as fathers in their families, they serve as role models for especially their male children. Their presence in the Local Church will guarantee to large extend, good behaviour among the male children in the Local Church.

6.4.6 Women's Movement

Mothers form the back bone in many local churches. Apart from their most appreciated assistance in evangelism, they are also endowed with the gift of raising their families. They are best suited in dealing with problems of peer pressure, teenage pregnancy, and adolescence, among others. Since the Local Church must grapple with these problems, their presence is very crucial in the Local Church.

6.4.7 Youth Movements

The Local Church as a Household of God must invest in its youth. The Bible is very instructive in this regard: the children must be raised in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. The youth in the Local Church must be made aware that they too are endowed with the gifts of the Spirit, and evangelism is equally their responsibility. The Local Church must therefore mobilize its youth in an effort to win the youth for Christ.

6.4.8 Catechism Class

New converts in the Local Church must be instructed in the sound teaching of the church. The catechism classes offer an opportunity where new members are instructed in the knowledge of the biblical gospel and church polity. All newcomers must make their confession in the presence of God and the congregation before they can be allowed to participate in different structures in the Local Church.

6.4.9 Sunday School

Sunday School offers a good opportunity for the children to learn virtues such respect, obedience, diligence, promptness, sense of sharing, tolerance, among others. Sunday school teachers must be well trained by experienced members of the Church Council to teach the young one about the Word of God.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study did not allow for the testing of the proposed model, mainly because it is a long-term capacity building model. It can, however, be a subject of another study.

The findings of this research can be generalized mainly to the local churches in the black townships of the Vaal Triangle. Other areas may have other demographic factors that differ from the local churches in the area of study.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a synopsis of the entire study in terms of its findings and recommendations, as well as its limitations and area for further research.

The entire study investigated the concept of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle and how it can enhance qualitative and quantitative church-growth, and ultimately, suggested the Pastoral Family Model (PFM) for the conditions in the Vaal Triangle.

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- Kkaroli, A.E (Uniting Reformed Church - Sharpeville)
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- Maboe, P (AME Church - Zamdela)
- Mohapi, M.J (Uniting Reformed Church - Sharpeville)
- Mokone, N.M (Methodist Church - Sharpeville)
- Ntate Noge (AME Church - Sebokeng)
- Nokoane, A (Uniting Reformed Church - Sharpeville)
- Nthoroane, P.A (Uniting Reformed Church - Sharpeville)
- Elder Phara (Uniting Reformed Church - Sharpeville)

Annexure:

- A Questionnaire for Ministers and Pastors
- B Questionnaire for Members of the Congregations
- C Questionnaire for Members of the community
- D Request for participating in Research project
- E Consent for participating in Research Project
- F Biography of Mr. V.G.L Leutsoa

ANNEXURE A
Ministers and Pastors

SECTION A: *Biographical Information*

N.B. Make a cross (X) in the appropriate block as your answer.

1.	Gender		Male	Female
2.	Home Language	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Tshivenda
		IsiXhosa	Sepedi	Setswana
	Other (Please specify)			
3.	Age in years	Younger than 19	20 – 30	31 – 40
		41 - 50	51 – 60	61 – 70
		Older than 70		
4.	Marital status	Married	Unmarried	Divorced
5.	Number of children (Indicate number)		Male	Female
6.	Where do you live? (Residence)	In the township	In the suburbs	On the neighbouring farm
7.	Does your congregation have a building?		Yes	No
8.	Do you attend church regularly?		Yes	No
9.	What position do you hold in your congregation?			
	Elder	Pastor/minister/bishop	Class/cell leader	Sick comforter
	Bible Leader	Choir Conductor	Other: (specify)	
10.	Do you use transport when coming to church?		Yes	No

SECTION B – *Questionnaire to Ministers/Pastors*

The following statements describe the impact of the **Local Church** on qualitative and quantitative church-growth in Vaal Triangle. On a scale 1 – 4, please make a cross (X) next to the number that indicates your opinion with each of the statements in respect to your own situation in the church.

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The Local Church is an environment where the members can grow spiritually.	1	2	3	4
2.	We should not be surprised to find inconsistencies even in good local churches.	1	2	3	4
3.	The ordination of ministers is the responsibility of the whole congregation.	1	2	3	4
4.	Commitment to the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation.	1	2	3	4
5.	The ministry of the Local Church is the work of the laity in the world with auxiliary help from the clergy.	1	2	3	4
6.	The success of the Local Church can be measured by the growing number of its members.	1	2	3	4
7.	The Local Church provides the opportunity for co-operate efforts in ministries of mercy and evangelism.	1	2	3	4
8.	Church-growth can be achieved by extending works of charity to the entire community.	1	2	3	4
9.	A good Local Church is characterised by administering Church Discipline.	1	2	3	4
10.	A person becomes a member of the Local Church when he knows a certain amount of facts about Christ.	1	2	3	4
11.	To achieve church-growth the Local Church must relax Church Discipline.	1	2	3	4
12.	The Local Church should take part in ecumenical (“merger”) talks, movements, councils, etc.	1	2	3	4
13.	The qualification for church membership is divine regeneration.	1	2	3	4
14.	A Local Church is a group of Christians so small as to be accommodated in a dwelling house.	1	2	3	4
15.	The Local Church is a Christian society so big as to include the whole nation.	1	2	3	4
16.	The ministry of the Local Church is the work of clergymen with auxiliary aids among the laity.	1	2	3	4
17.	Some Christians are members of the Local Church and others are members of the Universal Church.	1	2	3	4
18.	The Local Church comprises all Christians in the city.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your co-operation

ANNEXURE B

Members of the Congregation

SECTION A: *Biographical Information*

N.B. Make a cross (X) in the appropriate block for your answer.

1.	Gender	Male	Female	
2.	Home Language	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Tshivenda
		IsiXhosa	Sepedi	Setswana
	Other: (specify)			
3.	Age in years	Younger than 19	20 - 30	31 - 40
		41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70
		Older than 70		
4.	Marital Status	Married	Unmarried	Divorced
5.	Number of Children (indicate number)		Male	Female
6.	Where do you live? Residence	In the Township	In the Suburbs	On the Neighbouring farm
7.	Does your congregation have a building?		Yes	No
8.	Do you attend church regularly?		Yes	No
9.	What position do you hold in your congregation?			
	Elder	Pastor/minister/ bishop	Class/cell leader	Sick comforter
	Bible Study leader	Choir Conductor	Other: (specify)	
10.	Do you use transport when going to Church?		Yes	No

SECTION B – *Questionnaire to Members of the Congregations*

The following statements describe the impact of the *Local Church* on qualitative and quantitative church-growth in the Vaal Triangle. On a scale 1 – 4, please make a cross (X) next to the number that indicates your opinion with each of the statements. There are no right or wrong answers only honest responses. Your identity will be protected.

	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The local Church must join the community in political events, e.g. rallies, marches, boycotts, etc.	1	2	3	4
2.	The family members (household) must be members of the same Local Church.	1	2	3	4
3.	The Local Church must join structures and organizations that seek to combat poverty and homelessness, for example.	1	2	3	4
4.	It is not necessary to join the Local Church because one can listen to sermons on the radio.	1	2	3	4
5.	The Local Church must encourage its members to join civic formations, e.g. street committees, CPF's, etc.	1	2	3	4
6.	The Local Church must administer Church discipline to offending members of the congregation.	1	2	3	4
7.	The Local Church must discourage its members to join fund-raising efforts e.g. stokvels, kitchen parties etc.	1	2	3	4
8.	The Church must prescribe social events to be attended by congregants, e.g. jazz festivals, shebeens, picnics etc.	1	2	3	4
9.	The Local Church must not get involved in environmental issues such as demonstrations and marches against pollution in its neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
10.	The Local Church must limit its works of charity to its members.	1	2	3	4
11.	The Local Church must be a mouth-piece of those who are wronged against.	1	2	3	4
12.	The Church must avail its spiritual services to offenders in the local prisons.	1	2	3	4
13.	The only qualification for membership in the Local Church is confessing that Jesus is Lord.	1	2	3	4
14.	The members of the Local Church must love and care for each other as brothers and sisters in a family.	1	2	3	4
15.	Membership in the Local Church does not guarantee spiritual life or salvation.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your co-operation

ANNEXURE C

Members of the Community

SECTION A: *Biographical Information*

N.B. make a cross (X) in the appropriate block as your answer.

1.	Gender	Male	Female
2.	Home Language	Sesotho	IsiZulu
		IsiXhosa	Tshivenda
	Other: (specify)	Sepedi	Setswana
3.	Age in years	Younger than 19	20 - 30
		41 - 50	31 - 40
		51 - 60	61 - 70
		Older than 70	
4.	Marital Status	Married	Unmarried
			Divorced
5.	Number of Children (indicate number)	Male	Female
6.	Where do you live? (Residence)	In the township	In the suburb
			On the neighbouring Farm
7.	Is the dwelling in which you live Registered in your name?	Yes	No
8.	Do you attend church regularly?	Yes	No
	Is there electricity in your house?	Yes	No
	Are streets tarred in your neighbourhood?	Yes	No
	Is there running water on your property?	Yes	No
9.	What is the type of your employment?		
	Self-employed	Unemployed	School Teacher
	Factory Worker	Student	Clerk
		Other (specify)	Housewife
10.	Your highest educational level is:	Primary	Secondary
			Tertiary

SECTION B – *Questionnaire for members of the community*

The following statements describe the conditions in which the members of the churches in the Vaal Triangle live as well as their conceptions about the *local churches*. On a scale 1 – 4, please make a cross (X) next to the number that indicates your opinion with each of the statements. There are no right or wrong answers only honest responses. Your identity will be protected.

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The local churches must join the community in fighting against social ills such as maladministration and housing problems.	1	2	3	4
2.	The main task of the Local Church is to prepare its members for the life hereafter.	1	2	3	4
3.	The Local Church should discourage its members to take part in political events e.g. boycotts, rallies, marches, etc.	1	2	3	4
4.	The Local Church must provide spiritual services to offenders in the local prisons and those on <i>parole</i> .	1	2	3	4
5.	The Local Church must preach sermons that encourage its members to be good citizens.	1	2	3	4
6.	The Local Church must extend its evangelistic mission to the schools and tertiary institutions in its neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
7.	The Local Church should co-operate with the police by reporting crime in its neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
8.	The Local Church must provide asylum for political refugees in its buildings.	1	2	3	4
9.	The responsibility of the Local Church is only to report the homeless to the Social Workers.	1	2	3	4
10.	The Local Church has social responsibility only to its members.	1	2	3	4
11.	The Local Church can assist in the plight of the homeless by praying for them.	1	2	3	4
12.	Church leaders must discuss environmental issues such as pollution with authorities and offending companies.	1	2	3	4
13.	The Local Church should encourage whistle-blowing among the workers.	1	2	3	4
14.	The Local Church should extend its works of charity to the members of the community.	1	2	3	4
15.	The Local Church should discourage the workers to join unions at their place of employment.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your co-operation

ANNEXURE D

North-West University

P.O. Box 1174

Vanderbijlpark

16 September 2008

To Whom it May Concern

RE: Rev. M.P. Mohapi's research work

I hereby wish to inform you that Rev. M. P. Mohapi is a postgraduate student at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University. Rev. Mohapi, whose student number is 11281308, is currently completing his Doctoral Degree in Theology. Part of the work that Rev. Mohapi has to do is a research project that must be presented in a form of a thesis. The topic of his research has to do with the ministries of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle.

The Department of Theology at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University is confident about Rev. Mohapi's abilities as a professional and mature researcher. We are certain that the outcomes of his research will not only satisfy the relevant scientific requirements for this degree but also that it will be something useful and for the benefit of the community in the Vaal Triangle. Our department wants to assist the community by facilitating research into the problems affecting the churches in the Vaal Triangle. Rev. Mohapi's research topic is a clear demonstration of this commitment. We are hereby asking you to assist Rev. Mohapi in his research in whatever way possible. This kind of research he is doing can only be successful when the researcher receives the co-operation of the churches and the community at large.

We highly appreciate your cooperation in this regard. May God bless you, your work and your institution.

Yours truly,

TC Rabali (Director: School of Basic Sciences, Vaal Campus of North-West University)

ANNEXURE E

11 Beril Road
Waldrift
1939
17 October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

Participation in Research Project

I am at present studying for doctoral degree in Theology at the Vaal Campus of North-West University. The Rectorate have granted me permission to do research for my thesis on the *Model of the Local Church in the Vaal Triangle*.

This study will entail quantitative and qualitative research project and will make use of questionnaires and group discussions. I would appreciate very much if you would agree to participate in this research to be conducted in this community. Your identity will be protected. It also remains your right to withdraw your participation at any time should you have reasons for withdrawal.

Should you agree to participate, please be so kind as to give your written consent by signing this letter.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Mosielle Peter Mohapi

I, ...agree to participate in the research project proposed above.

Signed Date

ANNEXURE F

Mr. Nkadimeng Vincent Gilbert Loxley Leutsoa

Nkadimeng Vincent Loxley Leutsoa was born on the 5th of June 1925 at Gum Tree District, Ficksburg in the Free State. He started his primary school education in Ficksburg and then moved to Benoni where his father was employed at the local power station. He then moved to Modderpoort Teacher Training College near Ladybrand where he completed his Teacher's Diploma. His teaching career started at Harmonia Farm School in the district of Ficksburg. In the mean time his father had been transferred to Vereeniging Power Station and consequently Nkadimeng was attracted to the Vaal and got a teaching post at USCO industrial school.

On the recommendation of the School Area Manager, he joined the Vereeniging Municipality as the first black Librarian in Sharpeville. He enrolled for a Diploma in Librarianship with the South African Library Association and later with UNISA for a higher diploma, followed by overseas training in England. The Emfuleni Municipality later honoured Nkadimeng by naming the Sharpeville Library after him. This happened after 42 years of unbroken service. The Library is known as NKADIMENG LEUTSOA COMMUNITY LIBRARY. He also won the life-time Achiever Award arranged by the Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture in 2003

His greatest passion lay with the development of the Sesotho language and preservation of Sesotho culture. He was the author of children's books. As a result, he became the founder member of *LESIBA* (Sesotho Author's Association) and *Mokgatlo wa Puo le Botjhaba ba Basotho*.

Nkadimeng was a devout Christian and was involved in the translation of the Anglican Prayer Book into Sesotho. Because of his contribution, not only at Parish level but also at Provincial level, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, the then Primate of Cape Town, awarded him the *St. Simon of Cyrene Medal*. The Diocese of Christ the King, under the leadership of Bishop Peter John Lee also recognized him by awarding him a certificate of service. He also assisted his congregation in catering for the victims of Sharpeville Massacre in 1960.