

Regaining a perspective on holistic mission: An assessment of the role of the Wolaita Zone
Kale Heywet Church in Southern Ethiopia

H.T. Wotango, Rev.

Student No. 21069417-2007

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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. T.D. Mashau

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Nadine Bowers Du Toit

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Acronyms

- AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- CCFC- Christian Children's Fund of Canada
- CMA- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- CMS- Church Missionary Society
- EKHC- Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church
- EOTC- Ethiopia Orthodox *Tewahido* Church
- EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
- GWC- George Whitefield College
- HIV- Human Immunity deficiency Virus
- LMS- London Missionary Society
- MDGs - Millennium Development Goals
- NIV- New International Version
- NT- New Testament
- NWU- North West University
- OT- Old Testament
- PLWAS- People Living With AIDS
- SEM- Swedish Evangelical Mission
- SIM- Serving In Mission
- WZKHC- Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church

Abstract

Based on the missional experiences of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) in Southern Ethiopia, this dissertation argues the indispensable nature of the holistic approach to mission in order to fulfil the missional responsibility of the church effectively. Balance must be kept between the two aspects of mission (evangelism and social concern) and they need to be integrated as working towards a single goal of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. In other words, neither of the two aspects of mission may be magnified at the expense of the other nor should they be dichotomized as two unrelated parts.

Mission emerges from the nature of God. Ever since the creation of the universe God has been at work and the church takes part in what he is doing. God's mission is holistic. Through Jesus Christ, He is working towards the redemption of the whole creation to its originally intended state. The research attempts to give attention to this concept as the Kingdom-oriented (*Messio-Dei*) mission versus church-centered mission in light of holistic approach.

To weigh the experience of the church (WZKHC) from the perspective of the Scripture, OT and NT analysis will be done in detail. Furthermore, the eschatological views pertinent to the final state of the creation and millennium will also be assessed in order to find out their contribution as a root of imbalance or polarization between evangelism and social concern.

The aim of the study is to find out the factors that contribute to the imbalanced and non integrated approach to mission in the WZKHC in order to help the church regain the holistic perspective. This would be done mainly through qualitative research method, although quantitative approach is also employed rarely.

Key terms- Church, Gospel; Holistic mission; Integral mission; *Shalom*; Kingdom of God; *Missio Dei*; Transformation; End time.

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Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a guide map for the whole dissertation. Various issues relating to the research will be discussed in this portion of the dissertation. Firstly, it gives a brief background of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) which is the subject of this research. An overview of the Church's perspective on evangelism and social responsibility will be given under this topic. In addition, some motivations for the research will also be discussed. Secondly, the problem statement of the dissertation will be posed. This focuses on explaining the key concerns which the research attempts to address. Thirdly, the aim and objective of the research is given attention. A list of various issues which the research is attempting to find out will be given under this sub-section. Then follow the central theoretical argument and the research methodology. As the former is substantially related with the concept of problem statement mentioned above, the latter will indicate the research methodology that will be employed in this study. Finally under the same section a list of the resources that will be utilised to discuss each chapter of the research will be given.

1.2 Background and problem statement

1.2.1 Background

The history of Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) is part of the history of the Ethiopian Kale Heywet (Word of Life) Church (EKHC). The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church was established by the Serving In Missions (SIM) missionaries in 1928 in southern Ethiopia¹. Its foundation was laid in four different provinces, one of which was Wolaita (Duff, 1980:46). Through its aggressive gospel outreach ministry the church expanded immensely since its early years and currently has about six million members in 5500 local congregations.

¹ The EKHC is divided into eight administrative ketanas and the WZKHC represents one of them. The Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church is located in South Ethiopia. Its membership is estimated at about one million in 1040 local congregations. The historical documents indicate that Wolaita is the origin of the Kale Heywet Church in the whole country of Ethiopia in terms of starting and developing formal church settings (Davis 1966: 119).

Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church has been involved in various ministries since its founding in 1928. In the last sixteen years, however, it has developed its capacity in terms of evangelism and social ministries and has been running a wide range of activities to contribute its part in terms of building the Kingdom of God. In response to the commandment of the Great Commission, the Church has been contributing to addressing the spiritual needs of the community both in nurturing and evangelistic outreach. On the other hand, the aspect of social concern has also been given due attention in the ministry of the Church. The Matala-Gadala food security intervention, the Gogara fruit seedling distribution project, Child sponsorship, micro-loan and saving intervention (CCFC) and the Soddo HIV/AIDS prevention project are but few of the interventions.

The mission of the Church is holistic (Bosch, 1991:399). It targets meeting both the spiritual and physical needs of a community. This emerges from the core belief about mission. Mission is the work of God through which His love is expressed to human being. The Church is taking part in this comprehensive plan of God. Bosch (Ibid:390) attempts to show how the mission of the Church is tied up with the Trinitarian concept of mission. He says:

The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father Son and Holy Spirit sending the Church in to the World...to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.

Throughout the pages of the Scripture this truth is evident. In the OT the Israelites were commanded to fulfil both responsibilities. They worshipped Yahweh as a covenant community and attended the physical needs of their fellow Israelites as well as the aliens that lived among them (Lev 19:10; Dt 15:7, 11; Ps 9:18; 82:3; Pr 14:21). In addition, from what Jesus and the apostle Paul did and taught one can see that the mission experience of the early NT Church was holistic. Jesus ministered to both needs of his audience (Mt 4:23-24; Mk 1:38; Lk 4:43; 10:8-9). With his preaching of the coming of the Kingdom of God, he healed the sick, fed the hungry and released many from the oppression of demons. Moreover, Paul's mission experience was inclusive and integrated. He expressed equal concern in both evangelism and social aspects (Gal

2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 1Tim 5:3-16) (Ezemadu, 1991: 18).

In the light of what has been said the central question is whether today's Church is carrying out her mission in a right way. Is she true to the one who sent her? To limit ourselves to the scope of this research the above question needs to be understood as it focuses on exercising a holistic approach. The Church has to follow the above model in her mission task. Neither of the two aspects of the Church's mission should be missing out nor can they be compartmentalized (Johnson, 2008:247). Furthermore, they need to have the building of the Kingdom of God as their ultimate goal. This is apparent in the scriptures mentioned above. The ministry of Jesus Christ might be reviewed to get a roadmap. All his ministries were not ends by themselves; rather they were means (signs) which may point his audience to the ultimate reality (Hiebert, 1993:156). They are intended to yield a fruit, which is the redemption of the whole person to the Kingdom of God. However, this biblical principle seems to be ignored in most African Evangelical churches when it comes to the question of holistic mission. Either dualism or loss of sight of the Kingdom of God are perplexing problems in African Churches. This means that, evangelism and social concern are considered two different roles, which belong to two distinct realms. Moreover they are not integrated as they lack a unified goal. The experience of Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church shows that this Church is committing the same fallacy, which needs to be addressed.

This research is motivated by the researcher's practical exposure to an imbalance in ministry experience in Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church. The researcher has served in various responsibilities within this denomination for ten years during which he observed several difficulties. His key positions as director and academic dean for a total of seven years in two different theological colleges, which are under the denomination, gave him a good opportunity to analyse the Church's position with regards to a holistic approach. More importantly, however, during the two and a half years where he served as the General Secretary of the denomination (WZKHC), he felt the seriousness of the problem.

These observations can be expressed in two ways as they have to do with both academic and lay dimensions. With regard to the academic setting of the WZKHC, the curriculums of theological colleges are not designed in a way that the Church can produce ministers with a holistic

approach. It is indisputable that theological colleges play a significant role in producing influential church leaders who can be agents of changes in their society. From this perspective, curriculum of theological colleges should be designed holistically. However, this is not the case in WZKHC. Secondly, the problem is felt at lay people's level. Most of the congregation at grassroots do not consider social concern part of church's responsibility. Although almost all church members understand that evangelism is a role of the Church and back it up ideologically and materially, no equal concern is exhibited in terms of social responsibility.

On the other hand, in the higher denominational office (*Ketana*) where both activities are being run, an unbalanced and a non integrated approach between evangelism and social concern is a deep rooted problem. In some cases the former is given much attention at the expense of the latter and on the other hand the reverse happens. In addition, there is a clear dichotomy between the two as 'holy' (evangelism) and 'secular' (social concern) activities. Furthermore, the Church's social concern section is suffering from professionalism. This statement should not be misunderstood. It is essential to employ the right human resource at the right place in order to bring the needed change. However, it should be realized that the Church and faith cannot be divorced for the sake of professionalism. The social responsibility of a Church must operate in the framework of faith. Tsele (2001:211) warns about the danger of mere professionalism and emphasises the significance of integrating it with faith. He says, "We must register a particular concern about tendencies in mainstream development for aid workers to approach this field as nothing more than a profession, as scientific and businesslike as any profession....". He argues further that the remedy for this problem is adding faith dimension to development work. The above mentioned cases indicate that there is one central problem in the WZKHC, which is a misunderstanding of the mission of the Church as holistic.

Furthermore, two other external reasons are considered as motivation for this research. Firstly, the demography of the area is taken into account. Wolaita is one of the fastest growing tribes in Southern Ethiopia. The current data indicates that the population number of Wolaita is 2.5 million (<http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/view/3622/54/>). This means that the Church has a huge responsibility and it is critical to equip her with a holistic approach to mission in order to address the needs of the society around her. Secondly, the social, economic and psychological

crises are taken into consideration. Wolaita is one of the areas where poverty, the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, street children, commercial sex and several other problems are increasing from day to day. In such a context it is inevitable that a Church must maintain a holistic approach to mission in order to deliver a multi dimensional service. Ford (2004:4) underlines the role of the Church. It is the "...most truly Messianic community, the presence, proclamation and foretaste of God's Kingdom....a community of the world and for the world."

The fact that the last point in the preceding paragraph is shared by many African countries and Churches, gives this research a good contextual cover. Bowers (unpublished article: 1) substantiates that lack of holism is a common problem in the context of African churches. She says, "...despite the obvious strategic positioning of the local church, many churches in South Africa to a large extent continue to regard social development work as either a secondary task or not part of the Church's mission." Furthermore, Tsele (2001:205) in his work entitled *Faith in Development* explains the problem of Africa is multifaceted, but highlights that churches are not addressing them as they ought to. His long list of Africa's problems which includes "material poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness and spiritual poverty..." is followed by his fervent call for the Church to engage in social arenas to change the life of Africans. He says, "In the light of this we argue that the religious community in general and the church in particular must be called to account for its absence from the forums that seek solutions to Africa's crisis." This implies that African churches are not acting satisfactorily in contributing to relieve the crisis of African community which confirms the argument of this research.

It might also be helpful to view the significance of holism from the perspective of the African world view. Relatedness and interconnectedness are central to African culture. Hendriks (2004:148) rightly states this fact. In the Western world the world view of one's place in a community is defined as 'I am who I am' but in Africa it follows the pattern of 'I am because you are'. This is a good pointer that the concept of holism fits well into an African worldview. Moreover, Tsele's (Ibid: 213) comment sheds light on the African emphasis on unity to one another. "...despite our apparent differences we are united at a deeper level where our commonality as persons with histories experiences and destinies are located".

Various researches have been done on the WZKHC both with regard to evangelism and social

concern separately. However, no study has been undertaken on this particular topic within the context of this Church. The researcher believes that reasons for lack of holistic mission should be assessed and dealt with in order to keep a balance between evangelism and social action. A holistic approach is foundational to building the Kingdom of God. This research attempts to address this problem by finding out the reasons and recommend some solutions.

1.2.2 Problem Statement

As it is stated above, this dissertation seeks to research the factors contributing to the schism between evangelism and social ministries in evangelical churches at large and in the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) in particular. The need arises from the significance of keeping a balance between the two and of having an integrated goal for both responsibilities, which is building the Kingdom of God.

It might be helpful to examine two themes in order to form the problem statement or research question. The first one is the relationship between evangelism and social concern and the second one is the Kingdom of God.

The relationship between evangelism and social action/ development is a complicated one. In most cases it has been misunderstood. Either the two have been separated as distinct phenomenon or as the former (evangelism) taking primacy over the later (social action). Varied accounts are traced as root causes for such dualism. The Enlightenment worldview is one of them. Myers (1999:5) indicates that "... one of its enduring features has been the assumption that we can consider the physical and spiritual realms as separate and distinct from one another". Bowers (unpublished article:3) adds that the dichotomy of the Enlightenment view "...is a significant contributing factor to many Christians' understanding of Evangelism and community development as two separate activities".

What is related with the Enlightenment dichotomy is the concept of 'secular' and 'holy'. The proponents of this view claim that there are two parallel realms in which different activities take place. The spiritual world is the arena of sacred revelations in which faith operates and the real world is the world of scientific facts whose evidences based on hearing, seeing, feeling and touching (Myers, 1999:5). From this point of view evangelism is considered 'holy' and eternal

and the social concern is 'secular' and it belongs to the temporal world. The implication of this approach is that social concern is not the activity of the Church.

Another factor that played its part in the schism between the two is the pre-millennialist position. The emphasis of pre-millennialism is on the second coming of Jesus Christ upon which the millennial Kingdom will be inaugurated (Bosch, 1991:316; cf. Pocock, 2009: 129-134). The view of the imminence of Christ's return and their literal interpretation of the prophecies gave an impetus for evangelism (Kuzmic, 1999:144). Their concern was to save as many souls as possible before Christ returns. Consequently, in the 19th century many mission organizations were established and a number of missionaries were sent out to various parts of the globe (Bosch, 1991:316). The role of social responsibility was neglected to the extent that there appeared no need to invest any resource in it. According to pre-millennialists, especially in the view of dispensationalists, the world was "to grow worse and worse as part of God's program for the last days, so it makes no sense to try to improve society" (Kuzmic, 1999:144). In addition, they have also spiritualised the concept of salvation which directs them to the individual deliverance or to focus on the life hereafter (Bowers unpublished article: 3).

On the other extreme we find the proponents of the Social Gospel.² The thrust of this movement mainly focuses on dealing with the social justice. For them social action, which displays itself in eradication of poverty, injustice and inhuman experiences is evangelism in itself. This means that, they emphasize the present (now) aspect of the Kingdom of God. Every unfairness, oppression and coercion needs to be eliminated so as to create a peaceful and prosperous life whereby everyone can enjoy the blessings of the created order presently. Stott (1984:7) records the unbalanced statements of Rauschenbusch who was one of the key proponents of the Social Gospel. " 'It is not a matter of getting individuals into heaven but of transforming the life on

²The strong link in the American revival tradition between personal holiness and social reform contributed to the formation of the Social Gospel movement in the early 19th century. Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) was the most important exponent of the movement. His experience of the industrial exploitation and governmental indifference to workers made him a convinced critic of the established order. Consequently, he and other supporters of this position highlighted the significance of social concern at the expense of evangelism (Ferguson & Wright 1988:647).

earth into the harmony of heaven'... for ' the essential purpose of Christianity is to transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relationships'.

In response to the above claims one may examine that they fail to take into account that the gospel of the Kingdom is displayed as holistic. This means that evangelism and social action are the two sides of the same coin. Stott (1975:27) emphasizes that they are partners which belong to each other. This means that the Great Commission and Great Commandment can never be divorced. They complement each other. Strauss (2005:60) adds,

...as soon as we pit the Great Commission from the Great Commandment we are off track. If we ask which one is more important, social action or evangelism, our focus is wrong altogether. Our responsibility as New Testament believers is to live as complete Kingdom people; we must live with the gospel of the Kingdom on our lips and in our lives all the time.

Furthermore, in the Great Commandment one can see that these two are weaved into one. It reads '...Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul with your mind and with all your strength.... Love your neighbour as yourself' (MK 12:30-31) (NIV). This implies that the holistic mission is characterized by the vertical and horizontal dimensions which should inseparably be displayed in the ministry of the Church proportionally (Bosch, 1991:394).

In the preceding section we have attempted to briefly discuss various positions on the relationship between evangelism and social concern. The second theme which is closely related with the above one and we need to raise as a basis for the research question is the concept of Kingdom of God.

In the framework of holistic mission the relevance of the Kingdom of God can be seen from its Old Testament perspective of '*shalom*'. As Bowers & August (2005:29) point out it is a Kingdom "...where harmony, peace and justice reign under the Lordship of Christ". In other words, God's original purpose for creation was to live in a perfect accord with one another and fellowship with God. However, that plan of God was distorted by sin and the whole creation fell under the curse. Nevertheless, in His unfailing love God has started working to renew it to its original order. Samuel and Sugden (1987:128; cf. Thomas *ed.* 1995:114) explain it more clearly.

The theme of the Kingdom of God relates God's intention in creation to its final fulfilment which will be completed with the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth in which the righteousness of God will reign through the Lordship of Christ.

The Kingdom has two aspects. Its present aspect is realized as 'already' now; but its future dimension is 'not yet' (Strauss, 2005:60). This means that it is in the process of establishment which will be consummated at the end of the time. Samuel & Sugden (1999:22) confirm this thought. "We live in the period between the inauguration and consummation of the Kingdom....Therefore we seek its demonstration here on earth while awaiting its full revelation in the future." Balanced treatment of the two aspects of the Kingdom is significant for holistic approach. A zealous attempt to eliminate all the sinful activities from the existing structure without giving a due attention to the future is not more than the Social Gospel. On the other hand, neglecting the role of social transformation and emphasising only the future aspect of the Kingdom is also only one half of the mission of the Church. Samuel & Sugden (Ibid:20) state that Christians should "...not only live as Jesus' new redeemed community in the Church but also to work as responsible citizens influencing social institutions and systems toward the wholeness God intends".

The Church plays a key role in building the Kingdom of God. Foss (2008:70) states the responsibility of the church in this way. "...the Church is the herald and witness and minister of...the gospel which is the seal of every divine promise, the supply of every human want and the satisfaction of every human hope". However, it is proper to assess whether the Church is providing what is required of her in a holistic way. Dayton, (1987:55) explains that the Church's ministry should address the spiritual, physical and social aspects of a community. In other words, she must present the gospel of the Kingdom holistically. Ezemadu (1991: 16; cf. Starcher, 2006:55) adds, "God who created man knows man very well. He knows man's real problems and makes adequate provision for his total deliverance"

Given the above facts, the church needs to provide balanced service. Nevertheless, the present experience of the WZKHC as well as many other evangelical churches in Africa indicates that either the Kingdom of God is lost as the goal of social action or both ministries are not given proportional attention. This research reaffirms the responsibility of the Church in addressing both

(spiritual and physical) needs of a community; but questions the proper unity of the two ministries towards building the Kingdom of God.

This research is not looking for totally new findings. However, it attempts to contribute its part in assessing the factors which contribute to the unbalanced ministry between evangelism and social aspects and recommending some methods for better approach. I have mentioned above that in one way or the other the problem of schism is exhibited in the Church's approach. This experience needs to be addressed for several reasons.

Firstly, it is not biblical. In other words, both in evangelism as well as social action building the Kingdom of God must be a central theme. Second, separation creates unnecessary tension between the two wings of the church ministry. This means that they need to be regarded as two aspects of the same responsibility and operate with an integrated vision; but instead one is viewed as spiritual and the other as secular. Third, it causes a split in the church. Unity of the church is essential in order to carry out God's agenda for the world. However, that is not the case in many contemporary Churches. Disunity is one of the critical problems that today's Church is suffering from (Adeyemo, 1991:10). Part of the reason is a wrong view of the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility.

Fourthly, it provides a foot hold for the danger of materialism in the life of the Church. In some instances a Church's social action side becomes financially strong because it is driven by external donor funding. When the church lacks balance between evangelism and social concern and is not able to carry out her ministry with a single vision of building the Kingdom of God, money or any other material possession takes the primary place in the life of the church. Finally, a non-holistic approach results in resource abuse. The Church is a steward to whom God entrusted His resources (Samuel & Sugden, 1987:258). It is therefore expected of the Church to handle or use whatever resources wisely. In such a case the motivation to act as a responsible body comes from the proper perspective on the relationship of evangelism and social concern.

From the perspective of the above explanation the following research question can be drawn: What factors within the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church contribute to an unbalanced and a non-integrated mission approach and what are the proposed solutions? From this major research question arise some sub questions:

- Reflections on the historical background of the WZKHC and its involvement in mission
- What is the biblical view of holistic mission and its implication for the WZKHC?
- What is the correlation between the concept of the Kingdom of God and holism in the context of WZKHC?
- What are the factors within WZKHC that contribute to an unbalanced and non-integrated approach to mission and what practical guidelines and strategies are recommended

1.3 Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

The main aim of this research is to discover the factors that contribute to a disproportional and non-integrated approach in the WZKHC with regard to evangelism and social action.

1.3.2 Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study.

- To reflect on the historical background of the Church and its involvement in mission
- To assess the biblical view of holistic mission and its implication for WZKHC
- To examine the correlation between the concept of the Kingdom of God and holism in the context of WZKHC
- To explore the factors that contribute to an unbalanced and non-integrated approach to mission in WZKHC and to recommend some practical guidelines and strategies

1.4 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that a balanced treatment and integration of evangelism and social action is essential for the church's holistic approach to mission and the up building of the Kingdom of God, and this can be applied within the context of WZKHC.

1.5 Methodology

This missiological study is conducted within the Reformed Evangelical tradition. It is underlined that one must be aware of the fact that proper research design contributes a large part to a successful progress of the work (Vos & Fouche, 1998:76). In academic research one may follow

one of the three (quantitative, qualitative or combined quantitative-qualitative) approaches (Vos *et al.* 1998:15). This research will employ a qualitative approach as it is more helpful to achieve the intended goal. Under this approach various methods will be applied to deal with various research questions.

- ❖ To reflect on the historical background of the Church and its involvement in mission, an analysis of literature will be done. The main references will be *Fire on the mountains: The story of a miracle- the church in Ethiopia*. by Raymond, *Cords of Love: A pioneer mission to Ethiopia*. by Duff, “*Elohena Haleluya*” (*Agonies and Hallelujah*): by Bellete, *Warriors of Ethiopia: Heroes of the Gospel in the Omo River Valley* by McLellan and “*Bemekera wist Yabebech Betekristian*” (*Church out of Tribulation* by Ali). In addition, interviews will be conducted to gain the necessary data on the practical aspect of the topic.
- ❖ To assess the biblical view of holistic mission, a relevant Scripture and literature study will be done. Some of the resources include, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in Theology of Mission* by Bosch, *Walking With the Poor* by Myers, *The Church in Response to Human Need* by Samuel and Sugden and *The Local Church as an Agent of Change* by Padilla. Various Old and New Testament passages will be analysed in order to show that holism is a biblical concept.
- ❖ To explore the concept of the Kingdom of God and its contribution to holism, some relevant literature study will be done. The resources include *The Good News of the Kingdom* by Charles *et al. eds*, and *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* by Samuel & Sugden *eds*. In addition, the position of the Church particularly with regard to the Kingdom of God and eschatology will also be reviewed from its doctrinal statements.
- ❖ To explore the factors that contribute to an unbalanced and a non- integrated approach to mission in WZKHC and to recommend the practical guidelines and strategies interviews will be conducted in addition to literature study. *Walking With the Poor* by Myers and *The Church in Response to Human Need* by Samuel and Sugden will be main references. However, most part of this particular subject will be assessed by the outcome of the

interview because of the scarcity of secondary sources on the subject at hand, specifically related to WZKHC.

In conducting the interview and case study the researcher is responsible to get as accurate information as possible. Then the data will be analysed, interpreted and applied to the research. The aim of analysis as Mouton (2001:108) points out is "...to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts constructs or variables and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated or to establish themes in the data."

Chapter Two

Reflections on the historical background of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church and its involvement in Mission

This chapter paves the way for the subsequent discussion. The subject of the research, the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church, is one of the Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia. In this chapter we would like to survey the coming of the gospel to Ethiopia in general and the history of the Evangelical church in particular, with emphasis on the WZKHC. Moreover, attention will be given to examine the missional background of the church. A brief overview of the country of Ethiopia will precede these discussions as an introduction.

2.1 Ethiopia

Ethiopia is located at the horn of Africa. It is bordered by Eritrea at the northeast, Kenya at the south, Sudan at the south and northwest and Somalia and Djibouti at the east. The geographical landmass of the country is 1,106,000sq.km (Johnstone & Mandryk, 1993:243).

The topography varies from lofty mountains and moderately high plateaus to lowlands. According to the data recorded in the geographical setting description of the country the highest mountain reaches 4,620 meters (15,158 ft.) with mount Ras Dashan which is located in the northern part of the country. On the other hand, the lowest place is marked by the Danakil Depression which is located in the Great Rift Valley (Ethiopian Geography. <http://www.geography.about.com>).

As a result of varied geographical settings, the climate of the country has been categorized into three different temperature zones: the cool zone (*dega*) which include areas above 2600m; the temperate zone (*woina dega*), areas between 1500-2600m; and the hot zone (*qola*) which is below 1500m (<http://www.ethioworld.com/CountryInformation/climate.htm>).

According to the census Report of 2007, the population of Ethiopia is 73,918,505 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Population Census Commission 2008:8). 45% of these are

Semitic, 42.2% are Cushitic, 11.3% are Omotic and 1.2% are of Nilo-Sudanic origins. Most of the Semitics reside in the northern part of the country with a few of them located in central and eastern territories. The biggest tribe is the Amhara. The central south and western parts of the country is the home of many of the Cushitics with the Oromo tribe being the biggest of them. However, they also live in the eastern part of the country in smaller numbers. The Omotic peoples inhabit the south and south west geographical settings. From among the twenty five Omotic peoples, the dominant tribe is Wolaita. The Nilo-Sudanic group is comprised of twenty people groups located in the south and west of the regions of the country, with the Me'en tribe being the largest of them (Johnstone & Mandryk, 1993:243-244).

2.2 The introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia

2.2.1 The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church

The history of the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia may be traced back to the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church (EOTC), which is historically recognized as the earliest Church in the country. Various evidences indicate that Christianity was introduced to the country in the 4th century. Two possibilities were recorded with regard to the question of who took the first step in this respect. One of them is the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-39 who was thought to have brought the gospel to Ethiopia on his return from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Ethiopian Orthodox Church. <http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/ethiochurch/>). Without denying the possibility, however, the issue remains doubtful because of the uncertainty of the present and the old geographical boundaries of the country.

The more common and accepted version about the commencement of Christianity to Ethiopia is attached to two Syrian Christian brothers, Frumentius and Audessius. It happened that they were traveling in one of the merchant ships and the ship had an accident on the Red Sea coast. The two boys were rescued from this accident and caught by the natives and handed over to the contemporary king, Ella Amida, (340?). Not only were these boys treated well as they were characterized by hard work but they were also elevated to a higher position because of their

educational background (Shaw, 1996:62-63).³

Soon after, the Emperor died and the widowed queen asked one of the two boys to mentor her son, Ezana, who later assumed the throne. The privilege of being in such favor with the highest administrative body of the time opened an opportunity for the two boys to preach the gospel throughout the empire. Through their preaching even Emperor Ezana embraced Christianity and they planted the first church in Aksum, the then capital of the dynasty. Then the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church was accepted as a state religion with an officially consecrated bishop (Frumentius) in around 350 and that gave rise to its expansion to other areas under this dynasty (Ibid:63).

Over a century later a significant historical event occurred. The Council of Chalcedon, met in A.D 451 whose main topic of discussion was regarding the presence of the two natures (divine and human) of Christ in one person. Attempts were made from both sides (those who argue for and against the two natures of Christ after incarnation) to define and explain the truth they were convinced of. However, as Hall (1984:204) points out, the attendants could not reach an agreement and eventually were divided as monophysites and dyophysites.

This resulted in the persecution of the monophysites in some areas of the Byzantine Empire and the “Nine Saints” who fled this persecution arrived in Ethiopia in the 5th century. The “Nine Saints” played a multi-dimensional role in the expansion of Christianity in the country. Sundkler & Steed (2000:36) state, “Towards the end of the 5th century, with the arrival of the ‘Nine Saints’ holy men, most of them of Syrian background, the foundation was assured for the Ethiopian monastic movement in Aksum. ‘The Nine’ built a number of monasteries and Churches.” Further, Balisky (1997: 8; cf. Shaw, 1996:64) adds this about their achievements: “These Syrian evangelists made a significant contribution to Bible translation, to church government and forms

³ M. Shaw. *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*. (Michigan: Baker Book House 1996) 62-63. Shaw further confirms that the coming of Christianity to Ethiopia through the two youth (Frumentius and Audessus) was also recorded in the writings of the fifth century historians Rufinus and Socrates Scolasticus. In some documents these figures were mentioned as brothers and in others as relatives. They were accompanied by a Syrian philosopher, named Meropius when they were seized at the coast of Adulis (Red Sea coast) “ by hostile locals who were angered by a recently violated treaty with Rome . All were killed except the two youth who were then sent to the Capital” and later on played a significant role in founding the Christian faith in the Axumite dynasty. Moreover, The contribution of the nine Saints- *tesseatou Kidoussan* for the spread of Christianity can never be undermined. They were Abba Aregawi, Abba Guerima, Abba Aftse, Pentelion, Likanos, Alef, Tsihma, Ym’ata and Gouba (Shaw 1996: 64).

of worship, and to the evangelistic expansion of the Aksumite church.”

This explanation gives us a brief foundational idea of how and when Christianity entered Ethiopia. Nevertheless, as the main theme of this research is about the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church, which is of an Evangelical heritage, the following section will examine the commencement of the Evangelical missions to Ethiopia which includes the establishment history of the WKKHC.

2.2.2 Evangelical mission history in Ethiopia

2.2.2.1 Swedish Evangelical Missions (SEM)

After the 16th century reformation of the Christian Church, the next one and a half centuries was dominated by the Enlightenment worldview, which was skeptical about Christianity. Empiricism and rationalism were the two scientific approaches which characterized the Enlightenment tradition (Bosch, 1991:263). The 19th century, however, was marked by the incredible advancement of Christianity. During this century various mission organizations were founded in the Western world and a number of missionaries were sent out to different parts of the globe. Some of the mission organizations include: the London missionary Society (LMS), Church Missionary Society (CMS), American Presbyterian, the “Brethren”, the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) and Serving in Mission (SIM). Because of the unparalleled expansion of the Gospel during the 19th century, it was known as the greatest century in the history of Christian missions (Moreau, *et al* . 2004:124).

The history of Evangelical Christian mission is relatively recent in Ethiopia. It was started only in the second half of the 19th century and rooted in the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM). In 1866 the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) missionaries started their work in Eritrea, the former northern region of Ethiopia (now an independent country) (Nesib, http://www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/onesimus_nesib.html). After about two decades of trivial attempts in Eritrea, the missionaries designed a new plan, targeting the Oromo people, the biggest tribe in Ethiopia. They started their expedition to the selected destination of the Oromo people in around 1883. However, all did not work out as they planned. The last two decades of the nineteenth century was a time when they faced various challenges. Some of the obstacles

were: the government regulation against western missions, lack of clear route to the intended destination, Wellega (Western Ethiopia) and frequent failure of health. Nevertheless, major work was done in terms of Bible and literature translation into the Oromo language (Ibid).

After several years of attempts, official permission was granted in the early 20th century to SEM to preach the gospel to the Oromo people and the outreach ministry continued to spread widely. They brought the message of the gospel not only to Wellega, Western Ethiopia, but also to the South West and central parts of the country training people using schools as a vehicle (Ibid).

2.2.2.2 Society of International Missions (SIM)

The second noteworthy evangelical mission attempt was made by the Society of International Missionaries (SIM) - currently called Serving in Mission. This mission group, which was led by Dr. Thomas Lambie of the American Presbyterian church, arrived in Ethiopia in 1927. The group stayed in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, for about a year, seeking permission from the government and gathering information as to where to begin their mission work. Cotterell (1973:18) explains it as follows:

It will be necessary in Addis Ababa to establish contact with the Abyssinian Government and its officials, and to purchase and hire mules and horse at a price of about \$20 to \$25 each for journeying to the south of its frontiers and finding out where the densest areas of population are, where Mohammedan advance is most threatening, where slave raiding is most prevalent and where the people live who are most receptive to the gospel message...

Although Dr. T. Lambie (the representative of the SIM mission group) had an acquaintance earlier with the government officials (Empress Zewditu, Regent Teferi Meknennen) and the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church (EOTC) priests, it did not make the situation any easier to get permission. He, together with his companions, had to negotiate with both of them. As the negotiation began, Lambie was asked by the EOTC leaders to present his mission organization's faith statement and what they would be preaching and teaching in order for it to be reviewed by the priests. On presentation, however, the missionaries got an unexpected response. The assembly of the priests demanded that they teach along the lines of the tenets of the EOTC.

Cottrell (Ibid:22) indicates that they were required to teach the need for fasting, beliefs about the canon, the place of baptism, mediation of angels and the status of Mary many of which were not upheld by the missionaries. As a result, the rigorous negotiations ended without any positive result.

Furthermore, the unstable political situation of the country was another hindrance for the process of official permission from the government side. The disagreement between the present Empress Zewditu and her Regent Ras Teferi Mekonnen had also intensified. Eventually, the Empress was overthrown by military force and Ras Teferi Mekonnen assumed the throne by the name Emperor Haile Sellassie in 1927. This political unrest delayed the missionaries until they were given permission lately “to take air”, (to refresh themselves) from the then Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Bilaten Geta Hiruy (Ibid:24).

With the Foreign Minister’s oral permission the mission party left Addis Ababa for their target area, Jimma, South West Ethiopia in 1928. Jimma is about 360 kms from Addis Ababa. This area was chosen as a mission centre because of its Islamic domination. However, after travelling a certain distance southward, it was realized the party had missed the route to Jimma .Their further attempt to cross to the supposed destination by going through Hossana and Wolaita was also halted by the Omo river gorge. At this point the missionaries sought the guidance of God to establish mission stations in Wolaita. They were given a warm welcome from the officials and the people of the area and stationed at Otona, Wolaita (Duff, 1980:46). Having attempted to reflect on the arrival of the evangelical missionaries to Wolaita in 1928, in the next section attention has been given to discuss the primal religious experiences of the Wolaita people who were the subjects of the first outreach ministry of SIM.

2.3 Wolaita people and their former religious experience

2.3.1 Brief background on Wolaita

Wolaita is located in the South West central part of Ethiopia. The history of the Wolaita people goes back as far as the 13th century (Bibiso, 2003:199). It has been believed that originally people from various neighboring regions migrated to Wolaita and formed a tribe called Wolaita.

Bibiso (Ibid: 199) states, "... the history of Wolaita is characterized by waves of migration from the surrounding areas particularly Dawro, Kambata, Hadiya, Gamo, Sidama, Gofa and Koyra ”.

Before the conquest of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia in 1896, the Wolaitas lived as an independent kingdom for several centuries. Their administrative region was much bigger than the present geographical setting (Balisky, 1997:14). Wolaita had been led by two dynasties: the *Wolaita mala* and the *Tigre*. The last king of the ‘Tigre’ dynasty was king Tona. However, the Wolaitas lost their independence to Emperor Menelik at the close of the 19th century as he fought to unite the country under one administration.

The current geographical area of Wolaita is 4,400 sq. kilometers (<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=110640&rog3=ET>). It has three different climatic regions. The highland, the middle and the lowland areas. The population of Wolaita is estimated at about two and a half million. The language of the Wolaita tribe is *Wolaita doonaa* which is one of the Omotic language groups such as Gamo, Gofa, Dawro and others (Cottrell, 1973: 108-9).

2.3.2 The primal Religious experience

The Wolaita’s primal religious worldview perceives the natural phenomena in two ways: as good and evil. With regard to the good, they have three hierarchies: the high God – *Tosa*, various kinds of spirits or deities and ancestral spirits. The second group is generally called evil spirits. It is thought that the subjects in the first category are usually kind, compassionate, bring blessing and give just judgment. On the contrary, the evil spirits are responsible for all negative and harmful things that happen to someone (Balisky, 1997: 87-91).

Before the arrival of the gospel message to the area in 1928 through the SIM missionaries, the religious life of the Wolaita people was characterized by their traditional beliefs. Three events are noteworthy in this regard: the worship of the magician (*Sharechchuwaa*), the ancestral spirits (*ayaanaa*) and the *Masqqalaal* (the finding of the true cross) celebration (Ibid:94). The magician is consulted for various needs. Good luck in life, good health, child bearing, suitable rain and abundant crop production all were sought by paying a due sacrifice to the magician who was thought to have a supernatural power to provide for their petition. Further, it was common to

consult a magician (*sharechuwaa*) when someone needs special guidance for some problems.

In the same way, ancestral spirits had also been revered and worshipped in order to fill religious intuition. The place they were worshipped was called *mitta* and the purpose of worshipping was to assure peace and blessing for the family (Ibid: 94). In addition, “The finding of the cross” (*Masqqalaa*) had been celebrated every year in September as part of the religious life of the community. It was thought that during this time the ancestral spirits accompany the family members with all their blessings.

Satanic deception was also experienced through the evil eye (*Goromotiyyaa*). The evil eye meant that a person possessed magical power and through his eyesight he can strike another person with sickness or even death. Davis (1980:17) comments the Wolaita people sought and used charms to ward off the ill effects of other people’s magic or unknown power.

Generally, the pre-religious experiences of the Wolaita people were the same in one or the other way with other unreached people groups, before the introduction of the gospel. Satan had played a central role by deceiving people and captivated them for hundreds of years under his rule. Davis (1980:66) clearly states that the yoke of the devil was a huge burden on the people of Wolaita prior to the manifestation of the saving power of God through the gospel. However, as the time had come, those who lived under the shadow of death, have seen the marvelous light of the gospel. The following section is committed to deal with this theme.

2.4 Ground-breaking work of the SIM in Wolaita and the opposition faced by believers

2.4.1 The birth of WZKHC

It has previously been pointed out that the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church (EOTC) has been in the country for over a millennium and a half (Since 341A.D). During this long period of time it spread to different parts of the country, including Wolaita. However, except for a few who were from the ruling class, the majority of the Wolaita people did not embrace it. As Balisky (1997:78-79) points out the reason was the oppressive political system and the resultant hatred of the EOTC as a state religion. Furthermore, the EOTC evangelists did not preach the gospel as it ought to be. They compromised the true biblical teaching and synchronized it with the traditional religious practices.

The SIM mission group started its outreach ministry in such a context. They used various strategies in their attempt to reach the area. Learning the native language was the first strategy. This contributed much by creating a bridge between the strangers and the community. At the time, the Wolaita language was not yet reduced to a written form. Nevertheless, by repeating simple words, phrases and sentences the missionaries learned the spoken language pattern of the people. Duff (1980:61; cf. Davis 1984:37) highlights that learning the language was crucial for the mission group as using translators was not very effective.

As with most African cultures, communal life is a vital part of the Wolaita culture. In Wolaita, people exercise a collective life both in social and religious affairs. They work, celebrate, and worship together (Davis, 1980:75-76, 220). In this respect funeral ceremonies, which were attended by hundreds of people, were noteworthy. The missionaries made use of this advantage to communicate the gospel and it helped them to create acquaintance and convey biblical truth to people who did not know anything about life after death (McLellan, 2006:166).

Humanitarian activities of the missionaries contributed an invaluable part for the expansion of the gospel in the area. Taking care of orphans, building health and school facilities attracted the attention of the community whereby they were able to communicate the message of the gospel (Ibid:46-47).

The first water baptism of the first ten believers of Wolaita was conducted in 1933 at Otona. From this time onwards, the church began to expand in the surrounding areas. Davis (Ibid: 119-120) has documented this: "As a bomb bursts and spreads fire, so the Word of God burst and began to spread throughout Wolaita...In a short time many hundreds turned to God and branch churches were established." Thereafter, the native evangelists joined the missionaries in outreach endeavors and they took the message of salvation to the Diguna, Boloso, Humbo, Charake and Koisha districts in Wolaita and numerous people turned to Christ in faith. In ten years (1933-1943) the number of believers grew to 25,000 and 180 local churches were planted. That mission commitment continued and the current data indicates that the membership grew up to one million in a thousand and forty local congregations (Lera, verbal communication 2007).

2.4.2 Persecutions endured

Satan is against the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Persecution broke out as many people turned to Christ in response to the gospel being preached in various lactations of Wolaita. It arose both from religious as well as political structures. The teachings of the believers which do not correspond with the doctrine of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church triggered hatred towards them. In addition, Christians also challenged the traditional religious practices of sacrificing to witchdoctors and worshipping the ancestral spirits which resulted in animosity from the locals (Balisky, 1997:179-183; cf. Davis, 1980:122). Furthermore, the new way of life Christians began to experience disrupted the social equilibrium of the society. They broke the tradition of the community by allowing the despised lower classes (blacksmiths, tanners etc.) and the higher classes to eat, work and worship together (Ibid: 181). On the other hand, the Italians who were in control of the government loathed the believers' prayers and petitions for the restoration of the exiled Emperor Halie Sillessie back to the throne. Due to these and the overall new life style they adopted Christians faced persecution.

Evidence indicates that churches were closed and properties looted. Many church leaders were imprisoned and many others were beaten. Davis (1980:115) states that at one point fifty church leaders were jailed and each one of them was given hundred lashes while one top leader took four hundred lashes. Generally, Christians suffered from all sorts of mistreatments and abuses in prison and within the community. However, this situation did not weaken the spread of the gospel in Wolaita. Rather, it opened a new opportunity for Christians to witness the saving power of Jesus in the very place (prison) where they were put to be silenced. Furthermore, the care and love of believers for the imprisoned church leaders with abundant food provision which they shared with non-believing inmates and attending to other material needs contributed to the furtherance of the gospel; hence several detainees were won to Christ (Cotterell, 1973:147; cf. Davis, 1980:133). Throughout Wolaita and in the neighboring regions the Kingdom of God was extended astonishingly despite the persecution.

2.4.3. The Ministry of SIM in light of contextualization

Cross cultural evangelism and contextualization can never be separated. So it may be helpful to reflect on the outreach work of the SIM missionaries in Wolaita from this point of view.

Contextualization is defined by Hesselgrave & Romen (1989:200) as “the attempt to communicate the message of the person, work, Word and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts.”

The SIM missionaries attempted to communicate the gospel to the Wolaita people in culturally relevant ways. As it is pointed out above one of the strategies was using the receivers’ language. In addition, parts of Scriptures were also published in the Wolaita language, which promoted the spread of the gospel significantly. They also took part in various social affairs (funerals, weddings etc) in the community in order to develop a more receptive ground for the gospel message. However, although they were true to the gospel and communicated it in a sensible way to the receptors, some negative impressions in the area of Church leadership can be seen as failure. They did not develop future Church leaders who could handle the ministry of the Church at national and global levels. In other words, two of the four Ss’ (Bosch, 1991:450-451)⁴ self governing, and self theologizing were not given a satisfactory attention. This contributed in various ways to the slowed growth of the Church and resulted in disagreements over some foundational doctrines.

2.5 The Role of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) in Mission

2.5.1 Evangelism

Evidence suggests that the WZKHC enjoys a rich history in terms of evangelism. It has been engaged in this ministry from its earliest years (1928). For the sake of clarification we will divide the evangelistic role of the Church into two phases and view what was achieved during each one of them.

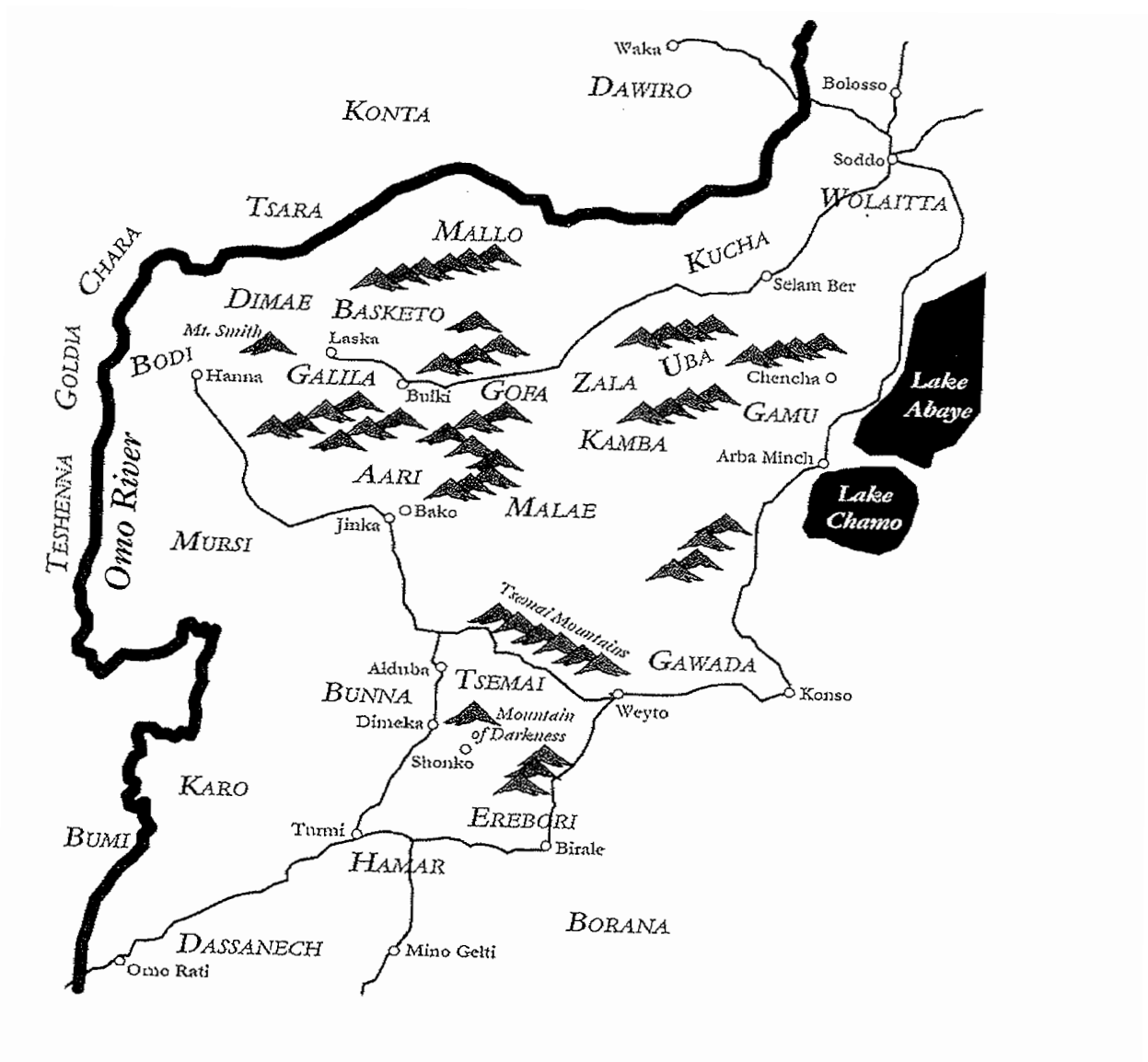
⁴ Bosch gives further explanation on the concept of contextualization. Though the notion is as old as the Christian Church, its modern development was started from 1970, where it was coined by the Theological Education Fund. From the mission theology background, one can observe that contextualization takes two models: Revolutionary and Inculturation or Indigenization. The former is related with the Liberation theology and the later with the Protestant evangelical position. In both cases, however, the central idea is doing theology/missions in culturally relevant ways, especially in the Third-World. Moreover, what is closely connected with contextualization in the cross cultural mission setting is the theme of the “three selfs” (self government, self supporting and self propagating). In other words, churches in the Third-World are weighed on the basis of these criteria to be recognized as a local congregation. The fourth ‘self’ which is “self theologizing” was added to the list later on (Bosch Ibid 432-454).

2.5.1.1 The First Phase (1928-84)

During this period the evangelistic endeavor of the Church concentrated on internal and external settings. In the earlier years attention was given more to reach various interior frontiers. Consequently, several evangelists were sent out and the fire of the gospel swept all corners of Wolaita.

However, having realized that the surrounding areas outside of Wolaita were also unreached, the Church decided to send cross-cultural evangelists to these areas in addition to the outreach role within the interior regions. Most of the target areas were located south, west and south east of Wolaita. They include: Gamu, Gofa, Kucha, Konta, Dawro and many others on the bank of Omo river valleys (Ref map 1). The Church's evangelistic attempt to these areas has been carried out in three frontiers.

The first one was the Gamo and Gofa frontier. The people of these areas speak a similar language to Wolaita, with a slight difference in dialect. There are also some similarities in worldviews about the creator and creatures. The creator is high above all and all creatures and especially human beings should submit to it (god) to live peacefully and to enjoy the blessings of life. This means that their belief system was so governed by the traditional religious practices (Cotterell, 1973:127).



*Source- Warriors of Ethiopia: Heroes of the Gospel in the
Omo River Valley by Dick McLellan*

The usual conviction of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church is proclaiming the gospel of salvation to all creation. As the Church was aware of the need in these areas the evangelists were sent without any delay. Cotterell (Ibid:107) substantiates the historical fact that the gospel went from Wolaita Southward to the Gamu, and Gofa provinces.

The second evangelistic frontier includes the Omo River valley lowlands, which were located

south of Wolaita and regions located to the West. The southern ones comprised of the Hamar, Dassanech, Bunna, Erboore Tsemai, Aari and Mursi people groups. They were about five hundred kilometers South of Wolaita and extended to the border of Kenya (Ref. Map 1). They share common experiences with the Wolaita traditional religion in worshipping ancestral spirits; but worshipping nature such as big rivers and high mountains was their typical religious practice. WZKHC has sent many missionary evangelists to these areas during different times. Davis (1984:101) indicates that in 1973 there were eighteen Wolaita and Aara Evangelists among the above tribes. They preached the gospel in twenty five different evangelistic sites and planted churches at thirteen of them.

Areas to the West of Wolaita mainly constitute the Konta, Dawiro, Malo and Tsara provinces (Ref. Map 1). The people of these areas had never heard the gospel message before. Balisky (1997:333-335) points out that), one of the districts in the above sites (Kafa) had a reputation of being a stronghold of traditional religions controlled by religious functionaries such as Ibida Goda and Garo Manjo. Several evangelists reached the area in 1970 of whom evangelist Tasew Hebana, Melkamu Shanko and Sawl Salgado are noteworthy. Numerous people turned to Christ through the mission endeavor of these pioneer evangelists.

The third evangelistic frontier was the south eastern part of Wolaita. These target areas include specifically Yabello and Moyale districts in the Borena zone and the bordering Guji tribe (Ref. Map 1). Spiritism has been a dominant traditional religious practice in the area. Moreover, a significant number of people were followers of Islam. The Church took a major step in pioneering this area with the gospel message.

2.5.1.2 The Second Phase (1985-2008)

During this phase two extremely opposite historical events happened in the life of the WZKHC. Firstly, the early years of this period were characterized by persecution of Christians by the communist government of Ethiopia. From 1985-91 all the Church buildings were closed and Christian worship and fellowship was banned to the extent that private prayer and worship were punishable by imprisonment or torture (McLellan, 2006:172). The reason of the prohibition was that the government believed the Christian worldview is against the communist political position. However, even during this period the Church did not succumb fully to the suppression of the

communist powers. Itinerant evangelists were preaching the gospel within Wolaita and some vicinities outside of it (Ibid: 172)

The second event was parallel to what has been mentioned above. As the communist regime had been overthrown by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991, the church resumed and started its evangelistic role in a more organized way with a nationwide and global vision of outreach. Evidence shows that the task which was extended to the northern, eastern and south central parts of the country came to its climax by sending international missionaries to India, Sudan and Pakistan (Lera, Verbal communication 2007).

Some background information on these countries may help to verify the church's position in selecting them as mission fields. India has a rich early religious history of over three thousand years. However, the world evangelization statistics points out that this country is one of the biggest unevangelised countries in Asia. The oldest religion in the country is thought to be Hinduism which counts 80%, Islam 12.50%, Christianity 2.40%, Sikh 1.92%, Traditional ethnic 1.40% and Buddhist 0.8%. (Johnstone & Manddryk, 1993:310). Pakistan is another densely populated nation in Asia. Its 164 million population is comprised of various people groups. The main ones are Panjabi 75 million, Sindhi 18.5 million Saraiki 15 million and others. Religious statistics of the country points out that 96.08% of the population are Muslims, 2.31% are Christians and 1.50% are Hindus (Ibid: 500). Furthermore, Sudan has the biggest geographical setting in Africa with a population of over 30 million. The dominant religion in the country is Islam which claims to have 65% adherents and Christianity which is limited only to a small portion of Southern Sudan and Khartoum areas holds 23%. A significant number of people also practice indigenous religions in Southern Sudan (Ibid: 596).

Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church has been contributing to the world evangelistic endeavor to reach the above mentioned countries. A missionary-evangelist Dansa Dana, from WZKHC, went to South India with ten other fellow missionaries from the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church in 1998. It has been testified that through the ministry of these missionaries 1,357 people committed their lives to Christ and 400 were baptized in a short period of time (Dana, verbal communication 2008). Moreover, the WZKHC has also been playing a substantial role in

reaching one of the Pakistani unreached people groups. A missionary couple, Abera Ayele and Desta Yohannes were one of those who were commissioned to this country in 2006. Upon their arrival they engaged in learning the language of the recipient (Urdu- national language) people group for effective communication of the gospel. However, the missionaries started to witness the gospel and many have been won for Christ. The following extract from missionary Abera's answer in electronic mail substantiates this fact,

Last Sunday (16 Sep 2007) I went to Marwari village where only one nominal Christian is known. Because the weather was extremely hot people were sitting under trees. 15-20 Hindus gathered around. I shared the love of Jesus, 15 of them accepted Jesus as their personal saviour. Praise God. This is a joy and frustration for me. It is a joy that in one year we have seen the first fruit of our ministry but frustration because I have not completed my language studies, I have one more year remaining to learn in a class setting. How can I disciple them? I don't know; please pray for me (Mission Progress Report 2007)

Based on the vision to reach South Sudan with the Good News of salvation, Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church sent two missionary couples (Yacob Aga & Tibarek Wondimu, Hizikias Fako & Frehiwot Thomas) to the area in February 2006. The people of South Sudan in general and the Dinka tribe in particular, have been suffering from the horrible results of civil war. All infrastructure has been destroyed and only wrecks remained. Hundreds and thousands of people were displaced or fled to the neighboring countries as refugees. Although this was a sad situation for the natives, it gave an opportunity for mission work in terms of regathering the few scattered communities of believers and reaching the majority of the community who were unreached. The following information from missionary Hizikias Fako in response to the electronic mail interview validates this fact.

Our mission and vision is rebuilding the southern Sudan, the nation and Church. In terms of the government, we are working in basic education to teach the adults from grades 1-8. By this program God has given us good relationships with the community and they really understand that we are concerned for their suffering. In southern Sudan SIM has five

schools with 150 active students. This basic education gave us good bridges to reach the community with the gospel of the Kingdom. The majority of our students are the community leaders, and elders who can change their environments. In addition, we have weekly outreach ministry program and sometimes we go very distant area for evangelism. Churches in Sudan have been destroyed by the war and people persecuted and scattered all over east Africa nations. But now many people are coming to Christ and churches are being planted in all our base areas. In my base area we have 300 new converts and 2 new planted churches (Mission Work Report 2007).⁵

In the preceding section we discussed the evangelistic outreach attempt of the WZKHC in a nutshell. The following part of our research is committed to assess the Church's role in social concern.

2.5.2 Social Concern

The late 19th and the first half of 20th centuries were characterized by the slowed involvement of the evangelical churches in social concern. Stott (1984:14; cf. Kuzmic, 1999: 134-165)⁶ indicates that many Evangelicals thought evangelism is more important than addressing social needs. Such a position emerged from the pre-millennialist view which believes in the imminence of the parousia. This means that the second advent of Christ would take place sooner because of which all efforts must be put together to reach the unreached people with the gospel message. Although

⁵ Sudan is one of African countries with its history of long civil war which claimed the lives of two million people and caused another four million to be displaced. The devastating civil war left the Southern part of the country almost without any infrastructure. School facilities, health centers, power stations and many other public service domains were left pieces <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/sudan.htm>. Such a situation calls for the intervention not only of the humanitarian organizations; but the Church has also to come at the rescue of those who are suffering from the aftermaths of the war. Wolaita Kale Hewyet Church joined the SIM mission-group who has been contributing its part in restoring the lives of the people of the South Sudan in various dimensions.

⁶ The Social Gospel, the extreme emphasis of the post-millennialists on changing the existing world into the Kingdom of God, and the American Fundamentalism, a response to the assault of Christianity from liberal theology, gave rise to the ascendancy of the Pre-millennialist view. Pre-millennialists believe in giving priority for saving of souls from this world at the expense of social concern; hence the 'Great Reversal' (Kuzmic 1999: 134-165).

the WZKHC shares this experience to some extent, the Church has some noteworthy traditions in the social aspect of the society. The following section deals with this theme and it is divided into three historical periods.

2.5.2.1 Period one (1928-73)

A typical feature of this period is the remarkable extension of the gospel into various parts of Wolaita and beyond. Besides the ministry of evangelism, the church designed to meet the social needs of the community. The experience was multidimensional. First the Church gave attention to change the academic standards of the community. The first half of the 20th century is marked by a poor concept of both the significance of education as well as educational facilities throughout the country. In reference to this particular issue, Pankhurst quotes one of Emperor Haile Sellasie's speeches. "In our country, of which it can be said there are several million inhabitants, we have not, as you know, sufficient schools teaching languages and arts to cater for many children" (<http://www.angelfire.com/ak/sellassie/articles.html>). An internet source (<http://www.internationaleducationmedia.com/ethiopia/index.htm>) gives us additional evidence that education has expanded considerably in Ethiopia since 1952, when only 4 percent of the adult population were literate. In such a context WZKHC took the initiative to start schools using local resources, such as grass thatched church buildings. As Akamo (verbal communication 2007) indicates, at the time there were three hundred local churches across Wolaita and almost all of them served as beginner's schools. This is a foundational level where every interested person can attend regardless of age.

One of the key challenges in the education expansion project was lack of trained manpower to run the sessions and poor interest in the community with regard to sending their children to school. The Church took measures to solve both of these problems. The lack of manpower was attended to by the volunteers from the Church and the community. On the other hand, in order to raise the level of interests in the community, the Church passed a circular to all the members that sending children to school is an obligation (Ibid:2007). In addition, two people from each Church were selected to visit from home to home in attempting to win the interest of the community.

The social concern of the WZKHC in terms of schooling was not limited to Church schools. Later on it was developed to a higher level where the Church contributed a significant part to produce skilled manpower in the society.

The second contribution of the church was in hygiene and sanitation. Personal and environmental cleanliness were fundamental for the Church. In this regard the WZKHC played a significant part by providing a role model. All the members of the Church were hygienically sensitive and place a high value on keeping their residential areas clean. Moreover, environmental beauty with houses surrounded by live green plants was an essential part of life the Church taught the community. Scarcity of health facilities and the low level of understanding about modern medical treatment with the poor economic status left the community with no other option than to use traditional medicines. Nevertheless, in some cases the traditional treatment was found to be harmful. WZKHC emphasised avoiding using unsafe traditional medicines and promoted the concept of scientifically proved medication (Alaro, verbal communication 2007).

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church had been a state religion in Ethiopia for several centuries. It was disseminated to almost all corners of the country. While the Church had multidimensional tenets on various areas, alms giving, fasting and self mortification emphasised as means to attain righteousness. Iliffe (1987: 26-29) states that these experiences contributed towards weakening work ethic and a zeal to fight poverty. On the contrary, the WZKHC gave attention to work ethics. The principle of the apostle Paul as a tent maker was a model the Church followed and she therefore took working hard as one of the values of Christianity. Odro (verbal communication 2007) points out that poverty was to be fought and every Christian had to have something to share with anyone in need in the community. The Church carried out her work ethic in a rather organized system. A group of three people assigned for this particular issue had to patrol all the farms of the members to make sure it was cultivated on time and covered with the right seed. In addition, they taught the unbelieving community the importance of hard work and building a sustained life.

‘Idir’ and ‘debo’ were names for a group of people (believers and non-believers) who come together to work. This provided an opportunity for the Church to spread her influence in the society. Choram (verbal communication 2007) explains that usually the session started with a short lecture on the significance of working hard. Everybody had the responsibility of playing his part in improving the economic standard of the society. The lecture referred back to the Scripture that ‘he who does not work he shall not eat’ (2 Thess. 3:10). As the Church had a strategic place in the society she undertook a major task in promoting a work ethic as much as possible.

In Wolaita, funerals are one of the important occasions where social life is displayed. Several needs arise during these instances. Burial preparation and visitor care are vital among many others (Ibid:2007; cf. Harries, 2008:262).⁷ The Church had to make material and financial provisions in such situations, irrespective of the receiver’s religious affiliation. It was done all out of care for one another without any discrimination and in so doing the Church facilitated a noble social value in the community.

WZKHC has a legacy of caring for the powerless. Attention for widows and orphans are but a few that we can name. Ebero (verbal communication 2007) states that it was the Church’s responsibility to build houses or to provide food stuff for widows and orphans. Furthermore, the Church worked to enhance the economic standards of the vulnerable. Although provisional care for the poor during the harvest time was noticeable, building sustainable living was emphasised. As a result, the disadvantaged were encouraged through the provision of an initial fund for small business and cattle breeding.

Building a morally sound society was crucial for the WZKHC. In this regard the Church played a part in preserving the customs and cultures of the community. Emphasis is placed on a healthy

⁷ Harries discusses that spending a significant amount of resources on funerals is a common culture in Africa. Africans live a communal life. At the time of one’s lose of a loved one it is expected that relatives and community members have to attend the funeral. Not only that but “ additional ceremonies often occur again months and years after burial” (Harries 2008:262). These ceremonies in most cases involve some expenses which the family of the deceased may not be able to afford. Though this situation opens an opportunity to share the gospel message through holistic approach, it should be done with careful strategies of avoiding the syndrome of developing dependency.

relationship with the opposite sex and this was carried out in two ways. First, the premarital relationship/dating was only to be done in culturally acceptable ways and sex before marriage should be avoided. In addition, the Church strictly opposed the idea of having children out of wedlock as that had a negative effect on the attempt of forming an ideal community. Secondly, some challenges pertinent to starting a family were attended. Paying a marriage dowry had been a burdensome part of the Wolaita culture. It was not only a barrier to marriage, but also contributed much to the poverty of society. WZKHC taught the community that marriage relationship might be governed by genuine love rather than material requirements. This means that without ruling out the exchange of reasonable love gifts, the basis of marriage should be commitment to one another. This position of the Church helped to shape the view of marriage in the community (Shanko, verbal communication 2007).

The social concern of the WZKHC in society was also exhibited in the area of settling disputes. Both minor as well as major disagreements were attended to by the Church. Wotango (verbal communication 2007) states that it was not uncommon for the Church to handle many court cases and settle them in a smooth way.

We have attempted to analyse the social responsibility of the WZKHC in the earlier years (1928-73). Now we will move on to briefly examine the same topic during the next period in the missional life of the Church.

2.5.2.2 Period two (1974-91)

This time has a special significance in the Evangelical Christian history of Ethiopia. As it is pointed out under 2.4.1.2 the communist regime had an anti-religious stance and therefore religious activities were prohibited. Church buildings were closed and properties were ransacked. Several church leaders suffered psychological and physical torture in prison and at home.

The social involvement of the WZKHC was insignificant during this period. Two events can be mentioned as reasons. One is identity loss and the other lack of organized system (Lera, verbal communication 2007). WZKHC had enjoyed religious and social dignity among the community

for several decades and her influence had been felt in various socio-economic dimensions of the society. However, with the denial of religious freedom the Church began to face an identity crisis. This means that the foundation of the Church's entire ministry had been jeopardized. What of course the Church had to do was to grapple to regain her identity.

The Church took measures in four ways in striving to recapture her real self. First she restructured the organizational system. As open air ecclesiastical activities were banned, the church was forced to systematically reorganize itself as an underground home church. Secondly, special prayer meetings were established to intensify the spiritual battle against the evil force. Thirdly, court cases were opened in favour of the arrested Church leaders. Fourthly, the Church officially protested against some political decisions of the government. Sunday had been accepted traditionally as a worship day for the Christian Church and the government's resolution to make it a day to study Marxist Leninist ideology was opposed by the Church (Ebero, verbal communication 2007).

The second reason for a weak approach to social concern in this particular period may be attributed to an inadequate scheme (Shanko, verbal communication 2007). Unlike the evangelistic role of the Church, which had been run with a clear goal and sustainable system, social concern was not given equal attention as part of the holistic mission of the Church. In other words, with regard to social concern no long lasting strategy had been set either at local church or at higher levels. Moreover, it seemed that the prevailing understanding was not that the church must engage in social concern, but that the church can as the need arises. This means that it was not seen as an integrated part of the holistic mission of the Church, but only as a result (good work) of evangelism (Kasali, 1997:32). What we have discussed above shows that the social concern ministry of the WZKHC has undergone some inconsistencies in terms of application. Although it had a better legacy in the first period, the second was characterized by weaker experiences. We will now move on to examine the third period, which is stronger but still has its own deficiencies.

2.5.2.3. Period three (1992- 2009)

The third period displayed a rather advanced position of the Church in fulfilling social responsibility. With the fall of the communist regime and the regaining of religious freedom, WKKHC recommenced her social concern. However, during this period, not only new concepts were introduced but also the work itself took a new direction. Before embarking in the discussion of the activities undertaken we may reflect on some variations.

Firstly, the modern concept of ‘development’ was introduced. The term ‘development’ is traditionally closely tied with the initial concept of the economic advancement of the Western world. The 18th century was marked by the Westerners' unprecedented attempt for economic growth. The driving force behind the attempt was, however, the Enlightenment worldview, which believes utopia can be achieved here on earth through economic growth and improving the living standards of the society. In other words, humans need a better future and that can be realized by bringing a radical change in the economic sphere. Sine (1987:2; cf. Myers 1999: 96) describes it this way: “Western development is a child of the European and American Enlightenment. It is based on the implicit belief that human society is inevitably progressing toward the attainment of a temporal, materialistic kingdom” (cf Erasmus 2005:139-147)⁸. What one can examine from this is the fact that the term development had secular roots in the Western endeavour for a better future through economic advancement.

Secondly, a new structure was introduced in terms of application, administration and funding. Unlike the previous experience, the work was detached from the local Church and began to be run only at the Ketana (parish) level. The local congregation was involved on a beneficiary basis with any other community members rather than as the one who executes the task. This means that, it is not an “inside out” but “outside in” approach. With regard to administration, the social concern section grew gradually implicitly independent as a para-church organization in which

⁸ The difference between development and social transformation was emphasised by Johannes C. Erasmus. Development is rooted in the modern concept of “human progress as a continual process of internal and external expansion based on the values of rationality, secularity and efficiency” (Erasmus 2005: 140). On the contrary, social transformation is based on the holistic view of the creation of God as it should be taken care of by the Church. The church should be warned of the danger that emerges from the secular background of the term development and endeavour to dissolve it into the concept of social transformation which is an affirmative approach for holistic mission.

case the concept of holism was endangered. Moreover, the source of funding also happened to be from foreign donations. The Church is therefore no longer responsible to take care of the ministry as part of her mission in terms of financing it.

Thirdly, professionalism became one of the features of the current social concern approach. Despite its positive contributions it has some unhelpful sides. The heart of the mission of the Church is building the Kingdom of God through the redemption of people and all creation of God. However, this theme was overshadowed by too much emphasis on professional achievements. Generally, the social action of the WZKHC in the third phase displayed several distinctive characteristics from the earlier ones.

It may be helpful to overview various roles of the Church in social work in the third period. First, food security was given attention. One of the urgent needs across the country is empowering the capacity of the people in order to improve qualitatively and quantitatively the standard of their agricultural product. According to the internet source 80.2% of the people depend on agriculture for their living (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ET.html>). The current economic policy of the government is the agriculture-led industrial development which is deliberated to hasten growth in agricultural sector. The Church has been contributing to this effort through the Matala-Gadala food security intervention. This is a small-scale irrigation project, which is designed to benefit farmers who live in Matala and Gadala peasant associations.

Forestry was another area of concern. The Ethiopian population distribution data shows that 84% of the people are rural residents (http://www.mofaed.org/Population/ETHIOPIA_image.doc). From this point of view forests are not only crucial to prevent global warming, but also as raw material for building houses, making furniture, as a fire wood and others. Furthermore, soil and water conservation was also taken into account. The farm and grazing lands should be protected as they are the priceless assets of the agrarian community. The Church has been playing her part by growing the seedlings of various selected trees and distributing them among the community and planting them in the erodible landscapes. The Harto Kontola, Girara and Adecha and Gogara sites all committed to this purpose. As modern methods applied in the process of growing the seedlings they were proved to be capable of surviving drought and diseases.

The child sponsorship intervention of WZKHC is also noteworthy. Orphans and disadvantaged children are the target beneficiaries of this program. The long term plan of the intervention is to empower the children to support themselves and their family: hence building a better society. This is implemented by helping them to get education, medication and a balanced diet. Currently this program is taking care of one thousand six hundred children of varied ages through the Soddo and Ade Daomt projects. Assuring the cover of primary education universally is one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)⁹ which is to be met in 2015 (http://www.mdgafrica.org/achieving_mdg.html). As a member state Ethiopia is working towards this goal in which the Church's contribution is not insignificant.

The involvement of the WZKHC in advancing the infrastructure is an invaluable task. In this respect, classroom and office buildings, public and private toilets, hospitals, health posts and road construction are worth mentioning. The community has benefited well from this work. In addition, the Church engaged in enhancing the economic standards of society. Through the micro-loan schemes the initial fund is made available for small-scale business by which several community members were assisted. Moreover, by promoting and organizing the saving units the Church helped the community to improve their traditional way of handling resources and reduce poverty.

Currently the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a worldwide concern. According to the international data, from the internet the prevalence of the disease is high in Sub-Saharan Africa. This part of the continent "remains the most affected region in the global AIDS epidemic. More than two thirds (68%) of all people HIV-positive live in this region where more than three quarters (76%) of all AIDS deaths in 2007 occurred". (http://www.etharc.org/publications/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf).

⁹ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set by the United Nations Declaration of September 2000 to be achieved in 2015. In this global summit leaders from 189 nations embraced a vision for the world in which developed and developing countries would work in partnership for the betterment of all. The MDGs comprise eight points which are considered to be key areas in advancing the welfare of the poor (Third-World) countries. They are, Ending extreme poverty and hunger, Universal primary education, Promoting gender equality and empowering women, Assuring child health and reducing mortality, Improving maternal health, Combating HIV/AIDS and Malaria, Ensuring environmental sustainability and Enhancing Global partnership for development. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Ethiopia is one of those countries and has been attempting to prevent and control the spread of the virus. The WZKHC is running a program which contributes its part to prevent and control the epidemic. As Atsenash (verbal communication 2009) explains the first activity of the program is mainstreaming. It attempts to equip the church leaders with the necessary knowledge in order that they can make the HIV/AIDS prevention part of their church activity. This means that they are encouraged to use every opportunity to make aware of the congregation and the community about this deadly disease. Home to home visit and counseling are also part of the program. Several infected and affected people (PLWAS) in Wolaita have been benefiting from the intervention.

One may be impressed by the multidimensional reaction of the Church in the social arena. It sounds as if Church is above reproach in terms of fulfilling her social responsibility. However, it should be questioned whether all these activities are performed from a holistic point of view; because holism is central to the mission of the Church.

Chapter Three

The Biblical View of Holistic Mission

and its implication for the WZKHC

Mission is a broad idea. It refers to the whole lot of activities that God is doing in His universe. However, this chapter is committed to study the biblical background of holistic mission and we need to direct our attention to that. The bible portrays the concept mission holistically. In other words, both evangelism and social concern are embodied in biblical mission. Stott (1975:27) attempts to point out that these two aspects are inseparable partners in Christian mission. The Bible gives equal weight to both of them throughout its pages. An understanding of this balance is, therefore, vital for the contemporary Church to build her ministry on this foundation. In this chapter we will examine this theme by firstly analysing the biblical basis of mission from a holistic point of view and secondly by considering its implication for the church. The later will be done from within the context of the WZKHC.

3.1 Biblical basis of Mission

3.1.1 Mission in the Old Testament

3.1.1.1 God's Mission in Creation

God is a missionary God and the OT portrays this fact clearly. One can observe the mission of God in His threefold tasks: creation, redemption and preservation (Samuel & Sugden, 1999:327). The concept of holism is embodied in these activities of God. He not only created all the creatures but also it is vital for Him to redeem and preserve them all. The covenant of God with Noah depicts this truth. *I now establish my covenant with you. And with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you...* (Gen 9:9-10). It is apparent that this covenant had a universal dimension. God pledges not to destroy human beings or any other creature (the whole *cosmos*) any more. However, we should realize that this notion does not lend itself to the claim of universalism, whose doctrine is that ultimately everyone will be saved regardless of religious background, for God is love and His provision of salvation is for all

mankind (Dyrness & Karkkainen, 2008: 914).¹⁰ With respect to this we need to confirm the biblical teaching of the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (Jn 14:6). Noah and his family were spared from the flood because they obeyed God and put their trust in Him (Gen 7:1). Nevertheless, one can observe that God's concern is extended to other creatures also. The redemptive work of God through the ark of Noah in which all the living creatures of all kind were preserved from the destructive flood foreshadows the redemption that would come in Jesus Christ. This means that the mission of God is a holistic one from the very beginning (Samuel & Sugden, 1987:129).

3.1.1.2 God's purpose with the creation of humanity

The holistic approach attempts to see the creation of God as a unified whole. However, that does not rule out the uniqueness of humanity within creation. Rather, carefully considered, it is evident that human beings bear some sort of exceptionality in their nature and acts. They are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27). Although various interpretations are attributed to the phrase 'image and likeness of God', (Wenham, 1987:29-32), man's nature of rationality and the ability to relate to the creator is favoured by several commentators (Myers, 1999:26; cf. Kidner, 1967:51).

What this research wants to deliberate is the fact that God created man with a specific purpose and mission. In the creation account of the biblical narrative it is evident that after creating Adam and Eve God put them in the Garden of Eden. He commanded them to work and take care of it (Gen 2:15). The concept of stewardship and showing concern for all God's creation comes into play here; thus holistic mission. All that God entrusted under Adam's and Eve's care was important to God (Ps 24:1; Lev 25:23). Article 14 of the Wheaton 83' Statement emphasises the need of realizing that all the Earth belongs to God and human beings are given responsibility to

¹⁰ It might be helpful to mention here that universalism is of two types. The first one is Hopeful and the second Convinced Universalism. The former express the hope but not the assurance that everyone will be saved. Although they are impressed by the evidence that the Convinced Universalists cite, they believe those Scriptures are in tension with other biblical passages which indicate some will be lost. The proponents of this position include the existentialist Soren Kierkegaard, J.C Blumhardt, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and a number of pietists. The latter claims without reservation that everyone will be saved. They appeal to some of the early church fathers, such as, Origen as he used a statement which suggests that hell is only a disciplinary. They emphasise the grace and love of God and the eternal judgement should be read symbolically not literally. The adherents of this position include, J.A.T Robinson, John Hick, William Barclay, Jurgen Moltmann and others (Dyrness & Karkkainen 2008: 914-915).

take care of it as faithful stewards (Samuel & Sugden, 1987: 258; cf. Myers, 1999:25).¹¹ What has been mentioned above briefly points us towards the bigger picture which we will examine in the next chapter; the Kingdom of God. This concept is the central theme of the holistic mission. It bridges God's creation to its consummation and the contemporary Christian mission revolves around this notion. In the next section attention is given to reflect on the progression of the subject at hand in the other parts of the OT.

3.1.1.3 God's Covenant with Abraham and Mission

We observed that the mission of God is primarily revealed in the Scripture in His acts as the author and sustainer of the universe. This revelation continued in the consecutive events as He dealt with various agents through whom He planned to carry out His plan of mission. Here brief attention will be given to note God's dealings with Abraham.

One of the major episodes in the book of Genesis is the call of Abraham. In Genesis 12:1 it is recorded that God called Abraham to come out of his father's household. Two elements are significant in this event: the covenant of God with Abraham and the purpose of His call. This means that, firstly, God promised to bless Abraham and secondly Abraham would serve as a channel of blessing *to all peoples on earth* (vv 2-3). This is the other account where mission finds its place in the OT. However, to keep in line with the central theme of the research we need to ask what kind of mission was in view that God wanted the patriarch and the descendants after him to carry on to the people of the earth.

It was non other than holistic mission which reveals the redemptive plan of God for the humanity and the whole *cosmos*. The blessing that God intended for all the peoples of the earth was wrought by Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Abraham. As all Christians are the children of Abraham through faith, hence the fulfilment of the promise of God. Moreover, it should be taken

¹¹ The Wheaton '83 Statement is an article that is produced by the church leaders from thirty different nations in the world. The Consultation was conducted in June 1983 and it deliberated various issues pertinent to Christian missions. While it has 53 smaller items in which the members of the Consultation expressed their position with regard to holistic mission, these are grouped into eight wider sections. They are I. Christian Social involvement, II. Not only Development but Transformation, III. The Stewardship of Creation, IV. Culture and Transformation, V. Social Justice and Mercy, VI. The Local Church and Transformation, VII. Christian Aid Agencies and Transformation and VIII. The coming of the Kingdom and the Church's Mission. (Samuel & Sugden 1987:254-165)

into consideration that the blessing of God is extended to all nations. In other words the selection of Abraham as an individual or Israel as nation was not for their own benefit but for the benefit of the whole world. Bosch (1991:18) contends, “ In the Abraham stories of the Yahwist there is not one which does not, in one way or another, illustrate Abraham’s (and therefore Israel’s) relationship with the nations. ... The God of Israel is the creator and Lord of the whole world”

3.1.1.4 God’s Covenant with Israel and Mission

The concept of holistic mission in the Abrahamic covenant and in the history of the people of Israel is closely related. Israel, as the descendants of Abraham, were bound in covenant to Yahweh. What needs to be emphasised here is the content of the covenant for it has a significant implication for holistic mission. The covenant involves a special relationship between Yahweh and Israel that Israel must worship only Him as their God (Dt 7:6-9). Regardless of the multitudes of idols worshipped by the nations around them, Israel’s allegiance could be given only to Yahweh. However, their covenant relationship was not only to be expressed in vertical dimension; but it also needs to be displayed in horizontal aspect. In other words, their deeds and words had to witness their unique identity. Central in this respect was exercising justice and righteousness in all aspects of their lives (care for the powerless is emphasized) in order that the nations around them may see Yahweh is the only true God and they may also join them in allegiance to Him. Kaiser (2000:54; cf. Ezemadu, 1997:15) states that in a polytheistic world, Israel was expected to stand as witness for the truthfulness of Yahweh over against the idols.

3.1.1.5 God’s Mission in the Prophets

The roles of the OT prophets add a noteworthy element to the concept of the holistic mission. They fulfilled their responsibility in addressing both the spiritual and social needs of Israel and the nations. As the latter (social concern) will be dealt in the next section here we would like to discuss the spiritual aspect.

Prophecy was central in the ministry of the OT prophets and it took various forms. At times they warned the Israelites against their disobedience and at other times reminded them that they were a set apart people for Yahweh and needed to live a life worthy of their identity. In one or the other way, their main role was to communicate the message of God to His people so that

ultimately God's mission of redemption might be accomplished. Borthwick (2008: 16; cf. Wright 2009: 32) argues that,

With God's redemptive purpose clearly in mind various prophets spoke and wrote. Isaiah spoke with the vision that 'the whole earth is full of his glory' (Isa 6:3) and in Habakkuk 2:4 Habakkuk predicted that the day would come when the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Furthermore, Moreau *et al* (2004: 34) underline that the messages of the pre-exilic prophets such as Joel (the outpouring of God's spirit, 2:28), Amos (God's restoration of the nations, 9:11-12), Micah (the coming of nations to worship God, 4:1-4) and Zephaniah (restoration of God's people, 3:20) add significant value to the missional nature of the Old Testament.

The Songs of the Suffering Servant (Isa 42-53), as it is rendered by Isaiah, may be the last part of the OT where one can see the motif of mission. Though the idea is not completely different from what we have mentioned above, its unique emphasis on Israel as "a light to the nations" makes it noteworthy. In this second section of the book of Isaiah the prophet portrays Israel as a channel of justice to the nations and a witness to the salvation of the LORD to all peoples of the earth. Kaiser (2000:58) sheds more light: "The people of Israel were to exemplify their calling to be a kingdom of priests in their service to the Gentiles." Furthermore, according to Wodecki (quoted by Kaiser, 2000:55), "Isaiah taught that the servant of the Lord, the Messiah, was to bring the Law and teaching of Yahweh to the ends of the earth through the witness of his people, Israel."

3.1.2 Mission in the New Testament

3.1.2.1 The coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God

The New Testament (NT) is rich in biblical evidence for holistic mission. It starts with the story of Jesus Christ. One of the very important phases in the earthly life of Jesus was his incarnation. Through it he entered into human history with the mission of salvation. Bosch (1991: 426) highlights that by means of his embodiment Jesus reached out to those who were under the subjugation of sin and proclaimed freedom to them.

Stott (1975:23; cf. So, 2006: 130-134)¹² also emphasizes the gospel narratives of Jesus' coming to this world being sent by the Father has a vital significance for the Church's mission role as the one who was sent.

Although the Kingdom of God will be deliberated widely in the next chapter, here it should be briefly mentioned as it is related specifically with the ministry of Christ. The coming of Jesus marks the breaking in of the Kingdom which is a new age of long awaited. He started his ministry with the proclamation of this Kingdom which was revealed both in his person and activities. As it is recorded in Luke 4:18-19 Jesus points out that the mission of the Kingdom is a comprehensive one:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (NIV).

In three and a half years of his earthly ministry Jesus dealt with various spiritual and physical needs of his audience; hence giving a guide map for the holistic mission for the early church and thereafter.

3.1.2.2 The calling of the disciples and the Great Commission

At his ascension Jesus entrusted the task of mission to his disciples. This is evident from various gospel narratives where he called them to follow him and finally sent them out with a mission (Mk 10:21; Mt 4:19; Lk 5:28; Jn 1:43) (Bosch 1991:36).

From the traditional point of view Jesus' commandment to the disciples in Mt 28:18-20 is the key reference among many others. Towards the end of his earthly mission, he gave this mandate to the disciples, which is adopted by the Church as the Great Commission. The Great

¹² Based on the Christological doctrine of Karl Barth, So explains the significance of Jesus going to the far country to address the needs of humanity in various dimensions. He left his glory and entered into a sinful world in order to restore the lost humanity back to the original intention of God. To accomplish his mission Jesus identified himself with frail humanity through incarnation, earthly life, baptism, death and resurrection. So (2006:11) states, "The emphasis of this unitary theme in the story of Jesus has far reaching implications for the life and missionary journey of the church into the far country- the world, especially in the very important area of holistic ministry."

Commission is about proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to unsaved humankind in order that they may believe in Jesus and share in the blessings of God. God's plan of salvation which was mentioned implicitly in Genesis 12 is unfolded here explicitly.

Moreover, Luke records another crucial passage in Lk 24:46-49. In this account Jesus communicates to his disciples and points them toward to the role that they would take. Repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem and they would carry out this task all over the world (Act 1:8) Bosch (Ibid:91) attempts to show the missional significance of the above portion of Scripture in a strategic way. "...its central thrust is the message of repentance and forgiveness; it is intended for "all nations"; it is to begin "from Jerusalem"; it is to be executed by witnesses; and it will be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit"

3.1.2.3 A bird's eye view on mission in the New Testament writings

It is indisputable that other New Testament writings also contain key missional references. The book of Acts was written by Luke as the second part of his recording to show the advance of Christ's Kingdom by the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the early apostles and the subsequent Church. The dramatic conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost is one of the instances that the early disciples committed themselves to carry out the mission given them by Jesus. Thereafter the message of the Good News went out to various places and many Jews and Gentiles committed their lives to Christ (Holmquist, 2006:438). In addition, with Paul's historic missionary journey to different distant destinations and the endeavour of his companions the message of the Great Commission spread and hence the expansion of the Kingdom through the planting of Churches (Rom 10:1; Cor 4:5-6; Eph 3:7-8; 1 Pet 2:9, 2).

The above discussion gives us some perspective that the concept of 'mission', especially in terms of evangelism, runs throughout the pages of the Bible. It is appropriate that we have to underline today's church is also responsible to engage in this task. The Great Commission is a timeless mandate for the Church of all ages. Piper (1993:173) comments that, "...The Great Commission is still binding on the modern Church. It was not merely given to the apostles for their ministry, but was given to the Church for its ministry as long as this age lasts."

3.2 Biblical basis for Social Concern

Social aspect constitutes an integral part of the Church's mission and the concept is central to both the Old and New Testaments. In the following sub-section of this chapter we will attempt to verify this notion.

3.2.1 Old Testament

3.2.1.1 Care for the Poor

The Bible uses various terms in reference to those parts of the community who are needy. Orphans, widows, poor, oppressed, the fatherless, the stranger and slave are some of them (Lam 5:3; Ex 22:25, 23:11; Dt 10:18, 28:33; Ps 9:9; Lk 4:18). All of these people have something in common. They are vulnerable.

In the OT Law there were some systems which were intentionally designed to address the needs of the poor. One of them is mentioned in Lev 19:9-10 (cf. Lev 23:22; Ruth 2:3; Dt 24:19-22). In this reference the Israelites were commanded not to harvest the edges of their field. In addition, they were not to come over again to collect their grapes and not to pick up the fallen ones. There must be something that remained for the poor fellow Israelite or for the alien living among them. Expressing that "These people have little income and during hard times, little hope of earning a living", Hartley (1992:314) comments that, "God wants the landlords to be thankful for their harvest and to express their acknowledgement that God has richly blessed them by sharing some of the harvest with the unfortunate". Furthermore, Gorman (1997:113) adds as a covenant people and holy community the Israelites were supposed to care for the poor in their midst. It was part of their worship to Yahweh.

The poor were taken care of in cash or kind business system. From the OT biblical narratives it is evident that lending money for interest was common experience of the day (Ex 22:25). In addition, various kinds of victuals were also lent on interest (De 23:19). Nevertheless, the Israelites were told not to be usurers and exploit their fellow poor Israelite in any manner.

3.2.1.2 Care for the powerless

Although the concepts of the poor and powerless are not exclusive of each other, the OT gives special attention to the care of widows and fatherless and it is appropriate to examine it here.

The powerless were God's central concern in terms of meeting their physical as well as psychological needs. These are people who were vulnerable and exposed to various kinds of oppressions. Yahweh urged His covenant people to take care of them in providing for their needs and protecting them from repression. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.* (Job 22:9). Bosch (1991:18; cf. Wright 2009:32) contends that "Israel is to serve the marginal in its midst: the orphan, the widow, the poor and the stranger. Whenever, the people of Israel renew their covenant with Yahweh, they recognize that they are renewing their obligations to the victims of society".

The Jewish traditional marriage system was instituted by the law in order to address the needs of widows. Accordingly, the brother of the deceased (the next of kin) should marry the widowed sister-in-law in order to preserve the family tree through the offspring and to provide for the feeble widow. Yamamori & Padilla (2004:60) point out that "the institution of 'levirate' marriage shows a concern for the integrity and the welfare of the helpless widow" (cf. Ruth 4:10). Similarly, the framework of the kinsman redeemer or family protector was also intended to look after the vulnerable people among the family and community.

3.2.1.3 The need for Justice

However, one should take into account that the OT expression of social concern is deeper than only attending to the physical needs of the helpless. It focuses on doing justice in all aspects of life. In other words, as Yamamori & Padilla (Ibid:60) state " God's law is an integral law that cares for the whole person" and creation. The Israelites were to judge justly for the oppressed and they had to defend the cases of the fatherless. Justice is an attribute of God and as they were tied in covenant with Yahweh they were to show their identity by exercising justice. Burch (2001:642; cf. Sugden 2007:138) substantiates this argument:

Biblical justice has always had a social, political, and economic dimension to it. The people of God by virtue of their relationship with a God who has revealed himself as righteous and holy have a heritage of responsibility to each other and the world around them. That heritage has meant carrying the witness of justice into every area of life, be it social, political or economic.... Justice knows no boundary

Furthermore, one may find that Yahweh's care for the poor and the oppressed is evident in the institution of the Jubilee. The central idea of the Jubilee is release or freedom. It is an allusion to the Sabbath rest, which was realized by the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. The Israelites were expected to set free the slaves when the Jubilee year comes. The principle to cancel debt also has an implication that the poor should be favoured for they are unable to pay what they owe to their fellow Israelite. Thompson (1974:185; cf. Vogt, 2008: 35-38) highlights the significance of the Jubilee:

In Israel...the poor and needy were the special concern of God and the covenant family was expected to ensure the welfare of every member of the family. Hence Israelite law was framed to protect the underprivileged. Since Israel herself had once been enslaved in Egypt and had known the sorrow of oppression and the joy of redemption, she was bound to guarantee the freedom and welfare of individuals. ¹³

In the rest of the OT concern for the oppressed and afflicted was given due attention. In this regard the Psalms and the prophetic writings are noteworthy. The Psalmist portrays Yahweh as Saviour and refuge of the oppressed (Ps 9:9, 14; 18:46; 38:22; 65:5; 85:4). From a holistic point of view it is vividly illustrated that salvation has both spiritual and physical dimensions. This means that humankind's physical plight is no less attended than the spiritual. God's solution for humanity's problem is all sided. Yamamori & Padilla (2004:63) state that "Salvation is not

¹³Vogt supports the idea of Thompson that Jubilee is central to the OT socio-religious aspect. At the end of the seventh year debts should be cancelled and slaves set free. In addition, the land should not be cultivated in order to give provision for the landless poor and wild animals (Ex 23:11). In the above statement one can see an integrated approach of caring for all creation. Not only human beings but also animals and all other creation is valuable to Yahweh. So jubilee is a typology of the ultimate rest that every creation is yearning to achieve at the eschatological consummation of the history of the world (Vogt, 2008: 35-38).

merely something that has to do with the future, nor is it something strictly 'spiritual'. The salvation of Yahweh that brings justice is palatable immediate and integral.”

Prophetic writings add valuable insights. The prophets were not only worried about the spiritual life of the people of God. They preached against all kinds of injustice which were the causes of poverty in one or the other way. Justice is central to both the major and minor prophets. Isaiah predicted the Lord's anger against Israel. One of the sins that provoked His anger was depriving of the poor of their right and withholding justice from the oppressed (10:1-2). Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied the same message. Defending the case of the afflicted, the fatherless and the widow is to know Yahweh (Jer 22:3,16; Ezk 22:7) (Myers, 1999:31-32). In other words, without doing what is right before the Lord, it would be vain to claim to be His covenant people.

Upon examination of the Minor Prophets' teachings one may note that they were not softer in this regard. Amos was one of those whose time was characterized by “...oppression violence and a seeming ignorance of the difference between right and wrong” (Smith, 1989:14). In addition, “the poor, the weak the debtor and the servant were mistreated and some people were even sold to slavery. Social conditions were soured by sin and greed” (Ibid:14). The prophet denounced this unparalleled misconduct that the religious and political leaders of his time were exercising upon the poor. His message clearly shows that such oppression would never be bypassed without being punished. Yahweh's judgement is impending on it (Amos 2:7).

Micah also addressed the socio-economic ills in addition to his call for spiritual restoration. Waltham (1988:137-38) comments that “Micah's powerful voice changed Hezekiah's heart reshaped Judah's policies and so saved the nation from immediate catastrophe.” (cf. Jer 26:17-19). Micah was filled with zeal for the oppressed, his own tell-tale sign of being filled with the Spirit. He has often been called 'the prophet of the poor'. (Mic 7:3; Zeph 1:12; Hos 12:6). Generally speaking in the biblical history there was no time that oppression of the poor was not condemned and a call for justice was left out. With this brief study in the Old Testament biblical background for social concern now we will proceed to examine the New Testament evidences on the same subject.

3.2.2 New Testament

3.2.2.1 *The teachings of Jesus*

The New Testament expresses equal concern for the question of the social involvement of the Christian Church. One can examine this starting from the teaching of Jesus Christ. From biblical evidence it is obvious that Jesus began his message with the proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God (Mt 4:17). It is, however, helpful to quest the relevance of the Kingdom of God in this regard to social concern, before analysing the biblical references on the subject at hand. The Kingdom of God and the notion of social concern are directly related, for the concept of the Kingdom is all about the redemption of all of God's creation from its broken state and bringing back to enjoy the originally intended relationship with God. In other words, the idea of holism emerges from the Kingdom of God.

Jesus came with this very message. What is recorded in Lk 4:18-19 presents a comprehensive view that he was sent to address the plight of humanity holistically. He claims that the Spirit of the Lord was on him to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. This was unfolded in various circumstances throughout the gospels when he dealt with multidimensional requests from his audiences. While attending to their spiritual needs, he simultaneously healed the sick (Mt 9:35) fed the hungry, (Mk 8:6-8) and cast out demons (Mk 5:15). Ezemadu (1991: 17) remarks that Jesus:

“...never distanced himself from the people and their needs. He always responded to the needs expressed by the people or the one he himself identified, be they spiritual, physical, material, economic, social etc...His ministry was holistic and aimed at the total man and every segment of the society”.

The Sermon on the Mount has social implication among many others. Mt 5:9 reads *blessed are the peace makers....* This phrase contains both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of making peace. Christians play a key role reconciling people to God as well as to their fellow neighbours.

Stott (1978:50) contends that “Every Christian, according to the beatitude, is meant to be a peacemaker both in the community and in the Church”

3.2.2.2 The calling of the disciples and their social responsibility

The disciples were given a missional responsibility of which social concern is a part. (Mt 10; Lk 10:8). Both of the above references show that Jesus wanted them to attend to the social problems of the community. They were to heal the sick and cast out demons in addition to proclaiming the message of the Kingdom of God. This means that without addressing the social concern of society, the ministry of the Church cannot be complete. Based on Mt 25:31-46, Ezemadu (Ibid: 18) states:

The Lord pointed out that feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, showing hospitality to the stranger, clothing the naked visiting and caring for the sick and caring for those in prisons etc are part of the mission of his people on the earth and that neglecting such responsibilities will not earn us his approval.

3.2.2.3 The early Christian church and their social responsibility

The early Church modelled their approach after Jesus in terms of addressing social need. The account of Acts 2:44-46 (cf. Acts 4:32) portrays that they found out that there were some needy people among them as the church began to grow. Then they resolved no one should lack anything. Some of them sold their possessions and goods and distributed it among the needy in order that every one of them may have what he or she needs. This account reflects that the early believers were already convinced that social concern is part of their mission.

The early Church’s experience shows that their concern was not only limited to their members (Bosch 1991:166). As there was famine in the Roman Empire and people were suffering from lack of food the church of Antioch decided to contribute her part in order to provide for those who were in urgent need. Each gave gifts in cash or kind according to his ability and that was sent to the intended recipients in Judea (Acts 11:29).

3.2.2.4 Pauline perspective

In his epistles to various Churches Paul considers social concern something to be dealt with. Unemployment was one of the problems that he addressed (1Thess 4:11). He taught the significance of working hard so that one may meet one's needs. Regardless of his conviction in sharing with others what Christians have, it was unacceptable for Paul to be dependent on someone else for life provisions. One should exhaustively utilize all the resources and sustain his own living in order to win respect from the outsiders. Moreover, it can be seen that Paul did not think preaching the gospel can take care of all dimensions of life; rather he gave relevant instructions as to what should be done in various social arenas. Ezemadu (Ibid:19) explains that Paul dealt with "...family problems (Eph 5:22), problems of single men and women, (1Cor 7) problems of youth and children, problems of widows and orphans, and problems of interpersonal relationships ”.

3.2.2.5 Social responsibility in other New Testament writings

The concept of ministry to social needs was not limited only to the epistles of Paul. For James and John also it was a vital part of the gospel. James emphasises that it is pleasing to God to take care of orphans and widows (James 1:27). These are powerless and helpless people in the community. In addition, from the Jewish traditional background one can understand that women were given a low status in the society. Then they could suffer worse situations when they lose their husbands who are taking care of the family. Attending the needs of such a people is an activity, which is pleasing to God.

Similarly, John underlines the significance of sharing with others what we have (1Jon 1:17). No one can claim to love God if he is not expressing his love to his neighbour in action. For both James and John social concern cannot be divorced from evangelism. They need to be balanced and integrated. The above discussion gives us some background that the mission of the Church is holistic. We now move on to examine what it entails for the WZKHC for mission.

3.3 Implications for the WZKHC

The above discussion attempts to show the biblical basis for mission and it has two aspects (evangelism and social concern). Two major implications could be derived from this for the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet church (WZKHC). Firstly, it is vivid that the WZKHC has to give attention for mission (evangelism). The church is a community of NT covenant people and the covenant involves worship and service (Bosch, 1991:165-170). As part of the worldwide church of Christ, (WZKHC) needs to commit herself for missions in order to extend the Kingdom of God. Mission statistics points out that the current global situation calls for urgent response from churches around the world. From a total of 16,302 people groups in the world 6,649 are unreached. Most of these are found in the 10/40 Window which is known as "The Resistant Belt" and includes the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists (Bush, 1995:11-15; cf. Johnstone 2007:10).¹⁴ In light of this fact WZKHC needs to respond in bringing the Good News of salvation to those who have not heard it.

Secondly, the church has to develop holistic approach on mission. Biblical analysis points out that evangelism and social concern alike given due attention throughout Scripture. Without keeping this balance the Church cannot claim to provide a complete service in the Kingdom of God. In chapter two of this research it has been indicated that the WZKHC has been involved in social concern in various ways. However, the concept of integration is not yet thoroughly considered. In other words, it is not thought as part of the Great Commission which the Church is entrusted to carry out. Stott (1975:25) attempts to describe the relationship between evangelism and social concern. They are partners to each other "...Evangelism and compassionate service

¹⁴ L. Bush. What is the 10/40 Window. (In C. Peter W. Stephen P. & Mark W. eds. Praying Through the 100 Gateway Cities of the 10/40 Window. Seattle: YWAM Publishing 1995) 11-15.

Bush gives further explanation on the 10/40 Window. It is a rectangular shaped territory which extends from West Africa to Asia. This geographical setting lies 10 to 40 degrees north of the equator. Because of its unique features it appears to be one of the primary mission frontiers which needs the attention of the world Christian mission enterprise. As Bush states, it has a historical significance as the place where the first fall happened. It was in this location that Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell into sin. In addition, although it is comprised of only one third of the world's land area, two thirds of the world's population live in it. Fifty five of the most unevangelized countries also lie in the 10/40 Window. From the world mission point of view this area is called the "Resistant Belt" due to the domination of the world's big non Christian religions, such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. The other fact that accounts for the 10/40 Window as a primary mission frontier is the quality of life. More than 8 out of 10 people live in absolute poverty in this part of the world. All these facts call for all the Christian churches in general and the WZKHC in particular to give attention to missions (Bush 1994:11-15).

belong together in the mission of God.” In a nutshell, the WZKHC has to focus equally both on evangelism and social responsibility as this is the authentic biblical guide map for all churches of Christ in the world to follow.

Chapter 4

The Kingdom of God and its implication for holistic mission

The theology of mission is undergoing some changes in terms of its focus. The late 19th and early 20th centuries were dominated by a church centred mission theology. What was vital in the activity of missions was planting churches and making sure that they are functioning well and sustainably (Scherer, 1993:83-84).¹⁵ In addition, it was thought that the church is solely responsible for carrying out the task of reaching the unreached people so as to fulfil God's agenda for the world. However, since the dawn of the second half of the 20th century the focus has shifted from church centred to Kingdom-oriented missiology (Ibid: 83). Proclaiming the Kingdom of God is the focal point of missions and it emanates from God himself; hence the theology of *Missio-Dei*. This shift of scholarship in the discipline of mission studies makes the study of the Kingdom of God significant.

As the Kingdom of God is a comprehensive concept, various notions related to it will be discussed under this chapter. Firstly, attention will be paid to observe some features (Reign or Realm, present or future), which characterize the Kingdom of God. This will be followed by a brief assessment of the views about the end of the cosmos and their positive or negative effect towards holism. Thirdly, a substantial amount of research is committed to reflect on the aspect of *Shalom* in the Kingdom of God. Finally, the position of the WZKHC will be reviewed in the framework of the preceded discussion.

¹⁵ H. Venn and R. Anderson were the advocates of church-centered missiology of the 19th century. In addition, "The acknowledged 'father' of mission science Gustav Warneck declared mission activity was the road from the existing (home) church to church in the mission field"(Scherer 1993:83-84). However, the year 1952 marked the rise of the Kingdom-centered view. This concept was brought forward at the International Missionary Council (IMC) meeting in Willingen in the above mentioned year and later on gained a wide acceptance. The merging of the IMC into the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961 at New Delhi with a role of World Mission and Evangelism also promoted the recognition of the Kingdom-centered approach (Ibid 1993: 82-83).

4.1 Reflection on the nature of the Kingdom

4.1.1 Reign, Realm or Both?

The nature of the Kingdom of God has been a conundrum for centuries. Based on the meanings of the Hebrew word *malkuth* and its Greek equivalent *basileia*, various scholars have presented different views over time (Ladd, 1964: 126-129). The first group we can observe in this line is those who claim that the Kingdom of God refers to a political system which Jesus was supposed to establish for the Jews. As presented by Seccombe (2002:167) Reimarus argued that the Jews believed “the Messiah was coming to free them from all their enemies and establish a kingdom centred on Jerusalem in which Israel would rule the rest of the world”. Jesus’ announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God was understood by his audience that the time has come for the fulfilment of this promise. However, according to Reimarus, (Ibid: 167) Jesus was killed without achieving what he was intended to do; hence the plan ended in failure.

The above interpretation of the Kingdom of God appears to diverge from the biblical reality. One can analyse it from Luke’s presentation of the matter in Acts 1:6. None of Jesus’ statements in this section of the Scripture encourages thinking that restoring a political kingdom for the Jews was at the back of his mind. Rather, he was directing their (not all, but those who accepted him) thought to something more and comprehensive. They would be the witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus which is the mark of the dawning of the new age. Not only in his death and resurrection, but also in his person and works, the Kingdom of God is evident. As claimed by those who argue the Kingdom of God as a political institute which ended up in failure, Jesus did not die a victim of Roman authorities. Jesus’ own words in Matthew 26:52-54 assure us that he was not interested in revolutionary engagement to accomplish his task (Bosh, 1991:34). He corrected some of the disciples who misbehaved and taught them the plan of God should be fulfilled in his life through his death and suffering.

A position that is similar to some extent to the above, but essentially different, was held by Johannes Weiss and his adherents. They stated that the Kingdom of God is a new material order of all creation. It would be established by God’s own intervention at the end of the history of the world in which Jesus Christ reigns as a King (Bosch 1991:32). As quoted by Seccombe

(Ibid:168-9) Weiss states, "...the Kingdom of God as Jesus thought of it is never something subjective, inward or spiritual but is always the objective messianic Kingdom which usually is pictured as a territory into which one enters or as a land in which one has a share".

Although this position contains some elements of truth, it fundamentally fails to do justice to the Scriptures as it emphasises only the material aspects of the Kingdom of God. In addition, it does not take into account the present dimension of the Kingdom of God. In Luke 11:20 the evangelist records that the ministry of Jesus was an indication that the Kingdom of God has already come.

The Kingdom of God as a reference to the dynamic reign of God has been a widely accepted approach among several scholars. This claim mainly depends on the meaning of the words *malkuth* and *basileia*. Ladd (1964:128, 32) argues that "*malkuth* is God's sovereignty; God's rule". When Jesus was speaking about the Kingdom of God in the gospels it was about "the exercise of divine royal power". Furthermore, by referring to Matt 12:28, where Jesus drove out demons by the Spirit of God, Bosch (1991:33) contends that the concept of the Kingdom of God alludes to the reign of God.

We cannot deny the reign of God is part and parcel of the comprehensive concept of the Kingdom; however, we are challenged to consider carefully whether the Kingdom of God has both dimensions of reign and realm as well. It is not uncommon to think that there should be a realm where the king exercises his power if there is a king. As Seccombe (2002:174-175) points out there are some instances the word *basileia* was used with more than a single sense of reign (Mk 13:8). Furthermore, from inter-testamental literature, it can be seen that *malkuth* was also used in varied ways to refer to territory and people (Ibid:175).

Samuel & Sugden (1987:128) suggest that the Kingdom of God is an all-embracing concept. This theme "...relates God's intention in creation to its final fulfilment". This means that God created everything perfect in the beginning; but because of sin human beings as well as the material world fell under God's curse. At present all creation is groaning and waiting for its redemption which will be consummated at the revealing of the sons of God (Rom 8:19-22). It "will be completed with the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth in which the righteousness of God will reign through the lordship of Christ" (Ibid:128).

Moltmann's (1996:131-133) position sheds more light on the all-inclusive nature of the Kingdom of God. He attempts to see it from the point of cosmic eschatology. The Christian hope is not only about the reign of God and eternal life at a personal level as pre-millennialists teach (the pre, post and amillennial views will be discussed more later); creation is an integrated whole and there is an indispensable interdependence among them. Eschatological redemption must be for all creation as they were created with the purpose of being for the glory of God (Ezemadu, 1991:14; cf. Verkuyl, 1993:72). In other words, to refer the Kingdom of God only as the reign of God hardly does justice to the biblical concept of the reality. It is an all-encompassing notion which has both dimensions of God's reign and realm.

4.1.2 Long disputed concept

The other aspect of the Kingdom of God which has been disputed for so long is whether it is present or future. Various approaches have been held by different scholars over years. The view of consistent eschatologists is one of them. According to this school of thought the Kingdom of God is the final visitation of God which will take place in the future. What was preached by John the Baptist and Jesus was only the closeness of the Kingdom and that "God is already beginning to transform the curse of this present existence" (Ladd, 1964:120-121).¹⁶ This means that in its actual sense the Kingdom is not yet present, but its sign and power are present.

On the other hand, Dodd, who was a non-eschatologist (Ibid: 17) assumed the opposite of what is stated above. He constructed his view in response to Schweitzer who claims Jesus misunderstood his mission as the one in whom God would intervene to bring to an end the history of the universe and establish a supernatural other-worldly kingdom (Seccombe, 2002:169; cf. Bosch, 1991:32). Dodd and his proponents attempted to avoid the future dimension of the Kingdom. They reinterpreted the scriptures that bear future concepts to fit into their position. They claimed

¹⁶ Ladd summarizes the early 20th century scholarship about the Kingdom of God in three forms: Consistent eschatological interpretation, Non-eschatological interpretation and Futuristic and Realized eschatological interpretation. The first and the second emphasize the future and present aspects of the Kingdom respectively. Rudolf Bultmann, Albert Schweitzer and Johannes Weiss all adhere to the first and T.W. Manson and C.H. Dodd represent the second position. The third position attempts to keep balance between the future and present aspects and advocated by Joachim Jeremias, W.G. Kummel and others (Ladd 1964:3-38).

that in reality these passages are not about a future timeframe, but they were meant to say ‘very very soon’ (Ibid:170). For Dodd, the terms *eggiken* in Mt 4:17 and *epthasen* in Mt 12 :28 are synonymous and crucial. These accounts indicate that the Kingdom of God has already come and is present. In other words, “The Kingdom of God does not mean the eschatological order at the end of history, but the eternally present realm of God” (Ladd, 1964:17-18).

We can see that the above positions take two parallel extremes. The former emphasises the future aspect of the Kingdom and the latter interprets it exclusively from the present perspective. However, careful examination of the biblical background of this theme suggests that both realities should be given equal attention. The Kingdom of God is a present reality as well as its final consummation is still yet to come. Bosch (1991:32) expresses that this seemingly contradicting thought is apparently not contradicting and that is how the Kingdom of God should be expressed.

One may consider the two dimensions of the Kingdom of God from the perspective of the two ages: the old and the new. The coming of Jesus marked the dawning of a new age. In His person and ministry, this new era, which ushered the eschatological Kingdom of God was manifested. Cray (1999:29) states, “...the Kingdom invades the old age through the person and ministry of Jesus, and that ministry consists both of proclamation of the Kingdom with its accompanying call to follow Jesus and of the effective demonstration of the power and reality of the Kingdom.” However, to appreciate the present and future aspect of the Kingdom one may enquire the relationship between the two ages. Has the old era come to an end and replaced by the new? From the biblical analysis (Mt 20:1-16; 22:1-14) it is clear that the old age was not replaced by the new one; rather the new and the old ages overlap and continue until the final consummation of the Kingdom. In other words, the new age is so called because it brought utterly new values and experiences which characterizes the Kingdom and which are already operative. On the other hand, the continuation of the old aeon indicates that the finalization of the Kingdom is still to come in the future. Having said this with regard to the Kingdom of God now we will examine its inferences and the eschatological views about cosmos for holism.

4.2 The implication of the end of *cosmos* and *Shalom* for holism

4.2.1. The final state of creation

It has been pointed out above that the Kingdom of God is a comprehensive idea. It has both present and future aspects. Various views have been reflected on the final destination of creation in the Kingdom of God. One's position about the end time has either an affirmative or negative contribution towards the concept of holism. In this subsection we will strive to interact with some of the approaches on this particular theme. Although there are a wide variety of positions that have been held by various circles of Christendom in terms of the eschatological destiny of creation, we will survey only three of them here: the Annihilation, Transformation and Deification.

4.2.1.1 *Annihilationism*

The annihilationist position claims the total destruction of the universe by the judgement of fire except the saved humans and God's angels. A New heaven and earth will be created out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) which is considered to be the consummated Kingdom of God. God, the saved humans and angels will reside in it. To put it another way, there will be no transformation of the world but a complete cessation of its substance. This theory is held by Lutherans and 2 Pet 3:12 is cited as evidence. Moltmann (1996:268)) clarifies it more:

If God himself is the eschatological salvation of believers, and if this eschatological salvation is designed only for those created in God's image, and not for the whole creation, then blessedness must indeed be thought of as devoid of any world. And the inevitable conclusion is that the world must be judged unblessed.

However, it should be taken into consideration that the extinction does not include unbelievers. They will live in a place prepared for them, a hell. In addition, one must make distinction between the annihilation of Atheism and the one discussed above. Atheistic termination endorses the discontinuation of everything and everyone without any exception. Attempting to show their view Blanchard (2008:11) writes this: "...we begin as a fluke, live as a farce and end as fertilizer...."

Although not all, most pre-millennialists adhere to the annihilationist view. Pre-millennialism, which came to its heyday in the later part of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Ferguson *et al.* 1988:429)¹⁷ claimed that this world is kept for the judgement of fire. The world is getting worse and worse which will culminate in its total destruction at the end. What the church needs to hurry for is evangelism not social transformation. As quoted by Kuzmic (Ibid:145) one of Moody's sermons contains the following:

I look at this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.' God will come in judgement and burn up this world... The world getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer. If you have any friends on this wreck unsaved you had better lose no time in getting them off.

What one can realize from this is the fact that the pre-millennialist approach is not redemption of the world but salvation from the world. Because all the present order of creation will be annihilated and a brand new order will take place as the consummated Kingdom of God. Their view of the final state of the *cosmos* and some other contemporary accounts such as the spread of the Social Gospel from the liberal theology proponents contributed much to their ignorance of the social involvement and eventually resulted in the 'Great Reversal'(Stott, 1984:6-8; cf. Kuzmic, 1999:143).¹⁸

Critical observation of the pre-millennialist view shows their deficiencies. They lack an integrated approach towards creation as it is stated in the Scripture. God created every creature

¹⁷Erickson discusses views related with pre-millennialism. Pre-tribulationism and post tribulationism are the main ones. The former claims the second advent of Jesus Christ will be before the seven years period of tribulation and the latter holds a contrary view to this position (the second advent will be after the tribulation). Moreover, the writer brings to attention that Dispensationalism should not be misunderstood as one of the stances about the end time. Rather it is a whole system of theology. American Fundamentalism and Dispensationalism are interconnected as both of them emerged in the early 20th century and many Fundamentalists adopted the Dispensational approach in the interpretation of the Scriptures (Erickson, 1977:109-182).

¹⁸The 'Great Reversal' is a term used first by Timothy L. Smith to point out the evangelicals' backsliding from the social responsibility. One of the reasons caused the 'Great Reversal' was 'Great Betrayal'. This was termed as such by Michael Cassidy in reference to the denial of the liberals of the gospel truth. In reaction to the liberals' truncated interpretation of the Scriptures, Evangelicals determined to guard the message of the Bible as it is intended in its original text. Furthermore, because of the then famous 'Social Gospel' teaching which was promoted by the liberal theologians Evangelicals shrunk themselves from the social arena (Stott, 1984:6-8).

with purpose and all of them are important for Him (Gen 9: 8-11). Gousmett & Chimuka (1997:2) contend that "...all creatures have been created as an interdependent community in bonded relationships. No creature can separate itself from any other. They are all bound together by the Word of God which created them as a community and sustains them in existence as such." Their pessimism about the world situation appears to have contributed to undermining the role of the Church in the world. Erickson (1977:63) underlines that pre-millennialists see the importance of the preaching of the gospel, but they believe mainly it would serve as a testimony without expecting "any substantial number of conversions." According to them it is only the powerful intervention of Christ which can bring change in the world. However, biblically it is evident that the church plays a significant role in transforming the world and taking care of God's creation. With regard to this we agree with Stott (1978:59) that, despite some other restraints that God instituted to stop the moral decay of the society (state, marriage, family life), the most powerful of all restraints is "his own redeemed, regenerate and righteous people."

4.2.1.2 Transformationism

Transformation, but not annihilation, is the second approach with regard to the eschatological state of creation. In the history of the Christendom this view has enjoyed many years of acceptance by post and amillennialists. The church fathers such as Irenaeus, Augustine and Gregory the Great adhered to this tenet. In addition, "Aquinas and the whole of medieval theology down to the present day Catholic-dogmatics" all were supporters of this position (Moltmann, 1984:268). As its name implies, those who hold this stance believe in the renewal of the creation rather than its radical destruction to nothingness. The form of the existing world will be changed substantially and a new heaven and earth will be created out of it. In other words, God has created once the whole universe out of nothing with a purpose as it is needed as a dwelling place for His creation. It is not temporal (in this particular sense) but the eternal universe of God. As a result of the contamination of sin it should be renewed but not completely dissolved into nothingness (Rev 21: 5, Gen 9:11).

The post-millennialist view which dominated the next two centuries after the Christian church Reformation of the 16th century is in agreement with the above doctrine. Post-millennialists were persuaded that aggressive gospel proclamation and social involvements are essential for the

transformation of the present world which will be consummated by the final renewal of the whole universe; hence the consummated Kingdom of God. They were so optimistic that the situation of the world would grow better and the second coming of Jesus would be ushered towards the end of this glorious period. Kuzmic (1999:138) reflects on their convictions. "...post-millennialists believe in the gradual improvement and redemption of the world. They believe in a golden age of prosperity, justice and peace as the rule of Christ is extended on this earth prior to his second coming." Moreover, post-millennialists emphasise the present aspect of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is here and now and is growing bigger and wider until the whole world submits to the kingship of Christ (Erickson, 1977:66).

However, one should not confuse the eschatological position of post-millennialism with the liberal concept of *utopia* on earth; they are essentially different. The latter believes that human progress and social improvement can be achieved by natural means and evolutionary process while the former subscribes to the sovereign rule of Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (Sine, 1987: 2-3).

Upon reflection on post-millennialism we can observe that they hold a relatively holistic view about the final state of the universe. This contributed considerably for their involvement in social concern. Kuzmic (1999:138) states that "post-millennialists insist that we should put greater emphasis on the demand of the Bible and those commands of Christ that require social justice and the elimination of poverty, exploitation and disease. Clothing of the naked and feeding of the hungry are taken as part of the mission of the church which is to share the compassion of Christ for suffering humanity."

Although the post-millennialist approach serves the topic at hand well (holistic mission), it displays some shortcomings. Its extreme optimism about the future golden age is one of them. This concept not only lends itself easily to the liberal approach of the best future or to the Social Gospel, but also it does not give enough consideration to the biblical passages which testify the world situation will grow worse (2Tim 3:1-8). Their view of the Kingdom of God seems to lack balance between the present and future dimensions. They emphasise the present aspect of the Kingdom that Christ is ruling now in the hearts of those who submit to him. In addition, their

conviction of the transformation of the world through strong evangelism appears to overshadow the imminent bodily return of Christ (Erickson, 1977:61).

Even though their position on the final destiny of creation is vague, Amillennialists share some commonality with post-millennialism on this particular subject. They believe that the concept of a thousand years reign (millennium) should be interpreted symbolically and "... is to be found in some past and/or present fact." Consequently, "The second coming of Christ will inaugurate the final age and the final state of all creation after which the new heaven and earth will be created" (Ibid: 74, 83). They are not as pessimistic as pre-millennialists that creation will end in the total judgement of fire. On the other hand, neither are they optimistic as post-millennialists that things will get better towards the end. However, they incline to the view of transformation concerning the final destiny of the *cosmos*.

4.2.1.3 Deification

The third position about the final state of the *cosmos* is deification. Although this view stated by Athanasius' famous axiom "God became human so that we humans might be deified", later on it was given a theological framework and taught in detail by Orthodox theologians. The term deification does not mean becoming God. It refers to the privilege of the childhood which believers have got through faith. In other words, the right of partaking in the characteristics of "divine nature through their community with Christ, the God-human being" (Ferguson *et al* 1988:273). On the other hand, vitally important for this view from the perspective of the integrated view of nature is the hypostasis of a person and *cosmos*. This means that, man's hypostasis is part of the hypostasis of the *cosmos* and man's redemption is the redemption of the *cosmos*. It is not only the soul of a person which is created in the image of God but also the body as well and "salvation lies in the transfiguration of the body." "Through the transfiguration of the human bodiliness such as this the whole of nature is gathered into the fellowship of transformed, transfigured humanity" (Moltmann, 1996:273).

The concept of deification has a significant part in viewing nature as a unified whole and that it is not destined for total destruction rather for transformation and transfiguration. Nevertheless, its view of considering the whole world as the image of God and not making distinction between the nature of man and other creation seem to contradict the biblical reality. As stated in Gen 1:26, it

is only human beings who are created in the image of God and nothing else. In addition, as Moltmann (Ibid:274) indicates their claim of “ the deification of the *cosmos* is not thought of as being a new creation of heaven and earth”, but it is spiritualization of the existing cosmos through the “ interpenetration by the radiance of the Spirit.”

The three positions discussed above (Annihilation, Transformation and Deification) may give us a brief idea about their contribution in various circles of the Christendom with regard to holism. They served both as hindrances as well as motivations. We have also reflected on some of their shortcomings most of which are about losing balance between the this-worldly and the other-worldly approaches. To develop a sound theology of holistic missions we always need to keep balance between these issues.

4.2.2 The concept of *Shalom*

The notion of the Kingdom of God has vital importance for integral/ holistic mission. In the preceding discussion it has been considered that there are two views about the Kingdom: one which claims the Kingdom is reign, but not realm, and the other which believes it is both. However, both of these views have one thing in common. They believe the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of peace, justice and righteousness (*Shalom*). In this sub- section of this chapter we will attempt to reflect on this theme and the eschatological dimension of the Kingdom.

4.2.2.1 Background

Shalom is commonly understood as the Hebrew equivalent of peace. However, analysis of the biblical evidences indicates that it is much broader and deeper than a simplistic use of the word peace or tranquillity. It is about a state of the whole creation in a peaceful relationship with God. Both the OT and NT share this concept extensively (Lev 26:6; 1Ki 2:33; Job 22:21; Mk 9:50; Lk 2:14; Col 1:20). From the very beginning God’s plan for all His creation was to live at peace with Him and one another. He intended *shalom* to be exercised in four dimensions: humankind with God, humankind among themselves, humankind with nature and nature with nature. Brueggemann (1976:15) contends that “The central vision of the world history in the Bible is that all of creation is one, every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security toward the joy and wellbeing of every other creature.” The life of Adam and Eve in the

Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:6-16) was a reflection of this truth. Myers (1999:51) also adds: “shalom is a relational concept; dwelling at peace with God, with self, with fellows, with nature.” While this is the biblical concept of shalom, we need to find out how it pertains to holism.

4.2.2.2 *Shalom towards Holism*

The previous paragraph points out that *shalom* bears a broad concept of undisturbed relationship among the whole of creation and God. However, it is evident from the biblical narrative that the relationship between God and His creation has been disrupted by sin (Gen 3:8). Therefore, the significance of *shalom* is to restore relationship and unity between God and humanity and among all creation. Myers (1999:50) substantiates this concept.

Relationships must be restored in all their dimensions. First and foremost, in an intimate and serving relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. Second, in healthy, righteous and just relationships with ourselves and our communities. Third, in loving, respectful ‘neighbouring’ relationships with all who are ‘other’ to us. Finally, in an earth-keeping, making-fruitful relationship with the earth”

Sin has affected all relationships and its effects have been experienced in various aspects of life. In other words, the scope of the damage of sin is not limited to an individual. It has permeated the whole of society and the structure in which the society operates. Brueggmann (Ibid: 18) states that the “Absence of *shalom* and lack of harmony is expressed in social disorder as evidenced in economic inequality, judicial perversion, and political oppression and exclusivism”. Moreover, from the biblical narrative it is conspicuous that not only Adam and Eve but this earth was also cursed because of sin (Gen 3:17-18; Job 31:40). This means that, the earth and all that are in it have fallen under the judgement of God. As a result all relationships need to be redeemed.

Moreover, Moltmann (1996:132) discusses the extent of *shalom* from the missiological point of view. He starts it with Christian hope which has two dimensions: personal and cosmic. In other words there is a Christian eschatological hope at a personal as well as at a cosmic level. These two aspects of redemption cannot be divorced. They complement each other and at the end of the

world history will be consummated by the creation of the new heaven and earth where the *shalom* of God will be exercised in its full extent. This concept complies with the biblical teaching. As pointed out above the Genesis account indicates that the original plan of God for all creation was to live a peaceful and harmonious life. In addition, in Rom 8:21 the apostle Paul clarifies that all creation will be liberated and brought to the glorious freedom of the children of God. From this perspective in the Kingdom of God there is no aspect where *shalom* is not exercised; hence the holistic mission of the Kingdom.

4.2.2.3 The Church and Shalom

One may wonder what role the Church plays in promoting *shalom* in the cosmos. The church is the agent of *shalom*. She carries out her responsibility in tripartite roles: priest, king and prophet.

Biblically it is evident that the main role of a priest is mediation. In the OT the high priest was to come before Yahweh in the temple with the required sacrifice to atone for the sin of the people of Israel. Whenever somebody trespasses the holy law of God, through the offering of the sin sacrifice the high priest prays on the behalf of the sinner so that Yahweh may relent from His anger (Lev 4:16-21). In the NT Jesus took this role. He not only offered a once for all sacrifice for the sin of the world but also he remains a mediator between God and His world (Heb 8:1-2).

The church follows in the footsteps of Jesus. Her priestly ministry is extended to the world in two dimensions. In prayer and role of reconciliation. Paul's statement in 1 Tim 2:1 clearly indicates that making prayer for all is part of the church's responsibility. Prayer is needed so that we may live a '*peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness*'. Some key themes are observed in this Scripture portion. Paul emphasises the scope of the Church's prayer. It is for all human beings. Unlike the Jewish or Gnostic view of salvation to a particular race or to a certain classes only, Paul's exhortation highlights the universal nature of salvation (Guthrie & Motyer 1970:1170). Another vital thrust is the significance of peace in the world. Paul clearly states that it is the responsibility of Christians to pray for those who are in high positions that they may preserve peace and order. In other words, prayer is an invisible weapon by which the church fights against the evil powers to extend the *shalom* of God in the entire world. The last point we see from Paul's exhortation is the need for godliness. Guthrie & Motyer (Ibid:1170) indicate that

the word godliness means giving a due reverence to God. The prayer of Christians has an essential contribution in order that the ungodly world may learn the fear of God.

The second dimension of the priestly role of the church is through reconciliation. This can be either vertical or horizontal. This means that, she endeavours to maintain the relationship of humankind with God through holistic mission. Stott (1975:35) argues that nothing is “so destructive of human dignity as alienation from God through ignorance or rejection of the gospel”. The church of Christ proclaims throughout the world the good news of the Kingdom of God to restore a relationship that was broken by sin. Moreover, Samuel & Hauser (1999:179) underline that the church’s ministry of reconciliation “pertains both to reconciliation between God and humans as well as individuals and groups alienated from each other. The Gospel is the good news of the possibility of a new beginning”. In addition, the Church also contributes for the establishment of *shalom* by dealing with societal problems. Regardless of religious affiliation or political ideology she extends her ministry of reconciliation to all structures. To state it the other way, the church’s peacemaking role has a universal dimension that she is striving until everything has become under the Lordship of Christ.

The prophetic role is another dimension through which the church is taking part in the eschatological divine task of restoring *shalom*. Upon the reflection on the messages of the OT prophets, one can realize that they emphasised two aspects: teaching and rebuking. They taught the people of Israel the holy law of God so that they may abide by its requirements as Yahweh commanded. On the other hand, they prophesied against the disobedience and rebelliousness of the people of God (Jer 23:10-11). Moreover they censured the people as they broke the law of God. The purpose of this was to maintain their relationship with Yahweh so that they may serve as a channel of blessing to the whole world (Kaiser, 2000:18-19; cf. Samuel & Sugden, 1987:130). The NT experience is none other than this. Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God. As it is evident in the account of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) and other Scriptures, he taught the crowds the values of the Kingdom. In addition, he also criticized the hypocritical Jews. After Jesus’ ascension the apostles and the early church carried out this mission faithfully as they were entrusted to (Act 2:29).

The contemporary church's prophetic ministry in advancing *shalom* follows the same pattern. She has to expound the truth of the Word of God to the world. The world which is estranged from its creator and wandering in the darkness, should see the light of the gospel and be saved. Explaining the Church's role in this age, Arana-Quiroz (2004:194) states that the Church is not only a called out but also she is a sent out community. She has been sent out to reach the whole world with the message of salvation. Bosch (1991:169) also substantiates that "the church is a community of people who are involved in creating a new relationships among themselves and in society at large, in doing this, bearing witness to the Lordship of Christ". Furthermore, the church also preaches and voices against injustice and oppression. God is the God of justice and He wants righteousness and justice to be exercised at individual as well as community levels. Any experience that fails to comply with the standard of God's justice cannot be tolerated. Voth (2004:65) attempts to show that justice is central to God's mission and it is equally so for His Church.

The kingly role is the third dimension through which the church serves the world in advancing *shalom*. This concept finds its root in Genesis (1:28) where God put Adam and Eve in charge of every creation. They were to rule over all creation and be faithful stewards of it. Although this created order was disrupted by sin, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ it was restored (but the final consummation is still awaited). As a new community the church is now a co-ruler in the Kingdom of God. She has power over all the powers and principalities. However, that does not mean she exercises power from the earthly point of view. During this interim period she renders her holistic service to the world humbly with the view of eschatological consummation. In other words, the kingly position of the church is a motivation for her to pay all the sacrifice the mission of *shalom* requires.

Bruijne (1991:28) argues that the threefold (priestly, prophetic and kingly) ministry of the church should be kept together. They complement one another. Priestly (compassion) ministry without prophetic is unknowledgeable. On the other hand, kingly ministry (rulership and justice) without compassion is destructive. Prophetic ministry without priestly and kingly services is also lifeless and unguided information.

4.3 Reflection on the teachings of the WZKHC

4.3.1 The Kingdom of God

In the first part of this chapter attention has been given to discuss various views about the Kingdom of God. Two main positions have been held by Evangelicals over years. When some believe that the Kingdom of God refers to the reign of God, on the contrary, others emphasise the King and his realm are inseparable and it contains both concepts of reign and realm (Seccombe, 2002:175).

WZKHC's teaching in this regard agrees with the first position. The Kingdom of God is about His reign in the hearts of believers. Although the church is not considered the Kingdom of God as such, much emphasis is placed on it. The church serves two roles: firstly, she is the one in whom God exercises His kingly authority. Believers are the devout members of the Kingdom; and secondly, God's rule is extended out to the whole world through the church. This means that she is the vehicle through which God's cosmic rulership is announced in order that all the nations of the world may submit to Him (Daniel, verbal communication 2009).

Jesus Christ is the central figure in the WZKHC's teaching of the Kingdom of God. Not only the new age of the Kingdom was brought by him, but also all the blessings of the Kingdom can be realized only in him. Balisky (1997:191-192) confirms that this notion is apparent in some songs of the early days of the WZKHC.

He loves me

His goodness is abundant to me

He was sent by God the Father

He descended from the heavens

He came down to earth

He took upon himself our flesh

He was born of Mary....

He died on the cross

He was victorious over death

On the third day

He rose from the tomb

He ascended to heaven

My guarantor will return...

He is now at the right hand of his Father

In order to give us eternal life

He is the guarantor

4.3.1.1 WZKHC's Position on the end time

The second section of this chapter has dealt with three major views about the last things. If not all, most Evangelical denominations subscribe to one of them. They are either Pre-millennialists, Post-millennialists or Amillennialists. Under this sub section the position of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church is discussed exploring its contribution towards the non-integrated mission of the church. As we have shortage of secondary materials in this particular area, most part of our assessment depends on the result of the interviews.

From the historical background of the Christian Church it is evident that the early 20th century was dominated by the Pre-millennialist view (Kuzmic, 1999:141). At the same time this was the time (1928-) that the WKKHC was founded by the SIM missionaries. The church, therefore, adopted the pre-millennialist position as it was taught by those who pioneered the outreach ministry in Wolaita. This can be seen in three respects: various doctrinal teachings, the interpretation of Scripture and some practical experiences of the church. At this point, the researcher would like the reader to be reminded of the shortage of materials in this particular section and most part of our assessment depends on the result of the interview.

4.3.1.2 Dogmas pertinent to the end time

With regard to the doctrinal teachings of the WZKHC, emphasis falls on the Second coming (parousia), Resurrection, Rapture, Great tribulation and Millennium.

The Second coming of Jesus is believed to occur before the millennial Kingdom and Jesus will reign bodily for a thousand years on earth. The second coming does not mark the end of the age; but it is only the beginning of the interim period between the millennium and the final judgement. It has two phases. The first one would be marked by the rapture of the Church. This means that, Jesus would not come all the way to earth but the saints will meet him in the air. This is a secret incident which only those who are in and for Christ can realize (Mt 24:40-41). The second phase, which is the continuation of the first (not a separate event), will be visible when Jesus comes to earth with all believers. It is a matchless special moment that will be seen by all the people of the world (Mk 13:26; Act 1:11) (Alaro, verbal communication 2009).

Unlike post or amillennialists, neither of the two resurrections of Rev 20 are combined as a single event nor any of them is spiritual (Erickson, 1977: 58, 76-77). WZKHC believes that they are two separate incidents which will happen at their appointed time. The first resurrection represents those who will be raised from the dead at the Second Coming of Jesus and the Second Resurrection is the resurrection of the unbelievers, which will take place at the end of the thousand years reign (Rev 20:5) (Lera, verbal communication 2009).

Rapture is an important part of the Church's teaching. It is resembled by a special moment where the bride (Church) joins her groom (Jesus Christ) in the air and enjoys the fellowship of the believers of all time. Rapture includes two groups of people. Believers who died will rise to life and be raptured and those who still remain alive until the Second Coming will be changed and follow them (1Thess 4:17) (Ebero, verbal communication 2009). Erickson's (1977: 127) statement confirms that the Church's tenet is categorized as pre-millennialist. "...an extremely important feature of pre-tribulationism (pre-millennialism) is the idea that Jesus will come for His church prior to the great tribulation to 'rapture' it out of the world."

Closely related with the concept of rapture in the position of the church is the great tribulation. The biblical passages quoted are Mt 24:21 and Rev 7:14. The great tribulation is a worldwide

event which would be distinct from all other persecutions that the people of God have been facing throughout centuries. However, it is believed that only those who accept Christ as their saviour during this period of seven years would go through the great tribulation. All other believers would be caught up in the air before the time of the great tribulation (Dana, verbal communication 2009; cf. Erickson, 1977: 126).

The earthly millennial reign of Christ is another doctrine of the church wherein its pre-millennial position can be noticed. This period is taken literally as a thousand years reign of Christ on the throne of David in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the millennial kingdom will be different from the earthly governments in many respects. Firstly, there will be only one universal king who is Jesus Christ; secondly, all the nations of the world will submit to his authority; third, believers will reign with Christ and be co-rulers in the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:4) and fourth, it will be a peaceful time where Satan was bound and no more evil power is operating (Rev 20:2-3) (Shanko, verbal communication 2009).

4.3.1.3 Interpretation of Scripture

Study on views about future events (eschatology) shows that hermeneutics is one of the key premises which shapes one's position. Biblical passages and promises could be interpreted either literally or symbolically. Moreover, in some cases both methods also been applied as they serve to interpret a particular passage without losing its original message.

WZKHC has been employing the literal interpretation method. Although not in all cases but in most, the promises given in the Bible to Israel are believed as either fulfilled or to be fulfilled to Israel in the future. In other words, Israel and the Church are two different entities. The church is now operating in the interim period as the Jews rejected the Messiah and the plan of salvation is shifted to the Gentiles. However, that does not mean the time of Israel was totally closed. There would be a second chance for Israel which will be given at the fullness of the time of Gentiles/ church (Rom 11:25-26) (Dana, verbal communication 2009).

4.3.1.4 Ecclesiastical and ministry experiences

Traditional gospel hymns were very familiar in the early Wolaita Kale Heywet church. They are sung during church services or any other occasions without restriction of time or place (Davis,

1980:79). From their content it is evident that they are composed from the pre-millennial point of view. They emphasise the other worldly Kingdom that Christians will inherit. Davis (Ibid:125) recorded some of the songs.

Jesus Christ is coming again

He is coming to take all of His children to be with himself

He is coming to take us

And there will be no more trouble there....

And the other one reads

If we have little trouble here we will have little reward there.

Moreover, Balisky's (1997:193) analysis points out the dualistic nature of the songs

There is a focus on heaven where there are no perverse people, no evil and where there will be fair judgment against the enemies of God. These songs emphasize a faith dimension, but little is mentioned about loving one's neighbor as oneself. This practical dimension of their faith may have been practiced but not put to song.

Emphasis on evangelism at the expense of social concern is the effect of the pre-millennial position of the church. In chapter three it has been deliberated that the church has been so passionate for the gospel outreach ministry both nationally as well as globally. However, equal concern has not been displayed in terms of social responsibility. The urgency of preaching the gospel and saving souls from the impending judgement of God was the church's central theme. Not only Wolaita, but the surrounding regions were also, given serious attention and an effective evangelistic task has been carried out. Balisky (Ibid:202) underlines it in his assessment. "It was the efforts of the Wolaita evangelists who succeeded the SIM missionaries which made a lasting impact on three Gāmo districts...".

The dogmas of WZKHC were outlined to show that the church's position with regard to the doctrine of eschatology falls under Pre-millennialism and this has played a significant role in a non integrated mission. It has been discussed above that the pre-millennialists emphasized more the saving of souls and neglected the social aspect of the biblical mandate. The research on the

doctrine of the WZKHC points out clearly that her pre-millennialist position had a valuable input for the weak social responsibility and a non integrated mission.

Various issues have been raised in this research thus far. Keeping this in mind now we proceed to the final part of this study which attempts to find out other factors that contribute to a non-integrated approach to mission in the WZKHC and make some recommendations.

Chapter Five

An Imbalanced and a Non-integrated mission in the WZKHC and factors contributing to it

Various issues have been raised in the preceding chapters. All of them are, however, intended to serve a single aim: to show that the biblical mission is holistic and the church of Christ needs to follow this model. We have also attempted to view the background of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet Church (WZKHC) and its missional experiences in the context of holism. This chapter appears to be more crucial in our study. Mostly it deals with the assessment of the missional journey of the WZKHC and hence wraps up the argument of the research. Recommendations will be made in order that the church may review her position in terms of integrated approach. This part will be followed by the summary and conclusion of the entire work. The researcher would like to indicate that this chapter will be resourced more from interviews with members and leaders in various ministries of the WZKHC as they hint as to the realities on the ground and help with some practical suggestions.

5.1 An imbalanced mission

The second part of chapter two has dealt extensively with the missional experience of the WZKHC. It is noticeable that the church has committed herself to both evangelism and social concern to some extent. A significant amount of resources have been invested in mission. Nevertheless, it appears that there are two major problems yet to be attended by the church in order to meet the biblical notion of mission. Firstly, imbalance between the two aspects of mission (evangelism and social concern) may be widely recognised in the ministry experience of the WZKHC. Secondly, a lack of integration of these two aspects of mission is another shortcoming that has been challenging the mission of the church for decades. Below each problem and the factors that contribute to it are thoroughly considered.

5.1.1 Imbalance between evangelism and social responsibility

A brief review of the Wolaita Zone Kale Heywet church is helpful in order to conceptualize the problem of imbalance (evangelism and social concern). This church is the biggest evangelical

denomination in the southern Ethiopia and current data indicates that the membership is estimated at about 1 million with 1040 local congregations (Lera, verbal communication 2007). The church has got various administrative hierarchies. While the grassroots level is the local church the next step is *Kifle mahiber* (sect of a union). The third level is *Awuraja* (a union) and the top level is *Ketana*. All these levels are closely connected to one another and work together in harmony. However, it is appropriate to raise some relevant question here. Is mission, in its holistic sense, the central agenda at all these levels? Is equal passion displayed for both evangelism and social concern? Are resources committed to both of them alike? (Stott, 1975:27).

Mission in terms of evangelism has been considered as the mandate of the church in all the above levels. The long mission legacy indicates that the church is convinced of this reality. From the local church to *Ketana* (highest level) and from leaders (church elders, pastors) to the laity all are involved in evangelism in one or the other way. Although the task of evangelism is as old as the life of the church(1928), it has been done in an organized way from 1948. Three schemes are noteworthy in this regard as to how the church has been running a sustainable evangelistic mission. They are annual 'gospel conference', a monthly 'set apart gospel gift' and 'unity for gospel' (*wongel mahibertegna*) programs. Although these mission support mechanisms are not exclusive of one another, each one of them has served as a prevailing source of support in a specific period of time. As Davis (1980:177) indicates, in the first fifty years the church used the annual 'gospel conference' as her main funding source for mission. From early 1990s the following decade was characterized by the 'monthly set apart gospel gift' (*Yegeta erat ken sitota*) scheme and since early 2000- the 'unity for gospel' (*wongel mahibertegna*) program is a dominating system. Through these and other methods the church has been able to undertake a significant work of evangelism both at national and international levels. The church's current mission statistics points out that eighty national and six international missionaries are in the evangelistic field through whom God has been doing a great job (Daniel, verbal communication 2008).

However, reminding ourselves of the questions we raised above, on the other hand, we observe the social aspect of the church's mission. Of the four administrative levels mentioned earlier only

at the *Ketana* (the top) level social concern is taking place. The local church, the sect of union (*Kifle mahiber*) and the union (*Awuraja*) have all not yet made social responsibility part of their mission practically, except at a very minor level. It is ironic to see that social concern is given attention at the *Ketana* level, which is far from the needed resources, and not exercised by the lower levels where all resources (people, funds etc.) could be accessed easily. The reason will be clarified as we progress.

From what has been presented above the researcher attempts to verify one of the key arguments of this research. The mission of the WZKHC is not balanced between evangelism and social responsibility. When the former is given due attention, the latter is neglected at most levels of the church's structure. Shonde (verbal communication 2009) states that "We cannot say that the church is not carrying out her mission; but we observe that it is incomplete." This means that the church is not treating the two aspects of mission equally as is the biblical model (Ex 22:25; De 10:18; Ps 9:9; Jer 22:3; Mt 4:23-25; Lk 4:31-39). In addition to the Scriptures, the Christian church's position also confirms that these two are part of the mission of every true church. In attempting to validate this notion Tienou (1987: 175 cf. Stott 1975: 1-62) quotes part of the Lausanne Covenant. "...we affirm that evangelism and social involvement are both parts of our Christian duty."¹⁹

5.1.2 Factors contributing to imbalance

Finding out the cause of an illness is a half way to the cure. What is mentioned above seems to indicate that something needs to be corrected in the WZKHC's mission responsibility. To deal with the problem and to maintain a healthy status, we have to find out what factors are contributing to the problem of imbalance in the mission role of the church.

Various reasons could be mentioned; but three of them appear to be key. Firstly, a misunderstanding of the biblical basis of mission is at the root of the imbalance. The church

¹⁹ The 'Lausanne Covenant' is a global Christian church leaders' and ministers' meeting which was held in Lausanne, Switzerland from July 16-25, 1974. Of 2,700 participants from 150 nations of the world, 50% came from the Third World. The meeting mainly focused on the Christian world mission and some of the topics include 'The Purpose of God', 'The Authority and power of the Bible', 'The uniqueness and universality of Christ', 'The nature of evangelism', 'Christian social responsibility', 'Evangelism and the Church', 'Partnership in world evangelization' 'Culture and Leadership', 'Conflict and Resolution', 'The power of the Spirit and the Return of Christ' and others (Stott 1975: 1-62).

considers evangelism as her main mandate, but social concern is regarded as only a means to facilitate evangelism. In other words, mission is not seen from the perspective of the Kingdom of God. The church's responsibility to address the plight of humanity in various dimensions (physical, spiritual, psychological) to care the creation of God is not taken into consideration. (Gen 2:15; Ps 24:1; Mt 4:23). Denio (verbal communication 2009) points out that although WZKHC is undertaking a significant work in terms of the Great Commission, she fails to give a due attention to social concern because there is a misapprehension of the biblical basis of holistic mission.

Secondly, as stated in chapter one, the concept of dichotomy is a deep rooted problem. This means that evangelism and social responsibility belong to two different categories. The former is viewed as a spiritual duty and the latter as secular. Lemma (verbal communication 2009) contends that in WZKHC there is a considerable conceptual gap in viewing evangelism and social work as two aspects of a single mission of the Church. Evangelism is considered as a holy duty and has eternal value, but social concern is a work of a transient world with no perpetual significance. Myers (1999:4-7) points out that this is a false dichotomy and it emerges from the modernist world view which separates religion and science. From the modernist point of view, "the spiritual world is the arena of sacred revelation, in which we know by believing. The real world where we hear, see, feel and touch is where scientific observation allows us to know things certainly." This Enlightenment conviction invaded the life of the church and has been playing its part in bringing unreal division in the mission of the church.

Thirdly, the doctrine of the church with regard to the Second Coming of Christ also contributed to the imbalance. As the WZKHC holds the pre-millennial position, the imminence of parousia was emphasised and this led to the urgency of evangelism over against social concern. Davis (1980: 125) points out that the enthusiastic reaction of the early Christians of the WZKHC in aggressive evangelism and endurance of various persecutions was driven by the concept that Jesus would come very soon. As already mentioned in chapter four, it could be seen clearly in some of the usual songs.

Jesus Christ is coming again

He is coming to take all of His children to be with Himself

He is coming to take us

And there will be no more trouble there

There will be no more pain there...

There will be no more tears

Jesus Christ is coming to take us to be with Himself

5.2 A Non-integrated mission

What has been discussed above indicates that lacking balance between evangelism and social concern is one of the two major problems in WZKHC that this research attempts to deal with. The topic of imbalance is seen from the perspective that the church's involvement in social responsibility is inconsistent as it is done on some levels and not on others. We also observed some factors contributing to this approach. Under this sub-section our focus moves to the problem of non integration which is the second major point of this research.

The framework of holism is central to the biblical mission. Mission emerged from a single source (God) and heads to a single destination, the consummation of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that holism cannot be expressed only by making evangelism and social concern part of the mission of a church; but also carrying out them with a single goal in mind which is the consummated Kingdom of God. Verkuyl (1993:72) states that "The heart of the message of the Old and New Testaments is that God the creator of the universe and all earthly life, is actively engaged in the reestablishment of his liberating dominion over the *cosmos* and all of humankind." The church needs to know that she is taking part in the vision of God. She does not have her own agenda. However, failure to realize this can lead to a fractured mission whereby each responsibility is being run with its own goal. This is a dilemma that WZKHC is facing.

The researcher would like the reader to get a clear organogram of the WZKHC in order to appreciate the second point of our argument. It has four levels: local church- *Kifle mahiber* (sect of union)- *Awuraja* (Union)- *Ketana* (top level). As mentioned earlier, social concern is not part

of the WZKHC's mission in the first three structures; but is operational only at the *Ketana* (the top office) level. In chapter two of this research under the subsection 2.4.2 various social involvements of the WZKHC are recorded and a substantial part of this is carried out at the *Ketana* level. Nevertheless, it is facing the problem of non-integration. The two aspects of mission (evangelism and social responsibility) are not seen as part of a single whole. It appears that evangelism is considered to be the biblical mandate that the church ought to fulfil; but social concern is mostly viewed as a humanitarian activity which is done out of good will for the wellbeing of others. Goshana (verbal communication 2009) contends that in WZKHC's mission work integration is missing. It is not understood that a single goal should govern both aspects and they are therefore running as two parallel sectors or aspects. If this is an experience of the WZKHC, it may be appropriate to ask: what is contributing to such an approach so as to challenge the church to move to a more integrated position?

5.2.1 Factors contributing to polarisation

Several different causes can be cited for this impasse in the WZKHC. Firstly, the doctrinal position of the church takes a substantial share. It has already been indicated that WZKHC adheres to pre-millennialism which holds the view of annihilation in terms of the final state of the whole *cosmos*. They do not view evangelism and social concern as a united praxis working together for the transformation of the universe which will be finalized by the consummation of the Kingdom of God. Moltmann's (1996:259) statement seems to express this view well. Mission is saving souls from the world that is destined for destruction but not a redemption of the world as a unified whole. Such view has been playing a vital role in the WZKHC as the church is not only emphasizing evangelism but also lacking a comprehensive approach in her role of mission.

Secondly, the messages imparted to the congregation through various means of communication (preaching, teaching, training etc.) contribute to the dichotomy. They are not addressing both evangelism and social concern proportionally. If not all, most of the topics of the regular or seasonal sessions emphasise evangelism over against social concern. Dana (verbal communication 2009) explains that he has never seen or heard a single sermon on social concern in his twenty years of ministry in the WZKHC.

Thirdly, personnel distribution of the church has also its part in non-integration. It is not uncommon to think that the church is professionally under resourced to carry out social responsibility. Consequently, qualified experts are hired from the intellectual market. It may appear externally that these people are skilled and certified; but it is hard to discern their commitment and motive to perform from the perspective of biblical values and the goal of mission. Dana (verbal communication 2009) points out that this is a concrete reality in the WZKHC. In most cases it is evident that such people do not show interest in being holistic agents of transformation by committing themselves both to evangelism and social action. Tsele (2001:211) attempts to remind us about the danger of professionalism. This concept is not to be misunderstood as contending against utilizing professional skills; but it is avoiding the risk of dichotomy that can result from the improper use of professionals.

Fourthly, the funding scheme of social concern plays a significant role in perpetuation of non-integrated mission in the WZKHC as the church is currently implementing all her social concern works in partnership with outside donors who are committed to finance various project interventions. This ties the church to donor priorities and leaves no room for the question of integration. Degaga (verbal communication 2009) explains that the source of budgets makes a big difference. He asks “ how can the church run her agenda of holism with someone else’s resources if she is not convinced that social concern is part of her actual mission and determines to run it by her own finance?”

Fifthly, lack of a conducive working atmosphere has also some share in a dichotomist approach. This can be expressed in various ways. One of them is a poor team spirit. Biblical mission is based on the concept of unity. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three, but one and work in harmony (Jn 17:21-22). The earthly life of Jesus shows that he not only walked around and worked in team with his disciples but also he sent them out in pairs in order to emphasise the value of working in unity (Lk.10:1) (Tadesse, verbal communication 2009). Moreover, inspired by Jesus, the apostles and the early church also followed the same mission pattern (Acts 16:19; 17:4). However, the WZKHC falls short of such experiences, which jeopardize the concept of holistic mission. A lack of peer review systems and transparency in work are another ways in which unfavourable working atmosphere displays itself. Constructive evaluation and assessment

is needed to run the mission of the church properly. Strengths should be appreciated and weaknesses improved; but this can be done only when there is a system in place. Moreover, lack of joint planning contributes its part. It has been cited above that God works in unity. The mission of the church is a participation in God's initiative and it is holistic (Lee, 2008:ii). Without a comprehensive plan which includes both evangelism and social concern no holistic mission after the heart of God. In other words, integral mission needs an integrated plan; hence a healthy and dynamic church.

5.3 Recommendations

The central argument of this research revolves around two interrelated themes within the missional context of the WZKHC. As can be seen from the previous section, the first one is a question of not accepting social concern as part of the church's mission and the second is avoiding dichotomy and developing a holistic approach. Below are some suggestions in order to address these shortcomings.

5.3.1 Reviewing the foundation of mission

Reconsidering the foundation of mission is one of key factors in attempting to regain a holistic perspective. The WZKHC has been operating after a long legacy of the need of taking the gospel to all creation in the world (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19-20). While the passion for the fulfilment of the Great Commission is valued as a noble task, the mission philosophy of the church needs to be revised in order to fit with the biblical concept of holistic mission. Scripture indicates that mission is a broad idea, which deals with all sorts of needs in God's universe as it is part of God's own mission. This means that the church is not only responsible for addressing the needs of the community multi-dimensionally (spiritual, physical, psychological) but also to commit herself as a faithful steward to take care of the whole of God's creation. In light of this, it is not an option but an imperative for the church to shape her mission after the holistic principle as stated in the Scripture (Gen 9:9-10; Ps 24:1; Isa 42-53; Mt 4:17; Lk 4:18-19). Denio (verbal communication 2009) suggests that the WZKHC needs to design a solid biblically founded policy which views mission as a unified whole in order to avoid one-sidedness and the dichotomist approach that is currently employed.

Furthermore, the contemporary African situation also calls for a holistic approach. Many African countries are suffering from the interplay between poverty and HIV/AIDS. Magezi (2007:49) contends that “the connection between these two issues works in two directions. Poverty increases vulnerability to HIV infection and...HIV/AIDS exacerbates poverty as the potentially productive person becomes powerless and draws from savings.” Ethiopia is one of those African countries and Wolaita is an area where such crisis is looming in abundance. The WZKHC, as the biggest Evangelical denomination in the area, has a strategic place in the community to address the needs of the victims (Lk 10:30). It is, therefore, expected of the church to reshape her mission methodology in order to provide relevant service amid a worsening situation in the area.

5.3.2 Assessing the goal of mission

What is closely related with the above point is making right the goal of mission. Proclaiming the Kingdom of God must be central (Mk 1:14, 15). This concept is crucial due to two reasons; firstly, it helps capture a thorough stance on mission. As indicated in chapter four of this research, the Kingdom of God includes all of the realm where God’s kingly reign could be extended. In other words, as Samuel & Sugden (1987:128) underline it is a “theme that relates God’s intention in creation to its final fulfilment.” The Kingdom of God is not centred only around church; but church is an irreplaceable agent of the Kingdom which is much broader and all-inclusive. Secondly, the current shift of focus in global Evangelical missiology seems to compel the WZKHC to re-evaluate her mission goal. The one time popular (19th century) church-centred missiology is now moving to the Kingdom-oriented model, which has already been recognized by the majority of churches globally. The new approach is not suggested for the sake of change but it has uncovered a very significant and new dimension in the theology of mission which is *Missio Dei* (Sherer, 1993:82-85). This concept helps to view mission first as the work of God not the church. The triune God has a mission in restoring the universe to its originally intended state (Ps 74:12-17). The church is participating in this mission of God. That is why Bosch (1991:390) says “there is church because there is mission not vice versa.” From this, it is understandable that the Kingdom of God is an indispensable theme which helps the church to see her mission in a broader way and work towards the consummation of that Kingdom.

5.3.3 Institutional Review

The church, as an institution, has various structures and management rules and regulations. These may contribute either positively or negatively to the holistic approach. Three factors (funding scheme, personnel management and imbalanced preaching and teaching) are mentioned above as hugely playing a role in dichotomy in WZKHC among many others. Social concern work (which is limited only to the *Ketana* level) is financially supported by outside donors. This system not only makes the work contingent on outside funding but also it leaves no room for the church to raise her agenda of integrated mission; hence the church ends up doing mere humanitarian work. To state it another way, as the church is accountable to satisfy the requirements of the funder, she is unable to design the work from the holistic perspective. Moreover, it develops dependency on the foreign resources which has crippled the mission of the church in terms of social action. If seriously considered and strategically planned, the WZKHC can generate her own funds to run social work as she is doing evangelism (Davis 1980:179-182). However, the 1040 local congregation of the WZKHC is doing almost nothing of its own as a result of the dependency that has been developed over years (Lera, verbal communication 2007).

This trend needs to be broken, not only because of its long lasting negative impact on the church community, but also because of the change in the global mission enterprise. Evidence indicates that recently the missionary sending legacy is shifting from North to South. Moreau *et al.* (2005: 286). Churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia are now taking a significant part in sending international missionaries to different destinations globally which the WZKHC herself has already been involved in currently. Referring to this fact Moreau *et al.* (Ibid:285) articulate that “A new day has dawned- a day in which all Christians must adequately recognise the gifts and strengths of those who hail from majority world countries.” This situation warrants the church, not only to equip herself financially for the mission work at home but also to look forward to send holistically trained missionaries to take part in an inevitable global change.

Secondly, personnel management should be given attention to promote holistic approach in the mission of the church. Training institutions have a vital role in this regard. The curriculum of the major sources of the trained manpower of the church need to be designed in view of biblical holistic mission. It must be resourceful both in the knowhow of evangelism and social action.

This means that theological as well as social training aspects should be included in order to meet the professional needs in the church context. Lemma (verbal communication 2009) emphasises, among many other issues, the role of a holistic curriculum in promoting integrated mission. Education is a powerful tool in bringing change particularly in a church and in society at large and if it is handled properly the tension of dichotomy in WZKHC could be alleviated.

Thirdly, the information provided needs to be balanced. As mentioned above preaching and teaching are the main mechanisms through which the church reaches out to her members and the broader community in various occasions. However, we need to ask a question how much of the message is proportional and imparted from the holistic point of view. The members of the church are being moulded after the message they get. In the WZKHC it is plain truth that sermons focus on spiritual aspects and the other worldly Kingdom. Being influenced by her pre-millennial background WZKHC portrays an escapist approach which highlights the saving of souls from the world whose final fate is a doom. The church is encouraged to reconsider her lecture in sermons and any other form as that has a fundamental part in advancing holism. Dana (verbal communication 2009) states that messages conveyed through preaching and teaching are unquestionably biased and it is crucial to correct such error in order to build an integrated stance.

5.4 Summative Conclusion

Several issues have been raised in this dissertation. As the proposal serves as the guide map for the whole work, chapter two provides with the background of Ethiopia and the church on which the research focuses (WZKHC). Some of the key subjects included were the commencement of Christianity to the country and the establishment and mission of the WZKHC. One may be reminded of the fact that the introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia is traced back to two sources. Firstly, the two Syrian brothers (Frumentius and Audessius) who started the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church in the country in the early 4th century. Secondly, Evangelical church history is rooted in the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) and the Society of International Missionaries/ Serving in Mission (SIM). The former started operating in Ethiopia from the second part of the 19th century and the latter from the early 20th century. WZKHC is the fruit of the SIM mission work. After her establishment in 1928 the WZKHC has been involved in

missions in various ways. Although her social concern is not as strong as evangelism, the Church paid an unprecedented sacrifice to reach the whole Wolaita and beyond with the gospel message.

In attempting to encourage the WZKHC to regain a holistic approach in mission, chapter three of this research deliberates an assessment of the biblical basis of holism. An effort has been made to bring to light that Scripture treats both aspects (evangelism and social transformation) of mission proportionally. They are partners which complement one another, yet do not replace each other. They are not divided, but two sections of a single mission of the church. In the analysis it is shown that both the OT and NT portray mission as holistic. Worshipping Yahweh as the only true God and caring for the poor and powerless characterize the OT background. In addition, exercising justice and righteousness in all aspects of life were vital parts the life of the Israelites which imply a holistic concept. In the NT the same pattern followed. In the ministry of Jesus, the disciples and the early church, holism was evident. They addressed the needs of the community in both aspects, which implies that the WZKHC in particular and the church of Christ in general should imitate this pattern.

The research then progresses towards a fundamental concept in the perspective of the holistic mission, the Kingdom of God. In chapter four this theme is dealt with giving attention to various subjects. Explanations about the Kingdom of God and the 'present or future debate' are some of them. Views on the final state of creation in the Kingdom of God are also considered as they significantly play a role either in holism or dichotomy. In this regard we have attempted to reflect on the contribution of the Annihilation, Transformation and Deification views on the pre-millennialist, post-millennialist and Amillennialist approaches on holism. The other important thrust discussed is the notion of *shalom*; it is a comprehensive idea which implies the state of the whole of God's creation in a perfect relationship with its creator. This points forward to the consummated Kingdom of God and at present the church plays her part in extending shalom through her prophetic, priestly and kingly ministries.

What has been discussed in chapters one to four revolve around one main theme. To show the biblical background of holistic mission and to call the WZKHC to review her position accordingly. The last chapter of the research attempts to pinpoint some of the evidences to the main argument that the mission of the WZKHC is imbalanced and non-integrated. Two

approaches are suggested in order to clearly understand this point. First, it should be noticed that the evangelism program/ ministry of the WZKHC is operational in her all church structures (local church, sect of union, union, and *Ketena*) but the social concern is operational only at the *Ketena* level. This justifies the imbalanced approach. Secondly, the evangelism and social work at the *Ketena* level are not integrated. They are not operating from a single point of view which is building the Kingdom of God; this verifies that the church is facing a serious problem in light of the biblical approach of holistic mission. Under each topic, factors contributing to the problem are briefly assessed. Finally, recommendations have been made for the WZKHC in order to catch up with the holistic approach and perform more fruitful and effective mission.

In closing we would like to reaffirm the fact that God has mission and so also the church. However, it should be realized that the mission of the church is only part of the overall mission of God. Then the church has to review herself to make sure that she is in line with the agenda of God for the world. Matthew in his gospel narrative emphasises the significance of being a faithful servant to one's master. *Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?* Mt 24:45. The church needs to be faithful to God and carry out the mission entrusted to her in holistic way.

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