

**Improving Pastoral Care in an Urban Intercultural Communication
Context in South Africa through Spiritual Transformation from a
Biblical Babel/Pentecost Perspective.**

by

Alexander Darryl Soal

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Declaration

I declare that “Improving Pastoral Care in an Urban Intercultural Communication Context, in South Africa through Spiritual Transformation from a Biblical Babel/Pentecost Perspective” is my own work and that all sources which I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

(Alexander Darryl Soal)

SIGNATURE

DATE

APPROVED BY:

Supervisor: _____

Dedication

For the glory of God and dedicated to Marianne, Chris, Hannah, Josh and Tim

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Key Words:

Intercultural, Babel, Pentecost, Culture, Communication, Pastoral Care, Reconciliation, Form, Globalism, Heterogeneous churches, Ethic, Multi-ethnic.

Abstract

We examine how we may improve pastoral care in an urban, intercultural communication context in South Africa, through spiritual transformation, from a Biblical Babel/Pentecost perspective. We document lessons learned in an intercultural urban African religious context, in multicultural and multilingual churches, which may assist in intercultural understanding on wider platforms like businesses, universities, clubs, communities, countries and even between nations. We study culture as the dynamic and structured customs, including underlying worldview assumptions which govern people's lives. Using a non-empirical research design including a literary survey for the Old Testament (hereafter OT) and New Testament (hereafter NT) texts and commentaries, we look at the significance of the division of language by God from Babel, from the Genesis record. The inherent creational *imago Dei*, genetic and Noahic unity of all humans makes reconciliation, relationship and intercultural communication possible. Then we examine the impact of Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit's gift of tongues is found to symbolize the unifying of divided languages and cultures. We found that the primary purpose of the gift of tongues was not centred on the controversial debate around glossolalia, but personal spiritual transformation and intercultural transformation. The Trinitarian nature of God enables all humans, made in His image, to once again be one in Christ. The centripetal cause of Babel which led God to centrifugally scatter nations through language, was reversed in Acts 2 by God, so empowering the early church to go out from Jerusalem, to be centrifugally natured to all cultures. We conclude that Acts 2 reverses the breakdown of Gen 11 and becomes the theologically underpinning of multilingual and multicultural churches, not simply the prevailing winds of globalism in our day. We also examine examples of intercultural conflict resolution from the early church records in Acts. Finally, looking at specific pastoral functions, through the various life stages, we seek to assess implementation of lessons learned from Biblical examples and intercultural communication. A Christian

“third culture” may need to be developed through Biblical teaching, without minimizing the positive and neutral values in the various cultures in an intercultural setup. All the pastoral care offered interculturally, calls for continuous dependence on the unifying and interpreting Holy Spirit. The key lies in patiently grown heterogeneous local churches, which are strengthened by the Holy Spirit, even using tools learned from intercultural communication. We postulate that there is significant evidence that Pentecost continues to reverse the curse of Babel, through structural forms to facilitate conflict resolution due to intercultural misunderstanding. The lessons learned in intercultural pastoral care and conflict resolution may thus be of assistance and laboratory test-cases to other groups grappling interculturally in our globalized world.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATM	Automatic Teller Machines, generally used by banks.
BCE	Before Common Era (previously BC)
BEB	Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
CE	Common Era (previously AD)
FOMO	Fear of missing out
GIC	Global Impact Celebration
HeyJ	Heythrop Journal
IVP	Inter Varsity Press
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KJV	King James Version
LW	The Living Word
LXX	Septuagint
NBCTCE	New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
StEv	Studia Evangelica
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal

Old Testament:

Gen; Ex; Lev; Num; Deut; Jos; Judg; Ruth; 1 Sam; 2 Sam; 1 Kgs; 2 Kgs; 1 Chr; 2 Chr; Ezra; Neh; Est; Job; Ps (plural: Pss); Prov; Eccl; Song; Isa; Jer; Lam; Ez; Dan; Hos; Joel; Amos; Obad; Jonah; Mic; Nah; Hab; Zeph; Hag; Zech; Mal.

New Testament:

Mt; Mk; Lk; Jn; Acts; Rom; 1 Cor; 2 Cor; Gal; Eph; Phil; Col; 1 Th; 2 Th; 1 Ti; 2 Ti; Tit;
Phm; Heb; Jas; 1 Pt; 2 Pt; 1 Jn; 2 Jn; 3 Jn; Jude; Rev.

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Introduction

Through this research we seek to improve pastoral care in an urban, Intercultural communication context in South Africa, through spiritual transformation from the perspective of a Biblical Babel and Pentecost. The primary division of languages and cultures which our Triune God brought about was at Babel, because of human pride. From Babel we have all the nations and languages of the world. When Christ and the Father sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this “curse” was undone.

Hence, we seek to find from Scripture and from the changes taking place in our local church, a theological rationale for multicultural and multi-lingual pastoral care within an intercultural context. For instance, is there a way to move churches along the Bennett Scale from simply “Adapting to Difference”, to where individuals are able to expand their own worldviews, to accurately understand other cultures and behave in a variety of culturally appropriate ways, by an “Integration of Difference” (Bennett 2004:8). We will investigate models of intercultural dynamics and propose better means for pastoral care within the intercultural church. We wish to explore theologically and pastorally, what happens when multiple cultures or the “mission field” walks into our churches.?

We research from Genesis and Acts the cause and implications of different languages and cultures. Then we endeavour to document how God’s Holy Spirit changes intercultural dynamics. From an intercultural perspective we wish to explore Biblical and pastoral responses, to a multiplicity of cultures worshipping together.

The aim of this research is to better understand the origins and implications of intercultural realities in a 21st Century local church. “We live in an age where every single person on earth regardless of his or her location, language or culture, is or can be interconnected with everyone else” (Samovar 2010:1). We will begin by assessing a theology of culture in this introduction and then to suggest ways of applying this theology in the last chapter, to pastoral care within the local church.

In our first two chapters we will identify all the narratives in Genesis and Acts that include aspects of interculturalism within them. These chapters will include Genesis 10 and 11 and Acts 2. We then delve into these narratives dealing with interculturalism, by doing

detailed exegesis. We then focus on the intercultural responses from the exegeted passages. In the third chapter we also consider the matter of intercultural conflicts in the New Testament, specifically from the historical perspective of Acts, showing its relevance to our Christian understanding today.

In the fourth chapter we will examine, as participant observer, some of the intercultural issues around pastoral care, in an urban multicultural church in Johannesburg, South Africa. Some scholarly discussions on the subject reveal that in the USA, Loritts (2014:nn) found that only 2.5 percent of churches were multi-ethnic (defined as where one ethnicity does not make up more than 80 percent of the church). "Anyone who has tried to start a multi-ethnic church or turn an older church into a multi-ethnic community of faith, realizes there are enormous challenges, misunderstandings, and difficulties to overcome in the process to become increasingly diverse" (McIntosh & McMahan 2012:18). In the South African context, we have seen God grow multiculturalism and bring many ethnicities into previously culturally homogenous areas. These areas then become "contact zones where differing groups come into contact" (Jandt 2013:22).

Definitions

Defining culture can be a difficult endeavour. It is said that culture is one of the two or three most complicated words to define in the English language. "This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought" (R. Williams 1983:87). Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952 collected 156 definitions of culture. Positively, we would agree with Lingenfelter (1996:225) who says: "Language, society and culture are gifts from God's creation and common grace. We cannot live apart from them, nor should we desire to do so." Jue (2015:60) argues that "after the Fall, our cultures and ethnicities are not immune from sin. Yet I remain convinced that culture and ethnicity are not inherently evil, and that God uses these things [like spiritual gifts] now to extend his gospel to a lost world." He goes on to say: "God has created us with individual gifts, including the gift of our culture and ethnicity" (Jue 2015:61). None of us can be cultureless. Yet living in an intercultural context with this God-given gift can be

difficult. Just as receiving an expensive gift from a loved one, like a new vehicle, means it needs continuous maintenance, insurance and refuelling. This is because “we are all in the grip of our cultural biases” (Lingenfelter 1996:225). We are comfortable. Birds of a feather flocking together are our default setting, which needs Divine intervention to reset. "The bad news is that our communities of bias are by nature prisons of disobedience (Rom 11:32; Gal 3:21-22)" (Lingenfelter 1996:225). Obeying the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) not only calls missionaries to cross to another culture for the glory of God, but calls all in a multicultural context to relate interculturally across cultures.

So how do we define culture? The term “culture” is the label, arising out of studies in anthropology, which is given to “the structured customs and underlying worldview assumptions which govern people’s lives. Culture (including worldview) is a people’s way of life, their design for living, and their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behaviour, plus the resulting artefacts (material culture)” (Kraft 2009:401). Culture is also dynamic. "Cultural practices can be defined as ways of doing something which relate to particular cultural environments and may therefore be unfamiliar to newcomers" (Holiday 2013:6). Piller (2011:5-17) in defining the dynamic nature of culture, sheds in-depth light on the diverse uses of the terms "cross-cultural communication", "intercultural communication" and "inter-discourse communication", and their implications for intercultural communication studies. She introduces the distinction between "culture as an entity" and "culture as a process", and takes a critical distance from the former. A definition of the ‘inter-discourse approach’ “set[s] aside any a priori notions of group membership and identity and [...] ask[s] instead how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture are produced by participants, as relevant categories for interpersonal ideological negotiation” (Scollon & Scollon 2001:544). Inter-discourse is the implicit or explicit relations that a discourse has to other discourses. Thus, inter-discourse communication seeks to analyze discourses without too much reference to culture (which is in process), even if the “forgotten contexts of culture” remain an important consideration (Piller 2007:221).

Culture is the “... integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas and products characteristic of a society” (Hiebert 1976:25). Brislan (1981:51-52) adds that these

shared aspects of society are passed on from one generation to another. Brynjolfson (2004b:52) says culture has three dimensions:

- Perceivable dimension – these are observed in symbols which cultures use like language, dress, gestures, etc.
- Organizational dimension – these are the organized symbols and forms passed on to the next generation and others.
- Conceptual Dimension – these are the worldview, unquestionable assumptions, primary values and allegiances of the group.

“Culture has the purpose of organizing our observable characteristics because we want to survive and prosper” (Brynjolfson 2004b:52). Yet some hold that culture is an illusion. Perhaps we can end with defining culture by observing its difficulty in definition by seeing “culture is a verb” (Scollon & Scollon 2001:23).

Livermore (2009:81) has a helpful analogy for culture, being the pair of glasses or spectacles through which we view the world. We see through the glass of the spectacles, yet we do not look at the glass in the frame whilst seeing, which may explain why some see culture as an illusion. Generally, we are unaware of the glass through which we see things. In the same way culture is largely invisible, but culture enables us to see and function. The analogy of the iceberg also fits here, as most of culture is below the surface. Culture that is above the water (10%) is the obvious: clothes, foods, habits, music, etc., but the largest part (90%) of culture is below the surface, namely attitudes, cultural values, worldviews and assumptions, which are largely unconscious.

We define “intercultural” (pronounced in-ter-kuhl-cher-uhl) as an adjective: as that which takes place between cultures, or derived from different cultures, or between or among people of different cultures. Hence "inter-cultural communication" is communication pertaining to or “taking place between two or more cultures” (Webster's 2010:nn). For instance, the term may be used in the phrase “intercultural exchanges in music and art” or an intercultural marriage. (Dictionary.com 2014:nn). The term originated in the years 1935–40. Piller (2011:8) helpfully defines Intercultural communication as studies of people from "different cultural backgrounds in interaction," where 'culture' is seen "as similar to ethnicity and/or race."

We may also define “ethnic” as large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background (*i.e. ethnic minorities, ethnic enclaves*). We also define “International” as active, known, or reaching beyond national boundaries (*i.e. an international reputation*). We define “Interracial” as involving, or designed for members of different races. “Race” refers to a large body of people characterized by similarity of descent, while recognizing that skin colour seems to be linked to place of origin on the globe (*i.e. distance from the equator*), because “global ultraviolet radiation measurement shows that skin colour is directly correlated, with less leading to fairer skin” (Jandt 2013:19). Our definition of “Multicultural” is of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures (*i.e. a multicultural society, multicultural education, a multicultural menu*) (Brynjolfson & Lewis 2004:xiii).

We, in South Africa have some cultural advantages over some other nations, in that most citizens are at least bilingual and many citizens are multilingual in our country of eleven official languages, hence speaking and largely understanding other cultures that are linked to the languages they speak. This may thus give us a head start in intercultural understanding, a gift shared with only a few other nations, like Canada, Switzerland, Belgium and increasingly other western European states. In an interview of the author of the 2015 South African Matric English set work “Absolution”, the North American Patrick Flanery is quoted as saying to academic Christopher Holmes: “This attempt to be constantly aware of how you are speaking about other people is something certain South Africans do consistently, in a way I haven’t encountered as intensely anywhere else, with the exception of some French intellectual traditions” (Holmes 2013:427-458). It is this sensitivity that Flanery attributes to South African history, which this dissertation seeks to explore as a gift of the Holy Spirit to our country, perhaps demonstrably through the South African experience and recovery from Apartheid. Flanery goes on to say:

My relationship with South African friends has prompted a constant relearning of how to speak and think, because they have demanded of me, of themselves, and of the wider world, a more nuanced way of thinking, one that does not allow a casual objectification of the Other – which was the basis of relations in South Africa for so many for so long – but which allows for awareness of otherness tempered by a comprehensive and vigilant acknowledgement of the *agency* of the other (Holmes 2013:427-458).

It is the unlearning of the “casual objectification of the other” that may be one of the lessons learned from intercultural communication as experienced within the local church context, by the Spirit’s empowering.

The unlearning of the objectification of the other, whether it is called turning from racism, or embracing multiculturalism, all occur best at the coalface of interculturalism, lit by the research from academia. “Yet from a Christian worldview we recognize that the stories promulgated by the world, are not only inadequate as metanarratives but toxic to human flourishing. Ministers of the gospel also have a story to tell — the story of Scripture, the story of Jesus and His love. This is the story that leads to salvation and a story we must not get wrong” (Mohler 2015:1). We need to return to the Bible for the origin of language and cultures. Theologically, we need to see what the story of Jesus and His Body - the church - teaches us historically. “Theology is culturally and historically not neutral. A neutral theology is in fact a homeless theology. It does not belong anywhere. But theology really begins in earnest when it identifies its home and discovers its belonging” (Song 1979:20). Now in a multicultural world, we need the leading of the Holy Spirit to work Pentecost into the intercultural dynamics we find in our increasingly global village.

Villa-Vicencio (1994:120) was one of the South African proponents at the end of the twentieth century, of the concept of interculturality. Interculturality emerged to indicate that an intercultural paradigm could be more appropriate, than the existing paradigm of inculturality. In the nineteenth century inculturalisation tended to be no more than the ‘Christianisation’ of the so-called heathen culture. Such an approach implied more than accommodation. It was actually an engulfing missionary model with the focus on cultural assimilation (Villa-Vicencio 1994:116). “This model projects a Christian homogenised culture that marginalises, (often alienates) those cultures that are excluded from the dominant religious point of departure” (Louw 2010:182). We hold here, not to an inculturalisation or homogenization of culture within the local church, but rather to a respect for what is good and neutral in all cultures. Only what is unethical culturally, needs to be confronted by Biblical standards. Ideally, this intercultural communication is primarily within the local church between Christians, but may just as well apply to the need for sensitive intercultural dialogue between the multicultural church, and the multitude of cultures around the local church in a multicultural context. “The essence of

the incarnation is entering the cultural prison of others and submitting to it, for the sake of the gospel" (Lingenfelter & Mayers 2003:117).

While there is a place in the local church for the concept of a "third race" as far as a new culture arising on the essentials of our faith, yet on the multitude of non-essentials, respect for other cultures needs to be the norm. As a caution to pushing the concept of the "third race" too far, as in becoming trans-cultural, Adams (2015:74) astutely observes that

When some white people call for "dying to yourself," they in effect mean, "assimilate or leave." ... [They retort] "But Paul gave up his Hebrew-ness for the sake of the gospel! We are called to lay ourselves down at the church door so that Christ may be all in all!" I'm not making allowance for total assimilation, as blacks too often die more to themselves than whites in white churches, but I heartily agree with that.

Finding the cultural balance (intercultural) between respect for all cultures (purely multicultural) and the need for something of a Christian third culture (potentially trans-cultural), becomes the ongoing challenge in a multicultural church. Intercultural understanding and communication thus become the tools to aid this process. Folmar argues for the unique role that the local church can play.

Healthy churches are laboratories for multi-cultural ministry. They are comprised of what the second century *Letter to Diogenes* called "a third race"—neither Jew nor Gentile, but united in the "one new man." Such unity amid diversity occurs nowhere else. Where else will you find Hindu-background Indians, loving and serving Muslim-background Pakistanis? Or black and white South Africans ministering together in harmony and humble deference? Only in true churches where the Word is rightly preached (Folmar 2015:46).

Evangelical theology will by essence seek to hold firm to its roots, in the inerrancy of Scripture and also evangelize all nations, even those living and working around us in our increasingly globalized world.

We do need to note that when the local church serves as a laboratory for multiculturalism and a community proto-type of unity amid diversity, this should not negate human uniqueness. Young Lee Hertig (1993:40:4) has pointed out that:

"Problems in a diverse community often come from the oversimplification of human complexity. The three dimensions of being human—"like *all* others, "like *some* others," and "like *no* other"—are very important factors for everyone living in diversity. The

universal, cultural, and individual dimensions in human beings are interdependent.”

Again balance is the key here. Augsburger (1986:49-50) rightly stresses:

Only when the universal is clearly understood can the cultural be seen distinctively and the individual traits respected fully; only when the person is prized in her or his uniqueness, can the cultural matrix be seen clearly and the universal frame be assessed accurately. The universal unites us as humans, the cultural identifies us with significant persons, and the individual affirms our identity.

Our research will focus on the cultural identities within the local church (the wider framework) of us all being fully human, because of one set of parents in Adam and Eve, (hence not racial inequality) and also all humans being individually unique (therefore no one-size-fits-all solution to issues).

The concept of multiculturalism in a local church using the tools of intercultural communication, also has relevance for the wider world, including the business world. According to a study by McKinsey and Company, gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform their less diverse peers; for ethnically diverse companies, that figure is 35%. Why is this so? Whilst their research is not exhaustive, diverse companies better capture the increasingly diverse consumer marketplace, and diverse teams encourage innovative thinking and creative problem-solving (Hunt 2015:nn).

Not only for global business, but especially politically for continents like Africa, as in today's urban local church, intercultural understanding is of crucial importance. Much national, continental and international conflict may be mitigated by ongoing growth in intercultural understanding. “In the wake of the falling of the Berlin Wall in November 11, 1989 the power structure of the international community moved from bipolar (the United States and the Soviet Union) to unipolar (United States) position. Now the movement is rapidly toward a multipolar international arrangement” (Samovar 2012:1). That which we have seen the Spirit of God do in a local church, we hold that God can do internationally. “Succinctly we believe many cross-cultural problems can be resolved or avoided through an awareness and understanding of the components of intercultural communication” (Samovar 2012:3). We read reports even from the field of psychiatry, where the psychoanalyst, “working in a foreign language moves between ‘the confusion of tongues’ and the ‘gift of tongues’, that is, between Babel and Pentecost” (Jiménez 2004:85). Intercultural communication is not only theologically

important for the contemporary church, but the lessons learned and taught by the church, should have a contributing influence for peace and understanding in our world, which inherently tends towards fracturing.

Research Methodology

We have primarily used a research design that is non-empirical, using a literary survey for the OT and NT texts and commentaries. There is also a certain amount of empirical research using case study as a participant observer in a multicultural church, in an urban setting, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The research method has been a mixed method: involving the qualitative method using primarily document collection and also some quantitative interview and observation. This will mean a literary survey and analysis of pertinent modern literature and an exegetical approach to the Scriptures.

Three categories will be explored, namely,

- i. The study of the narratives.
- ii. The functioning of the Intercultural dynamics within the Genesis and Acts narratives.
- iii. Deriving a theology connecting our findings to the New Testament and then contextualizing for Christian living today, in a multicultural environment.

Where possible, case studies will be given, using some Quantitative analysis among cultural groups within the context of the research place, though this may have to wait for further study in this field.

Our philosophical worldview gives rise to our research design and research methods. “Three key concepts were identified (the philosophical world view, the research design, and the research methods), modelled around a central research scheme (which encapsulates the decisions being made about a research methodology)” (Pilkington & Pretorius 2015:105). Hence our philosophical worldview is a social constructivism view on truth. “The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community” (Creswell 2003:8). Using a multiple paradigm thesis (Hall 2016:3), we shall therefore apply the historical grammatical method, to

discover the Biblical author's original intended meaning in the text, to arrive at our own viewpoint. The historical-grammatical method seeks to distinguish between the one original meaning of the text and its significance. The significance of the text will be essentially the application or contextualization of the principles from text. Selection is therefore both unavoidable and natural to our research.

The primary methodology upon which research into intercultural communication has been based is most often called ethnography, from “ethno” (people) and “graphy” (to describe). “Ethnographic research methodology is based on fieldwork, participant observation, “strange making,” and contrastive observation” (Scollon & Scollon 2001:19). As participant observers in the South African, urban local church, we hope to bring some added light to this growing field of intercultural studies.

Summary

In our endeavour to improve pastoral care in an urban Intercultural communication context in South Africa, through spiritual transformation from the perspective a Biblical Babel and Pentecost, we note that the division of languages comes from God at Babel and the healing of that division began at Pentecost. Hence the theological place for intercultural pastoral care in multicultural and multilingual churches.

Summary of some definitions: -

- Ethnic - large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.
- Multi-ethnic – two or more ethnic groups, where no one ethnicity makes up more than 80 percent.
- Culture - the dynamic and structured customs, including underlying worldview assumptions which govern people’s lives. It is a people’s way of life, their design for living, and their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behaviour, plus the resulting artefacts (material culture) (Kraft 2009:401).

- Intercultural - that which takes place between cultures, or derived from different cultures, or between or among people of different cultures.
- Interculturality – respecting multiple cultures within an intercultural paradigm.
- Inculturalisation - tends to be no more than the imposition of one culture upon another culture.
- Multicultural - relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures.
- Trans-cultural - a new third culture (3rd race) above all other cultures.
- Cross-cultural communication – communicating across to another culture.
- Intercultural communication - people from "different cultural backgrounds in interaction," where 'culture' is seen "as similar to ethnicity and/or race (Piller 2011:8).
- Inter-discourse communication – the implicit or explicit relations that a discourse has to other discourses. Thus analyzing discourses without too much reference to culture.
- International - active, known or reaching beyond national boundaries.
- Race - a large body of people characterized by similarity of descent.
- Interracial - involving, or designed for members of different races.
- Ethnography – study and description of people.

We hold to the conviction that intercultural studies and understanding, may not only assist the local church in a multicultural context, but become the “laboratory test-case” for a watching world in business, politics, travel and international and national society at large.

1. *Spiritual Transformation from a Babel / Pentecost Perspective*

Babel complicated many things, as Noel Coward wryly commented in his *Collected Lyrics*:

When the tower of Babel fell
It caused a lot of unnecessary Hell.
Personal rapport
Became a complicated bore
And a lot more difficult than it had been before,
When the tower of Babel fell
(Storti 2001: 97).

The complication of communication seems to set the world at war and make life in the Body of Christ between varying cultures ever a challenge. Yet intercultural communication is also an opportunity to witness to the watching world, that we truly are Christ's disciples, if we can overcome the curse of Babel by the power of Pentecost. When a church of many cultures can work together, resolve conflict and truly care economically and emotionally (holistically), then a conflicted world can take note that this is something beyond the natural; difficult at times but not Hell, nor a bore.

Professor Kenneth Mathews (1996:475) in his commentary on Genesis suggests; "Luke's report of the founding of the church at Pentecost has been interpreted by some commentators as an intentional echo of Genesis 10-11." The importance of this link between Babel and Pentecost is foundational to the hypothesis that only by the Holy Spirit's empowering can any meaningful intercultural communication be effective in the local church. It is the purpose of this dissertation to discover how much validity these interpretations of this link between Babel and Pentecost, have for the intercultural communication and pastoral care in the early Twenty First Century, where more and more churches find themselves in the melting pot of the global village. "The forces of postmodernism, post-colonialism, pluralism, multiculturalism and globalization have created in our collective mind-set a greater awareness of the disharmony within the human race. The church is also affected by these changes, especially as the face of Christianity gradually becomes less white and more non-white worldwide" (Chan 2005:1).

This chapter will examine the Genesis record and specifically chapters 10 and 11 of Genesis, to root this research in the Biblical text before seeking to find ways to improve pastoral care in the urban intercultural communication context we find ourselves in, in South Africa. The dynamics within this country mirror the global context to a large extent. The cliché that South Africa has the whole world in one country is perhaps truer than we surmise. South Africa finds itself as a mix of first world and two-thirds world economically and also a magnet for refugees (both political and economic) from around the world, but primarily from Africa. The next chapter will look at Acts and look back to Genesis, to see if the author of Acts was referencing Genesis 10-11.

1.1 *Babel in Context*

The creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 reveal a God who delights in and values both unity and diversity. God's creational design is far from mass produced uniformity. In the "melodious mélange" of Genesis 1 the Creator seems to delight in making opposites (heaven and earth, day and night, male and female) — "but opposites that complement, not clash, opposites that harmonize not antagonize" (Rhodes 1998:20). It is this providential planning of opposites that begins to point to the creativity behind the unity in cultures and the diversity between cultures. In fact, intercultural communication can be said to begin between the sexes and progress outwards to the ends of the earth.

The diversity between cultures is the norm and unfortunately the main issue triggering conflict. "A prominent question many worldviews and metanarratives are now wrestling with is the question of human diversity. Diversity is a fact that cannot be denied. The insularity of other cultures — which has always been partial — has now given way to the phenomenon of globalization. It is hard to miss the fact that we are living in an age of increasing diversity; not just the world at large but even in our own nation and communities" (Mohler 2015:1). In the intercultural church this diversity is most evident in differences between the sexes, ages and cultures. The unity or singularity that was there from creation was then restored at Pentecost, in answer to Christ's prayers in John 14-17.

The first three chapters of Genesis also reveal the God who creates mankind in his own image, capable of relationships. God alludes to the later revelation of the Triune nature of His being, when He as three persons of the Godhead, commune among themselves and say: “Let’s *us* make human beings” (Gen 1:26). Genesis shows that humanity was created to be in communion with God and one another, a communion that both reflects and glorifies the Triune communion (cf. Jn 17). This is the biblical and theological foundation for later revelation on intercultural communication and fellowship.

We thus need to note from the outset that the human race is one. Each and every one of the diverse peoples of earth belongs to one family. God’s singular act of creating male and female progenitors of all peoples is foundational to our theology (Gen 1-2). Yahweh is the God of creation. Since He is the creator of all human beings on earth, we are all His offspring. As His offspring by creation, every human being is our brother and sister. We are equally created by Him and like him (the image of God). We are equal in His sight in worth and dignity and thus have an equal right to respect and justice. If God has made us all from one set of original parents, then no individual or “race” may consider themselves or itself above others. Paul, in the NT proclaims to the racially proud Athenians, “From one man He made every nation (ethnos) of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth ...” (Acts 17:26ff; cf. also Rom 2:29-30). (Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version).

Van Engen (2004:2) speaks of “the complementarity of universality and particularity in God’s mission,” being His universal love of all humanity (Jn 3:16) and His particular love for individuals within all cultures. He observes that...

...three times in the first eleven chapters of Genesis we are told that God is the creator and judge of all peoples. All people are created in Adam and Eve; all people descend from Noah; all people have their languages confused and are then spread out over the entire earth after the Babel episode. In each case, there is a recognition of the particularity and difference of various peoples—as is signalled by the inclusion of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 – yet in each case this multiplicity of peoples are collectively and unitedly said to be the object of God’s concern (Van Engen 2004:2).

Even the call and blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12 involves Him being a blessing to the plurality of nations.

From Genesis 12 onwards we see that God is concerned for all nations and all peoples. He is declared to be the Lord of all nations (Deut 10:17; Dan 2:47; cf. 1 Tim 6:15). Though God specifically selected the nation of Israel to be His covenant people, it was not to favour one nation above all other nations, but to provide in Israel a channel through which God's grace could reach out to and "bless" all nations. This purpose was made explicit in the call God gave to Abraham: "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Many times in the Old and New Testament we see also that Yahweh is the God of provision, even in His ample provision made for the foreigner/alien/immigrant. Strangers in the midst of God's people were to be loved in the name of the Triune God. Even the later temple worship ("a house of prayer for all peoples") was to accommodate the nations. "Because he is the God of history, we affirm his sovereignty over all nations. Because he is the God of provision, we affirm his constant and providential care of the nations" (Davis 2003:106).

So the *locus classicus* for any biblical discussion of human diversity and culture is Genesis 10 and 11. The Genesis 10 passage is known as the Table of Nations, and Genesis 11:1-9 is the story of the Tower of Babel.

1.2 The Tables of Nations – Exegesis

In Genesis 10 we have what appears to be an incongruous juxtaposition of the Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel story. We have here what happened to the sons of Noah, after the Deluge. These passages seem at first glance to give incompatible accounts for the origin of nations and the different languages. Yet the author of Genesis seems to view them as complementary. The lexical and literary connections shared in both sections and the vocabulary seen by closer scrutiny of key words like "scatter" (פּוּץ), "build" (בָּנָה) and "land" (אֶרֶץ), point to the two narratives shedding light on each other and being bound in mutual relationship.

The Table of Nations, which is unique in world literature, paints a positive picture (or at least a neutral picture) of the relationship between nations; a picture of all nations being genealogically linked as brothers and sisters, all descended from Noah. The shorter Tower of Babel story corrects this conclusion: "Mankind is seen organizing and

arrogating to himself essentially divine prerogatives: he builds a tower to reach God's dwelling in heaven; he tries to make himself a name and he schemes on his own account" (Wenham 1987:242). God commanded humans to fill the earth (Gen 1:28, 9:1, 7) yet here the record shows we rebelled against this command, by only migrating east and rather congregating together in one city, Babel. So at Babel God divides language into all the resulting tongues of the world, in the last judgment of primeval times.

It is significant to notice that in the Genesis 10 genealogy, the phrase: "These are the descendants of ... in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations" (10:5, 20, 31) occurs three times. These statements seem to affirm the value of belonging to an ethnic group that shares the same language and lives together in a defined geographic area. This would seem to be one of God's gifts to human beings -to be included in a particular group of people — which gives a sense of belonging, identity, and security. This concept of an ethnic group will be elaborated on elsewhere in this dissertation.

The story of the Tower of Babel accounts for what led to the "remarkable diversity and dispersion" (Mathews 1996:427) of the ever growing population, as evidenced in the Table of Nations. So the "blessing" of procreation and rule of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1, 7 was being fulfilled by the sons of one man, Noah, yet again only after Divine intervention as "The LORD scattered them" (Gen 11:9). "The story of the tower also looks ahead by anticipating the role that Abram (Gen 12:1-3) will play in restoring the blessing to the dispersed nations" (Mathews 1996:428).

The Table of Nations deals with three sections, the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem. Seventy descendants of Noah prefiguring on a world scale the seventy sons of Israel who went down to Egypt (Gen 46:27). The fourteen "nations" that came from Japheth (Gen 10:2-4) and the thirty from Ham (Gen 10:6-20) and the twenty-six from Shem (Gen 10:21-31) add up to seventy "peoples." Dealing with the less relevant or non-elect lineage first, the writer of Genesis, elaborates progressively through Japheth and more into the sons of accursed Ham, focusing with greater interest on Nimrod (Gen 10:8-12), the founder of the cities of Mesopotamia. Nimrod's name (meaning "we shall rebel") reflects the motives of the builders of Babel. Even the especially accursed

Canaanites are included in greater detail (Gen 10:15-19) to account for the judgment which will later befall them through Joshua.

Lastly, and in highest priority, the Table deals with the elect line of Shem, which leads to Abraham. Yet even as Genesis 10 ends with a reminder of the nations spreading out after the “flood” (מַבּוּל), there is the association with the “Babel” (בָּבֶל) of Genesis 11, the last of the great tales of universal judgement that divides primeval history. The story of the tower of Babel is sandwiched between the two genealogies of Shem. The first genealogy completes the Table of Nations (Gen 10:21-31). It links Shem to (wicked) Joktan and then Babel. The second genealogy extends the lineal descent from Shem through Peleg and then to Abram (Gen 11:10-26). There then follows the narrative about Abram.

As an aside, the traditional understanding of Gen 10:25 has been that the etiological notice appearing with Peleg’s name (“for in his days the earth was divided”) is the writer of Genesis’ foreshadowing of the division of languages in the account of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11). This may also serve to demonstrate a division of Eber’s line into the ancestors of Abraham on the one hand and the builders of Babylon on the other. Those who support the traditional view that Peleg refers to Babel, include Keil and Delitzsch, Morris and Whitcomb, G. C. Aalders, H. C. Leupold, Allen Ross, John Sailhamer et al (Fouts 1998:19). Certain young-earth creationists recently see in Gen 10:25 a reference to continental drift. Proponents include D. G. Barnhouse and B. Northrup. They argue that the basic meaning of the root *p/g* (פָּלַג) and its derivations in other languages, particularly Greek. Northrup traces the development of the root *p/g* (פָּלַג) and concludes that “the emphasis in Greek refers to dividing land masses by larger bodies of water, such as seas or oceans. Therefore, the reference in Gen 10:25 must be to the division of the earth by large bodies of water and as such must be a reference to continental drift” (Fouts 1998:19). Fouts (1998:21) grapples with all the evidence including the suggestion of canalization of Babylon during Peleg’s time and concludes saying that the “view of division of the earth by continental drift (separation by oceans) seems to be untenable. It lacks both etymological support and historical confirmation”.

The Table of Nations sheds light on the interconnectedness of all human families even within the present diversity of genealogical descent. The tower of Babel accounts for

diversity of language and hence diversity of geography and political alignment. Our harmony between humans comes from "*imago Dei*," the innate dignity of humans made in the image of God. Keil and Delitzsch (1989:173) see this not so much around the "*imago Dei*," but due to their failure to "maintain their inward unity notwithstanding their disposition. But the fact that they were afraid of dispersion is a proof that the inward spiritual bond of unity and fellowship -- not only "the oneness of their God and their worship, but also the unity of brotherly love -- was already broken by sin". So, through Noah and ultimately back to Adam, come the blessings of God. Yet because of the sin of pride (in Eden and Babel) comes the discord to that harmony.

Mathews (1996:429) warns: "Genesis 10-11 shows that a disproportionate consideration on "races," as in our modern world, forfeits our inherent unity and may lead to a primitive tribalism that fosters war". Repeatedly in the Bible the emphasis is on language, which God divided at Babel, and not on race. While many contemporary correctives to racism are to be lauded, yet the danger exists that in that remediation itself, it can lead to a proud nationalism or tribalism that divides. Especially in conflict situations, the temptations are to default to accusations of racism or tribalism, rather than seeking to communicate more effectively, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, who may use the tools of intercultural communication techniques. It remains the inherent unity of all humans that makes reconciliation, relationship and intercultural communication possible. Without this inherent unity, ethnic "cleansing," tribalism—and even "retribalization"—can raise its ugly head. We have recently witnessed the violence of the Congo (DRC), Bosnia, Liberia, Chechnya, Burundi and Rwanda. Arthur Schlesinger (1992:1) has thoughtfully concluded, "Ethnic and racial conflict, it seems evident, will now replace the conflict of ideologies as the explosive issue of our times."

While this research will not delve into the heresy of the Hammite curse used to justify racism, it is helpful to notice that this same Table of Nations has been at the core of centuries of division based on cultural diversity. "Racism is of course one of those toxic approaches to the issue of diversity. Racism — a story that is not new and seems never to go away — suggests that human beings have permanent differences that must be evaluated along a spectrum of superiority and inferiority. Racism is one of the primal human sins and one of the most difficult to eradicate. It is the very antithesis of the

gospel of Jesus Christ and everything that Christians should know, believe, teach, and live” (Mohler 2015:1).

The horrors of the interpretative tradition that arose from Genesis 10 and the so-called “Curse of Ham,” which said that the descendants of Ham were cursed with black skin, does violence to the text and slanders the character of God. (We need only remind ourselves that the text indicates that it is not even Ham who is cursed but Canaan).

This heresy originated in the medieval world and became culturally significant when it was disastrously used to justify the Atlantic slave trade that promoted the worst forms of racism imaginable. “The only rescue from heresies like the infamous curse of Ham is the truth of the Gospel and the authority of Scripture. Our common ancestry in Adam (and Noah) points to our common need for a Saviour and, for believers in Christ, a common new humanity” (Mohler 2015:1).

It is interesting that other academic disciplines have reinforced the interconnectedness of all humanity. For instance, Aalders (1981:214) notes that “the sciences of anthropology and ethnology have generally acknowledged the unity of the whole of humanity. The essential physical similarity and the unrestricted capability of cross-generation of all races, point incontestably to this unity of the human race.” Then from the genetic sciences come the latest discoveries that say: “The overwhelming verdict of the genome is to declare the basic unity of humankind” (Wade 2014:nn).

Chan (2005:6) observes that: “All men are sons of Noah as well as sons of Adam. In contrast to, say, Egyptian mythology, in which the Egyptians saw themselves alone as men and everyone else as descended from the enemies of the gods, the biblical worldview holds that all racial and ethnic groups share equally in the image of God. This affirms an essential unity amidst the diversity of humankind and speaks against all thought of racial and cultural superiority.” This view of the essential unity of humanity, while always biblical, is now the common “politically correct view” in academic circles.

Another example of the interconnectedness of all humanity is the eminent physical anthropologist M. F. Ashley Montagu (1974: 74) who is a scholar who accepts neither the biblical account of creation nor the historicity of Adam, yet confirms the truth of the unity of the human race. He states: “Concerning the origin of the living varieties of man

we say little more than that there are many reasons for believing that a single stock gave rise to all of them. All varieties of man belong to the same species and have the same remote ancestry. This is a conclusion to which all the relevant evidence of comparative anatomy, palaeontology, serology and genetics points.” As for human blood, apart from the four blood groups and the Rh factor (which are present in all ethnic groups), “the blood of all human beings is in every respect the same” (Montagu 1974: 307).

Yet in spite of all the Biblical and scholarly evidence for the essential unity of all humanity, that unity flies apart when we come to Genesis 11 and Babel.

1.3 Divisive Babel

Babylonians believed that Babel/Babylon meant “gate of god”, but the words sound rather like “confusion” and similar to the words for “folly” and “flood” (Wenham 1987:245). The nearest source is probably *bab-el* “gate of God” from the Akkadian language. Thus it was the gate by means of which humans sought to assault God. Babel was meant to be the high point of culture, but has rather become the symbol of human defiance and failure, and as such gave rise to the need for intercultural communication, under the Holy Spirit’s empowering.

When we consider the “tower”, the word used in the Hebrew text (**מִגְדָּל**) is generic and can be used for any sort of tower, like defence towers or watchtowers. Yet this was an early Mesopotamian city. The most prominent building in the early temple complex was the ziggurat. “Most interpreters, therefore, have identified the Tower of Babel as a ziggurat” (Walton 2001:373).

Archaeology informs us that those ziggurats, resembled pyramids in appearance, but they are nothing like them in function. They were solid mounds with no inside to the ziggurat. The structure was framed in dried mud brick, and then the core was packed with earth filling. Finally, the façade was completed with kiln-fired brick. Parrot (1955:154) gives extensive detail about engineering, numbers and sizes of ziggurats, which is not germane to this study, though of ongoing interest. Initially it was said:

“nearly thirty ziggurats in the area of Mesopotamia have been discovered by archaeologists” (Walton 1995:2). It would seem that the Tower at Babel was this high point of the ziggurat culture.

The ziggurats were dedicated to particular deities; while in any given city there may have been several ziggurats, though the main one was associated with the patron deity of the city. Of the “nearly thirty ziggurats in the general region, and texts mention several others. The main architectural feature was the stairway or ramp that led to the top. In a small room at the top a bed was made and a table set for the deity” (Walton 2001:374). Ziggurats may vary in size from eighteen metres per side to over sixty metres per side.

Most importantly the ziggurat did not play a part in any of the rituals that are known to us from Mesopotamia. Known literature leads us to conclude that common people did not use it for anything. “It was sacred space, strictly off-limits to profane use. Though the structure at the top was designed to accommodate the god, it was not a temple, which was typically next to a ziggurat and the place people went to worship” (Walton 2001:374). The ziggurat was simply a structure built to support a stairway as a visual representation of that which was believed to be used by the gods to travel from one realm to another. The ziggurat was for the convenience of the gods.

There is some uncertain historical evidence to point to the *Birs Nimrud* (over 46 metres high) being the remains of Babel. Jewish tradition recorded by Flavius Josephus, ascribed the original construction to Nimrod (Aalders 1981:251). There are considerable ruins evident there, including an enormous tower, which Arabs regard as being destroyed by fire from heaven (Keil 1989:176). Thus the desire in building the tower was not necessarily to storm the gates of heaven, but to be “a central point of reference that could be seen by all” and serve as not simply a literal pointer back to the centre of civilization, but figuratively to keep from being scattered (Aalders 1981:248).

1.4 Brief overview of further Scriptures

Further in Scripture, Babylon came to symbolize human pride and godlessness, which consistently attracts Divine judgment. Isaiah later warned the king of Babylon:

Isaiah 14:13–15

“You said in your heart,
“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred
mountain.
I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.”

Isaiah also directly links the fate of Babylon to the fate of Sodom in Isaiah 13:19 “Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians’ pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.” Daniel foresaw the destruction of Babylon in his visions of the “head of gold” (Dan 2:28) and the tree top in the heavens (Dan 4:11, 22) all smashed and cut down. Babylon symbolized the accumulated wickedness and atheism of human beings (cf. Zech 5:5-11). Babylon will be ultimately destroyed, yet God’s people are to flee from it in the interim (Is 48:20). In the NT, Babylon is the great prostitute, out of whom the saints were to come (Rev 18:4) and to rejoice at the prospect of her destruction (Rev 18:20).

Babylon symbolizes the beginning and end of the world of imperialism. Babylon “has become the synonym of imperialism through the ages. The hope of the world for peace hangs on the fall of what it symbolizes (Rev 18-19) (Stigers 1976:125). Thus the call for “one world” is historically proven to bring ills by the multitude. When humans create “a name” for themselves it is invariably imperialistic power, where sin reaches unparalleled proportions, like last witnessed on a large scale in Nazi Germany and on a smaller scale to this day, around the world in smaller dictatorships. Stigers (1976:129) points out that the final judgment fire, like the flood will bring about the “final renovation of the earth” (2 Pet 3:7, 10-12).

Zephaniah 3:9 foresees the end of the confusion of Babel, “Then will I purify the lips [change the speech] of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder.” Luke looked at Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit to speak in other languages (tongues) as a sign of the last days, when all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:8-21). Babel is not the confusing last

word. As Keil and Delitzsch (1989:161) say, the nations “were not intended to be for ever excluded from the counsels of eternal love.” Chan (2005:7) argues that there is no “indication that God will eliminate language differences or national boundaries in the eschaton (Rev 7:9; 21:24-26), which would be expected had God imposed linguistic diversity and geographical dispersion as a curse.” Yet the prophets and the writers of the NT foretell the day when sin is destroyed and perfect unity is restored to the nations. Until then the church models that reality, as missiology and eschatology shapes our ecclesiology.

1.5 Language explored

There has been debate through the ages on how God divides the languages. Older commentators like Vitringa and Hofmann (Keil 1989:174) thought that it was by changing the organs of speech (lips and tongue). Keil and Delitzsch argue strongly for supernatural intervention in the human mind. Language is seen as the audible expression of emotions, conceptions and thoughts of the mind. Thus the confusion of languages at Babel into different national dialects needs to be seen as the breaking up of the original unity of emotion, conception, thought and will.

The linguistic sciences point out that new languages develop over long periods of time. The Genesis account of Babel points to Divine intervention in language, not the normal development of a new language in a certain part of the world. “Roman Catholic scholars have generally yielded to the argument that new languages can develop only over long periods of time” (Aalders 1981:254). The Roman Catholic scholars posit a long break between verses 7 and 8, where the migrating tribes each developed new languages before reaching Shinar, but this reverses the order of the Biblical narrative.

There is evidence of long development of languages, as can be seen relatively recently in Dutch developing into Afrikaans over the past 300 years in the South African context. Yet there is also no textual evidence in the Genesis record of a break between verses 7 and 8, nor reason to hold to a reversal of this order. Again there is no objective reason to discount Divine intervention in the space-time continuum, as given in multiple instances in history, like the Exodus etc.

Oscar Romo (1993:207) remarked, "It is said that America is a melting pot where the English language is the 'language' and the 'Anglo' (European) culture is superior. In reality, there are 500 ethnic groups who daily speak 636 languages of which 26 are considered major languages." Since this was written in the United States, those numbers have grown substantially. It seems now in most countries that there is a general increase in the multiculturalism and hence the multilingualism of the residents occupying that space. The sociologist Alice Feldman (2002:32) examines some of this concept of space (especially invasion and defence of space among minorities in a post-colonial world) from a geographical and sociological perspective in "Making Space at the Nations' Table" as she seeks to map "the transformative geographies of the international indigenous peoples' movement." Different languages and hence cultures are now both common and threatened in most places in the world. "Modern means of communication and the emerging world economy have transformed our world from a set of self-contained tribes and nations into a global city. Our world, our nation, and our communities are rapidly changing around us" (Davis 2003:91). Helping to not just cope with this change, but flourish in the variety of languages can be aided by the example and models of intercultural communication in the church.

Mohler (2015:1) asks the question regarding what happened to the 70 nations of Genesis 10. How many people groups are there now? Well, according to the International Missions Board of the Southern Baptists in the USA, "there are now at least 11,489 people groups in the world. So out of the 70 we read about in Genesis 10, there have developed 11,489. Of those, 6,832 are, at least by the best Christian reckoning, less than two percent Christian. And of those 11,489 people groups, 3,264 have no Christian witness." The disobedience of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve to the command in Genesis 1:28 to "fill the earth," led to the judgment in Genesis 11, and that led to the dispersion after the Tower of Babel. Remember though that the dispersion was not itself the judgment, it was God's plan all along. Mohler (2015:1) proposes that "the judgment was that instead of being dispersed in communion, they were dispersed in confusion — a story that continues even into today."

1.6 *Divisive Speech*

With the disappearance of unity between the various people who would go on to form the nations of the world, it would seem that the one original language was also lost. So that while various languages have made claims to being “The Original,” there is no evidence of this. Keil and Delitzsch (1989:175) say even in Hebrew that not enough has “been preserved to enable us to form the least conception of its character.” The opinion of Rabbins and earlier theologians, that Hebrew was the original language has been mostly abandoned because of philological research. There is the conviction that that first primitive language is now extinct, buried within all the materials of existing languages, only to be resurrected at the eschaton to eternal life in a glorified form of tongues understood by the redeemed.

Aalders refers to an Assyriologist who discovered a clear relationship between ancient Sumerian and Egyptian, and the several languages spoken by indigenous peoples in Central and South America and even some of the Islands. This scholar formally considered the Genesis 11 account to be no more than myth. While Sumerian is the oldest known language and found in ancient times in the plain of the Euphrates River, he does not imply that it is the “original language.” “The fact that it was there that a relationship was discovered with languages spoken by native peoples on the other side of the world is certainly of more than passing interest” (Aalders 1981:255).

Keil and Delitzsch (1989:176) again say that “a type and pledge of this hope was given in the gift of tongues on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church on the first Christian day of Pentecost, when the apostles, filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke with other or new tongues of ‘the wonderful works of God’, so that the people of every nation under heaven understood in their own language (Acts 2:1-11).”

1.7 *Pride and Sin*

The content, literary structure and terminology of the Babel narrative parallels other stories in Genesis 1-11. As in the fall narrative, so in the Babel passage, we see the Creator described anthropomorphically as omnipotent, stern and moral. “The Tower of

Babel stands as a monument to man's impotence before his Creator, and the multiplicity of human languages is a reminder of Divine retribution on human pride" (Wenham 1987:244). While building a high tower that God can hardly see, as He has to come down to look at it, is pathetic, yet the motives to embark on such an enterprise are the most horrific. Where sin reigns, the diversity among nations seems necessary to restrain the pride and wickedness of humanity. As Walter Brueggemann (1982:97) observes, "all human language has become the language of disobedience." The growing desire to displace God and the flaming thirst for fame, prompts God to slow down human attempts at cooperation, at least until the restraining Holy Spirit shall be poured out on His new people, the church.

The text gives two motives for building the tower – making a name for themselves and avoiding being scattered (Gen 11:4). This and other reasons have also been used by liberal scholars to defend multiple sources of authorship for Genesis. Yet even the liberally influenced scholars like Aalders (1981:244-5) dispute this idea conclusively, quoting Bohl who "has described these efforts towards dividing the sources as a 'superfluous exercise in clever ingenuity.'"

Walton makes a strong case for the judgment on Babel to not be attributed to pride or disobedience. Urbanization is also discounted as the problem. He argues that the context of Scripture speaks against that viewpoint, for there is nothing wrong with cities themselves. God later even chooses a city for His own name to dwell in: Jerusalem. "Some have posited, and probably rightly so, that the Tower may have been part of an astrological cult" (Mohler 2015:1). Walton returns to the ziggurat as the issue. Ziggurats assume a particular concept of God—a function that is at the root of the Babylonian religious system. "In fact, it is fair to say that the ziggurat was the most powerful representation of the Babylonian religious system, a system in which the gods were recast with human natures. The famous Assyriologist Thorkild Jacobsen summarizes it this way: 'Particularly powerful and concrete in the new anthropomorphic view was the symbol of the temple, the god's house. Towering over the flat roofs of the surrounding town, it gave the townsmen visible assurance that the god was present among them'" (Walton 2001:376). Hence the issue of God dividing language is thus attributed to idolatry, the age old temptation that would be fought by the people of God, through the OT.

Davis (2003:96) argues that God intervened in confusing the languages and so not allowing their building program to be completed, to accelerate His own decentralization program for mankind. He argues that a united humanity with one language would have an endless capacity for rebellion, hence God confused their languages and caused them to be scattered abroad. He acknowledges that God was judging their pride and their self-made unity, "but the judgment at Babel is not to be seen solely as punishment. In God's act of scattering humanity, he was also fulfilling his original intention for mankind. The act was preventative as much as punitive. It was designed to prove to earth's peoples that they could not frustrate his plan for human diversity and pluralism."

Chan (2005:6) raises the observation linked to the Tower of Babel and the ensuing division that:

Some interpreters have suggested that the sin God judged was not pride but disobedience to his command in Gen 1:28 to "fill the earth" ("let us not be scattered over the face of the whole earth," v. 4). If this is the case, then God's confounding of human language and geographical scattering need not be viewed as an evil that God inflicted as retributive punishment. Rather, it may be viewed as God's benevolent act of correction, to keep humankind from remaining in the one location at Babel. This proposed reading might find confirmation in the fact that there is no mention of God's wrath anywhere in Genesis 11.

Chan (2005:7) then draws the conclusion that: "This alternative reading of Gen 11 has one important implication: God is *behind* ethnic and cultural diversity, not opposed to it, since he is the one who set such diversity in motion." Chan's attempts to emphasize the diversity among humanity, may have swung the pendulum too far off balance from the repeated biblical call to unity, yet his emphasis remains a helpful corrective.

There is much to commend the conclusion reached by Walton that "the tower, as a ziggurat, embodied the concepts of pagan polytheism as it developed in the early stages of urbanization. Yahweh took offense at this distorted concept of deity and put a stop to the project" (Walton 1995:155). Davis (2003:104) points out that: "Ethnocentrism and racism are, after all, just another form of idolatry—of exalting someone else (ourselves or our own ethnic group) above the true God. This truth of unified origin should restrain the temptation to boast in ethnic uniqueness." Again the cause of division from Babel onwards is attributed directly or obliquely to idolatry.

Yet, as an archaeologist and earlier commentator, Stigers (1976:130), holds that the Tower of Babel was much too early to be thought of as the origin of the ziggurat, and hence that “another origin for the ziggurat temple-tower must be sought.” As seen above Walton’s view is dependent on linking the Tower of Babel to ziggurats. The difficulty Walton has is that the text does not attribute the division of languages to idolatry, but rather to pride and fear (of dispersal), yet both are symptomatic of idolatry.

The LORD says that Babel and idolatry are only the beginning of what humans will do. What is the end? “The answer the author of Genesis gives to that question is found in the association with Babylon. Perhaps the intentions of the builders were innocent enough, but now, behold what their ziggurat has come to represent!” (Walton 2001:376). The concept that idolatry is to blame for division of language would also find much traction with the subsequent practice of the called people of God through the ages falling from monotheism to polytheism on a repeated basis in the OT (and in the NT as witnessed by the warnings in books like Hebrews and 1 John (Col 3:5; Heb 6:4-5; 1 Jn 5:21)).

As Calvin Miller the modern poet has voiced this degradation of deity:

“The more the gods become like men,
the easier it is for men to believe the gods.
When both have only human appetites,
then rogues may worship rogues”
(Miller 1977:32).

1.8 *Unity and working together*

The Biblical understanding of a unified humanity before Babel has its origins in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The story of human beings from creation to the call of Abraham is sketched in broad universal strokes. One God created one world and one human family, yet even from the beginning there was diversity between male and female. One common problem promptly infected the whole race: the sin problem. God,

often in this period before the Deluge, dealt with the rebellion of the human race as a whole, at one point destroying all mankind in the flood, except Noah and his family. From the beginning, mankind was intended for unity in relationship to the Triune Creator. “Clearly in Genesis we have a unified anthropology. Even the name used for the first human being, Adam, also refers to man or humanity” (Davis 2003:94).

Thus the OT phrase “sons of men” (literally “sons of adam”) simply means “humans” or “human beings” or “men and women.” This points to a common OT concern—all of earth’s peoples are one and belong to one God. He is Lord of all nations (see Gen 9:5-7; Deut 5:24; 8:3; 1 Kgs 8:38, 39; Ps 8:4; 89:48; 107:8-31; Prov 12:14; Mic 6:8, etc.).

Linguistically the evidence for an organic unity of speech is found both in recent research and the language of Gen 11:1. Verse 1 literally says “one words” – words were common to all, shared by all and supported by one vocabulary. Syntax (language) and vocabulary made up a single understandable whole, comprehensible by all. This meant that communication was quick. Ideas and plans could be rapidly propagated. It was rapid communication that God ultimately thwarted, so that only now by patience and perseverance (all fruit of the Spirit) may a lasting, peaceful linguistic bridge be built.

To this day there continues the attempt to undo the curse of Babel, by humanistic or Biblical means. In a survey of interpreters at European Communities, meeting in Brussels, Janet Altman relates how crucial the role of interpreters is "in helping mankind to overcome Babel" (Kolmel 1989:83). She notes that the survey conducted there revealed an overwhelmingly negative or pessimistic view of the future for interpreters in the light "of technological (teleconferencing) and linguistic (the ever-increasing use of English)" changes in intercultural translation and understanding (Kolmel 1989:83).

1.9 Cross-cultural missions

The United States of America is now the most ethnically diverse nation in the world with an extraordinary variety of colours, classes, and national origins. “The number of immigrants plus their children has risen from 34 million in 1970 to 56 million in 2000, roughly one-fifth of U.S. population” (Davis 2003:91). God has literally brought the

mission fields of the world to the urban centres. “By 2056 the majority of Americans will be non-European, non-white” (Davis 2003:91). Similar data could be given for Canada and most of Western Europe. Even in higher education, Norman Jameson (2014:nn) quotes Daniel Aleshire executive director of the Association of Theological Schools since 1998, who says Theological schools are studying ways to change those statistics where whites are still the majority in a growing multicultural context, but it will be a “troubling signal” if seminaries cannot “crawl past their white past.” Aleshire says: “This is the biggest phenomenon we’re dealing with.”

Two-Thirds World nations (including South Africa) are experiencing a similar challenge with diversity and the ensuing eruptions of xenophobia. Refugees have fled from neighbouring nations because of civil war, famine, and political oppression. Rural tribes relocate to the cities in search of jobs and a better way of life. So much so, that a blue eyed rural Berber from Algeria in North Africa is now a barber in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Davis proposes that: “the greatest challenge for getting the gospel out in our postmodern world may well be crossing the ‘distance’ of race and ethnicity more so than that of geography and culture.” He then asks: “In a time of increased ethnic strife and fragmentation within the human family, how will Christians respond? ... Will we welcome this enormous ethnic mix of nations as a grand opportunity to preach the gospel to all nations? Recognizing the Pentecost nature of current Christian mission, will we seek to create new paradigms for witness and evangelization” (2003:91)? Surely a partial answer to Davis can be found in intercultural communication, using the Pentecostal fruit of love.

1.10 Summary

Intercultural communication is an opportunity to witness to the watching world, that we truly are Christ’s disciples, when we can overcome the curse of Babel by the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Genesis 1-2 reveals providential planned unity and diversity, even later between cultures. When the diversity between cultures triggers disunity, Pentecost has the potential to restore the creational unity intended by God.

The unity within the Trinity is the theological foundation for intercultural harmony. There can be no racial superiority of any culture over others, when all humanity can be traced back to Adam and Eve. God loves and blesses all nations through Abraham. So Israel was meant to become the channel of blessing to all nations.

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 reveals that we are all interconnected and genealogically linked to Noah. The Tower of Babel has God scattering nations through the diversity of languages. The story of the Tower of Babel sandwiched between the two genealogies of Shem, accounts for diversity of language and hence diversity of geography and political alignment. The Bible emphasises language, which God divided at Babel, and not race. The inherent unity of all humans makes reconciliation, relationship and intercultural communication possible. The Biblical worldview shows us that all racial and ethnic groups share equally in the image of God. Hence the essential unity amidst the diversity of humankind stands against all thought of racial and cultural superiority or inferiority.

While there is debate as to whether the Tower of Babel was one of the ziggurats, it became the rallying point for human disobedience and pride, which led to the plethora of languages with which we all now grapple. Babel became synonymous with Babylon, the human embodiment of defiance against our Creator throughout history. Babylon symbolizes the beginning and end of the world of imperialism. Zephaniah 3:9 foresees the end of the confusion of Babel, with Pentecost being a sign of the last days.

The change from a singular to multiple languages seems to have been supernaturally sudden, yet ongoing through the ages. The 70 nations of Genesis 10 now number well over 11 000 language - and people groups. While the original language is now thought to be buried under all the development of present languages, there remains debate on whether we will all return to a singular language in the new heaven and the new earth, or whether the Holy Spirit will continue the work of Pentecost and unify the plurality of languages.

The multitude of languages due to sin positively points to Divine restraint of evil and rebellion. The causes for the division of languages have variously been attributed to pride, disobedience (resistance to being scattered), accelerated decentralization and

idolatry. Now we can only work together via interpreters or patiently with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Globalization means that the mission field has come to the local church. By the empowering of the Holy Spirit we can have multicultural evangelism and intercultural communication, within multilingual congregations. Welcoming the mix of ethnicities and nations in the local church can be grand opportunity to preach and live out the Gospel.

Finally, Davis (2003:106) concludes and proposes that: "The people of God must model for our culture what it means to live in unity amid diversity. Believers must pursue ethnic and cultural diversity not because it is politically correct or because it is the latest theological fad or even because it is a good, conservative, or liberal ideal. We should do so because it is integral to both God's creative and redemptive plan." From creation we were one, yet from the Garden came separation through sin, then in Babel we find the roots of diversity and in Pentecost we receive the hope of unity.

It is this grappling with the link of Babel to Pentecost and the reality of what Pentecost looked like with all the nations gathered in Jerusalem, which the next chapter seeks to address.

2. Spiritual Transformation from a Pentecost / Babel Perspective

The Trinitarian Creator, who is both three distinct Persons and one perfect unity and who is the only God, said “Let us make man in Our image” (Gen 1:26). The inherent unity balanced with the diversity of the Godhead is seen in creation, from heaven and earth to male and female. Yet sin entered into Eden and has tipped the balance on diversity into division and death. Babel carried that division into language. God then gave the Abrahamic promises of blessing to all the divided nations (Gen 12). The Israelites carried that blessing to all nations with varying success. Ultimately, the Second Person of the Trinity came in the person of Jesus Christ, of the line of Abraham and David, to reconcile a sinful humanity and world to our Creator. After Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection and ascension, He and the Father sent the Holy Spirit upon His new Israel, the fledgling church at Pentecost.

Our purpose in this chapter is to examine the link between Babel and Pentecost. After looking at Babel in Genesis we now need to review the material in Acts that pertains to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost enabled various languages to be spoken by the disciples and understood by the hearers in their heart language. The Holy Spirit was promised in Acts 1:8 by our Lord Jesus Christ. This promised Holy Spirit comes upon the one hundred and twenty disciples gathered in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost (fifty days after the Passover). The Holy Spirit not only gifts the disciples to speak with “tongues,” but also empowers them to perform “signs and wonders” in the Name of Jesus Christ. Above all, the Holy Spirit unites these praying disciples into one Body, the Church. It would seem that the tongues, unity and empowering are all interdependent. “Tongues that were divided at Babel were given as a witness at Pentecost and will one day be united in blessing at His return” (Barnhouse 1970:72).

Keener (2007:1) makes an observation from the perspective of Pentecostal theology: “many scholars note that the locations from which these Jewish people came look much like the list of nations in Genesis 10 (except described in first-century language). In Genesis 11, God scattered these peoples at the tower of Babel by confusing their tongues. On Pentecost, by contrast, God again supplies diversity of languages, but not

to divide humanity. This time, through the new gift of tongues, God brings together a church united among many cultures, foreshadowing the rest of His plan in Acts.” We will be seeking here in this chapter to explore what these “many scholars” say about the nations listed. The question remains, was “the new gift of tongues” meant to bring a united church out from among many cultures?

Throughout the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is in the foreground, compared to the Gospels, where Christ takes centre stage. In the NT alone there are some 261 passages which refer to the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned fifty-six times in the Gospels, fifty-seven times in the book of Acts, 112 times in the Pauline epistles, and thirty-six times in the remaining NT. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit through the disciples is emphasised, because it bares witness to His operation. The Holy Spirit is building the Body of Christ in the likeness of our Saviour.

In this writer’s involvement as participant observer in our context, serving as a Senior Pastor of the Rosettenville Baptist Church in the South of Johannesburg, a large city in Africa, we can attest to the truth of this statement above. From the research in this dissertation and in our experience, we see that it is still true today, that the Holy Spirit is rebuilding and remodelling homogenous, segregated or “Apartheid Churches” into multicultural congregations. These multicultural congregations are reflective of the new South Africa and of multiculturalism globally. This phenomenon can only be done by a supernatural work, evidenced daily by the fruit of the Spirit. Parsons (2008:25) brings a helpful balance when he states: “The opening chapter of Acts serves not only to set the stage for the emergence and spread of the earliest Christian community; it constantly refers back to the previous story of the founder of that community, Jesus of Nazareth.” So while the third person of the Trinity is in the foreground, the second person of the Trinity is the founder of the church, yet all to the glory of the Father.

The Trinitarian nature of Acts has been questioned. There appears, as first glance, to be little reference by Luke to Christ in Acts and this may suggest that Christ was ascended and is inactive in the building of the church. “There is no need, however, to speak of an “absentee Christology” in Acts. The influence of Jesus throughout the rest of the narrative is profound even though He is absent as a character from the narrative of Acts after chapter 1 (except for appearances in visions). His name occurs no less

than sixty-nine times in Acts” (Parsons 2008:35). The Trinitarian nature of Pentecost which follows Acts 1 is always the norm for the whole book of Acts. The very unity and diversity of the Triune Godhead forms the basis for the Body of Christ, about to be supernaturally born in Acts 2.

It needs to also be noted that the promise of Acts 1:8 includes the implication that once the church has been witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, that the church (arguably the universal church, but just as likely the local church, where many cultures live or worship together, like in Jerusalem on the day of any Pentecost in that Herodian Temple period) will be made up of people from “every tribe and tongue” (Rev 7:9). “Ironically the departure of Jesus inaugurates the beginning of the church—the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the beginning of the worldwide mission” (Parsons 2008:28).

2.1 An exegesis of Acts 2

With the Trinitarian background in place we need to look more closely at Acts 2. While Acts is narrative writing and not didactic, nor normative, it remains true truth, historically recorded, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “The Book of Acts, then, is not a mere chronicle of events, but a portrayal of the kinds of people and kinds of things that were taking place in the early church. This approach makes Acts a much better “handbook” for the church today” (Elwell 1995:3, Ac 1:1). With this understanding of Acts, Leaney presents a helpful synthesis of biblical evidence culminating in the fact that Acts 2 is essentially interrelated to the Babel text in Genesis 10-11. Leaney (1968:419) summarized the various ways in which Acts 2 has been interpreted as the “reversal of Babel, the proclamation of the New Law, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, of the threat of John the Baptist, and of the promise of Jesus, and an earnest of the spread of the gospel throughout the world.” It is this first interpretation that we are choosing to explore, namely “the reversal of Babel.”

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the

Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1–4

As the disciples gathered for what was “originally the festival of first-fruits of the wheat-harvest” (Bruce 1951:81) the Holy Spirit came on them as the wind (πνοῆς) (Acts 2:2 – the wind also being an emblem of the Holy Spirit cf. Ez 37:9; Jn 3:8) and with “tongues” (γλῶσσαι) of fire (πυρός). The analogy of the tongues of fire (Acts 2:3) most probably point forward to the “tongues” (γλώσσαις) of languages in Acts 2:4. Others however, like Bruce (1951:81) suggests that the “tongues of fire” are probably indicative of a mystical experience. The Holy Spirit had been associated with fire by John the Baptizer (Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16). The tongues of fire were distributed (διαμεριζόμεναι) upon each disciple, just as the Holy Spirit had descended upon Christ Jesus in the form of a dove (Jn1:32). There are also OT parallels. “In describing the event as accompanied by these natural phenomena, Luke is echoing the theophany scenes of the OT, in which God’s presence is accompanied by similar signs (Ex 19:16; Judg 5:4–5; cf. Ps 18:7–15; 29:3–9)” (Parsons 2008:37).

Of all the writers of the NT, it is only Luke who records the descent of the Holy Spirit for the first time, but “the essential historicity of the incident is firmly assured” (Marshall 1980:67). The way the narrative is placed in Acts corresponds with the birth narrative of Christ in the Gospel of Luke. The significance is that the new-born church is now equipped for the task of witness and mission, assumedly after the on-the-job training with Christ for more than three years. Remarkably, the church immediately proceeds to witness to the death and resurrection of Christ, in the Temple, then progressively from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth, as foretold by Christ (Acts 1:8).

While the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit is the first occurrence of this experience, it was prophesied by Christ at His Ascension ten days earlier, in Acts 1:8 and foretold by prophecies in Isaiah 32:15 and Joel 2:28-32. This indicates that the last days have arrived. Marshall (1980:68) contends that the Acts event shows “no basis in the text” for a contrast with the story of Babel. He does acknowledge that some scholars have detected a link. It is this link that we are searching for, which may go beyond the word *glossa* (γλῶσσα) used in “tongues of fire” and “tongues” spoken.

Historically, the Lectionary Readings for Pentecost Sunday pair Genesis 11:1-9 with Acts 2:1-21, yet “there is little from the ancient historical and religious context to suggest that Luke or his audience would have made such a connection, despite the theological attractiveness of seeing Pentecost as the reversal of Babel” (Parsons 2008:36). Parsons discounts the surface similarities or the theological links. It can be said that these two texts have profound theological connections. Luke, under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, as the writer of both Luke's Gospel and Acts, has taken care throughout both books to establish a continuous link between God's actions in the past with Israel and His actions in the coming of Jesus and the establishment of the church. For this reason, it is hard to believe that Luke has not deliberately constructed the Pentecost account in Acts 2 as a counter-balance to the Babel story in Genesis 11. Luke has carefully shaped the Pentecost narrative to make a theological affirmation against the background of and together with the Babel story of Genesis 11.

The major point of contact is the diversity of language. In the Genesis 11 a common language was a symbol of unity around a false centre of idolatry, pride and self-sufficiency. The diversity of language was a symbol for the confusion that results when human beings attempt to go their own way without God.

In Acts we see the focus still on both the diversity of language and the centre of unity, but with a dissimilar emphasis. Apart from what some commentators would like to argue, it is clear that the languages in Acts 2 are representative of the various national or ethnic languages of those who were in Jerusalem for the festival of *Shavuot* (2:6-11). With the descent of the Holy Spirit, He enabled the diversity of people there to hear what was said in their own native language. While it is possible that since they were Jews or God-fearers, that they already had the common language of Aramaic (or Hebrew), or perhaps even Greek or Latin. But that is beside the point of the narrative. “The emphasis in the Acts account is clearly the unity brought by the Holy Spirit on the level of language that would otherwise raise barriers” (Bratcher 2013:nn).

The instantaneous filling of the Holy Spirit resulted in inspired utterance. While the “phenomenon of glossolalia has appeared in many forms” (Bruce 1951:82) it would seem from the context here in Acts 2:4 that the disciples’ words made perfect sense to those who understood the various languages or dialects spoken. To the other people

present who did not speak that particular language uttered in each case, the glossolalia was unintelligible. The disciples (probably with Galilean accents) praised God and told of His mighty works in such a way that each hearer heard with surprise, his or her own mother-tongue.

Then, when Peter addressed the questioning crowd from Acts 2:14ff, it would seem that the crowd heard him in the common tongue of Greek or Aramaic. For here there was no surprise around language from the crowd, nor mention of his Galilean accent. Stott (1990:63) points out that the symbolism of the Holy Spirit coming on the church at Pentecost includes "the speech in other languages [pointing to] the universality of the Christian church." Surely the Triune God would want all humans, made in His image, to once again be one in Christ.

Some have argued that the glossolalia attributed to the Corinthians was not exactly the same as this in Acts. Paul negatively comments on the Corinthian situation by saying in 1 Cor 14:23: "So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" Bruce (1951:82) observes that "the effect of the Pentecostal glossolalia was better understood on the part of the hearers; this does not appear to have been so at Corinth, nor is it so in many circles where the gift of tongues is cultivated nowadays." While there continues to be much debate on this point, a helpful test of Scripture needs to be applied, "All these must be done for the strengthening of the church" 1 Cor 14:26. Surely, the strengthening of the church by the Holy Spirit is to be sought in our multicultural world. This strengthening may be through the historically divisive, orderly use of glossolalia, if given by the Holy Spirit in the local church. The emphasis on order needs to be strongly emphasised. Just as administrative order is a much needed gift of the Holy Spirit, especially in conflict resolution. More importantly for now it seems to us, is the imperative use of the fruit of the Spirit, like patience, in intercultural dialogue. While the gift of tongues in the 20th and early 21st centuries has seen much division in Christendom, the fruit of the Spirit should surely be desired to bridge all the linguistic divides.

Another debate has raged around whether tongues are known or unknown languages, like tongues of angels. Gundry (1966:299) contends that it is not impossible that Paul

was referring to human languages (rather than “tongues of angels”) in 1 Corinthians. Gundry’s article in J.T.S. confines us to two options: “ecstatic utterance” or “the miraculously given ability to speak a human language foreign to the speaker.” Gundry shows that the tongues’ speech of both Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 can refer only to known languages spoken here on earth. Poythress (1977:130) proposes “at least five different parameters of classification.” After careful analysis he finds that the tongues referred to in 1 Corinthians and understood by the Church in Corinth, was the same as that referred to in Acts.

In seeking to reconcile the Pentecostal view of tongues and the Cessationists’ (that all tongues ceased after Acts) view, Parsons (2008:50-51) says:

Whatever the nature of glossolalia in the book of Acts, did Luke understand the Pentecost event to be a “once for all” phenomenon? The answer here is simply “No.” Filling with the Holy Spirit occurs throughout Acts (cf. 4:31 *et passim*). Likewise, glossolalia is sometimes depicted as the public display of the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. 10:46; 19:6). But it would be equally mistaken to suggest that tongues are a necessary evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (cf. 8:17) or that there is any clear sequence of baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts. Sometimes baptism precedes reception of the Spirit (8:12–17); sometimes baptism follows reception of the Spirit (10:44–48); sometimes it accompanies baptism in the name of Jesus and the laying on of hands (19:5–6). All this is to suggest that our current context calls for a middle way that affirms the reality of Pentecostal experience while correcting aspects of extreme expressions of Pentecostal theology.

So while tongues are not necessarily evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is absolutely necessary, for “whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” 1 Jn 4:8. While the merits of the Pentecostal and Cessationists’ views are beyond the ambit of this research, the clear statements of passages like Gal 5:16-26 remind us that without the fruit of the Spirit we cannot “inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:21).

Ford (1971:3) likewise seeks to find this “middle way” and investigates tongues and says “there is a general tendency among more recent exegetes to accept to some degree the validity of this spiritual experience, to interpret “tongues” as genuine languages uttered in a non-ecstatic state rather than “gibberish” in ecstatic or frenzied state.” He ends his findings with the following:

In Acts and 1 Corinthians “tongues” are a prophetic sign with the dynamism to re-create faith, either (1) to bring the Jew to the realization of the fulfilment of Sinai, or (2) as a sign that the *apistos* is entitled to the plenitude of Jewish-

Christianity; (3) as a sign to apostles etc. that the latter may be received into full membership of the Church; (4) as a general dynamic sign to build up the faith of the individual or the community; (5) as a sign of international unity, a sign that Babel wrought by God has been reversed by God (Ford 1971:27).

It is this fifth point that concerns our research here, as we do not need to delve too deeply into the other contested waters, it will be taken that there is a singular usage in the NT for the word tongues as used in Acts and Corinthians.

This sign of international unity is the issue at hand here. "At Babel human languages were confused and the nations were scattered; in Jerusalem the language barrier was supernaturally overcome as a sign that the nations would be gathered together in Christ...prefiguring the great day when the redeemed company will be drawn 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' (Rev 7:9)" (Stott 1990:69). This unity between nations and cultures in a multicultural local church's context takes much empowering by the Holy Spirit and the ripening of the fruit of the Spirit on an ongoing basis.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Acts 2:5–12

When Acts 2:5 refers to "every nation" stating that "there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven," it means that the author Luke would probably have depended on the Rabbinic tradition that reckoned that all the languages of the world numbered 70, according to the Table of Nations found in Genesis 10. As a little aside, it is interesting that in the Midrash *Tanhuma* 26c it was believed that at the giving of the Law the voice of God was heard in every nation under heaven. Also in Talmud *Bavli Peshahim* 68b the tradition said that "the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] ... is the day on which the Torah was given." This may go a little way to explaining the centripetal nature of Judaism, in contrast the centrifugal nature that God expects of the Gospel and the church.

Marshall points out that this linking of Pentecost with the giving of the Law on Sinai, comes from second century Judaism. This means that “we cannot be certain that this tradition was current in the first century” (Marshall 1980:68). Yet the centripetal tendency of Judaism through the Biblical and post-biblical ages cannot be denied regardless of the source of this Judaic linking of Pentecost to Sinai.

In Acts 2:9 the “Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia” were considered to be countries full of Jews who did not return from the Exile. There lived the descendants of the ten tribes (incorrectly called the “lost tribes”) who had been settled by Artaxerxes III around 350BCE. They mostly spoke Aramaic. “Judea” is thought to include all the territory from Egypt to the Euphrates, including Syria, and also full of Jews. “Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia” were all districts of Asia Minor and full of Jews as we see in the second half of the book of Acts. Egypt had a population estimated by Philo to be about a million Jews around 38CE, soon after the events at this Pentecost (Bruce 1951:85). “Parts of Libya near Cyrene” would have included Jews from the region from which Simon of Cyrene in the Passion story originated (Mt 27:32). Rome represented the centre of the Empire. It also had a Jewish population numbering in the thousands as this time. It is quite probable that the church in Rome began with returning converts after this day of Pentecost, as we have no historical record of their origin. Finally, the list ends (Acts 2:11) with the Cretans and Arabs who all together hear the Shema (Hear, O Israel etc.) in the various languages and dialects, by Galileans of all people. Bruce (1951:86) observes that “the reversal of the curse of Babel is surely in the writer’s mind.”

This list of nations comes in both a strange order and includes a selection of countries and regions that scholars have yet to find a fully satisfactory explanation. Marshall (1980:71) holds that the list was not invented by Luke himself, and is meant to show that people from all over the “known world were present.” Parsons (2008:38) who speaks against a link between Acts 2 and Genesis 10, yet goes on in his commentary on Acts to say: “In 2:5–13, Luke lists witnesses to Pentecost in connection with a list of nationalities reminiscent of the Gen 10 ‘table of nations.’” It is this reminiscence that seems to haunt the various commentators. Parsons later says: “The list of nations in Acts 2:9–11 may be taken as an “update” of the table-of-nations tradition found in Gen

10, a point rarely examined by interpreters (though see Scott 1994, 2:483–544).” John Stott (1990:65) in an earlier work looks at the list of nations and says: "this was the international, multi-lingual crowd which gathered round the one hundred and twenty believers" from the four points of the compass, even if "the crowd's reaction was one of bewilderment."

It may also be noted that the fact that Christ had sent out the seventy (or seventy-two) earlier in Luke 10:1, would also point to Christ’s intention in reaching all the nations.

Parsons (2008:39-40) looking at the intended audience of Luke’s writing, goes further:

The authorial audience has already been introduced to the table-of-nations tradition in Luke 10:1 in the so-called mission of the seventy. The mission of the seventy foreshadows the Gentile mission. From a very early point, then, the audiences (the scribes) connected the mission of the seventy(-Two) with the table of nations in Genesis 10 to symbolize that their mission was a universal one.

This comment from Parsons again comes from one of the commentators who question the link between Babel and Pentecost. Surely there is sufficient evidence in the structure and style of Luke’s writing of the Gospel of Luke and Acts to warrant an intended linking of Babel to Pentecost.

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”
Acts 2:13

As the early disciples were maligned as being drunk on sweet wine – wine still fermenting – in Acts 2:13, so Paul points out that glossolalia may be mistaken as madness in 1 Cor 14:23. Still today multilingual congregations face internal pressures to revert to the dominant language and multicultural congregations can be side-lined as mad to “force integration.” One post-Apartheid South African writer puts it this way: “There is at least one barrier that won’t be overcome until the last Day: language. Until that Day, it is best to plant separate churches for different language groups” (Prichard 2015:53). Yet the very nature of the nursery into which the church was born was multicultural and the early church in most places reflected that ethos.

2.2 *How Acts corrects the breakdown in Genesis 11*

Peter now goes on in his sermon (Acts 2:14ff) to retell the salvation history, “which now includes a new chapter on the mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God has worked through Jesus” (Parsons 2008:42). Along this seam of golden ore we will not delve deeper here. But getting back to the issue at hand, while there is ongoing debate about the textual support in Acts for the link between Pentecost and Babel, Stott (1990:68) points out that “ever since the early church fathers, commentators have seen the blessing of Pentecost as a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel.” It is this reversal that has theologically underpinned multilingual and multicultural churches, not simply the prevailing winds of globalism in our day. There may even be a case to be made for globalization as a move of the Spirit of God, under the understanding of the Sovereignty of God.

Callahan-Howell (2015:nn) astutely observed that “when Emerson and Smith wrote *Divided by Faith* in 2000, only 7-8 percent of churches [in the USA] could be considered multiracial. Although that increased slightly in the last decade to 13.7 percent, we still have a long way to go to negate the old truism popularized by Martin Luther King, Jr. lamenting Sunday morning as the most segregated hour of the week. Yet diverse churches provide the most fertile ground for combating racism.” Though combating racism is noble, and to be sought, the bigger picture remains the glory of our one Creator of all cultures and obedience to His revealed will in His Word.

The Catholic Theologian Ford, (1971:27) says of tongues:

It may be a sign to Christian denominations that they have much to give to and receive from each other, but also much in common. It is not without significance that the charismatic renewal began shortly after Pope Leo XII’s Encyclical on the Holy Spirit, the non-Roman Catholic prayers for unity, and then Vatican Council II, which was preceded by the earnest prayer of the Church for a New Pentecost. While it is true that the charismatic renewal has led to a refocusing on passages like Acts 2 and also powerful debate around the topic, it seems to be the common grace working of the Holy Spirit in the global culture that calls us away from narrow nationalism to greater internationalism. We can have a taste of “all nations” before the *eschaton* in the multicultural church that is practicing the fruit of the Spirit. In future chapters we will

seek to use lessons from intercultural communication to assist in the needs arising out of multiculturalism.

2.3 Cross-cultural missions

Though the Holy Spirit has empowered us to bridge all cultures, races, and ethnic groups with the gospel, this does not mean that the church automatically understood that power, nor has the church consistently made use of the power He has given us. The book of Acts shows us that much of the early Jerusalem church was slow to catch on to God's plan, after Acts 2. "Those who caught the vision first were the Hellenist Jewish Christians, a cultural minority within the Jerusalem church. Because they were already familiar with more than one culture, they had some sensitivity to the dynamics of cross-cultural ministry. One of the Hellenist preachers, Philip, pioneered the church's mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5–13)" (Keener 2007:1). Later some of the Apostles from Jerusalem went down to Samaria and saw that the work was from the Lord, and they joined in with the work themselves (Acts 8:25). The point is that Philip had broken the new ground, cross-cultural missions had begun.

As the early church grew, the apostles faced several problems arising from the diversity of young, growing congregations, but the apostles as early church planters never "partitioned the church into homogeneous units" (Sequeira 2015:38). The mother church (and model church) in Jerusalem was made up of people from wide-ranging cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Acts 2:5–11). "In Acts 6:1–6, tensions rose between those from different cultural-linguistic groups, namely the Diaspora (Hellenistic) Jews and the Syro-Palestinian (Hebrew) Jews. The apostles did not separate them, but resolved the issues through appointing men from the minority groups for the work of service" (Sequeira 2015:39). We see further evidence of the heterogeneous nature of the early church in the diversity of the leadership in the church of Antioch (cf. Acts 13:1), which included a former Pharisee (Paul), a former Gentile (Lucian), a former Levite (Barnabas), a member of the court of Herod (Manaeon), and a man of dark skin (Simeon, called Niger).

What would seem to be the apostolic model of multi-ethnic, heterogeneous congregations is not limited to the NT, but is also supported by the evidence of early Christian history. As David Smith (1985:27) says, "It was precisely the heterogeneous multi-ethnic nature of the church which made an impact on the divided Roman world and led to the growth of the Christian movement." The power of the heterogeneous multi-ethnic church is yet to be fully realized in our divisive world. Sequeira (2015:39) adds that: "While homogeneity in churches simply *reinforces the status quo of society*, the biblical evidence shows us that the *gospel broke down and cut across ethnic, social, economic, and cultural barriers in ways never before seen in history*" (italics are his emphasis). The very nature of heterogeneous multi-ethnic and multilingual congregations can now give a theological rational and living witness to a world in the throes of grappling with globalization. Lamin Sanneh (2009:1) makes the point that the gospel is inherently translatable into any and every culture and context. In every incarnation of Christ is evidence of this fact. Lamin Sanneh "explores how the African church was reshaped by the power of an eternal gospel that takes on universal relevance as it sheds its European colonial clothing" (Van Gelder 2000:37)

Historians site that "Early Pentecostals claimed the gift of tongues was not primarily the speaking of a heavenly language (*glossolalia*) but other human languages (*xenolalia*). The purpose? Early leader Charles Parham said, 'I had felt for years that any missionary going to the foreign field should preach in the language of the natives, and that if God ever equipped his ministers in that way [by *xenolalia*], he could do it today.' Though many anecdotes of *xenolalia* exist, none have been confirmed" (Galli 1998:1). Subsequent mission field failure to experience *xenolalia* compounded the problem. It is this lack of evidence of known languages by the power of the Holy Spirit, being experienced in the modern context that adds complexity to this research.

Church historians go on to record the history of Pentecostalism and say:

In developing his "Apostolic Faith" theology, Parham promoted a revolutionary but short-lived theory—which even Christian and Missionary Alliance leader A. B. Simpson would toy with. Simply put, Parham believed God would supernaturally give known, earthly languages to baptized believers so they could quickly evangelize the world. This end-time revival, accompanied by believers speaking in known languages they had never learned (*xenolalia*), would bring to an end the church age and bring back a triumphant Christ (Olsen 1998:7).

If the much trumpeted rise and fall of the multiracial Azusa Street revival and birth of Pentecostalism leaves us without *xenolalia*, then possibly the cross-cultural benefit of Pentecost can be seen in intercultural communication.

The fact remains that in “biblical times “tongues” were a sign of international unity and a sign of the extension of the Christian message to all peoples” (Ford 1971:27). It is this unity seen in living form in heterogeneous multi-ethnic and multilingual local congregations that is the matter at hand.

It would thus seem that there are no quick fixes (like *xenolalia*). There is only the patient, progressive perseverance of heterogeneous multicultural missions and heterogeneous local churches. What we see in the early church at Antioch, we are seeing increasingly as the norm for local churches in the global village that is the world today. We believe this is still the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

2.4 *Misunderstandings around Tongues*

In all the forgoing discussion about tongues and the contemporary church we need to heed Stott’s (1990:68) advice: “Discussion about the nature of glossolalia must not distract our attention from Luke’s understanding of its significance on the Day of Pentecost. It symbolized a new unity in the Spirit transcending racial, national and linguistic barriers.” This new unity in the Spirit must not be missed in all the other clamber and noise of our day. Keeping the unity between people of different languages in the local church is the issue, not endless debates about tongues.

Another misunderstanding around tongues is the discrimination between the different languages and racism. In our day, the deafening noise of loud demonstrations and the stench of burning barricades scream racism to all our senses. In all the heat and emotion of racism combined with painful histories, we must not lose sight of what God is doing. The issue of racism in all its forms rears its serpentine head at every turn. Tragically, racism has been common in the church historically. Even to this day racism continues in the church, despite the winds of globalization. “It’s an unavoidable and accepted fact that we have to live with people that are different than us. We live and go

to school and work and even play together. But then we retreat to social, cultural, and racial comfort zones when it is time to worship” (Charles 2015:97).

While we have not ventured too deeply into these muddy waters of racism, it is worth noting the words of Piper (2011:18-19) (though grounded in an American racial interpretation of ethnicity): “The heart that believes one race is more valuable than another is a sinful heart. And that sin is called racism. The behavior that distinguishes one race as more valuable than another is a sinful behavior. And that sin is called racism.” The issue of racism is a hotly debated issue in our day. The local church in South Africa and globally, will always face the deadly temptation to discriminate. Racism is a sin. Only the supernatural work of the cross can forgive that (and all) sin. Only the Holy Spirit can cleanse us personally and corporately of racism and empower the local church to intercultural unity. The problems related to racism and multilingualism will often be intertwined. Yet for the sake of clarity in this work, we will seek to primarily unravel the multilingual strand.

2.5 A brief look at the intercultural implications of Acts 2

In Acts 2 we see many cultures gathered for Pentecost and supernaturally united by the Holy Spirit into one church of many cultures. Again today globalization is placing many cultures in one geographic area. In all intercultural communication there will be previously advantaged cultures and previously disadvantaged cultures. How those advantages are defined is open to much debate. Often the economically advantaged may be the spiritually disadvantaged, or vice versa. Yet the Gospel of supernatural inner transformation needs to be communicated; the Kingdom of God advanced.

In communicating the gospel to all cultures there is a danger of wanting the shepherd to look like the sheep. Pritchard (2015:53) rightly observes that we cannot

downplay the real cultural differences among various ethnicities. Nevertheless, this line of reasoning wrongly views ethnicity as an insurmountable relational barrier. (see Eph 2:16ff). Indeed, such reasoning is contrary to the way Jesus thought about crossing the ethnic divide: the man he chose to take the gospel to the Gentiles was not himself a Gentile, but “a Hebrew of Hebrews.” While it may be easier to befriend someone who shares my culture, what is most needed in

gospel-ministry are under-shepherds who truly love the Chief Shepherd and who are utterly committed to serving his sheep (Jn 21:15ff).

It is this true biblical love and pastoral care given by the Holy Spirit that alone can make long-term intercultural pastoral care possible and in today's world necessary.

2.6 Summary

Keener (2007:1) concludes where we may conclude: "Babel has been reversed. In the gift of tongues, God has given us, among other blessings, the languages of many nations as a sign of His purpose: a united church from every kindred, tribe, people, and nation. This is our calling; this is our destiny. May His will be done now on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen."

In this chapter we have reviewed Acts 2 and how it relates to Babel. From this we have concluded that the Trinitarian nature of our Creator links Babel and Pentecost. Babel brought division. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost can bring reconciliation to divided languages and unity to God's diverse people. Tongues, unity and empowering are all interdependent. In Acts, and today, we see the Holy Spirit building the Body of Christ in the likeness of our Saviour. The third person of the Trinity is in the foreground, the second person of the Trinity is the founder of the church, yet all to the glory of the Father. Christ's command and prophecy in Acts 1:8 is being fulfilled so that the church (universal and local) is made up of people from "every tribe and tongue" (Rev 7:9).

We conclude from our exegesis of Acts 2, that "tongues of fire" can be seen as a reversal of Babel. The tongues of fire (Acts 2:3) empower the gift of tongues (Acts 2:4). The prophesied and promised Holy Spirit empowers the early church to be witnesses to Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, starting in Jerusalem and rippling out even to the ends of the earth. While some commentators question the link, Luke seems to have carefully shaped the Pentecost narrative to make a theological affirmation against the background of, and together with, the Babel story of Genesis 11. The languages given by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 are representative of the various national or ethnic languages of those who were in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit enabled the diversity of people gathered at Pentecost to hear

what was said in their own native language. The Triune God wants all humans, made in His image, to once again be one in Christ. The historically divisive use of glossolalia needs order, but much more we need the fruit of the Spirit, like patience, in intercultural dialogue.

We conclude that the tongues speech of both Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 can refer only to known languages spoken here on earth. There is a singular usage in the NT for the word tongues as used in Acts and Corinthians.

Tongues are thus a sign of international unity, a sign that the languages and confusion created at Babel by God has been reversed by God. Pentecost in Acts 2 prefigures the great day when the redeemed will be drawn 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' (Rev 7:9). While Judaism may have become inwardly natured (centripetal), in contrast the Gospel and the church was expected by God to go out from Jerusalem, to be centrifugally natured.

This list of nations in Acts 2 continues to be debated, but is meant to show that people from the entire known world were present and is reminiscent of the Gen 10 "table of nations." Even the structure and style of Luke's writing of the Gospel of Luke (dealing with the sending out of the 70) and the book of Acts, warrant an intended linking of Babel to Pentecost. While multiculturalism in the local church may be seen as drunkenness, as in Acts 2:13, yet the very nature of the nursery into which the church was born was multicultural and the early church in most places reflected that ethos.

We conclude that Acts 2 reverses the breakdown of Gen 11 and becomes the theologically underpinning of multilingual and multicultural churches, not simply the prevailing winds of globalism in our day. Globalization may be a move of the Spirit of God, under the understanding of the Sovereignty of God. The charismatic renewal has led to a refocus and debate on passages like Acts 2 where the common grace working of the Holy Spirit in the global culture, calls us away from narrow nationalism to greater internationalism.

Cross cultural missions, though slow to begin was spearheaded by Hellenists. Philip started the church's mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5-13) and broke new ground. As the early church grew, the apostles faced several problems arising from the diversity of

young, growing congregations, but the apostles as early church planters never divided the church into homogeneous units. The Holy Spirit did not lead “birds of a feather to flock together.” There are no instant intercultural communication solutions, like xenolalia. The key lies in patiently grown heterogeneous local churches, which are strengthened by the Holy Spirit, even using tools from intercultural communication.

In all the debate around the issue of tongues in Acts, we must not forget that the Day of Pentecost symbolized a new unity in the Spirit that transcends racial, national and linguistic barriers. We also note that the sin of racism is often intertwined with interculturalism, yet in this research we choose to focus on untangling the intercultural communication knot.

Like in Acts 2 all cultures are again gathered in many local churches. As long as the shepherds have an intercultural sensitivity and a heart after the Master, then proclamation of the good news of supernatural life transformation and real care, by the Holy Spirit’s empowering, can take place. What the Holy Spirit did at Pentecost and is still doing in multicultural churches cannot be overstated for Africa, the world and in missions through the local church. Politically, if the multilingual local church can get along, then there is greater hope for society.

3. *The Pastoral Care in Intercultural Conflicts that arose in the early church.*

In this chapter we seek to examine in greater detail issues that are beyond what has already been described in Acts 2, delving into the history of the early church as evidenced in the book of Acts. We will also look at further intercultural implications. In the previous chapter, under heading 2.3, we observed that though the Holy Spirit has empowered us to bridge all cultures, races and ethnic groups with the gospel of supernatural internal change, this does not mean that the church automatically understood that power. Still to today, the church has not consistently made use of the power the Holy Spirit has given us. The Holy Spirit has inspired Doctor Luke to record some of these early conflicts, both as a lesson for us in intercultural conflict in the early church and in how conflict was resolved in the Body of Christ, by the empowering of the Spirit of God.

The natural sinful nature (original sin) of all human beings can be compounded by culture. When different cultures interact, individual and cultural depravity can lead to conflict. For instance, when dealing with intercultural communication and conflicts between an individualist culture and a culture that prizes the group above the individual, it is helpful to take cognisance of the work of Johnson (2011:100-101), who offers Eric Law's guidelines for dealing with cross-cultural conflict and his multiple strategies. Johnson helpfully works with "the metaphor of building a bridge where people can meet from two very different contexts." To meet on the bridge requires an adaptive capacity to cultivate certain qualities and skills to be brought to cross-cultural communication including: humility, flexibility, creativity, openness, curiosity, resilience, caution and patience. These qualities and skills again broadly reflect the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It also means that for intercultural communication to successfully begin and continue in the local church context, there needs to be at least two "bridge builders" who will initiate this process. Usually those bridge builders need to be in a leadership capacity (as in the case of Peter and the Apostles in Acts 6,) but not always.

Cultural difference will always abound. Cultures are God given, creatively developing cultural diversity, but due to the fall the divisive bias of sin is added. Bridging these differences takes qualities like patience and perseverance. Muller and Stone (1998:340-341) coming from both an Afrikaans South African and Anglo-American background,

conclude their article on intercultural pastoral care, with the observation that “language and other cultural differences are part of our community. To communicate across these borders is not always easy, but it remains fascinating. For those among us who are willing to listen and willing to be drawn into the stories of others, new worlds of understanding emerge almost daily.” They view using either brief pastoral care or narrative therapy as two helpful tools in intercultural pastoral care. “The difficulty of intercultural pastoral caregiving sometimes brings us to the verge of despair, but with a not-knowing and not-expert attitude we can venture into the borderlands and develop new ecological niches where being different can be experienced as the most fulfilling part of existence” (Muller & Stone 1998:341). Listening to one another is the first key to conflict resolution. We now need to look at an example of the borderlands of intercultural pastoral care and the development of conflict resolving administrative structures in the account of conflict over benevolence to widows in Acts 6.

3.1 *The Human Response to differences by creating structure, in Acts 6, in choosing the seven.*

As we observe the development, of the early church, we note that by the time recorded in Acts 6, the disciples in the Early Church in Jerusalem increased in number and another problem arose. The problem was related to their rapid growth. We do not know how large the church had become. The last figure given of 5000 (4:4), apparently included only the men. To that figure may be added the women and young people and those who had joined the church since then (cf. 5:14). MacArthur (1994:176) speaking from a North American cultural context contends that “there must have been more than 20 000 in the Jerusalem church at this point.” While this number seems inflated, especially coming with the potential bias of a mega church pastor, there is a case to be made for such large numbers. Bruce (1964:8) contends that;

the local affairs of the Jerusalem church are handled by a body of elders. How many elders there were is nowhere stated, but if their institution was modelled on that of the Jewish Sanhedrin, there may well have been seventy of them. Seventy would not be too large a number for the effective administration of a community numbering tens of thousands according to Acts 21:20. The body of elders carried out its responsibilities under the general superintendence of James, the Lord’s brother.

While “tens of thousands” refers to up to forty years later, it may support MacArthur’s twenty thousand numbers by Acts 6. Interestingly, Heaster (2015:1) argues from a British and European cultural context convincingly for much smaller numbers in house churches throughout the early church, even in Jerusalem, mainly because of the “remarkable lack of archaeological discoveries of big Christian meeting places” anywhere, prior to 70CE.

The leadership and administrative problems associated with such a large congregation were enormous. Merely to meet their spiritual needs in preaching, teaching and prayer would have been a daunting task, let alone caring for their physical needs. The explosive growth left little time to adjust. It is likely that the apostles could no longer deal with the entire load of caring for the congregation. Further organization was required. “The growth of the church creates a problem in its social welfare” (Elwell 1995:nn). That social welfare problem needs to be resolved before it escalates into disunity.

In a congregation of that size, it was likely that someone’s needs would be overlooked. “The Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food” Acts 6:1. Malina and Neyrey (1991:63) coming from a socio-psychological approach to Biblical texts, observe that in the symbolic world of Acts, a “widow is in a precarious situation in regard to her ‘shame’ because she has no male to defend her and the honor of her children and household.” So failing to care for its widows not only stripped the women of their honor, but shamed the entire community. Parsons (2008:83) points out that “though Luke knows of women who move outside the private sphere of the home (see Acts 16); the need to preserve the collective honour of the community lies in the background of Acts 6. A solution is sorely needed.” Fernando (1998:225) suggests that “Grecian widows were particularly needy as they were not native Judeans and did not have relatives to care for them. A lot of older couples came to die in Jerusalem so that they could be buried there.” Much like we find in coastal towns and cities in South Africa or the state of Florida in the USA.

While this conflict was visible among vulnerable members of the body, like the widows, it also had the potential for great division. Division would go against the very Trinitarian

nature of the Godhead and the church, born at Pentecost to be the Body of Christ on earth. MacArthur (1994:176–177) conjectures:

here was an issue that Satan could use with devastating force against the church. He had already attacked it through persecution (4:1–31; 5:17–41). That, however, had merely caused the church to grow faster (4:4). Next, he had sought to cripple it by introducing sin into the body (5:1–11). God stepped in quickly and judged Ananias and Sapphira, and again Satan’s attack failed ignominiously.

We have seen that with persecution, it only made the church’s number increase (5:14). The fear of God and a purified church was even more effective in spreading the gospel. Now cultural division had the potential to disrupt the witness of the church. “What we see is that all intercultural encounters are fraught with pitfalls... there were not only linguistic barriers, cultural differences and economic disparities but also theological dissonance and these are no doubt sometime understood spiritually and, hence, demonically” (Yong 2014:134). So whether division was demonically inspired or simply the fruit of the sinful nature in this intercultural conflict, disunity would mushroom if left unattended.

The Hellenistic Jews came out of the Diaspora. Unlike the native, Judean or Hebraic Jews, their heart language was Greek, not Aramaic or Hebrew. The Hellenistic Believers would have used the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew Scriptures. Longenecker (1981:237-230) gives a helpful discussion on these groups and suggests that these people grew up outside Palestine, so that cultural differences resulted in differences in attitude and outlook. They may have absorbed some of the Greek culture that surrounded them. That made them suspect to the Hebraic Jews, especially those coming from the Pharisee’s party. “According to the Talmud, Pharisaism made little secret of its contempt for Hellenists . . . they were frequently categorized by the native-born and assumedly more scrupulous populace of Jerusalem as second-class Israelites” (Longenecker 1981:329). It would seem from the text that some of that racial and cultural hostility carried over into the church. Keener (2013:nn) calls this an “intra-Jewish cultural clash,” holding that all the converts to Christ were Jewish in origin. The Hellenistic believers were probably also a minority in the church. Generally, the word translated “complained” (*γογγυσμός*) is a negative word, used in the *LXX* for the murmuring of the Jews against Moses in the desert (Ex. 16:7; Num. 14:27). The early

church was now in danger of division. Hence this problem would be aggravated if it was not handled sensitively.

Sensitive conflict resolution can fall into the temptations of compromise or of legalism, but the narrow road is that of Biblical love and obedience – the highroad of a Christian worldview. “When it comes to cultural engagement, perhaps the biggest temptation Christians face is being influenced primarily by voices who may not share the Christian worldview. Regardless of political affiliation, we imbibe the latest content from our favorite cable news channels, ideological websites, or Twitter pundits. If we are not careful, we allow a political party or movement to form our belief system” (Darling 2014:1). But Christians should be people of the Book. Church leaders should model this more than anyone in the church. In Acts 6, Luke tells us that the Twelve chose to be devoted “to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

The Hellenists’ complaint came to the attention of the Twelve, who recognize the legitimacy of the grievance. The Twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples to seek a solution. While the apostles recognized the problem, they did not have the time to handle it. The apostles had to remain faithful to their priorities of prayer and preaching, yet the problem of distributing the food and money equitably remained. That important ministry needed oversight, so the believers selected from their own ranks seven men, whom the Apostles put in charge of this task. “The apostles’ solution to the problem is a model for future generations. Instead of trying to pin the blame on someone they take positive action by asking “all the disciples” (v. 2) to participate in a solution and a decision” (Elwell 1995:nn). The involvement of all the members in a local church, the local body of Christ, is crucial in potentially large conflict resolution.

Contemporary debates about gender and church authority were not part of the original intercultural conflict. MacArthur (1994:181) argues that “God’s design for the church is that men assume the leadership roles (1 Cor. 11:3, 8, 9; 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11–12)” and that “those who lead the church must be believers” (from “among you” Acts 6:3). Gender issues aside for now, the theological question from the text, may be asked as to whether these seven can be viewed as the first official deacons. Barclay (1962:51) observes: “It is extremely interesting to note that the first office-bearers to be appointed were chosen not to talk; they were chosen for practical service.” While they performed some functions

of the later deacons in churches, and there are forms of the Greek word *diakonos* (deacon) (namely διακονία and διακονεῖν) that are used to describe their ministry (vv. 1–2). MacArthur (1994:181) argues that

to view them in terms of a formal office is anachronistic. Of the seven, only Stephen and Philip appear elsewhere in Scripture, but they are never called deacons. Indeed, Stephen's later ministry was clearly that of an evangelist, as was Philip's (Acts 21:8). While Acts later refers to elders (14:23; 20:17), there is no mention of deacons. That is strange, if the office of deacon began in Acts 6. Further, all seven had Greek names, implying that they may have been Hellenists.

Though Osborne (1988:12) points out that their Greek names do not necessarily mean that they were all Hellenists, since “most Jews in the ancient world had three names — a Jewish, a Greek, and a Roman name — and used one or the other depending on the occasion.” (We have seen this tendency under Apartheid South Africa, with many Black South Africans having multiple names from various cultures, but at least one name from the dominant English or Afrikaans culture, often as a gracious gesture toward the linguistically challenged culture who spoke a limited number of languages.) Alexander (1984:243) points out that there are other reasons to conclude that “all seven appear to have been Hellenists.” Reasons like the cross cultural prowess of Phillip evangelizing the Samaritans in Acts 8:4-8 and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26ff.

This Hellenistic aspect of the Seven is striking in the context of conflict resolution. If this was the case, it would make a strong point for placing the minority group in charge, of the issues at hand in conflict resolution. “Not only did they need to have a good reputation (being wise and spiritual), they also needed to represent the interests of the neglected (the Hellenists)” (Talbert 2005, 60–61). MacArthur (1994:181) concludes his argument for the temporary office of the Seven saying that “it seems unlikely, however, that a permanent order of deacons for the Jerusalem church would include no native Palestinian Jews.” However, this argument against the Seven being deacons, skirts perilously close to a modern prejudice against foreigners being read back into the text.

Textually analysis of the various derivatives of the root word to serve (*diakonos*) used in Acts 6 does not imply that the seven held the office of a deacon. Elwell (1995:nn) takes a different tack and says: “Because the word translated “wait” (Gk. *diakonein*) is related to the word *deacon*, many have speculated that this incident is the origin of the

later office of deacon (see 1 Tim. 3:8–13). If this is true, and in all likelihood it is, Luke’s story provides virtually the only information we have on the function of deacons other than that which is to be inferred from the meaning of the word itself: ‘servant.’”

We, however, question whether this is likely, as it may also be noted that when the church at Antioch later sent famine relief to the Jerusalem church, no mention is made of deacons (Acts 11:29–30). In this passage the relief was sent to the Elders. Stephen and Philip probably did not continue long in this role of benevolent care for the widows, since both became evangelists. And persecution would shortly scatter most of the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 8:1), probably ending the ministry of the other five. MacArthur (1994:182) suggests that “God raised them for a brief period of ministry, to handle a crisis. The continuing unity of the church shows the effectiveness of their ministry.” Bruce (1964:8) would concur with this view when he says: “Their appointment was evidently of short duration, for one of them, Stephen, was martyred, and in the campaign of repression which immediately followed his martyrdom the others, with the Hellenistic group in the church to which they all seem to have belonged, were dispersed.” The office of deacon would seem to be a later development in the early church. The Seven seem to have been a short duration solution to the intercultural conflict in Acts 6. The short duration of intercultural conflict structures needs to be noted here. We may thus propose that small, temporary conflict resolution committees or teams of suitable members of the local church be considered in intercultural conflict issues.

In this first intercultural conflict recorded in Acts 6, MacArthur (1994:186) makes the case for better administration of conflict: “The church today needs organization for the same reasons as the first fellowship. Pastors must be freed to focus on the preaching of the Word and prayer. Better organization can help meet the needs of all members and thus avoid conflict. And a unified, well-taught church will be a powerful witness to the lost world.” The fact that the Seven represented the culturally disadvantaged, sets a good precedent going forward as the church. When speaking of the disadvantaged, we use that term in the sense of socially or economically disadvantaged, not in the sense of spiritually disadvantaged, as the Christian message should emphasize oneness, as in Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The culturally disadvantaged would thus be

any group in a local church who may be a significant minority in number, or economically disadvantaged, like the poor. “The rule is that for a mixed group to succeed, every person must feel significant and that his or her concerns are taken seriously. Every person must feel trusted and that leadership does things in an equitable, just way” (Pocock & Henriques 2002:94). Better administration of conflict by trusted people from among the most affected minority culture is a helpful perspective, when a knee-jerk response may be to bring in the experienced senior leaders from a majority culture.

To this day intercultural conflict continues and grows with migration, around the world. Yet the structural and administrative solutions proposed, remain the key for the local church and even denominations. Sathler-Rosa (2012:nn) speaking from a South American perspective on intercultural changes in Brazil, with the migration of Bolivians, makes the point that “Individuals, families and many groups seem to be living in a ‘society without parents’. The expression connotes without roots.”

He then goes on to give the

many signs of destruction of human bonds. The widespread distrust of politicians; the rise of corruption; the despair of migrants; the inability of parents to cope with disturbing behavior of adolescents; wars and the impact of TV images of violence; lack of self-confidence to cope with common fragilities of human existence. These human conditions and many more, indicate that the traditional work of pastoral care of individuals and their social milieu is needed.

Sathler-Rosa sees the structures within the church (and also what the church can do in society) as part of the solution to these intercultural challenges. We must not underestimate the gift of administration, order and structure, which the church can bring to intercultural conflict in society. These gifts from the Holy Spirit combined with ethical behaviour, become a powerful witness to a watching and troubled world.

These administrative structures that sensitively and promptly deal with intercultural issues existed thus from early on in the Jerusalem church. For as David Fiensy (1995:213) concluded, in a study of the composition of the Jerusalem church around the time of Acts 6, is that “the indications are that nearly all levels of society were represented. The church seems to have been a microcosm of the city.” It seems now in our day that again more and more churches are moving from the popularized homogenous composition of churches to the heterogeneous composition of Acts 6 and making intercultural communication and conflict resolution of essence.

3.2 *Individual Responses found mainly from the Acts narratives*

We now need to examine other examples of intercultural conflict on an individual level after Acts 6. Following the forming of the Seven to resolve benevolence conflict, it would seem that intercultural communication was “forced” onto the scattering church of mainly Jewish converts to Christ. Surely this was all the intention of the Holy Spirit, working all things for good (Rom 8:28-29). In Acts 11 we find specific mention, that the scattered believers also preached to the “Greeks” in Antioch, and that the message was accepted with joy. Antioch would therefore stand out as one of the first locations where Jewish, as well as Non-Jewish congregants, were worshipping together. (Wessels 2009:2)

In Acts 13 we see the heterogeneous nature of an early church with a diversity of the leadership in the church of Antioch (cf. Acts 13:1). The Holy Spirit bound such a culturally diverse group together, after all the prayer and fasting mentioned. This church did not just function effectively as a local church, but even became the “sending church,” sending out the first recorded cross-cultural “missionaries” in Paul and Barnabas.

Some individual responses to cultural diversity can be seen in NT leaders who display mature cultural alertness and sensitivity. Paul’s use of “in him we live and move and have our being” in his Mars Hill speech in Athens (Acts 17:28) was an ingenious accommodation to the Greek poets. Generally, Paul stands out in the early church as intensely culturally sensitive. We can add Peter as another recorded culturally sensitive Apostle, after the vision he received in Acts 10 to witness to Gentile Cornelius, with only one recorded intercultural relapse in Galatians 2:11-21.

Sequeira (2015:39) notes this trend toward heterogeneity continuing in Romans where Paul addresses a congregation that was undoubtedly composed of people from varying ethnicities, both Jews and Greeks (Rom 7:1; 11:13). Paul implores them to live together in love because of the gospel and to sacrifice their own preferences for the sake of others (Rom 13:8–10; 14:1–23). “Here we see that the gospel has implications not only for individual salvation but also for corporate sanctification—believers must learn to live

in community with those different from them by following Christ's example and considering others above themselves" (Sequeira 2015:39).

Further on in the NT, we see this heterogeneous nature of the early church. Some cases in point include 1 Corinthians, where Paul writes to a congregation with members from diverse backgrounds, and he asserts their oneness in Christ and exhorts them to prefer one another and show sensitivity to the consciences of weaker brothers (1 Cor 10:23–33; 12:12–13). In both these instances, the question of separate churches along homogeneous lines is completely foreign to Paul's thought. Sequeira (2015:39) notes that "Strategic" considerations for more effective outreach or "to make people feel more comfortable never take precedence over shared life in Jesus Christ. Rather, the conviction that believers are a new humanity in Christ drives Christian unity within the church, as believers love one another just as Christ has loved them."

An overlooked aspect of this brotherly love in intercultural care as a branch of pastoral theology, is that intercultural care should be directed by the following theological framework and principle: the principle of hospitality. Hospitality in theology refers to the attitude and praxis of hosting the stranger and inviting 'the other' to become part of the 'extended family' of God. In an intercultural setting, hospitality is the practice by which the church stands or falls (Sutherland 2006:83). Particularly, in Muslim evangelism, hospitality is the key, as any convert would probably lose all family and cultural ties, in turning to Christ. Smuts (2015:68) observes that "hospitality is the crying need in most urban churches today. Ministry in a setting like this is a great joy. The melting pot of cultures brings with it such enthusiasm and dynamism. Hospitality is so important to Tamil and African cultures that it's a wonderful antidote to Western individualism."

Does the multicultural nature of the NT church contradict the "homogenous unit principle," which, in its extreme form, advocates separate churches for separate groups? This was discussed extensively in the Lausanne Occasional Paper 1. *The Pasadena Consultation: Homogeneous Unit Principle* (Stott 1978:1). What we can learn from the Jerusalem church is that it had two different language groups, which would have made a natural division. But the leaders did not divide the church.

This heterogeneous nature of the early church continues to be challenged by some proponents of homogeneity who argue that a parallel should not be drawn between the Jew-Gentile divide and modern racial, ethnolinguistic, and cultural divides on four counts: (1) “Jew” and “Gentile” are not primarily ethnic terms; (2) the division between Jews and Gentiles was rooted in the Law, unlike modern ethnic divides; (3) the cultural distance between Jews and Gentiles in NT times was not as great as the cultural distance between ethnicities today, and (4) Jews struggled to accept Gentile salvation, which is not the case in the Christian landscape today (Hardison 2014:117).

In response to Hardison it needs to be noted that firstly, it is true that “Jew” and “Gentile” were not primarily ethnic distinctions, but primarily religious distinctions rooted in the Old Covenant. Yet, by the time of the NT we see in the life and ministry of Jesus that the hostility between Jews and Gentiles was more than merely religious; it extended to culture, language, and ethnicity. “The notion that Jews and Gentiles did not share a great cultural distance is simply incorrect, as any survey of literature from 2nd Temple Judaism indicates” (Sequeira 2015:42). We see from Acts 15 that it is true that Jews struggled to accept Gentile salvation, which is not so much the case today, but the ethnocentrism of the Jews is parallel to ethnocentrism of all human beings at all times, simply because we are fallen people who struggle to accept and live in community with those unlike us (and even with those like ourselves). Therefore, though there are some points of discontinuity between the Jew-Gentile divide and modern ethno-cultural divides that intercultural communication struggles to bridge, yet there are enough points of continuity to warrant the parallel. We need to strongly emphasise that the NT does extend the call to unity beyond “Jew” and “Gentile” to include categories like “Barbarian” and “Scythian,” which *are* ethnolinguistic categories (Col 3:11). “In the New Testament, unity in Christ trumps all other issues of identity, and the call to embrace the “other” encompasses all categories of “otherness,” and takes shape in the form of life together in the local church” (Sequeira 2015:42).

Yet we need to recognize some of the many challenges facing intercultural communication and relations in a culturally heterogeneous church. Fernando (1998:237-238) concludes his observations on conflict resolution in Acts, by saying we will face three major obstacles if we try to have multicultural or multilingual churches. “(1) Today’s pragmatism always looks at success in terms of measurable results.

Having homogenous churches often means rapid growth. But biblical principles should take priority over ‘the success principle.’”

(2) In the contemporary trend toward pleasure and away from pain and avoidance of suffering of any sort, the reality is that multicultural churches usually experience some pain as a result of misunderstandings and unintended cultural insensitivity. Yet as has been shown above, the benefits of multicultural churches are immense, especially in the area of evangelism and missions. Culturally we can learn much from each other. Social awareness and understanding of the problems experienced by the ‘other’ types of people (e.g., the poor) brings the whole church into the problem solving process in our local churches. Yancey (1998:30-31) makes an extensive argument for why he would never join a church that was not culturally and economically diverse. Fernando’s (1998:237-238) strongest point is that “we can demonstrate that Christ can make people one. This is an important message in a world broken by ethnic, caste, and class strife.”

Inertia of the church, as a people or because of habit in the church as a body, becomes the third issue. Fernando (1998:237-238) observes that: “(3) Established Christians are often unwilling to change practices in their church in order to welcome converts. Forms of worship, styles of music, the time of the worship service, and so on may need to be adjusted” to sensitively accommodate new Christians from other cultures, so that they will feel welcomed and be better cared for. “Many Christians say they are committed to evangelism, but they do not want to pay the price of bringing in an evangelistic harvest. In actuality, they want to be comfortable. But God has not called us to comfort but to witness to everyone about Jesus Christ” (Fernando 1998:237-238). Inertia and comfort prevent sacrificial care, manifest in evangelism and discipleship.

So, the issue comes down to how to keep the unity in all this diversity. Fernando (1998:237-238) proposes we

need to explore how best to apply the biblical principle of the unity of the body amidst diversity. While we may need separate congregations because of language barriers, we can still have them as part of one “church.” We can meet together for worship and fellowship occasionally, even though such meetings may be tedious even after careful and creative planning.

The ongoing tension between unity and diversity plays itself out in a myriad of ways. In the personal intercultural conflict sphere, it often comes down to the individuals involved,

but can be shaped by the teaching and theology held by the people of the local congregation. So while there is a subjective element in intercultural conflict resolution, the work of the Holy Spirit in unifying and empowering to bear fruit, must never be underestimated.

Fernando (1998:237-238) also gives a personal example of his experience with unity within diversity:

The church where I worship has two congregations — one English-speaking and the other Sinhala-speaking. We meet once a quarter for a combined, bilingual service. The Sinhala-speaking congregation to which we belong has educated members and illiterate members, wealthy members and desperately poor members. About 75 percent of them are converts from Buddhism. My wife and I cherish the enrichment that has come to us through having as close brothers and sisters, people who are so culturally different from us.

This experience is mirrored by others around the world and as a participant observer in a local congregation; this has been our experience in our context in Johannesburg, South Africa. The ongoing richness of cultural experiences and adventure, far surpass the struggles of intercultural conflict that only occasionally arise. The benefits outweigh the difficulties. In the Johannesburg intercultural context, we have seen all-night, large group, corporate prayer modeled for time-conscious cultures, which goes far beyond the failing fifteen-minute pre-service common, corporate prayer meeting. We have also witnessed the practical benevolence of cultures with excesses (like second coats) sharing with cultures who have little or nothing, within the local church, which we will document in the next chapter. The largest, but the most difficult benefit to quantify, is the ongoing witness of intercultural harmony and conflict resolution to a community in the process of large cultural change. What can be quantified is the practical and advocacy network of care for displaced and venerable peoples like refugees.

3.3 Corporate Responses seen mainly from Biblical history in Acts 15

After looking at some individual responses to intercultural issues, we now need to look at another corporate response. Acts 15 stands at the center of the book of Acts both as literature and theologically where the issue of Gentile inclusion into the family of God is finally addressed and resolved. There are seven scenes: a description of the nature of

the conflict (15:1–5); the debate in Jerusalem focusing on the speeches by Peter (and Paul and Barnabas) (15:6–12) and James (15:13–21); the solution (15:22–29); the report to Antioch (15:30–35) and the aftermath in which Paul and Barnabas separate (15:36–41); and Paul taking on Timothy and continuing to disseminate the decision of the council throughout the cities (16:1–5). While “eastern and western cultures were in contact and conflict [in Antioch, Galatia and elsewhere after Paul’s missionary journeys]. The relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church was debated and decided” here in Jerusalem (Acts 15; Gal. 2:11 – 13) (Stambaugh & Balch 1986:149). Hence we need to look more closely at this pivotal chapter.

In the context of Acts, we need to remember that the Christian Church began as a sect of Judaism. This changed in Acts 10 when God gave Peter and Cornelius the vision of the gospel spreading to the Gentiles. Even before this, the Ethiopian eunuch, who seems to be a convert to Judaism, was then converted to Christianity (Acts 8:26–39). The early church first understood that conversion to Christianity entailed being born Jewish or converting to Judaism—in other words, being circumcised. “The idea that Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jewish caused dissension among some in the church, particularly Christians who were previously Pharisees (Acts 15:1, 5)” (Espinoza 2015:nn). Again the yeast of the Pharisees was at work (Mt 16:6).

The lessons learned in Acts 6 of creating structure and form to address inequality in intercultural issues is now seen on a larger scale. Structural form did not end with the local church. Acts 15 shows that all these churches forming from the Christian Diaspora, were not entirely separated one from the other. It would seem that some representatives from individual churches at a time of real crisis met together in Jerusalem in what has been called the Jerusalem Council. The issue at hand was crucial: how any person is to be saved (Acts 15:1)? Parsons (2008:210) argues rather that “the issue here is not about the Gentiles’ salvation but whether Gentiles and Jews can commingle without the Jews’ being defiled by association with Gentiles, who are by nature unclean. This is a social, not a soteriological, question.” We would argue that the issue was primarily a soteriological issue, which also had a social aspect.

Most commentators seem to hold to the view that soteriology was at stake here and that it was a major doctrinal problem, revolving around “the brothers from the party of the

Pharisees” (15:5) who were saying that a person must be saved not only by faith in Christ, but also by the addition of the Jewish ceremonial law. “Certain men who came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, ‘Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved’” (Acts 15:5) (KJV). What is interesting is that so often in intercultural conflict, “social” issues are presented when soteriological issues are ultimately at stake. Schaeffer (1982:4:58) believes that not only did they meet “together as office-bearer (15:6) in a formal way,” but that now intercultural conflict should also be resolved on denominational and higher levels than the local church. Schaeffer argues for robust debate, attentive listening and a moderator (or chairman), yet always seeing form as the solution to this conflict. “There is very little detail as to the exact form here, but the general picture is clear” (Schaeffer 1982:4:59). Again policy and structure, even on denominational levels, seem to come into the picture as part of the solution to intercultural issues.

While policy and structure are crucial to solving intercultural conflict, cultural sensitivity towards all parties is also needed. “In a similar way, when the apostles granted freedom to Gentiles from the necessity of circumcision, they showed admirable sensitivity to Jewish believers by advising the Gentiles in the same letter to abstain from other practices offensive to the Jewish mind (Acts 15:19-20)” (Chan 2005:11). We may further note that Paul gave sensitive attention to the culturally based convictions of the weaker brother in Rome (probably Jewish) by advising the stronger brother (probably Gentile) to refrain from eating meat (a stumbling block to the weaker brother; Rom 14:21), even though he was morally free to eat it (Rom 14:6-7,14). Dunn (1990:xix) while speaking more about *theological* diversity than *cultural* diversity, makes the statement: “I have come to see that . . . without sufficient diversity Christian unity will be [heretically] narrow, squeezing out what is also the life of the Spirit. . .” This freedom in diversity, while finding solutions to conflict in form, like policy and structures, is the Spirit-led balance that is so needed, in the intercultural issues of a multicultural local church and denomination.

We note that James, the half-brother of Christ—drew the discussion together and related it to Scripture (15:15–17). “As Peter had offered a theological argument for Gentile inclusion in part on the basis of his personal experience, James offers a theological argument based on another source of authority: scripture” (Parsons

2008:212–213). Scripture above all must be the basis of the church’s authority. Their solution was not merely something pragmatic or cultural or something they generated out of themselves. The Holy Spirit-inspired solution, was rooted in OT Scripture—in this case, Amos. James’ quote included the prophecy of God, “...that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name...” (Acts 15:16-18; Amos 9:11-12). James employs an exegetical method similar to the *pesharim* found at Qumran. In this method, what “appears to be merely a quotation of a scriptural text turns out to be in fact also an interpretation of the text” (Bauckham 1995:1:453). Based on this and presumably other Scriptures, (even by allusions to Isa 45 and especially Jer 12), this issue was decided upon with the Spirit-led approval of the majority. “So here we find a meeting, a moderator, an appeal to Scripture, and a conclusion” (Schaeffer 1982:4:59). There is much to commend Schaeffer’s conclusions (though they may be coloured by a Presbyterian bias) as the reality of some extreme intercultural conflict in a local church, may need external mediation from a denominational or moderatorial level.

Understanding diversity is just as necessary as keeping the unity in Christ. Chan (2005:11) argues that “the bicultural situation of the early church (Jewish and Greek) offers a valuable parallel to today’s multicultural church. A theology of cultural diversity would call upon today’s church leaders to imitate the apostles’ belief that it is worth paying attention to the cultural values and convictions in the body of believers.” While the larger theological issue of salvation was certainly at stake in Acts 15, the intercultural issues that flow from one salvation for all cultures, which are brought into one body (Eph 2:11-22), are of continuing importance even to our day.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter we have looked at some of the intercultural conflicts that arose in the church after Acts 2 and what we can learn from them for today. From this we have concluded that intercultural conflict can be bridged with the empowering fruit of the Holy Spirit. Listening to one another is the first key to conflict resolution.

By observing the conflict around the benevolence for the widows in Acts 6, within a church that had exploded with many thousands of members, we conclude that sensitive, intercultural conflict around vulnerable and emotive members like widows, needs careful structures to comprehensively care and minimize conflict. From Acts 6 we deduce: -

- Leaders (the Apostles in that case) need to be alerted to the conflict.
- The leaders need to facilitate conflict resolution.
- All parties (members of the local church) need to be involved in intercultural conflict resolution.
- Leaders need to be clear on their own function and limitations.
- Members, who have the confidence of the rest of the church body, need to be selected, to form a small problem resolution team, like the seven in Acts 6.
- This problem-solving group should ideally consist primarily of members from the minority group or culture.
- This problem-solving group should be of a temporary nature, dissolving once the crisis is resolved.
- Better administration of conflict by trusted people from among the most affected minority culture, is better than a knee-jerk response to bring in the experienced senior leaders from a majority culture.
- Ethical structure, form and administrative gifts can also be an asset of the church, and then, shared with the wider society in intercultural confrontations.

We learn, from other personal responses to intercultural conflict that arose once the mainly Jewish-origin Christians were scattered after the stoning of Stephen, that this conflict resolution was thrust onto the new religious refugees, who were fleeing persecution in Jerusalem. The church in Antioch was multicultural by the time of Acts 13 and united by the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting. It became the first sending-church for cross cultural workers like Paul and Barnabas. Paul would become a personal example of intercultural sensitivity, seen repeatedly on his missionary journeys, and famously in the Mars Hill address (Acts 17) and the teaching of the multicultural churches in Rome and Corinth, through the epistles to the Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. Intercultural sensitivity needs to be learned. Hospitality towards the “stranger” is one powerful tool in bridging intercultural differences.

While the current debate between proponents of homogenous churches and heterogeneous churches continues, we see in the NT, that unity in Christ surpasses all other issues of cultural identity. Christ's call to embrace the "other", includes all categories of "otherness," so that we function interculturally in life together in the local church.

The challenges facing intercultural communication in multicultural churches include: -

- pragmatism,
- conflict avoidance
- inertia.

The benefits of intercultural communication in multicultural churches include: -

- a united witness to a watching world,
- broader evangelism,
- social awareness,
- understanding of "others" (especially the poor),
- learned conflict resolution skills,
- sacrificial love and a powerful proclamation of Christ making us one Body supernaturally.

Keeping the unity in diversity may mean different languages meeting separately to hear the Gospel of supernatural transformation in their primary language, but unity can be retained by regular combined meetings and combined administrative and leadership structures. The richness of cultural experiences, far surpasses the struggles of intercultural conflict that may only occasionally arise.

The corporate response to the inclusion of the "other" we observe in Acts 15, where finally Gentiles are accepted theologically and practically by Christians of Jewish origin. Creating structure and form to address inequality in intercultural issues is now seen on a larger scale than the local church. The issue was primarily a soteriological issue, which also had a social aspect. In intercultural conflict, "social" issues are frequently the presenting problem while soteriological issues are ultimately at stake. Policy and structure form part of the solution to intercultural issues, even on denominational levels. Freedom in diversity, whilst finding solutions to conflict in form, like policy and structures, is the Spirit-led balance that is so needed, in the intercultural issues. Scripture, above

all pragmatism and culture, must be the basis of the church's authority in conflict resolution. We can learn much in the multicultural church today, from the example of the early church in Acts.

So why did, some of these intercultural conflicts happen? Also why do they continue to happen? In the next chapter we will look at cultural worldviews and see how they can assist us in understanding intercultural conflicts.

4. *Intercultural Communication Insights*

Our ability to communicate is what sets humans apart from the rest of the created order. Our ability to speak intelligibly and reason is all part of what it means to be created in the imago Dei. Part of our communicating involves the transmission of information for understanding from one person to another, or to a group of people. Communication, therefore involves the removal of obstacles to facilitate understanding and an adequate response. In this respect, all communication is cross-cultural. Whether communicating between the sexes, ages or cultures, we are crossing to another culture. We are all crossing from our “island” of understanding to the “island” of another. "Communication is a process for creating understanding in which two or more parties are involved" (Smith 1992:6). The process of creating understanding between two or more communicators, makes intercultural communication such an interesting endeavour. Various attempts have been made to document ways to look at intercultural communication systematically - to review what is happening. These various communication studies, can help to answer such important questions as how to prevent rejection of the message being communicated interculturally, or how to minimize resistance to the message, especially such an eternally important message as the Gospel of supernatural, personal transformation.

Now having looked at many of the different OT and NT passages pertaining to intercultural communication and conflict in the previous chapters, we will endeavour in this chapter to look at some of the lessons we can learn from the field of intercultural communication studies. "There is a very real danger, however, that as our technology advances and enables us to cross geographical and national boundaries with singular ease and increasing frequency, we may forget that it is the cultural barriers which are the most formidable" (Hesselgrave 1999:392). It is these formidable cultural barriers that need all the tools of intercultural communication to assist with getting the message out, both cross-culturally to the world and interculturally, when the many cultures are part of the local church or community.

Getting the message out cross-culturally in a multicultural context like the church, is important, because the gospel of supernatural, personal transformation has eternal

consequences. Also the world is observing the institution of the church to find hope for real, working, intercultural communication, in an atmosphere of potential tension that can easily lead to division and disunity, rather than a coming together in practical unity.

4.1 Communication Signals

On a basic level we may say that communication takes the form of a variety of “signals,” both verbal and non-verbal. Culture and signals are inseparable. To have effective intercultural communication, we need to begin with learning how signals are used in different cultures. Each participant in the communication process comes with their respective cultural baggage. “The challenge of intercultural communication is to overcome these two major barriers to understanding - different experiences and different interpretations of similar experiences” (Smith 1992:57). It is in these differences that conflict can mushroom.

Smith (1992:161) has sought to categorize and recognize twelve signal systems. The goal of the intercultural communicator is to learn how these twelve signals are used in each culture. Then, to consciously use them in the appropriate way, which becomes the basis of effective intercultural communication. Smith (1992:161) goes into extensive detail on each of these twelve:

1. Verbal,
2. Written,
3. Numeric,
4. Pictorial,
5. Artifactual,
6. Audio,
7. Kinesic,
8. Optical,
9. Tactile,
10. Spatial,
11. Temporal,
12. Olfactory.

The renowned Catholic missiologist and anthropologist, Louis Luzbetak (1963:60-61), would understand these signal systems within what he calls "ideational environments." These being the intermediate level of meaning or message, of the sign or symbol, being communicated. He said: "Culture is a design for living. It is the plan according to which society adapts itself to its physical, social and ideational environment. ... Man copes with this ideational environment through knowledge, art, magic, science, philosophy and religion. Cultures are but different answers to essentially the same human problems." We then each communicate from our culture into another culture using one, two, more or all of the signals mentioned above.

We also learn from missiology and research, in sharing the Christian message in oral cultures, that the arts (mentioned by Luzbetak) are a powerful key to effective cross-cultural communication, reaching multiple signal systems. "We see how arts are part and parcel of communities, inseparable from so many contexts of communication. Our attempts at sharing about Christ in a way that resonates with any group of people will not ring true without the natural colours, gestures, sounds, and communication frameworks familiar to those people. Without them, any incarnation of the gospel remains incomplete, a robotic, lifeless framework, rather than a living creation" (Hoogerheide & Krabill 2016:13). As an observation, early translations of the Bible, frequently included art in the text and the arts were central to the message of the church, especially to pre-literate peoples. For centuries the church sought to communicate its message and theology, using art. Intercultural communication is then more effective when the arts are added to the repertoire of communication tools, as multiple signal systems are reached simultaneously.

There is growing research in linguistics to find links in smaller language groups between the geography out of which a certain language (and then culture) arises. It is theorized that the various languages changed to suit the natural habits where they were originally spoken. Hence languages originating in densely vegetated areas contain more vowels in general (like "banana"), while languages originating in open areas, like savannas, favour high-pitched sounds and more consonants (like "strict"). In The Star article, "*Language differences driven by geography*", Professor of linguistics Ian Maddieson says: "We believe that some part of the characteristics of the sound patterns in languages is shaped by the ecological or climatic features of the area where it was

originally spoken” (2015:11). This would fit with Luzbetak’s (1963:60-61) concept above of culture (including language) being a design for living within a certain environment. Should these findings by Maddieson be corroborated, they will add to our understanding of spatial, temporal and pictorial signal systems in languages, which influence the culture we encounter in intercultural communication.

In intercultural communication, once all signal systems have been taken into consideration, the final difficulties to overcome are the “world views” (or “core beliefs”) and the “values” of the receptor culture in the communication process. “Challenging core belief directly brings rejection of the message and often the messengers as well.... learn the assumptions on which a culture rests. It is particularly crucial in intercultural communication, where assumptions may be unknown” (Smith 1992:258). This is why world views and values are taught most frequently to people about to cross into another culture. “Worldview is not separate from culture. It is included in culture as the deepest level of presuppositions upon which people base their lives” (Kraft 2009:401). Culture is thus observed visible like the surface of a river, but the worldview assumptions are the deep level rocks, currents and water below the surface of a river. The worldviews of the culture one is engaging and one’s own (personal, family, national and regional) worldviews need to be understood, to best facilitate fluent intercultural communication. “To this end the insights of anthropologists into culture and worldview can be harnessed to enable us to advocate a Christianity that is truly contextualized, truly relevant and truly meaningful” (Kraft 2009:405). We will now seek to look at some of the more common assumptions in worldviews that influence intercultural communication.

4.2 Cultural Worldviews

Our own cultural worldview is generally assumed as normative and not examined until we encounter another culture. When the culture we encounter questions our understanding of truth and reality, there can be great fear, confusion and chaos, a feeling sometimes labelled culture shock. To address this shock it can be helpful to understand our own cultural worldview and the worldview of the person or group being encountered. Brynjolfson (2004:22) has helpfully summarized many of the elements of cultural worldview below, given by Dodd (1995:105-111). Each of these differing

intercultural worldviews we find in Acts and in the church today. All of us would find themselves somewhere along the continuum of each of these pairs of worldviews. While there may be a tendency to form stereotypes from these worldviews for a particular group, as long as we do not become judgmental and simply use these summaries to assist us to form neutral stereotypes, they may be of great value. This is what Livermore (2010:90) calls a “significant part of building our CQ [Cultural Quotient/ Cultural Intelligence] repertoire.”

Worldviews can be seen as relating to a number of elements summarized below. The following pairs of elements are set on a continuum because some cultures may only identify partially with one worldview side or the other. This continuum can be used for each worldview under examination (e.g. Hebraic Christians, Hellenist Christians, English South African, Zulu, Congolese, North American, Mexican, Afrikaans, etc.)

4.2.1. Shame or Guilt Orientation in Cultures

Some cultures can be characterized by their perceived sense of personal guilt (usually found in individualistic cultures) and shame (usually found in collectivist cultures). The care of the widows in Acts 6 would place the early church (and particularly the Hebraic believers) squarely on the Collective/Shame end of the continuum, while the Hellenistic believers would have tended more to the Individualistic end of the continuum. Various scholars like deSilva (2000) and Malina (1993) have observed that honor/shame (H/S) is “the pivotal cultural value” of the Bible.

Figure 1 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



Jue (2015:59) warns, however, as an Asian American who would abhor subtle stereotyping of Asian cultures as only shame based, that

In my opinion, however, you cannot preach the gospel without discussing the guilt of all sinners before the judgment of God (Romans 6:23). And guilt is not the same thing as shame. Moreover, guilt is not a foreign cultural concept for Asians. Arguably, legal codes in Asia and the Middle East pre-date those in the West. A violation of the emperor's edict in Ancient China for example, would result in guilt and punishment. Again, this is a subtle form of stereotyping that requires careful attention.

While stereotyping is a danger, intercultural awareness remains an asset. Chiang (2015:77) as an Asian American illustrates the implications of shame orientation from his cultural background, when he says: "We don't ask for help because this could imply shameful inadequacies. We don't speak up to authority figures because that would be disrespectful. We don't volunteer ourselves for leadership because doing so is a prideful demonstration of arrogance." Thus in applying these cultural worldviews we need to continue to be mindful of the whole counsel of God, and not slip into the dangers of allowing worldviews to hinder preaching the gospel of supernatural, personal intervention, rather than compromise or even universalism.

4.2.2. *Spirit or Secular Orientation in Cultures*

A culture can be evaluated by its cognitive cultural worldview, which involves whether or not the culture accepts the notion of a cosmos filled with spiritual beings and forces, or whether a spiritual dimension plays a lesser role or any role at all. Generally, African and Asian cultures include a spiritual orientation in their cultures, while post-Christian Western Europe and parts of the USA would be generally post-Christian and secular (taking little or no cognizance of spirits, angels, demons or God,) with many variations in between. Figure 2 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

Fig 2: Spirit or Secular Orientation in Cultures

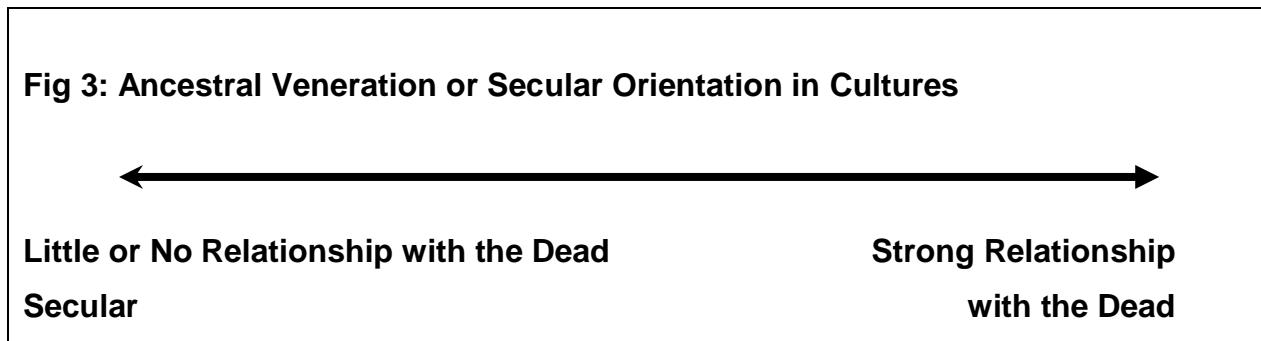


4.2.3. *Ancestral Veneration or Secular Orientation in Cultures*

Closely linked to the previous orientation of spirit and secular oriented cultures comes cultures that have a high view of the dead (whether veneration or even worship) and those that have little or no life changing view of the dead or their ancestors. Some cultures are characterized by their view of the relationship between living and dead. Mbiti (1999:83) coming from an African perspective calls the recently deceased (up to four generations) ancestors, the “living dead,” until they become full spirits. Many cultures find this relationship with the dead in passages like Heb 12:1-3 “...the great cloud of witnesses...” This has big implications for end of life matters.

This issue has many implications in the South African context. Not least of which is the sad exploitation of those holding to strong relationships with the dead, by spiritists, witchdoctors and greedy undertakers. Another issue for Christians from an African culture is the issue of lobola. When a man pays a (many times considerable) bride price agreed by the elders of both families upon the intention to marry a woman, this is called lobola. Among southern African peoples lobola is a bride price; especially one paid with cattle, hence the practice of paying a bride price. The problem arises when that bride price is linked with appeasing or venerating the ancestors through an animal sacrifice by one or both families in a marriage union. Here the culture of one or both parties in a marriage involving lobola has the potential to cross the line into idolatry. Those Christians living in an urban environment with growing secular pressures, experience considerable soul searching pressure whether to pay a lobola that has a strong relationship with the dead for both families entering into a marriage covenant. In an interview with Lesego Motsoahae (2016), he expressed shock at discovering the deep

ancestral links that would be required of him should he wish to pay lobola. Yet failing to pay would create considerable family tensions on both sides and even alienation from both families. Figure 3 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



4.2.4. The Optimistic or Pessimistic Anthropologic Orientation in Cultures.

This intercultural tool looks at how a culture views the nature of humankind. Here we need to understand whether a culture has an optimistic or a pessimistic anthropology, or something in between. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961:12) cultures perceive humans in one of three ways; basically good, neutral, mixed good and evil, and basically evil, each one being mutable or immutable. We see this view held by some in the debate in Acts 15. It was thought by those from the party of the Pharisees that “some Gentiles were capable of remembering God and God’s way and thus acting in a righteous or just manner. Such a view is based on an ‘optimistic anthropology’ in which persons were capable of observing the law, whether natural or Mosaic” (Parsons 2008:212). On the other hand, “Peter holds the pessimistic anthropology of certain sectarian Jews: Gentiles cannot keep the Noahic commandments” (Parsons 2008:212).

Another example is found in more contemporary conflict. In recent research into xenophobic perceptions in South Africa, Moyo (2015:195) found that “if African immigrants are objectively and positively portrayed, this can contribute to fighting xenophobia, because objective and positive portrayal and reporting could encourage a culture of tolerance and acceptance.” In viewing the nature of humankind as a mixture of good and bad, Moyo argues that positive and objective reporting in the media can

“reduce the chasm between ‘us’ and ‘them’. It would obliterate the image of the ‘barbarians at the gate’ (McDonald 2000:2) plotting to ‘break into the house’ and instead build the image of ‘all people in the house’, building and taking care of the same” (Moyo 2015:195). An healthy view of all human beings being created in the image of God, can also help address the issues around xenophobia. Yet when discourse demotes groups to sub-human categories, great danger looms. Understanding the anthropologic view of the communicator in an intercultural communication context goes a long way to helping bridge the divide.

The Evangelical Christian worldview would be that all human nature is affected by sin (total depravity) and no aspect of humanity is basically good. Thus we would see human nature as basically bad. This would mean that Evangelical Christian dialogue with other cultures is coming from a pessimistic anthropologic worldview with a message of hope in the gospel of supernatural, personal transformation through Divine intervention alone. Figure 4 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



4.2.5. *Anthropocentric or Natural Orientation in Cultures.*

Another element of world view is the amount of control over nature one believes people have. (i.e., subject to nature, in harmony with nature, or controlling of nature.) This view is similar to fatalism, discussed below. This orientation will have an impact of issues like progress, fear, apathy, urbanization etc. Figure 5 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

Fig 5: Anthropocentric or Natural Orientation in Cultures - Humans and nature



4.2.6. *Doing or Being Orientation in Cultures*

The doing and being duality is another world view difference between cultures. Doing emphasizes goal setting and producing achievements while being focuses on inner personal development in character, knowledge etc. Perhaps here the Apostles' desire in Acts 6 was on being in prayer, which conflicted with the need to do the work of "waiting on tables" Acts 6:2. Maznevski (2002:277) illustrated this by defining: -

Doing: People would continually engage in activity to accomplish tangible tasks.

Thinking: People would consider all aspects of a situation carefully and rationally before taking action.

Being: People would be spontaneous, and do everything in its own time.

Figure 6 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

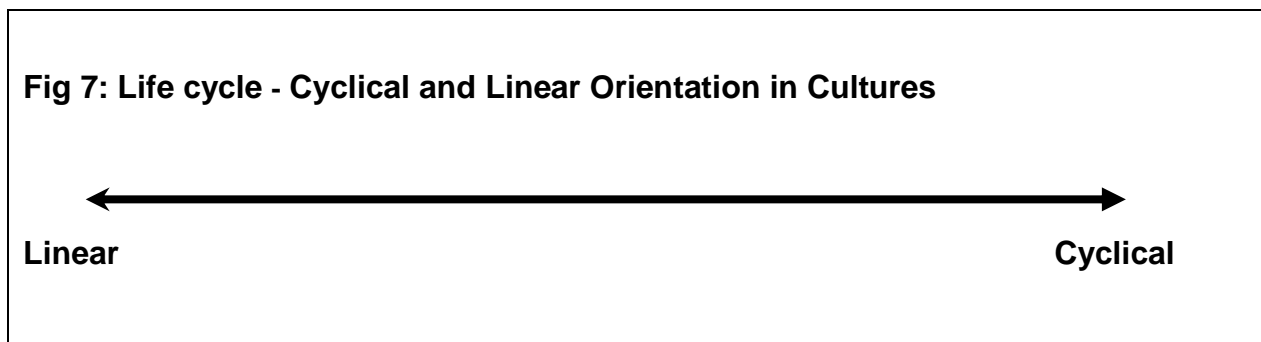
Fig 6: Doing and Being Orientation in Cultures



4.2.7. Cyclical or Linear Orientation in Cultures

Life is viewed as linear or cyclical. Western cultures, for instance, tend to think of time in terms of a three-part structure of past, present, and future, with time moving in one direction without repetition, thus being linear. Cyclical time emphasizes repetition and is very much influenced by the cycles apparent in the natural world. “Traditionally, anthropologists have identified this notion with early or prehistoric, and I suppose significantly pre-literate, cultures” (Sundaram 2013:1). Cahill (1998:nn), for instance, argues that Judaic culture fundamentally changed Western culture by contributing this sense of linear time, which of course was adopted by Christianity and thus spread throughout Europe and the Western world.

Figure 7 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

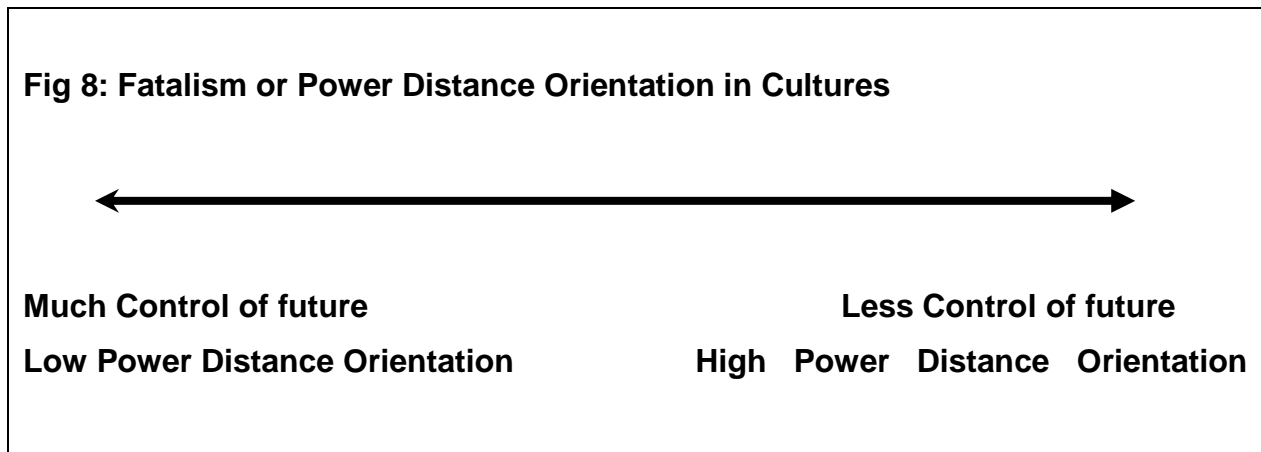


4.2.8. Fatalistic or Low Power Distance Orientation in Cultures

This intercultural tool measures the degree of power that is wielded by authority figures over subordinates within a culture, based on fatalism. In political terms it may be observed in the difference between dictatorships in contrast to a democracy. Rogers with Svenning (1969:273) defined fatalism as "the degree to which an individual recognizes a lack of ability to control his future." Linked to fatalism is the power distance in cultures. "A high-power-distance culture views it as the lot of some individuals in life"

to do menial work, while others are fated to have higher roles (Livermore 2010:100). Power distance refers to how much control leaders have over followers. "Power distance is the extent to which differences in power and status are expected and accepted" (Livermore 2010:100). Thus those cultures with a high power distance have a high degree of fatalism, which is used by leaders in authority to keep subordinates under their control. Other cultures with a low power distance generally have low degrees of fatalism among followers of leaders, and thus less chance of exploitation. This power distance value can differ even within a culture due to generational sub-cultures, professional sub-cultures and organizational cultures. Organizationally we see this worked out in either hierarchical or flat structures, such as the hierarchical Roman Catholic in contrast to the generally flat Baptist church polity. Fatalism thus becomes a tool in the hands of power to control the powerless.

Figure 8 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



To illustrate this difference in power distance we may refer to what was said by Shekhar Kapur (the Indian) director of the 2002 British film "The Four feathers" in his commentary after the film. He speaks of the difference in philosophy between east and west. The East generally believes in destiny "therefore if man embraces his destiny, then he is a stronger individual. His strength, purpose and honour lies in embracing his destiny." The West is all about "will," "I will do this or that" and so the West builds structures that are strong so that they overcome and create any destiny they will. This fundamental difference creates structures and empires. When the A.E.W. Mason novel by the same

name was written in 1903, on which the film was based, the Western world believed in colonization. Colonization was then a moral right, a right to intrude in other countries was arrogance, but was not questioned. It was the moral right to aggressive colonization. This cultural difference which the director addresses, we see with hindsight in history as a clash between fatalism (destiny) and power distance.

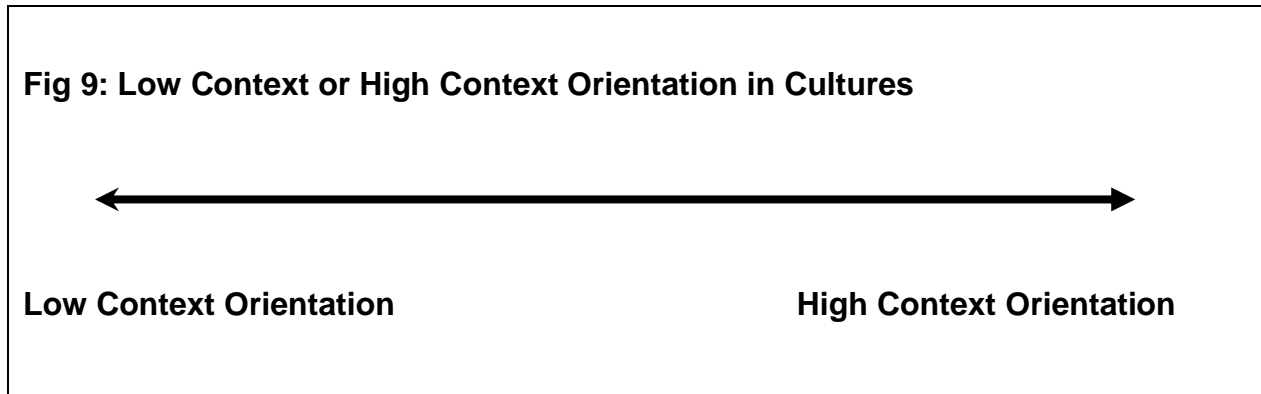
Power distance affects issues like equality and hierarchy. When creating understanding in an intercultural context, the power distance can cause those with a high power distance (fatalistic) cultural background to expect authoritarian leadership, give unquestioning servitude and exhibit apathy. So much so that attempts to empower church members from a high power distance orientation, leads to frustration as they exhibit little desire to take responsibility and lead as equals or brethren together. This frustration can be minimized by humility and Biblical servanthood on the part of leaders, especially if the leaders come from a low power distance culture. Eric Law argues in his book; *“The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb”*, that the only viable solution to the problem of power distance is the way of the cross: a way of the strong serving the weak, and a way of meekness and self-denial.

4.2.9. *High Context or Low Context Orientation in Cultures*

High context cultures are cultures where the people have a significant history together and so a great deal of understanding can be assumed. The majority of the people in the culture are “insiders” and know how to behave. Written instructions are minimal. Most people know what to do and when to do it. Examples may be in close families, liturgical churches and cultures in the Middle East and Korea. These remain difficult cultures to visit or communicate with as an outsider.

Low context cultures are places where there is little left to assumption “so things are spelled out explicitly” (Livermore 2010:93). Contacts between people and places are generally of a shorter duration. Instructions for much of life are specified in written notices to facilitate ease of entry into the culture. Cultures such as contemporary churches and cultures like most of the cities of the USA, North America and Western Europe would normally be low context. Low context cultures value direct communication

and much more explicit instructions than would be given to a close family member who understands the context. Figure 9 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

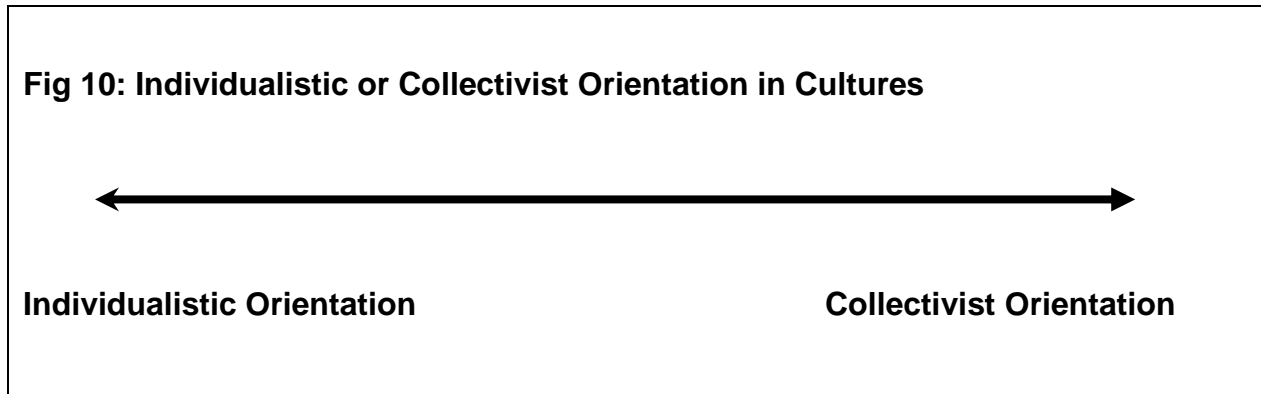


4.2.10. Individualistic or Collectivist Orientation in Cultures

Linked to the shame and guilt aspects in various cultures is the individualist (personal guilt orientation) and Collectivist cultures (shame orientated cultures.) Collectivist cultures emphasise dedication and loyalty to the group (i.e. *guanxi* or strong social networks in China). That group requiring loyalty may be the family group, religious group, work group or national group. The commitment of individuals is to what is best for the group. Motivation comes from group success. So, in collectivist cultures, there is a high value attached to saving face. The majority of the world's cultures are collectivist.

Individualistic cultures emphasise "I" and individual identity. Personal accountability and hence personal guilt for wrong-doing is a primary motivator. Individuals are encouraged to work alone and make individual decisions. "These cultures are largely governed by a commitment to do what's best for the individual as long as it does not infringe on the rights of other individuals" (Livermore 2010:97). Motivation comes from personal rewards and success. Cultures like Australia and the USA are prime examples of this type of culture. We see this difference even between generations within cultures; where, for instance, the Boomer generation (strongly individualist) has different views on personal responsibility than those of the millennial generation and generation X (Gen-X) (more collectivist). Hence, even between generations this intercultural tool can be of

assistance, in raising understanding and empathy. Figure 10 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



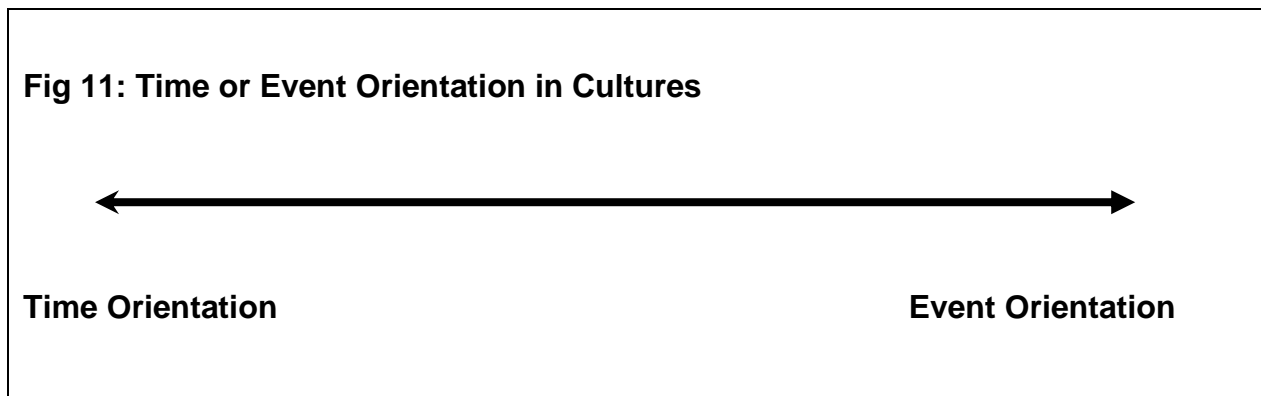
4.3. Cultural Values

Having looked at cultural worldviews, we now need to look at cultural values. Worldviews are the deeper structures of a culture (under the surface of the river, or below the waterline of an iceberg, to use previous analogies). Values are mostly evidenced on the surface. Kraft (2009:401) combines values with worldview, and sees culture (artefacts) as being surface evidence. Here we will differentiate cultural values from cultural worldview for the sake of distinction. We hold that a cultural value is a learned pattern (a surface or observable issue) that a particular group of people generally share in common. These cultural values have worth to the people in that culture; they make sense to them and form their identity. Values are thus culturally determined. Cultural Values are felt to be right or wrong, but generally they are simply preferences. Yet these preferences can cause conflict in intercultural contact and communication. We will now look at some value categories.

4.3.1. The Time or Event Orientation in Cultures

In this section, time or events are valued by the majority in a culture. This is also a value consequence of the task and people orientated cultures, and the doing and being

orientated cultures discussed above which can be visibly observed as time or event orientated cultures. Figure 11 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



We may illustrate this cultural value with the example of degrees of tardiness. For instance, the concept of being late varies between different people. For some people, being 5 minutes late can be excused and 15 minutes late creates tension, whilst being half an hour late creates hostility. But for other people being half an hour late can be excused. Being 1 hour late creates tension and only when you are 2 hours late then there is hostility. Why is this so? When Timex (the watch company) asked people in the time-orientated United States, how long they would wait before taking action in a wide variety of situations; researchers discovered that they would consent to wait only:

- thirteen seconds before they hoot (blow the horn) at a vehicle in front of them that has stopped at a red light that turns green;
- thirteen minutes for a table at a restaurant (Lawrence 2015:105-107).

These are simply two examples among many of the time consciousness in general, of the North American culture. Yet within a church context, the praxis of these values is evidenced on a frequent basis. So often in intercultural interactions there is misunderstanding about time and event. Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:38) suggest that American and German cultures are more time orientated, while Polynesian and Venda cultures are more event-orientated. All cultures and individuals fit between these two poles on a continuum. "The time-orientated express great concern about punctuality, the length of time expended and the utilization of time to its maximum potential. People who are event-orientated show concern that an activity be completed

regardless of length of time required and emphasize unscheduled participation rather than carefully structured activities” (Lingenfelter 2003:38). Most people feel the tension of these two poles and in different circumstances we can swing towards either pole.

Time-orientated people enjoy diaries, clocks, setting goals and objectives, but their lives can become so busy and booked up that they can do nothing on the spur of the moment. Event-orientated people focus on the details of what is going to happen and not when or how long. Test Cricket over 3-5 days can be event-orientated where the game is enjoyed and played till everyone is out, while spectators can come and go, just like some Korean and African church services. Participation and completion of the event in the present (now, not future or past) are the central goals for event-orientated people.

If one is time-orientated then there will be a continuous sense of urgency, where we feel “time is running out,” along with a fear that we may miss out on something (FOMO). Time-orientated people feel like they cannot wait for our next weekend, holiday or the last day at school or on the job. But for event-orientated people, time is not as valuable as enjoying the now and so they can be less fearful. “*The real enemy is fear. Fear is the devil’s workshop. Perfect fear drives out love. It’s supposed to be the other way around, but it works both ways. Only one remains: Fear or love. The devil roams around like a roaring lion—not a biting lion—a roaring lion*” (Medearis 2015:2). Event orientated people generally have a lower sense of fear and anxiety, yet may appear apathetic or careless to time-orientated people.

At the time of Acts 6 and Acts 15, it would seem that the Christian and Jewish cultures were generally more event-orientated. Also during the life of Jesus, within that context, Jesus invited two disciples to spend the day with Him (Jn 1:39, maybe because it was a Sabbath). Nicodemus disregarded “working hours” to come to Jesus at night, and Jesus shows no displeasure (Jn 3:2). Our Lord was also 4 days late when Lazarus was sick (Jn 11:6). Yet the Messiah taught us that God’s harvest time is now (Jn 4:35-36). In Matthew 4:17 and 16:21 “the time” (or better still, the opportunity) to preach and explain had come. Jesus would thus seem to be both event and time-orientated.

Within a family or single culture, individuals can differ between time and event-orientation, which causes friction. But when whole groups or cultures differ in

orientation, there can be strife. To function together interculturally means all the differing orientations need to adapt to one another. While we might criticize someone who is late, we may miss that she stopped, like the Good Samaritan, to help her neighbour (Lk 10:30-37). In growing to be more Christ-like, we need to remind ourselves that “in God’s scheme the emphasis on time and event exist together in complete harmony” (Lingenfelter 2003:49). William McConnell (1983:89) suggests that time is “a gift from God, and that His priorities can always be fulfilled in the amount of time we have been given...God is lavish with His gifts, so that there is always enough time to do what Jesus calls us to do.” Jesus cared for the persistent crowds who came to His wilderness prayer retreat, teaching and feeding them, before finally dismissing them and spending the night in prayer (Mt 14:13-25). By the Holy Spirit’s empowering, we continually need to appreciate the strengths of either the event or time priorities of the people and cultures with which we live within a multicultural church. Finally, our attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus, seeking to satisfy the time and event priorities of others, before our own needs (Phil 2:3-5).

(See Appendix 1 for the use of this intercultural tool in leadership training to aid intercultural understanding.)

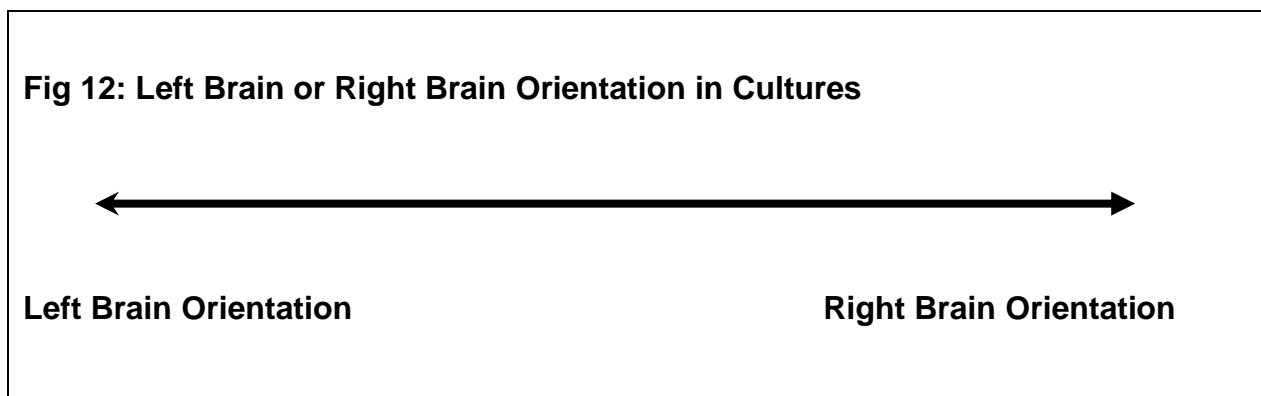
4.3.2. *Left or Right Brain Orientation in Cultures*

When different cultures work together as leaders in a multicultural context we find differing values govern making executive decisions and judgments. So that in a multicultural church these different ways of making judgments may easily be misunderstood. Even between men and women these differences in making decisions and judgments may be vividly seen. M. Mayers identifies two distinct ways of thinking: left brain (dichotomistic thinking) and right brain (holistic thinking) (Lingenfelter 2003:53). Most people use both kinds, but we all tend to have a preference.

Left brain thinkers tend to make black-and-white, right-and-wrong judgments. They form specific conclusions that are then uniformly applied in evaluating others. Their security comes from feeling that they are “right” and that they have a very specific role in society. Information reaching left brains is systematically organized, sorted and ordered, to form

a clear pattern. Those coming out of a western culture based on Greek thought, would be most prone to left brain thinking. In extreme cases left brain thinking can look very much like the Pharisees in the New Testament.

Right brain thinkers tend to make open-ended decisions that evaluate the whole person and consider all the circumstances. The right brain thinkers find their security from multiple interactions within the society and feel insecure with fixed roles. For them, information and experiences are seemingly disorganized. Right brain thinkers view a story as complete in itself and avoid breaking it down into details. So when dealing with people, right brain thinkers tend to avoid labels and withhold both approval and disapproval. Those coming out of a Hebrew or African culture tend to favour right brain thinking with all its parables and stories. Figure 12 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.



“Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the different functions of the two hemispheres, and more research is in progress” (Lingenfelter 2003:55). While our brains are extremely complex, we need both parts for healthy living and thinking. At its simplest level, one can ask oneself, “Do I think most in words (left brain) or in mental images (right brain)? Then, when telling a story, do I visualize it (right brain) or do I remember all the facts (left brain.)” When we look at the Bible we see both, right brain vivid stories from the prophets and left brain logical theology from Paul in Romans. History has seen the extremes of this Biblical variety carried to the limits in the systematic theology wars of the Reformation in contrast to the extremes of rapidly

growing Pentecostalism with some unbiblical visions and prophecies now seen in Africa and South America.

When serving as leaders in the church we need to take into consideration the main mind-set and culture of the person with whom we are dealing. Jesus understood the context of the Jewish (and Roman) social structure in which the Father had called Him to serve and die in. In His choice of disciples, most were only trained in the workplace of their occupations, and seemed mostly to be right brain thinkers. The Apostle Paul alone was well educated and appears to be more left brained, yet could say to the Jews he was a Jew and to the Romans he was a Roman (1 Cor 9:19–22). Charles Kraft (1982:28) called Jesus' approach "receptor-orientated and personal", and likewise we need to try think like the person, Christ calls us to serve as a leader.

In dealing with difficult issues in the church, we need to remember that left brain thinkers will want black-and-white answers with universal application of principles and feel secure where their perception is recognized as correct. While right brain thinkers will see most issues as open for debate, rather than black or white. They think each situation is unique and are uncomfortable with standardized rules and procedures.

It would seem that in Acts 15 the conflict caused by the left-brained disciples from the party of the Pharisees, needed an holistic solution from the right brained Peter, combined with a final fairly black-and-white solution from (what appears to be) the more left brained James.

As we deal with many cultures and genders we need to remember that some coming from say a Muslim background will tend to be rigid left brained, while those from sub-Saharan Africa may be right brained and evaluate the total person, finding nothing perfect but all having "feet of clay." This may explain why Jesus taught us to not judge one another. And Paul in Romans 14:1 says "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters."

(See Appendix 2 for the use of this tool in leadership training in intercultural understanding.)

4.3.3.

Task or People Orientation in Cultures

Some cultures value and emphasize task accomplishment over relationships, while other cultures emphasize relationships over task. Here in this dissertation we may conjecture that the Hellenistic task orientation rubbed up against the people-orientated Hebraic believers. Though even within a culture someone like Paul may have been more task-orientated than people-orientated. Figure 13 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

Fig 13: Task or People Orientation in Cultures



On an individual level one may ask: “Has one ever found oneself critical of someone who is spending a lot of time talking and not doing the work? Or does one get frustrated with people who are always busy, with no time for being sociable and friendly? Maybe one may view a certain group of people as lazy or another group of people as rude.” What we usually have in this context is a clash between the goals of task-orientated people, in contrast to the goals of interaction-orientated people.

Task-orientated people make completion of objectives, the goal of their lives. They feel most fulfilled when projects are completed. So they focus on tasks and principles. They will seek like-minded people with similar goals and they accept loneliness for the sake of personal achievements. All this can be noble, but when pushed to extremes, they can live lives at a frenetic pace and become workaholics, trying to do more than is humanly possible in every day.

Interaction-orientated people make it their goal to relate to others, maintaining personal relationships at all costs. Every opportunity is a time to network and meet new people. They feel most fulfilled when their energy is used in maintaining personal ties and fulfilling group obligations. They seek out group-orientated people, fearing loneliness, while sacrificing personal goals for group interaction. In extreme cases interaction-orientation can lead to little or no productivity and in a work context to job-loss.

In a multicultural church there will probably be both types of people who have differing goals. Intolerance and frustration can easily arise. For instance, when task-orientated city people meet interaction-orientated rural folk, there can be much contempt from both sides. Even culturally, those of a Germanic background may tend to be more task-orientated, while those from Zululand may be more interaction-orientated. Yet even within a culture, or within a family or marriage there can be these differing orientations. The danger is that our personal preferences or cultural values, can blind us to the values of another culture.

To compound the problem, the educational system is designed to reward task-orientated people, who are “willing to sacrifice interpersonal ties for long hours of study” (Lingenfelter 2003:81). Worldly success is often defined in terms of objective goals achieved and not relationships developed. For interaction-orientated people a major goal in doing any job is the interaction, not the money they can make.

For leaders and pastors in the church who have been called to care for the Body of Christ, it means serving people. Building relationship is central to all service. For task-orientated people interaction can be difficult, and needs conscious effort, otherwise the completion of tasks will use up all available time and energy.

From a biblical perspective, if we have achieved great tasks and have not loved and interacted with people, then we are little more than a sounding gong (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3). On the other hand, if we have interacted with the whole world, yet not made disciples, who will last for eternity, then we have simply become a friend of the world. The challenge is to understand our God-given nature to either be task or interaction orientated, yet always to seek to share the gospel and share our lives (1 Th 2:6-8).

(See Appendix 3 for the use of this concept in leadership training in intercultural understanding.)

4.3.4. *Status or Achievement Orientation in Cultures*

This cultural difference revolves around the value of societal status in contrast to individualistic achievement. This orientation has many similarities to individualist versus collectivist orientation in cultures. A brief self-analysis may illustrate this difference: “When you meet someone, what impresses you the most; their family background or what they have managed to do with their life? Is it more important to you what family the person before you descended from, or their office or achievements in life?” In the intercultural relationships we have in society and the church, we see some individuals and cultures who prize their ancestral background, while others value the successes of individuals or groups.

A status focused society (what M. Mayers calls prestige-ascribed) (Lingenfelter 2003:92) is concerned primarily with a person’s birth and social rank. So respect is given, based on a person’s social position. Like the Pharisees in Jesus’ society who liked the places of honour at weddings (Lk 14) and disliked mixing with people perceived as inferior (so clashing with Jesus Lk 15:1-2).

Other cultures value what is achieved, over one’s social rank. Personal performance determines self-worth. Titles are scoffed at while success is the indicator of worth. Success can be either economic (the rich fool Lk 12:13-21), moral righteousness (the young ruler in Lk 18:18-20) or a life of service (to family, church or community). Achievements focus usually only gives short-term self-worth. Successful people are prone to be critical of others and themselves (Like Martha in Lk 10:38-42). Achievers generally only respect other achievers. Figure 14 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

Fig 14: Status or Success Orientation in Cultures



When we observe Jesus, we see He rejects both status focus and achievement focus. When Jesus said in Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple.” Also Jesus says in Matthew 20:26–27 “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.” This is very difficult for status focused cultures like the Jewish or European cultures, who value middle class security and having servants.

On the other hand, to individuals or cultures who value achievements, come Jesus’ words to the proud young ruler who obeyed all the commands since youth (Lk18:21). They find it most difficult to “sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me” (Lk 18:22). As the disciples recognized, (Lk 18:26) Jesus is asking the impossible, because none of us can “achieve” or do enough. Whenever we find self-worth in performance, we will end up as worried or critical as Martha (Lk 10:39-42).

All believers are called to a lifetime of servanthood, not social rank or personal achievement. In spite of our inherent worthlessness and empty self-righteousness, God elevates our value and seeks us like the lost sheep (Lk 15) and says in Romans 3:22–24: “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Especially in an intercultural church, it needs to be emphasised that self-worth comes from the pattern set by Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5-8), not social status or achievements which can divide us from one another. Servant-leaders in an intercultural church must come

with servant hearts, remembering that as “a royal priesthood” (1 Pet 2:9) they do not need to grasp position or status, but empty themselves in faithful service to all.

(See Appendix 4 for the use of this tool in leadership training in intercultural understanding.)

4.3.5. Vulnerability or Strength Orientation in Cultures

This category of values (or preferences) contrasts a willingness to expose vulnerability as opposed to a concealment of vulnerability. A culture that values emotion and vulnerability, “wears its heart on its sleeve,” like many Latin countries. “A willingness to expose vulnerability indicates people’s willingness to talk freely about their personal lives” (McAllister 2004:18). They accept responsibility and admit weaknesses.

A culture that values personal strength and scorns emotional displays, “where cowboys don’t cry,” is often seen in cultures such as those with a Germanic or Chinese background. They tend to conceal vulnerability, deny responsibility and withdraw from activities that may expose weakness. Criticism is repulsed while forgiveness is not easily given. Figure 15 graphically shows these two elements on a continuum.

Fig 15: Vulnerability or Strength Orientation in Cultures



4.4. *Conflicting Values*

Values are perceived as “right” until a conflicting value is encountered in another culture. Generally, this can lead to conflict, unless intercultural understanding has raised awareness. Then a cultural value needs to be measured against an absolute, like the Bible. So, for instance, the African or Philipino culture valuing hospitality (1 Pet 4:9) would then be found to be universally preferable (right). On the other hand, cheating or child sacrifice in some cultures, due to a success orientation, goes directly against the Bible. A middle ground value like alcohol consumption in moderation may find justification either way in the Scriptures. A fully neutral value would be the body space (distance) between people in conversation and in public waiting areas, like queues. This would then be a clear preference coloured by parental and societal values.

Dealing with conflict involves understanding whether the value issue is Biblically right, wrong, middle ground or neutral. Many times culturally determined preferences can be equally valid. Seldom is a cultural value a theological issue. Resolving intercultural conflict is helped by understanding that we all may be somewhere along the continuum in each of these values. “The key is to attain appreciation for those with different values and let them enrich our fellowship and worship” (McAllister 2004:20).

4.5. *Action Plan*

All of these cultural worldviews and cultural values, with their infinite variations, make intercultural sensitivity all the more crucial in our day and age. The place to start is understanding what one’s own cultural bias entails, and only then to begin to seek to understand the cultural orientations of those Christ has added to His Body, the family or local church where one is called to serve or the denomination or community where one may have influence. From understanding must come genuine care put into practice. Strategies and policies may help, as we have seen in earlier chapters. Education of all concerned in intercultural communication is paramount.

Much church conflict can be solved through teaching. “A theology of cultural diversity would call upon today’s church leaders to imitate the apostles’ belief that it is worth

paying attention to the cultural values and convictions in the body of believers” (Chan 2005 :12). When Gal 3:28 says “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” this is because justification is by faith alone (Gal 2:15), and no one gains greater status in the kingdom because of OT observance (Gal 2:11-14). Paul boldly declares that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Gal 3:28). This means our unity in Christ should never be forgotten or downplayed by cultural differences. Gal 3:28 does not artificially remove cultural differences within the body of Christ, any more than it obliterates socioeconomic or sexual differences (“neither slave nor free, male nor female”). Jews remain Jews, the seed of Abraham and heirs of Abraham’s promise. Gentiles remain Gentiles, but by faith attain the same status as Jews (Gal 3:14, 29). With the Holy Spirit’s gracious power poured out since Pentecost, “cultural diversity is preserved in the midst of an overarching unity” (Chan 2005:13).

Chan (2005:14) argues controversially for a theology of cultural diversity that considers the creation of culture to be a Divine calling, but would also acknowledge culture’s fallen nature. “It would affirm God’s delight in cultural diversity. It would recognize God’s demand for church unity in the midst of diversity. It would denounce racism and ethnic isolationism. It would promote cultural sensitivity and racial reconciliation.” We would see the gift of intercultural communication as a valuable tool to “keep the unity of the Spirit” which Christ has given us in multicultural churches (and all churches hopefully).

In understanding how a church can transition to an intercultural church by creating a culturally friendly environment, we can be helped by Bennett’s (1986:179-195) six stage model:

Stage 1: Denial – The congregation has little experience or no contact with other cultures and may react aggressively to any intrusions.

Stage 2: Defend – Church members have experience with other cultures and criticise them, because their culture is the only “right” culture.

Stage 3: Diminish – Church members have experienced other cultures and cultural differences are explained away or romanticised, so that leaders try to bend other cultures to their culture.

Stage 4: Accept – Other cultures are sufficiently understood to accept that all cultures are equally complex and valid, so that there is respect and curiosity about one another, which leads to inclusion and recognition.

Stage 5: Adapt – Sufficient cultural understanding by church members leads to appropriate cultural responses to another culture. Cultural diversity is expressed in appropriate ways, and leadership and resources are shared.

Stage 6: Integrate – The people from different cultures feel comfortable in the other cultures without assimilation of a non-dominant culture by a dominant culture. Second generation immigrants experience assimilation and do not fully fit into either culture, forming effectively a third culture. Fully integrated churches have a high degree of mobility between cultures and usually bilingualism, at least on a leadership level.

In most cases of intercultural progression in churches, the 5th stage of Adaptation is the highest stage reached, unless the leadership is bilingual and highly culturally competent. The character of a congregation will determine the distance covered in these six stages of transition. Bridging the gap between cultures and dependence on God to grow inclusivity, is worth the effort, till in the years to come every tongue and tribe will gather together to worship the Lamb upon the Throne.

We may also use three helpful categories for analysing the degree of integration in congregational culture:

- *Assimilated multicultural congregations* — “in which one racial group [or cultural group] is obviously the dominant group” and non-dominant groups assimilate.
- *Pluralist multicultural congregations* — in which “physical integration has occurred in the sense that members of different racial groups [and cultural groups] choose to gather in the same church and the same worship service” but “members do not move beyond coexistence to real integration of social networks.”
- *Integrated multicultural congregations* — the “theological ideal” in which the “congregation has developed a hybrid of the distinct cultures that have joined

together in one church . . . the new hybrid culture is an expression of the congregation's unified collective identity." (DeYoung et al 2004:162-181)

Exceptions to encouraging multicultural congregations may then be valid when:

- Only one racial group lives in the area of a local church, though this is increasingly uncommon in our multicultural world. Yet, we may suggest that churches should still work toward ethnic diversity where possible.
- When there is a lack of a common language, though we suggest that affordable technical possibilities for simultaneous translation may eliminate this exception in the future.
- In unique circumstances of first-generation immigrant groups. We may allow for the possibility that the challenges of crossing cultures may be too great for the first generation living in new culture (DeYoung et al 2004:162-181).

Many intercultural churches are heavily weighted towards the dominant culture so that minority cultures feel like they are "dancing with elephants." The African proverb says dancing with elephants is exhilarating at first, but sooner or later one gets crushed (Brynjolfson 2004b:51). A clear definition of culture is needed and an understanding of our own culture and the cultures of others. (See introduction for definitions.) Otherwise at the first sign of discord we insist that our practice is right and the foreign practice is wrong. We need an environment of freedom and openness to engage in healing intercultural dialogue.

What we need is what Kraft (1996:76) calls the cultural golden rule: "Do unto other cultures as you would have them do unto yours." We recognize that no culture is perfect (without some depravity). Yet we seek to follow the Apostle's humble example of "becoming all things to all men...to save some" (1 Cor 9:19-23). This cultural relativism (or Biblically limited relativism) may be threatening, but is crucial for intercultural dialogue in the multicultural church. It is this journey from the mono-cultural (Hebraic) church in Acts 1 to the multicultural church of Acts 2 and restructured leadership (Acts 6:1-7), suspicion amongst the status quo (Acts 8:14; 11:2; 11:22-24; 15:1), and

eventually a negotiated acceptance (Acts 15:1-35), that we detailed in the previous two chapters. In our multicultural churches if we fail to reach a changed intercultural hierarchy; we will fall back on cultural imperialism.

The key to change is a well-developed and thoughtfully expressed theology of culture. Without this theological underpinning, any change will be met by suspicion. “The transitioning movement of mono-cultural churches will remain under suspicion that it is merely a body grab, motivated by desperation, a last ditch survival tactic for our challenged urban churches... [unless] we value culture...” (Brynjolfson 2004b:53). The challenge is for the host culture in a church to dance the dance of love, and as the “elephant” in the ballroom, to caringly consider the guest cultures without crushing them.

4.6. Summary

Divinely bestowed human communication transmits information from one island of understanding to another island. Communication studies help to prevent the message being lost at sea in the inter-island transfer. The cultural barrier reefs around foreign islands can be formidable. Intercultural communication tools assist in crossing these perilous reefs and waters.

The first challenge is to understand the various verbal and non-verbal “signals” that make up communication. These signals leave one ideational environment and cross backwards and forwards like canoes to and from the island of another ideational environment. The arts and understanding language origins, can all add to the effectiveness of the communication canoes.

The second challenge to overcome is the hidden rocks under the water around a culture. These jagged rocks which can scuttle communication, are the world views or core beliefs surrounding a cultural island. To navigate the waters of intercultural communications, means mapping the waters of one’s own culture and the culture with which one is communicating. The danger is to assume all islands are the same as one’s

own. It is crucial to simultaneously understand our own culture and the culture we encounter. This understanding can be called cultural intelligence.

Worldviews generally range along a spectrum. We have identified ten spectrums of worldview. They are: -

1. Shame or guilt orientation in cultures that revolve around the response to wrongdoing in collectivist or individualist cultures.
2. Spirit or secular orientation in cultures where the spiritual world is considered significant or insignificant.
3. Ancestral veneration or secular orientation in cultures, linked to the previous point, holds varying degrees of honour for the dead.
4. The optimistic or pessimistic anthropologic orientation in cultures looks at how a culture views the moral nature of humans, which influences the degree of need for supernatural salvation or even the tolerance of the culture of foreigners.
5. The anthropocentric or natural orientation in cultures, which is the perceived degree of control a culture believes it has over nature.
6. The doing or being orientation in cultures either emphasises goal setting and production as against inner personal development and knowledge.
7. The cyclical or linear orientation in cultures involves the view of time and life by a culture.
8. The fatalistic or low power distance in cultures considers the power distance perceived by authority figures as against subordinates linked to the degree of individual control over the future.
9. The high context or low context orientation in cultures revolves around the degree of shared historical context a culture has developed. So that high context cultures all know how to behave culturally, making it difficult for outsiders to enter and function. Low context cultures have less shared history and hence leave little to be assumed and publically provide cultural direction through numerous signs and notices.
10. Individualistic or collectivist orientation in cultures emphasising either personal achievement (or failure and guilt) or group loyalty (and shame for group failure).

Cultural values differ from deep cultural worldviews (like the hidden part of an iceberg) in being mostly evident preferences (above the waterline) on the surface of a culture.

They are: -

1. Time or event orientation in cultures value either punctuality or participation in the event.
2. Left or right brain orientation in cultures value differing ways of making decisions and judgments. While we all range along the spectrum at different times, we can see general preferences. Left brain thinkers prefer black-and-white, right-and-wrong judgments, patterns, order, universal application and systems. Right brain thinkers prefer open-ended decisions, multiple interactions, storytelling and seeing each situation as unique.
3. Task or people orientation in cultures value either task accomplishment or relationships and interaction with people.
4. Status or achievement orientation in cultures value either personal achievement or societal status (family background). Christ's call is to servanthood.
5. Vulnerability or strength orientation in cultures value either a willingness to expose vulnerability or the concealment of vulnerability.

When values conflict, an objective absolute such as the Bible is an invaluable tool. Each culture holds that their culture is "right," until they encounter another culture. Hence the Bible can dictate what is morally right, wrong, a grey area or a neutral value. We need to understand that we are all somewhere along each of these continuums and can also be enriched by differing values.

An action plan includes understanding one's own cultural worldviews and values. Then one should seek to understand the worldviews and values of the cultures one encounters. From understanding, care needs to flow. Strategies and policies may help. Education of all concerned, helps. Yet our unity in Christ takes precedence over all cultural differences. Cultural differences will remain, just as gender and socio-economic differences remain, yet all under the overarching unity of the Spirit.

Diverse cultures may be seen as a Divine calling, corrupted by the fall. Hence, there is the need for unity in the midst of diversity. Racism and ethnic isolationism both need to be denounced. Cultural sensitivity and racial reconciliation grow through six stages:

denial, defending, diminishing, acceptance, adaptation and integration. Even integration may be simply assimilation, pluralistic or fully integrated. Traversing these stages is lengthy, complex and seldom complete, but an environment of freedom and openness encourages healing intercultural dialogue. The key to this gradual change is a well-defined and thoughtfully expressed theology of culture.

We will now endeavour to examine some practical applications of the use of these intercultural tools in a multicultural church setting, so as to be of ongoing help to church leaders faced with a variety of pastoral situations in a changing multicultural local church.

5. Improving Pastoral Care in an Urban Intercultural Communication Context in South Africa

In the light of unity brought at Pentecost, which continues to undo the division caused by Babel, and based on the lessons learned from Acts on intercultural conflict resolution, along with the insights of intercultural studies, we find much assistance for pastoral care in the local church. This chapter is central to practically applying the lessons learned in previous chapters. Hence, in this chapter we seek to become far more practical. We will endeavour to show some of the intercultural implications for pastoral care. Included, will be a number of references to Appendixes, which may also be of pastoral and administrative help to churches grappling with the many aspects of pastoral care in an intercultural context, but can be used just as well in any church context (with the author's consent).

5.1 Arriving at a Theology of Intercultural Pastoral Care

The narratives in Genesis 10-11 and Acts 2 point to the work of the Holy Spirit, unifying at Pentecost, what was divided at Babel. Now as the new "called together" church (ἐκκλησία, *ekklēsia*) birthed at Pentecost by the Holy Spirit, we need to mirror both His desire and example for communication between cultures. Especially when the Holy Spirit places more than one culture in a local church, then His models for conflict resolution and genuine care between all the cultures represented, are of great importance. Intercultural communication and Biblical conflict resolution become the church's witness to a watching world.

Ephesians helps us understand the place of the church in God's eternal plan. God's eternal plan is to unite all things in Christ "things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10). One of the things God unites through Christ is a diverse, multi-ethnic humanity (Eph 2:11-22). Preaching the Gospel calls Gentiles (and Jews) to repentance and faith, in order that they might enjoy the unsearchable riches of the Jewish Messiah (Eph 3:8). As formerly hostile peoples come to faith in Christ, God's plan to unite all things in Christ is made known to the watching world (Eph 3:9). And as repentant Jews and repentant Gentiles come together in the church, they display to the cosmic powers, the multi-

faceted wisdom of our God (Eph 3:10). Some like Smuts (2015:67) go so far as to say: “as we read Ephesians 2, we see that homogeneous churches (in multi-cultural areas) actually undermine the gospel.” Cho (2015:79) provides a helpful balance when he says: “It is easy to use passages like Galatians 3:28 as proof texts to claim that there really should not be any ethnic churches. There are others, and especially those who have grown up in ethnic churches, who understand that the greater issue may not be as much about being divisive as it is about fulfilling a need.” While we note the dangers of pragmatism, yet the church participates in the *missio Dei*; God’s eternal plan to unite all things in Christ through the preaching of the gospel and the gathering of repentant sinners in a local congregation of believers (*ekklēsia*). We also concede that there needs to be an awareness of the demographics in which a local church finds itself.

Likewise, Peter reminds us that, through the gospel, God has created a new race (1 Pet 2:9): a unified people from multiple ethnicities, cultures, genders and generations living together as family. This is why Peter urges Christians to “love one another earnestly from a pure heart” (1 Pet 1:22; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14). As we live together in love as a local church, we demonstrate to the watching world the wisdom of our God and the power of His gospel to change people who formerly isolated themselves on the basis of ethnicity (race), age, gender or socioeconomic background. In the light of this, the local church can be composed of multiple ethnicities and cultures, including ethnic-language church services in a united local church. God is glorified as a diversity of peoples (Jew/Gentile, male/female, rich/poor, young/old, black/white, Hispanic/Asian, etc.) is brought together by the gospel, and as they live together as a church. This is not to say that a church that is not ethnically diverse is in sin; what we are saying is that we can be an even more faithful witness where God has placed us, reflecting the make-up of our local multicultural communities.

There is then the need to faithfully teach the whole counsel of God to a congregation undergoing change from mono-cultural to multicultural ministry. Folmar (2015:45) commenting from a multicultural church in Dubai, on the issue of marriage in different cultures says: “The worst thing you can do in a multi-cultural environment is to dumb-down the doctrine, or avoid the hard-edges of theological truth, in order to try and keep diverse people on the same page. ... robust truth is what will keep churches and friendships together amid their diversity. *Lowest common-denominator theology*

promotes strife and feebleness, not unity and strength" (italics his). This we have witnessed, as participant observers in an African context, when the issues of intercultural conflict are dealt with. It is only an appeal to the absolutes of Scripture (and the continuous teaching of hard theological truth), that can quiet the red-face fears of any group given to favouritism (or racism by another name).

The hard theological truth is that the NT issues the imperative of reconciliation to the church because of the indicative of our reconciliation with God the Father by the Son. We are called to peace-making in the church because of the fact of our peace with God through the Cross. The Bible urges border-crossing love for the church because of the example of Christ's border-crossing love for us, from Heaven to earth. Our corporate unity and identity within the body of Christ, calls for corporate demonstrations of unity in the local church, and in personal sanctification, whose we are by virtue of our justification. In addition, since Pentecost we have the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the life of the church and the individual for the sake of continuing the cross-cultural ministry and mission of Jesus Christ through the church.

Yet what are the alternatives to corporate unity? Alternatives to intercultural bonding in one united church abound. "Renting is just one of several types of relationships between cultural groups sharing church facilities. Though it lies at the end of the spectrum that least exemplifies the inclusive discipline of border crossing that Jesus modeled, renting can work for certain purposes" (Drury 2015:nn). While multiple autonomous congregations in one location may be an option, it would seem to us that this defeats the theme of unity in the church espoused through the NT and would "least exemplify the inclusive discipline of border crossing" (Drury 2015:nn) that comes with intercultural communication in a multicultural church.

We will not be able to delve into the waters of growing a multicultural church, much more than to refer to Eldin Villafaña (1995:54-56), who has suggested that there are at least four options for churches who address the matter of multi-ethnicity.

- The first model is the "multi-congregational model" This pattern is "as a corporation composed of several congregations" (English, French, Zulu etc.) in which the general autonomy of each congregation is preserved and the

resources of the congregations are combined to present a strong evangelistic witness in the community.

- The second model is the “temporary sponsorship model.” This model pictures an English congregation using its resources to minister to other language or cultural groups in the community by assisting them to establish their own ethnic or cultural congregation.
- The third model is the “bi-lingual, bi-cultural model.” This is an “integrated church” model, where members of more than one homogeneous unit hold membership and participate in the activities of a single congregation.
- The fourth model is the “total transition model.” This pattern involves the planned phasing out of the original congregation and the phasing in of a new language, cultural or ethnic neighbourhood congregation....

The context of the ministry determines which model is best. Van Engen (2004:35) reviews the models and concludes: “The above [four] models and others can be added to represent structural adaptations that try to respond to communities undergoing ethnic transitions.” We have seen these various models and minor variations at play in urban contexts especially.

Jue (2015:59) observes that “the method for multicultural or multi-ethnic churches usually follows a model where diversity begins with the leadership. Therefore, it is important to have a Caucasian pastor paired with an African American, Asian American, or Latin/Hispanic American pastor.” We cannot, however, build a multi-ethnic church in the long-term through reverse engineering, by simply adding multicultural staff, or focusing the ministry around a particular pastor or minister, or even around a shared appreciation of certain worship or music. Gilbert (2015:49) proposes two things: “First, remove obstacles.” Like culturally offensive or insensitive practices, as we will discuss under cremation below. Secondly, “do the things that Christians do. Preach, sing, talk about Jesus, pray, and love. Those aren’t White, Black, Latino, Eskimo, Arab, or Asian things to do—they’re *Christian* things, and *Christians*—regardless of their ethnicity—will be drawn to them. That may be a slow process, yes, but it’s one that brings people to one heart with each other, not just into one room” (Gilbert 2015:49). While this is maybe simplistic, there can be something to be said for “sticking to the basics” of transitioning to a multicultural church. It is the robust truth of the Gospel of personal salvation by

Divine intervention, which needs to be caught and taught theologically. So to paraphrase B.B. Warfield (1991): if we focus our vision on Jesus as an example, He shows us what we ought to be, but we could never actually become due to our weakness and sin. However, when we focus our vision on Jesus, not just as our example, but as our Saviour, we see in Him an example not only for what we should be, but what we shall be by faith and transforming grace. Theologically understanding the need for intercultural pastoral care includes solving the inevitable intercultural conflicts, which is what this dissertation is about.

Having discussed this theology of intercultural pastoral care, we now seek to look at specific pastoral care functions within an intercultural church and how these aspects are the same as in a “homogenous” or mono-cultural congregation and how they differ in a multicultural congregation.

5.2. *The Pastoral Care of Intercultural: -*

5.2.1. *Births*

Births have been celebrated in diverse ways. In an established, stable mono-cultural church, things like Cradle Rolls, Cherub choirs, etc. work well. By contrast, in a multicultural church, where there may be a great turnover of members and a transience with the families and the cultures in which the church finds itself, then letters to the children and parents, written by the pastor/pastoral staff at birth can have greater significance.

One of the greatest differences in birth practices can be witnessed in individualistic cultures, which tend to have births in sterile medical facilities with medical staff and immediate family present, possibly only the father. Then the new parents return to their nuclear family home and relative isolation fairly soon after birth, with all the ensuing challenges, like post-partum depressions. Classes for Young Mothers and Parenting classes (like *On Becoming Babywise*, *Preparation for Parenting*, *Dobson’s Dare to Discipline*, etc.) have helped to deal with these issues to some degree. A handful of

coordinated meals delivered by church members to the new family also ease the transition of the first few days at home.

What is interesting to watch, is when a collectivist-orientated culture forms part of a previously individualistic-orientated church, then there is much greater care for the new family, both in visits to the family in hospital or at the home for a home-birth. There is also much longer personal care of the family by slightly older mothers in the congregation, with meals being cooked on site in the new family's home for days and sometimes weeks after the birth.

From a pastoral perspective, hospital visits before the birth (especially in the case of caesarean sections) and after the birth, are offered to all mothers and accepted fairly widely across cultures.

Perhaps the greatest intercultural aspect of pastoral care in the birth season of life, is the realization that "it takes a village to raise a child," as the old African proverb puts it. That communal care is seen from birth in the great participation of the community and the church in the life of the new born and with the family of the new born.

5.2.2. *Child-care*

Structured Christian programs, like AWANA, Children's Church or the older, traditional Sunday School, can be a great asset when task-orientated cultures bring their administrative and formal teaching gifts to bear on the Christian education of people-orientated cultures. People-orientated cultures bring great energy, colour and fellowship to potentially stale programs.

Often within intercultural church services, it is the norm for large groups of children to be left without their own parents for the duration of the service, so that discipline and parenting functions fall to older adults and adults from other cultures. While this offers opportunities for intercultural discipleship, it can easily degenerate into disruptions of worship. A Young Worshippers' League of registering children in worship services, including a special talk for the children as a regular part of the liturgy and then grouping

all the children in one section of the church seating area (with an adult overseer or two), allows for the best worship experience for all concerned. This Young Worshippers' League also allows for rewards (like fruit or sweets) at the end of the service for attendance and end of year parcels of much needed stationary and gifts.

These parcels may follow the example of the Franklin Graham organization, Samaritans' Purse International Relief, who distribute Christmas boxes around the world as part of their Operation Christmas Child. (See <http://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/> - for more information.) All this is done with the primary object of evangelizing the children, often in their crèche, school or orphanage context. Great partnerships can be developed around the distribution of these boxes, between the sending country, short-term mission's teams and the receiving country, local churches and the community, with spin off projects like school shoes for barefoot learners, etc.

5.2.3. Parenting

As was seen with births, the care of children is more of a shared responsibility in an intercultural context. Parenting programs are often more popular in multicultural contexts than with mono-cultural contexts, as many of the people feel the challenge of raising children in a diverse context, and often an environment different from their own childhood.

One of the greatest changes faced by migrants and refugees in an intercultural church is the parenting of their children, who are now called "third cultures." The children of refugees neither belong to the resident cultures, nor their parent's culture, as they attend local schools. Often these children lose the language of their parents in the new culture. These "third culture" children experience alienation from both the host culture, and from their parent's culture. Hence, at a recent ladies' meeting, French speaking mothers approached the speaker, to thank her for including an illustration of being a "third culture" child herself. The illustration of the speaker, involved her mother from a Dutch culture who could not find the "new" (swear) words her children (and neighbours) were using in her presence, in any dictionary. Only later did this foreign mother learn the

meaning of these swear words and slang, much to her embarrassment (Van Doorene-Soal 2015:nn). The innocent wearing of T-Shirts with words from other languages can also be minefield of impropriety.

Another parenting issue is the problem of homework checking, when the parents are not yet fluent in the host language/s. This can mean academic disadvantage for the children of the non-resident language groups. One way the church can assist is through Saturday classes, either to listen to reading and check writing in English for the early primary school children. (In our context we called the group “The Three R’s” made up largely of concerned educators, other adults and especially of retired members of the church.)

The second intervention we started was support for scholars (learners) in the final three grades of high school. Here language impaired parents (and even mother tongue speakers) appreciated the Saturday extra classes offered by university students, due to the growing complexity of the subjects. This program was offered to high school youth in the church, and included one hour of discipleship teaching and then one hour of extra Science or Mathematics. This very successful intervention occurred due to changing educational philosophies in public schools, such as the abandonment of Outcome Based Education, mid-stream and the ensuing higher percentage of failures among relatively studious learners.

5.2.4. *Dedications*

Once the new born is home and healthy, families are offered or request child dedications, in our religious tradition. In other Christian traditions, this may be the time for the Christening, or Infant Baptism, as is the norm. At this point a home visit by the pastor (or a visit to the pastor at the pastor’s office) with the new family is preferable, both to pray with and care for the family, as well as to discuss the dedication service. An informative dedication booklet (Appendix 5) is shared with the family.

On the day of the dedication all the relatives and friends are invited to the service. During one to the services on a Sunday the actual dedication of the child and the parents, is

carried out. This part of the service is not a Christening or a Baptism in our tradition, but rather a dedication of the parents to the task of faithful Christian parenting, and a thanksgiving to God for the gift of the child.

In an envelope with the Certificate of Dedication handed to the parents comes one or more letters. These letters may be to the parents to remind them of this day, but most appreciated is a letter to the infant, with the instructions to be opened when they are older or on their thirteenth birthday, explaining this dedication service and our prayers that the thirteen-year-old young person would receive Christ as their personal Saviour. (See Appendix 6 for the English Dedication Letter and Appendix 7 for two examples of French Dedication Letters. Appendix 8 has an evangelistic Dedication letter given to the child on their 13th birthday, used by Rev Dr Mike Holcomb, with permission.) In a private interview it was said that this dedication letter has “reaped one of the longest term results” in more than thirty years of ministry, now with grown (regenerate) children returning for dedications for their infants into the third generation (Holcomb 2016:nn).

5.2.5 ***Baptism***

In our tradition, baptisms (believers' baptisms) take place once the person has come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, usually after childhood or later in response to evangelism. These baptisms are by immersion before the whole church, during a worship service. The added intercultural dynamic is that once the candidates have been baptized (usually towards the end of the worship service) and come out of the changing rooms, there is much cheering and a celebratory tunnel of waiting family and friends to welcome them out, with sustained applause, blessing and prayers. (See Appendix 9 for a copy of the Baptismal Booklet used in the Baptismal Preparation Class [in printable booklet form]. Appendix 10 is the French Version of the Baptismal Booklet).

In baptismal classes the issues around baptismal regeneration (not held in our tradition) and infant baptism are dealt with more extensively, as the wider pool of religious traditions tends to be represented in an intercultural context. Our tradition of religious freedom means that other traditions are treated with respect, and our own understanding is presented simply, biblically and without argumentative debate (though

questions and self-study are encouraged). In the matter of baptism, we would hold to (the theologically dubious, but oft quoted) “unity in essentials; liberty in nonessentials, with charity in all things” – holding that baptism is a nonessential issue (for salvation) (Beaumont 2013:nn). This said: baptism is a necessary pastoral care issue both within the local church and from a biblical standpoint, and also in discipleship teaching and practice.

5.2.6. *Marriage*

Marriage is possibly one of the most contested issues in pastoral practice in intercultural churches. This is because of strongly held prejudices which can surface in the face of what one red-faced father of the groom, called “irresponsible puppy love.” This issue has divided families for generations and is well documented even in fictional classics like *Romeo and Juliet*, by Shakespeare. All can be well (on the surface at least) in an intercultural church, until one believer “falls in love” with another believer from another culture.

As we looked at unity and division extensively in previous chapters, especially in dealing with Genesis, we will not rehash that now. What we can say is that often the family dynamics of a wedding and marriage, may surface deeply-felt emotions and/or prejudices. Hence, we need to consistently promote and practice Biblical marriage before “they fall in love.” “Because biologically and Biblically there is only one race, the human race, “interracial” marriage is a myth. Marriage of peoples of different colours or cultures certainly should not be seen as a violation of biblical principles” (Davis 2003:107).

The fact that we are one race has one Biblical exception, and that is in the case of intermarriage between a believer and a non-believer (of whatever culture). Repeatedly, in the OT between Jews and non-Jews, intermarriage was forbidden, and in the NT, between Christians and non-Christians, intermarriage is prohibited.

While we cannot go too deeply into these perilous waters, perhaps we can look at the issue of “interracial” marriage as dealt with in the OT record. The OT study of

prohibitions against intermarriage reveals two aspects. First, these injunctions to Israel (see for example, Deut 7:1-4; Ex 34: 15-16; Josh 23:12, etc.) are primarily limited to the inhabitants of Canaan and initially not related to foreigners or other ethnic peoples. Secondly, and of continuing Biblical significance, the reason stated for this repeated prohibition is theological, not racial. The Canaanites were idol worshippers and would inevitably lead God's people into apostasy. The lure of idolatry was the reason for the ban on intermarriage to Canaanites. The OT ban on intermarriage had nothing to do with race or physical appearance. It is perhaps ironic that the Canaanites were closely related to the Israelites ethnically.

The OT makes it clear that God's people were permitted to marry non-Canaanite foreigners (who became believers) (see Deut 21:10-14; Num 12:1), many of whom were quite different racially. Thus the racial differences were not the issue behind the OT bans; it was the issue of the faith and the theology of the parties in the marriage. This would explain why Ezra and Nehemiah reacted so vigorously to the returning Jews who married foreigners: their new wives were not faithful worshippers of the LORD (cf. Ezra 9:1; Neh 13:23-27) and so as idolaters, would lead God's people once again into apostasy, as had happened with Solomon (1 Kgs 11:4-6).

As a digression, there is some discussion of Moses' intermarriage to the Cushite (Ethiopian) woman in Numbers 12:1 (to be distinguished from his marriage to Zipporah; cf. Ex 2:15-22, though even on whether this Cushite reference is to Ziphora or not is subject to further discussion). "Moses' wife may be Zipporah, his Midianite wife (Ex 2:21). It is unclear whether he had two wives" (Fleenor 2015:nn). Hays (2003:70-80) argues that though Moses' family objected to the marriage to a second wife (probably after the death of Zipporah) who was Cushite, the LORD approved, and Moses is reaffirmed as God's chosen leader. Hays' work traces the diversity of Biblical cultures and races against the background of ancient Near Eastern social history and the ethnic make-up of the OT world. Hays seeks to show that the Cushites were black Africans (Ethiopians) and play a significant role in the OT record (Cush or Cushite appears fifty-four times in the OT Hebrew text), something often overlooked in scholarly discussions of the people of the biblical world. "This is only one of numerous examples he [Hays] cites that demonstrates a subtle—and perhaps subconscious—bias against black Africans on the part of many past and present scholars. Unfortunately, those of dark

complexions have often been marginalized and ignored in the biblical record” (Davis 2003:107). The irony would then be a racist objection to Moses’ Cushite wife, which leads to Miriam being turned really white with leprosy, before being banished for seven days.

While the scholars on both sides of the racial fence debate and argue the case from tenuous passages like Num 12:1, the reality in the local church remains a mud puddle reflection of the stratified debate. Continuing prejudice of many Christians to inter-ethnic marriages, makes pastoral care before, during and after weddings, and then during all marriages, a great challenge. Racism cannot be remedied without the gospel. Therefore, racism cannot be lastingly addressed without the church. Piper (2011:46) also addresses interracial marriages argues: “The church is not called to be responsible for the way unbelievers run their lives. But we are called to be responsible, by the power of the Spirit and for the glory of Jesus, for the way believers live and the kind of relationships that are cultivated in the fellowship of the church.”

The NT, like the OT, has only one limit on marriage and is clear in 2 Cor 6:14-18 which forbids being “yoked” or married to unbelievers of any culture. While not positively saying that intercultural marriages between different cultures is “the rule of the church” (1 Cor 7:17), this climactic passage on marriage, singleness, divorce, remarriage and widowhood makes very clear that as Paul says in 1 Cor 7:39, “A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.” So this freedom to marry anyone (including of another culture), is only limited by the command that he/she “must” be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Intercultural pastoral care of interracial, cross-cultural and any other form of marriage had best be started at the latest in the early teenage years (or earlier), with repeated Biblical teaching of freedom in Christ, limited only by remaining “in Christ” when choosing a life partner. One of the hardest decisions this writer and his family faced was the acceptance of intercultural marriage within our own extended family and the personal probabilities of intercultural marriage of immediate family, by choosing to minister in an intercultural church. In addressing parts of this topic which is fraught with awkward silences, Prichard (2015:54) advises “Not everyone is a racist. Many I hope

are not. Nonetheless, I think it's wise for every pastor to ask himself the hard question, 'Do I have a racist heart?'" Then in the footnote he says, ask more specific questions, e.g. "Would I welcome a son-in-law (or daughter-in-law) from another ethnicity?" (Prichard 2015:54). Yet the general silence on this topic is deafening.

Appendix 11 is given as a Wedding Ceremony (working) booklet that is continually evolving with new intercultural dynamics. The earliest booklet in this series 20 years ago, dealt with alcohol and smoking, now it is all-night prayer and celebrations at receptions, the legal obstacle courses of ever greater documentation required to limit fraud, and the fingerprinting of couples, like criminals (often in their white suits and glittering dresses). Ironically, all cultures now seem to want the one cultural Hollywood white wedding. This current, pernicious, cultural weed has blown across the airways over the Atlantic and infects the world with outrageously expensive weddings, modelled on the media hype and seldom on Biblical wisdom, which is creating mounting conflict and debt pressures for all concerned. Here is globalization at its worst excess. So far nothing has stopped the growth of this trend, bar the undesirable "Christian" legalism.

5.2.7. Prayer

Prayer is difficult. Corporate prayer is even more so. Done well, prayer is the fuel, sustaining growth in care and outreach, in the intercultural church context. Poorly handled corporate intercultural prayer is the small burr under the saddle that gets the little donkey of a church kicking in every direction.

What has worked well with time-conscious cultures is 24-hour or in our case 72-hour prayer chains: with continuous guided prayer taking place on an hourly roster system day and night for three days (also linked with other churches in our area.) With event-conscious or people-conscious cultures, all night prayer meetings from 8pm to 6am (usually on a Friday or Saturday night) after work, for those in low-paying employment, works best.

Traditionally our church year, in the context of Johannesburg, starts with a week of prayer, where the whole congregation meets for an hour each evening daily for a week,

to receive teaching on prayer and then to practice praying for the remaining half of the time. The clash of cultures occurs when individualist cultures want ordered prayer in the round (usually of small groups), where one person at a time prays and the rest listen, with hopefully all agreeing at the end with an “Amen.” The dangers are legion, with time hogs, prayer parading, superior prayer tones and inferiority induced silences, etc.

Community-orientated cultures have tried to teach the individualistically-orientated cultures to all pray simultaneously, “in a joyful noise” to the infinite, omniscient God who hears all hearts simultaneously. Order is kept by a MC (Master of Ceremonies) who claps to calm the cacophony at times and give new prayer directions. Simultaneous corporate prayer eliminates eaves dropping, inferiority complexes and lethargy (falling asleep) in prayer meetings. The only disadvantage seems to be the resistance of “non-believing” neighbours who object at 2am to all-night, simultaneous prayer by 180 believers, in a closely built-up urban context. Considering our neighbours and municipal noise by-laws, have all been debated under this topic of corporate, simultaneous prayer. In wrestling with the conflict locally between intercultural ideals versus the dominant cultural pride in Canada, Sheffield (2011:8) calls for the church to bridge the gap between the theory of “interculturalism” and the practice, when he says: “The incarnational mission of God calls us to be local, to be concrete. We cannot build a new macro-society; this kingdom stuff is like a mustard seed. We must start in our own communities to be intercultural citizens.” Praying together interculturally is a small start in the right direction.

With all that said above and prayer being continuously practiced in small groups through the week and larger groups during the weekend, there is a direct correlation between corporate prayer and church growth. Corporate prayer is the key to healing (physical and cultural misconceptions) and true intercultural care.

5.2.8. *Worship*

Perhaps in worship styles we see the greatest differences between cultures and takes the so-called worship-wars to another level altogether. Even between generations and sexes, within one culture, there are differences in worship style. So it is to be expected

that differences between cultures are not wrong, evil or heretical, but rather expressions of the background and cultures of the various groups in the local church. A danger is to label all differences theologically and then to part ways, using theological categories as an excuse. Intercultural worship may need to be a whole topic on its own.

Yet, nothing is new under the sun. Wilson (2013:nn) in a comment to an article, quotes Augustine from a letter which he wrote to Januarius, where he discusses differences of customs from one church body to the next. In paragraph 2:

There are other things, however, which are different in different places and countries, e.g., some fast on Saturday, others do not; some partake daily of the body and blood of Christ, others receive it on stated days: in some places no day passes without the sacrifice being offered; in others it is only on Saturday and the Lord's day, or it may be only on the Lord's day. In regard to these and all other variable observances which may be met anywhere, one is at liberty to comply with them or not as he chooses; and there is no better rule for the wise and serious Christian in this matter, than to conform to the practice which he finds prevailing in the Church to which it may be his lot to come. For such a custom, if it is clearly not contrary to the faith nor to sound morality, is to be held as a thing indifferent, and ought to be observed for the sake of fellowship with those among whom we live.

Beaumont (2013:nn) comments and says "Augustine is referencing practice here, not doctrine – but one can see how the sentiment might have been applied by others [to doctrine]." This liberty in the non-essentials of worship preferences needs to be emphasized in a multicultural context.

It is the spirit of Augustine's last sentence, which can guide us in things regarding worship in our churches. "For such a custom, if it is clearly not contrary to the faith nor to sound morality, is to be held as a thing indifferent, and ought to be observed for the sake of fellowship with those among whom we live" (Wilson 2013:nn). So in matters practical, such as in this chapter, custom and fellowship are observed, so long as there is no clear theological hindrance.

Some of the customs we, in the context of the inner-city/ fringes of Johannesburg, have retained unchanged as we have become more intercultural, are the order and practice of Communion or the Lord's Supper (what would be the Eucharist in other traditions). Also order in worship (1 Cor 14:40) and to a lesser degree some structured time keeping.

It is with music styles that we, in the context of Johannesburg, see the most intercultural accommodation taking place in the various (five) services on a Sunday. There is a service with an historically Western traditional worship style of hymns, prayers and a message. There is also a Christian contemporary music service with longer singing time and longer messages, but shorter prayer time. Also there is a blended service that includes at least one traditional tune (hymn), some contemporary songs and frequently songs in the other languages or cultural tune styles represented (with written interpretation if necessary). These three English services become the home for the majority of cultures. There are two further services that seek to meet people in their heart language, when hearing the Gospel in English, is difficult or impossible for them. These two services would be in French (with personal interpreters if there are visitors) and Zulu with Sotho, (here with simultaneous upfront interpreters when visitors attend). These last two services generally channel their children and over time, themselves into the English services, as they acclimatize to the new urban culture where they find themselves ensconced.

The intercultural conflicts occur over time management between time and task-orientated cultures, who question people and event orientated cultures, using limited facilities in a cramped urban context. Strong administrative gifts have solved many a facility conundrum.

The second greatest bone of contention is the extension of business meetings that occurs when interpretation takes place. So a 15-minute meeting can extend to a 45-minute meeting if both French and Zulu interpretation is needed. But to a large degree this has been solved by the training and extensive utilization of bilingual (or trilingual) servant leaders from all the cultural groups. Yet the value of having all cultures making Spirit-led decisions together in business meetings, can solve many misunderstandings before they occur and slowly builds lasting bridges of care.

5.2.9.

Fellowship

We define fellowship as the formal or informal face-to-face meeting together of two or more Christians for their mutual edification. While fellowship is ongoing in small groups throughout the week, and between services at combined coffee breaks, the reality is that in our context we have experience many starts and stops in this area. Fellowship between introverts and extroverts within a culture is already a challenge, so to add the intercultural dynamic has been a slow process.

Church camps (which are ideal for growing fellowship) have become economically unsustainable, even after years of cross-subsidization. Day missions, day trips and church picnics are better options when there is a wide economic difference between rich Christians and poor Christians in the intercultural church.

It would seem that this economic disparity was at the root of the conflict over the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:17-34. We have found potlucks, bring-and-share meals, like the Biblical love feasts of old, do not work in our context, as the poor have little to bring except large appetites and the rich who have much to bring, resent not getting anything to eat as some hungry believers carry heaped plates away from the common table (buffet). If food is served with a beverage-like cool drink, tea or coffee, then that food/cake/biscuit is equally divided and placed on controlled pre-packed plates or in pre-packed containers. So when Paul asks the gluttonous and drunken Corinthians, "Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?" 1 Cor 11:22a, we apply that to mean, each person is to eat at home, and together we have simple (presently around a beverage) fellowship corporately where temptations of comparison are limited. Hence, we have found in our context in Johannesburg, that we need to apply 1 Cor 11:34 "If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment."

We have found one exception to this general guide is a combined annual celebration. We call this celebration our Global Impact Celebration (GIC). At our 4 or 5 day themed GIC we look back at what God has done over the year and recall as many of our missionaries as possible, along with other ministry and missions friends, to have combined worship, and good Biblical teaching. At this GIC there are a few groups who

cater for select functions (like the deacons and families hosting the returning missionaries and families), but there is one large sit down banquet at a reasonable price, just to dress up smartly, laugh and celebrate before God together. The GIC after 5 years' of practice has produced the best long-term fellowship between the different cultures and we have seen various ministries and missions grow from 60 to 84 in this period. That is 24 new ministries and missionaries doing the work of God in various contexts, over 5 years.

With this growth in ministries, new policies have been drawn up for ministries needing funding and teams to coordinate them have been created by the task orientated cultures in the body. One of the newest ministries we have celebrated at our GIC is the structured benevolence committee (which we will look at next under 5.2.10 Benevolence) to help with the growing needs among the widows, orphans and unemployed.

Fellowship may not only revolve around large fellowship or benevolence issues, but simply building trust and care through traditional informal and formal fellowship. Okuwobi (2015:nn) observes that the racial makeup of their congregation has gone from 95% White to 50% White, 25% African American, and 25% International, an ultimate representation of 34 nations. "Once we became aware of the increasing need to listen to the views of every congregant, we put together listening sessions that included six major ethnic groups in the church body. They were asked questions including: if their culture was being represented in the church, how the church could go deeper in representing their culture, and how they could contribute in making sure their culture was represented." They then used the feedback and they were able to institute new traditions honoring their diversity. They discovered that for Internationals, coming together on Christmas was essential given their distance from home. Okuwobi (2015:nn) comments that "celebrating Christ in worship over an Ethiopian-style lunch brought our church family even closer together." It is this constant practice of listening deeply to one another that is crucial for caring fellowship.

Part of listening to one another means understanding one's own culture. In previous white, European or Western culture groups who are becoming multi-ethnic (defined as where one ethnicity does not make up more than 80 percent of the church), Loritts (2014:159) has an excellent treatment on white privilege. This concept of white privilege

is helpful and illuminating. In one section, he writes (in the words of Peter the African-American consultant and former pastor who is the main character):

I believe most white people don't see themselves as being white. And this is a huge disconnect in our society, because minorities are constantly in tune with their ethnicity, while you're not in tune with yours. It would be like me pointing out to you that you have two arms. You'd shrug as if to say, *Big deal*. You don't see yourself as having two arms, and neither do you see yourself as being white. But now imagine I had only one arm, and was constantly made aware that I was different in a two-arm society. If we're going to get along, you're going to have to understand what life is like for me having only one arm. That's the disconnect between whites and minorities. We live in a white world—a two-armed society, so to speak—but we minorities have only one arm. Life as a minority can feel like you're handicapped at times when compared to our white brothers and sisters.

Understanding of one's own culture and the other cultures in an intercultural context like the local church is a long (sometimes painful) but necessary process. Formalized listening sessions may thus need to be part of the formation, if not the ongoing structure, in an intercultural context.

5.2.10. Benevolence

The care of vulnerable members of the church (the widows, orphans, elderly, disabled, unemployed etc.), has been on the heart of God from OT times. We have already looked at the intercultural benevolence needs that arose in the NT, which led to the first church conflict in Acts 6. We, in our context in Africa, have found it helpful to use the findings of a paper presented by this writer at the Baptist Union Assembly on 5 October 2014, titled "Poverty and the Bible" (see Appendix 12). Since that paper we have established a Benevolence Committee (modelled on the pattern of Acts 6 and other NT passages), and function according to that policy document (see Appendix 13).

From this policy document drawn up to guide the benevolence committee, we in the Johannesburg context, recognize that there is poverty that arises as a result of laziness or the "lifestyle" of the needy within our socially disadvantaged context. We have taken note that "doing nothing" comes under God's holy judgment. To the slothful God says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways" (Prov. 6:6), shaming the lazy by telling them to look to insects to learn something important. It is this group Paul undoubtedly

has in mind when he says, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (2 Th. 3:10) (Soal 2014:20-21). We use policies such as: -

- a) At our church in a socially disadvantaged part of Johannesburg, we will not give food or money to people we know to be lazy or those choosing or addicted to substances like alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, prostitution or gambling, so as not to create or continue dependency. The giving of cash will only be in exceptional circumstances, such as for critical medication or evictions.
- b) We will freely advertise jobs on the notice board, to help those who want to work.
- c) We will put the names, contact details and jobs wanted of members and regular adherents in the bulletin.
- d) We will offer job-creation courses, as we have people gifted in this area and willing to promote entrepreneurial skills. Courses like Paradigm Shift. Paradigm Shift (see: <https://shiftingparadigms.org>) has perhaps proved to be the most effective training program we have tried, after poor long-term results from programs like simple dress-making, knitting, sewing classes, etc.
- e) We will teach and encourage members not to give to beggars, etc., but rather create small jobs (like picking up papers in their street, digging holes, running errands, etc., in return for food only.)
- f) We will teach and encourage members to work hard and prove themselves faithful in all jobs.
- g) We will offer courses like “Celebrate Recovery” (see: <http://www.celebraterecovery.com>) or “Quitting for good” to help break with dependency on things other than Christ, as we have people gifted in these areas and willing to facilitate the ministry.

While the guidelines above may seem stern, we do recognize that poverty may arise in an individual or family as a result of disaster (Sproul 1996:521-522). Where someone in the church (or community to which we can effectively assist) are left in poverty, because of the ravages of disease or disasters, we need an attitude of compassion and genuine charity. We will endeavour to see to it that the suffering of these people is reduced, as we are financially able.

- a) The “hungry that are to be fed” include those who have a crisis, like a mother of young children, in hospital and we will seek to organize meals for the family, where there is no supporting family.
- b) The naked who are to be clothed, will be helped from the Box Boutique, where there is need and opportunity. The Box Boutique ministry is a “wealth distribution” plan where anyone with a surplus (two coats, as Jesus called it), can pass on those surplus goods for distribution to those without. So far this ministry has distributed everything from motor vehicles to babies’ clothing. The Box Boutique functions together with and supplies goods to the “Hidden Treasure” ministry and stores of the Baptist Women’s Department of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.
- c) Benevolence vouchers from the benevolence fund will be given to those in the church in a sudden crisis. We assess needs which are not crisis-driven, using a needs assistance questionnaire (see Appendix 14). This form is filled in by two committee members, and their recommendations referred back to the committee for action, and ultimately to the Deacons and Elders, if needs be.
- d) Food parcels from the Harvest Festival, will be given to those in the church in a sudden crisis and those struggling financially like widows and orphans. In the past year of 2016, over 25 families with no member employed, were helped, in our context in Johannesburg.
- e) Our church will also help the Elderly, with subsidized rental money and medication from the Irene Wilson Fund, who fall within the ambit of that policy.
- f) All the above work is done, as we have gifted people in this area who are willing to promote and do voluntary work in the ministry. In an article critical of the political agenda of the Poverty and Justice Bible, Duigon (2016:nn) speaks out against the gross inefficiencies of government welfare historically and the continued need of local church benevolence, as it has been since the days of the early church. The early church is well known for taking in foundlings left by the pagans on the highways and in the markets. He quotes the criticism in a Daily Mail article on 23 September 2010 titled “Bono's ONE foundation under fire” which gives only 1.2% of all donations to actual needs, the rest goes to his staff salaries. The rational being that if a famous charity cannot get benevolence right, then do not leave it to the state, but encourage it in the local church, where it has generally been effective historically.

A third area of assistance is offered to those who experience poverty as a result of exploitation. This is the poverty that results from unjust laws and unfair systems in our society. Such injustice and inequity should move God's church. In our area, refugees are often labelled as "Mobile ATMs" as they are not able to access the formal banking system without certain papers and often carry what little cash they have on their person. These refugees are seen as prey, to the criminal elements in our society. Hence we prayerfully consider and then support, necessary and legitimate social action and justice projects. Adams (2015:73) rightly observes racism in previously white mono-cultural churches that become multicultural churches, when he says: "blacks want a proactive advocate—one who will condemn and challenge preferential treatment and privileged silence."

The Ministry to Refugees Project has arisen to help congregants and community members get their papers in order with the government at the Department of Home Affairs. Presently, we in our context in Johannesburg, have one unemployed refugee, who has sacrificially used his vast skills learned from the United Nations, to advance this project, not only within our church, but wider afield in the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. Over 250 people have been helped so far, mainly from our congregation, but also increasing numbers from across the country, under the auspices of Deeds of Love Ministries (DOLM) of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. Roshan Dadoo, director of the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa says "we should be proud of our refugee legislation [in South Africa] at a time when other countries were reluctant to take in refugees" (Smith & Cendrowicz 2015:15). This practical benevolence and advocacy goes a long way to ameliorate the great human suffering that often accompanies forced migration. Dadoo goes on to say "it's quite heartening to see how ordinary South Africans...provided assistance to displaced nationals [during the xenophobic violence]" (Smith & Cendrowicz 2015:15). We have found that help with food and visits to temporary refugee camps are powerful witnessing forums. Frans Cronje the CEO of the South African Institute of Race Relations said "lessons that South Africa can learn from the problems Germany was facing was to allow migrants in and register them...to get them into the economy and labour market" (Mokati 2015:15). Unfortunately, the tide seems to be going against refugees and migrants in the latest developments around the world.

So in response to the minefield of needs in an intercultural context with large differences between rich and poor, we have formalized our benevolence to limit conflict and misunderstanding. We have tried to resist the temptation to generalize about poverty. We have also tried to avoid glamorizing poverty based on the Bible, so promoting a medieval mentality that the poor are to be emulated, or a socialist mentality that the poor are better than the bourgeois. Overall, we seek to remember that “God cares deeply about human poverty and the consequent suffering” (Sproul 2009:5:59).

5.2.11. *Death*

The various cultural ways of dealing with death gives rise to the most divergent aspects in intercultural pastoral care. If there is a “way to grieve” based on the Bible, then it seems that there are diverse ways to grieve in the Scriptures from both early OT times to later OT times and then into the NT. In the ensuing multitude of cultures, we have today, that way is ever mushrooming. As believers, “we do not grieve as the world does” (1 Th 4:13), yet the cultural backgrounds of all the church members in a multicultural context does have varying influences on the death and burial aspect of pastoral care.

We have had to have long periods of dialogue to resolve issues that are greatly sensitized by death and grief. Formalizing policies and discussion papers in the church have helped resolve some very sensitive cultural preferences. (See Appendix 15 for the funeral help document and Appendix 16 for the Funeral and Memorial service booklet with the financial policy spelled out.)

One intercultural aspect around death was the expectation of some cultures to be buried in their birthplace, which may be thousands of kilometres away. Migrant workers in a city church like Johannesburg, often have this expectation. In which case the expectation was that the pastor needs to leave the church for a number of days and follow the coffin to distant burial places, sometimes in distant countries, at the church’s expense. Hence policies were agreed on by the whole church, to request travel costs from the families of the deceased and a special fund was established to assist where the family could not finance the pastor to travel to the distant burial site. A Biblical

similarity was the burial of Isaac back in the Promised Land by Joseph, while he was still “prime minister” of Egypt, probably at great personal, but possibly state expense (Gen 49).

One of the most contentious intercultural issues was the issue of cremation and the scattering of ashes on church property. This writer clearly remembers the words: “Pastor, may I scatter my wife’s ashes in the beautiful rose garden at the front of the church grounds. She so loved this church and served here for many years.” This seemed like an easy question, requiring a simple caring answer of, “Yes, no problem.” Precedent held that a few others had informally scattered their ashes like this in the past, before the church became multicultural. The vocal volunteer gardener who oversaw the attractive little rose garden also planned to have his ashes scattered. So what was the problem?

There were two problems really. One issue was the question by some, about cremation versus burial of the Christian dead. The second issue had racial and cultural tensions attached. Our church in Johannesburg was previously an all Caucasian church, but in 10 years it had changed into a Multi-ethnic and Multi-lingual church comprised of 18-plus nationalities, with five services on a Sunday in three different languages.

Some of the urban English speakers, who were founders, were even divided theologically on the merits of cremation. Papers were written. Parking lot debates flared up. Cremation blew across our vista with Eastern winds spicing up the dialogue. Then in the third corner of the debate huddled the Diaspora of Refugees from across Africa. They eke out a living in a hostile urban jungle but greatly add to the ethos of the church in Johannesburg with deep prayer lives. The Refugee members pleaded with the leadership not to allow any further scattering of ashes on church grounds.

For those of the Diaspora anything of the dead was an anathema. Many had come to salvation in Christ, out of the darkness of ancestor worship and occultism. One godly leader dramatically described how his family used to carve small shavings off his grandfather’s skull into a fire, to ask for guidance from their “forefathers.” With tears he now believed all those actions were demonically inspired, occult practices, to be shunned by

true believers. So how could we have the ashes of the dead scattered near the entrance to the church building!

Advice was sought across the USA and RSA. All the while, racial tension ominously brewed like a storm on the horizon. The Holy Spirit had always cooled the debates in the past with breezes of patience and kindness. Now the church leaders had run out of ideas. Two staff members resigned quietly. Months were passing and “The Ashes” that started the conflict, were gathering dust in a cupboard.

Then a conversation with a denominational leader and Elder in another congregation started the ball rolling in the right direction. This leader asked the simple question. “Is this not a case of the weaker brother?” (See 1 Corinthians 8 and 10). The church in Johannesburg was certainly a lot like the Corinthian church. After much discussion among the leaders they agreed on a policy that gave freedom to those who chose cremation, to be cremated. They also got the agreement of the congregation, not to scatter ashes any more on church property. This protected the weaker brothers and sisters who may be tempted back into witchcraft, out of which they had been saved. Much like our use of grape juice instead of alcoholic wine for Communion, (because of the substantial number of weaker brothers and sisters who are coming out of alcoholism), we reached a God glorifying solution. Now for ten years, peace has reigned, on that issue at least. God had already prepared this solution for this intercultural conflict in the Bible.

A further issue around the pastoral care of bereaved families is seen, in the time-conscious cultures who suggest “quick” funerals and short bereavement periods, but often at the cost of psychological issues that arise later and need referral to counselling professionals. In the event and people orientated cultures, longer funerals are expected, and bereavement is assisted by gifts of money and meals to practically help while the immediate family deals with a multitude of issues. Frequently the high cost of funerals is mitigated by fellow believers and even community members, who assist with spontaneous gifts, or help from “*stokvels*” (African savings clubs) and burial societies. Unfortunately, ancestor worship among many in the cultures around Christians has created a cultural pressure to have exorbitant burials, to “appease the ancestors.” This

trend has to be resisted, sometimes at great spiritual and social cost, by believers who still have unbelievers in the wider family.

One godly member described how they were shunned by the family, once ancestral practices were started during a family burial, and they refused to participate in the blood sacrifices of animals, etc. At great social cost and sometimes even at the expense of their lives, some Christians have made a stand against ancestor worship, in the surrounding cultures.

5.2.12. *Burial or Cremation*

We do also need to add to what was said under 5.2.11 “Death” above, that there continues to be debate around the issue of burial and cremation. Eastern religious preferences for cremation have been popularized by the media. Further economic pressures that make cremation cheaper at present than burial also invite Christian believers to consider burial. While a case can be made for burial as a Biblically preferable practice and a historical practice among Christians, the shortage of burial grounds worldwide and especially in an urban context, all mitigate against burials.

Seabrook (2006:7) contends that “cremation is a pagan practice, or is associated with God’s wrath [in the Bible]. It denies the value of the body and fails to proclaim our faith and hope in a bodily resurrection when Christ returns.” There is no Biblical support to show that cremation affects a person’s eternal destiny or resurrection. We also know people can be accidentally burned to death. Yet Seabrook (2006:7) argues that cremation “gives a false message to the world about Christianity. In practicing cremation, we are not conducting ourselves ‘in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ’.” The redemption of our bodies is mentioned by Paul, in Rom 8:23, who pictures believers’ eagerly awaiting “our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” Then in Rom 14:8 he reminds us that “If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.” The argument is that by practicing cremation, we are simply following eastern religions with their beliefs in reincarnation that have increased the popularity of cremation. Thus by not advocating burial, a case may be made for the church losing its witness. While we cannot be

prescriptive, we can assist the believer in Christ to make a thoughtful, informed decision as to how to treat the body of a loved one after death. To this end, we can encourage an act like burial that brings glory to our resurrected Lord and the body of the deceased. We need to continue to look for culturally sensitive answers to these questions of burial versus cremation that are both Biblical and contextual.

5.3 Aspects of the Practice of the Fruit of the Spirit – showing Christian Application

We cannot emphasize enough that all the intercultural pastoral practices discussed above, can only function because the Holy Spirit came upon the church at Pentecost and reversed, and continues to reverse the confusion of Babel. The Holy Spirit's tireless work of unifying believers across cultural divides means that the church and individuals need to "walk in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). This means that in each case of pastoral care, there needs to be repentance from self-interest and an appropriation of the fruit of the Spirit, by prayer. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit also need to be used wisely to build and keep the unity of the Spirit, and not for prideful or selfish reasons.

One application is the spiritual fruit of patience, which needs to be practiced in all oral and written communication. When English is used as the medium of communication between different language groups, first language English speakers must be careful to understand meaning, rather than be pedantic about grammar and syntax. The same cultural tolerance should be called for, regardless of the primary language of communication being used to bridge the cultures. The patient listening to what is meant, rather than what is simply heard through thick accents, remains crucial for harmony in an intercultural context. Generally, the attempt at greeting and initially formalities in the minority language by the majority language, paves the way for loving communication, if the minority language feels heard. Often, the minority language will switch over to the majority language, once they are greeted and acknowledged, as a fairly common courtesy.

Many conflicts can be avoided by face-to-face dialogue, rather than written missives. Especially in intercultural conflict, the temptation is to put down the various opinions on

paper, which are quickly misunderstood, rather than the longer, but more fruitful process of dialogue. There are many Biblical injunctions to “go to the offended brother” (Mat 18:15) and go one-on-one to a brother or sister, or go two or three, rather than send a letter. Hence, the verbal option needs to be pursued much more than the written option, in intercultural communication.

The use of questions to clarify issues is important. So often, asking questions can be viewed as disrespectful, by some cultures, especially when there is a power, age or status difference. Questions of clarification need to be encouraged on all levels of intercultural communication.

The Spirit-directed structures and order in the intercultural church are of repeated importance, as it seems in many points above. The danger lies in policies becoming legalism, and again, only living by Spirit-led relationship, do the policies remain guidelines and not rigid walls, in running the race of faith.

When it comes to leadership, like Elders (including teaching Elders and Pastors) and Deacons in a multicultural church, it may be helpful to consider cultural sensitivity, as an additional quality, to be desired. This is in conjunction with the basic requirements spelled out for the office in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1:5-16. Loritts (2014:nn) in his leadership fable *Right Colour, Wrong Culture: The Type of Leader Your Organization Needs to Become Multi-ethnic*, categorizes three types of people depending on how they relate to other ethnicities:

- C1: person from one ethnicity who has assimilated into another (e.g., Hellenistic Jews of Acts 6 or, in another of Loritts’ examples, Carlton Banks of the TV series “Fresh Prince of Bel Air”)
- C3: people who are culturally inflexible (e.g., Pharisees, or Al Sharpton in the USA or Julius Malema in the RSA)
- C2: people who are “culturally flexible and adaptable without being ethnically ambiguous or hostile” (e.g., Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 when he talks about being all things to all people, or Denzel Washington)

While each type of person can have a place in church leadership, it is essential to have a C2 leader as the Pastor and as a majority among the Elders. Otherwise, a C1 leader will not be able to lead people from their own ethnicity and C3 people will not be able to lead people from other ethnicities.

The care offered in a multicultural local church by people orientated cultures needs to be appropriated and learned from, by time orientated cultures. This writer has experienced far more meaningful care from people orientated foreigners (both Christian and Muslim) who came to sit and pray in our lounge after bereavement, than from brief calls, notes or emails, sent by well-meaning time orientated believers. Personal care, presence and practical help cannot be overemphasised in the busy urban context.

Furthermore, the issue of cultural manners needs to be discussed. What are generally “good manners” in one culture may be considered “bad manners” in another. Only ongoing discussion of manners and preferences can help. With the Holy Spirit’s assistance, we need to call not for the imperialism of one culture over another, but the formation of a “third culture,” the Christian culture, which finds its roots and freedom in the Scriptures.

A classic example of this is the issue of women walking through doors before men. In some cultures, a man allowing a woman preference is considered “good” and expected. But with some youth cultures and rural cultures, the man is expected to go ahead of the woman, to show equality or defensive consideration against any enemies or lions on the other side of the door. What a “Christian” cultural response to the priority of the sexes in door exiting will be, is yet to be determined, but can be found by dialogue within each context.

The issue of what the final language of communication will be, in a multilingual church context, also needs to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Historically, a new language group in a context is usually absorbed over time into the dominant language. Usually that language is the language of instruction in the educational structures, which leads the children to drop their “mother tongue” in favour of the language of instruction, usually over the period of their schooling. This creates challenges for the multicultural church, which finds the “mother tongue” services shrinking with time, while the dominant language services usually grow as the older generations pass on. Examples of this can be found in German speaking Lutheran churches in our context, where the one German language service is aged and tiny, while the English service is vibrant, multigenerational and growing. Here the Spirit’s leading may be through cultural norms, but just as well

could be by strong cultural identities, which are not easily lost, such as some Latino congregations in the English speaking USA. Yet one wonders if this is not more a clinging to “homogenous” church cultural practices, rather than embracing multicultural congregations in a multicultural context. As Williams (2015:15) observes from the perspective of racial reconciliation, “Christians in general must do a better job at defining the gospel, race, and racial reconciliation, and we must be intentional about pursuing racial reconciliation in our churches and communities. We must do a better job living out the gospel of racial reconciliation in community with real people in both church and society.” Much wisdom is needed for all camps on the multicultural field of dialogue. We need to explore all options and find our home in Christ.

“We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

TS Eliot (1998:V)

5.4 Summary

The theology for intercultural pastoral care arises from the conviction that the Holy Spirit unites at Pentecost, what He divided at Babel. God unites all cultures in Christ, in His Body, the church. Thus multicultural churches are preferable to mono-cultural churches, in a multicultural context. A multicultural church becomes a new (third) race (1 Pet 2:9) in a multicultural community. Robust theological truth needs thus to be taught and practiced in the local church. We are to reach out across cultures, because of the example of Christ reaching out to us and reconciling us to the Father. Our cultural border crossing may take various forms, yet aspire to largely model the example of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The options for modelling multiculturalism for a local church range from: -

- renting worship space to another culture,
- to a multi-congregational model,
- the temporary sponsorship of another culture model,

- the bi-lingual, bi-cultural model
- the total transition to another culture model.

Each local church needs to prayerfully pursue the most theologically robust option, in response to context and community undergoing ethnic transitions. Dangers in transitioning to a multicultural church abound around pitfalls like simply hiring diverse staff or trying to reverse engineer a congregation or not removing culturally offensive or insensitive practices.

Intercultural pastoral care of a multicultural congregation needs to understand the difference between individualist orientated cultures around the limited care of families experiencing the birth of a child, and the strong community involvement and care expected in collectivist orientated cultures. Task orientated cultures seem to excel in the structured Christian education of children. People orientated cultures bring vibrancy and large groups to child education opportunities. One of the pastoral challenges is the diversified care needed by the host culture, then the immigrant/refugee culture and finally the “third culture” of children of immigrants that grows up in the intercultural context. The sharing of resources between cultures is a strong witness to the watching world. This sharing is not just material, but especially evident in the parenting functions, where the host culture can help the immigrant cultures with such foundational needs as reading skills in the host languages.

The administrative care like certificates and letters for dedications and baptisms can be longer term investments for both time and event orientated cultures, providing some roots in an increasingly rootless world. Religious freedom also provides great latitude for different religious traditions between cultures.

In the deeply emotive context of intercultural marriages the oneness of all humanity needs to be extensively taught and emphasised, making “interracial marriage” a myth. The only exception to all intermarriage among believers is marriage to a non-Christian.

We see the difference between event conscious and time conscious cultures, especially exposed in the realm of prayer. The ordered, individualist prayer chains are preferred

by the time conscious and the lengthy, simultaneous combined prayer sessions are favoured by the event conscious cultures in an intercultural church. Both can be accommodated and guided by wise administrative structures and careful allocation of facilities. Much good can be learned from simultaneous corporate prayer practicing cultures. Corporate prayer is key to healing (physically and of cultural misconceptions) and true intercultural care.

In worship, different customs are to be expected and respected interculturally. Liberty in the non-essentials of worship preferences needs to be emphasized in a multicultural context. Custom and fellowship are observed, so long as there is no clear theological hindrance. In fellowship we need to emphasize the “getting together” and not the eating, especially where there is a large economic disparity. Task orientated cultures can help in ordered structuring of fellowship, ministry and mission, especially when these needs are unearthed in intercultural listening groups. Understanding of one’s own culture and the other cultures in an intercultural context like the local church is a long (sometimes painful) but a necessary process.

In the context of Christian benevolence strong formalized policy helps reduce intercultural conflict. Local church benevolence and Biblically guided intervention for the poor seems to be more effective than state run social care. There is also much that the church can do in advocacy roles for vulnerable people, like refugees and widows.

Death is an intercultural challenge. Many expectations are placed on the local church, which need to be resolved prior to the event by dialogue and subsequent clear policy-documents. Worldviews, around ancestor worship, clash strongly with secular worldviews, so that Biblical and pragmatic solutions need to be found for such issues as burials in birthplaces, cremation, burial sites and the scattering of ashes. The concept of accommodating the weaker brother has been a strong guiding principle in conflict resolution. People and event conscious cultures, have much to teach to time conscious cultures in the care of the bereaved. Task orientated cultures can assist with limiting the abuses experienced by people orientated cultures at the hands of unscrupulous materialists, preying on ancestrally orientated emotions, which encourage economically crushing funeral debt. A case can be made for promoting burial, linked to the bodily

resurrection of the dead from the Bible, as opposed to cremation with its Eastern and reincarnation links.

All the pastoral care offered interculturally calls for continuous dependence on the unifying and interpreting Holy Spirit. The Spirit's fruit of patience in verbal dialogue and respectful questions, cannot be overemphasized. Culturally adaptable leaders, who are not culturally ambiguous or hostile, are preferable in the multicultural local church. Personal care, presence and practical help are most needed by all cultures. A Christian "third culture" (for manners as well) needs to be developed through Biblical teaching, without minimizing the positive and neutral values in the various cultures in an intercultural setup. Continuous exploration of our own and others' linguistic (via bilingualism for instance) and cultural landscapes can lead us all, as many cultures, to worship as one now and one day, before the Throne of God.

Conclusion

“Ever since the early church fathers, commentators have seen the blessing of Pentecost as a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel” Stott (1990:68).

In our endeavour to reap this blessing and improve pastoral care in an urban, intercultural communication context in South Africa, through spiritual transformation from the perspective of a Biblical Babel and Pentecost, we note that the division of languages comes from God at Babel and the healing of that division began at Pentecost. Hence the theological place for intercultural pastoral care in multicultural and multilingual churches.

Summary of some definitions: -

- Ethnic - large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.
- Multi-ethnic – two or more ethnic groups, where no one ethnicity makes up more than 80 percent.
- Culture - the dynamic and structured customs, including underlying worldview assumptions which govern people’s lives. It is a people’s way of life, their design for living, and their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behaviour, plus the resulting artefacts (material culture) (Kraft 2009:401).
- Intercultural - that which takes place between cultures, or derived from different cultures, or between or among people of different cultures.
- Interculturality – respecting multiple cultures within an intercultural paradigm.
- Inculturalisation - tends to be no more than the imposition of one culture upon another culture.
- Multicultural - relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures.
- Trans-cultural - a new third culture (3rd race) above all other cultures.
- Cross-cultural communication – communicating across to another culture.
- Intercultural communication - people from "different cultural backgrounds in interaction," where 'culture' is seen "as similar to ethnicity and/or race" (Piller 2011:8).

- Inter-discourse communication – the implicit or explicit relations that a discourse has to other discourses. Thus analyzing discourses without too much reference to culture.
- International - active, known or reaching beyond national boundaries.
- Race - a large body of people characterized by similarity of descent.
- Interracial - involving, or designed for members of different races.
- Ethnography – study and description of people.

We hold to the conviction that intercultural studies and understanding, may not only assist the local church in a multicultural context, but become the “laboratory test-case” for a watching world in business, politics, travel and society at large (both internationally and nationally).

Intercultural communication is an opportunity to witness to the watching world, that we truly are Christ’s disciples, when we can overcome the curse of Babel by the power of Pentecost. Genesis 1-2 reveals providential planned unity and the diversity, even between cultures. When the diversity between cultures triggers disunity, Pentecost has the potential to restore the creational unity intended by God. The unity within the Trinity is the theological foundation for intercultural harmony. There can be no racial superiority of any culture over others, when all humanity can be traced back to Adam and Eve. God loves and blesses all nations through Abraham. So Israel was meant to become the channel of blessing to all nations.

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 reveals that we are all interconnected and genealogically linked to Noah. The Tower of Babel has God scattering nations through the diversity of languages. The story of the Tower of Babel sandwiched between the two genealogies of Shem, accounts for diversity of language and hence diversity of geography and political alignment. The Bible emphasises language, which God divided at Babel, and not race. The inherent unity of all humans makes reconciliation, relationship and intercultural communication possible. The biblical worldview shows us that all racial and ethnic groups share equally in the image of God. Hence the essential unity amidst the diversity of humankind stands against all thought of racial and cultural superiority.

While there is debate as to whether the Tower of Babel was one of the ziggurats, it became the rallying point for human disobedience and pride, which led to the plethora of languages with which we all now grapple. Babel became synonymous with Babylon, the human embodiment of defiance against our Creator throughout history. Babylon symbolizes the beginning and end of the world of imperialism. Zephaniah 3:9 foresees the end of the confusion of Babel, with Pentecost being a sign of the last days.

The change from a singular to multiple languages, seems to have been supernaturally sudden, yet ongoing through the ages. The 70 nations of Genesis 10 now number well over 11 000 language and people groups. While the original language is now thought to be buried under all the development of present languages, there remains debate on whether we will all return to a singular language in the new heaven and the new earth, or whether the Holy Spirit will continue the work of Pentecost and unify the plurality of languages.

The multitude of languages due to sin positively points to divine restraint of evil and rebellion. The causes for the division of languages have variously been attributed to pride, disobedience (resistance to being scattered), accelerated decentralization and idolatry. Mostly, we can only work together via interpreters or patiently with the aid of the Holy Spirit. But with the mission field coming to the local church as society becomes increasingly globalized. Now by the empowering of the Holy Spirit we can have multicultural evangelism and intercultural communication, within multilingual congregations. Welcoming the mix of ethnicities and nations in the local church can be a grand opportunity to preach and live the Gospel of supernatural personal salvation.

In chapter 2 we have reviewed Acts 2 and how it relates to Babel. From this we have concluded that the Trinitarian nature of our Creator links Babel and Pentecost. Babel brought division. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost can bring reconciliation to divided languages and unity to God's diverse people. Tongues, unity and empowering are all interdependent. In Acts, and today, we see the Holy Spirit building the Body of Christ in the likeness of our Saviour. The third person of the Trinity is in the foreground, the second person of the Trinity is the founder of the church, yet all to the glory of the

Father. Christ's command and prophecy in Acts 1:8 is being fulfilled so that the church (universal and local) is made up of people from "every tribe and tongue" (Rev 7:9).

We conclude from our exegesis of Acts 2, that "tongues of fire" can be seen as a reversal of Babel. The tongues of fire (Acts 2:3) empower the gift of tongues (Acts 2:4). The prophesied and promised Holy Spirit empowers the early church to be witnesses to Christ's Death, Resurrection and Ascension, starting in Jerusalem and rippling out even to the ends of the earth. While some commentators question the link, Luke seems to have carefully shaped the Pentecost narrative to make a theological affirmation against the background of and together with the Babel story of Genesis 11. The languages given by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 are representative of the various national or ethnic languages of those who were in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit enabled the diversity of people gathered at Pentecost to hear what was said in their own native language. The Triune God wants all humans, made in His image (*imago Dei*), to once again be one in Christ. The historically divisive use of glossolalia needs order, but much more we need the fruit of the Spirit, like patience, in intercultural dialogue.

We conclude that the tongues speech of both Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 refers to known languages spoken here on earth. There is a singular usage in the NT for the word tongues as used in Acts and Corinthians. Tongues are thus a sign of international unity, a sign that the languages and confusion created at Babel by God has been reversed by God. Pentecost in Acts 2 prefigures the great day when the redeemed will be drawn 'from every nation, tribe, people and language' (Rev 7:9). While Judaism may have become inwardly natured (centripetal), in contrast the Gospel and the church were expected by God to go out from Jerusalem, to be centrifugally natured.

This list of nations in Acts 2 continues to be debated, but is meant to show that people from the entire known world were present and is reminiscent of the Gen 10 "table of nations." Even the structure and style of Luke's writing of the Gospel of Luke (dealing with the sending out of the 70) and Acts, warrant an intended linking of Babel to Pentecost. While multiculturalism in the local church may be seen as drunkenness, as in Acts 2:13, yet the very nature of the nursery into which the church was born was multicultural and the early church in most places reflected that ethos.

We conclude that Acts 2 reverses the breakdown of Gen 11 and becomes the theologically underpinning of multilingual and multicultural churches, not simply the prevailing winds of globalism in our day. Globalization may be a move of the Spirit of God, under the understanding of the Sovereignty of God. The charismatic renewal has led to a refocus and debate on passages like Acts 2 where the common grace working of the Holy Spirit, in the global culture calls us away from narrow nationalism to greater internationalism.

Cross-cultural missions, though slow to begin, was spearheaded by Hellenists. Philip started the church's mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5–13) and broke new ground. As the early church grew, the apostles faced several problems arising from the diversity of young, growing congregations, but the apostles as early church planters never divided the church into homogeneous units. The Holy Spirit did not lead "birds of a feather to flock together." There are no instant intercultural communication solutions, like xenolalia. The key lies in patiently grown heterogeneous local churches, which are strengthened by the Holy Spirit, even using tools from intercultural communication.

In all the debate around the issue of tongues in Acts, we must not forget that the Day of Pentecost symbolized a new unity in the Spirit that transcends racial, national and linguistic barriers. We also note that the sin of racism is often intertwined with interculturalism, yet in this research we choose to focus on untangling the intercultural communication knot.

Like in Acts 2 all cultures are again gathered in many local churches. As long as the shepherds have an intercultural sensitivity and a heart after the Master, then proclamation of the good news of supernatural life transformation and real care, by the Holy Spirit's empowering, can take place.

In chapter 3 we looked at some of the intercultural conflicts that arose in the church after Acts 2 and what we can learn from them for today. From this we have concluded that intercultural conflict can be bridged with the empowering fruit of the Holy Spirit. Listening to one another is the first key to conflict resolution.

By observing the conflict around the benevolence for the widows in Acts 6 in a church that had exploded, possibly with many thousands of members, we conclude that sensitive, intercultural conflict around vulnerable and emotive members like the widows, requires careful structures to comprehensively care and minimize conflict. From Acts 6 we deduce: -

- Leaders (the Apostles in that case) need to be alerted to the conflict.
- The leaders need to facilitate conflict resolution.
- All parties (members of the local church) need to be involved in intercultural conflict resolution.
- Leaders need to be clear on their own function and limitations.
- Members, who have the confidence of the rest of the church body, need to be selected, to form a small problem resolution team, like the seven in Acts 6.
- This problem solving group should ideally consist primarily of members from the minority group or culture.
- This problem solving group should be of a temporary nature, dissolving once the crisis is resolved.
- Better administration of conflict by trusted people from among the most affected minority culture is better than a knee-jerk response to bring in the experienced senior leaders from a majority culture.
- Ethical structure, form and administrative gifts can also be an asset of the church shared with the wider society in intercultural confrontations.

We learn from other personal responses to intercultural conflict that arose once the mainly Jewish origin Christians were scattered after the stoning of Stephen, that this conflict resolution was thrust onto the new religious refugees fleeing persecution in Jerusalem. The church in Antioch, was multicultural by the time of Acts 13 and united by the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting. It became the first sending church for cross-cultural workers like Paul and Barnabas. Paul would become a personal example of intercultural sensitivity seen repeatedly on his missionary journeys, and famously in the Mars Hill address (Acts 17) and the teaching of the multicultural churches in Rome and Corinth, through the epistles to the Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. Intercultural sensitivity needs to be learned. Hospitality towards the “stranger” is one powerful tool in bridging intercultural differences.

While the current debate between proponents of homogenous churches and heterogeneous churches continues, we see in the NT, that unity in Christ surpasses all other issues of cultural identity. Christ's call to embrace the "other" includes all categories of "otherness," so that we function interculturally in life together in the local church.

The challenges facing intercultural communication in multicultural churches include: -

- pragmatism,
- conflict avoidance
- and inertia.

The benefits of intercultural communication in multicultural churches include: -

- a united witness to a watching world,
- broader evangelism,
- social awareness,
- understanding of "others" (especially the poor),
- learned conflict resolution skills,
- sacrificial love
- and a powerful proclamation of Christ making us one supernaturally.

Keeping the unity in diversity may mean different languages meeting separately to hear the Gospel of supernatural transformation in their primary language, but unity can be retained by regular combined meetings and combined administrative and leadership structures. The richness of cultural experiences, far surpass the struggles of intercultural conflict that may only occasionally arise.

The corporate response to the inclusion of the "other" we observe in Acts 15, where finally Gentiles are accepted theologically and practically by Christians of Jewish origin. Creating structure and form to address inequality in intercultural issues is now seen on a larger scale than the local church. The issue was primarily a soteriological issue, which also had a social aspect. In intercultural conflict, "social" issues are frequently the presenting problem while soteriological issues are ultimately at stake. Policy and structure form part of the solution to intercultural issues, even on denominational levels.

Freedom in diversity while finding solutions to conflict in form, like policy and structures, is the Spirit led balance that is so needed, in the intercultural issues. Scripture, above all pragmatism and culture, must be the basis of the church's authority in conflict resolution. We can learn much in the multicultural church today, from the example of the early church in Acts.

Communication crosses from one island of understanding to another island. Communication studies help to prevent the message being lost at sea in the inter-island transfer. The cultural barrier reefs around foreign islands can be formidable. Intercultural communication tools assist in crossing these perilous reefs and waters.

The first challenge is to understand the various verbal and non-verbal "signals" that make up communication. These signals leave one ideational environment and cross backwards and forwards like canoes to and from the island of another ideational environment. The arts and understanding language origins, can all add to the effectiveness of the communication canoes.

The second challenge to overcome is the hidden rocks under the water around a culture. These jagged rocks which can scuttle communication, are the world views or core beliefs surrounding a cultural island. To navigate the waters of intercultural communications means mapping the waters of one's own culture and the culture with which one is communicating. The danger is to assume all islands are the same as one's own. It is crucial to simultaneously understand our own culture and the culture we encounter. This understanding can be called cultural intelligence.

Worldviews generally range along a spectrum. We have identified ten spectrums of worldview. They are: -

1. Shame or guilt orientation in cultures that revolve around the response to wrongdoing in collectivist or individualist cultures.
2. Spirit or secular orientation in cultures where the spiritual world is considered significant or insignificant.
3. Ancestral veneration or secular orientation in cultures, linked to the previous point, holds varying degrees of honour for the dead.

4. The optimistic or pessimistic anthropologic orientation in cultures looks at how a culture views the moral nature of humans, which influences the degree of need for supernatural salvation or even the tolerance of the culture of foreigners.
5. The anthropocentric or natural orientation in cultures, which is the perceived degree of control a culture, believes it has over nature.
6. The doing or being orientation in cultures either emphasises goal setting and production as against inner personal development and knowledge.
7. The cyclical or linear orientation in cultures involves the view of time and life by a culture.
8. The fatalistic or low-power distance in cultures considers the power distance perceived by authority figures as against subordinates linked to the degree of individual control over the future.
9. The high context or low context orientation in cultures revolves around the degree of shared historical context a culture has developed. So that high context cultures all know how to behave culturally, making it difficult for outsiders to enter and function. Low context cultures have less shared history and hence leave little to be assumed and publically provide cultural direction through numerous signs and notices.
10. Individualistic or collectivist orientation in cultures, emphasises either personal achievement (or failure and guilt) or group loyalty (and shame for group failure).

Cultural values differ from deep cultural worldviews (like the hidden part of an iceberg) in being mostly evident preferences (above the waterline) on the surface of a culture.

1. Time or event orientation in cultures value either punctuality or participation in the event.
2. Left or right brain orientation in cultures value differing ways of making decisions and judgments. While we all range along the spectrum at different times, we can see general preferences. Left brain thinkers prefer black-and-white, right-and-wrong judgments, patterns, order, universal application and systems. Right brain thinkers prefer open-ended decisions, multiple interactions, storytelling and seeing each situation as unique.
3. Task or people orientation in cultures value either task accomplishment or relationships and interaction with people.

4. Status or achievement orientation in cultures value either personal achievement or societal status (family background). Yet Christ's call is to servanthood.
5. Vulnerability or strength orientation in cultures value either a willingness to expose vulnerability or the concealment of vulnerability.

When values conflict, an objective absolute such as the inerrant and trans-cultural Bible as God's Word, is a valuable tool. Each culture holds that their culture is "right," until they encounter another culture. Hence, the Bible can dictate what is morally right, wrong, a grey area or a neutral value. We need to understand that we are all somewhere along each of these continuums and can also be enriched by differing values.

An action plan includes understanding one's own cultural worldviews and values. Then one should seek to understand the worldviews and values of the cultures one encounters. From understanding, care needs to flow. Strategies and policies may help. Education of all concerned, helps. Yet our unity in Christ takes precedence over all cultural differences. Cultural differences will remain, just as gender and socio-economic differences remain, yet all under the overarching unity of the Spirit.

Diverse cultures may be seen as a Divine calling, corrupted by the fall. Hence, there is the need for unity in the midst of diversity. Racism and ethnic isolationism both need to be denounced. Cultural sensitivity and racial reconciliation grow through six stages: denial, defending, diminishing, acceptance, adaptation and integration. Even integration may be simply assimilation, pluralistic or fully integrated. Traversing these stages is lengthy, complex and seldom complete, but an environment of freedom and openness encourages healing intercultural dialogue. The key to this gradual change is a well-defined and thoughtfully expressed theology of culture.

The theology for intercultural pastoral care arises from the conviction that the Holy Spirit unites at Pentecost, what He divided at Babel. God unites all cultures in Christ, in His Body, the church. Thus multicultural churches are preferable to mono-cultural churches, in a multicultural context. A multicultural church becomes a new (third) race (1 Pet 2:9) in a multicultural community. Robust, theological truth needs thus to be taught and practiced in the local church. We are to reach out across cultures, because of the example of Christ reaching out to us and reconciling us to the Father. Our cultural border

crossing, may take various forms, yet aspire to largely model the example of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The options for modelling multiculturalism for a local church range from: -

- renting worship space to another culture,
- to a multi-congregational model,
- the temporary sponsorship of another culture model,
- the bi-lingual, bi-cultural model
- the total transition to another culture model.

Each local church needs to prayerfully choose the most theologically robust option, in response to context and the community undergoing ethnic transitions. Dangers in transitioning to a multicultural church abound around pitfalls like simply hiring diverse staff or trying to reverse engineer a congregation or not removing culturally offensive or insensitive practices.

Intercultural pastoral care of a multicultural congregation needs to understand the difference between individualist orientated cultures around the limited care of families experiencing the birth of a child, and the strong community involvement and care expected in collectivist orientated cultures. Task orientated cultures seem to excel in the structured Christian education of children. People orientated cultures bring vibrancy and large groups to child education opportunities. One of the pastoral challenges is the diversified care needed by the host culture, then the immigrant/refugee culture and finally the “third culture” of children of immigrants that grows up in the intercultural context. The sharing of resources between cultures is a strong witness to the watching world. This sharing is not just material, but especially evident in the parenting functions, where the host culture can help the immigrant cultures with such foundational needs as reading skills in the host languages.

The administrative care, like certificates and letters for dedications and baptisms can be a longer term investment for both time and event orientated cultures, providing some roots in an increasingly rootless world. Religious freedom also provides great latitude for different religious traditions between cultures.

In the deeply emotive context of intercultural marriages the oneness of all humanity needs to be extensively taught and emphasised, making “interracial marriage” a myth. The only exception to all intermarriage among believers is the prohibition of marriage to a non-Christian.

We see the difference between event conscious and time conscious cultures, especially exposed in the realm of prayer. The ordered, individualist prayer chains are preferred by the time conscious and the lengthy, simultaneous combined prayer sessions are favoured by the event conscious cultures in an intercultural church. Both can be accommodated and guided by wise administrative structures and careful allocation of facilities. Much good can be learned from simultaneous corporate prayer practicing cultures. Corporate prayer is key to healing (physically and of cultural misconceptions) and true intercultural care.

In worship, different customs are to be expected and respected interculturally. Liberty in the non-essentials of worship preferences needs to be emphasized in a multicultural context. Custom and fellowship are observed, so long as there is no clear theological hindrance. In fellowship we need to emphasize the “getting together” and not the eating, especially where there is a large economic disparity. Task orientated cultures can help in ordered structuring of fellowship, ministry and mission, especially when these needs are unearthed in intercultural listening groups. Understanding of one’s own culture and the other cultures in an intercultural context like the local church is a long (sometimes painful) but necessary process.

In the context of Christian benevolence strong formalized policy helps reduce intercultural conflict. Local church benevolence and Biblically guided intervention for the poor seems to be more effective than state run social care. There is also much that the church can do in advocacy roles for vulnerable people, like refugees and widows.

Death is an intercultural challenge. Many expectations are placed on the local church, which need to be resolved by dialogue and subsequent clear policy documents. Worldviews around ancestor worship clashes strongly with secular worldviews, so that Biblical and pragmatic solutions need to be found for such issues as burials in birthplaces, cremation, burial sites and the scattering of ashes. The concept of

accommodating the weaker brother has been a strong guiding principle in conflict resolution. People and event conscious cultures have much to teach to time conscious cultures in the care of the bereaved. Task orientated cultures can assist with limiting the abuses experienced by people orientated cultures at the hands of unscrupulous materialists, preying on ancestrally orientated emotions, which encourage economically crushing funeral debt. A case can be made for promoting burial linked to the bodily resurrection of the dead from the Bible, as opposed to cremation with its Eastern and reincarnation links.

All the pastoral care offered interculturally calls for continuous dependence on the unifying and interpreting Holy Spirit. The Spiritual fruit of patience in verbal dialogue and respectful questions cannot be overemphasized. Culturally adaptable leaders, who are not culturally ambiguous or hostile, are preferable in the multicultural local church. Personal care, presence and practical help are most needed by all cultures. A Christian “third culture” (for manners as well) needs to be developed through Biblical teaching, without minimizing the positive and neutral values in the various cultures in an intercultural setup. Continuous exploration of our own and others’ linguistic (via bilingualism for instance) and cultural landscapes can lead us all, as many cultures, to worship as one now and united one day, before the Throne of God.

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” Rev 7:9–10

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Further research:

- Drawing up a grid of intercultural tools.
- Surveying and plotting the cultures in a local intercultural context.
- Surveying and plotting the cultural worldviews and values in a local church undergoing change from mono-cultural to multicultural.
- Surveying the stages of development of various churches undergoing the change from mono-cultural to multicultural churches.
- Finding a viable survival strategy for inner-city congregationally governed churches, facing progress from mono-cultural to multicultural change.
- Intercultural worship may need to be a whole topic on its own.
- Multicultural Mapping: Analysing the state and development of intercultural worldviews and values in a local multicultural church in a 21st Century South African city.

Appendices

Appendix 1

From an Executive Devotion - 17 February 2015 Understanding the Time – Event Continuum

The concept of being late varies between different people. For some people, being 5 minutes late can be excused and 15 minutes late creates tension, while being ½ hour late creates hostility. But for other people being ½ hour late can be excused. Being 1 hour late creates tension and only when you are 2 hours late then there is hostility. Why is this so?

So often in intercultural interactions there is misunderstanding about time and event. Marvin Mayers suggests that American and German cultures are more time orientated, while Polynesian and Venda cultures are more event-orientated.¹ All cultures and individuals fit between these two poles on a continuum. “The time-orientated express great concern about punctuality, the length of time expended and the utilization of time to its maximum potential. People who are event-orientated show concern that an activity be completed regardless of length of time required and emphasize unscheduled participation rather than carefully structured activities.” (Lingenfelter 2003:38)² All of us feel the tension of these two poles and in different circumstances we can swing towards either pole.

Time-orientated people enjoy diaries, clocks, setting goals and objectives, but their lives can become so busy and booked up that they can do nothing on the spur of the moment. Event-orientated people focus on the details of what is going to happen and not when or how long. Test Cricket over 3-5 days can be event-orientated where the game is enjoyed and played till everyone is out, while spectators can come and go, just like some Korean and African church services. Participation and completion of the event in the present (now, not future or past) are the central goals for event-orientated people.

If we are time-orientated then there will be a continuous sense of urgency, where we feel “time is running out,” along with a fear that we may miss out on something. We feel like we cannot wait for our next weekend, holiday or the last day at school or on the job. But for event-orientated people, time is not as valuable as enjoying the now and so they can be less fearful. “*The real enemy is fear. Fear is the devil’s workshop. Perfect fear drives out love. It’s supposed to be the other way around, but it works both ways. Only one remains. Fear or love. The devil roams around like a roaring lion—not a biting lion—a roaring lion.*”³

At the time of Jesus, it would seem that Jewish culture was generally more event-orientated. Jesus, within that context, invited two disciples to spend the day with Him (Jn 1:39, maybe because it was a Sabbath.) Nicodemus disregarded “working hours” to come to Jesus at night, and Jesus shows no displeasure. (Jn 3:2) Our Lord was also 4 days late when Lazarus was sick. (Jn 11:6) Yet the Messiah taught us that God’s harvest time is now. (Jn 4:35-36) In Matthew 4:17 and 16:21 “the time” (or better still, the opportunity) to preach and explain had come. Jesus would seem to be both event and time-orientated.

Within a family or single culture, individuals can differ between time and event-orientation, which causes friction. But when whole groups or cultures differ in orientation, there can be

¹ Lingenfelter, S.G. and Mayers M.K. 2003 *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic

² ib.

³ Medearis, Carl 2015 “What ISIS wants,” *Parse*, February 12, 2015: 2

strife. To function together interculturally means all the differing orientations need to adapt to one another. While we might criticize someone who is late, we may miss that she stopped, like the Good Samaritan, to help her neighbour. (Lk 10:30-37) In growing to be more Christ-like, we need to remind ourselves that “in God’s scheme the emphasis on time and event exist together in complete harmony.” (Lingenfelter 2003:49) William McConnell suggests that time is “a gift from God, and that His priorities can always be fulfilled in the amount of time we have been given...God is lavish with His gifts, so that there is always enough time to do what Jesus calls us to do.” (1983:89)⁴ Jesus cared for the persistent crowds who came to His wilderness prayer retreat, teaching and feeding them, before finally dismissing them and spending the night in prayer. (Mt 14:13-25) *By the Holy Spirit’s empowering, we continually need to appreciate the strengths of either the event or time priorities of the people with whom we live.* Finally, our attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus, seeking to satisfy the time and event priorities of others, before our own needs. (Phil 2:3-5)

⁴ McConnell, W.T. 1983 The gift of time. Dowers Grove, Ill: IVP

Appendix 2 from an Executive Devotion on 21 April 2015 - Understanding Differences in Judgment

In a multicultural church we will find different ways of making judgments, which can easily be misunderstood. Even between men and women these differences in making decisions and judgments can be vividly seen. M. Mayers identifies two distinct ways of thinking: left brain (dichotomistic thinking) and right brain (holistic thinking). (Lingenfelter 2003:53)⁵ Most of us use both kinds, but we all tend to have a preference.

Left brain thinkers make black-and-white, right-and-wrong judgments. They form specific conclusions that are then uniformly applied in evaluating others. Their security comes from feeling that they are “right” and that they have a very specific role in society. Information reaching left brains is systematically organized, sorted and ordered, to form a clear pattern. Those coming out of a western culture based on Greek thought would be most prone to left brain thinking. In extreme cases left brain thinking can look very much like the Pharisees in the New Testament.

Right brain thinkers tend to make open-ended decisions that evaluate the whole person and consider all the circumstances. The right brain thinker finds their security from multiple interactions within the society and feels insecure with fixed roles. For them, information and experiences are seemingly disorganized. Right brain thinkers view a story as complete in itself and avoid breaking it down into details. So when dealing with people, right brain thinkers tend to avoid labels and withhold both approval and disapproval. So those coming out of a Hebrew or African culture tend to favour right brain thinking with all its parables and stories.

“Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the different functions of the two hemispheres, and more research is in progress.” (Lingenfelter 2003:55) While our brains are extremely complex, we need both parts for healthy life and thinking. At its simplest level, ask yourself, “Do I think most in words (left brain) or in mental images (right brain?) Then when telling a story, do you visualize it (right brain) or do you remember all the facts (left brain.) When we look at the Bible we see both, right brain vivid stories from the prophets and left brain logical theology from Paul in Romans. History has seen the extremes of this Biblical variety carried to the limits in the systematic theology wars of the Reformation in contrast to the extremes of rapidly growing Pentecostalism now seen in Africa and South America.

When serving as leaders in the church we need to take into consideration the main mind-set and culture of the person with which we are dealing. Jesus understood the context of the Jewish (and Roman) social structure in which the Father had called Him to serve and die in. In His choice of disciples, most were only trained in the workplace of their occupations, and seemed mostly to be right brain thinkers. The Apostle Paul alone was well educated and appears to be more left brained, yet could say to the Jews he was a Jew and to the Romans he was a Roman. (1 Corinthians 9:19–22) Charles Kraft (1982:28)⁶ called Jesus’ approach “receptor-orientated and personal”, and likewise we need to try think like the person Christ calls us to serve as a leader.

In dealing with difficult issues in the church, we need to remember that left brain thinkers will want black-and-white answers with universal application of principles and feel secure where their perception is recognized as correct. While right brain thinkers will see most issues as

⁵ Lingenfelter, S.G. and Mayers M.K. 2003 *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic

⁶ Kraft, C. H. 1983 *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. Nashville: Abingdon

open for debate, rather than black or white. They think each situation is unique and are uncomfortable with standardized rules and procedures. As we deal with many cultures and genders at RBC we need to remember that some coming from say a Muslim background will tend to be rigid left brained, while those from Africa may be right brained and evaluate the total person, finding nothing perfect but all having “feet of clay.” This may explain why Jesus taught us to not judge one another. And Paul in Romans 14:1 says “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.”

Appendix 3: Executive Devotion – Goal Tensions used on 19 May 2015

Have you ever found yourself critical of someone who is spending a lot of time talking and not doing the work? Or do you get frustrated with people who are always busy, with no time for being sociable and friendly? Maybe you view one group of people as lazy or another as rude. What we usually have in this context is a clash between the goals of task-orientated people, in contrast to the goals of interaction-orientated people.

Task-orientated people make completion of objectives, the goal of their lives. They feel most fulfilled when projects are completed. So they focus on tasks and principles. They will seek like-minded people with similar goals and they accept loneliness for the sake of personal achievements. All this can be noble, but when pushed to extremes, they can live lives at a frenetic pace and become workaholics, trying to do more than is humanly possible in every day.

Interaction-orientated people made it their goal to relate to others, maintaining personal relationships at all costs. Every opportunity is a time to network and meet new people. They feel most fulfilled when their energy is used in maintaining personal ties and fulfilling group obligations. They seek out group-orientated people, fearing loneliness, while sacrificing personal goals for group interaction. In extreme cases interaction-orientation can lead to little or no productivity and in a work context to job-loss.

In the church we have both types of people who have differing goals. Intolerance and frustration can easily arise. When task-orientated city people meet interaction-orientated rural folk, there can be much contempt from both sides. Even culturally, those of a Germanic background may tend to be more task-orientated, while those from Zululand may be more interaction-orientated. Yet even within a culture, family or marriage there can be these differing goals. The danger is that our personal preferences or cultural values, can blind us to the values of another culture.

To compound the problem the educational system is designed to reward task-orientated people, who are “willing to sacrifice interpersonal ties for long hours of study.” (Lingenfelter 2003: 81)⁷ Worldly success is often defined in terms of objective goals achieved and not relationships developed. For interaction-orientated people a major goal in doing any job is the interaction, not the money they can make.

For us in the church who have been called to care for the Body of Christ, it means serving people. Building relationship is central to all service. For task-orientated people interaction can be difficult, and needs conscious effort, otherwise the completion of tasks will use up all available time and energy.

From a biblical perspective, if we have achieved great tasks and not loved and interacted with people, then we are little more than a sounding gong. (Cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3) On the other hand, if we have interacted with the whole world, yet not made disciples, who will last for eternity, then we have simply become a friend of the world. The challenge is to understand our God-given nature to either be task or interaction orientated, yet always to seek to share the gospel and share our lives. (1 Th 2:6-8)

⁷ Lingenfelter, S.G. and Mayers M.K. 2003 *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic

Appendix 4 - Executive Devotion – Gaining Self-worth from Status or Achievement. **11/8/15**

When you meet someone, what impresses you the most; their family background or what they have managed to do with their life? In the intercultural relationships we have in the church, we see some individuals and cultures who prize their ancestral background, while others value the successes of individuals or groups.

A status focused society (what M. Mayers calls prestige-ascribed) ((Lingenfelter 2003:92)⁸ is concerned primarily with a person's birth and social rank. So respect is given based on a person's social position. Like the Pharisees in Jesus' society who liked the places of honour at weddings (Lk 14) and disliked mixing with people perceived as inferior (so clashing with Jesus Lk 15:1-2.)

Other cultures value what is achieved, over one's social rank. Personal performance determines self-worth. Titles are scoffed at while success is the indicator of worth. Success can be either economic (the rich fool Lk 12:13-21), moral righteousness (the young ruler in Lk 18:18-20) or a life of service (to family, church or community). Achievement focus usually only gives short-term self-worth, so making the people critical of others and themselves. (Like Martha in Lk 10:38-42) Achievers generally only respect other achievers.

When we look at Jesus, we see he rejects both status focus and achievement focus. When Jesus said in Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple." Also Jesus says in Matthew 20:26–27 "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave." This is very difficult for status focused cultures like the Jews or European cultures, who value middle class security and having servants, not being one.

On the other hand, to individuals or cultures that value achievements, come Jesus' words to the proud young ruler who obeyed all the commands since youth (Lk18:21). They find it most difficult to "sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (v22) As the disciples recognized, (v26) Jesus is asking the impossible, because none of us can "achieve" or do enough. Whenever we find self-worth in performance, we will end up as worried or critical as Martha (Lk 10:39-42.)

All believers are called to a lifetime of servanthood, not social rank or personal achievement. In spite of our inherent worthlessness and empty self-righteousness, God elevates our value and seeks us like the lost sheep (Lk 15) and says in Romans 3:22–24 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Your self-worth comes from the pattern set by Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5-8), not social status or achievements which can divide us from one another. As servant-leaders at RBC, let us come with servant hearts, remembering that as "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2) we do not need to grasp position or status, but empty ourselves in faithful service to all.

⁸ Lingenfelter, S.G. and Mayers M.K. 2003 *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic

Rosettenville Baptist Church

THE DEDICATION SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

It is a real joy for us at Rosettenville Baptist Church to know that you wish to bring your child, in an act of thanksgiving and dedication, before one of our services. We understand the ceremony to have three purposes:

- 1) To express your gratitude to God as a parent for the gift of your child;
- 2) To promise before God that in your home the name of Jesus will be honoured;
- 3) To give us, as the members of Rosettenville Baptist Church, an opportunity to support you in the great responsibility God has given you to rear this child in a sinful world.

The purpose of this little booklet is to give you information concerning the Dedication Service as practiced in the Rosettenville Baptist Church.

The first section of the booklet outlines the Biblical basis for the Dedication service. We then try to answer any questions which you may have, concerning the meaning of this Service. The third section gives you practical information about the service itself. If, after reading this booklet, you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact one of the Pastors at the Church Office (436-0918). God bless you.

THE PASTORS
ROSETTENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH



THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR DEDICATION

There is no direct command in the Bible instructing us to present children for dedication to God, but it does seem to be in accordance with the general teaching of the Word of God. The way, in which Hannah presented her son Samuel, back to God (1 Samuel 1:21-28) is not to be considered the norm, since Samuel lived permanently with the priests after being offered back to God.

However, there are passages of Scripture, which lead us to believe that a service of Dedication is appropriate. Our understanding of this finds its Biblical starting point in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, where Moses on several occasions urges parents to understand and accept their responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their children. Even today, with the availability of Sunday School for the spiritual instruction of children, we still firmly believe that training in the things of God must begin at home.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 outlines this parental responsibility:

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Your decision to stand in front of a congregation of God's people in this Service of Dedication implies an acceptance of this responsibility and a commitment to carry it out, as God enables you.

Then, in Matthew 19:13-15, we see how Jesus himself dealt with the children who were brought to Him:

Then little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these".

Jesus then placed His hands on these children. By following that example, we too place our hands on the child and pray for him or her. This does not impart any special power, but is a simple request on our part for God's blessing and protection to rest on your child in the days ahead.

A FEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do we not baptize children?

It is our Baptist understanding of baptism that this is an act of a believer, in accordance with the sequence outlined in

Matthew 28:19-20.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We therefore wait until a person is of an age where he or she can make a spiritual decision for himself or herself before we consider baptism.

The Dedication Service is an act of thanksgiving and commitment on the part of the person concerned. As we have already mentioned, this Service is an opportunity for us as a Church to pledge before

God that we will do all in our power to provide a place where your child can at any time find spiritual help, a place to worship God and an environment where he or she can be instructed in the things of the Lord.

2. Do the parents have to be church members?

There is no requirement that parents should be members of our church, although it is logical that there should be some link with Rosettenville Baptist, if possible. We simply want to provide a public platform where you as a parent may declare your thanksgiving and commitment to God. At the same time, it is our prayer that God may use our church to serve you and your child in the days ahead. It is our desire that you have a real and personal relationship with God, who created families. To this end we will gladly introduce you to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, if you want to know more about whole relationships.

3. Do both parents have to be present?

We believe that it is important for both parents to bring a child together, so that there is a shared commitment to the task, which lies ahead. If there is a reason why one parent does not wish to come, or if it is a single-parent situation, this should be discussed with one of the Pastors. Remember, your parenting is only as good as your marriage, so work at your marriage always.

4. *How old should a child be?*

It goes without saying that if parents were truly grateful to God for the safe arrival of a baby, they would want to express that in a Dedication Service as soon as possible. Certainly the baby will be more likely to remain quiet throughout the Service if he or she is still an infant. Older children may be scared of the Pastor and may react accordingly. However, there is no age limit to the Dedication Service and children of any age may be brought in this act of thanksgiving.

5. *What if my baby cries?*

According to the law of averages, some babes will wake up at just the moment of the Dedication and may be unhappy at being held by a stranger. Try not to feel uncomfortable if your baby cries. The Pastor will continue with the Service and will keep the prayer short so that the baby is returned to you as soon as possible. People in the church are very understanding if the baby is unsettled, so don't allow that to trouble you.

THE SERVICE ITSELF

It is our practice only to conduct the Dedication Service for one family in any particular service, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We therefore urge you to book a date well in advance with the Church office and with the Pastor of your choice. (Any one of the Pastors may be approached to conduct the service for you.)

The Church Office needs the following information from you:

- ❖ Parents' names*
- ❖ Child's names*
- ❖ Date and place of birth*

On the day of the Dedication Service, you would need to arrive just a little early so as to confirm with the pastor that you are there. (Sometimes babies are taken ill at short notice and the Service may have to be postponed.) We suggest that you sit near the end of a row so that it will be easy to get out for the Dedication.

At the appropriate moment in the Church Service, the Pastor will invite you to join him on the platform and stand facing the congregation. After a few words of introduction, the Pastor will ask you to respond by saying, "I do" to the following questions:

- 1) Do you acknowledge the goodness of God in giving you the gift of this child and do you recognize the Christian responsibility, which comes to you with the gift?*

- 2) Do you promise to do your utmost to provide your child with an environment in your home where he/she will at all times be exposed to the instruction of the Lord and the example of Christ-like parents?*

The Pastor will then invite the congregation to stand. He will take the baby from you and offer a prayer for the child and for the parents. If the child is too old to be held, he or she

will simply stand in front of the Pastor and hands will be placed on the child's head during prayer.

When the child is returned to you, the Pastor will hand you an envelope containing a Dedication Certificate and a letter from the Pastor, which we ask you to keep until your child is old enough to read it for him or herself. You may then leave the platform and return to your seat, or take the baby out to the cry room, if that would make you more comfortable.

CONCLUSION

Do remember that our Church has a Sunday School (9.00am on Sundays) catering for children from 2 years upwards

Please know that if there is any way we can be of service to you, we would count it a privilege.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: of Help, with Parenting

"Baby Wise" by G. Ezzo & Bucknam - Multnomah Books.

Books by James Dobson - Focus on the Family.

Please complete and hand to the Minister

Surname: _____

Child's Names: _____

Father's Names: _____

Mother's Names: _____

(Maiden Name) _____

Place of Birth: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Dedication: _____

Please complete and hand to the Minister

Surname: _____

Child's Names: _____

Father's Names: _____

Mother's Names: _____

(Maiden Name) _____

Place of Birth: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Dedication: _____



Rosettenville Baptist Church

8 Albert Street, Townsview, Johannesburg, 2190
Box 49044, Rosettenville, 2130

Pastor: Rev. Darryl Soal, 10 Pelion Road, Hill Ext Phone: 011-435-3839
Pastor to Seniors: Rev. Paul Jones, 1 Jolly Cottages, Queenshaven Phone: 011-613-1059

Church Office: 011-436-0918

Saturday, 14th November 2015

Dear

Today is the day of your Dedication in the Rosettenville Baptist Church, and I am handing this letter to your Mom and Dad to keep until you are old enough for them to read to you. They will also be given a certificate to mark this special occasion and I hope they will show it to you one day.

Nobody asked you if you wanted to be presented to the Lord, but both your parents want all of us to know how thankful they are for the gift of your life. The Service of Dedication in which you have been involved today actually says three things:

1. That your parents are very grateful to God that you were born safely into the world and have been given into their special care.
2. That your Mom and Dad are here today to make a commitment to provide a home where the name of Jesus is honoured and where you will be set a good example of Christian living.
3. That we as the people of God in the Rosettenville Baptist Church will always seek to provide a place where you can come to hear about Jesus, to study His Word, and to find Him as your own Lord and Saviour.

There is nothing magical in the service today. All I did was to take you in my arms and pray for you, but we do believe that God hears and answers our prayers and we therefore trust Him to look after you and to make you His own child when you are old enough to understand what that means.

You may not read this letter for yourself for many years, but when you do, we hope you will thank God for a Mom and Dad who loved you enough to present you before God today. It's our prayer that by then God will have become your Friend too.

God bless you!

Rev. Darryl Soal
PASTOR



Rosettenville Baptist Church

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BOY13-03-2011

Chèr Emmanuel

Aujourd'hui est ton jour de consécration à l'Eglise Baptiste de Rosettenville, et je remets cette lettre à ton Père et ta Mère de garder jusqu'à ce que tu va grandir pour qu'ils la lisent pour toi. Ils auront également reçu un certificat pour faire de cette occasion une marque spéciale et je souhaite qu'ils vont te faire voir ce document un jour.

Personne ne t'a demandé si tu voudras être présenté au Seigneur, mais tes deux parents voulaient que nous tous nous connaissions comment ils étaient reconnaissant pour le don de ta vie. Le service de consécration dans lequel tu es actuellement engagé aujourd'hui parle de trois choses:

1. que tes parents sont très reconnaissant à Dieu du faite que tu étais né sain et sauf dans ce monde et tu avais été confié dans leurs soins.
2. que ton Papa et ta Maman sont ici aujourd'hui pour prendre un engagement à pourvoir une maison où le nom de Jésus sera honnorable et où tu pourras donner un bon exemple de la vie Chrétienne.
3. que nous, comme les enfants de Dieu dans l'Eglise Baptiste de Rosettenville, pourrions toujours pourvoir une place où tu peux venir écouter la parole à propos de Jésus, d'étudier sa parole, et de le rencontrer comme ton Seigneur et Sauveur personnel.

Il n' y a rien de magique dans le service d'aujourd'hui. Tous ce que j'ai fais c'était seulement de te prendre dans mes bras et prier pour toi, mais nous croyons que Dieu répond à nos prières et cependant nous avons confiance à lui qu'il va veillez sur toi et te faire son enfant quand tu grandira et comprendra de toi-même qu'est cela veut dire.

Tu ne pourras pas lire cette lettre de toi-même pour beaucoup des années, mais quand tu l'auras, nous espérons que tu pourra remercier Dieu pour ton Père et ta Mère qui t'ont assez aimé à te présenter devant Dieu aujourd'hui. C'est notre prière que dès lors Dieu aura à devenir ton ami aussi.

Que Dieu te benisse!

Laurent Meya.



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Church Office: 011-436-0918

17-04-2011

Chère Praise

Aujourd'hui est ton jour de consécration à l'Eglise Baptiste de Rosettenville, et je remets cette lettre à ton Père et ta Mère de garder jusqu'à ce que tu va grandir pour qu'ils la lisent pour toi. Ils auront également reçu un certificat pour faire de cette occasion une marque spéciale et je souhaite qu'ils vont te faire voir ce document un jour.

Personne ne t'a demandé si tu voudras être présenté au Seigneur, mais tes deux parents voulaient que nous tous nous connaissions comment ils étaient reconnaissant pour le don de ta vie. Le service de consécration dans lequel tu es actuellement engagé aujourd'hui parle de trois choses:

1. que tes parents sont très reconnaissant à Dieu du faite que tu étais né sain et sauf dans ce monde et tu avais été confié dans leurs soins.
2. que ton Papa et ta Maman sont ici aujourd'hui pour prendre un engagement à pourvoir une maison où le nom de Jésus sera honnorable et où tu pourras donner un bon exemple de la vie Chrétienne.
3. que nous, comme les enfants de Dieu dans l'Eglise Baptiste de Rosettenville, pourrions toujours pourvoir une place où tu peux venir écouter la parole à propos de Jésus, d'étudier sa parole, et de le rencontrer comme ton Seigneur et Sauveur personnel.

Il n'y a rien de magique dans le service d'aujourd'hui. Tous ce que j'ai fais c'était seulement de te prendre dans mes bras et prier pour toi, mais nous croyons que Dieu répond à nos prières et cependant nous avons confiance à lui qu'il va veillez sur toi et te faire son enfant quand tu grandira et comprendra de toi-même qu'est cela veut dire.

Tu ne pourras pas lire cette lettre de toi-même pour beaucoup des années, mais quand tu l'auras, nous espérons que tu pourra remercier Dieu pour ton Père et ta Mère qui t'ont assez aimé à te présenter devant Dieu aujourd'hui. C'est notre prière que dès lors Dieu aura à devenir ton ami aussi.

Que Dieu te benisse!

Laurent Meya.

Appendix 8

(I always date the letter.)

Dear Future Church Leader,

Probably one of the first things that you will notice about this letters that it was written several years ago. The date reflected on the letter was a very special day at Life Church at Oxford. As you are reading this you have reached your 13th birthday. Many things have happened in your life that has brought you to this point today. One of the most important events of your life took place on that special day that I referred to, (Date of dedication.) On that day, your parents brought you to the altar of our church and made a commitment of their lives to bring you up in a Christian home and to do all in their ability to lead you to give your life to Jesus Christ. They were aware that you commitment to Christ was a decision that you must make for yourself, but they promised the Lord that they would provide you with the example and the guidance necessary to encourage you in that decision.

If, at this time, you have not accepted Christ as your Saviour, I urge you to receive Him now by praying this simple prayer of faith; "Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and need your salvation. I trust you as my Saviour by believing that you died, was buried, and rose from the dead for me. I ask you now to come into my heart right now, and forgive me of my sin, and save my soul." Now read Romans 10: 9-10.

Life can be so happy when your are serving Jesus! I know that being a teenager is tough, but Jesus is tougher than all powers of evil that tempt your and tears at you every day. Trust Him! Walk with Him! You will never be sorry.

If you know where I am today, call me and tell me you got my letter. It will make my day.

God bless you on your Birthday,

Your Pastor and Friend,

Dr Mike Holcomb

THE
BAPTISMAL
SERVICE

ROSETTENVILLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

Introduction

We are so glad to know that you have felt the Lord prompting you to consider the matter of Believer's Baptism and we consider it a privilege to share with you in your preparation for this act of obedience. The purpose of this little booklet is to give you information concerning the Baptismal Service as practised in the Rosettenville Baptist Church.

The first section of the booklet outlines the Biblical basis for the ordinance of baptism, as we understand it from the New Testament. We then try to answer the question, which many people ask, "**what if I was baptised as an infant?**" This is followed by the brief statement concerning the mode of baptism, which we believe to be by full immersion in water. The fourth section of the booklet looks at your responsibility as a consequence of being baptised. The final section gives practical information concerning the service itself.

As you read through this material, it is our prayer that God will speak to you and make clear what He wants you to do in response to His command to be baptised. It is our desire to be of service to you and if you should have any further questions after you have read this booklet please don't hesitate to contact the Pastor at the Church or telephone 435-3839.

THE PASTORS and MEMBERS
ROSETTENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Biblical Basis for Baptism

Our understanding of baptism finds its Biblical starting point in **Matthew 28: 19 – 20.**

Go and make disciples of all nations
Baptising them in the name of the Father
And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
And teaching them to obey everything
I commanded you.

In these verses Jesus was giving four very clear commandments to His disciples.

1. They were to **go** to where the people were.
2. They were to **make disciples** by leading people to faith in Christ.
3. They were to **baptise** those who had become disciples, and
4. They were to **teach** them.

To us there seems to be a progression here, which is why we insist that people should become Christians (disciples) **before** they are baptised. Our ordinance is therefore called “**Believer’s Baptism**” and not “Adult Baptism” as some erroneously think.

There can be no doubt that this was the pattern followed in the book of Acts, which outlines the practices of the early church. Make a study of the following passages and you will see that in every case, conversion is mentioned prior to baptism.

Acts 2 : 41

The converts on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 8 : 13

The Samaritan converts.

Acts 8 : 13

Simon the Sorcerer (an example of one who professed faith but who was not in fact a true believer).

Acts 8 : 36 – 38

The Ethiopian Eunuch after his meeting with Phillip.

Acts 9 : 17 – 18

Saul of Tarsus after his Damascus road experience.

Acts 10 : 47 – 48

The household of Cornelius perhaps including various age groups, but all able to “hear the message” and “receive the Spirit”.

Acts 12 : 13 – 15

The household of Lydia after she responded to Paul's message.

Acts 16 : 31 – 34

The household of the jailer after the whole family "had come to believe in God".

Acts 18 : 18

The household of Crispus and many Corinthians, after Paul preached to them.

Acts 19 : 5

The Ephesian disciples having already been baptised by John's baptism to signify repentance, were now baptised after hearing about Jesus Christ.

It seems clear from every one of these examples that repentance and faith must precede baptism.

What if I was Baptised as an infant?

There are many folk who really battle with what some would call **re-baptism**, since it seems to be a denial of an infant baptism which in many cases is really meaningful to the person concerned. Quite apart from any debate over the Biblical evidence given above, we would like to stress that Believer's Baptism **is not** a denial of any previous baptism. It is entirely different!

On that previous occasion, if you were baptised as an infant, your parents made promises on your behalf, which hopefully were made your own at the time of your Confirmation. In Baptist Churches we believe that, since our understanding is that baptism must follow conversion, it is important for you to be baptised to declare **your own** faith in Jesus Christ.

What is the Baptist mode of Baptism?

A careful study of the Bible will show you that in the Old Testament, God speaks of "sprinkling" His people and on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as being "poured out" on God's servants. We must therefore, accept that God used both these methods at different times for particular forms of "baptism".

When Jesus came and instituted New Testament baptism, the Greek word used to describe that event can only be translated to "**dip, immerse or submerge**". We therefore take that to mean that all those baptised in the Gospels and Acts were "**immersed**" in water. This is important not only because of the meaning of the word, but because it is entirely consistent with the symbolism of baptism which, according to **Romans 6: 4 – 6**, is that of death, burial and resurrection.

These verses, while actually speaking of Holy Spirit baptism, clearly indicate that our "**going under**" the water is a symbol of dying to the old life and our "**coming out of**"

the water likewise symbolises our rising again to walk in new life in Christ. It is not that the water actually does this for us. There is nothing magical or supernatural about the water in the baptismal pool, but we are declaring something, which has **already happened** to us. It is a way of stating to all those present that we have already reached a point where we buried our old life and became “**new creatures in Christ**”. To use Paul’s phraseology, we are “united with Him”.

This is what makes sense of Jesus’ own baptism. He had no sin and therefore did not need to repent, but He chose to be baptised by John the Baptist (**Matthew 3: 13 – 17**) in order as He put it, “**to fulfil all righteousness.**” He identified Himself with us, even when He did not really need to, and in so doing depicted the very death, burial and resurrection which he Himself was going to pass through in order to take away our sins.

What responsibility is involved in Baptism?

One of the purposes of being baptised in front of a congregation, as we have pointed out, is that we make a public testimony, indicating our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a second important reason why we make this public stand; it is so that the fourth part of the Great Commission can be carried out as well i.e. **teaching**. We are saying to the local congregation, “**here I am, available to be taught and to be used in the service of the Lord, I love**”.

Our union with Christ in baptism also brings about another union – the union with the Body of Christ, which is His church. Baptism and identification with a local group of believers go hand in hand. While we do not force people who are baptised to become members of the Rosettnville Baptist Church it is a logical next step. The person who has been baptised needs further teaching and instruction, as well as opportunities for service, and the local church provides all of these to the mutual blessing of all.

We therefore, invite all those requesting baptism to consider applying for membership. This will give you an opportunity to find out what the Rosettnville Baptist Church believes on important doctrines and you will be guided in the part **you** can play in building the Kingdom of God in this place.

^^

The Service Itself

If after reading this booklet and talking to the Pastor, you believe that God is indeed urging you to be obedient in baptism we will arrange a service at either a morning or evening service as soon as possible.

Public Testimony: At that service, the congregation needs to hear your testimony. This can either be done by your giving a **brief** prepared testimony (**not more than two minutes**) or by the answering of two questions, which the Pastor will put to you, one about your salvation and the other about your desire to be baptised. When you have done this, a certificate will be handed to you before you proceed to change.

Preparation: While the congregation sings a hymn or some songs, the candidate will go through to the dressing rooms behind the Baptistry to prepare for Baptism.

Ladies: wear white gowns, which are provided, by the church. It is recommended that you wear a full petticoat since the water makes the white gowns slightly transparent. It is also advisable to wear white or flesh-coloured underwear or full length costume.

Men: need to provide your own clothes preferably a white shirt with white longs or shorts. Grey longs are an alternative.

All candidates: need to bring your own combs and towels, as well as your necessary change of clothing. You attend the service wearing your normal clothes and can then change back into these afterward.

The Baptism

In the same order in which you were called forward to testify you will line up in the passage outside the change rooms. Some church members will be there to assist you when it is your turn to be baptised, please just hand your towel to them. You then proceed down the steps and stand in front of the (pre-warmed) pool where you stand with the Pastor, your hands folded together on your chest. At this point someone may pray for you. As the Pastor says the words **“We baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** simply take a deep breath and hold it until you are helped out of the water. Thereafter there will be a brief prayer before you leave the pool. As you climb the steps ladies, a towelling cape will be put over your shoulders until you go through the door, at which **your** towel will be returned to you. A power point is available in the Change Room in case you wish to use a hair dryer.

CONCLUSION

You may expect that the Lord will find His own special way of blessing you as a result of your obedience to Him. You must also expect that Satan will not be happy and will try to find ways in the weeks ahead to make you question your salvation and the wisdom of taking this step in baptism. Just cling to the knowledge that you are following a clear commandment of our Lord. It is also worth noting the words of a certain Christian who once said:

Peace and comfort can be found
Nowhere except in simple obedience.

For your spiritual growth and encouragement

GOOD READING FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

Learning and Living the Christian Life
Author: John Blanchard.

Honest to God
Author: Bill Hybels.

Now that I'm a Christian
Author: Ernest Kevan.

Restoring your Spiritual Passion
Author: Gordon MacDonald.

Basic Christianity
Author: John Stott.

Discipleship
Author: David Watson

The Cost of Commitment
The Fight
The Race
Author: John White.

DETAILS OF BAPTISMAL CANDIDATES

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Contact Numbers: (H) _____
(W) _____
(Cell) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Which service?

Male	
Female	

9am	
10:30am	
French	
African Languages	
6pm	

Le

SERVICE DE BAPTEME

ÉGLISE BAPTISTE DE ROSETTENVILLE

Introduction

Nous sommes si heureux de savoir que vous avez senti le seigneur vous inciter à examiner la question du baptême du croyant et nous la considérons un privilège de partager avec vous dans votre préparation pour cet acte d'obéissance. Le but de ce petit livret est de vous fournir l'information au sujet du service de baptême comme pratiqué dans l'église baptiste de Rosettenville.

La première section du livret décrit la base biblique pour l'ordonnance du baptême, comme nous la comprenons du nouveau testament. Nous essayons alors de répondre à la question, que beaucoup de gens posent, « **quoi si j'étais baptisé en tant qu'enfant en bas âge ?** » Ceci est suivi de la déclaration au sujet du mode du baptême, que nous pensons pour être par pleine immersion dans l'eau. La quatrième section du livret regarde votre responsabilité comme une conséquence d'être baptisé. La section finale fournit l'information pratique au sujet du service lui-même.

Comme vous lisez par ce matériel, c'est notre prière que Dieu vous parlera et inciter clairement ce qu'il veut faire pour vous en réponse à sa commande d'être baptisé. Il est notre désir d'être utile à vous et si vous avez toute autre question après que vous ayez lu ce livret veuillez ne pas hésiter à contacter le pasteur à l'église ou au téléphone 435-3839.

LES PASTEURS et LES MEMBRES
ROSETTENVILLE ÉGLISE DE BAPTISTE

Pour votre croissance et encouragement spirituels

BONNE LECTURE POUR LES CHRÉTIENS GRANDISSANTS

Apprenant et vivant la vie chrétienne
Auteur : John Blanchard.

Honnête à Dieu
Auteur : Fature Hybels.

Maintenant que je suis un chrétien
Auteur : Ernest Kevan.

Reconstitution de votre passion spirituelle
Auteur : Gordon MacDonald.

Christianisme de base
Auteur : John Stott.

Discipolat
Auteur : David Watson

Le coût de l'engagement
Le combat
La course
Auteur : Blanc de John.

La base biblique pour le baptême.

Notre compréhension de baptême trouve son point de départ biblique dans **Matthieu 28 : 19 – 20.**

Allez, faites de toutes les nations des disciples, les baptisant au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint Esprit, et enseignez-leur à observer tout ce que je vous ai prescrit. Et voici, je suis avec vous tous les jours, jusqu'à la fin du monde.

Dans ces versets Jésus donnait quatre commandements très clairs à ses disciples.

1. Ils étaient à **allez là** où les gens étaient.
2. Ils étaient à **faites les disciples** par la conduite de personnes à la foi en Christ.

3. Ils étaient à baptiser ceux qui ont eu devenus disciples, et
4. Ils étaient à les enseigner.

À nous ça semble être une progression ici, qui est pourquoi nous insistons sur le fait que les gens devraient devenir des chrétiens (les disciples) **avant** qu'ils soient baptisés. Notre ordonnance s'appelle donc **Le « baptême du croyant »** et pas le « baptême d'adulte » comme certains pensent incorrectement.

Là Il ne peut y avoir aucun doute que c'était le modèle suivi dans le livre des Actes des Apôtres, qui décrit les pratiques de l'église primitive. Effectuez une étude des passages suivants et vous verrez cela dans tous les cas, conversion est mentionné avant le baptême.

Actes 2 : 41

Les convertis le jour de Pentecôte.

Actes 8 : 13

Les convertis de Samaritain.

Actes 8 : 13

Simon le sorcier (un exemple d'un qui a professé la foi mais qui n'était pas en fait un croyant vrai).

Actes 8 : 36 – 38

L'eunuque éthiopien après sa réunion avec Philippe.

Actes 9 : 17 – 18

Saul de tarse après son expérience de route de Damas.

Actes 10 : 47 – 48

Le ménage de Cornélius peut-être comprenant de divers groupes d'âge, mais tout capable « entendent le message » et « recevoir l'esprit ».

Actes 12 : 13 – 15

Le ménage de Lydia après qu'elle ait répondu au message de Paul.

Actes 16 : 31 – 34

Le ménage du geôlier après la famille entière « était venu pour croire en Dieu ».

Actes 18 : 18

Le ménage de Crispus et de beaucoup de Corinthiens, après Paul a prêché à eux.

Actes 19 : 5

Les disciples d'Ephèse ayant déjà été baptisé par le baptême de John pour signifier la repentance, étaient baptisés maintenant après avoir entendu parler de Jésus le Christ.

Il semble clair de chaque de ces exemples que la repentance et la foi doivent précéder le baptême.

Le baptême

Dans le même ordre dans lequel vous êtes appelé vers l'avant pour votre témoignage, vous alignerez dans le passage en dehors des salles de changement. Quelques membres d'église seront là pour vous aider quand c'est votre tour à être baptisé, s'il vous plaît juste donner leurs votre essuie main. Vous alors procédez en bas des étapes et vous tenez dans l'avant de la piscine (préchauffée) où vous vous tenez avec le pasteur, vos mains pliées ensemble sur votre coffre. En ce moment quelqu'un peut prier pour toi. Comme le pasteur dit les mots « **Nous vous baptisons au nom du père, et du fils et du Saint Esprit** » prenez simplement un souffle profond et tenez-le jusqu'à ce que vous soyez aidé hors de l'eau. Ensuite il y aura une brève prière avant que vous laissiez la piscine.

Car lorsque vous monterez des étapes les dames, une écharpe sera mise au-dessus de vos épaules jusqu'à ce que vous passiez par la porte, à laquelle **votre** serviette (essuie main) vous sera retournée. Une prise électrique est disponible dans la salle de changement au cas où vous souhaiteriez utiliser un sèche-cheveux.

CONCLUSION

Vous pouvez compter que le seigneur trouvera son propre chemin spécial de la bénédiction pour vous en raison de votre obéissance à lui. Vous devez également compter que Satan ne sera pas heureux et essayera de trouver des moyens en semaines en avant de vous inciter à remettre en cause votre salut et la sagesse de prendre cette mesure dans le baptême. Accrochez-vous juste à la connaissance que vous suivez un commandement clair de notre seigneur. Il est également à noter les mots d'un certain chrétien qui a par le passé dit :

La paix et le confort peuvent être trouvés

Nulle part excepté dans l'obéissance simple.

Le service lui-même

Si après avoir lu ce livret et avoir parlé au pasteur, vous croyez que Dieu vous invite en effet à être obéissant dans le baptême nous arrangerons un service à un matin ou d'une soirée aussitôt que possible.

Témoignage public : À ce service, la congrégation doit entendre votre témoignage. Ceci peut être fait par vous en donnant bref témoignage préparé (**pas plus de deux minutes**) ou par la réponse de deux questions, que le pasteur posera à vous, un au sujet de votre salut et l'autre au sujet de votre désir d'être baptisé. Quand vous avez fait ceci, un certificat vous sera remis avant que vous procédiez au changement.

Préparation : Tandis que la congrégation chante une hymne ou quelques chansons, le candidat interviendra aux vestiaires derrière le Baptistère de se préparer au baptême.

Dames : portez les robes blanches, qui sont fournies, par l'église. Il est recommandé que vous portiez un plein jupon puisque l'eau rend les robes blanches légèrement transparentes. Il est également recommandé de porter les sous-vêtements blancs ou chair-colorés ou le costume intégral.

Hommes : le besoin de fournir à vos propres vêtements de préférence une chemise blanche le blanc désire ardemment ou court-circuite. Le gris désire ardemment sont une alternative.

Tous les candidats : devez apporter vos propres peignes et serviettes, aussi bien que votre habillement de changement nécessaire. Vous assistez au service portant vos vêtements normaux et pouvez alors changer de nouveau dans ces derniers après.

Quoi si j'étais Baptisé en tant qu'enfant en bas âge ?

Il y a beaucoup de gens qui luttent vraiment avec ce que certains appelleraient **re-baptême**, puisqu'il semble être un démenti d'un baptême infantile qui est dans beaucoup de cas vraiment significatif à la personne concernée. Tout à fait indépendamment de n'importe quelle discussion au-dessus de l'évidence biblique donnée ci-dessus, nous voudrions soumettre à une contrainte le baptême de ce croyant **n'est pas** un démenti de tout baptême précédent. Il est entièrement différent !

À cette occasion précédente, si vous étiez baptisé en tant qu'enfant en bas âge, vos parents faits les promesses en votre nom, lesquelles si tout va bien ont été faites par vous même à l'heure de votre confirmation. Aux églises de baptiste nous croyons que, puisque notre arrangement est que le baptême doit suivre la conversion, il est important que vous soyez baptisé pour déclarer **votre propre** foi en Jésus le Christ.

Quel est le mode de baptiste du baptême ?

Une étude soigneuse de la bible vous montrera que dans l'Ancien testament, Dieu parle de « aspersion » ses peuples et du jour de Pentecôte, l'Esprit Saint est parlée de comme « étant versé dehors » sur les serviteurs de Dieu. Nous devons donc, accepter que Dieu a employé ces deux méthodes à différentes heures pour les formes particulières de « baptême ».

Quand Jésus est venu instituer le baptême de nouveau testament, le mot grec employé pour décrire que l'événement peut seulement être traduit à la « **immersion, immergent ou submergent** ». Nous prenons donc cela pour vouloir dire que tout ceux baptisé dans les évangiles et les actes étaient « **immergé** » dans l'eau. C'est important non seulement en raison de la signification du mot, mais parce qu'il est entièrement conformé au symbolisme du baptême selon lequel, **Romans 6 : 4 – 6**, c'est de la mort, de l'enterrement et de la résurrection.

Ces versets, tout en parlant réellement du baptême du saint d'esprit, indiquent clairement que notre « **allant sous** » l'eau est un symbole de la mort à la vieille vie et notre « **sortant** » de l'eau les symbolises de même notre lever encore à marcher dans la nouvelle vie en Christ. Ce n'est pas que l'eau fait réellement ceci pour nous. Il n'y a

rien magique ou surnaturel au sujet de l'eau dans la piscine baptismale, mais nous déclarons quelque chose, qui a **déjà produit** à nous. C'est une manière d'énoncer à tous les participants que nous avons déjà atteint un point où nous avons enterré notre vieille vie et sommes devenus « **nouvelles créatures en Christ** ». Pour employer la phraséologie de Paul, nous « sommes unis à lui ».

C'est ce qui donne le sens au baptême de Jésus. Il n'a eu aucun péché et donc n'a pas eu besoin de se repentir, mais il a choisi d'être baptisé par Jean-Baptiste (**Matthieu 3 : 13 – 17**) dans l'ordre comme il l'a mis, « **pour accomplir toute la justice.** » Il s'est identifié avec nous, même lorsqu'il n'a pas vraiment eu besoin, et a ce faisant dépeint la mort, l'enterrement et la résurrection mêmes qu'il lui-même allait passer à travers afin d'emporter nos péchés.

Quelle responsabilité est impliquée dans le baptême ?

Un des buts d'être baptisé devant une congrégation, comme nous avons précisé, est que nous faisons un témoignage public, indiquant notre foi dans le seigneur Jésus Christ. Il y a un deuxième motif important pourquoi nous faisons ce stand public ; il est de sorte que la quatrième partie de la grande Commission puisse être aussi bien effectuée c.-à-d. **enseignement**. Nous disons à la congrégation locale, « **ici je suis, disponible d'être enseigné et être employé dans le service du seigneur, j'aime** ».

Notre union avec le Christ dans le baptême provoque également une autre union - l'union avec le corps du Christ, qui est son église. Le baptême et l'identification avec un groupe local de croyants vont de pair. Tandis que nous ne forçons pas les gens qui sont baptisé pour devenir des membres de l'église de baptiste de Rosettenville qu'il est un prochain pas logique. La personne qui a été baptisé à besoins des plus enseignements et l'instruction, aussi bien que des occasions pour le service, et l'église locale fournit tous ces derniers à la bénédiction mutuelle de tous.

Nous, invitons donc tout ceux qui demandent le baptême à considérer faire une demande pour l'adhésion. Ceci te donnera une occasion de découvrir ce que l'église baptiste de Rosettenville croit sur des doctrines importantes et vous serez guidé dans la part que **vous** pouvez jouer en établissant le royaume de Dieu dans cet endroit.

^^

Wedding Ceremony



Rosettenville Baptist Church

INTRODUCTION

Your wedding day will without doubt be one of the most important days of your life. To assist you to prepare meaningfully for that day, and for the days, which follow, we will require you to attend pre-marital counselling. During that counselling, we will discuss with you the details of the actual wedding ceremony, and this booklet outlines various options for you to consider. While a few aspects are legally prescribed and cannot be changed, there is nevertheless some room for making the service special to you.

You will therefore find a sample Order of Service, which can be adjusted to suit your personal preferences. Then you will find a few alternative sets of Personal Vows and you will need to select one of these. An alternative additional section in the Ring Ceremony will also require your decision.

Some couples like to include the Candle Ceremony and sample wording (to be said by the Marriage Officer) is included for your information and decision. The booklet concludes by offering a few suggested hymns, but any others are quite acceptable. It is our sincere prayer that this booklet will help to make your special day even better!

God bless you.

The Pastors and Members
Rosettenville Baptist Church.

Revised May 2012

SAMPLE

ORDER OF SERVICE

PROCESSIONAL
(e.g. Bridal Chorus, Entry of Queen Sheba)

HYMN 1

SCRIPTURE and MESSAGE

PLEDGING OF VOWS
(see below)

RING CEREMONY
(see below)

PRONOUNCEMENT
(usually kneeling)

CANDLE CEREMONY
(optional)

ITEM
(optional)

HYMN 2
(optional)

SIGNING OF REGISTER

RECESSIONAL
(eg. Wedding March, Trumpet Voluntary)

NOTE: If you would prefer a different order (for example, the message after the vows), please feel free to discuss this with the Marriage Officer.

PLEDGING OF VOWS

The legal vows are prescribed, but there are some alternatives for the personal vows. Kindly select A, B or C and advise the Marriage Officer accordingly. These vows will normally be repeated after the Marriage Officer but may be said from memory if you wish.

VOWS 1

Groom: I call on this congregation to witness that I take youto be my wife; to have and to hold from this day on, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, for as long as we both shall live.

Bride: I call on this congregation to witness that I take you to be my husband to have and to hold from this day on, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, for as long as we both shall live.

VOWS 2:

Groom: I take you now as my helper, friend and wife. I will care for you, lead you and guide you. I will provide for all your needs. I give myself unreservedly and unconditionally to be your husband. I covenant to remain faithful to you. I commit to you a love without limit that is given to us from the heart of our Father God.

Bride: I take you to be my husband. I pledge before God and man to love you, respect you and submit to you as to the Lord. Wherever you go, I will go. I will always support you in the ministry to which God has called you. With God's help, I will be a godly wife, encourager and best friend.

VOWS 3:

Groom: I take you as my friend and wife. I will care for you, and lead and guide you. I give myself to you without reserve and promise unconditionally, with God's help, to love you and remain faithful to you as long as we both live. I commit to you a life of love. I promise to respect you, encourage you, and be your best friend.

Bride: I take you to be my husband and friend. I promise before God and man to love you and honour you, and submit to you as to the Lord. I will be your companion and will support you in all that God calls us to do. With God's help, I commit my life to you, to love you, inspire you and be your closest friend.

RING CEREMONY

Kindly select A (with or without the optional response) or B and advise the Marriage Officer accordingly. You may repeat this after the Marriage Officer or say it by memory, whichever you choose.

OPTION A:

Groom: I put this ring on your finger as a continual sign that I have taken you to be my wife under the solemn pledges we have made today, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Bride: (Optional) I receive this ring with the pledge that where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay; your people will be my people and your God my God.

Bride: I put this ring on your finger as a continual sign that I have taken you to be my husband under the solemn pledges we have made today, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

OPTION B:

Broom: I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you. As I place it on your finger, may it always be a tangible sign of my unending commitment to you.

Bride: (Optional) I receive this ring with the pledge that where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay; your people will be my people and your God my God.

Bride: I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you. As I place it on your finger, may it always be a tangible sign of my unending commitment to you.

CANDLE CEREMONY

Marriage Officer: (Optional) The two outside candles of the centre candelabra represent the lives of and up to this moment. They are two distinct lights. To bring bliss and happiness to their home, there must be a merging of these two lights into one. This is what the Lord meant when He said, "A man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." From now on their thoughts shall be for each other, their joys and sorrows will be shared. As they each take a candle and together light the centre one, they will extinguish their own candle, thus letting the centre one represent the union of their lives into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, so it stands as a united testimony to their unity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

COST OF THE USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

The following are the prices for the use of the facilities of the Baptist Church Rosettenville.

Facility	Member	Non-member
Hire of the Church	Nil	R400-00
Hire of the Hall	Nil	R600-00 (R1 000-00 for both Church and hall. Please note that this includes the use of chairs and tables in the hall.)
Minister's fees (ceremony)	R150-00	R500-00
Minister's fees (legal) (per minister)	R200-00	R500-00
Minister's fees (both)	R350-00	R750-00
Sound System Operator	R200-00	R200-00
Organist fees	R200-00	R200-00
Janitor	R200-00	R200-00

A R500-00 refundable deposit is required for the use of cutlery & crockery.

Should you wish to make a booking for the facilities, you are kindly requested to contact Glynis in the Church office 011-436-0918.

Please note:

No alcohol or tobacco may be used on the premises.

Premises must be left clean and everyone must have left by 10pm

ROSETTENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

**REQUEST FORM FOR THE
USE OF FACILITIES**

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:
TELEPHONE NUMBER:
TYPE OF FUNCTION:
DATE OF FUNCTION:
TIME OF FUNCTION:
DURATION OF FUNCTION: CHURCH HALL

2. COSTS:

There will be costs involved as decided by the Church executive. Details are attached.

3. PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

3.1. Arrangements must be made with the Church well in advance to ensure that the facilities can be prepared at a time which does not clash with the various Church activities.

3.2. The Church does not provide flowers for weddings. You are requested, therefore, to make your own arrangements in this regard, and to organise the removal of the flowers after the ceremony. One arrangement to be left to grace the Sunday services.

3.3. The throwing of confetti is permitted, but this must take place OUTSIDE of the Church complex and not in the vestibule. The use of rose petals is encouraged as an alternative.

3.4. Please note that the setting out of the tables and chairs and the cleaning up of the facilities is not the responsibility of the Church Executive, members or staff. Please ensure that the entire complex is left as it is found.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

1. TUNE: "O Perfect Love"

O perfect Love, all human thoughts transcending,
Lowly we kneel in prayer before Thy throne,
That theirs may be the love which knows no ending
Whom Thou for evermore dost join in one.

O perfect Life, be Thou their full assurance
O tender charity, and steadfast faith,
Of patient hope, and quiet brave endurance,
With childlike trust that fears no pain nor death.

Grant them the joy which brightens earthly sorrow:
Grant them the peace which calms all earthly strife,
And to life's day the glorious unknown morrow
That dawns upon eternal love and life.

2. TUNE: "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee:
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not,
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter, springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

3. TUNE: "Morning Has Broken"

Vows have been spoken, prayers have been offered,
Ring as a token placed on the hand.
Now with elation spirits are lifted
In celebration - Joyful we stand.

Two lives are binding each to the other,
In Your love finding that they are one:
Keep them and mould them, let joy enfold them,
In your peace hold them till life is done.

Their marriage brighten with understanding,
Their sorrows lighten by Your care,
With trust increasing in Your love's blessing.
May hope unceasing be their share.

Praise and thanksgiving lips are now voicing,
Lord of the living, God above!
For all around us hearts are rejoicing,
As You surround us with Your love.

CHURCH REGULATIONS

1. Premarital counselling is usually required for all couples.
2. Couples need to bring Identity Documents and where necessary, court orders or parental consent, to the first counselling session.
3. The Church has a very strict policy on the remarriage of divorcees and this may only be done when the couple is well known to the marriage Officer and when all the criteria laid down by the church have been met.
4. All couples must complete an application form and the required fees must be paid prior to the wedding.
5. People may participate in the service only with the Marriage Officer's prior permission.
6. Confetti, streamers or petals may not be thrown in the inner foyer. Petals are the preferred suggestion by the church, because of the easier clean up.
7. Please make provision to prevent wax spillage on candles used.
8. Photographers must make arrangements with the Marriage Officer prior to the service to avoid distractions.

BOOKS YOU SHOULD READ

LARRY CRABB The Marriage Builder
Navpress - 1982

BILL AND LYNNE HYBELS Fit to be tied.
Zondervan Publishing House - 1991.

TIM & BEVERLEY LaHAYE The Act of Marriage
Christian Art
Publishers - 1989

CLIFFORD & JOYCE PENNER The Gift of Sex
Word Incorporated
1981.

CHARLES SWINDOLL Strike the Original
Match
Multnomah Press 1980.

ED WHEAT Intended for Pleasure
Christian Art Publishers.

PLEASE NOTE

1. Widows and widowers must produce a death certificate from the Master of the Supreme Court.
2. Minors require the consent of both parents to marry.
3. Bride and Groom must provide the marriage officer with 2 (Two) **passport photos** each.
4. Bride and Groom must show the originals and provide the marriage officer with **2 (two) photocopies of their RSA ID documents**. If no ID documents are available, then 2 (Two) photocopies of temporary resident OR refugee papers AND passports AND the originals.
5. The bridal couple must ask the two **witnesses** to provide **2 (two) photocopies of their RSA ID OR 2 (two) photocopies of their Passports AND the originals**.
6. **2 (Two) photocopies** of the Letter from the relevant Embassy stating that the couple are not previously married AND the original letter.
7. Information of highest educational level completed by bride and groom.
8. Current occupation of bride and groom.
9. Future physical address once married.
10. Full form to be completed in the centre of the booklet.
11. Please bring wet-wipes to the marriage ceremony to clean fingers after finger-prints of all, are taken for the register.
12. If the Marriage Officer desired is not the Church's Pastor, a letter supporting this application must be attached.
13. Applications for the use of the facilities by non-members is subject to approval by the Church Executive.

14. Your signature below indicates an acceptance of the conditions for the use of the facilities, which require that there will be no alcohol, no dancing, excessively loud music and no smoking.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

FOR OFFICIAL USE
APPROVAL GRANTED
ORGANIST
CARETAKER ADVISED
FLOWER CONVENOR ADVISED
FEEES RECEIVED
REHERSAL DATE

APPLICATION
FOR A
MARRIAGE
AT
ROSETTENVILLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

HUSBANDS SURNAME: _____
WEDDING DATE: _____
WEDDING TIME: _____

BRIDEGROOM

SURNAME:
FIRST NAMES:
IDENTITY NUMBER:
DATE OF BIRTH: Day Month Year
COUNTRY OF BIRTH:
CITIZENSHIP:
POSTAL ADDRESS:

CODE:
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE: CODE:
HOME:
WORK:
CELL:
STATUS: (eg. Batchelor, Widower, Divorcee)

BRIDE

SURNAME:	Maiden Name:	
FIRST NAMES:		
IDENTITY NUMBER: (If no ID No. then Passport Number):		
DATE OF BIRTH: Day	Month	Year
COUNTRY OF BIRTH:		
CITIZENSHIP:		
POSTAL ADDRESS:		
CODE:		
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:		
TELEPHONE: CODE:		
HOME:		
WORK:		
CELL:		
STATUS: (eg. Spinster, Widow, Divorcee)		

Under which surname does the bride wish henceforth to be recorded in the population register? _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS (after marriage)

SERVICE DETAILS

MARRIAGE OFFICER DESIRED:
ORGANIST REQUIRED:
HYMNS: (1)
(2)
PROCESSIONAL REQUIRED:
RECESSIONAL REQUIRED:
OTHER ITEMS:

VOWS: 1. 2. 3. (Please circle your preference)
RING VOWS: Option A. B. C.
CANDLE CEREMONY REQUIRED:
YES NO

RECEPTION DETAILS (if held on church premises)

NAME OF CATERER:
CATERER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
KITCHEN REQUIRED:
YES NO
NUMBER OF GUESTS:
TIME FUNCTION WILL END:
(Church ruling: to vacate the premise by 10pm for the sake of our neighbours)

Appendix 12

POVERTY and the BIBLE

5 October 2014 BU Assembly

Introduction

The issue of poverty is complex. To illustrate this, maybe a real life example will help: We have a couple in their early 60's who receive a combined state pension of +R2 700pm. They are members of Rosettenville Baptist Church. Both are wonderfully saved and have served, at times, as church bus drivers and worship team members. Both of them smoke over R800pm worth of cigarettes and thus cannot come out on their pension. We first helped with food parcels, freedom from nicotine dependency courses, etc.

Then a brother-in-law of theirs' invited the husband to join him begging on a busy street corner - from 6-00am to 9am for 5 days a week (weather permitting), where he makes over R4000pm.

Their combined income is now over R7000pm. For the past 2 years – they have since bought a new TV / hi-fi and a kitchen appliance...is it wrong? They left the church when another member said “No, we are not giving to you at the corner.”

What were we to do?

Two pictures my son gave me show 2 solutions to the same problem of a person in a hole. One picture has the ladder in the hole with the person in distress and the second picture has the ladder with the rescuer... The question we need to ask as we look at these two pictures is “Where is the ladder?” That will determine the type of aid given.

So let us look at God's word.

James considered the poor to be worthy of esteem, and the rich as those who should humble themselves (Jas 1:9–10). (Thornhill, A. C)

He admonished his readers to care for the orphans, widows (Jas 1:27), and needy (Jas 2:15–16; see also 1 John 3:7–19).

James also warned against favouring those who were wealthy or powerful over the needy (Jas 2:1–7), and he condemned those who took advantage of the poor (Jas 5:1–6).

Some people think that when Jesus said “The poor you always have with you” (John 12:8) to mean that you are allowed to neglect the poor. As if Jesus were saying, “Oh, well, we always have poverty in our midst, so don't worry about it.”
NO!

Jesus recognized the ongoing struggles of poverty, not to ignore it, but to call all Christians to carefully deal with the problem.

The Bible gives us at least four major ways of categorizing poor people. These are 4 types of material poverty. (R.C. Sproul has helped my thinking here)

There are more than two thousand verses about the poor and poverty in the Bible, yet most evangelical pulpits are strangely silent on a subject that God cares about so deeply.

1. Poverty as a Result of Laziness or "Lifestyle".

The Bible speaks of those who are poor because they are lazy, refusing to work. This slothful group receives sharp criticism from God. "Doing nothing" comes under God's holy judgment.

Karl Barth (following the early church fathers) listed laziness as one of the primary and foundational sins of man, along with pride and dishonesty.

It is to the slothful that God says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways" (Prov. 6:6), shaming the lazy by telling them to look to insects to learn something important.

It is this group Paul undoubtedly has in mind when he says, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" (2 Th 3:10).

The best thing you can do for a lazy person leading an undisciplined life is test them by giving them a job and pay them in food, not money. (e.g. to pick up papers in your street, dig holes, run errands, etc.)

Since the Bible criticizes the lazy poor, some have jumped to the conclusion that laziness and poverty is the same thing.

Some people think that poverty is always and everywhere a sign of laziness.

Thus, the poor can be ignored because "they" need to be left to suffer their "just penalty for laziness."

Such an attitude is ignorant of the distinctions the Bible forces us to make. There are other reasons for poverty.

2. Poverty as a Result of Disaster.

The Scriptures recognize that many are left in poverty because of the ravages of disease or disasters.

The man born blind, the person left crippled by an accident, the farmer whose crops have been destroyed by flood or drought—all of these need help to improve their situation. These people are victims of circumstances not of their own making.

For these poor, the Bible says we need an attitude of compassion and genuine charity. It is the responsibility of the people of God to see to it that the suffering of these people is reduced.

They are to be a priority concern of the church. These can be the hungry who are to be fed, the naked who are to be clothed.

This is where we each can have a poor fund (starting with 3% of income) and help those in crisis, or a benevolence fund in the church for the genuinely needy,

food parcels, Harvest festival. Paradigm Shift - entrepreneurial training - a “hand up” or Industrial sewing classes

Josh Billings (1818 – 1885) humourist “I am a poor man, but I have this consolation: I am poor by accident, not by design.”

Bono was in Scotland at a conference talking about African Poverty. Bono said every time he claps his hand, a child in Africa dies. From the back of the crowd a Scotsman shouted "Then stop clapping your hands!" - Robin Williams

3. Poverty as a Result of Exploitation.

These poor are oppressed. This is the poverty that is the result of unjust laws and unfair systems. This poverty is seen in the ones who live out the mournful slogan, “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”

This group suffers injustice because they live in a society where the social and political institutions, and especially the judicial systems, favour the rich and the powerful and leave the poor without somebody to speak up for them.

This was the situation in Israel in the eighth century BC, when God thundered against His people. The Word of God came via prophetic criticism that demanded justice and righteousness in a time when the poor were being sold “for a pair of shoes.” This was Israel’s status when in bondage to Egypt.

This kind of poverty moves God Himself as He hears the cries and groans of His oppressed people and says “Let my people go!” Such injustice and inequity should always move God’s church. This is the church’s basis for necessary and legitimate social action.

Our ministry to refugees at RBC enabling refugees to get proper papers from Home Affairs, is one small e.g. (A further example - Erin Brockovick acting against water contamination. Etc.)

4. Poverty as a Result of Personal Sacrifice.

These poor people are called poor “for righteousness’ sake.” This group, like Jesus Himself, is made up of people who are voluntarily poor.

Their poverty is a result of a conscious decision to choose lifestyles or jobs with little or no financial benefit. This class of poor is promised special blessings from God.

They are poor because the priorities of their lives may not fit in with the values of the culture in which they live.

There are many examples of this type of voluntary poverty

Like Jonathan Edwards, who wrote in almost microscopic print to save paper because of his tiny pastor’s salary (ultimately costing the church and universities millions of Rands, later, to retrieve and reconstruct the priceless treasures of his words);

Martin Luther, who gave up a wealthy career to wear the poor clothes of the monk; like many Baptist pastors who if they did not fast on Tuesdays and Thursdays, would really starve to death!!

Or to take the example of the modern businessman who does not accept the "big contract," because his conscience warns him about hidden unethical elements.

C.T. Studd. - He was born into a very wealthy English family, and became an excellent Cricketer, playing both county and international cricket for England, but he gave it all up to go into the mission field. (India, China and Africa.) -

When returning back to the Mission Field (in his seventies, I believe), and when asked why he was doing it, he replied, "If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to make for Him."

"Voluntary poverty was the marked condition of Jesus (see Luke 9:58) ... The reason we hear so little about the inner spiritual side of external poverty is that few of us are in the place of Jesus, or of Paul." - Chambers, Oswald.

Conclusion

A lady was throwing a party for her granddaughter, and had pulled out all the stops – a caterer, band, and a hired clown. Just before the party started, two Hobos knocked at the door looking for food. Trying to apply the Word of God, the woman told them that she would give them a meal if they would help chop down some small trees for her.

Gratefully, they headed to the back of the house. The guests arrived, and all was going well, with the children having a wonderful time. But the clown hadn't shown up. After half an hour, the clown finally called to say that he was stuck in traffic, and would probably not make the party at all.

The woman was very disappointed and unsuccessfully tried to entertain the children herself. She happened to look out the window and saw one of the hobos doing summersaults across the lawn. She watched in awe as he swung from tree branches, did mid-air flips, and leaped high in the air.

She spoke to the other tramp and said, 'What your friend is doing is absolutely marvellous. I have never seen such agility. Would your friend consider repeating this performance for the children at the party? I would pay him R500!' The other hobo said, 'Well, I dunno. Let me ask him. "HEY WILLIE! FOR R500, WOULD YOU CHOP OFF ANOTHER TOE?"'

What can we learn from these four types of poverty?

Firstly, we should be warned not to lump all the poor together in one package. We must resist the temptation to generalize about poverty.

An equally insistent warning must be voiced about the same kind of unjust grouping of the rich.

It would be unfair to say that all rich people are corrupt, as if all riches were achieved through evil means or through exploiting the poor. Not all rich people are greedy or ruthless.

To accuse the rich without understanding would be to condemn people like Abraham, Job, David, and Joseph of Arimathea, or Le Tourneau, Cadbury and Truett Cathy of Chic-Fil-A

Francis A. Schaeffer says: "There is the question of the compassionate use of wealth. This means two things: first, making it with justice; and then using it with real compassion.

"... I think when Christians get to heaven and they speak of how much they gave to missions, to build schools, and so on, that the Lord is going to tell them it would have been better if they had had less money to give and had made their money with justice."

Second, we must avoid trying to glamorize poverty based on the Bible.

Church history, has had repeated efforts to make poverty a necessary condition for entrance into the kingdom of God.

That would be a form of works righteousness whereby the poor have an automatic ticket into heaven. An old trick of the cults!

This would say we are made right with God by poverty and not made right simply by faith.

Third, we must remember that God cares deeply about human poverty and the suffering that goes with it.

Your duty is to be just as concerned about poverty as God Himself.

As long as the poor are with us, we are called to find ways of serving them, not only through charity, but by seeking and working for the change of social and political structures that enslave, oppress, and exploit.

In practical terms this means not only speaking out for the needs of the least privileged members of society but also teaching the coming generation to care about their concerns. If we can encourage a new generation to love generosity and justice, we have done our job well.

By Rev Darryl Soal

Appendix 13

Policy for RBC based on "POVERTY and the BIBLE"

When Jesus said "The poor you always have with you" (John 12:8) Jesus recognized the ongoing struggles of poverty, not to ignore it, but to call all Christians to carefully deal with the problem.

1. Poverty as a Result of Laziness or "Lifestyle".

"Doing nothing" comes under God's holy judgment. To the slothful God says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways" (Prov. 6:6), shaming the lazy by telling them to look to insects to learn something important. It is this group Paul undoubtedly has in mind when he says, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" (2 Th 3:10).

- h) At RBC we will NOT give food or money to people we know to be lazy or those choosing or addicted to substances like alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, prostitution or gambling, so as not to create or continue dependency. The giving of cash will only be in exceptional circumstances like medication and evictions.
- i) We will advertise jobs on the notice board, to help those who want to work.
- j) We will put the names and jobs wanted of members in the bulletin.
- k) We will offer job creating courses as we have people gifted in this area and willing to promote entrepreneurial skills courses like Paradigm Shift at RBC.
- l) We will teach and encourage members not to give to beggars, etc, but rather create small jobs (like picking up papers in your street, digging holes, running errands, etc, in return for food only.)
- m) We will teach and encourage members to work hard and prove themselves faithful in all jobs.
- n) We will offer courses like "Celebrate Recovery" or "Quitting for good" to help break with dependency on things other than Christ as we have people gifted in this area and willing to run the ministry.

2. Poverty as a Result of Disaster.

Where someone in the church (or community to which we can effectively assist) are left in poverty because of the ravages of disease or disasters. We need an attitude of compassion and genuine charity. RBC will endeavour to see to it that the suffering of these people is reduced as we are financially able.

- g) The "hungry that are to be fed" include those who have a crisis, like a mother of young children, in hospital and we will seek to organize meals for the family, where there is no supporting family.

- h) The naked who are to be clothed, will be helped from the Box Boutique, where there is need and opportunity.
- i) Benevolence vouchers from the benevolence fund will be given to those in the church in a sudden crisis.
- j) Food parcels from the Harvest Festival, will be given to those in the church in a sudden crisis and those struggling financially like widows and orphans.
- k) RBC will help the Elderly from the Irene Wilson Fund who fall within the ambit of that policy.
- l) All the above as we have as we have gifted in this area and willing to promote the ministry.

3. Poverty as a Result of Exploitation.

This is the poverty that is the result of unjust laws and unfair systems. Such injustice and inequity should move God's church. RBC will consider necessary and legitimate social action and justice projects.

- a) The ministry to Refugees Project to help congregants get their papers in order at Home Affairs, is one such project. (I am not sure we should include this – it was agreed to run this as a 6 month project I think).
- b) RBC will prayerfully consider justice projects that the Lord brings to our attention through members who wish to pursue them

4. Poverty as a Result of Personal Sacrifice.

These poor people are called poor “for righteousness’ sake,” who are voluntarily poor. Their poverty is a result of a conscious decision to choose lifestyles or jobs with little or no financial benefit.

- a) RBC will help here where requested, on a case by case basis and to the extent that finances allow.

Conclusion

Firstly, we must resist the temptation to generalize about poverty.

Second, we must avoid trying to glamorize poverty based on the Bible.

Third, we must remember that God cares deeply about human poverty and the suffering that goes with it.

- a) A small Benevolence Committee will be formed (which includes at least two Elders, 2 Deacons and 2 representatives of the BWD) to assess the needs presented as outlined above and act as guided by this policy.
- b) Where appropriate, those asking for assistance will be referred to the Committee and asked to fill out the RBC Assistance Questionnaire which must be approved by the Church Executive.
- c) The Committee will assist where resources are available, by consensus of the majority, but not less than four of the committee. The Church Spot

Committee can be consulted where necessary number of committee members cannot meet.

- d) Records must be kept of each person assisted and the nature of assistance given as well as the date of the assistance.
- e) The church will provide for a benevolence allowance in the annual budget.
- f) A monthly report must be provided for the church Executive of assistance given

30 March 2015

Appendix 14

ASSISTANCE QUESTIONNAIRE – STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Details of your accommodation

Is your accommodation: Rented _____ Old Age Home _____

Owned _____ Other _____

Do you live alone Yes _____ No _____

If no, state whom you share accommodation with _____

Who pays for the accommodation _____

Details of your income

State Pension _____ Private pension _____ amount _____

Employed _____ amount earned _____

List any other income _____

Details of your monthly expenses (include basic items AND non essentials you buy e.g. cigarettes, lotto tickets, alcohol, etc

Church – related details

Are you a member of the church Yes _____ No _____

If no, how long have you been attending the church _____

Do you attend church weekly Yes _____ No _____

If no, please state reasons _____

Are you involved in any church activities other than attending Sunday Services

Yes _____ No _____

Please state details of your involvement _____

What do you think your spiritual gifts and talents are and how do you use them within the church _____

Do you tithe to the church Yes ___ Weekly ___ Monthly _____ No

—

Family

Do you have any children or grandchildren

Names: _____

If yes, where do they live and what are their contact numbers _____

Do they assist you financially Yes ___ (amount) _____ No ___

If no, have you ever approached them for assistance, why or why not _____

Do they assist you in any other way _____

Do you have any other living relatives Yes ___ No ___

Names & relationship

If yes, where do they live and what are their contact numbers _____

Do they assist you financially Yes ___ (amount) _____ No ___

If no, have you ever approached them for assistance, why or why not _____

Do they assist you in any other way _____

Details of assistance

Please state what type of assistance you are looking for

Food____

Visitation____

Money____ (please state how much and what it will be used for) _____

Counselling____

Transport____

Maintenance (give details) _____

Medical____

Other (be specific) _____

Have you received assistance from our church before Yes____ No ____

If yes, when _____

Details of how we have assisted you _____

Have you approached any other church or organisation for assistance Yes____ No____

If yes, whom, when and what assistance was given to
you _____

Contact person's details: _____

I, _____ hereby certify that the above
information is truthful, and fully correct. I understand that falsifying information will
disqualify me from further help.

Date _____

Signature _____

Church Representative(s) _____

Appendix 15

Planning for a Funeral or Memorial Service

Introduction

We, as Pastors of Rosettenville Baptist Church, extend our deepest sympathy to you all in this time of grief. We will seek to assist you in the grieving process over the long term and also to help you plan the funeral or memorial service. This brochure seeks to give some information that may be of assistance to you. As Pastors, we find that, as the initial shock wears off, the painful realities and practicalities have to be worked through. Few people know what to do when a death occurs.

First things

Bear in mind that God knows all things. God's Word assures us that He will comfort those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4) He knows how you feel because His Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross of Calvary. The good news is that Jesus has now conquered death by rising from the dead on the third day, as a prototype of what is to come when Christ returns for the second time. So start with prayer and talk to God about what you are facing, and ask Him to help you with all the arrangements.

1. Contact your doctor, who will have to certify death, to be able to give you a death certificate.
2. Call an undertaker as soon as possible so that they can arrange to transfer the deceased to their own premises.
3. Make a time to meet with the Funeral Director representing the undertakers to plan the details and the time of the funeral (only fix a time in consultation with the undertakers, your wider family and the Pastors)
4. The undertaker will require: -
 - The deceased's identity document, or some official document giving date of birth and full names.
 - The place of birth.
 - The place of death.
 - Details of any funeral policies, prepaid funeral contracts and any pension received.
 - The "Medical Certificate" issued by the doctor.
5. Bear in mind that, as time goes by, the funeral costs will not be the only costs expected to be paid, and it may be prudent to keep these costs as low as possible. Beware of the subtle pressures that may be brought to bear on you to go for an expensive funeral, which may leave you seriously in debt. Shop around for the best service and price, the coffin alone can be a huge outlay of resources.
6. The undertaker will ask you: -
 - Whether you want a burial or a cremation?
 - Where you want the funeral or memorial service to be conducted?
 - Whom you wish to have officiating at the service?
 - Whom you wish to act as pallbearers?
 - Would you like funeral service programs?
 - Do you require notices to be placed in the local newspapers?
 - Do you want floral tributes on the coffin and in the church?
 - What should happen to any floral tributes after the funeral?
 - Would you prefer to have donations in lieu of flowers, and to which organization or charity?
 - With a cremation, what you wish to do with the ashes?

Each item carries a cost with it.

To Prepare for the Funeral or Memorial Service

The Pastors will endeavour to make the service as personal as you wish and make it a service meaningful for the relatives, family and friends who are mourning. The Pastor/s conducting the funeral need to know: -

1. Full names of the deceased.
2. Time and place of the funeral (and burial, if necessary)
3. Names of immediate close family who hope to be present at the service.
4. Any hymns or songs you feel may be appropriate in the service. (e.g. Amazing Grace, Abide with me, How Great Thou Art, Nearer my God to Thee, The Lord is my Shepherd, What a Friend we have in

Jesus, My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, Take my life and let it be, Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah, etc.) Usually two or three verses of a hymn are sufficient under these stressful circumstances. Most undertakers have the words for the hymns, or the Pastors can assist with this.

5. Is there any particular Scripture passage that you would like read in the service, which may have had special meaning to the one who has passed on?
6. Do you want a Tribute given of the deceased? If so, by whom and what would you like said? Personal tributes and letters may be read by the person doing the tribute, as he/she feels capable and willing to include those items, before or after the tribute. Other items can be included in the service as would be fitting and appropriate according to the circumstances of a Christian service. (E.g. solos, song items, poems, etc.)
7. To whom do you wish thanks to be expressed in the service?
8. Would you like a tea in the church hall or at a private venue?
9. Do you wish to travel to the graveside as a large procession after the service, or have a private graveside service before the service, or at another time?
10. The costs involved for the use of church facilities are given below and need to be paid in to the church-office secretary in the mornings at 10 Albert Street, Telephone 435 3982 (Please do not hand money to anybody at the church or in the hall)

The Service

The service itself will be made up of appropriate words of comfort from the Word of God, prayers, the tribute, a short message based on what God has said to us from the Bible, the thanks, the committal of the deceased into the care of God and the benediction. Where the coffin is in the service, the Pall Bearers will then be called forward to carry the coffin out of the service at the end. In the case of a private burial or cremation the people will bid farewell to the hearse containing the body. Otherwise everyone will be invited to follow the hearse to the cemetery, with the headlights of their vehicle switched on.

Children are welcome in the service if their parents feel it is appropriate.

Catering

There is a small team of retired ladies who can provide:-

1. Tea and coffee in the hall after the service, as a ministry from the church.
2. The family can then bring eats if they so desire.
3. Alternatively, our ladies can assist with some sandwiches and sausage-rolls to accompany the tea. Please refer to cost schedule. (Any monies that might not be used after deductions of expenses, will be used for the annual Christmas Party for a crèche from an under-privileged area.)

Could you please estimate as accurately as possible how many people you are expecting at the tea, for planning purposes? Any left over foodstuffs are given to the family to take home. Please note, that no alcohol or tobacco may be used on the premises.

Flowers

The church asks that the flowers in the front of the service be left for the Sunday worship services, if the Funeral or Memorial service is held towards the end of a week, or that the flowers are taken by the family or given to some needy situation. There are florists that the church can recommend and their number can be provided. You can then make arrangements personally with the florist concerned.

The Janitor

The Janitor will need to be informed whether you wish to have the coffin to be in the service, outside the service or not at the service at all. He also needs to know the time for any possible viewing before the service, the time of the service and the time of the tea. He will then seek to serve as a car-watch for those vehicles that may be parked outside of the secure parking lot, during the service and the tea. If possible, ask those coming, to park inside, in the 60 parking bays, for security reasons. All cleaning and locking up afterwards will be left with him. Please inform the Pastor of your preferences in this regard.

After the Service

Once the service is over, a time of relief can be experienced, and most other people get back to their normal routines, leaving you to grieve in private, which can be very lonely. Allow others to help where they can. Keep your emotional-, social- and spiritual- support structures strong. Get involved again in the church services as soon as you are able. Let God meet you at your point of need, through His people and the love one still finds in this world.

Then there are all the other practical arrangements to be made such as sorting out the estate, getting death certificates, accident reports from the police (in the case of an accident) for insurance purposes, paying tow trucks and scrap yards (in the case of an accident). In the case of the elderly there are far-away family, friends and institutions to be notified of the death, etc. Some things to consider: -

- Work systematically - make lists.
- Keep records of all arrangements made and people spoken to.
- Keep receipts and financial records for the closure of the estate.
- There are often unexpected costs, so be prepared for this.

Lastly, allow time to grieve. Each person involved will also grieve in their own way. This can be a very stressful time in the life of those involved. Avoid tranquillisers as they provide temporary relief, but often prolong the natural grieving process. Be kind to yourself and others. Speak to a counsellor if that is necessary.

COST OF THE USE OF THE ROSETTENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH'S FACILITIES

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-member</u>
Organist's fees	R100-00	R100-00
Janitor	R50-00	R50-00
Women's Department for catering	At the family's discretion	R5,00 per person for the eats
Minister's fees	At the family's discretion	R300-00

Check List

Undertaker		
Death Certificate		
Brochures		
Newspaper Announcement		
Flowers		
Organist		
Tribute		
Catering numbers		
Traffic Department Control		
Sound System Needed for Service		

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

The Funeral or Memorial Service

Planning for a Funeral or Memorial Service

Introduction

We, as the Minister/s of Rosettenville Baptist Church (R.B.C.), extend our deepest sympathy to you all in this time of grief. We will seek to assist you in the grieving process over the long term, and also, to help you to plan the funeral or memorial service. This brochure seeks to give some information that may be of assistance to you. As R.B.C.'s Minister/s, we find that, as the initial shock wears off, the painful realities and practicalities have to be worked through. Few people know what to do when a death occurs.

First things

Bear in mind that God knows all things. God's Word assures us that He will comfort those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4) He knows how you feel because His Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross of Calvary. The good news is that Jesus has now conquered death by rising from the dead on the third day, as a prototype of what is to come when Christ returns for the second time. So pray and talk to God about what you are facing, and ask Him to help you with all the arrangements.

1. Contact your doctor, who will have to certify the death, to be able to give you a death certificate.
2. Call an undertaker as soon as possible so that they can arrange to transfer the deceased to their own premises.
3. Make a time to meet with the Funeral Director representing the undertakers to plan the details and the time of the funeral (only fix a time in consultation with the undertakers, your wider family and the Minister/s of R.B.C.)
4. The undertaker will require: -
 - a. The deceased's identity document or some official document giving date of birth and full names.
 - b. The place of birth.
 - c. The place of death.
 - d. Details of any funeral policies, prepaid funeral contracts and any pension received.
 - e. The "Medical Certificate" issued by the doctor.
5. Bear in mind that, as time goes by, the funeral costs will not be the only costs expected to be paid, and it may be prudent to keep these costs as low as possible. Beware of the subtle pressures that may be brought to bear upon you to go for an expensive funeral, which may leave you seriously in debt. Shop around for the best service and price; the coffin alone can be a huge outlay of resources.
6. The undertaker will ask you: -
7. Whether you want a burial or a cremation

- Where you want the funeral or memorial service to be conducted?
- Whom you wish to have officiating at the service?
- Whom you wish to act as pallbearers? (Normally members of the family)
- Would you like funeral service programs?
- Do you require notices to be placed in the local newspapers?
- Do you want floral tributes on the coffin and in the church?
- What should happen to any floral tributes after the funeral?
- Would you prefer to have donations in lieu of flowers, and to which organization or charity/church?
- With a cremation, what do you wish to do with the ashes?
- Will a private internment ceremony be conducted at a place where ashes will be laid to rest? Will a Minister of R.B.C. be required to officiate at this ceremony?

Each item carries a cost with it.

To Prepare for the Funeral or Memorial Service

The Minister/s of R.B.C. will endeavor to make the service as personal as you wish and make it a service meaningful for the relatives, family and friends who are mourning. The Minister/s of R.B.C. conducting the funeral need to know: -

1. **Full names** of the deceased.
2. **Time** and place of the funeral (and burial, if necessary)
3. Names of **immediate close family** who hope to be present at the service.
4. Any **hymns or songs** you feel may be appropriate in the service. (E.g. Amazing Grace, Abide with me, How Great Thou Art, Nearer my God to Thee, The Lord is my Shepherd, What a Friend we have in Jesus, My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, Take my life and let it be, Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah, etc.) Usually two or three verses of a hymn are sufficient under these stressful circumstances. Most undertakers have the words for the hymns, or Minister/s of R.B.C. can assist with this.
5. Is there any particular **Scripture passage** that you would like read in the service, which may have had special meaning to the one who has passed on?
6. Do you want a **Tribute** given of the deceased? If so, by whom and what would you like said? Personal tributes and letters may be read by the person doing the tribute, as he/she feels capable and willing to include those items, before or after the tribute. Other items can be included in the service as would be fitting and appropriate according to the circumstances of a Christian service. (E.g. solos, song items, poems, etc.) Please note that the Minister/s of R.B.C. together with the Church Executive will have the final say as to whether the suggested item or any other specific request is appropriate or will be permitted on the church premises.
7. To whom do you wish **thanks** to be expressed in the service?
8. Would you like a **tea** in the church hall or at a private venue?
9. Do you wish to travel to the **graveside** as a large procession after the service, or have a private graveside service before the service, or at another time?
10. The **costs** involved for the use of church facilities are given below and need to be paid in to the office secretary of R.B.C. during morning working hours at 8 Albert Street, Telephone 011-436-0918 (Please do not hand money to anybody at the church or in the hall)

The Service

The service itself will be made up of appropriate words of comfort from the Word of God, prayers, the tribute, a short message based on what God has said to us from the Bible, the thanks, the committal of the deceased into the care of God and the benediction. Where the coffin is in the service, the Pall Bearers will then be called forward to carry the coffin out of the service at the conclusion of the service. In the case of a private burial or cremation the people will bid farewell to the hearse containing the body. Otherwise everyone will be invited to follow the hearse to the cemetery, with the headlights of their vehicle switched on.

Children are welcome in the service if their parents feel it is appropriate.

Cremation:

The church does not offer a facility (e.g. A garden of Remembrance) in which you can dispose of the ashes.

Catering

There is a small team of retired ladies who can provide: -

1. Tea and coffee in the hall after the service.
2. The family can then bring eats if they so desire.
3. Alternatively, we have included a price list for your convenience.
 - a. PLEASE DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THANDA BANTU CATERING SERVICES through Yolande at 083 652 8830

Could you please estimate as accurately as possible how many people you are expecting at the tea, for planning purposes? Any leftover foodstuffs are given to the family to take home. Please note, that no alcohol or tobacco may be used on the premises.

Flowers

After the service, flowers in the front of the church may be left for the Sunday worship services, if the Funeral or Memorial service is held towards the end of a week. Alternatively, the flowers may be taken by the family or given to some needy situation. There are florists that the church can recommend and their numbers can be provided. You can then make arrangements personally with the florist concerned.

The Janitor

The Janitor will need to be informed whether you wish to have the coffin to be in the service, outside the service or not at the service at all. He also needs to know the time for any possible viewing before the service, the time of the service and the time of the tea. (He will then seek to serve as a car-watch for those vehicles that may be parked outside of the secure parking lot, during the service and the tea). If possible, ask those coming, to park inside, in the 60 parking bays, for security reasons. All cleaning and locking up afterwards will be left with him. Please inform the Minister/s of R.B.C. of your preferences in this regard. Although every effort may be taken to ensure the safety of the cars the church cannot take responsibility for their safety.

After the Service

Once the service is over, a time of relief can be experienced, and most other people get back to their normal routines, leaving you to grieve in private, which can be very lonely. Allow others to help where they can. Keep your emotional-, social- and spiritual- support structures strong. Get involved again in the church services as soon as you are able. Let God meet you at your point of need, through His people and the love one still finds in this world.

Then there are all the other practical arrangements to be made such as sorting out the estate, getting death certificates, accident reports from the police (in the case of an accident) for insurance purposes, paying tow trucks and scrap yards (in the case of an accident). In the case of the elderly there are far-away family, friends and institutions to be notified of the death, etc. Some things to consider: -

- Work systematically - make lists.
- Keep records of all arrangements made and people spoken to.
- Keep receipts and financial records for the closure of the estate.
- There are often unexpected costs, so be prepared for this.

Lastly, allow time to grieve. Each person involved will also grieve in their own way. This can be a very stressful time in the life of those involved. Avoid tranquilizers as they provide temporary relief, but often prolong the natural grieving process. Be kind to yourself and others. Speak to a counselor if that is necessary.

Financial Matters:

Should a need arise to conduct the funeral service outside the Gauteng province, church policy is that the Minister/s travelling expenses will be carried by the family. The rate is presently R1.76 per kilometer, (less than the AA rate but subject to the prevailing price of petrol at the time) and the family needs to provide suitable and acceptable accommodation and food for the Minister/s of R.B.C. while away. The Minister/s of R.B.C. requested to conduct the funeral will need to apply for ministry leave from the Elders and Church Secretary, to conduct funerals outside Gauteng.

However, Rosettenville Baptist Church has a fund, which will assist needy church members, up to R1500 per funeral of member on the A-Role, for travel, but food and accommodation remain the responsibility of the family. (The costs are calculated at R1.76 per kilometer - less than the AA rate of R2.63/km as in

paragraph 1 above). This assistance is conditional on there being money available in this fund. In the event of this fund being depleted, the Minister/s of R.B.C's travelling expenses will be at the cost of the family. The Minister/s of R.B.C. will do all they can, to be of assistance to all families of church members, in our multi-lingual and multi-cultural church. Excess finances for travel in any funeral will be channeled back into the fund for future needy situations.

Should the funeral take place outside the Republic of South Africa, this fund will contribute (if it is able) the equivalent amount for the R.B.C. Minister's travel costs, to that of the funeral being in R.S.A, not exceeding R1500-00.

Please note that no money is contributed into this fund from general church funds, but rather as special gifts of designated funds by God's People. In no way will the church contribute financially to the direct costs of a funeral.

All moneys need to be paid to the church office the day before the funeral or departure to the funeral.

Should there be difficulties for the families in covering these costs, the R.B.C. Minister and the Church's Spot Committee has the discretion of waiving some or most of these costs.

Only appointed personnel may operate the church's equipment (such as the organ and sound desk etc.) Any request for a deviation from this is to be addressed to the Church Executive or Spot Committee.

Check List

Undertaker		
Death Certificate		
Brochures		
Newspaper Announcement		
Flowers		
Organist		
Tribute		
Catering numbers		
Traffic Department Control		
Sound System Needed for Service		

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Some Information:

Physical Address: Rosettenville Baptist Church:
8 Albert Street
Townsvlew
Johannesburg

Senior Pastor: Darryl Soal 011-435-3839

Church Office: 011-436-0918
Open: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
8:30am – 1pm.

COST OF THE USE OF THE ROSETTENVILLE BAPTIST
CHURCH'S FACILITIES

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Deceased Member</u>	<u>Deceased Non-member</u>
Organist's fees	R200-00	R200-00
Janitor	R200-00	R200-00
Minister's fees	At the family's discretion	R500-00
Sound System Operator	R200-00	R200-00
Kitchen staff	R50 per lady washing up	R50 per lady washing up
	50 people or less – one lady, thereafter one lady per 50 people, at a cost of R50.00 per lady	
Catering Convener	No charge	R400

Revised: May 2012