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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

on

“The Task of the Missionary Church regarding moral regeneration in South Africa”

By

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PREFACE

The process of writing this work was accompanied by many and different challenges.

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ABSTRACT

This missiological study is to precede from the reformation Theology tradition. The Theological methodology used in this study in formulating theoretical indicators from scripture will follow the hermeneutics of Biblical Theology as set out by Scobie (2003), Lexicons such as Louw and Nida (1988), the grammatical – historical method (Du Toit & Roberts 1979:58), along with other relevant scholarly works will be consulted. This study focuses on the task of the Missionary church and therefore qualitative research is preferable over quantitative research.

This study is limited by the fact that morality is a very wide area. There are a lot of interrelated issues that this type of study cannot address and that call for further research e.g. the task of the state towards moral regeneration and the relationship with the church and religion in general, the influence of postmodernism on the church. The context of this study is limited to South African context and covers the post 1994 democratic elections. This study will focus on the Mission focused family because it is the cornerstone of society.

Chapter one presented the limites of the study on theSouth African context and cover the post the 1994 democratic elections. Secondly, the second chapter focused on the Missionary church their task to morall regeneration: begining with the church in the area such as self-introspection, repentance, confession of sins, forgiveness an faith in God and in the message of the church. Firstly, the chapter reviewed the history of South Africa and how the past Apartheid era impacted on the present situation as well as the church's response to Moral Regeneration. Finally, the chapter looks at how the Church can come with practical development through the re-humanization of our people.

Similarly, chapter four looked at the matter of Mission focused families as cornerstones for Moral Regeneration. Initially, I provided a comprehensive definition of Mission focused families in the light of, amongst other things, Deut 6: 1-25 and Eph 5: 22-23

Finally, the fifth chapter delved on the question of the South African Missionary church and the challenges she faces as an agent of hope for moral regeneration. I analysed in detail the challenges facing the Missionary Church today, and on how the Missionary Church deals with those challenges. Most importantly, the chapter focused on the Missionary Church's prophetic voice on moral regeneration.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie missiologiese studie bou op die tradisie van die Gereformeerde teologie voort. Die teologiese metodologie wat in die studie gebruik word om teoretiese aanwysers vanuit die Skrif te formuleer sal die hermeneutiek van Bybelse teologie volg soos deur Scobie (2003) uiteengesit. Leksikons van skrywers soos Louw en Nida (1988) en die Grammatical-historical method (Du Toit & Roberts, 1979:58), sowel as ander tersaaklike vakkundige werke sal geraadpleeg word. Die studie fokus op die taak van die sendingkerk en daarom is kwalitatiewe navorsing verkieslik bo kwantitatiewe navorsing.

Die studie is beperk deur die feit dat moraliteit 'n baie wye area is. Daar bestaan baie onderlingverbinde kwessies wat nie deur hierdie tipe studie aangepak kan word nie en wat om verder navorsing vra, insluitend die taak van die staat teenoor morele herlewing, die verhouding van die kerk en godsdiens in die algemeen en die invloed van postmodernisme op die kerk. Die konteks van hierdie studie is tot 'n Suid-Afrikaanse konteks beperk en dek die tydperk ná die demokratiese verkiesing van 1994. Die studie sal op die sendinggefokusde familie fokus, aangesien dit die hoeksteen van die gemeenskap vorm.

Hoofstuk een bied die beperkinge van die studie in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks aan en dek die tydperk ná die demokratiese verkiesing van 1994.

Hoofstuk twee fokus op die sendingkerk en sy taak om morele herlewing teweeg te bring en begin met die kerk op gebiede soos selfintrospeksie, inkeer, belydenis van sonde, vergiffenis en geloof in God, en in die boodskap van die kerk. Daar word gekyk na die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika en die wyse waarop die Apartheidsera 'n invloed op die huidige situasie uitgeoefen het, sowel as na die kerk se reaksie op morele herlewing. Hierna word die wyse beskou waarop die kerk kan begin met praktiese ontwikkeling deur die hervermensliking van mense.

In hoofstuk drie word daar gepoog om Suid-Afrika se verlede te ondersoek, asook die wyse waarop die vorige era die huidige situasie beïnvloed het. Laasgenoemde,

en die kwessies in verband met morele herlewing, word ook ontleed; voorbeelde wat gebruik word is kwessies soos jeugswangerskappe, alkohol en die verbrokkeling van gesinne.

Die fokus word geplaas op die kerk se reaksie op morele herlewing, spesifiek op die wyse waarop die kerk in 'n situasie is waarin hy geroepe is om individue, gemeenskappe en die hele nasie te help om nuut en vars na die nasie te kyk, asook na die wyse waarop die kerk binne en buite sy eie geslote netwerk by die nasie aansluiting vind. Daar word beklemtoon dat 'n vars siening van die toestand waarin die nasie verkeer, binne die liggaam van Christus moet begin en dat dit die geweldige verantwoordelikheid moet aanvaar om die nasie te lei in sondebelydenis, sowel as om met praktiese programme vorendag te kom vir inkeer, versoening, transformasie en die algehele ontwikkeling van die land se mense en nasionale instellings.

Hoofstuk vier ondersoek die kwessie van sendinggefokusde gesinne as hoekstene van morele herlewing. Aanvanklik word 'n omvattende definisie van sendinggefokusde gesinne verskaf in die lig van onder andere Deut 6: 1-25 en Ef 5: 22-23.

In hoofstuk vyf word die kwessie van die Suid-Afrikaanse sendingkerk ondersoek en die uitdagings wat dit in die gesig staar as 'n instrument van hoop vir morele herlewing. Die ontleding van die wyse waarop die sendingkerk hierdie uitdagings hanteer, word in besonderhede gedoen. Die belangrikste aspek waarop die hoofstuk fokus is die sendingkerk se profetiese stem in verband met morele herlewing.

Key words:

Missionary Church

Morality

Nucleus Family

Ubuntu

Transformation

Ethics
Regeneration.

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CHAPTER 1 THE TASK OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH REGARDING MORAL REGENERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

1.1 Formulating the problem

1.1.1 Background

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has been faced with an escalating rate of crime. Types of crime range from petty stealing to the horrific raping and murdering of toddlers, in most instances by people whom they were entrusted to.

White-collar crime is rampant in both public and private institutions and this is costing the country the business confidence it earned during Mr Nelson Mandela's administration and the initial period of Mr Thabo Mbeki's administration. The political front is also fraught with corrupt elements; personalities whom the populace is expected to look up to for leadership, stand accused of corrupt activities.

With this moral breakdown in South Africa, the church has a crucial and significant role to play. Meiring (2003:1227) argues that "the challenge to South Africans is to restore our neighbourhoods, to rebuild communal life". In similar tone, Bosch (1991:150) is of the opinion that "the church is placed as a community of hope in the context of the world and its structures". According to Post (1994), the escalating crime, which obviously had an impact on moral decay in South Africa, has led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement in June 1997, initiated by former President Nelson Mandela with the help of religious leaders.

Mr Mandela called on the role of religion "in nation building and social transformation, and the need for religious institutions to work with the State" (Rauch, 2005:9). This requires the active participation of the missionary church in political, economic and social dimensions. Thus Bosch (1991:70) would argue that the missionary church's "mission cannot concern itself exclusively with the personal, inward, spiritual and 'vertical' aspects of people's lives".

The quest to address the moral decay in our nation was taken further in February 2002, when former President Thabo Mbeki, Deputy President Jacob Zuma and Deputy Minister of Education, Smangaliso Mkatshwa, expressed their “concern about the worsening moral situation” (Richardson, 2003:3). The missionary church is compelled by external forces to act upon the issues of morality in this world.

It is, therefore, imperative for the missionary church to live up to its calling to bring about hope in hopeless situations, particularly in the words of former President Thabo Mbeki: “... a collapse of an acceptable level of morality in our society which resulted in the elevation of the self, and the serving of interests of the self to the point that self becomes a religion. The self became the god we must all worship. ... In the vacuum individuals had to decide what was bad, and the good was defined as what would serve my interests” (Richardson, 2003:5-6). The missionary church is obliged to make a statement as an instrument of hope and lasting peace; it has the responsibility to pay attention to God’s desire for a moral society. Moreover, it has an obligation to God to act according to its calling. It is a matter of concern to learn that the Moral Regeneration Movement was initiated by the government, while the church was invited to participate (Rauch, 2005:9). One would expect things to happen the other way round.

1.1.2 The problem statement

In light of what has been said, this study is an attempt to analyze the missionary church theologically as an agent to address moral issues and reconcile torn communities. In obedience to the *missio Dei*, it must find a way to assert itself as the available agent of morality in our societies.

The missionary church in South Africa has a task to address moral issues in all spheres of life, namely political, social and economic. According to statistics, 80% of South Africans call themselves Christians; the question remains why morality has become such a great concern.

The main question that is raised by this study is the following: How can the missionary church in South Africa, according to the *missio Dei*, address moral issues

and present itself as the available agent or instrument of morality?

1.2 The central research question

The central research question in this study is to determine how the missionary church in South Africa can address moral regeneration issues and assert itself as the agent of morality.

1.3 Questions arising from the central research question

The following questions are to be asked:

- i. What is the role of the missionary church concerning her task to moral regeneration?
- ii. What is the present situation and what are the issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement?
- iii. What is a mission-focused family and how can it be a cornerstone of moral regeneration?
- iv. What are the challenges facing the South African missionary church as an agent of hope?

1.4 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study is to identify and analyze theologically why morality in this country is decaying after democracy was achieved and what the task of the missionary church is in this regard.

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

- i. to study and analyze the historical and social context of the missionary church in South Africa, as well as her role and task towards moral regeneration;
- ii. to study the present situation and issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement;
- iii. to define a mission-focused family and how it can be a cornerstone of moral

- regeneration; and
- iv. to study the challenges that are facing the South African missionary church as an agent of hope.

1.5 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that if the church followed Biblical guidelines, it would fulfill its task to change the society in accordance with the *missio Dei*.

1.6 Methods of research

This missiological study is to proceed from the Reformed theological tradition. The theological methodology that is going to be used in this study in formulating theoretical indicators from Scripture will follow the hermeneutics of Biblical theology as set out by Scobie (2003); lexicons such as Louw and Nida (1988), the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit & Roberts, 1979:58) and other relevant scholarly works will also be consulted. The study focuses on the task of the missionary church and therefore qualitative research is preferable to quantitative research.

The research will be executed by:

- i. studying relevant literature and information gathered on the historical and social context of the missionary church in South Africa;
- ii. analyzing relevant theological literature and by discursive engagements of the literary materials available to help this study gain the contemporary Christian perspectives on moral regeneration;
- iii. analyzing, comparing and evaluating scholarly works on *missio Dei* and its contribution to moral regeneration; and
- iv. studying and analyzing the challenges facing the missionary church in South Africa as an agent of morality.

1.7 Study limitation

This study is limited by the fact that morality is a very wide field. There are a lot of interrelated issues that this type of study cannot address and that call for further research, e.g. the task of the State towards moral regeneration and the relationship with the church and religion in general, as well as the influence of postmodernism on the church. The context of this study is limited to a South African context and covers the time after the democratic elections in 1994. The study will focus on the mission-focused family, as it is the cornerstone of society.

CHAPTER 2: THE MISSIONARY CHURCH AND HER TASK IN REGARD TO MORAL REGENERATION

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, much attention will be focused on the missionary church and her task in regard to moral regeneration. In order to do that, a working definition of the most significant concepts will be provided, such as 'church', 'mission', 'agape', 'moral regeneration' and 'human rights'. The purpose of such an endeavor is to identify the systemic and historical processes and forces that shaped the collective moral state of the various communities, culminating in the current moral state of the nation that also came about as a direct result of the socio-political and economic system in the rapidly globalized world of today. Again, some emphasis will be put on the functioning of families and communities regarding the crisis of morality in South Africa.

2.2 What is a missionary church?

2.2.1 Defining the concept of 'church'

A comprehensive understanding of the missionary church is located within an in-depth appreciation of the universal meaning of the concept 'church'. The latter is derived from the Greek word 'ecclesia', which means "a gathering of citizens, called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating."

In the Septuagint, it is often equivalent to the assembly of the Israelites, especially when gathered for sacred purposes. In Judges 21:8, the following is written: "Then they asked, which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah?"

According to Thayer (1961:196), the term is also used in a more general sense for "any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance or tumultuously", for example in Acts 19:31-32: "Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent

him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. The assembly was in confusion, some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not know why they were there”.

On the other hand, a more recent definition of the concept is explicated by Louw and Nida (1988:126): “Ecclesia is a congregation of Christians, implying interacting membership for the New Testament, however, it is important to understand the meaning of Ecclesia as an assembly of God’s people”.

The English standard version of the study bible (2008:2532) states that “Christ is the head of the church, which is his body (Eph.1:22-23, 4:15,5:23). He has authority over his people and determines their direction and destiny. Each member of Christ’s body serves an important and distinct role, and none have life, power, or ability of any kind apart from Christ (1 Corinthians 12).

Furthermore, the concept of ‘church’ is used by Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew in a manner that is instructive on how local congregations should handle interpersonal conflicts, as well as the management and resolution of internal differences. Thayer (1961:196) mentions that “the name Ecclesia is used even by Christ while on earth of the company of his adherence in any city or village, for example Mat 18: 17, ‘If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector””.

Again, in a more general Christian sense, the concept of ‘church’ refers to “an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in the religious meeting; or a company of Christians, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs according to regulations prescribed for the body for order’s sake, in addition the church refers to the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth, collectively, all who worship and honor God and Christ in whatever place they may be, this includes the company of Christians accustomed to meet for worship in the house of someone” (Thayer, 1961:196).

In addition, the English Standard Version of the Study Bible (2008:2532) states that “there is ultimately only one church, the global community of believers on earth plus those already in glory. In the world, however, the church takes the form of countless local churches and each of those must be viewed as a microcosm, outcropping and sample of the larger whole. Jesus Christ’s headship of the church that is his body is the relationship that applies both to the universal church and to each local church. Denominational identities are secondary to these primary and fundamental realities”.

2.2.2 The image of the church as the Body of Christ

In the biblical vocabulary, the concept of the body of Christ has several layers of meaning; the most basic meaning refers to the universal membership of Christian believers, both ancient and contemporary. It relates to the spiritual unity and the sense of belonging that all persons who profess their faith in Jesus Christ have attained by virtue of being the followers or disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

On the other hand, according to Komonchak (1989:142-143), “in the New Testament, usage (the Body of Christ) can refer to the human body of the historical Jesus, his sacramental presence in the Eucharist, and his body which is the Church. The New Testament normally presents the bodily reality of the historical Jesus as a matter of fact, although John uses strongly realistic language to counter those who would deny the human reality of Jesus (especially in John 6). Jesus not only came in the flesh and has a body (1John 4:2; Heb 5:7; 10:5), the Word also became flesh (John 1:14). His body bonds him to his people and indeed, to all peoples his body/flesh is the effective symbol of salvation. Enfleshed, the Word of God spoke ‘words of eternal life’ (John 6:68), when he reached out his hand and cast out demons and heal, the ‘finger of God’ (Lk 11:20) was at work, enacting the reign of God. This saving meaning of Christ’s body is summed up in the second New Testament usage, in the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper: ‘This is my body to be given for you’ (Lk 22:19; 1Cor 11:24). The layers of meaning are richly nuanced. He gives up not just a part of himself or body he possessed; rather, he gives his whole body/person, himself.

“Paul’s image of the Church as the body of Christ preserves the Eucharistic image

from a narrowly individualistic interpretation of the life-union offered. Paul's use of the body image fits well with a cluster of experiences and ideas from his own background, such as the Adam-Christ parallel (1Cor 15:22; Rom 5:12-19), with its clear overtones of human solidarity, and the community as the temple/building in which God dwells (1 Cor 3:16-17). Paul first develops the idea of the church as the body of Christ (1Cor 12:4-27); in Romans 12:4-8 he does it again by writing to the Corinthian community which is deeply divided on the Eucharist. The point of the 'body of Christ' image in 1 Corinthians and Romans is the unity of Christians among themselves in the local church.

"The union of the wider church with Christ as her head and life-giving source will be stressed in the later Pauline epistles (Col 1:18; Eph 2:11-18; 4:1-16). In 1 Corinthians, the ecclesial body of Christ and the Eucharistic body of Christ are not separated. Partaking of the one loaf is a sharing in the body of Christ so that the many who eat are one body (1Cor 10:16)".

Furthermore, "in contemporary ecclesiology, the church is increasingly perceived as sacrament, sign and instrument (cf Dulles, 1976:58-70) [...]. Paul saw his own mission as priestly service of the gospel (Rom 15:16) and challenged the Christian community to offer itself as a 'living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God' (Rom 12:1). The New Testament books list many gifts conferred on individuals for the benefit of all: teaching, healing, apostleship and more. The gift of priesthood, however, is never mentioned; instead, God entrusted this gift to the community as a whole (1 Peter 2). Other New Testament images of the church which represent the same idea are salt, light, yeast, and prophet" (Bosch, 1991:374).

Komonchak (1989:198) also expresses the opinion that the idea of the church as sacrament is best expressed in the view of the church as eucharist: "In 1Cor 10:16-17 the image of the community as the body of Christ is implicitly connected with the eucharist: The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf.' This connection will be of great significance for St Augustine's theology of the eucharist, and indeed of the church".

2.2.3 What is mission?

The concept of 'mission' will now be focused on. Bosch (1991:492-493) argues firstly that "by the sixth decade of this century (20th century), it was generally accepted in all confessional families that mission belongs to the essence of the church, and that the church was no longer perceived primarily as being over or against the world, but rather as sent into the world and existing for the sake of the world. Mission was no longer merely an activity of the church, but an expression of the very being of the church."

Secondly, Bosch (1991:493-494) continues to argue that "mission cannot be defined only in terms of the church – even of the church which is mission by its very nature. Mission goes beyond the church; it also means serving, healing, and reconciling a divided, wounded humanity".

Equally important is the significant point that Bosch consistently advances in his work, namely that mission is first and foremost God's work, and that it begins and ends with God. For example, he applies the concept of 'missio Dei' or God's mission in order to explicate that "mission has its origin neither in the official Church nor in special groups within the Church. It has its origin in God. God is a missionary God, a God who crosses frontiers towards the world. In creation, God was already the God of mission, with his Word and Spirit as Missionaries (Gen 1:2-3). God likewise sent his incarnate Word, his Son, into the world. And he sent his Spirit at Pentecost. Mission is God giving up himself, his becoming man, his laying aside of his divine prerogatives and taking our humanity, his moving into the world, in his Son and Spirit (Bosch, 1980:239)".

In addition, Bosch (1980:240) argues that "mission has its origin in the fatherly heart of God. He is the fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is not possible to penetrate any deeper: there is mission because God loves man. Forty-six times in the Gospel of John alone Jesus says that the Father has sent him, often adding that it is for the sake of the salvation of the world. Several parables have the same theme. The ground of mission is God's agape (love) or his charis (mercy-love). 'For God is love; and his love was disclosed to us in this, that he sent

his only Son into the world to bring us life' (1John 4:9) and 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son [...]' (John 3:16)."

Bosch (1980:241) is also of the opinion that "on the Cross God revealed that he took the world seriously, in that he judged the world. He not only judged the world, however; on the Cross, as well as in the Incarnation and Resurrection, he claimed the world for his Kingdom, and he reconciled the world to himself. In the sign of the Cross, symbol of both judgment and reconciliation, the Church is sent into the world. Mission thus indeed has a Trinitarian basis, but in such a way that it has a Christological concentration, because it is precisely Christology that accentuates God's entrance, his mission, into the world. Mission signifies a new dimension of God's concern for the world. What is more, it is God's final and definitive concern. [...] Jesus as Missionary is, at the same time, the model for our mission (the Incarnation) and its foundation."

Lastly, Bosch says "in Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan the Spirit immediately revealed the missionary character of Jesus' ministry. At the end of his earthly life, Jesus promised his disciples his Spirit within the framework of his missionary commission (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)".

As mentioned earlier, it was initially the intention to focus on elucidating the meaning of the main concepts, namely 'church' and 'missionary/mission'. This is necessary in order that the reader will have a sound conceptual framework upon which to judge whether the central logic of the research succeeds to convey the task of the missionary church regarding moral regeneration in South Africa.

At this point, the author would like to state that he is in full agreement with Bosch (1980:240) when he argues that "the ground of mission is God's agape". According to Thayer (1961:4), the concept of 'agape' is theologically loaded and has a multiplicity of meanings; however, it essentially means 'the love of God towards men'. Romans 5:8 states: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us". It also means the love of God towards Christ, as well as the love of Christ towards men. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. [...] If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I

have obeyed my Father's command and remained in his love" (John 15:9-10).

On the whole, it is of paramount significance to realize that the church, both as an institution and as the sum total of individual believers, constitutes the body of Christ. In terms of the biblical vocabulary, the concept of the body of Christ has several layers of meaning; however, the most basic meaning refers to the universal membership of Christian believers, both ancient and contemporary. It relates to the spiritual unity and the sense of belonging that all persons who profess their faith in Jesus Christ have attained by virtue of being the followers as well as the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

According to Wright (2006:62) "mission is not ours, mission is God's. Certainly, the mission of God is the prior reality out of which flows any mission that we get involved in. Or, as has been nicely put it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission-God's mission".

In addition, the body of Christ also pertains to the physical and living body of ordinary men and women, young and old, who are the products of God's agape. It was out of God's love that salvation from the heart of God reached humanity and it was on the basis of this love that God's mission finds its original source, power, purpose and expression through the daily lives or lived experiences of members of the body of Christ. Without agape, there is no saved community. Equally important, without agape, there is no *missio Dei* (God's mission). God's love is not only the source of *missio Dei*, rather, it is also the force and power that drives and sustains God's continual reaching out to his creation, especially God's self-disclosure to humanity through Jesus Christ and the active or dynamic presence and creative movement of the Holy Spirit in the world.

In addition, it is proper that we base our deliberations of the *missio Dei* upon a conceptualization of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This model of trinity is a creative tool in enabling humanity to comprehend the nature of God. Through it we are enabled to perceive the One God as existing in a community or family of the

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This conceptualization of God has implications for humanity here on earth, as we have become more sophisticated and complicated in many diverse ways through the process of human and cultural transformation and evolution. Yet the fundamental building block of human culture and society remains the human family, albeit in diverse forms. It is generally accepted that “the family has been found in one form or another in every historical period and in every known society. All other social institutions, such as religion, government, and education, were formed and developed within early family systems. Only late in cultural evolution did these institutions become separate spheres” (Popenoe, 1989:354).

2.2.4 Contextualizing God’s mission within the family framework

It is vital to conceptualize God’s mission within the family framework, which is also predicated upon the Trinitarian family or divine community model. Having done that, we can see the interconnections between the human family and God, especially in association with the mission Dei; hence the apostle Paul prayed without fear of contradiction when he said: “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name” (Eph 3:15). This verse provides the reader of the Bible with a clear sense of the origins of the earthly human family, and that the form of family here on earth is said to be in conformity to its heavenly counterpart. Most significantly, though, is the idea that human family here on earth derives its name from God the Father.

According to Wright (2010:282) “the people whom God has called into partnership...need the constant challenge that comes from the enormous privilege it is to be called by God’s name and entrusted with God’s mission”.

In fact, we learn from Paul’s prayer that human family is intimately connected to God because of the fact that God is love, and that it is indeed out of God’s agape that humans are created and also presented as constituting God’s family. In short, one is well within the Biblical tradition to hold the view that without agape, there is no human race or human families, communities or societies that are organized according to the values and norms that spring from God’s love. In other words, all creation, including human beings and society as a whole, is the product of God’s

love. Hence any human condition, be it spiritual, psychological, intellectual, socio-political or economical that is devoid of agape, reproduces no love in society. Such a society amounts to one that is essentially robbed of its inner essence.

2.2.5 God as the source of the missionary church

In the research, it is within this broader context that the author will advance his argument and explore the meaning, and later on the purpose or task, of the missionary church. In essence, the argument is based on the premise that there can never be a mission Dei, nor a missionary church, without God; the same applies to the human family. Most importantly, however, is that there can never be a church or human family, including God's mission, without agape. The concept of God's love to the entire creation is made clear in Psalms 145:13 "The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving towards all he has made".

Only when there has been a deeper appreciation of the role of God and his love in the birth of the church and the human family, justice can be done towards the explication and exploration of the essence and task of the missionary church. It is only on that platform that focusing on moral regeneration can begin, as well as on the church's task in the process of reconstructing a new moral order in our society and the world at large.

At this point, the author would like to state that a missionary church is one that is fully conscious of her origins, namely that she is the creation of God. She is a living organism with a God-given life, identity, and purpose here on earth. Before the church can be a missionary agent, she needs to be fully aware of the fact that she came into being as a result of individual human beings' response to God's initiative of self-disclosure to humanity, through his Son Jesus, because God call all believers into this body of Christ.

2.2.6 The role of God's love/agape in the birth of the church

A church that is aware of her divine origins is a living body, consisting of the people of God who appreciate God's nature of love and how that nature gave birth to a

family and community of God long before the creation of the universe. It was through individuals' faith in Jesus that the door for the emergence and gathering of a unique assembly of people from all earthly families opened, people with diverse tongues and nationalities, and such a gathering was made possible through God's love. An example is the message of the apostle Paul (Eph 1:4-5;11) to the believers in his letter to the Ephesians: "For (God) chose us to him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will [...]. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will".

In other words, it is entirely "in love", as Paul stated, that the church found her origins, as well as her spirit and nature. This means that a missionary church is primarily a family or community of God's love, born from the loving nature of God, in order to become the living embodiment of agape. She is the family of God on earth, fully human, that acknowledges Jesus Christ as her head. This community of agape is the living body or embodiment of Jesus Christ, blessed with diverse gifts in order to serve and bless the nations of the world, as Paul (Rom 12:4-6a) wrote to the church in Rome: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to us".

2.2.7 The church as the community of agape

Paramount to the inner and outer life of this community of agape is the principle of unity in diversity and such a principle is predicated upon a spirit of inclusiveness, which is continuously driven by the church's desire to embrace her members' diversities in all spheres of their being. This community thrives and excels on the differences that her members bring into her collective personality and identity. The differences are cultural, theological, ideological, racial, socio-political and economical (to mention but a few). In the letter of Paul (1Cor 12:-13), written to the Church in Corinth, he said: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all

baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

This community of agape is characterized by a multiplicity of voices, perspectives, world-views and philosophical and psychological, as well as historical, differences. Yet, notwithstanding all those internal contradictions, it is able to embrace all the differences with authenticity of spirit and attitude. It does not pretend to be without human brokenness, weaknesses and flaws. It is true that despite the fact that this community of agape is one that has experienced God’s forgiveness in Jesus Christ, it does not live outside of the normal human challenges, which are often characterized by human failure, albeit unintentional.

In essence, it accepts that it is a forgiven child of God, who stands in need of God’s forgiveness daily, because “pardon by God and therefore unconditionally pronounced and unconditionally valid – that is man’s justification. In the judgment of God, according to his election and rejection, there is made in the midst of time, and as the central event of all human history, referring to all the men who live both before and after, a decision, a divisive sentence. Its result – expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – is the pardon of man. And this as such is man’s justification, this alone, but with unconditional truth and efficacy, so that apart from it there is no justification, but in it there is the total justification of man. Whether man hears it, whether he accepts it and lives as one who is pardoned is another question. Where men do hear it and accept it and dare to live as those who are pardoned, it is realized that its power is total and not partial, and there will be no refusal to give to it a total and not a partial honor” (Barth, 1956:568).

Consequently, it is this forgiven community that will take it upon itself to carry the message of God’s pardon and justification into the communities and all families who are struggling with moral degeneration, where they may be needed for repentance and forgiveness, so that those individuals and families broken by sin may find courage to come to God and know that God accepts them unconditionally. Because the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has ensured that all who accept in their hearts and minds that they are incomplete without God’s intervention in their lives, may find God’s redemption, which, when accepted, will lead to the transformation of

their lives and the change of their moral ethical lives.

For the same reason of agape, the missionary church is a community that fully submits itself under the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ. She is awake to the demands of the Gospel upon her life and her purpose on earth. She knows that her life in this world flows from the shedding of Jesus' own blood on the Cross of Calvary. That means that her own life is not of her own making, but rather the extension of Christ's life through her to all the nations of the world, as well as to all creation, both the visible and the invisible. This means that her genuine purpose in this world is identical with the purpose of her head, namely Jesus Christ. This Christ-centric purpose is well articulated in the Gospel according to John, where Jesus said: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b). In a manner of speaking, the missionary church is the earthly possessor of Christ's life, as well as the only organ that is tasked with the responsibility of sharing Christ's life with the entire human family.

As the result of Jesus coming to fulfill his purpose in this world, the missionary church is able to subordinate her own organizational interests and needs to the dictates of Christ's life and the imperatives of the Gospel, as articulated by Jesus when He said of his mission: "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 the recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19).

Herein lie the essence, identity and fundamental core, as well as the purpose and mission of the missionary church, namely to be to the world what Jesus was to humanity as a whole. This means the impartation of God's life to humanity through the proclamation of the Good News and effecting practical liberation in the lives of the universal human family.

2.2.8 The church as an agent of unity within families and communities

The results of the church's faithfulness in pursuing the mission Dei will lead to, amongst other things, the realization of union between Christ and those who were

lost; subsequently, there will be unity in the families as well as within the communities of the repentant. All of these results will be the outcome of the proclamation of the Gospel and the values inherent in the Kingdom message, because “the proclamation and activity of the messengers are identical with that of Christ himself. To them has been granted a portion of his power. They are charged to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom of heaven, and to confirm their message by performing signs. They must heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and drive out devils. The message becomes an event, and the event confirms the message. The Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sins, the justification of the sinner through faith, all this is identical with the destruction of the devil’s power, the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead. The proclamation of the apostles is the Word of the Almighty God, and therefore it is an act, an event, a miracle. It is the one Christ who passes through the land in the person of his twelve messengers and performs his work. The sovereign grace with which they are equipped is the creative and redemptive Word of God” (Bonhoeffer, 1937:230).

In the same vein, the church can advance the promotion of the *missio Dei* and moral regeneration through embracing the words of Jesus Christ. It is, for example, important for the *agape* community to realize that the Word of God is the force or power upon which everyday moral conduct of the faithful is based. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said to the believers: “You are the salt of the earth. [...] “You are the light of the world.” (Matt 5:13-14). By extension, it is the church community that embodies moral values and principles that our society and families can draw inspiration from and utilize as tools to restore broken family values and moral communal systems.

2.3 What is moral regeneration?

2.3.1 Historical background to the concept of moral regeneration

The debate about moral regeneration in South Africa began to dominate public discourse during the period of the protracted political transition which was narrowly marked by the release of Mr Nelson Mandela from his life sentence in Robben Island and culminated in his inauguration as the first democratically elected head of State in

1994. However, it is true that the church in South Africa was constantly dealing with the question of morality, albeit within a specific denominational framework.

During the period between the early and mid-1990's, there was an increasing national outcry over the rapid decline in the national sense of collective morality due to the high levels of violence that had come to characterize the daily life in South Africa. Much of it was politically motivated, but there was also another social form of violence that was characterized by individuals or gangs of people who robbed homes and business premises. What was profoundly disconcerting is the fact that the majority of these criminal acts were accompanied by assaults or serious bodily harm, which resulted in some instances in the death of the victims of such crime, even though they were not resisting the criminal elements.

Naturally, members of the community raised concerns about the manifestation and causes of violence in South Africa. During public engagements, especially in the media, like talk radio shows or broader media platforms, serious questions about the nature and necessity of moral regeneration began to dominate public discourse. Thus moral regeneration, particularly in South Africa, has a lot more to do with the desire of ordinary citizens who want to live in a society where safety and general respect for human rights, property and human life in particular will be guaranteed by the rule of law.

Obviously, the matter of moral regeneration cannot be limited to the issue of law and order exclusively; instead, it is one of the issues that covers a broad spectrum of human striving. There is, for example, an urgent need for moral regeneration in areas such as marriages, human sexuality, corporate governance, political culture, business transactions, religious conduct and interpersonal relations. In all these areas, moral regeneration is about the human ongoing expectation to lead a better, morally acceptable life, or one characterized by virtues such as truth, justice, love, honesty, courage, righteousness, integrity and fairness. Hence Birch and Rasmussen (1989:190) argues that "character formation is the learning and internalizing of a way of life formative of our own moral identity. It is our moral "being", the expression of who we are...character includes our basic moral perception-how we see and understand things-as well as our fundamental

disposition,. Intentions, and motives”.

Moral regeneration, though, should not be driven by the desire to force those persons who are regarded as immoral to adopt a moral code that is imposed by outside authorities, especially in matters largely within the private sphere of human conduct. This is a very complicated facet of moral regeneration, as certain conduct is based on individual choice, yet still affects families, even though those who committed it may have done so in their private, personal sphere. However, in order for moral regeneration to succeed in South Africa, it will take all individuals to introspect themselves and make individual judgments on whether their conduct is harmful or not. In areas of obvious harm to persons or property, law enforcement should take its effect.

The issue of moral regeneration does not only raise questions that have implications for the missionary church alone, but “the question of moral regeneration triggers a variety of responses, more so in a social context characterized by transformation imperatives on all the levels of our (South African) societal formations. As a nation, we have to contend with the reality of the racial, class, cultural and religious diversity definitive of South Africa today. [...] The presuppositions and moral disposition from which we commence moral regeneration discourse and its spirituality trajectory automatically become the framework of reference. The challenge therefore is that we all need to acknowledge our moral dispositions and the presuppositions that inform and shape their parameters. We need to accept that our dreams and aspirations are firmly grounded and shaped by expressed encounter of the ‘other’ and shared spaces that determine our sense of being and belonging. Hence one can assume that most of our moral postures take place within well-defined spaces of moral references. In relative terms, moral renewal could mean the realignment of the moral, cultural and spiritual resources for the attainment of articulated national intentions” (Mashinini, 2010:14).

2.3.2 The essential elements of moral regeneration

Due to the multidimensionality of the process of moral regeneration, it is important to note that it cannot be confined exclusively to the sphere of religion. In short, moral

regeneration is by definition a process that ultimately deals with matters of the personal and collective mind, soul, spirit, and material and social well-being. It is a spiritual as well as a social, political, economic, cultural and attitudinal renewal, and is both an intrinsic and extrinsic process and phenomenon. Thus, it is an institutional and policy matter at the same time. It is also a process of the inner and outer transformation of the mind-set, hearts and life-style of individuals, organizations, policy and the collective culture of the citizenry. In essence, the task of the missionary church is to help South Africans re-imagining their families as God's creatures that are created for agape. The life of agape is, therefore, quintessentially definitional and representative of moral regeneration in that it is located at the core of collective moral regeneration and constitutes the fundamental dynamic of individual moral regeneration and a moral society.

2.4 The task of the missionary church in moral regeneration

2.4.1 The fundamental task of the missionary church

The fundamental task of the missionary church towards moral regeneration is manifold, as it includes both the intrinsic and extrinsic systems of personal and collective mechanisms of enabling, teaching, guiding and supporting humanity in coming to the full knowledge, understanding and actual practice of the desired moral ethical values. However, the dominant aspect of the fundamental task of the church is to ensure that moral regeneration takes place within the church or amongst all individual believers. Hence, there can never be genuine moral regeneration in the broader community if it does not exist first and foremost within the church. That means that the church should always remain humble about her moral standing before God, because "the Church too is sinful. It is in constant need of purification and sanctification" (Hendriksen, 1988:81). She is thus called upon to lead by example by confronting her own sins, be they institutional or emanating from leadership or laity, and confess them both within her boundaries and outside.

Having confessed their sins to each other and society, church members should extend forgiveness to all those who are willing to come forward and take responsibility for the role they have played, directly or indirectly, in creating

conditions that finally led to the current state of moral decay. Consequently, the church is faced with the challenge of modeling faith and morality by virtue of being embedded in all the communities within the country.

This presence in the communities calls for the church to be conscious of her decisions, because she is far from perfect. In fact, “Saints we may be by the call of God, but yet ambiguous ones. God promises to complete the good work begun in us (Phil 1:6). The Church never becomes so adept at faithfulness, so sure of its vision of God that it rises above the need to be born, reborn, called, recalled. But continuing conversion is always at the center of the church’s agenda in any age [...] (because) the church is mission also in the sense that the church exists not for itself, but rather to sign, signal, and embody God’s intentions for the whole world. God is going to get back what belongs to God. God’s primary means of accomplishing this is through the church [...] (because) the community, in its corporate life, is called to embody an alternative order that stands as a sign of God’s redemptive purposes in the world” (Willimon, 2002:240).

On the other hand, the church as an eschatological community also embodies a set of values and moral practices that have a serious bearing on her inner and outer life as it is embodied in its mission. Bosch (1980:236) states: “Mission understood eschatologically wishes to place the Church’s calling and responsibility in the widest context imaginable: to the ends of the earth and the end of times, [...] mission as eschatological event reminds the Church that her task is never finished. Mission eschatologically understood is a constant stimulus for the Church. God’s plan for the salvation of the world is only disclosed in the Church’s missionary involvement in the world. While believers carry the message across all frontiers, the mystery unfolds itself to them. The Church’s mission into the world is Jesus’ only reply to the question about the date of the coming Kingdom (Acts 1: 6-8). To wait for the end never implies passivity but rather intense activity in the here and now. Involvement in the world is one of the chief ways of preparing ourselves for the Parousia.”

2.4.2 The church as a community of faith

In the same vein, as a community of faith, the church is called upon to profess and

exercise her faith in the face of societal faithlessness and skepticism. According to Scripture, “faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb 11:1). The current state of moral degeneration in our society needs to be confronted through the utilization of the tools of faith. The church should engage society on the basis of her sense of faith in God and in his unfailing love for all the global nations. It is only the church that can convey the God-centered message of his love for all, especially for those who have been broken by the various social ills.

Only on the bases of faith in God, Scripture and the Gospel, as well as the wisdom that is part of the church’s heritage, will she be able to develop different approaches in dealing with the multiplicity of the contemporary moral challenges. Above all, she will be empowered to learn lessons from the past and then utilize them in helping the communities to come to terms with issues that call for urgent attention. That approach will enable the church to employ creative mechanisms in dealing with our collective weaknesses in order to equip families and communities to confront effectively the demons that weigh down on our collective soul and psyche, and to help us as a society to exorcise them from our hearts and minds.

Moreover, the church in pursuit of her task must also demonstrate her original character, namely that she still embodies characteristics that were very abundant in the first decades of her existence during the first century CE, because at that time “the community was a living fellowship of love, the *koinonia* (Acts 2:42) liked all members in a brotherly fellowship, which found expression in mutual help, shared suffering, and in common ownership of property (Acts 2:45;4:32-36). This fellowship was tested and proved during the friction between Jerusalem and the Gentile Churches” (Kung, 1976:151). Furthermore, the concept of *koinonia* is a very significant facet of the Christian life, because it denotes “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint partnership, intercourse or the share which one has in anything [...]. Intimacy as well as benefaction jointly contributed, a contribution as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship, for the benefit of one.” (Thayer, 1961:352). Today, South Africa is in dire need of the practical application of this concept. Firstly, it should be applied within the body of Christ and secondly, it must be communicated to and shared with the needy, and help them to overcome the negative effects of moral degeneration.

2.4.3 The church as the model of community fellowship

The church could provide a model of community fellowship through its creative application of the practice of koinonia, so that those who for example are negatively affected by abuse within their home environments, may find in the church's practice of koinonia a new home where there is warmth, love, caring and the sharing of all necessary resources, be they spiritual, emotional, intellectual, or material. Again, through koinonia, the church could become an agent that enables the believers to create opportunities for the establishment of community or church-based occasions where healthy and strong social intercourse takes place across different racial, class, gender, and religious differences.

The Christian practice of koinonia should be understood as a paradigm that hastens the establishment or the rising up of the Kingdom of God from within the community. As a result, our diverse communities will be enabled to experience the living presence of God in and through the ordinary and daily experiences and interaction amongst Christians and the community at large. Hence, the practice of koinonia could become an all-inclusive system through which the church can render diverse services to the needy and, in so doing, the church will be in a position to help repair broken relations, families, hearts and minds.

Therefore, the central pillar in the church's task in our society that is still divided, is to embody and manifest God's powerful vision for our nation. Christians are thus tasked to be the harbingers of God's power, hope, purpose and activity in all facets of our national life. The author believes that it is God's vision to bring about unity, reconciliation and healing to South Africa, and to liberate her from all her social and moral ills. The church should proclaim boldly that God continues to rule and exercise his power in this universe, as well as in our national and personal life. Although the extent of moral decay appears to be escalating, we, as the community of faith, need to look beyond the current extrinsic state of affairs and allow our eyes of faith to impart within us a new vision for our society that conforms us to God's purpose, will and plan for our nation, including in the area of personal and collective morality. We need to be conscious of the power of the individual as well as the collective vision,

because “where there is no vision, people perish” (Proverbs 29:18).

As such, part of the church’s task in dealing with the prevailing situation in our land is to sensitize herself for a view of God’s reign from the vision of the apostle John, as it is well articulated in the book of Revelations. Most of this book’s chapters describe the entire universe from the perspective of heaven. The purpose of this vision is to show us, in beautiful symbolism, that all things are governed by the Lord on his throne. ‘All things’ must include our trials and tribulations. That is the reason for the description of the trials and tribulations, with the symbolic prediction of the trials and tribulations which the church must experience here on earth.

According to Hendriksen (1998:84), this vision of the universe that is governed from his throne precedes the symbolic description of the trials through which the church must pass; the throne is the very center of the universe, not the geographical, but the spiritual center. Here is the true foundation for astronomy: The universe of the Bible is neither geocentric, nor heliocentric or sagittario-centric, but coelocentric, that is, theocentric. Here, too, is the true philosophy of history: Newspapers and radio announcements provide people with the headlines and news flashes, while magazines add the explanations, but these explanations are, after all, in terms of secondary causes. The real mind, the real will, which, while fully maintaining the responsibility and freedom of individual instruments, controls this universe, is the mind, the will of the Almighty God. Nothing is excluded from his dominion.

2.4.4 The community and the practice of human rights

The idea of the human mind, will and responsibility can be best understood and appreciated within the broader system of human rights. Koyzis (2003:49) states that “according to liberalism, humanity has certain rights that inhere in each person as an individual. The individual is autonomous: that is, she pursues a rational self-interest as she thinks best. This is not to say that the community and its claims lack importance for the liberal. The more thoughtful and nuanced liberal acknowledges that healthy communities are necessary for the well-being of individuals. Nevertheless, the community’s claims are subsidiary to the rights of the individual. The individual claims to be able to remake the world and society at large in her own

image”.

The aforementioned liberal views on human rights have inherent limitations which manifest through the liberal tendency to deify human beings. Koyzis (2003:188) mentions that “a deification of the individual in liberalism has led to the fragmentation of North American societies and the increasing breakdown of marriages, families and other basic communities. The otherwise laudable emphasis on human rights has degenerated in our Western constitutional democracies into what Mary Ann Glendon has perceptively called ‘rights talk’, which is incapable of placing individual rights in the larger social context and understanding their relationship to mutual responsibilities”.

In South Africa, human rights talk began to dominate public discourse in the decades following the late 1960s and especially the 1980s, in that “there were signs by the early 1980s of a willingness on the Government’s part to turn the central legislation into an inter-racial body where the Colored and Indian communities were concerned; but the exclusion of Africans from the institutions of central government remained total, and the decade ended with a flurry of constitutional improvisations by the Government of PW Botha, which failed to convince any of the black or white opposition parties that they contained the germ of a solution. With the accession to power of FW de Klerk in 1989, the National Party appeared to be willing for the first time to negotiate a new dispensation with the real black leadership” (Davenport, 1991:550).

It was out of that process of political negotiations that South Africa formulated its human rights-based constitution that was finally adopted as law in 1996, following the first general democratic elections on 27 April 1994. According to Vorster (2004:283), “the nurturing of a culture of human rights must go hand in hand with the development of a new public morality. Therefore, it is now of the utmost importance that a new public morality should be developed. The core values of community life such as respect for life and property, human dignity, ‘ubuntu’, sexual morality, family life, the otherness of others, trustworthiness, honesty, diligence and many other values should be rebuilt in the new society. In this regard the state with its educational systems, the media and religious institutions have a special duty”.

Vorster (2004:285) continues by saying that “the task of the church to be engaged in critical solidarity involves three touchstones [...]. Firstly, the church should take sides with the poor and all who remain oppressed in any form. Secondly, the church should always defend human rights and thirdly, it should be self-critical if it wants to be credible in the eyes of the community at large. Critical solidarity is indeed a valuable definition of the prophetic role of the church in society and even more so at a time of transition”.

2.5 Conclusion

The task of the missionary church towards the Moral Regeneration Movement is indeed multifaceted. This task begins within the church; it includes the question of self-introspection, repentance, confession of sins, forgiveness, and faith in God and the church’s message. Most importantly, the church is called upon to practice a culture of fellowship, while appreciating God’s reign in the universe as it was incarnated by Jesus Christ. In so doing, the church will incarnate God’s vision, mission and power in the world and such a church is able “to rediscover its ancient faith in Yahweh, whose outstanding qualifications – which made him the Wholly Other – was founded on his involvement in history as the God of righteousness and justice who championed the cause of the weak and the oppressed (cf Deut 4:32-34f; Ps 82). [...] Since faith and life are inseparable [...], this liberation is to be effected at three different levels: from social situations of oppression and marginalization, from every kind of personal servitude, and from sin, which is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings” (Bosch 1991:442-443). Only then the church is really part of the *missio Dei*.

In this chapter, an attempt was made to provide a working definition of the concepts of church, mission, agape, moral regeneration and human rights. The meaning of the concept of the missionary church, as well as the task of the missionary church towards moral regeneration, was also explored. The purpose of such an exercise is to provide a broad and intellectually sound and adequate context for an in-depth investigation, analysis and interrogation of the systemic and historical processes that brought South Africa to the current state of moral degeneration. In the following

chapter, the focus will be on the present situation and the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MORAL REGENERATION MOVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

The question of moral regeneration in South Africa today is central to the whole collective life of the nation. However, the concept of 'moral' has to do with the question of ethical or virtuous behaviour. Therefore, before the situation and issues regarding moral regeneration can be addressed, it is imperative that the historical context and forces that produced moral degeneration should also be explored, so that there can be a clearer understanding of the issues that need regeneration and a profound appreciation of the role that was played in the past in the laying of a foundation and structures that later produced contemporary moral challenges. In other words, it is important to acknowledge that the current situation regarding moral regeneration and the issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement have a historical, ideological, structural, cultural, socio-political and economic rationale.

In this chapter, historical forces that produced moral degeneration, as well as the current situation regarding moral regeneration and the issues regarding the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement, will be explored in an interconnected approach. This will be done in order that the link between the past and the present South Africa can be understood through multifaceted perspectives.

In essence, the past and present are still heavily intertwined through the past's continual presence in the contemporary collective body politics, the deeply entrenched structures that refuse to die and obstinate attitudes that are hard to change.

3.2 The current situation regarding moral regeneration

Almost all South Africans are in agreement that, as a society, they are going through moral turbulence's. Some have even gone so far to say that South Africans have lost their moral compass and, instead, are in a state of moral confusion which needs to

be addressed by all significant societal institutions, such as families, schools, religious and cultural organizations, as well as government.

In his paper, entitled 'Pluralism and moral regeneration: building a community in South African perspective', Chapman (2004:5-6) makes an observation about the current situation that "the outsider visiting South Africa is immediately struck by extraordinary levels of security, where even relatively modest properties are protected by razor wire, ferocious dogs, and signs warning of armed response units. Although there is some debate over the actual as against the perceived levels of crime, it is clear from the figures like the murder rate that the society is, at least in some places, extremely violent. Other statistics (No reliable numbers and sources are provided in this matter), including the rate of HIV/AIDS infection, which affects up to one quarter of the total population, as well as the high numbers of reported rapes and incidents of domestic violence, also seem to indicate the breakdown of traditional family ties, which have historically formed the backbone of communities. Alongside this, there are other signs of social alienation, including high levels of gambling which the present administration appears to be doing little to discourage, as well as alcohol and drug abuse. Some of the causes of these social problems are undoubtedly the effects of the massive income differentials between the different population groups, as well as the demographic effects of these segregation policies of the Apartheid era where families were split up and whole groups forcibly deported. The legacy of Apartheid will last for a very long time; this is the prevailing situation within which the question of moral regeneration is interrogated and analyzed."

3.2.1 Individualism, communalism and collective morality

The matters involved in the moral regeneration process, however, transcend individuals or personal human shortcomings. Instead, this state of affairs raises a lot of challenges in that, as a new democratic society, South Africans are faced with the rapid secularization of their outlook and a secular, liberal political culture that is characterized by a wide-spread cancer of corruption and nepotism, more specific at local government level, as well as a Western ideology of individualism. By individualism is meant "a belief in the primacy of the individual over any social group or collective body, which suggests that the individual is central to any political theory

or social explanation. From this perspective, all statements about society should be made in relation to the individuals who compose it; strictly speaking [...] this view is usually underpinned by the belief that human beings are naturally self-interested and largely self-reliant, owing nothing to society for their talents and skills” 9(Heywood, 2002:190).

The behavioral and attitudinal manifestations that are associated with the philosophy of individualism in the South African society have resulted in a compound of negative effects for the collective state of morality, because the African majority in South Africa was historically organized on the basis of a culture that valued the spirit of communalism and collaboration or collective action, starting with the family members. The next level that also had a huge impact on individual moral life was the neighborhood or the village, which had a multiplicity of institutions or structures that consisted of different age groups, organized along the lines of gender, clan, and age. All of these were designed to influence the attitude, behavior, life-style and moral life of individuals.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has experienced moral degeneration primarily because the new constitution places huge emphasis on the rights of the individual, with little attention to collective community life, especially on shared values and norms. One example is that during a morning discussion held at the studios of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (Morning Live Show, 2011) it was revealed by the discussants from the organizations Love-Life and the Junior Doctors Association that many young girls become pregnant nowadays. Out of a total number of 1 000 girls, 66 will fall pregnant in South Africa, while the figure will be 12 girls for every 1 000 in other countries. Previously, this state of affairs was easily managed, or even prevented, through the workings of community/village and clan structures that were designed to form groups according to different age levels, where all young people felt a sense of belonging, accountability and responsibility. All group members acted in a manner that was meant to bring honor to their peers. Consequently, teenage pregnancies were rare, if not unheard of.

Clearly, these statistics demonstrate the depth of the moral challenges that young people are facing. The most significant fact that was mentioned during that show

(Morning Live Show, 2011) is that, in some instances, teenagers as young as twelve years old are beginning to experiment with sex. Moreover, young girls, starting from the ages of fifteen, are engaging in transactional sex with older men or are involved in what is normally referred to as trans-generational sex in exchange for money to pay for food, clothes, school and other family needs. Many of these needs are not met by the significant others, because some of the teenagers come from single-parent families, or child-headed families. To make matters worse is the fact that most of these girls are forced not to use condoms, hence the escalation in teen pregnancies. Even more alarming is the fact that the majority of these teenagers are getting infected with the HI virus.

During the Morning Live Show (2011), it transpired that many teenage girls are not only involved in sexual encounters with other teens or older men, but have now adopted a worrying behavior that is deeply connected with the question of the protection of women reproductive rights, namely the right to terminate any unwanted pregnancy. Unfortunately, these young girls now tend to use the provision of free termination of pregnancy services at state hospitals and community clinics as a form of convenient contraception. This means that instead of using the normal contraception available to all who may need them, the teens are now engaging in sexual intercourse without any protection at all.

As a result, many of them are getting infected with sexually transmitted diseases, like the HI virus, as mentioned before. Undoubtedly, South Africa will have to deal in the near future with another reproductive health crisis that will involve women who may have developed complications as the direct consequence of subjecting themselves to multiple terminations of pregnancy, in close proximity to each other, at a fairly young age. No one knows the long-term psychological effects on the future mental health of these young women, especially when they are going to enter into permanent relationships and begin to start families. What physiological complications will manifest, or will develop later on, is still unclear.

These reports follow the shocking news that dominated the media recently, whereby it was reported that three teenagers, namely a girl of 15, and two boys of respectively 16 and 17 years old, were discovered engaging in sexual acts on the

school grounds; they even recorded it live on their cellular phones. Initially, the girl opened a case of rape against the boys, but following further investigations, it transpired that all of them had engaged in voluntary under-age and illegal sexual intercourse.

3.2.2 Peer group pressure and its impact on the youth's moral choices

The incident mentioned under 3.2.1 is indicative of several matters that should be confronted if we are to deal with this challenge, for example the universal issue of peer pressure and curiosity of the majority of teenagers, as well as boredom and a lack of involvement in extramural activities, including sports and arts. Society should also interrogate the role of the media in its promotion of highly sexual material, such as movies, music videos and advertisements that especially target the youth and are based on sexually biased marketing and advertising approaches.

The attitude that is prevalent among some of the youth is that they have the right to do as they please, wherever and whenever they feel like it, and that sexual activity is their right and should be accepted as the norm. However, these ideas should also be questioned. Society needs to ask questions about the origins of these new values and ideas about the sexual life of the youth, including an investigation of their ethical bases. A very significant point to note is that it seems as if the girl involved in the aforementioned report comes from a single-parent household. The question to ask, not of the girl per se, but of the community at large, is what the role and presence of fathers in the lives of their children are. Where are the fathers of these teenagers? What kind of relationship do they have? Where are other significant men and women in the lives of the young ones? Issues of moral regeneration are not merely a reflection of the failure of individuals, they point to the breakdown of the influence and positive impact of the family, school, religious institutions, cultural and other social or community organizations on the youth.

The weekend newspaper, the Sunday World (2010), reported about a young man in his twenties who committed crimes under the pretense that he was celebrating his birthday party, misleading his would-be female rape victims. According to the paper, "top model Tinyiko Mathusa and Wendy Mbatha, an actress, fell victim to Mtshali's

trickery when he invited them to celebrate his birthday with him. After spending four hours with him, he bought them liquor [...], grabbed their belongings right in front of Mathusa and ran off. He made off with Mathusa's R8000 iPhone, an HTC Diamond screen cellphone worth R11 000, a wallet with US\$3 000 in it and bank cards [...]. (Fortunately they) escaped being raped by alleged serial rapist Mlungisi, 'Mr. Birthday Party' Mtshali [...]. (He) was arrested at a house in F-section, Kwa-Mashu last month [...] (after he) allegedly robbed, assaulted and raped 20 other women. He would lure one woman away from the 'birthday celebration' in the evening and take her to a hotel in Hillbrow or central Johannesburg under the pretext that he was fetching his sister or his luggage. Once inside the room, he allegedly raped his victims [...]. He has been charged with 20 counts of rape, as well as charges of kidnapping, robbery, and assault".

This case is a graphic description of the rape crisis in the South African society. The young male single-handedly committed a high number of rapes, but this does not include the numerous unreported rape cases and the hundreds of thousands that only become part of the annual crime statistics and are never solved in South African courts of law. Furthermore, the case highlights the fact that the majority of rapes are committed by the so-called ordinary guy next door or someone familiar, an acquaintance or even a longtime friend to the victim; it is not only a monster who lurks out there in the dark, waiting for the opportunity to pounce on an unsuspecting victim, who commits these crimes. Although such events do occur, the majority of cases point to the opposite.

3.2.3 Alcohol abuse and moral consequences

The case that was discussed above highlights the other serious problem in South African society that affects young and old alike, namely the matter of alcohol abuse. These young people, male and female, engage in alcohol consumption, albeit for purposes or reasons of socializing and fun. It is under such 'innocent' circumstances, though, that serious crimes are committed. Indeed, our society's liberal attitude towards liquor is one of the contributory factors that fuel serious crimes.

Alcohol abuse is so endemic in our society that the Western Cape Province has

become the world leader in the problem of foetal alcohol syndrome. According to the Medical Research Council (2007:4), “Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) was recognized as a distinct birth defect in 1973 (Jones et al, 1973) and has been identified as an important public health problem in certain regions and among specific population groups in South Africa. This is particularly the case for pregnant woman in poorer communities in the Western Cape, where it was considerably higher than the percentage found in other surveys of 42.8% versus 25% in the USA”. This is a serious condition that affects the foetus in the womb as a result of women who drink alcohol during pregnancy. Consequently, thousands of children are born with a variety of cognitive, psychological and medical conditions that greatly reduce their quality of life as well as their life expectancy.

The abuse of alcohol raises a number of questions; for example, if most women were indulging in alcohol, what impact would that have on the lives of their children, especially the girl-child? South Africa is well acquainted with the ravages of male alcohol abuse on family life, including its impact on the lack of provision for basic family needs, such as food, not to mention men’s inability to take care of other tertiary family needs that pertain to long-term financial planning. What are the serious consequences of alcoholic women, and mothers in particular, on their families?

During the reopening of Gauteng schools in 2011, the media also reported about an incident involving three teenage boys who were seen going to school in the morning, holding bottles of beer in their hands and drinking in full view of everyone. In the same week, the Gauteng Police Department conducted raids on school premises within the Soweto area, where they found teenagers in possession of alcohol, drugs and dangerous weapons. At one school, they uprooted dagga (marijuana) trees on the premises. These incidences indicate clearly that substance abuse has become a major moral challenge in the society.

3.2.4 Women and domestic violence

With regard to the question of domestic violence, South Africa is regarded as one of the countries with high levels of crimes against women. For the most part, many

social commentators and opinion makers tend to confine domestic violence as a phenomenon that predominately affects poor communities. Clearly that is not entirely truthful. A case in point is the matter involving a former executive member of the Gauteng Legislature, Mr. X, who, according to the Sunday World (27 February 2011: 10), had committed domestic violence. The newspaper reported that “Mr. X, former Gauteng housing MEC who is sought by the police on charges of assault, appeared at the Daveyton Magistrates Court for fraud with his ex-girlfriend and co-accused Joyce Morgan. Their case was postponed until the end of April. Sunday World can also reveal that (Mr. X) is also sought by the Hawks for another fraud case, which involves millions of Rands, allegedly embezzled in an AgriBEE deal. Last year, he was accused of assaulting Morgan [...] (and now recently,) in a fit of rage on Thursday afternoon, (he) entered the house (of his former wife and) started beating the helper, who is also his relative [...]. When (his wife) Jacky came out of the bedroom, (he) ‘slapped’ her and grabbed her by the throat and started banging her head against the wall. (Apparently) he is jealous that Jacky bought a new Mercedes Benz SLK. He even kicked the bumper of the Audi that belongs to Jacky’s daughter. A source close to the couple says his ambush visit breached the conditions of the restraining order”.

Again, the matter of Mr. X is a clear indication of the pervasive nature of the problem of domestic violence among all segments of our society, although poverty is usually regarded as the pre-eminent explanation or reason why poor families find themselves caught up in this web of abuse. In the matter involving Mr. X and his former wife, it is self-evident that they are wealthy people, yet their wealth has not prevented Mr. X from being accused of both assault and embezzlement. Clearly this case points to the overall problem of political corruption: This man was once one of the team that constituted the Gauteng’s Provincial Government; as such he should have known better, yet he is supposedly one of those who find themselves to be on the wrong side of the law.

3.2.5 Political power and the prevalence of corruption

The City Press (2011) reported on the health MEC of the Limpopo Province, Ms Y: “[...] on the same day she was fired, and with two bodyguards checked into the

luxury Pretoria boutique hotel and ran up a R 76 000 tab in three days, which the state settled. Y and her bodyguards checked into the 131 on Herbert Baker, a boutique hotel in Pretoria, on the afternoon of January 28, just a few hours after she had been axed by Premier Cassel Mathale. The party left three days later after running up a bill of R 75 870". The same paper reported that Y "is no stranger to controversy. In August 2009 she was forced to pull out of a deal to buy a second official car. The deal would have pushed her total expenditure on cars to more than R 1,3 million – about R400 000 more than she was permitted".

This extravagant behaviour by politicians in a country that has more than 25% of the population unemployed, with more than 3,5 million young adults unemployed and over 50% of the population who live below the bread line, is indicative of the moral crisis we are facing.

The case of politicians who are accused of breaking the law has serious implications for our national collective culture, because actions that are executed by politicians by and large have an impact on the level of political morality that ultimately becomes part of our political culture.

However, it is equally important to understand what is meant by political culture. According to Heywood (2002:200), "in its broadest sense, (it) is the way of life of a people; it encompasses that which is passed from one generation to the next by learning, rather than through biological inheritance. Political scientists, however, use the term in a narrower sense to refer to a people's psychological orientation, political culture being the pattern of orientations to political objects such as parties, government, the constitution, expressed in beliefs, symbols and values. Political culture differs from public opinion in that it is fashioned out of long-term values rather than simply people's reactions to specific policies and problems".

As a matter of fact, South Africa has evolved from a different political culture that was fashioned before the colonial era, but was altered during centuries of colonialism and Apartheid rule. The new post 1994 democratic dispensation created a different political culture that is still evolving and is characterized by a lot of contradictions. For instance, South African society has experienced a protest

organized by a group called 'The right to know', who protested against the proposed Protection of Information Bill that is under consideration in Parliament. The irony about this bill is that it is the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government that is now accused by activists of seeking to hinder free flow of State information. Yet it was the same ANC that used to accuse the former Apartheid government of censorship. The City Press (2011) reported the following: "State security minister Siyabonga Cwele has dominated headlines as the hawkish champion of the newly drafted Protection of State Information Bill. Cwele and his department have been enthusiastic supporters of the bill, which critics regard as a body blow for whistle-blowers and investigative journalism. Cwele has spoken out against the need for a public interest defense in the bill." This change of attitude of the current ruling elite is indicative of the effect of power on individual, institutional and collective values and behaviors.

It is within the political culture that some civil servants demonstrate the attitude of self-serving tendencies which has been adopted by some of the present political leadership and has somehow impacted on the current political culture and the processes regarding moral regeneration.

3.2.6 Politics and social divisions

We have a political culture that has given birth to multidimensional divisions which are difficult to eradicate. There are huge income differentials and the wealth gap is escalating at an alarming rate. Poverty is now endemic in our society, while a minority of South African citizens continues to accumulate and concentrate more wealth into their hands. No wonder that high levels of crime and a lack of human decency have come to characterize our society; especially our personal, institutional and collective moral fiber have suffered a heavy blow.

To illustrate this point, Meiring (2003:1227) argues that "all people need safe, stable environments in which they can play in the parks, go to the library, walk out the front door to be with other people, to help one another, to offer guidance to one another's children, to learn from each other, to enjoy one another, where children may learn to take responsibility [...]. (However,) for many years local communities were seedbeds

of division, of prejudice, and violence. Apartheid made people to distrust one another, distanced one from another.”

On a daily basis, communities are facing various challenges which stem from a lack of moral, for example crime, ranging from petty theft to serious ones that include bank robberies, murders, serious assaults, domestic violence and abuse, white collar crime and corruption, both in the private and public sector. Yet there is a lack of initiative on the part of the conventional societal moral agencies, such as the religious establishment, to confront the situation head-on. For the most part, most church or religious organizations have adopted a mentality that is focused on the inner workings or internal interest of their groups and faith system, rather than paying attention to both the inner life of faith and the external societal dynamics, because it is theologically and morally safer for them to focus on issues that may not raise a lot of controversy for the religious establishment.

3.2.7 Crime and the prevalence of violence

One issue that should be confronted is the murder rate in South Africa. The South African Crime Quarterly (2010:5) states the following: “The SAPS statistics suggest that over the past nine years, attempted murder rose during the 2002/03 reporting period. However, serious doubts remain about the veracity of the assault, attempted murder and even the murder statistics. It is therefore difficult to offer a clear reason for the changes in trends of these categories. The SAPS statistics show that since 1994/95, murder has reduced by 50%. The decrease of 7,2% in the absolute number of murders in the past year is the third largest year-on-year decline since 1995. One of the factors contributing to the decline in murders may be the 6,3% decrease in the number of aggravated robberies. Since almost 16% of murders in South Africa occur as a result of robbery, the decrease in aggravated robberies may have contributed to the decline in murders.”

Criminals will enter a residential property with the intention to steal, yet if they come across occupants of the house, who may be women and children, or even unarmed male occupants or senior citizens, they will often assault and even kill them brutally. Some people get killed for items such as a cellular phone, even though the owner

was not resisting the attempts of the criminals to acquire it unlawfully. The most disturbing feature about this issue is that South Africa is also experiencing more and more murders that are committed in homes by family members or people who are related to the victim. For example, some men kill their wives or partners, including the children. In the same vein, the media have reported on women who have arranged with criminals to murder their own husbands.

The issue of domestic or public social murders has also raised questions about the character of those committing such acts, for example, “people who commit acts of gratuitous violence may tend to be people who have weak inhibitions against using violence, and therefore act violently without having strong motivations to do so. Individuals who have personality profiles of this kind might include those who would be classified as psychopaths, scions-paths and people with attachment disorders or dis-social personality disorder.

“The quality of empathy is not uniformly distributed in any population. People with empathy deficits may not necessarily be restricted to those who are afflicted by psychopathy or one of the other pathologies that have been mentioned. Social and historical factors, as well as the cultural, community, organizational or peer group context also play a role in shaping violent behaviour. Some have argued that the capacity for empathy and identification is merely a potential and one that may or may not be brought into being through the appropriate facilitating environment.

“Empathy deficits might not be general attributes of an individual’s personality, but might be selective or situational. Thus, with some offenders, the lack of empathy might reflect ‘cognitive distortions’ which enable them to ignore the distress of the victims, though they retain the capacity for empathy in their interaction with others, an issue that has implications for the type of treatment programs which are appropriate. If ‘empathy’ and sensitivity are equivalent concepts, then evidence suggests that alcohol abuse might also be an issue that should be considered here. Holcomb and Adams found that ‘intoxicated murderers had higher personal sensitivity scores than sober murderers, suggesting that alcohol may help to nullify a person’s sensitivity’” (South African Crime Quarterly, 2010:8).

3.2.8 The effects of the Apartheid legislation on contemporary family life

It is important to note that the moral fiber of the nation was also affected by the impact of the migrant labor system, which was a piece of legislation with its associated regulations that had a devastating blow on the quality of life for families. It amounted to virtual control of the individual workers and their families, and as a consequence, that system of restrictions had a negative impact on the role of parents in discharging their parental duties with regard to the upbringing of their children. The author agrees that “many of the serious problems families are experiencing today are caused by economic, political and other factors ‘outside’ the family. The reverse is, however, also true: family life to a large extent determines what society will look like in the cultural, political, economic, educational and religious spheres, as the family is the source or the origin of any society. Within the family babies, children and the youth are prepared for life in the broader society. Should this preparatory work not be done properly, or if it is totally neglected, the whole community will pick the rotten fruit” (Van der Walt, 2003:259). Because of the past, a lot of people, to the detriment of their family, still maintain this practice today for financial benefit.

It is, therefore, not surprising that today, in a free and democratic South Africa, family life is in a state of rot; for example, in the letter written to the editor of the Sunday Sun by one of the readers, McDivett Tshehla (2011), it was pointed out that “our nation has all sorts of problems as a result of alcohol abuse. Taverns (drinking houses) are built next to churches and schools. Marriages are broken up as a result. And promising careers have taken a nose dive. Look at what has happened to our best soccer player, Mr. M. The guy was successful. He landed a lucrative contract at Tottenham Hotspurs. Instead of working hard and establishing him, he chose booze and his contract was terminated. Sugar Mamas sleep around with boys young enough to be their sons. During school time kids drink liquor and take the drugs”. Most importantly, the moral degeneration that flows from the abuse of alcohol has exposed itself in South Africa’s culture of lawlessness and violence.

Eventually, the entire South African society has become a society that is characterized by lawlessness. With regard to the effects of alcohol, every observer of

the state of morality in South Africa would attest to the billions of Rands that are lost due to thousands of people who die on South Africa's roads annually. One of the main causes of the road carnage is drunken driving, and the abuse of other substances such as drugs; for example, the Medical Research Council (MRC) published a report that recorded the findings of the South African Automotive Association, which stated that "the costs of traffic accidents nationwide amounted to R 112 billion in 2009, double the amount linked to accidents in 2008. Alcohol, responsible for 50% of the crashes, accounted for half the amount" (MRC, 2011:6). The most disheartening thing about drinking and driving is that the majority of those who violate the traffic rules are ordinary members of the public who normally regard themselves as law-abiding citizens.

3.2.9 Redefining family

In South Africa, the concept of 'family' has undergone profound changes today; it is now normal to speak of child-headed and single-parent households as a growing social feature of both rural and urban settings.

For most ordinary South Africans, especially Africans, the idea of belonging to a 'normal' family that is constituted by parents and their children, living in the same household, was and still is largely an ideal that has never corresponded to their reality. Many children have been born out of wedlock and others do not even know who their fathers are, because men constantly moved with companies to different locations, leaving behind their partners as a result of the migrant labor system which is now abolished, but whose legacy are still felt by people who were affected by this destructive phenomenon (especially contract workers).

This had negative consequences that affected the entire life of individuals, families and communities, as it robbed many children of the warmth, love, care, support and necessary discipline of a family. In some communities, many children do not know what it is like to grow up in a normal family with both parents physically present in the upbringing of their children. Most boys do not have the necessary role modeling that fathers provide, hence their negatively affected development. That is why South Africa is experiencing a huge challenge with young people who are in conflict with

the law, because they have no regard for law and order, nor do they have respect for family values or other people's property and, above all, they lack reverence for human life. In the same vein, many children in townships grow up under circumstances of serious challenge, as those whose parents are working, grow up without constant parental supervision; most parents leave their homes early in the morning and come back late, while some children are raised by Grandmothers who are no longer physically capable of providing adequate supervision.

3.3 Issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement

Consequently, we find ourselves confronted with historically diverse and contradictory issues that have a huge bearing on the question of the Moral Regeneration Movement, especially on reasons for its establishment. For example, the former President Thabo Mbeki could thus speak of the central importance of moral regeneration in his State of the Nation address on 8 Feb 2002: "The language of moral regeneration was to be used as a means of inculcating in us and our youth that service to the people, selfless commitment to the common good, is more valuable than selfish pursuit of material rewards. Productive investment is more valuable than aimless gambling in markets for derivatives. Payment for honest work is more fulfilling and sustainable than theft. Children and women are there to be respected, not to become targets of abuse" (Chapman, 2004:6).

In the same vein, Chapman states (2004:7) that "in the preparation for the launch of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) a few months after Mbeki's State of the Nation address, Jacob Zuma, Deputy President, spoke of the Movement in terms similar to those of Mbeki. He saw the project as that of reviving the nation's morality through re-establishing close-knit kindred feeling; in his speech he made much use of the African terms 'ubuntu' or 'botho' [...] (and said) our people have high moral values which are evident in all our cultures. We must transform the antisocial acts that threaten our country. The MRM recognizes and endorses this concern, and is a framework to encourage, facilitate, sensitize and network the response in every sector of our society. It envisages a confident community with a strong moral fiber. Its mission is to revive the spirit of ubuntu/botho, using all the values expressed in our Constitution."

In brief, for too long the people of South Africa have tended to focus on the physical manifestation of the inner loss of ubuntu/botho, such as the high crime rate (including murder, theft, rape, abuse, corruption, fraud, white collar crime, domestic violence), sexual immorality, HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, drug abuse and many more social dysfunctional misdemeanors, instead of turning all the attention to the consequences of the current constitutional dynamics that stress the importance of individual rights rather than collective norms and values.

3.4 What is the church's response to moral regeneration?

3.4.1 The people of God and moral regeneration

The fundamental response of the church to moral regeneration should be multifaceted. However, the primary response should first and foremost be that of the church taking the initiative and reclaiming her own unique and God-given identity in the world, namely as the bride of Christ and the people of God, so that she will be empowered to offer the inevitable and long overdue leadership role.

A number of intellectuals have expressed their concern and dismay over the years that it was the politicians, especially former President Nelson Mandela, who took the initiative of calling for the reconstruction and development of the soul. Of course all of this was articulated within the context of the Reconstruction and Development Program, which was the economic policy of the African National Congress, as it was preparing to assume leadership of the first democratically elected government in 1994.

It is important to acknowledge that the church is not just an institution, but is made up of individual Christians who believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The practical implications of that belief is that each Christian man and woman, young and old, should rediscover the mission of God and of Jesus Christ as he stated it to his audience when he said: "My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life" (John 10:10b).

Wright (2010:25) is of the opinion that “to ask the question, ‘what is the mission of God’s people?’ is really to ask, ‘for what purpose do those who call themselves the people of God actually exist?’ What are we here on earth for? The answer to that question has to be the mission of God, as God himself has a mission. God has a purpose and goal for his whole creation. Paul called this the ‘whole will of God’. And as part of that divine mission, God has called into existence a people to participate with God in the accomplishment of that mission. All our mission flows from the prior mission of God. And that mission arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated from his heart to ours. [...] (In essence,) mission is the global outreach of the global people of God, so when I speak of mission, I speak of all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose.”

It is imperative for the church to be focused on the mission of giving life to the world, as Jesus came into the world to impart God’s life to all humanity. In contemporary South Africa, the church, both at an individual and institutional level, should rediscover “the ethical dimension of the mission of God’s people. We are to be people committed to blessing others, walking in the way of the Lord, doing righteousness and justice, and representing God by living lives of practical holiness in the midst of the world [...]. This does not, of course, exclude the importance of verbal witness, the message we have to proclaim, because in the Gospel, Jesus said: ‘You are the salt of the earth’ (Mt 5:13), meaning that the believer is one whose life is worth following or imitating” (Wright, 2010:128).

3.4.2 The church and the need for unity

In the context of South Africa, there are questions that should be posed and answered, for example: What is the mission or the purpose of the church in the context of the moral challenges that South Africa is facing, more specifically arising from the history of the divisions of the past? The first and emphatic answer to that question is that the pre-eminent mission of the church of Jesus Christ in this land is the creation, promotion, fostering and maintenance of the spirit, attitudes and collective life of unity, which is one of several areas of concern.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the church to work hard in uprooting the vestiges of divisions, starting from within and then progressing to the outer world, confident in the propagation and work for the benefit of the family, community and national unity, because “the one, unique God is the principle and source of the unity and uniqueness of the church. The Fathers presented the church as the one people of God – Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian basis for the unity of the church is established by the saving act of the one God, in the revelation of the one crucified, risen, and glorified Christ, by the movement of the one Spirit of God and of Christ. By his death and resurrection Christ redeemed humankind, sent his Spirit upon it and formed human beings mystically into members of his own body. This unity given to the church from the divine initiative seeks to be expressed concretely in the life of the churches. It is an eschatological imperative which draws Christians to seek its fullest, visible expression in history” (Komonchak, 1989:1065-1067).

This unity is the means through which the church can reach all humanity, so that the issues of discrimination, sexism, racism, abuse, violence, crime, corruption and issues such as domestic violence, family breakdowns, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual immorality and, above all, the loss of human dignity, can be addressed comprehensively in the society. It is only a church that appreciates its own wounds and brokenness that will be God’s agent of healing in the world, starting with individuals, families and communities that are overburdened with poverty, disease, hunger and powerlessness.

That does not mean that there will ever be a uniform solution for all South Africa’s challenges, but rather that part of the church’s mission is to participate in the multitude of activities in order to expose and confront the idols of individualism and materialism that have engendered a culture of greed, selfishness and extravagance, and its associated attitudes that stand opposed to collective action, communal living and sharing.

The church should consciously seek to build structures within herself that promote the spirit of a single community, so that as she reaches out to the world, starting at the local and then national level, she could become a dynamic model of a community in which all differences are honored, accepted and even celebrated, as long as such

differences do not promote disunity and idolatry, be it the self-idolization, love of money over the love for God and one's neighbor, including the love of power and control.

The role of the church in a society like South Africa's, where diversity is entrenched in the constitution of the country, should be characterized by a new sense of self-perception that is predicated on the conviction that the church is "the center and agent of God's mission; for example, in Pauline captivity letters 'Ephesians' and 'Colossians', the Church is placed at the very heart of God's purpose to gather up all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). It is said not only to be an instrument of the Gospel, but part of the Gospel. The reason for this is clear, if often forgotten: God's reconciling activity in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:19) has as its goal not only individuals and the cosmos, but human beings with one another. The overcoming of alienation is to be manifested in the end of hostility between antagonistic groups. Reconciliation does not take place when groups of people merely decide to be friendly with one another, but when they form part of the same community, learning to submit their identity and forgo their ambitions for the sake of a common goal" (Kirk, 2009:35).

3.4.3 The church and the need for repentance

The church, as the family of God here on earth (Eph. 3:15), is supposed to be a living example of how our collective moral crisis should be addressed. For example, part of the response to moral regeneration should be about embarking on an intensive process of self-introspection, confession and repentance, and individual as well as institutional transformation, because the moral issues that have besieged the country are fully represented within the church and our Christian families. Perhaps some members of the church are ashamed of owning up to their own complicit conduct regarding certain moral issues, but the reality both within and outside the church is that all of us are impacted and affected by one or more of the moral issues that have gripped our collective soul.

Many Christian families are undergoing their own painful processes of internal divisions. Some have even succumbed to the weight of separation and divorce, while others are struggling to deal with the challenge of living with members who are HIV

positive or have had to face the pain of losing their beloved ones on account of AIDS; still others suffer from family abuse or violence. These issues do not belong to individual Christian families alone; rather, they belong to the church, because the church is part of the community, nation and world that are infected, affected and are even dying of AIDS-related diseases. The wounds of the nation are the wounds of the body of Christ too.

Part of the church's becoming God's mission in the wounded world is to embrace the world with its wounds, as well as to embrace the diversity that families contribute in making the world what it is. That also means the acceptance of people who come into the church with different ideological, theological and cultural backgrounds as the fruit of our witness. Thus, since the church is a witnessing community, "we are all agreed that the 'stumbling block' of the Gospel will always be with us. While we do seek wider community with people of other faiths, cultures and ideologies, we do not think there will ever be a time in history when the tension will be resolved between belief in Jesus Christ and unbelief. It is a tension that divides the Church from the world. It is a tension which also goes through each Christian disciple, as each is unable to say that his or her faith in Jesus Christ is perfect. There is great urgency for seeking a community beyond our own. We must seek the wider community without compromising the true 'stumbling block' of the Gospel" (Saayman:1984:108). By 'stumbling block' is meant issues that constitute our own human shortcomings and weaknesses.

In fact, one of the stumbling blocks that the church in South Africa is called upon to remove is the facade of self-righteousness; she should not be ashamed of embracing her own human weakness as she leads families, the community and nation in fulfilling her duty to serve.

There are so many opportunities that the national wounds bring upon the church; each aspect of moral degeneration and the issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement, or individual and structural sinfulness, provide the church with an opening to start afresh and prepare herself to serve. The Gospel offers an excellent illustration where Jesus says: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not

so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:25-28). In this passage, “the career Jesus prescribe for his followers is one of service, (hence) individuals whose lifestyle reflects prestige ascribed to them because of their social position find servant-hood a very uncomfortable career” (Lingenfelter & Meyers, 2003:97).

3.4.4 South Africa and her moral (or immoral) character

The situation and issues regarding moral regeneration speak of our nation’s collective shadow and broken relationships, whether that is found within or between racial, class, gender or any other divide. At the same time, the nature of our relational and institutional brokenness serves as a metaphor for the deep sense of estrangement that exists between humanity and Divinity. This state of affairs between men and God is well captured in the collection of work edited by De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio, wherein Adrio König (1994:108-9) explicates that “there are two basic aspects of the relationship of humanity with God, which flow directly from the nature of God and which define human nature. As covenant partners of God we are different from God and must respond in complementary fashion to the divine initiatives. As the image of God, again, humans must be analogous to God in their lives, values, and lifestyle, thereby representing God in the world, loving as God loves. The essence of humanity is determined by these relationships. This means that people are relational beings, and their relations must be lived in love, because God is love. It means that they must be committed to God, to other people and to nature. Because all have the same human nature, all are equal. Christians will therefore work for an open, free, just society in which people have equal rights and opportunities, in which above all they care for one another as individuals and groups”.

König (1994:108-9) is indeed correct in predicating human relationships within the context of God’s love for all humanity and especially by utilizing the notion of the *imago Dei* (God’s image). This means that, in the context of our new South Africa, the responsibility that we all have is to seek ways of incarnating God’s love within the

structures that manifest and even to promote our collective brokenness. In short, the working of God's love within each individual Christian and the church will ultimately lead to our individual, family and societal transformation, restoration and healing.

Moreover, South Africa has another, equally significant responsibility: It is important to note that the notion of the image of God has implications for the manner in which all Christians relate to each other and the world. This means that all the issues concerning the society at large that have led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement should be dealt with adequately, because "God created us to represent God on earth. We are to make God visible, to live like God. There is no question of an identity between us and God; the distance and difference implied by the covenant relationship is too great. But we speak of an analogy despite the difference; because God is love, we must also love, because God is holy, we must be holy, because God is merciful, patient, righteous, and faithful, we too must be all these" (König, 1994:108).

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt was made to explore South Africa's past and the manner in which the previous era impacted on the present situation. The current situation and the issues regarding moral regeneration have also been analyzed; examples that have been used, are issues such as youth pregnancy, alcohol and family breakdowns.

The focus was also placed on the church's response to moral regeneration, specifically on how the church is placed in a situation whereby she is called upon to help individuals, communities and the nation at large to take a new and fresh look at the nation and the manner in which the church relates within and outside her close network. It was emphasized that a fresh look at the state of the nation should begin within the body of Christ and that it should take the heavy responsibility of leading the nation in the confession of sin, as well as come up with practical programs for repentance, reconciliation, transformation and the overall development of the country's people and the national institutions.

In the following chapter, the focus will be on the mission-focused family as the cornerstone of moral regeneration. A definition of the mission-focused family will be provided, as well as the conceptualization of a family from an African and a Western perspective. Lastly, I shall address the role of the mission-focused family towards communities or society.

CHAPTER 4: MISSION FOCUSED FAMILIES AS A CORNERSTONE FOR MORAL-REGENERATION

4.1 Introduction

The question of moral regeneration is primarily a family and secondly a societal problem. It is therefore significant for families to have a clear sense of their mission. When families are focused on this mission, there is hope for society, as the challenges that have been brought about by the absence of parents, especially fathers, can then be addressed.

In this chapter, the focus will first be on important concepts, like God's love, the fall of Adam, the Ten Commandments, the concept of the covenant and then, more specifically, the fifth commandment.

Thereafter, the focus will be on the definition of the mission-focused family and the concept of 'family' from both the African and Western perspectives.

Furthermore, the role of Christian families towards their communities will be explored by the analysis of issues like agape, God's will, God's Kingdom, the Incarnate Logos of God and modeling as a means to reach out to a sinful humanity.

Of paramount significance is the role of Christian families in their communities, especially by putting God first, collaborating with communities and building community networks in the context of our heterogeneous culture. This should be done by way of inclusion, mediating and modeling the ideal, morally sound mission through Jesus Christ.

4.2 Definitions of mission-focused families in the light of Deut 6: 1-25 and Eph 5: 22-23

Firstly, every human family has its own mission, whether it is a well-known and stated mission or not. This sense of family mission flows from the first human family in the world, which came into existence as a result of God's love. The family

consisted of Adam and Eve, who gave birth to Cain and Abel later on. God's love was manifested in the fact that he did not only choose to express it in the creation of the universe and all that constituted nature, but that He went a step further by demonstrating it through the outpouring of his blessing upon the first human family when He said to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."(Gen 1:28)

The problem of sin, though, robbed this first family of the benefits of his blessings, especially of its close relationship with the loving God. This relationship was thrown out of God's original plan, because "God's human creatures choose to rebel against their creator, distrusting his benevolence, disobeying his authority and disregarding the boundaries he had set for their freedom in this world. This produced radical brokenness in all the relationships established in creation. Human beings hide from God in guilty fear. Men and women can no longer face one another without shame and blame. The soil comes under the curse of God, and the earth no longer responds to human touch as it should [...]. After the floods, God renews his promise to creation [...], (yet, in Genesis:11,) the Babel story presents us with people who seem intent on invading the heavens, resisting God's will for them on earth. The result is chaotic dividedness [...]. Human beings are adding to their catalogue of evil as the generations roll past – jealousy, anger, murder, vengeance, violence, corruption, drunkenness, sexual disorder, arrogance technology and culture are advancing, but the skill that can craft instruments for music and agriculture can also forge weapons of violent death. Nations experience the richness of their ethnic, linguistic and geographical diversity along with confusion, scattering and strife" (Wright, 2010:65).

In essence, the relation between the human family and God became strained because of the breaking of God's law, continual disobedience and overall sin, and that inevitably led to humanity becoming more and more immoral.

4.2.1 Family life and God's Ten Commandments

It is important to note that disobedience to God's laws or commandments is at the

core of moral regeneration. Hence Moses was given certain commandments by God in the Old Testament.

In this chapter, the general theme of the commandments will be focused on briefly. Thereafter, there will be a specific focus on the fifth commandment and its implications on morality and family life in particular.

The expression “Ten Commandments’ is a translation of the Hebrew expression ‘ten words’ that is found in Ex 34:28 and Deut 4:13; 10:4. Traditionally, the Ten Commandments are known as the Decalogue. According to the Deuteronomy texts, the expression applies to the commandments in Deut 5: 7-21 that were written on two tablets of stone (Deut 5:22). The expression is secondary in Ex 34:28, since the number of commandments in Exod 34:14-26 is twelve, not ten. Finally, the expression refers to the commandments given in the theophany on Mount Sinai (Ex 20: 3-17).

The legal form of the Ten Commandments is significant. It is a series of apodictic laws, in other words laws that impose an obligation directly on a person. They command the person to perform or refrain from performing a particular action that the legislator considers desirable or harmful. These apodictic laws have two forms. The first form is in the third person, for example: “No one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness” (Deut 17:6). The second form is in the second person, for example: “You shall not have intercourse with your father’s wife” (Lev 18:8).

Although the apodictic laws are rather exceptional in the ancient Near East, they are characteristic of Israel. Moreover, the second person forms, in as much as they express the basic religious attitude of an entire people, are unique to Israel. These second person singular forms offer a dimension of intimacy; here Yahweh speaks directly to the individual. According to the introduction (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6), Yahweh identifies himself as one who has liberated slaves who now constitute his covenant people. Yahweh assumes and surpasses the position of the tribal elders. Israel is called upon to obey, not only because these regulations are for the good of the tribe, but also because Yahweh has intervened decisively in their lives.” (Komonchak, 1989:1005-6).

Hence, these Ten Commandments serve as basis for the development of the entire covenant that God instituted between himself and the children of Israel. Most important of all is that there exists a high degree of intimacy between God and Israel that shapes the mutual expectation of both parties.

4.2.2 Family life and God's covenant

The concept of 'commandments' is also connected to the other important concept, namely 'covenant'. In brief, "the covenant concept was already extremely important for Israel's religious consciousness [...]. It is particularly significant that the initiative for making the covenant proceeds from Yahweh and that the covenant appears as a solemn pledge made by God. Yahweh chose Israel from all nations of the earth and entered into an intimate relationship with it" (Ringgren, 1966:118).

On the other hand, the message of Christianity is centered on the belief that God also took the initiative of seeking sinful humanity and gave Jesus Christ his Son as a sin offering, so that God's new laws will be written in the hearts of all who believe in Jesus Christ, as "the Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: 'This is the covenant I will make with them (believers in Jesus) after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds'" (Hebr 10:15-16).

It is of paramount importance that the contemporary missionary church should redefine the concept of the covenant so that it can begin to have a fresh meaning for the Christian community across denominational lines. Then the concept should be presented to the broader public or nation, so that the nation's religious consciousness can be transformed, especially the consciousness of those who are not members of the body of Christ.

This should be done in such a way that members of the community may be able to repent and develop a religious consciousness that is responsive to the Good News and will engender a sense of reverence for God and moral responsibility, so that all community members will be able to take the initiative in confronting problematic

issues within families and the community at large, especially matters encompassing cultural and ideological practices that promote and sustain moral degeneration.

It is true that the concept of the covenant cannot be applied or interpreted today in all cases or circumstances as it was dealt with in ancient societies. The mission-focused family should rather draw inspiration from the values inherent in it and then seek to challenge the current collective value system. In so doing, values such as love, justice and righteousness should be investigated and interpreted to challenge current selfishness and injustice, which undoubtedly leads to the perversion of family and social relationships.

This process of redefinition of the covenant concept should be predicated upon the Old Testament Decalogue, so that it will become incumbent upon the Christian community, and especially Christian families, to revive the significant role of the Decalogue in maintaining sound and godly families, as well as healthy community relations.

4.2.3 The Decalogue and its relevance to family and community relations

The matter of respect for God's laws or commandments is central to the creation and maintenance of godly relations, because "the Decalogue is unique among the Pentateuch legal codes in expressing what is most fundamental and essential in the maintenance of man's relationship to God and society; the first four stipulations concern especially the worship of God, the remainder govern the life of the human community." (West, 1971:146)

Today, our society and the world are in desperate need of the rediscovery of the 'fundamental and essential' laws that are given and inspired by God in order to govern all human relations, especially the family.

According to the Decalogue, the fifth commandment is the one that is the foundation upon which the life of the community is based. That means that in a society like South Africa, where moral degeneration is at its worst, families are at the forefront of dealing with the negative repercussions of a lack of respect in the youth for parents.

In some instances, it is the youth, or even children, who are experiencing abuse and violation of their human rights. Therefore, mutual respect is of cardinal importance if the tide of erosion of good morals is to be stemmed in the country. That level of respect can only come about if the mission-focused family seeks God's inspiration in its endeavor to manifest agape to all in need of God's love.

Moreover, the family of today needs the creative and continuous influence of the Christian family, which in turn will influence the entire community through the teaching and practice of the Bible. It is precisely through God's laws as found in the Bible that our society can be empowered to deal with our contextual challenges, because the Bible itself is capable of inspiring our families to seek the ethical and morally correct path. In the context of the Old Testament, "these particular laws were drawn up by Moses under divine inspiration for the specific use of Israel in as much as they make demands upon Israel on the grounds of its election to be the holy nation of Jehovah, which go beyond the sphere natural rights, not only prohibiting every inversion of the natural order of things, but requiring the manifestation of love to the infirm and needy out of regard to Jehovah" (Young, 1964:75).

The most fundamental aspect of God's laws is that it required from the elected children of God to manifest love towards the weak, needy, sickly, poor, slaves and aliens, to mention but a few. The majority of our societal and family problems stem from the abuse of the most vulnerable members of society, more especially within the domestic sphere; this means that those who are supposed to offer them love, are unable or incapable of giving the love that is expected of them.

Consequently, the matter of moral regeneration within our families and the broad environment is faced with the huge challenge of the conflict of the law, in that the Decalogue was inspired and given by God in order to be used specifically by Israelites as the chosen children of God.

On the other hand, for the missionary church to bridge the gap between the era of Moses and the one of today (which is based on a secular constitutional order and legal outlook that is essentially created and inspired by mere human beings) is quite a theological and an institutional challenge. It is within this context that the

missionary church, together with Christian families, is expected to draw inspiration from the Decalogue and use its lessons as a way of challenging the current moral relativism that is dominant in families and the society.

It is true that the prevalence of lawlessness is at the core of moral degeneration, as much of what constitutes immorality in society falls squarely within the broad spectrum of individual misdemeanors that relate to disrespect of family and social norms, values and laws, especially the laws of God as embodied in the Bible, which ultimately manifest in disrespect of government laws. However, the most fundamental need in South African context is the need for love and honor.

It is, therefore, incumbent upon the missionary church to seek inspiration from God, so that, through missionary activities, she can also inspire families, including their young and old, to seek direction regarding the managing of human relations that are based on the Word of God and his laws. In other words, the missional church should aspire to become an agent of creating a new covenant community of love in which the love of God will become a principle in the governing of life decisions within and between families and different communities, without discriminating between community members on the bases of race, ethnicity, gender, class and political affiliation.

In the Old Testament, the concept of covenant community had a special and dynamic significance for its members. To all successive generations of the Israelites who received God's laws in the wilderness, the meaning of the covenant was based on their sense of belonging: "To be an Israelite means to be a member of this covenant community. Israel is no longer a people in the strictly ethnic sense, the progeny of one family line, but a holy nation whose primary bond is one of covenantal polity rather than kinship. The laws of the covenant represent the borders of Yahweh's kingdom. To step outside those laws is to remove oneself from the protective sovereignty of Yahweh. Similarly, to be an Israelite means to be a member of a covenant community. Each individual Israelite does not and cannot stand alone, but is also bound to be the covenant brother or sister." (Mann, 1944:104) At the core of this covenant community is the principle and practice of unity and the belief that no one should stand alone or find himself or herself isolated from the community

warmth, love, acceptance, solidarity and responsibility.

The missionary church, including the Christian family, is compelled to be conscious of their standing, as the contemporary covenant community is founded on the New Covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ; He said to his disciples during the last supper, before he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20)

On the other hand, this community is one that is driven by the commandment of love, as Jesus Christ commanded his disciples very explicitly: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13: 34-35)

4.2.4 The role of honor in building a family life as captured in the fifth commandment

Where there is love, there is bound to be honor. It is very important to note that, as the children of God, or as a new family of God, the disciples are called upon to honor Christ and his words, as well as to honor each other in the Lord.

In terms of the Decalogue, the question of honor is located within the family structure; hence God said: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Exod 20: 12) This commandment is very cardinal, as it is located in the center of the law. It therefore becomes a bridge between the commandments that are connected with God and his relationship to his children, and those that are concerned with the manner in which God expects his children to relate to each other.

The fifth commandment, in other words, is the basis of all laws that relate to the interaction between people and is expected to be observed within the fundamental unit of society, namely the family, before its positive effects can be extended to the society as a whole.

One of the important areas of focus on the fifth commandment is that it was given by

Moses to a group of people whose culture was deeply shaped by the attitudes of patriarchy, but Moses said to all members of this society that women should be honored in the same vein as men. This seems to suggest that in the heart of the Decalogue, God was also communicating to the children of Israel the importance of gender equality between men and women. Yet the whole society of the Near East continued for generations to value the male gender higher than the female. Even when Jesus Christ came into the world, He was operating within a male-dominated cultural system.

It is important to note that there is a specific promise that is attached to the fifth commandment, namely that the one who observes it will reap the blessing of longevity in the land of the living. To honor one's parents is to put oneself in a position of experiencing the gift of life, to enjoy the pleasures of life in the land, or to derive the blessings that the land offers to those who are living according to God's laws. In other words, the land is God's means of giving his children in general, and youth who respect their parents in particular, sustenance, wellbeing, wealth, health, and social, economic and political security, as well as spiritual growth and overall development.

In this commandment, both the subjective and objective interconnections can be observed between the individual, his or her family and the collective family or society. Through children honoring their parents, society will benefit by way of healthy socio-cultural relationships, for if the young respect their elders, they in turn will raise a generation of respectful children. In this way, there will develop a culture and a moral way of life whereby mutual honor between young and old will be an integral facet of the collective culture, thus starting within the family and extending to the whole society.

If children grow up in a society where the principle of honor is inculcated in the mind set of the young, it will become easy for them to extend the same attitude towards strangers within the community and to anybody else they interact with, either in the work environment, field of play, at a place of learning or any other social setting. This means that a society that prizes honor and creates family structures in which such a value is held in high regard will definitely be empowered to deal with social ills that

stem from all manner of deviance's, which is something that society in the 20th century lacks.

It seems as if there is a huge lack of respect within families. Either parents do not teach the value of honor to their young, or those parents who do their best in raising their children in the fear of God encounter resistance from the youth that resist moral ethical education, or are restricted by other social forces that are designed to frustrate their endeavors.

The role of mission-focused families to assist other families within the community in pursuing their mission, namely to help their young understand God's law, is indisputable, because our current culture is saturated with the philosophy and ideology of children's and human rights. It becomes more daunting for Christian families to place God's law in the center of societal discourse regarding the pre-eminence of God's law, because of the potential conflict between the ancient and contemporary world-view.

4.2.5 The role of the missionary church in shaping families to be mission-focused

The South African society is characterized as one in transition, whereby its collective culture is fluid and not anchored in a spiritual foundation that is commonly agreed upon. The role of the mission-focused family in moral regeneration can never take place in isolation from the broad work of the missionary church, especially in a society that is dominated by numerous contradictions in all areas of life, be it politics, economics, religion or general life issues.

The challenges that are mentioned above are even more pronounced in the current democratic society in which the majority of adults are unemployed. Most of those who are employed, work far from home and spend most of their time commuting to and from work, which deprive families of quality time. Some unemployed parents, or other adults within families, seek solace in alcohol and illicit drugs.

This state of affairs leaves children unsupervised and vulnerable to abuse, both from adults and other children. As a result, young boys and girls are demonstrating

excessive anti-social tendencies currently.

It is in this context of dysfunctional families and broken community bonds that questions like the following arise: What is meant by mission-focused families? How does a family discover its mission? What are the central elements of the family mission? Who is responsible for ensuring that a family's level of awareness is raised? How do families constitute the cornerstone of moral regeneration? What is the meaning of 'family' in an increasingly global village? How can families create the space through which they can become centers of peace, unconditional love, care, connection, rest, values, integrity, discipline and godliness?

Acquiring the abovementioned values will be daunting for the majority of South African families, as the questions that are raised have a huge impact on the contemporary South African conceptualization of family, as well as their view of individual human life in general as it is experienced in families. South Africa, like many countries in the world, is currently experiencing the process of moral decay that manifests itself in uncontrolled sensuality, self-centeredness, disdain for traditional values and an obsession with satisfying bodily desires and fleeting passions of the day.

How does the definition of a mission-focused family, as perceived in ancient Biblical texts (like the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and the book of Ephesus in the New Testament), connect with the state of the family in contemporary South Africa? What is the role of African theological discourse in envisioning mission-focused families as the cornerstone of moral regeneration? The answer is important, "[...] for theological consciousness presupposes religious tradition and tradition requires memory and memory is integral to identity: without memory we have no past and if we have no past, then we lose our identity [...], we have a different perspective. Identity is important. Dignity and self-worth are essential for a healthy personality (and family), but our identity and dignity are derived primarily from our relationship with God" (Gehman, 2005:366).

To honor a parent has a significant impact on the way in which the sense of family memory and consciousness is influenced positively, especially in the way in which

families relate to each other and shape their own value system.

One is confronted by a number of questions that have a bearing on the state of family in South African society, for example: How does the contemporary South African family relate to, connect or continue with the process of forming, organizing, developing and sustaining itself along traditional patterns, as encapsulated in the theological paradigm of African Traditional Religion? To what extent do the Biblical explications and expectations of family (as an institution that is tasked with the responsibility of executing primary socialization duties to its members) affect South African family life, its norms, morals and values, or enhance the African sense of family morality and identity, as well as their mission?

4.2.6 The relevance of the Old and New Testament for contemporary families

In this subheading, more questions that are equally important can be asked, like: What can South African families learn from the texts of the Old Testament and New Testament regarding family life? How can families derive their sense of mission from the Bible?

Firstly, according to Deuteronomy 6, the Lord God of Israel gave the Israelites a series of commands, decrees and laws that are meant to govern and regulate family relations, especially the relationship between parents and their children. Furthermore, the laws encompass the whole set of interrelated national activities between the temple system, neighbors and broader community organs, including Israel's disposition towards foreign gods; all of these laws are anchored within a strong Israelite historical tradition. Hence, God expects parents to be instrumental in teaching his laws to their children, as is written: "These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed to me (Moses) to teach you to observe in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life, [...] (as such) impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when walking along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. And if we are careful to obey all these laws before the Lord our God as he has commanded us that

will be our righteousness.” (Deut 6:1-2; 7; 25)

4.2.7 The agape principle and family moral life

Although all the abovementioned laws and commands have to be obeyed, most important of all is that the supreme principle of love or agape is at their core, as encapsulated in the words: “Hear oh Israel: the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts.” (Deut 6: 4-6) Therefore, the core element in the definition of mission-focused families is the love of God.

It is imperative for families to realize that they are loved by God and that God expects from each family member, especially from senior members, to be a model of love for the other members of the family, as well as to demonstrate love to the neighbors. It is very important for families to realize this, because “Jesus is not interested in universal, theological or poetic love. For him love does not consist primarily of words, sentiments or feelings. For him love means primarily the great, courageous deed. He wants practical and therefore concrete love. Hence according to Jesus, love is not simply love of man but essentially love of the neighbor. It is a love, not of man in general, of someone remote, with whom we are not personally involved, but quite concretely of one’s immediate neighbor. Love of God is proved in love of neighbor, and in fact love of neighbor is the exact yardstick of love of God. I love God only as much as I love my neighbor” (Kung, 1968:256-257).

South African families, especially Christian families, should seek God’s love, because there is no other solution to the moral decay we are experiencing than the possession of God’s love. The Bible is the only vehicle for the South African nation to access and learn about the love of God, because “the Bible emphasizes what love does more than how love feels. This is no doubt why those who translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek chose the colorless agape over the strong, vibrant eros and the warm, affectionate philia. Agape had this going for it: It emphasized choice, action. The others did not. Eros, not to be restricted to contemporary definitions of the erotic or sexually-oriented affections, was so passionate as to be

compared with intoxication. There was no choice, no will, no freedom for the man (or woman) seized by the tyrannical omnipotence of eros. But agape referred to a free and decisive act determined by the subject himself, not by the drawing power of the object, as in the case of passionate eros or warm, but duty-bound philia. The primary characteristic of Biblical love is action.

“In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, loving is often linked with obeying – the outward response of an inward condition of love. We are commanded to love: ‘You shall love the Lord your God [...]. You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ (Deut 6:5; Matt 22: 37-39). ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments’ (John 14:15). ‘For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments’ (1John 5:3; 2John 6). The first question Scripture asks is not, how do you feel about this person? But, rather, what choices must you make concerning this person?” (McQuilkin, 1989:22)

It is, therefore, important that the church as an institution, as well as individual Christian families, begin to propagate the centrality of human choices that everyone makes from day to day, especially in the arena of decision making. All human beings have been granted the ability to make choices whenever they are confronted with complex issues; it becomes pertinent for communities to know that they do not have to make the wrong, unethical or immoral choices.

Similarly, the Biblical understanding of love is predicated on actions, hence there can be no true Biblical love without God’s love as driving force and power behind every individual action and conduct. The starting point should be that, in order to confront the moral quagmire we find ourselves in, Christians should take their position as God’s beloved children very seriously, “for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). For this reason, Christians should demonstrate their love for God and their neighbor by giving themselves in the service of the community, especially to those families that are undergoing tremendous stress due to a lack of moral ethical judgment on their part. It is only when individuals act according to the Bible that the love of God is transformed from a Biblical law to a practical reality, both for the believer and unbeliever.

Christian love is about putting the fundamental teaching of the Bible into action; for example, in Ephesians 5: 22-23 in the New Testament, the apostle Paul wrote: “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.” In these verses we encounter a model of practical family life and how the principal members of the family should relate to one another and to the Lord. It is very important for families to locate their collective family norms, traditions and culture under the total submission of God and Jesus Christ our Lord, as well as upon the spirit and practice of love, because no one is perfect; both young and old will commit errors from time to time, or say words that might hurt other family members. In some instances, family members may even execute deeds that may not only be unacceptable to others, but may even be harmful, shameful and devoid of love.

4.2.8 The missio Dei and God’s will

In essence, the foundation of the mission-focused family is God’s mission as it is embodied in the Holy Bible. It is incumbent upon the family who believe in God, his Son and the active presence of the Holy Spirit to submit to the will of God and the teaching of the Word of God, so that they can become God’s agents in advancing his mission in the world, according to God’s will, because “God wills nothing for himself, nothing for his own advantage, for his greater glory. God wills nothing but man’s advantage, man’s true greatness and his ultimate dignity. This then is God’s will: man’s well-being. From the first to the last page of the Bible, it is clear that God’s will aims at man’s well-being at all levels, aims at his definitive and comprehensive good: in Biblical terms, at the salvation of man and of men. God’s will is helpful, healing, liberating, saving. God wills life, joy, freedom, peace, salvation, the final, great happiness of man: both of the individual and of the mankind as a whole. This is the meaning of God’s absolute future, his victory, his Kingdom, which Jesus proclaims: man’s total liberation, salvation, satisfaction, bliss. And this very radical identification of God’s will and man’s well-being, which Jesus took up from the standpoint of God’s closeness, makes it clear that there is no question of putting a new patch onto the old clothing or of pouring young wine into old wineskins. Here we are faced with something new and it is going to be dangerous to the old” (Kung, 1968:251).

For the same reason than the abovementioned, moral regeneration in our society will become a reality if individuals seek God's will for themselves and their families; that will have a direct impact on the communities, so that the old, unacceptable behaviors can be done away with and buried.

On the other hand, when individuals or families as a whole have behaved in a manner that is highly reproachable and indecorous, and after they have repented or accepted responsibility for what they have done or left undone, a need for a new beginning becomes the dominant desire and feeling, because "somewhere deep inside us we seem to know that we are destined for something better. Now and again we catch a glimpse of the better thing for which we are meant, for example: When we work together to counter the effects of natural disasters and the word is galvanized by a spirit of compassion and an amazing outpouring of generosity; when for a while we are bound together by our caring humanity, a universal sense of ubuntu, then we experience fleetingly that we are made for togetherness, for friendship, for community, for family; that we are created to live in a delicate network of interdependence" (Tutu, 1999:213).

This means that, as individuals and members of families, we are capable of doing good towards other members of society and that, as Christian families, we have the God-given capacity to pursue our mission in a manner that seeks to serve the needs of other families, especially those that are not Christian. Therefore, the definition and meaning of family becomes crucial.

4.3 What is a family? African versus Western thinking

It is possible for everyone to live in a community that is characterized by relationships that can best be described as consisting of close interconnectedness between individuals. Such a network of relationships is the product of interaction between families. But what is a family, as conceptualized by African and Western perspectives?

Firstly, 'family' from a Western point of view will be defined. According to Western thinking, "family is the nuclear family – a group that consists of a couple and their

children, usually living apart from other relatives; variations on this pattern are common. Death and divorce leave many families with only one parent. An elderly grandparent may join the household. Economic problems may force a married child to bring his or her spouse and children to live with the family of orientation. Or a daughter, still living at home, may have a child. In other cases, an aunt or uncle may join the family, or a widowed man with children may ask his unmarried sister to move in and help care for the children. When, as in most of these cases, the family is a group which consists of one or more nuclear families plus other relatives, it is called an extended family. The intact nuclear family is the most typical of the (Western) middle class and upper middle classes, whereas the single-parent family is more common among the lower classes. Single-parent families are associated with high rates of divorce and separation, illegitimacy, and the unemployment of males. The extended family is also more common among the lower classes, owing mainly to economic conditions" (Popenoe, 1989:359).

Secondly, a conventional conceptualization of 'family' from an African perspective is one that views a family as a household that consists of a man and a woman, or women, with their children (if they have any), including all other individuals who belong to the entire network of blood relatives from both spouses' families of orientation. Such family members may or may not dwell together in the same house, yard or neighborhoods. However, with the rapid industrialization and urbanization, some people in the African group have re-conceptualized a family to constitute elements of the Western/nuclear model, to the exclusion of the traditional African elements of family-hood.

4.4 The family's role in communities or societies

Currently, it is important to integrate the definitions of family with the roles that are inherent in it. The role of mission-focused families will still be explored by investigating the role of families in communities or societies. However, before going into finer details, the prospective roles of families should be located within a well-defined and articulated Biblical construct. Thus, the role of families in the communities can best be understood from the Biblically based description of the family that draws its content and application from both the Old and the New

Testament, for example: "It becomes clear that the concept of a family is used in the Bible in both an immanent concrete sense as well as in a spiritualist and transcendent sense [...]. The family concept is used to describe the relation between husband, wife and child. In addition, the family is used as a metaphor to describe the spiritual Covenantal relationship between God and his people. The people of God are a family, with God acting as Father and the believers as his children. The reason for this usage is that the relation between God and a believer is as close and loving as the relation between father and child in a family relationship. On the other hand, the God-believer relation provides moral principles for family life." (Vorster, 2007:174)

According to Voster (2007: 175) "The family is deeply embedded in the idea of the covenant. The formula of the covenant, as expressed in Gen 17:7, describes the essence of this relationship. God is the God of Israel and their descendants and they will be his people. This covenantal relationship contains promises and instructions. The covenant develops along familial lines. God promises his people that He will be their God, but also the God of their children. The children are included in the covenant and this inclusion is signified by circumcision. The promise of the covenant, sealed by the initiating rite of circumcision, addresses itself to the solidarity of the family unit. The children thus have a special status which requires special treatment. This idea is equally important in the New Testament dispensation, as can be seen in Jesus' special concern for children and the fact that baptism replaces circumcision as the sign of the covenant. The doctrine of salvation, and especially the biblical view that children share fully in the salvation in Christ, compliment this idea. Children are also justified by faith and receive the gift of faith just as much as adult believers. These gifts of grace are signified by the sacrament of baptism" (Vorster, 2007:175).

Again, in the family of God, people are equal before God, but that does not entail uniformity. Just as the people of God are blessed with different gifts, members of a family are blessed with diversity in nature, talents, spiritual gifts and customs. The diversity does not inhibit the equality, but should enrich it. In the functioning of this unique community the individuals should honor each other's sameness and otherness on the foundation of their inherent equality before God. This principle

implies mutual submission.

And people share their spiritual and material gifts. Therefore, a family ought to be a sharing community in a spiritual, emotional and material sense. (Moreover,) in the family of God believers reflect unity, and thus models family solidarity. Solidarity implies mutual compassion, responsibilities and obedience within the culture of functional differentiation between husband, wife and child. The household codes reflect this functional differentiation in the broader framework of solidarity (Eph 5: 21-6:9)." (Vorster, 2007:175)

On the whole, Vorster's explication of family from the Biblical perspective serves as a meaningful and readily applicable model of Christian solidarity that contemporary families should adopt as a morally sound system to inform them regarding their roles in society. Christian families ought to draw strength from the fact that their sense of family-hood is predicated on Scripture. The fact that God regards Christians as his children and himself as their Father should serve as a pillar of strength for families that are surrounded by family breakdowns as a result of all the social ills that have negatively impacted on our communities.

4.4.1 The significance of the father figure in the family

Many children and youth in South Africa grow up in single-parent families and in most cases, fathers (or grown-up men who play the role of fathers) are absent, as most men work far away from their families. Sometimes, children are born out of wedlock, or the absence of a father is the result of a breakdown of the relationship between the parents. It becomes, therefore, important for Christian families to witness to the fact that God is the ever-present Father of all individuals and families, and that the Father has a certain set of expectations that each family should live up to. This means that no single individual or family should be encouraged to pursue a self-centered or egoistic life-style without due consideration of the moral implications as encapsulated in the Bible.

In other words, Christian families are obliged to put God first in their lives, so that those other families that do not believe in God may find a good example to follow.

The primary role of any Christian family is to become faithful witnesses of God and Jesus Christ to the community and the nations.

This kind of Christian family witness can best take place through the manifestation of Christian gifts and general Christian service within the broader context of community and society; for example, Paul wrote in Romans 12:4-8: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve, if it is teaching, let him teach, if it is encouraging, let him encourage, if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously, if it is leadership, let him govern diligently, if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

These words mean that each Christian is a member of God's family by virtue of their belief in Jesus Christ, and that each Christian family is by extension a member of the Body of Christ. Hence, the role, actions and diverse manner of service that Christians render to society on behalf of God testify to their mission in the world.

4.4.2 The Christian witness and the *missio Dei*

The witnessing of Christians is not just an optional act on the part of individual Christians, but rather an integral part of the *missio Dei*. This kind of witness is predicated on Biblically inspired partnerships for the purpose of sharing the church's faith and all of God's gifts that are entrusted to her as an institution and the families that constitute her as the living and dynamic Body of Christ in the present world system.

According to Kirk (1991:184), this "partnership has a positive and reassuring ring about it, denoting a sense of equality, collaboration and a public commitment to share in common endeavors [...]. (Nevertheless), within world Christianity, partnership expresses a relationship between churches based on trust, mutual recognition and reciprocal interchange. It rules out completely any notion of senior and junior, parent and child, or even older and younger. It is a term designed to show

how different parts of the Church belong to one another and find their fulfillment through sharing a common life. It implies a relationship in which two or more bodies agree to share responsibility for one another, and in which each side meaningfully participates in planning the future of the other. Put in this way, partnership is an ideal to be aimed at”.

Therefore, it is paramount for Christian families to do all they can to form networks of partnerships amongst themselves as part of the broader missional church to reach out to the community in creative ways of confronting the evil principle that is at work in the world.

Christian families cannot function at their most optimum level, though, if they choose to witness outside the church of Christ or in isolation of their immediate communities. This means that individual families should collaborate with the church as they embark on their mission to reach out to broken families and members of families who are in dire need of healing, counseling, consolation, mentoring, transformation, education, encouragement, inspiration and the presence of Christ's ambassadors in their mundane daily lives.

In order to achieve this mission, Christian families should seek to build bridges across class, gender, race, and cultural, theological and denominational lines. This will help them to become a well-located organ at the lowest level of society to reach and connect to those who are 'sick' and have lost their fundamental core of ubuntu/botho or their God-given humanness and, more particularly, the image of God within them, so that they might rediscover their lost humanity through the Christian families. In this way, God will use his redeemed families on earth to bring healing into the lives of the hurt and the lost. Such communal connections can best be effected through authentic partnerships between the church and her constituent families.

It is important for the mission-focused family to realize that its ministry in the world is fundamentally to fulfil God's will. Hence, it should view its mission as an act of God in the hearts and minds of individuals, families and communities, as well as the product of active missionary work by Christians within families and communities. Saayman

(2003:97) wrote thus: “I define mission broadly as the over-arching dimension of Christian life in the world. When the risen Christ met with his disciples on the Sunday evening after his resurrection, He breathed the Spirit on them and told them ‘as the Father sent me, so I send you’. And he was sent on a comprehensive ministry which included proclaiming the good news, setting free the captives, healing the sick, and announcing the arrival of the year of the Jubilee (John 20; Luke 4). Whether the year of the Jubilee ever actually functioned in Israel or not, its intention is clear: introducing a totally new dimension to the reigning political economy, making room for grace (cf. Rumscheidt 1998).

“Mission is therefore not some appendix to Christian life, an afterthought which can be accommodated if there is some time, energy and resources left over from the real business of the church (which basically deals with introverted issues relating to the upkeep and survival of the church). Mission is indeed the acid test of the authenticity of the life of the Christian community in the world, the indispensable invitation to join the new eschatological community.”

Saayman (2003:98) continues by saying: “In my understanding of Christian mission the concept of humanization is very important. I understand this to mean Jesus of Nazareth, the new human being, incarnated in his joy and grief, victory and pain, empathy and anger, what it means for all of us to be authentically human in relating to self, others, the created universe and God-self. He invites us to participate in his liberating, healing and evangelizing mission, thus being missionary while being human. It implies incarnating the Christian gospel, not as something esoterically or supernatural, but as a completely concrete message for concrete human beings in their daily lives.”

In another book, Saayman (2007:5) argues that “by characterizing Christian mission thus as humanization I therefore do not wish to demean or devalue or despiritualise mission. On the contrary, I wish to exalt it in line with the Old Testament teaching that human beings have indeed been created to be only slightly less than angels, inferior only to God himself, and crowned with glory and honor (Ps 8). If understood in this sense, humanization therefore refers to a spiritual journey with God to become an ordinary human being, according to the example of the Man from Nazareth

(Prove 2004: 197-199).”

4.4.3 The Christian family as the embodiment of Christian values

In order for the role of the mission-focused family ‘to be authentically human’ as an institution in a society that is said to be in need of moral reconstruction, the Christian family should be able to live up to the demands of the Gospel and its implications upon our individual lives, as well as upon the families in the community, thus making an impact on the entire society.

Saayman stresses the importance of the concept of ‘incarnation’ as a vehicle at the disposal of the church and the Christian family in reaching out to the world. Christian families are expected to become the actual representation of Jesus Christ in the world, especially in sharing the Good News and all other gifts entrusted to them, whether they are spiritual or physical – all should be directed towards the lives of those who need moral regeneration. It is from within each Christian family that is centered on Christ that a new sense of transformation should manifest, so that each individual Christian should base his/her humanity on Christ’s incarnation. By so doing, those Christian families will be opening their mission to become God’s light and salt in this world.

For instance, Christian families can best fulfill their mission and role in communities by closing the gap between the proclamation of the Gospel and the concrete presence of Christians by way of building dynamic, responsive and empathic community networks within and between families and the community.

Bosch (1991:368-389) is of the opinion that, “in order to grasp fully the very important missionary implications of Christian koinonia, it is necessary to understand the church as the pilgrim people of God, for whom ‘there is no permanent city here on earth’, but who are ‘looking for the city which is to come’ (Heb 13:14). The church has often become domesticated in certain contexts (for example in the entanglement between mission and colonialism), but in reality the church is everywhere in Diaspora, called out of the world to be sent back into the world with the message of the world to come. In the apt words of Hoekendijk (1964:34), the church is a

'sociological impossibility' in our world, on its way to the ends of the earth and the end of time (:50). On this journey through the world, the apostolate or sentness of the church can be defined as communication with our fellow-travelers (:56-78). The missionary church must therefore become church-with-others".

Therefore, the missionary church that is in solidarity with others is able to incarnate the essential koinonia of the body of Christ truly; this has important consequences for our practice of mission.

According to Kritzinger *et al.* (1994:38), "it makes very clear that Christian missionaries can never proclaim or witness as if from some safe haven, as people who have 'arrived', whose journey, apart from intermittent forays into 'the world', is over. It calls into question much of the history of missionary church planting, as much of the effort was concentrated on domesticating the church (in a nation, people, group or culture) rather than on equipping the church for its open-ended existence in fellowship with other pilgrims on their journey through the world. From this perspective, the important missionary question about the church is therefore whether its very existence is an open invitation to fellow pilgrims to join it to find sustenance and fellowship on the journey to the eschatological destination".

4.4.4 The Christian family and its mission in the world

Kritzinger's notion of 'pilgrim people of God' is definitely of paramount importance to the church and Christian families in South Africa, in the sense that it conveys the idea of a fellowship of believers on a journey or on an outward movement towards those in need of God's grace, conversion, attitudinal and character transformation. This idea of pilgrimage is very central in the *missio Dei*, because God, through Jesus Christ, sent us into the world "to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:19).

Of equal importance is that Christian families should go out of their self-created enclosures to represent the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in the world, rejuvenating

and regenerating men and women, young and old, and all who are trapped in sin. Christian families in South Africa should be conscious of the fact that, since 1994, the society continues to be largely characterized by a great deal of transition in many areas of its collective life. The new South African Constitution promotes, for example, the ethos and values of diversity and the culture of fundamental human rights which is, in practice, indicative of a huge shift from the past social system that prescribed a particular conservative social system.

In order to make an impact on these rights of conscious communities and families, Christian families have to develop a new system of communication with the world, one that includes a relevant 'language' of expressing the will and love of God in a manner that is current and comprehensible, just like the early church had to do. Yoder (1984:50) argues: "We can say that the New Testament is the document of a transition made by a message-bearing community from one world to another. Born in Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Jewry, praying and socializing and theologizing only in that small society and its tongue, with its Scriptures, the messianic movement in two generations had reached the capital of the world and had produced a core body of literature in the trade-and-culture language of the Gentile world."

Yoder (1984:50) continues by saying: "Admittedly, the Hellenistic world was not one culture but a cosmopolitan melee; Jewry was already largely Hellenized, and even Palestine had been infiltrated by Hellenistic cities and Hellenistic culture. Nonetheless, Jesus-believers with a relatively smaller, more homogenous, poor, less speculatively pretentious world view moved with their homegrown forms of faith into the encounter with peoples and meaning systems which have no place for their confident call to decision. The Jesus movement was utterly particular. The Hellenistic Roman world was classically pluralistic."

Today, there are several dominant similarities and dissimilarities between the ancient Palestine context and the context of South Africa in the 21st century, which is shaped by a liberal constitutional democracy that is based on secular and humanistic values. Like in the ancient Roman Empire, South Africa enjoys a strong presence of heterogeneous culture; Christianity is but one of the main world religions, which include Buddhism, Bahai, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. All are practiced in the

context of a well-established African Traditional Religion in which families are central in the ritual, theological and cultural aspect in the majority of the South African population.

Consequently, the role and mission of South African Christian families are to confront the nature of our diverse society head-on: politically, culturally, religiously and ethically. Through these encounters, the values of Christianity may be instilled in every family, without an attempt to deny the unique family and cultural diversities and their influence on all religions. Such an exercise of Christian engagement with families should be based on a strong Christian identity and theological conviction that is informed of the complexity of our diverse communities.

4.4.5 The Christian family, the African world-view and the Jesus Model

It is incumbent upon the Christian community, consisting of Christian families, to make a serious effort in immersing itself in the African world view by working hard in establishing deep and lasting philosophical, intellectual and practical interconnections between itself and the African cultural systems, as well as entering into a deep and mutually respectful process of dialogue with those who practice cultures that are different from those that are influenced by the Western/Christian world views. In this way, Christian families can develop authentic and Christ-centered solutions to the questions of moral decay and family breakdown, without a foreign religio-cultural bias, or acting out of cultural ignorance or misinformation, as well as false religious or theological presuppositions. Christian families should rather develop a well-informed and researched theological intervention that will truly challenge unethical ways of conduct that are practiced by both the African and Western-influenced families and members of the community on an equal basis, while using the Bible as the foundation for moral critique towards all different cultural communities and families in an inclusive manner.

Naturally, the mission-focused family should endeavor to adopt the model of Jesus as it seeks to engage different sectors of the community. Webber and Clapp (1988:44-45) argue: "In addressing Jesus' inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom we have seen just how fundamentally he confronted both individuals and social

structures. But there was another institution more basic to the social structures of Israel than its tense relation to Gentile neighbors; family ties and roles. Even these were not left untouched by the kingdom Jesus introduced.

“His own family once asked to see him, but he pointed to his disciples and said, ‘Here are my mothers and brothers. Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, my sister, my mother’ (Matt. 12:49-50). The disciples left families to follow Jesus (Mark 10: 28-31), and it is in reference to families split asunder that Jesus warned, ‘You must not think I have come to bring peace on earth’ (Matt. 10: 34-36).

“In this respect, Jesus’ ministry was no less disturbing than the effect of modern ‘cults’ who call their members away from kin. Of course there is no basis for assuming Jesus wanted to abolish the family. But his actions and teaching indicate that even this most meaningful and fulfilling of human institutions cannot be absolute. The work of the kingdom may call spouse or son or daughter away from family; to this day a serious confession of faith can throw families into conflict. No institution molds or shapes individuals as profoundly as the family, no society exists without families. Few principalities or powers can be more benevolent or more destructive than the family. And in the work of Christ this power, too, is brought under the rule of God.”

The most fundamental work that Jesus came to do in this world was to proclaim the reign of God over all creation, especially God’s rule over human society and all social structures, including the family. It is in the spirit of the Kingdom of God that Christian families should seek inspiration and guidance to know the way in which they may embody the spirit of the Kingdom of God, as well as how to begin in engaging families and communities at large. This means that every Christian family should be fully conscious of the fact that, as a Christian family, it is an extension of God’s reign in every street where it is located. The Christian family is best placed to reflect the power, authority and presence of God’s rule in the midst of human sin and institutional evil.

For the same reason, Webber and Clapp (1988:48) say that “we turn to Jesus’

forgiveness of sin, which, characteristically, was stunningly bold. The action excited accusations of blasphemy (Mark 2:7) and marked Jesus as someone claiming a religiously and politically dangerous level of authority. On this count we see just how tightly the individual and society were bound together in the work of Jesus. Clearly, the forgiveness of sin concerned individuals. This deed of Jesus does not fit neatly into the scheme of those who would reduce Christianity to a political program, revolution on behalf of the poor. After all, it is most often exactly the poor, the outcast, and the sick who are offered forgiveness by Jesus (Matt 9:1-9; Luke 7:36-50). The forgiveness he offers is not the promise of acceptance by human society that would prompt no charges of blasphemy. He grants the acceptance of God himself”.

The authors (Webber & Clapp, 1988:49) continue to argue that “even this most intimate of Jesus’ action is not without its social dimension. The managers of society presume to determine and punish sin (with ostracism, if nothing else). Those who control the social ‘apparatus for forgiveness’ thus wield tremendous control. Consequently, Jesus’ forgiveness of sin was both religiously staggering and a breathtaking threat to the accepted forms of social control. It showed that what mattered most to persons, their acceptability before God, could not be regulated by those who ran society. Freed of ultimate condemnation-rejection by God, who need fear so much the condemnation of any government or religious organization? Jesus’ forgiveness was socially empowering”.

Similarly, the question of Jesus’ forgiveness is very significant for South Africa to address the challenges of moral degeneration, including crimes such as violent robbery, abuse, rape, murder and theft amongst the numerous forms of sin and evil in society.

At the core of Jesus’ forgiveness is God’s challenge to each individual to repent and sin no more. When Jesus offered sinners forgiveness, he always accompanied the offer with the need for individuals to turn from their old ways to a new and radically different way of life. Hence, the challenge in our society today is the tendency of individuals to condemn crime and yet purchase stolen goods, or accuse the traffic police of being corrupt and yet break the law by speaking on mobile phones while

driving, and, when caught, by not hesitating to bribe traffic officers. The same is true in cases where men rape their daughters and some family members, who know about it, choose not to press charges on account that the family will suffer if the breadwinner is arrested. They would rather opt for family counseling, instead of seeking a just and lasting method that will guarantee a total inner and outer change of heart, mind, attitude, spirit and conduct of the criminal. As such, South African families and communities need to be engaged by Christian families on how to seek new ways of relating to and raising or socializing the young, as well as helping those who find themselves in conflict with the law or moral codes, to change and continue to live in the newness of life.

The fundamental mission and role of Christian families in our society is, therefore, predominantly to proclaim and model Christ, and not mere religion, as the “Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6) to other non-Christian families and communities so that the process of forging new and lasting ways for both individual, communal, institutional and societal transformation may be effected.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, there has been a refocus on the concept of the *missio Dei* as a basis of building upon the argument of the mission-focused family as a cornerstone of moral regeneration.

Secondly, the impact of Adam’s fall on all humanity, including the current post-modern society, has been analyzed.

The impact of the absence of parents, especially fathers in contemporary families, has been looked at and important concepts have been defined, like the mission-focused family, the Ten Commandments (more specifically the fifth commandment) and the significance of agape, acts of love, God’s will, God’s Kingdom, God’s covenant and the role of Christian families towards non-Christian families (especially in putting God first), witnessing and advancing the values of humanity through the creation of community networks, as well as embracing South Africa’s heterogeneous culture by promoting inclusion to succeed in modeling and mediating the values of

the incarnate Logos of God.

In the next chapter, the focus will be on the South African missionary church and the challenges it faces as an agent of hope. Special attention will be paid to the manner in which the missionary church deals with those challenges. Lastly, the focus will be on the missionary church and her prophetic voice.

CHAPTER 5: THE SOUTH AFRICAN MISSIONARY CHURCH AND THE CHALLENGES IT FACES AS AN AGENT OF HOPE FOR MORAL REGENERATION

5.1 Introduction

When a society loses hope, it also loses the will to be a moral society in which virtues are upheld. For moral regeneration, hope is needed: “In hope we were saved” (Rom 8: 24). As one of the “three theological virtues” or “three things that last” (1 Cor 13:13), hope has traditionally been understood as one of the modalities which describe Christian existence, the other two being faith and love. As such, these virtues, grounded in the grace of the Holy Spirit, express the values that never change in Christian anthropology. “Where the Spirit is, there is freedom” (2Cor 3:17). This freedom is Christian discipleship as actualized in faith, hope, and love [...]. In the light of the Trinitarian formulation of the foundational Christian mystery of God’s self-communication to humanity through Christ and in the Spirit, hope becomes human hospitality for the divine guest. Hope is the human spirit as receptive to the divine indwelling, while faith and love are correlated with Christ and the Spirit as the two ways the One God comes to us” (Komonchak, 1989:492, 496, 498).

5.1.1 Hope, Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit

Firstly, the South African church will be explored in this chapter as a community that is called in hope to embody and communicate hope for moral regeneration in a society that is faced with different challenges. The role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer and the entire body of Christ will also be explored. The challenges facing the church will be reviewed again, including the activities of the Christians within the church in the context of secularism, religious pluralism, communities’ hunger for the works of love and the challenges emanating from disagreements regarding national unity and identity. The question of divisions in the world and how they affect the missionary church will also be explored.

Secondly, this chapter will deal with the manner in which the missionary church is to deal with those challenges through the presentation of Christians as the source of

hope, as well as through Christian care, the promotion of human rights, religious freedom and multidimensional missions to the issues of the society's moral crisis. Furthermore, the missionary church's prophetic voice will also be explored regarding the way in which it deals with poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, the presence of the permanent underclass and the logic of an oppressive economic structure by breaking its silence on injustice, idolatry and hypocrisy, and by confronting the broad socio-economic issues of structural economic injustice. In doing this, the church will be the agent for moral regeneration.

Thirdly, the New Testament's view on Christian ethics is dependent on the view that God's Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts and minds of Christian believers. This stems from the early chapters of Acts in which the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is described. The coming of the Spirit was in great measure the fulfillment of the Old Testament, for example the prophecy of Jeremiah 31: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31: 31-33). The Spirit thus comes to write the law of God upon the hearts of men and women. He comes to enable us to fulfil Christ's demands and thus live morally and He is the One who guides, teaches and leads into truth" (John 14:25-31; 15:21-16:15). (Cook, 1983:60-61.)

It is against this background of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers and by extension in the whole life of the Body of Christ that the church produces hope for the benefit of contemporary society and the world. The missionary church will certainly need hope in order to confront widespread hopelessness, because "hope in the Scriptures always is a confident expectation; the word hope never carries even the connotation of uncertainty that adheres to our English term (as when we say cautiously, I hope so). There is no 'hope so' about the biblical concept. When Paul wrote to Titus about the 'blessed hope', for instance, he was urging him to look forward to the 'happy expectation' of the 'appearing of the glory of

our God and Savior Jesus Christ.' He had no thought of uncertainty about the fact of this event" (Adams, 1973:39).

5.2 What are the challenges that are facing the missionary church of today?

In South Africa, the community of God's people, the church, is the center and arena of the Spirit's activity, in the sense that it is called upon to witness about God in an environment that is characterized by so many contradictions; for example, our country is a multi-party, constitutional liberal democracy that is based on secular principles. Although human rights are enshrined in the South African Constitution, human rights are violated daily.

5.2.1 The state of the nation and the implications according to the Gospel

Our society is undergoing a massive socio-political and moral or ethical transformation that has produced untold contradictions, including inter- and intra-personal conflicts. Cassidy (2005:142) states the following: "The Bible [...] and the moral law [...] require clear unequivocal affirmation of biblical truth and an unapologetic embrace of biblical ethics. But this cuts across the moral and intellectual climate of the times, where both intellectual truth and moral principles are viewed in highly relative terms. So this species of relativism is definitely one of the new hot potato issues facing the contemporary Church. It basically focuses on other religions and their truth claims and how Christians are to respond to these in our religious pluralistic society. Let's say right up front that there are some very proper challenges relating to Christian tolerance. But a widespread not-so-proper belief is developing that all truth is relative. This needs questioning. The view says: 'You have your opinion, I have mine. You like Jesus, I like Buddha. He likes crystal balls and she is into Eastern mysticism. So what? Surely sincerity is all that matters and all roads lead to God anyway. Are we not all worshipping the same God? Are not all ways to God equally valid?

"I acknowledge that we are in a new place in terms of the very self-conscious religious pluralism developing in our world everywhere today and especially in my own country of South Africa. I have no problem with this. It is both right and

inevitable. I am also comfortable with the playing field being leveled by the absence of any special privileges for Christians. So how then are we to respond to people of other living faiths to build a moral society? I believe we should begin first of all with repentance and contrition for the arrogance and dismissive manner in which we Christians have not always had grounds for pride. Our approach needs to be humble and sensitive so that other people's convictions are respected. There should also be an open-mindedness and willingness to learn and understand.

“So, while one may listen sensitively in order to understand, I don't believe Christians should ever surrender the obligation to call people, whoever they are and whatever they believe, to faith in Christ. Our Lord told us to go into the entire world and proclaim the Gospel to every person, calling each one to come in repentance and faith to the living Christ who is Savior, Lord and God. Remember Christianity began in the context of another living faith, namely Judaism, and the Apostle Paul found no problem in saying that the Gospel was ‘for the Jews first and then for the Greeks’ (Romans 1:16).” (Cassidy, 2005:142-143.)

With the challenge of calling all people to come in repentance to God through Christ (in a secular state and with a constitution which promotes a multi-faith culture), the church is expected to have a strong voice regarding matters of morality without alienating the adherence of other religious persuasions. At the same time, it is expected of the church to remain true to its calling and mission, especially in calling people to believe in God through Jesus Christ.

No wonder that, during the decade of the 1970's, a sense of awakening took place within the Body of Christ, especially in the manner in which the views regarding the approach of the church towards the world was undergoing a profound transformation. The issues of mission and evangelization became central in the major debates that were raging within the ecumenical movement. Bosch says that: “The fifth meeting of the WCC took place in Nairobi, late in 1975. Indications are that here, for the first time since 1961, a turn of the tide in ecumenical missionary thinking could be detected [...] (and) the address that aroused the most attention at Nairobi was Mortimer Arias' ‘That the World may Believe’. He distinguished between ‘mission’ and ‘evangelizations’ and judged that the WCC had lately done very little

about the latter. Arias wrote thus: 'The gospel always includes the announcement of God's Kingdom and love through Jesus Christ, the offer of grace and forgiveness of sins, the invitation to repentance and faith in Him, the summons to fellowship in God's Church, the command to witness to God's saving word and deeds, the responsibility to participate in the struggle for justice and human dignity, the obligation to denounce all that hinders human wholeness, and a commitment to risk life itself'.

"The world is not only God's creation; it is also the arena of God's mission. Because God loved the whole world, the church cannot neglect any part of it – neither those who have not yet heard it. Our obedience to God and our solidarity with the human family demands that we obey Christ's command to proclaim and demonstrate God's love to every person, of every class and race, on every continent, in every culture, in every setting and historical context" (Bosch, 1980:192-193).

This means that the major challenge of the church is to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all, as well as to embody the spirit and works of agape in its practices. It is important that Christians, as members of the church, should not just talk about God's love, because the world does not want to be told about the goodness of God's love, people are hungry for the outpouring of the works of love to all those who have experienced abuse, crime and socio-political injustices. In this way, the church will build a moral society.

The challenges that are facing the missionary church in South Africa are not radically different from those that are faced by the church in other nations, except for the fact that all mission works take place within different contexts, like environmental, political, socio-economic, cultural and organizational contexts. With regard to the South African environment, it can be said that there are several unique issues that tend to be more dominant on the mission agenda than in other countries, where such matters may not be as pronounced in the ideas and practice of missionary work.

It may well be asked what the contribution of apartheid in the moral degeneration of Black and White was. Davenport (1991:537) states the following: "The very fact was that of geographical separation between white-run towns and their (Black) locations

[...]. Congregations in most churches were unilingual and uniracial. The Dutch Reformed Churches were constitutionally structured into separate white and black 'missionary' bodies. The English-speaking Presbyterian Church of South Africa existed side-by-side with a Bantu (later Reformed) Presbyterian Church, though this was a black breakaway body which remained linked to the Church of Scotland, not the result of a white decision to segregate. A number of African independent churches resulted from similar breakaways, especially from the Methodist Church, though the Methodists were the first to elect a black person as their leader when the Rev Seth Mokitimi became President of the Methodist Conference in 1964, well before Bishop Desmond Tutu became the first black Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town."

The church thus lacked the unity in the past to raise a uniform voice for a moral society. It is within this unique historical environment that the church in a unified, democratic and non-racial South Africa faces numerous challenges, some of which stem from the past, while others are a result of the dynamics that accompany any social processes in the broad changes since 1994.

5.2.2 The crisis of South Africa's collective myth and identity

At the core of challenges regarding missions and moral regeneration, especially in South Africa, is the crisis of the myth of the New South Africa and the manner in which that myth is making an impact on missionary activities: "As sociologist Max Weber has pointed out, social systems develop a public set of beliefs, values and ideologies called societal myths which we are socialized to believe or want to believe." (Albert, 1985:49.)

In order to deal with the challenges flowing from the issue of myths, we need to ask several questions, such as: What do South Africans believe about themselves? Do South Africans have a collective sense of unity or common national identity? Is South Africa a truly united nation? Is the church in our nation truly united? What is the church doing in order to address internal denominational divisions? How can the church in its pursuit of mission be an agent of hope where there are cultural, theological and denominational divisions? How can the church address the question

of divisions in the families, communities and the intergenerational gap that exists between the youth and the older generation? How can the church give the millions of unemployed youth hope? What is the church's role with regards to the persons living with the HI virus, as well as her role towards the AIDS orphans?

With regard to the collective 'social myth', it can be stated that the South African nation is facing serious conflicts, as the question of unity or disunity is at the heart of the nation. A church that is divided cannot speak with authority about morals, because they are disobedient to the call to be one in spirit.

Most South Africans are living in a state of serious poverty, while others are experiencing and leading a wealthy life-style. This state of socio-economic division is also reflected in the church community and is similar to the great developed North and underdeveloped South. Again, some citizens have developed values and beliefs that pose a serious challenge to the basic teaching of the Bible, because of their secular and individualistic orientation. As example can be mentioned that the democratic South African Constitution is based on the principles of diversity and respect for different religions. As a result, it is a huge challenge for some Christians to relate to non-Christian religions. Therefore, the religious divisions and denominational divisions within the broad Christian faith is a real matter that challenges the church's attempt to be an agent of hope in a multi-faith society. A united church has a moral high ground from which it can witness.

5.2.3 A call to witness to the divided world

The missionary church is called to witness as a unity to the divided world, and yet some facets of the social divisions have made an impact on the Body of Christ as well. That is why "the Fathers presented the Church as the one people of God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian basis for the unity of the Church is established by the saving act of the one God (1 Cor 8:6), in the revelation of the one crucified, risen and glorified Christ (Rom 14: 6f), by the movement of the one Spirit of God and of Christ (Eph 2:18). By his death and resurrection, Christ redeemed humankind, sent his Spirit upon it and formed human beings mystically into members of his own body. In this body, particularly through the sacraments of Baptism and

Eucharist, Christians are united to the glorified Christ in such a way that the Trinitarian life is communicated to them. Incorporation into the body of Christ takes place at baptism; in this sacred rite, fellowship in Christ's death and resurrection is symbolized and brought about, hence all the baptized live in intimate, vital union with Christ. They are also united to one another: as all members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also the faithful in Christ (1Cor 12:12). All are one in Christ. Ultimately this unity will be fulfilled eschatologically when 'God will be all in all' (1Cor 15:28). Meanwhile, in its earthly pilgrimage, the church is in a condition of the already given but not-yet-fully-realized communion in God and with the first fruits of unity, but it is only the beginning of a definitive reality. In its earthly condition, then, the church is characterized by a duality, a dialectical structure which corresponds to its 'already-not-yet' character" (Komonchak, 1989:1065-1066).

5.2.4 Jesus Christ: the life of the world

Boesak (1984:158-159) attempts to address the question of hope as he reflects that "without Jesus there is no hope for a world in the grip of sin. With him there is not only hope, but also a possibility of a moral society". He continues: "Jesus Christ is the life of the world! These are words that speak of joy, of meaning, of hope. For some, they may even speak of triumph and victory. These words have a ring of certainty in them. Yet in the uncertain world of suffering, oppression, and death, what do they mean? The realities of the world in which we live suggest the cold grip of death rather than the vibrant freedom of life.

"Violence, greed, and the demonic distortion of human values continue to destroy God's people. Economic exploitation is escalating rather than abating, and economic injustice is still the dominant reality in the relationships between rich and poor countries. In too many places too many children die of hunger, and too many people just disappear because they dare to stand up for justice and human rights. Too many are swept away by the tides of war, and too many are tortured in dungeons of death. In too many eyes the years of endless struggle have extinguished the fires of hope and joy, and too many bodies are bowed down by the weight of that peculiarly repugnant death called despair. Too many young people believe that their youth and their future are already powdered to dust." (Boesak, 1984:158-159.)

5.2.5 Confronting poverty: its consequences and underdevelopment

Since Boesak wrote those words in the 1980s, the state of the world may appear to some as having changed, but many of the structures of society that produce poverty, underdevelopment and hopelessness are still in operation and have a negative impact on morals. The challenge of violence, especially violence between individuals, continues to rob families of their loved ones.

On the other hand, structural violence continues to produce hunger, poverty and general underdevelopment, both globally and within South Africa and the Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. It is incumbent upon the church to embody hope, not only in words to sinners, but also in deeds for those who face malnutrition, diseases, unemployment and temptations which affect their moral and ethical life-style.

To be an agent of hope in an environment of abject poverty demands a radical re-definition of what mission is really all about. Surely it cannot be solely about winning souls for the Kingdom of God while the socio-economic environment is left unchallenged and untouched, especially the structural and systemic forces that produce, sustain and perpetuate multifaceted means of violating both the individuals and social organs at large. Hence the argument of Cassidy (1990:215) should be taken to heart when he said, "Poverty in South Africa clearly has to be tackled and uprooted. Our white society needs to recognize that basic and fundamental changes are necessary, although we can't be so naive as to think there are any quick fixes [...]. But the challenge is to involve all society, and to start to live and behave as a new society as quickly as we can. Everyone should look to their own structures, be they in business, commerce, industry, education, the Church or the home, and get things right there. Everyone has to be committed to being part of the solution rather than part of the problem. This practice must start now."

5.2.6 Sent into the world through prayer

It is in the abovementioned context that the church is sent into the world of violence and hopelessness, full of dangers and risks, and is expected to fulfil Jesus'

commission. No wonder that to Jesus, it was cardinal to pray for his disciples and the future church to be agents of transformation. In chapter 17 of the Gospel according to John, Jesus offered a significant prayer to God and prayed for the safety of his disciples. Dongell (1997:204-205) argues: "It may seem odd to hear Jesus restrict his prayers to the disciples alone: 'I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me' (John 17:9). Having concluded his first petition for his disciples to be protected (17:6-16), Jesus offered a second petition for them. 'Sanctify them' (17:17-19). The key to grasping the focus of this request is found, no doubt, in the clear comparison between the sanctification of the disciples and the sanctification of Jesus: 'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified' (17:17-19). The words 'as' and 'they too' compel us to place Jesus and His disciples side by side in order to understand the nature of their sanctification. In both cases, a freedom from the world's values and control is assumed: 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of it' (17:16)." A sanctified church is an effective witness.

In his prayer, Jesus is giving his disciples a new perspective on his mission, namely that prayer is central to the manner in which He views the nature of his mission. Here it is found that it is important to focus on one's internal dynamic. Tournier (1977:30-31) states the following: "We must become aware of our own aggressiveness, an awareness which is much rarer than one might think. Here meditation can play a decisive part [...], (because) all men in practice adopt a very simple criterion which none dares to profess openly, namely that their own aggressiveness always seems to be legitimate, while that of others is to be condemned. The culpable violence of others we see as colossal and scandalous; ours we see as insignificant – even when the truth is quite the reverse. Is not this exactly what Jesus meant with his image of 'the mote in my brother's eye' and 'the beam in my own' (Matt 7:3)?"

5.2.7 Confronting the sin of the world

Consequently, as the missionary church seeks ways and strategies of 'penetrating' into the world to uplift the moral of society, it is constantly confronted with sin in its different manifestations, because "sin is an unpopular word, but a very popular

activity. Thought lightly of on earth by those who practice it, sin is considered the heaviest of all weights in heaven, where the cost of it was borne. The nature of sin is little understood, the origin of it little known, and the results of it considered only too late. Yet sin is a major theme of Scripture, and without understanding it, the greater themes of righteousness and salvation can never be rightly known [...] (because) sin has to do with moral conditions and behavior relating to the righteous character of God and his will for creatures made in his moral likeness. The Bible views sin as both active and volitional and also as dispositional. Sin is transgression against the law. In fact, where there is no law, there is no sin (Rom 7:7). It can be volitional, a deliberate choice – and usually it is. The rebel deliberately violates the law. The sinner knows to do right, but doesn't do it. That is sin (James 4:17). Sin is against the law of God. In fact, to violate the law of God is to violate God. The great problem is horizontal, and from a wrong vertical relationship flow all the horizontal wrongs (Ps. 51:4; 1Thess. 4:8; Gen. 39:9). When David said, 'against thee, thee only, have I sinned', he did not mean that he had not sinned grievously against Uriah and Bathsheba, and, indeed, the whole nation. What he meant was that these responsibilities to fellow men pale into insignificance compared with the terrible sin of violating God and his law. The biblical concept of sin assumes the existence of a personal God of infinite perfection, and [...] assumes the responsibility of man" (McQuilkin, 1989:85-86). Sin uproots morality with dire consequences.

5.2.8 Sin and worldly divisions

The divisions in the world, both within the church and in the communities, are a result of sin, because it was due to sin that humanity was separated from God. The moral problems in South Africa stem from the old-age problem of human defiance of God's law, because "human disobedience and rebellion against the Creator God brought disastrous results (Gen 3-11). Evil and sin weave their way into every aspect of God's creation and every dimension of human personhood and life on earth. Socially, every human relationship is fractured and disrupted – sexual, parental, familial, societal, ethnic, international – and the effect is consolidated horizontally through the permeation of all human cultures, and vertically by accumulation through the generations of history. And spiritually, we are alienated from God, rejecting his goodness and authority. Romans 1: 18-32 outlines all of these dimensions in its

analysis of the fruit of Genesis 3. If there is good news for such dire realities, it needs to be pretty big. The glorious truth is that the Bible gives us a Gospel that addresses every dimension of the problem that sin has created. God's mission is the final destruction of all that is evil from his whole creation. Our mission therefore has to be as comprehensive in scope as the gospel that the Bible gives us" (Wright, 2010:40-41).

5.2.9 Repentance, transformation and reconstruction

The fractured social relations between different groups, communities and families, as well as between individuals, offer an opportunity for the church to utilize them in the process of serving all, starting with individual, personal sin and brokenness and then moving on to external, structural sin. The church must strive to help individuals and groups to rebuild themselves, but such a state of personal and collective reconstruction can only be realized through total inner and outer personal transformation.

The process of nation building and reconstruction is also predicated on true repentance, leading to broad social transformation and moral regeneration, although "South Africans are not agreed about what constitutes nation-building. 'The New South Africa I visualize is that of a society transcending racial, ethnic, and tribal barriers', Joe Seremane has indicated. 'A society responsive to cultural cross-fertilization which will minimize tensions in human relations. The goal must therefore be a constitutional, pluralist democracy, with a sense of common belonging and mutual respect for different cultural traditions and moral regeneration, where the need to belong is met both by communal cultures and common citizenship replacing a common national feeling" (Frost, 1998:193-194).

5.3 How can the missionary church deal with those challenges?

5.3.1 Caring people in a broken world

Some of the challenges that the missionary church faces in its quest for moral regeneration will now be summarized and the measures that the church may take to

deal with those challenges will be explored simultaneously.

According to Cassidy (2005:164-166), “the world is changing, so we have to be changing too, because we are approaching people who are struggling with change. But we must never change our Gospel message, as this is changeless, coming as it does from One who is ‘the same yesterday, today and forever’ (Hebrews 13: 8). Because the world is suffering from information overload, our own message cannot just be information, but has to be a message of demonstration and indeed transformation. People need to see that we are different and are practically and caringly engaged with them. The way of love takes on new importance and primacy. The world is facing choice overload. Therefore people to whom we would witness cannot be rushed into choosing Christ. A proper urgency of the Gospel must also make space for time and process in the matters of choice.

“Because the world is rushed, fatigued and burnt out, we must, as Christian witnesses, seek not to be rushed, fatigued and burnt out as well. It is hard to help such a world if we are indeed in that condition ourselves. We register that the world and those to whom we would witness are in deep pain, for many and various reasons. This is a major contact point for the Church and for all Christian believers, telling as we do of One who has ‘borne our grief’s and carried our sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:4) and who has also said, ‘come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28).

“Because the world is in such a mess relationally, the challenge to Christians is to witness, minister and demonstrate a world of good relationships and morals at home, in the Church and in society. If we can demonstrate true connectedness and community, a lost and lonely world will feel a magnetic pull to our doors. Because the Postmodern world is sexually obsessed and sexually dissatisfied, we must as Christians witness and as the Church be ready to share the truths of biblical sexuality and convince a skeptical world that true sexual fulfillment is most truly found within the confines and principles of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Because the world lives with Postmodern views of truth and moral as relative, variable and situational, we as Christian witnesses have to hold on uncompromisingly to the full deity and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, to biblical

absolutes, to a firm moral code of some things right and others wrong and to the cornerstone of truth, defined as 'coherence with the facts as they are'. We would affirm that truth is universal and not local and that Truth is ultimately personal in Christ, rather than simply propositional in a statement. We would insist on holding to the law of antithesis that A is not non-A, and that two contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time.

"Above all, we need to be caring people in a world crying out for care and we need to love in a world that is very short on love. We must be willing to share our own stories and testimonies in such a way that they will attract rather than repel people in the Postmodern world around us. Our aim will be to demonstrate that truth of what we believe rather than simply trying to convince by argument.

"The Postmodern world out there is asking us, often with cries of anguish and also with real longing, whether we have anything that will really work for them. Have you something, each individual is saying, which will really work for me in my life? My relationship? My family? My sexuality? My mind? My body? My soul? My final future? The Christian answers that we do indeed have something that really works. But we need to show it. In reality we have someone who really works. And if we can manifest Him credibly, the world will sit up in new ways to look at us, listen to us and then learn from us".

Unquestioningly, Cassidy (2005:164-166) has managed to advance a pragmatic approach to contemporary moral and ethical challenges that confront our world, societies and local communities. Therefore, the only manner possible to deal with all the immorality is for the church to refocus her sense of vision on the 'unique' image of Jesus. It is that primary focus on the nature, character, personality and conduct of Jesus towards those who were social out-casts and sinners that should serve as a model for all Christians to adopt and demonstrate towards all members of our communities and families.

5.3.2 The missio Dei and its multidimensionality

The manner in which each Christian and the church as a whole deal with the social

and individual challenges can only bear fruit and regenerate morals if there is a conscious attempt by believers to locate the story of Jesus at the heart of the *missio Dei*. Above all, “our mission has to be multidimensional in order to be credible and faithful to its origins and character. So as to give some idea of the nature and quality of such multidimensional mission, we might appeal to images, metaphors, events and pictures rather than to logic or analysis. I therefore suggest that one way of giving a profile to what mission is and entails might be to look at it in terms of six ‘salvific events’, portrayed in the New Testament: the incarnation of Christ, his death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the *parousia* [...]. (All of) these facets of Christ’s life will empower. In this model, one is not interested in a Christ who offers only eternal salvation, but in a Christ who agonizes and sweats and bleeds with the victims of oppression. One criticizes the bourgeois church of the West, which leans toward Docetism and for which Jesus’ humanness is only a veil hiding his divinity. This bourgeois church has an idealist understanding of it, refuses to take sides, and believes that it offers a home for masters as well as slaves, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed. Because it refuses to practice ‘solidarity with victims’ (Lamb, 1982), such a church has lost its relevance. Having peeled off the social and political dimensions of the gospel, it has denatured it completely” (Bosch, 1991:512-513).

Undeniably, it is within this context of contradictions both within and outside the church that the moral decay of our society should be addressed. In other words, the missionary church should repent and embrace her true nature, identity and calling, while she is simultaneously called to lead humanity to God through repentance. However, the South African society is now organized around a strong human rights ethos and the culture of choice, including in the arena of morality. That calls for a sober and an in-depth analysis of our collective understanding of religion, morality and the role of faith within a society that is based on strong secular and constitutional principles. In this society, the church’s prophetic voice must be heard for a just and moral society.

5.4 The prophetic voice of the missionary church

As early as 1983, Bishop Tutu (1983:27) spoke prophetically about the missionary

church's role in South Africa when he said, "When we Christians speak prophetically, as we must, our truth must be spoken to all, Black and White as is appropriate to each. There are many unpalatable truths that we must address to both groups if we are to speak for God. And if we do these things, uphold the faith and hope of God's people (who are all people on earth, not just Christians), then we must not be surprised that suffering will come our way [...]. To uphold faith and hope in these dark days of crisis, is what it means to be the servants of God. Our servant-hood and our witness are urgently necessary and must be translated into action, hallowed by prayer, the sacraments, worship and meditation shot through and through with the Holy Spirit of God".

South Africa has reached a critical stage where people are tired of speeches and are more interested in seeing what the missionary church is doing practically in addressing the relentless family breakdowns and moral decay. Our communities are crying out for a prophetic voice that is informed by the spirit of servant-hood, whereby the missionary church will be willing to serve those in need with regard to socio-political and economic issues, as well as to minister to matters of the heart or the spirit.

5.4.1 The missionary church and her prophetic voice

During the period of the 1990's, another outstanding South African theologian, Reverent Frank Chikane, as quoted by (Goba: 1996: 29-32) spoke prophetically about the state of the nation and the responsibility of the missionary church regarding the articulation of the prophetic voice. In his view, the reader can pick up a strong sense of the proclamation of truth that confronts all sectors of our society, and across all divisions, as he boldly stated that "as we celebrate our new fledgling democracy, we must not lose our prophetic vigilance, especially in addressing the political realities of the day. These political realities must not be viewed in isolation of the on-going pain and political dissatisfaction one encounters every day amongst ordinary people, who continue to view our democracy as an illusion. What are ordinary people saying on the ground? 'We are homeless, hungry and poor without any prospect of employment'.

“In other words, there is a permanent underclass that is being created in the new South African society. This poses a very critical question of how we should respond to these challenges and how we should restore morality and responsibility in the society. Those who have jobs are not satisfied, hence numerous strikes all over the country by people making incredible demands for high wage increases [...]. There is no way of ending this exodus of people from rural areas to the cities. Those who flee bring with them enormous social problems, health problems, unemployment, crime and violence, and the frightening challenge of AIDS [...]. At the same time as we are experiencing all these social problems and moral decay, we are having a democracy, but our society is in deep crisis, crying out for deep social and personal transformation. [...] What we see and hear as shocking, poses a challenge, not just for a quick fix, but for deep reflection to respond to the painful socio-political realities of our context.” (Goba: 1996: 29-32)

Rev Frank Chikane spoke of the stark, economic realities, the logic of the oppressive economic system that was designed to subjugate and crush the poor, but to be beneficial to the rich and powerful.

One of the most exciting lessons that all theologians learned from the Kairos movement has been to struggle with the word of God, to engage in the process of the rereading of the Word of God and to defy social reality as they act upon it, becoming agents of God's transformation. The struggle in the face of those challenges is not over, for Micah's words continue to pose the haunting question, as well as to provide an answer: “What does the Lord require of you but do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”

South Africans are entering a new political situation and the challenge to the church is to respond to this new context. It means that the church must develop a culture of lobbying – it must introduce sophisticated ways of critiquing national policy. Think tanks must be developed that will engage in research to provide alternative policies that are informed by the Gospel. The church must move away from the approach of making moral platitudes and must develop a Christian praxis that provides solutions to the socio-economic problems of the day. The church in this context must contest and challenge policies; it cannot afford to give simplistic answers. Social analysis

and Biblical reflection become challenges once again as the church seeks to promote its faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as his agent for social and moral regeneration.

At a time when there is a great deal of confusion about moral values in our society, the values of ubuntu- botho must be reclaimed. The church is challenged to revisit its prophetic task in restoring the values of human dignity. It must challenge all Christians to a life of righteousness as the basis for their moral responsibility in order to understand once again their covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. Once again, the church must engage in the teaching ministry that seeks to promote alternate visions of society, focusing on human rights, democracy and the promotion of a just global economic order. As God's family, the church must be a witness and practice Biblical morals, from family level to the church as a unity.

5.4.2 Christian faith and the exercising of prophetic ministry

At the heart of Goba's argument (Goba: 1996. 32) is the prophetic cry for the restoration of values that enhance human dignity. The majority who live in poverty have a sense of discontentment and alienation from the powerful ruling elite, while the upper middle classes feel that their standard of life is under threat from the criminal element. It is within this space that the missional church's voice matters most; in other words, at the core of the missional church's prophetic ministry should be the realization of a vision for the re-humanization of the dehumanized so that all may experience the true meaning of freedom that encapsulates the political, economic and moral ethical dimensions.

Tutu (2004:114-115, 123-124) expresses the opinion that "freedom realized is better than repression [...]. Remember you are a moral agent, capable of creating a particular kind of moral climate that is impatient with injustice and cruelty and indifference and lies and immorality. We make these moral decisions – we live a life aspiring toward goodness – not because we will be punished if we are bad, or will spend eternity in hell. We do so because when we can feel God's love for us, we want to live that love in our lives and share that love with others. It has often been

said, 'What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God'. Do we love like God, as God so deeply desires? Do we become like God, as God so deeply desires us to be?"

In addition, the challenges of the prophetic voice that are posed by the missional church have implications, both for the members of the church as for those that are targeted by the church:

"Throughout history, we Christians have often been deaf to God's voice and blind to God's presence in people. This lack of faith has prevented us from exercising the prophetic mission that Jesus has given us. We have often been silent instead of denouncing injustice and oppression. Instead of working for justice and liberation, we have often remained uninvolved. How shall we explain this silence and uninvolved, this blindness and unbelief? For some of us, the reason lies in a life that is not confronted by suffering and struggle of the poor, and therefore the choice of a convenient God who does not challenge us to take part in a movement for change. For others, however, the reason lies in a choice of privilege and power, and a conscious defense of the status quo. In many cases, it includes taking part in attacks against movements for change, in repression and the killing of the poor. For such people, it is not simply an inability to see and hear, it is a refusal to see. Although we are conscious of our own sins, we must raise our voice in the denunciation of sin." (The Road to Damascus, 1989:10.)

5.4.3 Discerning God's voice in the midst of ministry activity

It is today of equal importance that the missionary church should become conscious of her prophetic role in the communities, which means that she should develop the ability to identify God's voice when He is rebuking and disciplining the Body of Christ, because the ability to discern God's voice as he directs his will, purpose and grace for his work is crucial for the church.

On the other hand, the church in South Africa is called upon to denounce any signs and practice of sin, especially those evils that are based on the unequal social relations and unfair power distribution amongst different social classes. Such a

challenge to the cause of prophecy can only come about if the missionary church demonstrates a deep sense of commitment towards the rediscovery of its prophetic spirit, both for the Body of Christ and the society at large.

Finally, it is clear that the writers of the document, *The Road to Damascus* (1989), have provided a well-reasoned and articulate prophetic voice for contemporary South Africa. The researcher believes that it will serve the missional church well if all Christians can draw inspiration and a missional model from the arguments and perspectives that are captured in it.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the South African church as a community that is called for moral regeneration, embodying and communicating hope in a society that is faced with different challenges. The role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer and the whole Body of Christ has been explored. The challenges that are facing the church have also been reviewed, including the activities of the Christian church within the context of secularism, religious pluralism, the hunger in the communities for the works of love and moral regeneration, as well as the challenges emanating from some disagreements with regard to the question of national unity and identity. The question of divisions in the world has been explored, as well as the affect they have on the missionary church in terms of moral regeneration.

The way in which the missionary church deals with those challenges has been explored, discerning how Christians present themselves as the source of hope for moral regeneration; Christian care, the promotion of human rights, religious freedom and multidimensional missions have all been dealt with.

The prophetic voice of the missionary church has also been explored in the way it deals with moral regeneration in relation to poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, the presence of the permanent underclass and the logic of the oppressive economic structure, through Christians breaking their silence against injustice and hypocrisy, and by confronting the broad socio-economic issues, as well as structural economic injustice.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At this juncture of the work of analyzing and exploring 'The task of the missionary church regarding moral regeneration in South Africa', a brief summary and conclusion of the process as it has evolved over the preceding five chapters will now be offered. Some of the issues that were raised in chapter one will be reviewed. The first chapter presented the fundamental issue, concepts and the rationale of the research. For example, an account of the background to the study, as well as the formulation of the research problem, were presented. The main focus of the background was on the advent of democracy in South Africa, namely April 1994 and the resultant escalation of crime and other associated social ills that followed the elections.

Firstly, the study explored the concern that had characterized the presidency of former president Nelson Mandela regarding the problem of public and private corruption, and the general lawlessness in society. Former president Mandela invented the concept of the RDP of the soul. Later on, former president Thabo Mbeki, during his presidency, presented this phenomenon as "A collapse of an acceptable level of morality in our society which resulted in the elevation of the self and the serving of interests of the self to the point that self becomes a religion. The self became the god we must all worship [...]. In the vacuum individuals had to decide what was bad, and the good was defined as what would serve my interest" (Richardson, 2003: 5-6).

Hence, the first chapter sought to locate the role of the missionary church as pursuing the mission Dei or God's mission and thereby addressing the moral issues by way of addressing certain fundamental questions, for example: What is the role of the missionary church and its task to moral regeneration? What is the mission-focused family and how can it be a cornerstone of moral regeneration? What are the challenges facing the South African missionary church as an agent of hope? These and many more questions were raised and answers, where possible, were provided in the development of the argument throughout the research work.

Chapter one also focused on the aims and objectives of the study by identifying and analyzing theologically why morality is decaying in South Africa. Consequently, a greater part of the work tended to retrace some contributing historical factors and then relocate them within the contemporary socio-political and economic context.

The chapter closed by looking at the central theoretical argument, namely that if the church followed the Biblical guidelines, it would fulfill its tasks to change the society in accordance with the mission Dei; as such, this missiological study proceeded from the Reformation theological tradition. The theological methodology used in this study in formulating theological indicators from Scripture followed the hermeneutics of Biblical theology as set out by Scobie (2003). Lexicons like those of Louw and Nida (1988) and the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit & Roberts, 1979:58), along with other relevant scholarly works, were consulted to focus on qualitative rather than quantitative research. Chapter one presented the limits of the study in the South African context and covered the post-1994 democratic elections.

Secondly, the second chapter focused on the missionary church and her task in moral regeneration. In order to do that, working definitions of the most significant concepts such as 'church', 'mission', 'agape', and 'moral regeneration' were provided. The nature and purpose of the missionary church in the context of moral regeneration were explored in detail again. The chapter focused on the task of moral regeneration, beginning with the church in areas such as self-introspection, repentance, confession of sins, forgiveness and faith in God, and in the message of the church. Most importantly, the following was also addressed: God's call upon the church to promote and practice the culture of fellowship, while appreciating God's reign in the universe as it was modeled by Jesus Christ, thereby incarnating God's vision, mission, and power in the world through the church.

Furthermore, the question of context as it is raised in chapter three was explored. Firstly, the chapter reviewed the history of South Africa and how the Apartheid era impacted on the present situation. Thereafter, the present situation and the establishment of moral regeneration were addressed, including attending to the issues that led to the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement, as well as

the church's response to moral regeneration.

In addition, the focus was on how the church is placed in a situation whereby it is called upon to help individuals, communities and the nation at large to take a new and fresh look at the South African nation and the manner in which collective relationships are conducted. Finally, the chapter looked at how the church could come with practical development through the re-humanization of people.

Similarly, chapter four looked at the matter of mission-focused families as cornerstones for moral regeneration. Initially, a comprehensive definition of mission-focused families was provided in the light of, amongst other things, Deut 6: 1-25 and Eph 5: 22-23. After that, a definition as well as an understanding of family were provided, from the African as well as the Western perspectives. Lastly, the chapter addressed the role of mission-focused families in communities or society.

Finally, the fifth chapter explored the question of the South African missionary church and the challenges it faces as an agent of hope and moral regeneration. The challenges facing the missionary church today was analyzed in detail, as well as the way in which the missionary church deals with those challenges. The chapter explored the work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of hope and how He imparts life in the Body of Christ to deal with issues such as Traditional Religion, secularism, pluralism and the need for works of love in our communities. Most importantly, the chapter focused on the missionary church's prophetic voice on moral regeneration. South Africa has a moral crisis and therefore it is necessary for the missionary church to go beyond its borders with its prophetic voice to address issues that impact negatively on the lives of individuals in South Africa. Therefore it is imperative that the missionary church should not look after its own interests only, but also after the interests of the nation.

However, one needs to point out that the study was only limited to the 1994 democratic elections and could not cover everything that is related to moral regeneration or moral decay in South Africa. In view of the situation, there are gray areas that need to be researched, for example the shift to secularism from African

culture, people who don't follow the teachings of the church, the task of the state towards moral regeneration and the relationship with the church and religion in general, as well as the influence of postmodernism on the church. The context of this study is limited to the South African context and covers the post-1994 democratic elections.

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