

From vision to structure: Assessing the Apostolic Faith
Mission of South Africa in the light of the one, holy, catholic
and apostolic church.

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ABSTRACT

The intention of the AFMSA to revision its policies, processes and structures is the motivation for this study. The relationship between the vision and essential nature of the church and the structure or form given to it is central to all the chapters.

The first chapter gives an analysis of the origins of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA in order to reveal their original vision of the church and the way in which this vision became structured in their history. After a section on the importance of a clear vision and strategic structures for organizations today, the biblical metaphors that served as a foundation for the early Christians' vision of the church are discussed. Our Christian predecessors' envisioning and structuring of the church in each period of history are analyzed. This gives an idea of the need for reform and the challenges involved in this process, which are still faced by later generations. The historical survey reveals the development of the marks and the vision of the early Christians to represent the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. In the conclusion, a preliminary dialogue is established between the vision of the early Pentecostals and the leaders of the AFMSA with regard to the structuring of the church and other expressions of the same vision.

The next four chapters (2-5) address the significance of the specific marks in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. This is followed by a short analysis of the biblical foundation and the historical development of these marks in the history of the Christian church. The chapters are arranged according to the prominence of each mark in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. Chapter two therefore starts with the apostolicity that is followed by the holiness in chapter three, unity in chapter four and catholicity in chapter five.

It becomes clear from chapter two that the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA want to restore the apostolic faith of the early Christians while the rest of the Christian church confess every Sunday through the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed that they believe they stand in the tradition of the apostles. The mark of holiness that is discussed in chapter three expresses the particular view of holiness held by Pentecostals. Biblical and historical connections are made between it and other Christian expressions revealing that we can all become true followers of Christ in holiness. Chapter four addresses the fact that the church has to accept that we exist as a unity in diversity. In chapter five, the linking of all traditions is established because all have the challenge to share their unique expression of God's fullness with the universal Body of Christ.

In chapter six, all the elements so far discussed: the vision of the church that was based on the Bible, and the history of the Pentecostal Movement, AFMSA and of the Christian Churches are summarized to gain an overall perspective. This is followed by an analysis of the vision of the church today and applied to the AFMSA. The AFMSA is encouraged to revision and restructure itself in the light of the apostolicity, holiness, unity and catholicity that are shared by the witnesses in Scripture and history so that it will be an example of God's vision for the church and the world.

DECLARATION

I declare that **FROM VISION TO STRUCTURE: ASSESSING THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE LIGHT OF THE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH** is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Daniël Nicolaas Andrew

Date :

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Signed :

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INTRODUCTION

The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the AFMSA) is presently involved in a process of major restructuring. In this process their practical decisions are informed by their vision of what the church should be. For any part of the Pentecostal Movement such a process poses major challenges. What is the ecclesiological vision of the AFMSA, do they have such a vision and how does institutional restructuring make sense in such a Pentecostal vision?

In this study the concentration will not be on the abstract theoretical question of the institutionalisation of vision. This question will rather form the framework from which the process of institutionalisation that is presently happening in the AFMSA will be discussed. My focus on the AFMSA is therefore intended to make a contribution to the current process of revisioning in the church.

The process of the institutionalisation of such a dynamic movement like the Pentecostal Movement is a well-known complex social theoretical question, but in that broad and general sense it is not what the problem statement of this thesis is all about. This specific question, namely how the AFMSA could move from vision to structure, of course calls for an answer to the question what the ecclesiological vision of the AFMSA is? It will be argued, based on the history of the AFMSA that at heart four aspects characterise the original vision and self-understanding of the AFMSA namely that it envision to be apostolic, holy, one and a church of fullness. The remarkable truth about this vision is that it corresponds precisely with the classic ecclesiological vision of the early church as expressed in the Creeds.

The initial question underlying this thesis is therefore whether and how the AFMSA could benefit from this classic vision and from the biblical and historical insights and contributions supporting and informing this vision. The second, more practical question flowing from that will be how these so-called marks of the church thus were understood and received in the AFMSA and the systematic question how it should be received and embodied?

This question will be answered within the methodology of a Pentecostal framework. This will be done through an explanation of what the vision is, that already lives within the AFMSA and on, which they call intuitively.

This study will not be based on church history and my methodology will thus not be historical. The study will give a historical overview on the marks of the church and how it can be related to the vision of the AFMSA. A research visit was undertaken to the AFMSA head office and interviews were done to obtain relevant documentation for a responsible perspective on the vision of the AFMSA on the marks of the church.

The study also does not use the Bible as a point of departure although the role and use of the Bible by the theologians from diverse traditions is used to provide a biblical foundation to understand the marks of the church. The exegetical and hermeneutical implications of reading the Bible today will be taken seriously but will be placed within a Pentecostal hermeneutic.



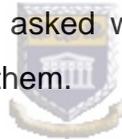
The doctrine of the church will also not be the point of departure because that would also not be in line with a Pentecostal framework that is based on experience as normative. That is why the narrative of the origin and institutionalisation of the vision of the early Christians from the Bible and the history of the Christian Church will be taken seriously. The Pentecostal understanding of this narrative and its implication for the vision of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA is of cardinal importance for this study.

In a second critical step, the See-Judge-Act method will be used to reflect on the question whether the way in which the AFMSA assess the marks is adequate and whether it cannot be enhanced and complemented, even be criticised through the insights from the Bible, church history and the ecumenical church.

These steps, which involve the Bible, church history and the ecumenical church, will not be developed individually into a study of its own. I will rather make use of

secondary sources and the Bible will be used from a Pentecostal hermeneutic that is narrative and not traditionally Protestant or historical-critical. I will make comparative, illustrative and therefore eclectic use of church history and will use every time a Catholic, Protestant, Reformed, South African and where possible a Pentecostal theologian in principle. They will be used to assess some aspects that are important to a relevant understanding of the marks of the church and its implications for a Pentecostal framework.

Every chapter will end with the question, what the implications could be of such a broad overview from a biblical and church historical perspective for the vision that the AFMSA intuitively share concerning each mark. Some of these questions are, whether apostolicity is understood widely and richly enough, whether the holiness should be understood more holistically, whether the current search for unity is conceived widely enough and whether the full gospel could not also be understood as the fullness of catholicity? I will also relate these implications with the practical institutional questions asked within the AFMSA and try to provide some proposals or ways to answer them.



The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa forms part of the worldwide Pentecostal Movement. The churches that belong to the Pentecostal Movement historically regarded themselves as organisms, but due to certain challenges, they developed into organisations. Their initial rejection of church structures was based on their understanding of the church as the Body of Christ and their determination to restore the roots of the early Christianity to the present age. The lack of acceptance of them by other branches of Christianity has created in them an exclusive vision of the church and a peculiar understanding of church structure and ministry. In their search for a particular expression of Christianity they have developed their own confessions of faith and structured their churches according to these beliefs. The global nature of the Pentecostal Movement requires one not to generalise about the developments in different countries, but to search for some elements that provide some insight into the vision and structure of the AFMSA

The fact that the Pentecostal Movement finds its roots in the Bible and that it has developed from other branches of Christianity also requires the study of the movement's understanding of the vision and structure of the church. One cannot study the origins of the Pentecostal Movement without the doctrine of the church as it developed over the centuries.

The vision of the early church that was confessed and believed by both the Eastern and the Western Churches is clearly stated in the Nicene Creed of the fourth century. The churches clearly stated that they believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Their vision of the church was the product of debates against their theological opponents. The characteristics by which they have chosen to identify the church were based on the Bible and coloured in by their historical setting. If we, as modern people, want to confess and believe this same vision, we need to understand the reasons why they arrived at the characteristics, known as the marks of the church, today.



My intention in this study is to analyse the roots of Pentecostal movement and the AFMSA to see whether the marks confessed by the entire church formed part of their vision and how they institutionalised it. In order to have a clear perspective on the marks of the church, the biblical and historical context that led to the formulation of these marks will be described. The purpose of this is to have an informed perspective on the envisioning and structuring of the marks of the church and to see how this vision was embodied in the Pentecostal Movement with special reference to the AFMSA.

In chapter one, an introduction will be given to the origins of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA and what the vision and structure of the church meant to them. It is no secret that the Pentecostal Movement is not homogeneous and this implies that Pentecostals will have different things to say about its origin. Some authors argue that the Movement was the product of revivals that took place over the centuries and others that it was founded by either Charles Parham or William Seymour. Others insist that the Pentecostal Movement is a direct working of the Holy Spirit and that no human being is responsible for its existence.

It will become clear that the Pentecostal Movement is also the product of historical developments and thus a part of church history. The tendency amongst Pentecostals to refer to other church traditions as “historical churches” will be proved to be wrong because they share this history with the other traditions.

In this chapter, we will also discuss the importance of vision and structure for organisations and relate them to the church. It is my thesis that the members of the Early Church had a vision of the church that was based on the Scriptures available to them and that was expressed through the metaphors known from their socio-cultural, political, economical and geographical world. They consequently structured their church from their life setting and left to us what is known as the true marks of the church. In this chapter, I will discuss critically the biblical basis for their vision of the church and how they employed these biblical metaphors to institutionalise their vision. I will also give an assessment of the process of the institutionalisation of the church that is regarded as being inimical to the charismatic nature or elements in the church.



The AFMSA has the view that it wanted to be true to the teachings of the apostles and that could be seen by its peculiar view of holiness, the bond of unity in the body of Christ, and the message of the full Gospel it wished to proclaim to the whole world. Precisely these four characteristics- teaching of the apostles, holiness, unity in Christ and the message of the full Gospel- that are of such crucial importance for the AFMSA also formed the so-called marks of the church for centuries through the history of the church.

In Chapters 2-5, I will therefore be considering these marks of the church individually and specifically, the way in which they were embodied by the AFMSA. I will discuss the biblical foundation for them and their development in history. The Nicene Creed starts with the marks related to the unity, holiness, catholicity and ends with the mark of apostolicity. For the purpose of my study, I will start with the marks that are more known to my Pentecostal tradition and move to the less known. At first, I shall examine the marks of apostolicity and holiness that are

made clear from the origins of the Movement and the AFMSA, followed by the marks of unity and catholicity.

Chapter two deals with the question "what does it mean to be an apostolic church?" Here I will be focusing on the meaning of apostolicity within the Pentecostal movement and the AFMSA. The AFMSA had such high regard for this mark of the church that it included it in its name. The biblical meaning of the term apostolicity will be assessed to get some clues as to how the early Christians understood the term. This will be followed by a historical overview of the meaning that was given to apostolicity in church history and the ecumenical church. The implications of its meaning are applied to the vision of the Pentecostal movement and the AFMSA.

Chapter three focuses on the mark of holiness as it was understood by the Holiness Movement and other related movements. This gave birth to the unique view of holiness of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. The same process of assessment to arrive at the biblical meaning of the term holiness will be followed and an overview of its meaning in the history of the church will be offered. The implications of the biblical meaning of holiness and its historical perception are also applied to the vision of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA on holiness.

Chapter four deals with the unity-struggle within the AFMSA and the broader Pentecostal movement. At the same time, I will touch on some vital ecumenical concerns that will lead me to the discussion of the biblical basis for the unity of the church and historical reality of this mark. This particular mark will have strong implications for my discussion on the catholicity of the church.

Chapter five focuses on the universality of the church and deals with the issue of fullness. In the recent past, the Pentecostals have seen themselves as the only ones who have the full Gospel. This implies that other churches have part or none of it. Pentecostals have consequently withdrawn themselves ecumenically from other church traditions and from society, in the past. This chapter will be

discussing certain views on fullness from Pentecostal perspectives. Drawing on biblical and historical perspectives on the meaning of the term catholicity, I will try to provide a meaning that is more inclusive and helpful for a vision of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA.

Chapter six has a twofold nature. First, the implications of the vision of the Christian Church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic church will be assessed. The implications of this vision will secondly be assessed in the light of the revision process that is currently underway in the AFMSA. Some proposals or possible ways in which these marks can be helpful for the structure of the AFMSA will lastly be offered.

It will be argued that Pentecostals have brought the vision of the early church anew into their own context. This will be argued with the following questions in mind: What vision of the church did the early leaders of the Pentecostal Movement and the founders of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa have? How did they express this vision structurally as members coming from Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Evangelical, Holiness and many ecclesial backgrounds? In what way did they continue with this vision of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church? How did they include "the one holy, catholic and apostolic church" in their total vision of the church?

The reality is that Pentecostals do not have unity about sacramental, liturgical and doctrinal issues. The Pentecostal Movement is not a homogeneous movement and that is why the narrative of the AFMSA is taken as a particular expression of the vision of the early Pentecostals. Their experience as the oldest Pentecostal church in Africa might differ from the experiences other churches have in other parts of the world but there are some hallmarks that is distinctive of Pentecostalism to which will be referred to in the first chapter.

The question that lies at the heart of this study is, how the marks of the church were understood and received within the AFMSA and how it should be received within the revision process that is currently underway in its structures. In the

following chapters I will try to answer that question from a Pentecostal framework and hope to provide some insights that can be helpful for the AFMSA and other Christian churches that struggles also to express the vision of the early Christians to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.



CHAPTER ONE

FROM VISION TO STRUCTURE: ASSESSING THE AFMSA

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa tabled the following statement of intent at its Workers' Council in Pretoria: "With the challenges of our calling and of the new millennium, the leadership of the AFM of SA commit themselves to the revision of the constitution, policies, procedures and all structures, so as to ensure that the local and broader church as well as the different specialised ministries shall have freedom to fulfil their calling within the mission of the AFM."

It is this process of revision that will be at the heart of this study. Before one can revision any structure, policy and procedure one needs to know what the original vision was for the structure and what the challenges are that necessitate a process of revision. It is stated in the Introduction section that this study will not concentrate on the abstract theoretical question how visions are institutionalised but rather on the ways that it can form the framework around which the process of institutionalisation happens in the AFMSA.

In this chapter, an introduction is given to the origin and development of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA (1.1). The importance of this section for our study is to assess how the development from movement to institutionalisation happened in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. The next section (1.2) tries to provide a framework for the process of institutionalisation and its relevance to our question, how the vision of the early church, to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic became part of the vision of AFMSA and how it was expressed institutionally. The meaning of the terms "vision" and "structure" and their relevance to the doctrine of the church is thus very important in this section.

The AFMSA is not the first and the only church that is challenged by a process of institutionalisation, so that is why an assessment is done of some literature produced by renowned theologians from different church traditions that can be helpful to understand the development of churches from movements to institutions and its implication for our study. In the next section I consider the importance of a biblical foundation (1.3) and the historical development of the doctrine of the church with special reference to the marks (1.4), before I draw some preliminary conclusions (1.5) leading into the four chapters on the different marks of the church.

1.1 ASSESSING THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT AND THE AFMSA

In this section my aim is to assess the development of the Pentecostal Movement from a movement to an institution and its implications for the process of revisioning currently underway in the AFMSA.



The Pentecostal Movement is only a century old and can be regarded as a relatively young development in the history of the Christian church. As a result of this not much have been written about the historical development of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. The subsection that deals with the Pentecostal Movement (1.1.1) assesses some insights on the historical development of the Movement from the perspective of a few Pentecostal theologians from different nationalities. In the subsection called AFMSA (1.1.2) an assessment is given on the origin and the historical developments that led to the current need for revisioning in the AFMSA.

1.1.1 PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

In this subsection my assessment will focus on two aspects that are important for the broader question of concern which is, how the early Pentecostals expressed the vision of the early church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic in their vision and church structure. The first aspect

will deal with the development of the Pentecostal Movement from a movement to an institution. The second aspect will deal with the origin of the Pentecostal Movement and the different aspects emphasised by some theologians, which consequently influence their perspectives on church structure.

From the inception of the Pentecostal movement, its leaders and the AFMSA expressed their commitment to be seen as an organism rather than an organisation. Their use of the Body of Christ as an image to describe the church had the concept of an organism in mind. According to Marius Herold (1998: 422), Pentecostals consider this metaphor as deeply significant for the church, “ which is no longer only the people of God like in the Old Testament times but as the Body of Christ has a more organic and intimate connotation”.

He concludes that according to this ecclesiology, typical of the broader Pentecostal Movement and in my view also of the AFMSA, the church is formed as a body by an interaction between the parts, a symbolic harmony between members.

It is stated by P Hocken (2002: 544) in an article entitled “Theology of the Church” that the reluctance amongst Pentecostals to speak of any visible embodiments of the universal church illustrates a tendency to treat the local church as the visible Body of Christ and reflects a historic Protestant mistrust of church institutions. It is clear that Pentecostals wanted to see the church in purely spiritual rather than in institutional terms, as organism rather than an organisation, as local congregation rather than as institution or structure. The restoration thrust of Pentecostalism has seen the outpouring of the Spirit as the restoration of authentic New Testament Christianity. This signifies the restoration of the full Gospel and this would restore the church back to the mind of God in the Scriptures.

The anti-institutional and anti-organisational approach did not prevail for long in the Pentecostal Movement. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many American and European local congregations formed new Pentecostal denominations and changed from missions to assemblies. The new denominations were however formed for pragmatic rather than doctrinal reasons. Although the process of institutionalisation, making the organism more of an organisation, did not produce any distinctly Pentecostal view of the church, it allowed Pentecostals to adopt every form of church government that were known to Christians. This process is seen by some as the weakening of the Pentecostal Movement as a Holy Spirit revival movement (Hocken, 2002: 548).

In an article entitled "Pentecostal theology", FD Macchia (2002: 1138) argues that Pentecostals throughout their history harboured the vision that they as a movement, gifted by the Holy Spirit, must help prepare the world for the coming of the reign of God in the last days. The need is to apply this vision critically to the hierarchical and patriarchal structures of established Pentecostal denominations. The three questions that must be asked are: Is such an ecclesiastical development consistent with the early Pentecostal vision of the church? Can this early vision be used to criticise and analyse Pentecostal churches and other churches as well as society? , Can Pentecostals again become the blessing to the church and the world that they hoped to be in the beginning? These three questions reflect precisely the purpose of this study of the AFMSA.

Walter Hollenweger (1997: 258) states that, "Pentecostals have to wrestle in all countries with institutional problems, and similar to those faced by other traditions". He shows by this statement that he is completely aware of the threats posed by these institutional problems. He also shows that Pentecostals are not the only churches faced with these institutional problems. He asserts that the ideal condition for the church on earth would no doubt have been one of universal unity in doctrine and organisation but

when the main ecclesiastical body departed from Scripture in doctrine and practice it was inevitable that reformations would occur.

Pentecostals, and especially, the AFMSA should remember the vision of their founders when they create new structures, but at the same time, should know that their founders had their own challenges that forced them to formulate their vision for their time. When they envision structures to meet the challenges of their time they should bear in mind that they create traditions that will be a blessing or an impediment to future generations.

The intention that the AFMSA had, to revision their structures, must be seen in the light of the vision of the early church to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church and also the vision of the Early Pentecostals to restore the early Christianity for the whole church. Larry Christenson (1975: 35) argues that Pentecostalism had strong ecumenical tendencies in the formative periods and that the spontaneity and vitality of their experience had no respect for denominational boundaries. The resistance to and rejection of Pentecostals by different denominations in the past have caused a move towards exclusiveness on the Pentecostals' part. He states that, "the church must recover the balance between the charismatic power and ecclesiastical authority which characterised the apostolic and sub-apostolic era" (Christenson, 1975: 35).

The South African Catholic theologian Brian Gaybba (1987: 176) argues that it is the Spirit of love that provides the balance between the charismatic and institutional elements of the church. He states that it is the Spirit that creates the unity of the church and that it is a unity in love, a holy unity, a catholic unity and an apostolic unity. His understanding of the role of the Spirit and its implications for the church as an institution are helpful to my understanding of the Pentecostal tradition. He argues that it is wrong to seek the unity of the church primarily in uniform structures and practices because it can lead to a denial of the legitimate differences, freedom and responsibilities of individuals and communities. On the other hand, is it also

wrong to seek unity exclusively in the presence of the Spirit in our midst, so that it can never become visible? More will be said about this in the chapter on the oneness of the church, but what is important now is the balance between the charismatic and the institutional church. This wrestling between other churches and the Pentecostals, particularly the AFMSA, with regard to the balance between these two elements, is the concern of this study.

In his book, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* the Pentecostal theologian S Schatzmann (1989: 101) argues that Paul conceived of Christian existence only as a charismatic existence and that all communities of believers are charismatic communities. For Paul, the charismata are expressive of the diversity of gifts bestowed by the sovereign Spirit upon the members of Christ. Every Christian is seen as a member of the body of Christ and is thus charismatic. It is also stressed that the charismata are given for service and not for self-gratification because the highest functional purpose is the building up of the body in love. None of the gifts can be seen as worthless and incomprehensible. Charismata cannot be seen as hierarchical although some gifts are more visible and regularly exercised. Charismata and authority are said to be both operative in the church, although charismata cannot be seen as an expression of authority in the church. All ministries in the church should be understood charismatically (Schatzmann, 1989: 102).

Charismata and authority belong to the scope of the church but they must be based on service. The harmonious and orderly functioning of a charismatic community is possible only when charismata and authority are shared in the community (Schatzmann, 1989: 98). If that does not happen, then charismata are regarded as an expression of authority and lead to the manipulation of charismatic authority. The charismatic authority of the individual believer receives and maintains its significance only in submission to the charismatic authority of the entire community. In that sense, it is believed that both charismata and authority find their mutual

fulfilment in the service of others provided this service does not become manipulative (Schatzmann, 1989: 99).

The theologians mentioned above agree on one thing, which is that the Pentecostal Movement could not escape the process of institutionalisation early after its origin. In their effort to become a Movement with more structured churches Pentecostals had to learn about order, policies and structure from the church governance of other Christian churches. The answer to the problems that Pentecostals encounter institutionally cannot only be found amongst them but is also found among other Christian churches. The other Christian Churches can also learn a lot from the answers that Pentecostals have found to certain issues that they encounter institutionally.

Any Pentecostal vision of the church that ignores the role of the Spirit in the restoration of the leadership and structures of the church misses the mark and kills the potential that every member has when used by the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are given to each member of the body of Christ so that each one can make a contribution to the vision and structure of the church.

The second aspect of this section deals with the origin of the Pentecostal Movement and the different perspectives held by theologians on who or what can be accepted as the true founder of the Movement.

Walter Hollenweger (1997: 326) believes that there are two controversies that dominate Pentecostal historiography: Who is at the root of the modern Pentecostal Movement and what is a tenable definition of Pentecostalism? On the first question, he asserts that this is not just a historical but also a theological controversy for it decides what one considers to have been at the heart of Pentecostalism. He continues by saying that arguments about one's true history are usually struggles between forms of legitimacy. On the second question, about a definition of Pentecostalism he argues that all Pentecostals agree on the presence and demonstration of the charismata

in the modern church, but beyond this common agreement there is much diversity as in all other branches of Christianity (Hollenweger, 1997: 326-329).

There is more than one approach to the study of the Pentecostal origins. The providential approach attributes to God the timing and causal explanation of the unity, while the historical roots approach tends to stress the continuity of twentieth century Pentecostalism with nineteenth-century religious and social developments. The multicultural approach redefines Pentecostalism as a multicultural phenomenon rather than deeming white Pentecostalism as normative. The functional approach attempts to understand Pentecostal thought and practice in order to learn why and how it appealed to those who joined the movement. Augustus Cerrilo (junior) argues that all these four approaches answer a different set of questions and analytical concerns and provide a different angle of vision on the Pentecostal beginnings (PNEUMA, volume 19, no 1, Spring 1977: 50).



He evaluates these approaches and points out the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. The providential approach opens for consideration the role of God in human history by insisting on the reality of spiritual forces working both within the human agents who make history and in the broader structures of society and culture. He asserts that the providential interpretation of Pentecostal origins cannot be verified by research and interpretative methods commonly used by historians. The historical approach on the other hand, fits well within the traditional concern of historians with issues of historical change and continuity

The multicultural approach opens new ways for historians to think about the meaning and origins of Pentecostalism especially their diverse ideological and institutional roots and rudimentary structure. Some criticises the black and ethnic approach because it assumes rather than proves the centrality of the Azusa Street Mission to the emergence of a national Pentecostalism (1977: 51). The functional approach with its socially positive form opens

fresh lines of inquiry to the start and existence and durability of the Movement. Cerrilo (1977: 52) regards this approach as favouring the institutional side of the creation of the Movement. The weakness of this approach lies in the fact that it can lead to the patronising dismissal of Pentecostalism as a religion without redeeming social or economic value and can also lead to a present orientated down-playing of the historical, religious, and social forces that came together in Pentecostalism. He believes these approaches help illuminate the broader contours that shaped the new Pentecostal Movement. When taken together, they promise a way to a more comprehensive and historically satisfying synthesis of the story of the Pentecostal religious tradition.

There are two beliefs about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit amongst Pentecostals, which greatly affects their view of the origin and task of the church in Pentecostalism. The first one is the apocalyptic belief that sees the outpouring of the Spirit as the empowerment of believers for effective evangelism in the light of the imminence of the second coming of Christ. Early Pentecostals like Charles Parham, who have seen speaking in tongues as an aid to evangelism, followed the apocalyptic view.

The other view is called the restoration belief. It sees the outpouring of the Spirit at the heart of the restoration of authentic New Testament Christianity. A biblical text often quoted by Pentecostals is Joel 2:28 – 32, “And afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (NIV) and also Acts 2:1 – 4, “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”(NIV).

The Apostle Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 when he was asked about what happened in the upper room (Acts 2:16). For the first Christians this experience was the fulfilment of what God had promised will be happening in the last days.

It contends that the outpouring was the culmination of several divine interventions that were made to restore authentic, Spirit-filled Christianity. The Reformation is seen as the first restoration because it was the restoration of the gospel of justification by faith. The second restoration was the restoration of the Spirit's work in sanctification as in the Wesleyan movement. The last restoration is the one cherished by the Pentecostals. It is the restoration of divine power with the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the full range of the gifts that comes with that baptism (Macchia, 2002: 545).

The question of the day was whether these experiences of the gifts of the Spirit died at the end of the apostolic era or whether they continued. Isak Burger (1987: 459) maintains that,  "the Pentecostal Movement considers itself a continuation of the church of Acts, in Spirit, doctrine and practice and there has never been an exact equivalent to the Modern Pentecostal Movement, although occasionally Pentecostal phenomena have occurred among believers".

The view that the Pentecostal Movement is the culmination of different divine manifestations is strongly supported by Clark and Lederle in their book, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal theology* (1988). They affirm that Pentecostals have searched the "underside " of church history for those groups who have exhibited and held values similar to those which set Pentecostals apart from their denominational contemporaries. Behind this attempt lies the understanding that Pentecost in this century is a revival of the charismatic first century church. The pneumatic fervour was lost to the church due to institutionalisation (Clarke and Lederle, 1988: 7). The

evidence provided by them starts with the anointed and ecstatic in the Old Testament to the enthusiasm of the Corinthians.

Some other important groups are the Montanists of whom Gilpin (1976: 123) has this to say, “modern Pentecostals have tended to praise the Montanists for their charismatic nature, but it is doubtful that the movement was worthy of such approval. The abuses and excesses of Montanus and his followers cast a shadow of doubt over the baptism in the Holy Spirit that eventually caused the main body of the church to treat this subject with too much caution.” On this they assert that whatever their excesses, the Montanists confronted a rapidly institutionalising primitive Catholic Church. Later, the radical reformers or Anabaptists would do the same with the Reformation and Catholicism, which they regarded as both half-hearted and incomplete. Wesley did the same to the Anglican and Calvinistic puritans in his time and the Revivalists did likewise to the formalism of their time. It is from the Revivalists that the Holiness Movement that is regarded by Clark and Lederle (1988: 10) as the only clear link to Pentecostalism stems.



The reason why it is necessary just to mention these different groups from the underside of history is to show the historical roots of Pentecostalism with other traditions. However, there are some other groups with which Pentecostalism do not share any historical link, yet they share more or less the same experience.

Larry Christenson (1975: 17-29) correlates the Catholic Apostolic Church with the Pentecostal Movement in an article that he entitles, “Pentecostalism’s forgotten forerunner” in Dayton’s *Theological roots of Pentecostalism* (1975). He argues that during the rise of Pentecostalism charismatic manifestations were a commonplace occurrence in a body of churches outside Pentecostalism. Stating that there is no historical link between the two, he asserts that the mystery of two movements existing side by side, sharing in considerable measure a unique religious outlook and experience, cannot be

explained (Christenson, 1975: 22). He argues that both movements apprehended a common area of truth and the connection is from a common origin beyond history.

He regards the similarities as a leitmotif, which accompanies the historical manifestations of certain characteristics or potentialities that lie resident in Christ and His Body. Charismatic manifestations common to both the Catholic Apostolic Church and Pentecostalism, such as the speaking in tongues, brought about the establishment of modern Pentecostalism. The mood of expectancy, which such charismatic manifestations created, accompanied the desire for the fullness of life in the Spirit. Both movements saw the role of the Holy Spirit as one that equips believers for service in the Body of Christ. He sees the paradox of initial ecumenism and later exclusivism by Pentecostals as a result of the rejection by the established Christian churches (Christenson, 1975: 34).



Japie Lapoorta (1996: 42) rejects the idea that Charles Parham founded the Pentecostal movement or the Holy Spirit without any human help. Together with theologians such as Harvey Cox (1994: 48), he argues for the black roots of the movement that are deliberately ignored and underestimated by white Pentecostal historians and theologians in the United States of America, Britain and South Africa. He believes that the Azusa paradigm of William Seymour is the true reflection of Pentecost and regards him as the founder. At the end of his discussion of the origin and development of the AFMSA, He concludes that William Seymour is the authentic father of the Movement.

Does the debate about the real origins of the Pentecostal movement mean that we cannot really talk about a “vision” of the early Pentecostal fathers and mothers? Hollenweger (1997: 328) expresses the desire that, “a newer generation of Pentecostal scholars should produce monographs not just on their own Pentecostal denomination but on the whole of Pentecostalism in their respective countries”. This statement expresses what is at the heart of this study. One cannot consider the AFMSA position on the marks of the

church without first considering the Pentecostal movement from which AFMSA had its origin. Hollenweger (1997: 329) believes that the unity in the Pentecostal movement is not based on the level of doctrine but on an experience that they share with the early church. He understands the Pentecostal movement to be in the same position as the early church in the year 100 AD when it did not have a unifying confession of faith. However, although the early church members used different confessions for baptism, they did have the Lord's Prayer, a body of hymns and an emerging corpus of canonical writings that served as a bond between the different expressions.

Gilpin (1976: 121) states that the Pentecostal movements have many complicated roots, but that it is the taproot plunging deeply into the New Testament Church that gives them their distinctive life. He continues that the only way that a church can assure itself of its own apostolicity is to test its correspondence with the Christianity of the first century. If Pentecostal believers see themselves as an isolated movement, they will cease to exist meaningfully because the conditions that gave them their birth have disappeared. However, if they view themselves as an inevitable development in the mainstream of church history, they can continue to be a significant expression of the New Testament Christianity to this generation (Gilpin, 1976: 123).

The questions asked by Harvey Cox (1994: 262) on where and how, and among whom the modern Pentecostal Movement came to birth are quite difficult. For him, the greatest temptation for Pentecostals is to forget or minimize the circumstances of their birth and to try to blend into the religious and social atmosphere around them. He concludes that if that happens they will lose their essence and become just one more denomination, one more creed, and also deprive themselves of a future. The opposite of this is that an exclusive perspective of themselves can be good for their self-preservation, but not necessarily for their ecumenical relations. The time has come for Pentecostals to appreciate the roots that

they share with other forms of Christianity and to realise that these are the very roots that provided them with their confessions about the church. It is historically so that their view of the church is a direct development of the desire for a more charismatic nature of the church as the body of Christ and thus opposed to the institutionalism of the church. Pentecostal churches have also become so institutionalised that many groups have moved from their ranks to form their own churches to secure the working of the Spirit in their midst.

In the next section, an assessment will be given of the origin of the AFMSA and the historical developments that led to the current need for revision in the structure, order and policies of the AFMSA.

1.1.2 AFMSA

In the previous section it was pointed out that the intention of the early Pentecostals was to be true to the roots of the early church.



Isak Burger (1987: 100) holds the view that the persons and movements that started the AFMSA continued the restoration belief of the early Pentecostals like Charles Parham. Some of these persons were Thomas Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake, who started their work with certain manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He maintains that certain individuals and organisations such as the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Andrew Murray, P. L. le Roux and others have laid the foundation of the Pentecostal Movement and thus the AFM in South Africa. About the role of Andrew Murray, a well-respected Dutch Reformed minister, Burger (1987: 101) says the following: “In Murray se strewende dat die kerk moet terugkeer na die Handeling model, praat hy die taal van die Pinksterbeweging en het hy inderdaad ook die bodem vir die ontstaan van hierdie beweging voorberei”.

The contributions of these individuals and organisations to the understanding of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church will be discussed under the headings of the AFMSA in each chapter.

Japie Lapoorta (1996: 33) disagrees with the idea that the AFMSA was a result of certain manifestations only. He argues that the same issues that destroyed the unity of the first Pentecostal movement that was found by William Seymour also destroyed the early AFMSA.

The Azusa movement was based on the equality of all believers because God is no respecter of persons. He concludes that the AFMSA was born in the spirit of Azusa and that the walls of race, class and gender were wiped out, but when the Spirit subsided, the walls were built up again (Lapoorta, 1996: 84). He has dealt strictly with the issue of unity in his thesis and offers interesting comments on the origin of the AFMSA along the line of the Azusa Mission. The Pentecostals' ecumenical view of the church at the beginning of the movement at Azusa had much in common with the view held by the early members of the AFMSA. *The Apostolic Faith*, an official magazine of the early Pentecostals puts it this way, "this Pentecostal Movement is too large to be confined in any denomination or sect. It works outside, drawing all together in one bond of love, one church, one body of Christ " (Hocken, 2002: 546).

The fact that members of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, the Dutch Reformed Church, and the Apostolic Faith Mission have shared the same building for worship, expresses this ecumenical relationship. The early doctrine and church structure of the AFMSA was initiated and developed under the leadership of P. L. le Roux who was a missionary trained at a Reformed theological institution. This is one of the reasons why the AFMSA attracted so many white Afrikaners and lost its link with Zionism.

In Pentecostal circles, the vision of the early Christians to be an apostolic church – a moving church, spreading the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was initially very attractive.

Isak Burger (2000: 4) provides some interesting remarks on the importance of functional structures in the AFM. He argues strongly for a church that is more concerned with the content than with the form of the church. He states in his presidential address at the Workers' Council of June 2000 that the AFM did not start with structure, but as a fresh move of the Holy Spirit where the people of God spontaneously came together because of a common Pentecostal experience. However, due to the needs the first Pentecostals had, they had to form geographic structures. In addressing the need for relational structures Burger (2000: 4) finds a solution in Jesus' parable of the Kingdom as a dragnet (Matthew 13:47) that connects a large numbers of knots and these make it an effective tool to gather in huge quantities of fish.



He applies this metaphor of the net to the interconnectedness of relationships and resources in the church to accomplish the great commission of effectively winning souls. In addressing the ineffectiveness of the traditional structures for the unity, he proposed an alternative non-geographic structure that is based on networking. Burger (2000: 5) said that church structure must assist or empower the being or essence of the church. He further states that if the structure is not functional, it limits or prohibits the church. The origin of the AFM shows that it did not start with a structure, but it slowly developed or evolved into the present structure. Burger (2000: 6) argues that the AFM, that was racially and geographically separated in the past, is now mature as an integrated church. It is now mature enough to respect others' diversities and to set up networks to make room for alternative structures.

For the last ten years, the once historically disunited and racially segregated AFMSA has struggled to make their vision to be one a reality in its local,

regional and national structures. The question is whether this structural unity has achieved the biblical and historical criteria for real unity. Marthinus van der Merwe (2001) argues in his doctoral thesis that the structural unity of the AFM of SA does not guarantee true unity amongst the believers. He clarifies his view by saying that true unity can only be achieved if the AFM is honest about the support it offered the government under Apartheid and how that benefited the Afrikaner members of the AFM. He further argues that only if the AFMSA becomes involved in development as a national body, will it make a difference in South Africa as a truly united, reconciled church.

1.2 FROM VISION TO STRUCTURE

In the Introductory section of this study it was stated that this study would not focus on the abstract theoretical question, how visions are institutionalised. The process of institutionalisation will help us to understand how the vision of the early church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic was institutionalised in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. The insights by theologians from diverse theological backgrounds will be assessed in order to understand the complex issues that results from the process of institutionalisation in the Christian church.

At first will I try to create a workable definition of vision and structure that enables me to understand the vision and institutionalisation of the church. The word "vision" can be defined as "the faculty or state of being able to see, the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom and a mental picture of what the future will or could be like" (Readers Digest Word Power Dictionary 2002: 1096). It is the second usage of the word that is useful for our analysis of the four marks of the Christian Church.

The two words used for vision in the Bible are the words *hazon* (Hebrew), which means to see or to come into being and *opticia* (Greek), which means the eyes. Myles Munroe (1992: 83) concludes from this that from a biblical perspective it means, "the ability to see the end from the beginning". John

Stott (1985: 328) supports this definition when he defines vision as, “ an act of seeing, an imaginative perception of things, combining insight and foresight”. Agrippa Kathide (1995: 13-15) refers to insight as an ability to penetrate mentally and understand a complete situation or problem whilst foresight is orientated towards the future. The present and future orientation of the act of seeing are captured by the definition of vision given by George Barna (1992: 5) when he says that it is “a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to God’ s chosen servants and is based on an accurate understanding of God, Self and circumstances”. Visionary thinking and visionary leadership have become the most important elements in the present and future orientation of institutions today. The church as an institution needs to take account of these developments in the world in order to remain relevant to the challenges of today.

The Apostolic Church of first century Palestine and the believers who are standing in the tradition of the apostles today, are challenged to be informed about God’s vision of creating a community, that is willing to stand in a loving relationship to the Triune God and to give structural form to that relationship. From the Old to the New Testament witness, it is clear that the community of God is always challenged by the structures set up by the surrounding cultures and even religions. God has always wanted there to be transcendence, above, beyond, and remote from any human initiative that wanted to reduce God to its structures and cultures. David Bosch (1973: 74) states that God enters upon the scenes of our lives and transforms us, gives a new dimension, a new depth of wealth and fullness. The fact that we are social beings implies that we need structure to make our vision and even our response to God’s vision visible. Let me define and also explain the need for structure.

The word “structure” is defined as, the “mutual relation of the constituent parts or elements of a whole as determining its peculiar nature or character and also as that pertaining to the arrangement and mutual relation of the parts of any complex unity” (Oxford English Dictionary, (1989:957).

It comes from the Latin word *struere*, which means to build. The word “structure” implies that each element that belongs to the whole contributes to the character or nature of the structure. It is also described as complex because of the role played by each part or element. The character of the structure is thus dependent on the mutual relation and coherence of each part.

When this definition is applied to the church it means that each member of the church makes a valuable contribution to the character and essence of the church. This presupposes that the members can determine the origin and the existence of the structure of the church. It is stated by the AFMSA that the church is constituted by the Holy Spirit and not by the members of the church, which implies that, the character and essence of the church cannot be determined by the members although they have an influence on it (Preamble, p3-8, Constitution of the AFMSA, 2000). On the other hand, it is also true that the church cannot exist without human beings.

E.P Clowney (1988:142) a Presbyterian theologian argues that it is debatable whether the New Testament presents us with one final uniform pattern of church governance to serve as a norm for all ages, although there are certain considerable developments between Pentecost and the Pastoral epistles, points to an openness for more than one form or structure for the church. Howard Snyder (1977: 139) further supports this idea when he regards the structure of the church as inevitable but not all structures as equally valid. He uses the metaphor of the wineskin to demonstrate that the skin is not the wine and the structure is not the church. A church that is not structured along biblical principles will not be able to achieve the quality of growth and the authenticity of discipleship,

which God intends. He also states that church structures are neither evil nor illegitimate and he proposes certain criteria for workable church structures.

The criteria for workable structures that are offered by Snyder include first, biblical validity, which should help the church to be the church and carry out its mission. Second, the church must be culturally viable and thus be compatible with the cultural forms of the society where the church exists. The last criterion emphasises that the church must be temporally flexible because of the fact that cultures are dynamic and that the church must be open to modification in changing circumstances.

The pitfall of institutionalism is something that needs to be taken account of by the church because it can make the organisation (form and structure) more important than the people. G.A Getz (1984: 252) provides some facts that reveal the negative effects of institutionalism in his book *Sharpening the focus of the church*). He argues that institutionalism causes individuality and creativity to be lost in the mass and that the atmosphere in the organisation becomes more threatening than open and free. In such an organisation, the structural arrangements become rigid and inflexible. The result is that communication breaks down and people become prisoners of procedures. In order for the people to survive in a cold structure they develop their own special interests and create divisions that result in a lack of unity in the organisation as a whole. He concludes that the morale degenerates and that people lose their initiative and become discouraged and critical of the organisation and the leaders. The organisation gets bigger over time and that creates the development of a hierarchy of leadership with increasing problems from top to bottom.

He applies his notion of institutionalism to church history and discovers three major periods of institutionalism among the people of God that caused them to look for ways to restore the church's life and vitality. Christianity was born from Jesus' criticism of the existing religious system that had become so

institutionalised that it had lost the ability to recognize the truth from tradition. The external conformity of the people and the outward expressions of their religion were at the expense of the individual experience of God's truth. The reformers, in turn, rose up against the stagnant lifeless Roman Church to defend the biblical truth about the forgiveness of sins through the grace of God only over the personalised Christianity that offers forgiveness through the selling of indulgences. The reformers reacted strongly against the institutionalism and dead orthodoxy of the Roman Church, but they replaced them with intolerance of other traditions and control over the Protestant state churches. In turn, some other groups, such as the Free Church Movement, developed in reaction to the reformers' institutionalised form of Christianity., They wanted to maintain the freshness and vitality reflected in the New Testament. Getz (1984: 255) concludes from this that all these movements developed in reaction to institutionalism and ended up as institutions themselves. From these movements, it is clear that the system, which is the church's dogmas, traditions, forms, and structures eventually, becomes more important than the people.



It will become clear from biblical terms and images: the People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of God, Bride of Christ and a community filled by the Holy Spirit that the church is regarded as a spiritual ideal. David Lloyd-Jones (1999: 73) comments that such a church, as described by the above-mentioned images, could easily become the hope of the world, but the fact is that it can only be experienced on earth. He asserts: " All we see are all too human organisations divided from one another by walls of mutual suspicion and bitterness, built up over centuries of prejudice, misunderstanding and the failure to be truly Christian towards each other".

Lloyd-Jones (1999: 74) explains the fact that all churches are flawed as human institutions are due to the fact that all human beings are sinful. He further argues that the church needs to be visible as a real human community and structured as an organisation so that the divine and heavenly ideal can be manifested. For the church to function effectively in the world and fulfil its

divine commission to make disciples of all the nations in the world it needs systems of church government.

In order for the church to fulfil its vision effectively, it needs to understand the advantages and weaknesses that come with every form of church structure. The people responsible for these processes of institutionalisation in the church should also be aware that the structures that they erect are not beyond criticism and should be tolerant of corrections. If we study the history of certain individuals who were critical of the present state of the church in their life and age we find the same impulse to resist institutionalism. It was not Martin Luther's intention to start a Protestant Church or a Lutheran Evangelical Church. Although he was critical of the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, it was not his intention to found a church. When John and Charles Wesley's criticised the "High Church" in England they did not intend to form the Methodist Church by introducing Methodism, but their followers were forced by the situation to institutionalise their ideas. The same applies to Charles Parham, William Seymour and John G. Lake. They wanted to restore the apostolic faith or early Christianity. They wanted to establish missions and not structured churches, but in the end, they had to institutionalise and take everything that goes with that process into their form of the Christian Church.

It is with this understanding in mind that even a Catholic theologian like Hans Küng argues that Jesus did not call for the founding of a church or the organising of a fellowship of the elect for the parables used by him (the net, seeds, growth) point to the Kingdom of God. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God is not identical with the church. In Jesus' version there is no substitution of the old people of God (Israel) with a new people of God (Christian Church). The institutionalisation is thus not part of Jesus' vision of a community. It is after Easter and Pentecost that the early Christians first spoke of the *ekklesia* (an assembly). The reality is not the act of "founding" the church historically, but what Hans Küng (1993: 127) calls the "event" church when people meet together, pray together, celebrate together, act together, where ever,

however and whenever as disciples of Christ in memory of him. It is on this basis that he becomes critical of the “hierarchy” (which means the holy rule of the Roman Catholic Church) that is not found in the Bible. The word found in the Bible is “diakonia” which means service and describes the kind of power that the Christian Church needs. Cormac Burke’s definition is more positive towards the “hierarchical” structure of the Roman Catholic Church. He regards the sacredness of “authority” and thus “holy rule” in the church as different from that in the world. It can be distinguished from the way the world understands and orders its authority.

Burke (1988: 98) argues that Jesus did not wish to set up a purely spiritual, non-institutional, non-judicial structure and regards a too spiritual view as theologically out of God’s plan. He uses a sacramental approach by saying that God saved us through the incarnation of Jesus, which was visible and accomplished in a visible manner. He regards the humanity of Christ as a sacrament to the world and thus also the church as a sacrament to the world. The human nature that is visible in the members will show the human defects in the church but not render the grace of God ineffectual. He states: “We see the visible people of the Church and their defects, we do not see the invisible working of the Holy Spirit”.

His other argument is based on the fact that there is a historical difficulty with the thesis that Jesus left only a purely spiritual church. Jesus has left the newborn church without his physical presence but not without leaders. Jesus gave the church the power to organize herself in a judicial structure according to Matthew 18:18, “ I assure you whatever you will bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you allow on earth will be allowed in heaven.”

Jesus did not give the church laws but he gave her a judicial nature whereby the church is enabled to create parameters for her members to live under the Lordship of Christ.

Burke (1988: 113) argues further that the word authority, which comes from the Latin word *auctor* that means the source of something, implies a creative and guiding function that calls for free acceptance. The word “power” comes from the Latin word *posse* that means to be able to do things, being in a position to coerce, call for a free response and compel its acceptance. The authority and power that the church has, comes from above, from Christ (Matthew 28:19 – 19, John 1:12). The authority and power that the church has, is no political power that dominates and coerces people, but is a moral authority that guides us. He states that those who freely choose to belong to the church are morally bound to obey the authority of the church.

Differing from some extreme positions in Pentecostalism, Burke (1988: 114) opts for a hierarchical authority that is different from secular authority and describes the sacredness of the church’s authority as the distinguishing factor. He defines this hierarchy in a service pyramid over against a power pyramid. Although service through ruling seems a paradox, he concludes that service through ruling serves people in a threefold office i.e. priestly (sanctify) prophetic (teaching) and kingly (ruling).

In a sense, Burke reconciles power and authority with what was originally intended by God. It is the responsibility of human beings to act as stewards of God when it comes to authority and power over fellow human beings and the rest of creation.

In the same vein the famous Dutch Reformed and ecumenical theologian, Hendrik Berkhof, in his book *Christian Faith*, continues to study the combination of the church as institute, community and apostolate. He argues that the church is an institution and just another organisation, but that it exists as churches in different communities. As an institute that transmits faith the church’s transmission consists also of the element of offices and church order. The office-bearers give leadership, guard and equip the church. Berkhof (1986: 386) sees nothing wrong with the fact that the office is

coloured by the cultural climate of the times, whether feudal, aristocratic, or democratic. The church order or church policy serves the process of mediating the grace of God. He defines church order as a set of rules and regulations, which is designed to facilitate the mediating tasks of the church and the work of the office-bearers involved.

After establishing the mediating task of the church order/policy and the office bearers, He addresses the contrast between church laws and the charismatic elements involved. He stresses the fact that the Spirit blows where it wants. He argues that the Spirit is not too spiritual for order because God is a God of order according to 1 Corinthians 14:33 and that there must be room for the Spirit. The Catholic theologian Brian Gaybba (1987: 75) supports this view when he addresses the role of the Spirit in creating the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. He argues that the Spirit not only creates, but that it also establishes certain ministries that have to become uniformly structured as ordained ministries. He continues that he does not mean by uniformity the denial of legitimate differences or to take away the freedom and responsibility of individuals and communities, because this can lead to tyranny masked as unity that stifles the charismatic element (Gaybba, 1987: 76).

He agrees on this when he states that if we rule with absolute control we stand in the Spirit's way. On the other hand, it is also true that if we allow anarchy, we make room for other spirits. A solution is that we must ensure that the stability guaranteed by Christ and flexibility in different situations be preserved. From the above, it becomes clear that there is a creative tension between the charismatic and institutional elements involved in a vision and structure of the church.

Berkhof (1986: 388) identifies three areas that are problematic in church order. He first addresses the issue of doctrinal discipline that can take an ethical, juridical and therapeutic form. He questions the fact that the church can find a person guilty of something on the basis of its policies and discipline and then at a later stage it is proved that the church was wrong, as it has

been proved in history. Another problematic area addressed by Berkhof (1986: 389) is the relation between the local church and the church as a whole. He sees the origin of congregationalism as a reaction against Roman hierarchy and regards it as problematic. He states that it can lead either to individualism or freedom without limits, or even anarchy that threatens the church. Lastly, he focuses on the relationship between the personal and the collegial in church order or the government of the church.

Berkhof's contribution provides some interesting material for my focus on the relationship between the vision of the early Christians and the way in which Christians have institutionalised this vision up to the present day. Some of his points are the acceptance of the church as an institution with church order and policy, the relationship between the laws of the church and the role of the Spirit, the problematic of church discipline, and the threats and opportunities offered by the relationship between the local and universal church. It will become clear that these matters are not only challenges to the vision and structures of other churches, but also to the wider Pentecostal movement and the AFMSA. It will be recalled that the AFMSA never intended to become an organisation but rather wanted to be an organism. In the process of revision, the AFMSA needs to take account of these elements because it also aspires to "maintain and promote the good order of the church and...prays that its laws will always be an interpretation of the will of Jesus Christ" (Preamble, p.6 Constitution of the AFMSA, 2000).

The exclusion and domination of women, by the sins of sexism and patriarchy in the structures of church and society, undermine their freedom to share their gifts and ministries with the local and the universal church. Letty Russell, offers, as a feminist theologian, a helpful perspective to this issue in her book, *Church in the Round*. Here she emphasises the need to have a metaphor like the round table that addresses the vision of the Christian Community of faith, struggling to practice God's hospitality. It is a metaphorical description of a church struggling to become the household of freedom where the walls are broken down and all are made welcome.

Russell (1993: 13-14) understands the church to be a sign of the coming fulfilment of God's promise for a new creation. As a sign, the church is provisional and thus in constant need of renewal in order to make an authentic witness to God's love and justice in changing contexts, whether historical, political, economical or social. As a feminist theologian, she believes that women should challenge the patriarchal interpretation of ecclesiology. They should not only give criticism but also provide alternative ways of reconstructing the traditions of the church.

Russell (1993: 90) also proposes certain structures that would enable the marginalized in the church and society to interpret the church. She refers to a few structures that can address and serve the needs of people over the racial and sex divide in a pluralistic society. Some of these structures are what she describes as types of missionary structures. The family type- residential – congregation exists for people of all classes and races where they can learn more of each other while the permanent community structure provides regular programs of community services. The permanent availability of structure enables the church to serve the long-term needs of people. The task-force structure answers the need for social change and suits a pluralistic changing society. People are normally attracted to the structures that fulfil certain needs and bring a sense of stability and identity. The elements suggested by the missionary structures can be found in any church. For her, the answer to a structure that allows freedom and participation of the marginalised is provided by the Basic Christian Communities.

The Basic Christian Communities she regards as liberation structures that re-invent the church in poor and disadvantaged communities in Latin America. She defines them as a structure, “where members can form groups, struggling to break free from racist, sexist, homophobic, class, imperialistic and other forms of oppression” (Russell, 1993: 92).

The emphasis is placed here on the critical social analysis of power in political, social and economic relationships. She is not so much concerned about a correct type of structure, but the first priority is to act in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. The old sociological division of the church as a community and institution is rejected by the Basic Christian Communities. They are not opposed to institutionalisation or organisation but against inflexibility and dominating institutional forms that exercise power for the benefit of those who control these institutions (Russell, 1993: 93).

The intention of the AFMSA to revision must include the role of women in the structures, policies and procedures. From the origin of the Pentecostal Movement, the role of women as gifted ministers was recognised. Lapoorta (1996: 36) argues from the Azusa paradigm that William Seymour was in favour of the inclusion of women at all levels of ministry in Azusa and he quotes, "Before Jesus ascended to heaven, holy anointing oil had never been poured on a women's head: but before He organised His church, He called them all into the upper room, both men and women, anointed them with the oil of the Holy Ghost, thus qualifying them all to minister in this Gospel. On the day of Pentecost they all preached through the power of the Holy Ghost. In Christ there is neither male nor female, all are one".

Lapoorta concludes that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has broken down the walls of separation and liberated them from racial, sexual and class prejudices and hatred. The AFMSA has not always been true to the vision of Seymour who is regarded as the founder of the Pentecostal Movement by many. The question that needs to be addressed is whether the structures of the AFMSA really create the freedom and opportunities for women to live out their ministries and share their gifts in the same manner as males.

Leonardo Boff (1993: 2) a liberation theologian came up with the idea of *ecclesiogenesis* - a new principle of birthing the church or starting the church again. He regards the plea for a new experience of church as a

reaction to massive church structures. He regards the institutionalisation of the church as inevitable but regards it as a threat to real community. He does not regard the Basic Christian Community as a general alternative for the church as an institution but is convinced that it can invigorate the institutionalised church. The relationship between the church as an institution and the church as a community as contrasting poles will always be there, but this relationship can be based on respect and openness. Boff evaluates the relationship between the church as an institution (Roman Catholic Church) and as a community (Basic Christian Communities) and sees the Basic Christian Communities as a particular way of being the church. It can be seen as a grassroots base that exists and functions from below. It is the universal church manifested in a concrete and historical way. He further argues that the catholicity or universality of the church is not a geographic, statistic, sociological or historical concept.



The cell church structure, which focuses on small groups, is highly regarded amongst Pentecostals. The purpose of this structure is to give every member of the church an opportunity to serve the Body of Christ with his or her gifts and ministries. The Basic Christian Communities differ from the cell church structure uncritically, although the emphasis is in both cases on small group meetings. In the case of the Basic Christian Communities, a small group of Christians that live in abject poverty read the text together from a position of powerlessness, in order to be liberated from a situation of oppression. The fact that people who live in the same geographic area and share the same income and interests normally belong to the same cell-group deepens the gap between the affluent, learned members and the poorer, half schooled and even illiterate members. In order to belong to a certain cell-group one needs to go up the social ladder otherwise one is the “mission target” of the more blessed, affluent members and their development programmes. Indeed, we need development programmes for the less fortunate in our churches, but I think the Basic Christian Communities provide us with a concept whereby such programmes are

owned and managed by the people from below. In that sense such a cell group becomes “a grassroots structure”

Boff distinguishes between the *ecclesia* (assembly) and the *basileia* (kingdom). He regards the relationship between them as dialectical because the kingdom of God cannot be identified as the assembly although the two cannot be dissociated. This dialectical relationship can serve as a practical principle if the *ecclesia* is the ideal, distinctive, and essential feature of the Christian Church and one that sets it apart from other religious communities. The *basileia* is the rule of God that determines the *ecclesia*. One cannot limit God's rule to specific areas and in other areas our own will and reason reign supreme. On the other hand, God's rule also includes the human element that gives us the freedom to become co-creators and thus determine our destiny.



Somewhere in God's plan and vision, as it was revealed to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the earthly-historical form of his existence in the church (to borrow a term from Barth) and the eschatological hope, lie the principles needed for us to understand the *basileia* (rule of God) and our institutionalisation of it as the *ecclesia*.

The re-birthing (ecclesiogenesis) of the church is also addressed by a North American Methodist theologian PC Hodgson in his book *Revisioning the Church – ecclesial freedom in the new paradigm*. Hodgson (1988: 52) sees the situation in the church as a crisis on all levels and regards it as a call for a new paradigm. He regards the conditions right for the rebirth of ecclesial community, a rebirth from below and from outside of the established structures of the church. A new vision was set by the black, liberation, political and feminist theologies that regard the *ecclesia* as pluralistic, emancipative, prophetic and transformative. Such a vision is non-hierarchical, non-provisional and non-privatistic. Such an ecclesial vision focuses upon the historicity and spirituality of the church. It

recognizes its distinctive communal forms and thematises its liberative praxis and ecumenical mission (Hodgson, 1988: 18).

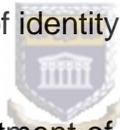
One of the South African theologians that really provided some insight to a responsible process of renewal in the church is Coenie Burger. His focus on the need for a healthy balance between the institutional and charismatic elements of the church is what concerns me here.

In the light of the challenges posed to the Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter referred as the DRC) in the post-Apartheid South Africa, Coenie Burger wrote, *Dinamika van 'n Christelike geloofsgemeenskap*. He identified the times in South Africa as new times, with new requirements that call for a change in mentality by the members of the DRC who are predominantly white Afrikaner people (Burger, 1991: 13-15). This call on the DRC was in reaction to the process of secularisation, whereby a decline in church and religious activities was taking place, a growing emphasis on the individual above the group was developing, and a more critical attitude towards authentic and authoritative structures was prevalent. The DRC was thus forced to reconsider its vision, community commitment, and service. He does not regard his perspective, as all there is to say on a total vision of the renewal of the DRC or a blueprint towards that end. He argues that the ministry's philosophy of the church did not fall from heaven, but is a result of people's theories and interpretations.

Burger (1991: 27) states that the secret of the church is that it is first a creation of the Spirit, and that it is thus a unique type of community that finds its existence outside itself, which implies that it cannot be extinguished or destroyed. This secret is manifest in the words Jesus used when he told Peter, on the occasion of his confession, that he (Jesus) was the Christ, Son of the living God, and that he would build his church on that truth. The church exists in an open reality in which it can think the unthinkable and believe the unbelievable. Second, the church is a social reality and is formed into an institution. It is thus an empirical reality and

exists as a link between the spiritual and the social world. Third, this implies that the church is visible and can be enriched by the social sciences because it can be researched. Burger (1991:28) concludes that we do not stop being people when the Spirit comes upon us. Although the church is a creation of the Spirit, it is an open and material reality and can be analysed, criticised, and researched. This enriches the pastoral service of the church as a social entity, while, as a spiritual entity, it is protected from destruction.

In order for a community to be dynamic, Coenie Burger (1991: 20) proposes the need for four processes that are simultaneously and equally effective. Such a community must first move from static formulations to a hopeful vision that is accepted by the people (Burger, 1991: 37). Such a vision must be centred upon a Trinitarian understanding of God's work in the past, present, and the future. It must use an open language containing metaphors and symbols, and the vision must be explicit. It helps such a community to have a sense of identity and to become visible.



Second, in terms of a commitment of faith, the community must move from unclear agreement to solid commitment (Burger, 1991: 73). In this “faith-as-doing” stage, the purpose is the spiritual formation of people, the creation of opportunities for public confessions of faith and the renewal of confession, the evaluation of faith, and the search for a deepening faith.

Third, it is the stage of commitment to the community when people move from privatism and self care to care for each other (Burger, 1991: 99). This selfless commitment restores the biblical vision of *koinonia* in which the interests of the individual are subordinated to those of the group, and therefore, brings about the creation of a collective consciousness. In the process people will know that their lives are precious and protected, surrounded by people for whom they are important and that they are cared for in the power of Jesus.

Fourth, people move from a self-driven religion to a life of service (Burger, 1991: 123). This is at the heart of the reason the church came into being and still exists. In order to render service to God, the structures and the processes of the church must be constantly changed to serve that purpose. Coenie Burger (1991:133) concludes that the danger of an institutional model is that the church becomes more concerned with its own needs and its image. One of the church's purposes then is to maintain it and ascertain its continuity. Such a vision is related to a theology of gifts and calling.

Jurgens Hendriks another South African theologian (1992: 9), uses the model theory of Avery Dulles as a frame of reference to understand the differences between church concept and church praxis. These models make the reasons clear why churches differ in theological convictions, style and praxis. He studies also the metaphors that is developed about the church from the Old and the New Testament to get clarity on what the norm and the purpose of the church is and lastly how it can be implemented in the praxis. He evaluates the institutional, proclamation, body and transformation models given to the church.

In terms of the institutional model, Hendriks (1992: 14) argues that the church in this model is based on a strong power and authority structure (rule and govern). On the positive side, the model enhances unity, stability and provides members with a sense of identity. Although a sacramental understanding of the model has a strong biblical and early Church basis, it has a few weaknesses. It is too traditional, authoritarian, and legalistic and creates a distance between the positions held and the "ordinary" members (clergy – laity).

Hendriks (1992: 19) observes that the proclamation model allows the word of God and the confessions of faith to control the church (teach and organise). A one-sided emphasis is placed on teaching and proclamation, but it becomes too intellectualistic. The affective and emotional (hearts) as well as the will to do (hand) are suppressed. A model like this has the

tendency to institutionalise to such an extent that it becomes a hierarchy and a bureaucracy in a synod structure that rules the church.

In the body model, Hendriks (1992: 29) gives high priority to the role of the Spirit (glorify and testify). In this model, God is interested in people and not remote from them. Every believer has a ministry and a strong personal testimony that is shared in koinonia. Such a model leads to perfectionism because people are given the impression that they are always winners and religion is marketed with capitalistic motives.

Hendriks (1992: 29) asserts that the transformation model is rooted in social development and based on a doctrine of salvation or liberation (protection and compassion). Although the motives are genuine this model can lead to an ideology where God is reduced to become a tool in the hand of the human liberators. In that sense are people regarded as deserving Gods grace and work alone for their own liberation.



Hendriks (1992: 13) concludes that all these models develop a fixed order or procedure that describes their conception of the church. A certain form is created that dominates over the spontaneous life that prevents adaptations and renewal in the church. Each model develops its own institutional authority that is sometimes rigorously defended against other models.

Hendriks argues that the major church traditions are implied in these models. The first model is associated with the Roman Catholic and Anglican tradition while the second model is more identified with the Protestant/ Reformed tradition. The third model has a more Pentecostal/ Charismatic orientation while the last model emphasises a liberation theological position that is especially found in the Latin American churches.

The implication of these insights for the institutionalisation process in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA will now be assessed. The definition of the terms “vision” and “structure,” implies that there are a mental element,

thus a human element, involved in the revision and institutionalisation process. The combination of insight and foresight in these two processes allows any organisation to understand the past, present and the future existence of it. When applied to our study, this framework offers an opportunity for the church to understand the human element in this process. It help us to understand that the Bible from which we derive our church structure is also a human book and that it do not provide us with one pattern our structure of church governance.

This framework provides us with some criteria that we can use to determine whether our church structures are effective and relevant from a biblical, cultural and temporal perspective. It has become clear that it is a human responsibility to create church structures, but the sinfulness of the human endeavour needs to be taken into account. People must not be used as a means to an end in the structures of the church because when that happens the process of institutionalisation becomes harmful to them.



The process of institutionalisation provides a framework to understand the hierarchical nature of church structures but also challenges the church to make it based on service and not an authoritarian rule. It allows us to accept the church as an institute that transmit faith through its offices and order and to be open to the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit of love that the church is enabled to serve all the members of the body of Christ without bias and discrimination.

It is also proposed that small groups are essential for the church structure if its intention is to allow all the members to serve the church with their gifts and talents. The church becomes an “event “ when and where people meet to glorify God. In that sense is the church always re-birthered, ready to revision its structures so that it can be emancipative and transformative for its members now and in the future. The inevitability of institutionalisation challenges all churches to be always in a state of reformation.

In the process of revision the church should have a clear vision that focus on the kingdom of God and its implications for the life of the assembly. The church should be able to get a commitment from all its members and structures to make the vision a reality. There should be a commitment to care for each other and willingness to serve through the sharing of gifts and ministries.

In the process of restructuring the church should keep in mind that people need structures for stability and identity but be aware that people don't want to be manipulated or used by the authority laid down in the structure. The church should keep in mind that people wants to be stimulated intellectually and emotionally by the teachings of the church. Such a structure should allow people to experience the Holy Spirit and to share it with the rest if its members through testimony. People should be able to experience the working of Gods power in all spheres of their lives so that salvation becomes reality in their everyday lives. The next section focuses on the role of the Bible and how it is important for the vision and structure of the church.



1.3 THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE

In the Introduction to this study it is stated that the Bible will not be used as the point of departure but that the role of the Bible and how theologians from the different traditions use it will be assessed. It is especially their understanding of the biblical metaphors regarding the marks of the church that will be assessed. At first, will we assess the manner in which Pentecostals read the Bible (1.3.1), than will we assess some Old Testament metaphors that are used to understand the continuity between Israel and the church (1.3.2) and lastly will we focus on some metaphors from the New Testament that describes the church (1.3.3).

1.3.1 Elements that describe a Pentecostal reading of the Bible

Pentecostals have a high regard for the authority of the Bible because already at the beginning of the movement, the students of Charles Parham diligently studied the book of Acts on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The preference for a biblical theology among Pentecostals is due in part to the fact that Pentecostalism is “restorationist”, with the goal of recovering the full life of the Spirit experienced by the churches of the Apostles and depicted for us in the New Testament (Macchia, 2002: 1121) J. M. Bonino (1999: 116) agrees that Pentecostalism is a Bible-centred faith, but what this means is not always self-evident in the movement.

There is a lack of uniformity among Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, which makes it difficult to find a common hermeneutical approach and for that reason, my intention is to describe some elements that point to some consensus among Pentecostals on a Pentecostal hermeneutic. The elements that will be described are the role of the Spirit, the centrality of the community, experience, narrative and the fourfold office of Christ.

The role of the Spirit in interpretation is one of the elements central to a Pentecostal hermeneutic. Marius Herold (1998: 422) argues that, “Pentecostals will underline the uniqueness of the New Testament in its application to the church and especially the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit”. The Spirit works within the parameters of the Bible and believers can feel the Spirit when they act out the metaphors of the bible, which provide for them access to and the experience of the Spirit. The Spirit endows the believer with charismatic gifts, which is an actual way for God to be present directly and inspire his people. This allows the possibility for all believers to read and understand the Word of God in their everyday lives. According to Hollenweger (1997: 315), such an interpretation depends on a spiritually informed discernment and intuition that is open to ordinary people with an extra-ordinary book. Wonsuk Ma (1999: 54) sees such a literalistic reading of scripture as of great interest for lay people

engaged in Bible studies and contends that it leads to the emancipation of the Bible from the exclusive claim of the clergy.

J. M. Bonino (1999: 119) further states that the Spirit enlightens the text and places the reader in the presence of God. The Spirit thus opens the heart of the reader so that the living Christ becomes the centre of the individual and the community and inspires a response of prayer and praise. F. D Macciah (2002: 1122) agrees with this when he states that the experience of the Spirit depicted in the Bible, especially in the book of Acts, is for all Christians of all generations because the same Spirit involved in the events and words of the text is alive in the church today and the Jesus whom the Spirit anointed and to whom the Spirit bears witness is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Another element already implied by the former statement is the importance of liturgical space or the centrality of the community in a Pentecostal hermeneutic. Herold (1998: 422) says that the church is the place where the Bible becomes manifest, where all the Bible truths are lived out and that which is latent becomes an actuality. He continues that Pentecostals do not see a text only within the context of a passage or chapter, but also within the wider context of the church. Macchia (2002:1122) states that Pentecostals imply a theological method that is similar to the one used by Geoffrey Wainwright in his book *Doxology* where he makes the worship of the church the centre of theological reflection and praxis. Some Pentecostals like Simon Chan and Steven Land prefer the term “spirituality” over “worship” as a primary locus of reflection to include both worship and practical living in the hermeneutical context. It is also debatable whether Pentecostals have placed equal weight on daily living as on worship as primary contexts for the interpretation of Scripture. Wainwright’s emphasis on worship as a primary core of theological reflection and praxis is regarded as the most common direction of Pentecostal theologising. Walter Hollenweger states that, “no one person interprets the Scripture correctly on his own. It is only in conflict, debate and agreement with the whole

people of God and also with non-Christian readers that we can get a glimpse of what Scripture means.”

Marius Herold (1998: 428) states that the element of experience is important in a Pentecostal hermeneutic. The purpose of reading the Bible is to recover the fullness of life in the Spirit as the apostles experienced it. The quest here is on understanding and experience, and not so much on interpretation for the sake of it. The goal of interpretation of the text is not only to understand but also to apply to real life situations. The experiential mood serves at a hermeneutical level, to where truth and reality converge to become a power of persuasion and ultimately, transformation. For Pentecostals, there are thus a certain “present-tenseness to the events and words of the Bible, so that what happened then, happens now and what was promised then, inspires assurance and hope in everyday life. The reading of the text becomes an event of the Spirit in which the reader is transformed and made to experience what the Bible puts forth as living truth. Historically, the Pentecostals were rejected by fundamentalists because of the basic dependence they had on contemporary experience of God’s revealed presence and word rather than on objective scientific method (Macchia, 2002: 1122).

The element of narrative is very important in a Pentecostal hermeneutic. The early Pentecostals used the biblical narratives for their theological foundations. According to Wonsuk Ma (199:55) the validity of the narrative material for theological work was “intuitively” assumed rather than theologically argued. The book of Acts was a favourite book for Pentecostals and provided a strong motivation to seek the empowerment of the Spirit applied as a biblical pattern for contemporary believers. Pentecostals love the biblical narratives and use it mostly as basis for their doctrines, especially the historical narratives of the book of Acts. Narratives are viewed by Pentecostals as an effective and authentic means of communicating traditions and truth. Walter Hollenweger (1997: 313-314), using the work of Gordon Fee, questions whether the book of Acts can be

regarded as normative. The first question asked is: How is the book of Acts the Word of God? Second, if the Primitive Church in Acts is normative, which experience of it is normative, Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi or Corinth? Third, is it at all legitimate to take descriptive elements as normative? How do we distinguish those that are from those who are not? He opts for a narrative exegesis that asks the questions: Who has written this text, for whom and why?

Another element of importance for a Pentecostal hermeneutic is the function of the fourfold office of Christ. Herold (1998: 429) regards the fourfold office of Christ as deeply embedded in the roots of the Pentecostal perspective, which is Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Coming King. For him the fourfold office serves as a broad hermeneutical category according to which Scripture will be interpreted. The christocentric moment is only normative when nothing in the Bible contradicts or fails to contribute to its central message.



In short, the role of the Spirit, community, experience, narrative and the fourfold office of Christ are some of the important elements in a Pentecostal hermeneutic. The question that must be dealt with now is whether a Pentecostal hermeneutic can be regarded as acceptable in the academic world. Bonino (1998: 428) states that studies on Pentecostalism, which are bold in their own interpretations of what Pentecostalism is and does, seldom stop to listen to how Pentecostal scholars themselves interpret their own faith and experience. The other side of the coin is also true when one reads what Marius Herold (1998: 428) says on the interpretation of Pentecostal scholars. He argues that they are often inclined to follow contemporary academic hermeneutical streams without considering whether they are in line with Pentecostal tradition and presuppositions. He concludes that such a practice needs to be remedied if Pentecostals want their hermeneutics and exegesis to be true to their roots.

Macchia (2002: 1121) argues that Pentecostals always had a tension between the traditional forms of biblical theology of academically trained Pentecostals and the more abstract or philosophically -oriented constructive systematic theology. The advantage of such a preference for a hermeneutically based theology was the possibility of a fresh approach to certain doctrines that have for centuries been excessively burdened by dogmatic concerns. The purpose of hermeneutics was more “pragmatic” than an interpretation for the sake of interpretation. This “pragmatic hermeneutic” originated with Charles Parham and was seen as a counter-movement to the influence of biblical criticism. Hollenweger (1997: 408) argues that we can no longer say that “the Bible says” and quote a verse of Scripture, but that we need to account for our principle of selectivity. It is in that sense that there are pressures mounting against Pentecostal critical biblical scholarship and a need for Pentecostal theologians to familiarise themselves with the significant changes in the religious environment and the social context that will influence the reading of Scripture in the twenty - first century. Wonsuk Ma (1999: 63) argues that Pentecostals are challenged by these changes to do hermeneutics and theology in a way that can impact them positively in future.

Marius Herold and Wonsuk Ma both see in contemporary post-modern hermeneutics a potentially positive contribution for Pentecostal hermeneutics. Due to the fact that Pentecostals are under exceeding pressure to participate in serious theological research, he expresses his uncertainty about the unhelpfulness of the current approach in research to explain the Spirit movements. He regards modernity and reductionism as a too rigid mental framework to be helpful in describing the Pentecostal sentiments characterised by spontaneity and freedom. He continues,” A post-modern paradigm with its emphasis on an integrated (holistic) approach and an organic (the world is not a machine) reality may provide a basis for a more promising method” (Herold, 1998: 427).

Wonsuk Ma (1999: 63) supports his view when he says that postmodernism is particularly appealing to Pentecostals because it provides legitimacy for their intuitive reading of Scripture. Post-modernism allows for other non-conceptual ways of interpretation including multi-level reality and truth, integrated approach, metaphoric understanding, wholeness, etc. In Pentecostalism, the Bible is not regarded as a rulebook or as fixed or absolute truth, but the rich images and metaphors stimulate the religious imagination and challenge one to discover the biblical truth as living truth for oneself (Herold, 1998: 427). Such an approach makes it easier for the Bible texts to become integrated into the mind enriching and stimulating what is already present in the form of images and stories.

In the first part of this section some elements is described that is important in a Pentecostal reading of the Bible. The importance of metaphors in a Pentecostal reading of the Bible was emphasised as authoritative and normative. In the last part of this section I would like to assess the use of images and its application as models in ecclesiology.



The use of images, metaphors, symbols or models in ecclesiology has become important today as another way to conceptualise certain beliefs about the church. R.D Knudsen (1987: 329), a Presbyterian theologian from North America describes an image (Latin: imago; Greek: eikon) as a likeness of someone or something, most often in another medium ... it represents and symbolizes, but it is more; it is the similitude of something, reflecting or mirroring it.

The South African Reformed theologian Johan Heyns (1980: 42) writes in his book, *The Church*, that the Bible offers no systematic treatment of the church or abstract definitions of it. The biblical writers used symbols or images peculiar to their eastern modes of thinking and culture. One must also remember that there are some distances between these first century, Eastern Mediterranean images of the church (cultural, linguistic, geographical, political, etc.) and our modern world.

They used images to convey the scriptural truths. Because an image does not explain itself it cannot be used as an end in itself. An image is derived from the metaphors that were formed in the experience of these believers from the world of the Bible. When these images are used reflectively and critically, it becomes models.

The North American Catholic theologian Avery Dulles (1987: 17) emphasises the use of models in ecclesiology as a way of talking indirectly about the church, which he regards as a mystery of which we cannot speak directly. The word, "mystery" signifies that the church is not fully intelligible to the human mind and that the church's richness lies therein. He argues that one cannot fully objectify the church.

Dulles (1987: 21) states that models can be used explanatorily (synthesize what we already know) or exploratory (provide the capacity to lead to new theological insights), which implies that it can lead to new ways of being the church at present and in the future. He states that images are derived from certain cultures and when these cultures change, the people who cherish these images experience it as a crisis of images.

This is normally experienced as a shift in paradigms. The need for a new pattern or model is thus experienced. When this shift occurs, people experience a loss of substance and foundation. This can lead to polarisation, mutual incomprehension, the inability to communicate, frustration and discouragement. For him the contemporary crisis of the church is a crisis of images.

Paul Minear (1977: 22) explains that that there are three basic functions performed by images. It firstly serves as tools of rhetoric that is designed to help us describe and convey an impression concerning something that is already known. Images secondly serve as mode for perceiving a given reality that is not amenable to objective visibility or measurement. Images

serve lastly to advance the self-understanding of individuals and society. When these functions are applied to the church it means that, “ the church should have constant recourse to the dominant pictures in the New Testament, not to use them as tools for rhetorical ingenuity or as mirrors for self-preening, or as weapons in ecclesiastical warfare, but as modes of perceiving afresh that mystery of eternal life which God shares with his people, and as reminders of its neglected roles as the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (Minear, 1977: 25-26).

Minear (1977: 28) states there are between eighty and one hundred images of the church in the New Testament of which he examines only 96 images that he divides into 32 minor and 64 major and decisive images. The fact that there are so many images to describe the Church in the New Testament makes it difficult to choose which one of them can be the most helpful for our understanding of the vision of the early church as it is described in the four marks of the church.



Images are not always adequate and although some images are used more than others, we must understand their interdependence. The feminist theologians warned us against turning the images used in our theological language into idolatry when we use language to describe the fatherhood of God. Sallie McFague (1982:10), a feminist theologian, argues that there are also other images that can be used to describe God like Mother, Friend and Lover. The liberation, black and African theologies are often very critical of how the Bible was used to justify the experience of oppression and discrimination in their contexts. This is why they are critical about the use of the Bible as a political weapon to discriminate against people on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, tribe, class or even continent.

These critical insights must be kept in mind when we apply the images or metaphors from the Bible. In the next section I am going to analyse the metaphor of Israel as a people of God and how it is continued in the New Testament where the church is described as the new people of God. The

metaphor that describes the church as the body of Christ will also be examined. The images of the church as the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit and the witness in the world will also be assessed, because they provide valuable insights into the vision of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

1.3.2 Metaphors from the Old Testament

In his book, *The Church*, Heyns (1980: 29) argues that the church's origin must be sought much earlier than its New Testament history. He states, "To date its origin at Pentecost or at Jesus' birth or death would be disparaging to the church's historical antecedent". Lapoorta (1996: 121) confirms this in *Unity or Division* when he concludes that theologians normally commence their discussion of the unity of the church in the New Testament as if the Old Testament has nothing to offer in this regard. In order to avoid a Marcionistic trend (from Marcion who rejected the Old Testament as a book of law and accepted the New Testament as a book of grace (Schillebeeckx, 1990; 151) in a biblical foundation for the church, I would like to start with the image that is found in both testaments, the church as the elect and the people of God.

The church as the elect and the people of God

The church consists of those, who are called by God as the elect, to follow him alone. This is also explained by the word *ekklesis*. The Greek word (ek-kletoi-the called) refers to the calling together of Greek citizens among the city's inhabitants to an assembly. The biblical meaning of this word lies in the Hebrew work *qahal* that denotes a religious gathering where Jahweh is the convener (Gen 49: 6 / Num 16:33). The first *qahal* or gathering of Jahweh was held at Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:22), Solomon also addressed the assembly (1 Kings 8:14) and Ezra read the Law to the assembly (Nehemiah 8:33).

In the Old Testament, the members of God's community have a cultic relationship with God. Heyns describe this relationship as a two-way traffic, where a merciful God approaches humans with forgiveness and they accept it obediently. In this cultic relationship, sacrifice is central as illustrated by Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3) Noah (Gen 8:30) Abraham (Gen 22:2,13) and Jacob (Gen 31:46,54). Part of this sacrificial relationship was the erection of altars (Gen 8:20 / 12:7 / 13:4/ 18:25). In the relationship with Noah, God took the initiative for a covenant (Gen 6:18). The ark was to become a symbol of the church as a saving institution (Mt 24:36 - 43 / Luke 17: 26 - 37 / Hebrews 11:1 / 2 Peter 2:5 / 1 Peter 1 : 18 - 22). In the New Testament the ark was interpreted to mean that sinners can find salvation in the church just as Noah's people did in the ark. The most typical features of the covenant are seen in God's covenant with Abraham and his seed (Israel). God promises salvation to Israel, those who accept it in faith are children of Abraham, if they are obedient. Those who demonstrate their obedience to Jahweh culturally are described as *adah* and *quahal* and that is translated in the Septuagint as *synagogue* and *ekklesia*.

In order to become part of the elected people of God, various regulations must be followed. Circumcision and purity (ethical and religious) and a right relationship to God and neighbour were some of those regulations. It was not only Israel's prerogative to be part of this cultic community, even circumcised slaves and righteous ones like Job were included. From this it can be derived that the community of the Lord was not identical with the empirical nation of Israel and second, that the community of the Lord was a dynamic not a static entity.

Israel was set apart by God from all other nations, exclusively to receive God's revelation; to obey it, testify about it and to record and transmit it from generation to generation. Israel did not obey that and was judged and rejected by God. Through the prophets, God promised a new people, with a new heart, new spirit and a new covenant (Es 11:9 / Joel 2:29 / Hosea 1:10

/ Isaiah 61:6 / Zech 2:11 / Isaiah 43:6). God's covenant with Israel was not terminated but extended through the new covenant. What is continued is the idea of a remnant of Israel and what is discontinued is the idea that it involves only the nation of Israel. Heyns (1980: 40) describes it as follows; "The true continuation of the Old Testament community of the Lord is to be found in the Church, not in post-biblical Judaism". Hans Küng (1995: 126) disagrees with such a view on the basis that Jesus never wanted to substitute the old people of God with a new people of God. Jesus did not single the twelve disciples out as the "new Israel" or the "new people of God" or even contrast them with Israel. He regards it as a post Easter development (Küng, 1995: 127)

The church's message of the kingdom is seen as a reality that existed long before the existence of the New Testament church. This is one of the reasons proffered by Heyns (1980: 30) for an Old Testament basis for the church. He argues that "a one-sided, a particularistic, narrowly, nationalistic view of the Old Testament fails to do justice to the cosmic or universal features it contains". Israel knew it was God who rules over them (Psalm 103:6-18). This message had cosmological and international aspects. God ruled as King over all the earth (Psalm 145: 10-13 / Jeremiah 31:35 / Isaiah 42:9 / 43:19 - 20).

In the Qumran scrolls, one finds reference to a community awaiting the coming of a Messiah at the end of time (Newlands, 1984: 16). Heyns (1980:30) concludes that Christ was the Head of the Church before the New Testament church arrived. When one interprets the Old Testament prophecies messianically, we can find reference to the expected Messiah, who is Christ. The apostles regarded Jesus coming in the flesh as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Peter preaches about Jesus as the one referred to by David (Acts 2:25 / Ps 16:8-11). Paul proved that God has fulfilled his promises in Christ (Acts 13:33 / Psalms 2:7). There are some texts in the Old Testament, which is regarded as Messianic prophecies. They are Genesis 3:15 / Numbers 24:17, 2 Samuel 7:11-13, Isaiah 53,

Isaiah 11: 1 - 2 and the Royal Psalms (Psalms 20, 21, 45, 61, 63, 72, 110). According to these Messianic prophecies was Jesus the head of the church, before the origin of the Christian church.

According to Heyns (1980: 34) the same reasons given for the coming of the messiah in the messianic prophecies is also the reason for the origin of the church. In the Old Testament, we find the expectation of the Messiah who would come and save his people and his people would be with him. In the New Testament, Christ's coming is related to saving people from sin (Mt 1:21). Jesus came to serve (Mt 20:28), to undo the devil's work (1 John 3:8), to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15), to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) and to invite sinners (Mk 2:17).

Heyns (1980:35) concludes that, "If the incarnation finds its origin and motivation in human sin then it is also the motivation for the church's origin"

The church is thus God's reaction to the problem of sin and his solution to it. Does this imply that the church is without sin? History has proved that the church consists of people and humans are fallible and so the visible church is also fallible.

From this Old Testament metaphor of Israel as the people of God one can derive the basis for the New Testament view of the church as a people of God and Body of Christ. It represents a typical way to see the church biblically and is widespread, popular and commonly accepted within Pentecostal circles and the AFMSA in particular. According to Lapoorta (1996: 122) offers the Old Testament concept of Ke-hal Jahweh a significant background to the New Testament ecclesia.

1.2.3 Metaphors from the New Testament

In the Introduction to this section on the biblical foundation of the church, it was stated that the use of metaphorical language by the biblical writers was

derived from their experiences in their Eastern Mediterranean world. The first century Christians were from different nationalities and cultures. In order to define themselves as the followers of Jesus Christ they used images that were known to them, to interpret this new hitherto unknown experience of being a community of Christ. It was almost spontaneous for these followers to use the image of the people of God.

The other image that was regarded as a more inclusive one was the image of the church as the body of Christ. Newlands (1984: 18) states that no single image or congregational situation can be regarded as normative for the doctrine of the church. He argues that we have the freedom that was expressed by the church over the centuries under diverse situations and in widely different ways, to use those images that best describe the nature and task of the Christian church, where and whenever we are.

The people of God

The church as a people of God (*Laos*) can again be traced back to Israel. The New Testament writers mentioned prophecies that were made to the Old Testament writers about a new people that God is going to create. John the Baptist refers to the new people who will be prepared fit for the Lord (Luke 1:17) James refers to God's chosen people amongst the Gentiles (Acts 15:4). Paul refers in Romans 9:25 to what was said in Hosea that "I (God) will be their God and they will be my people". He said that also to the church in Corinth with their many nationalities (2 Corinthians 6:16). This is also promised in Ezekiel 37:25 / Jeremiah 31:31. Peter refers to a people, called by God, not of biological origin, but as an act of God. This people are no continuation of Israel. The word "people" in this context becomes a purely religious concept where the people are transformed as a holy people (set apart for God's purposes).

It is also expected from this people to have a commitment and love for fellow members across natural divisions of language, culture and history. Individuals find safety in this collective fellowship. These members must

accept one another as Christ had accepted them. In this, the Messianic expectation of the Old Testament was fulfilled. Jesus saw the new community as a community that lived under new rules (John 13:34). The early church had three convictions about themselves namely: They are the ecclesia, called out for a purpose and sent into the world (John 20:21), they had a universal concept that the church was for all (1 Corinthians 10:32), even if there was differences of opinion (Acts 15) and lastly, they had a particular view of evangelism as the task of all believers and not of a chosen few. For them, the local church was a microcosm of the universal church (1 Tim 3:15). Again, this form of retelling the story of the biblical foundation of the church in terms of the people of God is characteristic also of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. This express their present experience of themselves, their communal understanding, their reconstruction of themselves within the Biblical narratives, retold in this way. They are the People of God.

The body of Christ



Together with the image of the church as the people of God, the body of Christ image refers to the church as community, yet there are differences between these two images. Dulles (1987: 54) regards the image of the body as superior to that of the people because the latter brings a distance between the head and the body and is egotistical and monopolistic in creating a new view of being the people. Some authors believe that Paul uses the term body of Christ (*soma Christou*) first, as a reference to the bread at the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16); second, as the body of the crucified Lord (Rom 7:4) and third as the community of the believers (1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27 / Romans 12: 4-8). , Paul refers to the community of believers at the Lord's Supper as the body of Christ. He does not equate the community of saints as the Body of Christ with the Body of the crucified Lord as if Christ's life is continued in the form of the church (*Christus prolongatus*). This can lead to an erroneous idea that the church as the body of Christ must be regarded as a symbol and not as a historical reality.

It is for this reason that Avery Dulles (1987: 55) calls this model the mystical communion of believers.

Lapoorta (1996: 123) provides some valuable insights regarding the *soma Christou*. He sees the church as a supernatural reality into which all believers are baptised, but that the sum total of believers is not the body of Christ. The body of Christ existed before the local church and binds all aspects of the church together. He asserts that the Spirit dwells and reigns in the body of Christ and binds the members together regardless of their differences (1 Corinthians 12:13 / Galatians 3:28). Dulles (1987: 55) calls the Spirit the life-giving principle in the church as a body, that makes it grow, repair and adapt itself in changing times. This body is dynamic and develops towards a specific goal. The role that is attributed to the Holy Spirit in the church can imply that the Holy Spirit is responsible for the wrong actions of the church. It is on this basis that Gaybba (1987: 76) argues that the Spirit of love is not there to serve the institutional structures of the church. What makes this body of Christ unique and different is that it is both a visible and an invisible community.

When the Christian community is described as being “in Christ” (Galatians 2:17 / Romans 8:11) this makes them seem superior to being “in Adam” (Romans 5: 12 -21 / 1 Corinthians 15:45 - 49). This Christological formula indicates a particular relationship between Christ and the believer. As an ecclesiological formula it indicates Christ as the head of the church. It indicates as an ethical formula that those in Christ are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). There is an indissoluble link between Christ and His church, which is expressed by the various roles ascribed to Him. As head, Christ rules the church (Ephesians 1:22 / 1 Colossians 1:18), as mediator Christ intercedes on the church’s behalf (Hebrews 7:25) and as the perfecter He leads the church to the fulfilment of his intention with it (Hebrews 8:6 / 12:2). All of these designations are extremely important for a Pentecostal hermeneutic Biblical ecclesiology. It reflects the aspect of

experience, of involvement, of present-day participation in the Biblical story of the church.

According to Lapoorta (1996: 123), in order to become a member in this body one needs to be baptised as a condition and guarantee for membership first and then baptised in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3 / Romans 6:3). The members of the body celebrate their unity and diversity at the Lord's Supper with Christ and amongst themselves. Paul reminds the believers to respect each other's gifts and their interdependence instead of independence (Romans 12 / 1 Corinthians 12). In the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, this idea of unity in diversity is expressed to the whole wide church, not just the local one.

The bond that exists between the believers is a consequence of Christ and is inclusive not exclusive. The gifts of the body must serve this unity of the church. Diversity is thus not a rival or threat for the church, but part of her nature. The contribution of every member will celebrate this diversity and advance the welfare of the whole body. On the basis of the members' status before God (Romans 15:16 / Hebrews 10:10) they are called a community of saints.

Avery Dulles (1987:53) contrasts the organic images of the church such as the People of God and Body of Christ, with the church as an institution. Although he is more in favour of the church's organic elements, he highlights some weak points found in both models of the church. The People of God model fails to bring out what is new in the covenant of the Body of Christ. Used as a synonym for the church, it can show an egotistical and monopolistic church as if its members are the only ones who know God. The Body of Christ model is in danger of leading to an unhealthy divinisation of the church and can make the Spirit responsible for the wrong actions that the church as the body takes.

As loyal and convinced Catholic theologian Dulles (1987: 42) is of course not against institutional elements in the church, but definitely against the fact that such elements can lead to institutionalism. Institutionalism treats the institutional elements as permanent and this leads to a hierarchical perception of the church. The institutional model also easily gives rise to certain consequences, such as clericalism (reduces the laity to passivity) and juridicism (turns the Gospel into a new law). Some positive aspects from this institutional model are according to him, that it encourages continuity of the Christian origin and tradition and a strong sense of corporate identity. A weak element of this model is that it has a meagre basis in Scripture and the earlier Christian tradition.

The following metaphors that are used in the New Testament to describe the church have strong implications for a Pentecostal understanding of the vision of the church to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.



The church as the bride of Christ

This image refers to the love-relationship between Christ and the church as found in a marriage (Eph 5:22). The bride which is the church, must guard her sanctity in the world for her husband, but the purity of the bride is not through her own effort, but the fruit of God's own labour. Revelations 21:21 refer to the New Jerusalem as a bride preparing for her husband. Like her, the church has an intense longing for her heavenly bridegroom (Revelations 22:17). Holiness is thus seen as a gift and a command that is given to the church. Together with the Body of Christ, this model is familiar and important to the Pentecostals. There were two thrusts in Pentecostalism, the one apocalyptic and the other restorationist. According to the apocalyptic approach, the outpouring of the Spirit is seen as the empowerment of believers for effective evangelism with the imminence of the *Parousia*. The dominant image of the church is thus that of a bride awaiting her groom.

The church as the temple of the Spirit

This image again places an obligation on the believers to live a holy lifestyle. There is a connection between the body of believers and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The whole structure of the church rests on the cornerstone of the building, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:20-22). Christ's death changed the external visible structure of the church (Hebrews 8-9). The middle wall of separation is broken through Christ (Ephesians 2:14) and all believers are now priests (Revelations 1:6 / 5:10 / 20:6 / 1 Peter 2:5,9) in God's temple. There they serve each other as priests (Romans 15:17 / 1 Corinthians 9:12). The church as the household (Hebrews 3:6) and building of God (1 Peter 2:5), expresses God's permanent indwelling in the believers. Heyns calls the church God's residential address in the world and this is an interpretation of this New Testament image with which many Pentecostal Christians would be able to relate immediately.

The church as a witness in the world

A further image from the New Testament, however, is extremely important to Pentecostalism, and especially to the AFMSA as can be seen from its own self-description not as a church, but as a mission. Jesus commanded his followers to be his witnesses in the world (Luke 24:48 / Acts 1:8 / John 15:27 / Revelations 12:17). The word that describes the importance of being a witness is from the Greek word "*marturia*" - from which we derive the word martyr. Witness is also a judicial concept and justice is served when the witness sticks to the facts or evidence in the case. The witness does not offer his or her interpretation of the case but only of the facts.

The Apostles are regarded as the first witnesses who testified about Jesus Christ, his life, and work. The first witnesses, unlike contemporary witnesses, were ear and eyewitnesses. The witness does not rely on his or her moral attributes or orthodoxy, but in Jesus Christ. As an ambassador the witness acts on behalf of the one who sends him or her (2 Corinthians 5:20 / Ephesians 6:20). Jesus was sent by his Father in the New Testament (Matthew 10:40) and sent his followers in the same manner

(Matthew 28:19). The church must thus continue to testify to this message, as witnesses and ambassadors. The church cannot keep silent about what she saw and heard. The church is an apostolic mission, in the missionary service of the apostolic faith.

From the first part of this section on the role of the Bible it is clear that Pentecostals have a high regard for the Bible and that their reading of the Bible can be described by certain elements like the role of the Spirit, the centrality of community, experience, narrative and the fourfold office of Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and coming King. The importance of narrative in the Pentecostal tradition allows me to accept that metaphors can be used to understand their vision of the church.

The second part makes it clear that the use of models in ecclesiology allows us to assess the metaphors used in the Old and New Testament to describe the relationship between Israel and the church. Continuity is seen between the metaphors of the people of God and the body of Christ, which establish its importance as models to interpret the church today.

The freedom that we have to revision and structure the church reminds us that it is a human process that needs both the institutional and charismatic elements. This is to avoid an unhealthy form of institutionalism that can oppress and kills the vision of the early Church. It is in these metaphors that the early church found their vision to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic and it is to these roots that the early Pentecostals wanted to go back.

1.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

In the Introduction it was stated that although this study will not take church history as a point of departure, a historical overview will be given about the

vision of the AFMSA and how it relates to the vision of the early church to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

In this section, an overview will be given on the origin and development of the doctrine of the church and its relevance for this study.

It has become clear from the previous section that the early Christians used certain metaphors from their life setting to describe their vision of the church. In order to address the controversies of their day and to reach consensus on their basic Christian beliefs, they formulated what have become the normative statements of Christian belief. These beliefs were expressed in what is known today as the ecumenical creeds, accepted and adopted by the various ecclesiastical authorities.

The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed are the ones on which I will concentrate for the purpose of this study. The Apostle's Creed states with regards to the church: "I believe the one, holy, catholic Church, the Communion of saints" whilst the Nicene Creed states: "We believe the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church".

The Apostles' Creed starts with the statement "I believe" and this provides the liturgical and theological significance of this confession for the individual at the initiation to the Christian faith and in defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. The Nicene –Constantinopolitan Creed is the outcome of the consensus reached between Christians after long struggles against those who wanted to falsify their faith (so called heretics). It means that our own formulation of the way in which these truths have become concrete in our times is not in opposition to those of the early Christians. It opens up the possibility of re-formulating our faith in the face of new challenges. The new formulations of faith are known as confessions of faith. Different church traditions have their own views on the way in which they can arrive as a community to such confessions. Dogmatic formulation is seen as the activity of the church that arises out of theological

controversy or out of a need to clarify the faith to be embraced by the believers.

Dogma has also come to bear the marks of the intellectual and cultural ethos of the time and the people where it was formulated. It should be accepted then that dogma is not an absolute, timeless truth but a reminder of the challenges facing the church in every age.

The marks of the church must thus be seen in that same light. When we confess these marks of the church we must be aware of the intellectual and cultural ethos of those that formulated them. The questions that are raised by this admission are whether these marks can be considered the true marks or signs of the church and if the answer is they are not, what other marks or signs are there that we do not acknowledge? Some are of the opinion that the central theme of ecclesiology relates to the four notes or marks of the church- that is to say the four defining characteristics of the Christian church (McGrath, 1994: 417). According to P C Hodgson (1988: 37), the qualities of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity came to be considered marks of the true church, although what each of those qualities actually consists of, has been a subject of continued debate. It is this debate that is important for my study about the vision of the early church, to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church and how it was understood by later generations of Christians, the Pentecostal Movement and AFMSA.

On the first question of the debate, whether unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are really the marks or signs by which the true church or ecclesial community may be recognized, one also needs to consider post-medieval and post-reformation theology. The Eastern Orthodox Churches and later the Protestant churches differed with the Roman Catholic Church over the marks. The Reformers did not deny the marks but they were forced to develop criteria, to discern the true church from the false church and some of these criteria were the pure teaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments.

The second question in this debate whether these marks or attributes of the church have ever been realized is met with mixed responses. Some conclude that because the churches are the opposite of what they are supposed to be these marks are actualised only paradoxically and ambiguously. Hodgson (1988: 39) claims that it is self-evident that the Christian Church has always been united, but divided, catholic (universal) but particular, holy but sinful, and possesses apostolic authority but serves the world. However, he concludes that retrievable elements from the tradition serve as foundations of a new ecclesiology.

John Macquarrie (1966: 360) argues that the church is a mixed phenomenon and keeps its treasure in earthen vessels. It unfolds creation and minister reconciliation, but it falls short of consummation. He bases his argument on the four notes or marks of the church and shows how they were actualised more or less visibly in the church's history. He believes that the Christian hope is that these notes will become clearer as the church moves towards consummation. Although we see them, more or less, each of the notes needs some visible or institutional structure for its embodiment and protection. He concludes, "with all earthen vessels, while these are quite indispensable, they are never perfect".

In the first part of this section an assessment was given about the origin and development of the doctrine of the church. It was established that the vision of the early Christians to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church was formulated in the light of the challenges that threatened their understanding of what it means to be the true church. How this vision was believed and expressed by later generations will be assessed in the second part of this section.

Martin Marty, a world-renowned Lutheran historian provides a valuable contribution in his work, *A Short History of Christianity* (1989, second and revised edition) on the marks of the church in history. In the following

paragraphs, the appearance of the marks throughout the church's history from the time of the early church to the present will be briefly evaluated with the help of his overview and analysis. Aspects of importance will be discussed in detail under the respective chapters on the marks of the church.

In chapters 4, 8, 10 and 14 Marty discusses the mark of apostolicity as it developed in the socio-political and ecclesiastical environments of the Early Church, Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Modern period, respectively. Marty (1989: 56) shows in chapter four that deals with the Early Church, how the trend towards the formalization of religious life, the stewardship for orthodoxy and authority and the centralization of power fell more and more under the rubric of apostolicity, while the continuity of the church lay with the disciples on whom Christ himself first placed his hands. He regards the church fathers as ecumenical theologians who represented a reasonable consensus of the tradition of the apostles. They regarded the creeds as a guarantee of faith and life as they bring nearness to the source and founder of the church (Marty, 1989: 62). The vision to be an apostolic church was born from these early ecumenical theologians. Chapter eight deals with apostolicity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The original missionary activity associated with apostolicity changed into a historical doctrinal issue so that what was intended to be dynamic and culturally relative turned into something static and absolute, whereby the deposit of doctrine was now exclusively possessed and guarded by the Roman Catholic Church (Marty, 1989: 126). He asserts that churches up to today have assumed apostolicity on the basis of tradition and claim that their institutions cannot err.

Marty (1989: 173) argues in chapter ten that the Reformers challenged the view of the apostolic tradition with the "*soli Scriptura*" principle. They argued that Scripture alone is normative for the church and not tradition. He argues further that the "*sola*" of the reformers was also influenced by the culture and world-views of their time and that they wanted God's

redemptive activity to be based on faith and not on the rock of the institution. Due to the influences associated with the Modern period, Marty (1989: 260) argues in chapter fourteen that these acids of the time eroded the cosy containment of the apostolic message. People could now challenge this message by their religious intuition and experience. This period is characterized by mixed views concerning the truth. Some saw that the truth would be destroyed by the acids of time while others saw a new flux and change that could lead to fuller truth.

He examines the mark of holiness in the different periods of history with some thoroughness. He sees a move from holiness as persecution to holiness as isolation from the world in the Early Church. He is critical of the Greek influence that has led to an unbiblical despising of the human body, particularly as it was also the time when many of the basic Christian teachings on marriage and sexuality were formulated. Despite their removal from the world, these theologians preserved learning and culture and gave us the ideals of holiness and a pace-setting piety (Marty, 1989: 50). He argues in chapter five that the Dark Ages are not as dark as has been supposed because they were one of the only times that offered the church the possibility to unite the secular and the sacred. The holiness of the church in that time consisted of involvement in the world.

In chapter nine, he sees that the holiness of the church was continued in the lives of the ordinary people despite the apostasy of the clerics. He reminds us that the Reformers came from the same profession as the corrupt clerics who are regarded as one of the reasons for the Reformation. During the Modern period, a wall of separation has been built between the church and the world. Although this process of secularisation has developed differently in different countries, the basic issue is that Christianity has been removed from the centre of Western life. Through pietism, an effort has been made to take holiness back into the personal

lives of Christians. Some believe that the churches have not been stained by the disentanglement between church and society but that this process has enhanced and given new possibilities to the church (Marty, 1989: 230)

In dealing with the mark of oneness in the respective periods of church history Marty shows us how the essence of the churches' unity was compromised by the churches' division. In chapter three, Marty states that Jesus wanted the new society to continue with his message. This message was spread by his followers, the disciples and emphasized by the metaphors left to us by them. The apostle Paul's contribution of the new society as the Body of Christ emphasizes the diversity and the danger of divisions in the church. For Paul, there was no difference between the life of the church as community of the Spirit and as an institution. Marty (1989: 18) concludes from this that, "with such a measure of the Church's character and life, there could hardly be a more offensive sin in Christian history than to create a wrongful division of this body, no greater neglect than to fail to work as Paul did for reunion and healing".



Marty deals with the two issues that tore Christianity apart into an Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, and into a Roman Catholic and a Protestant Church in the Reformation period. Although these two schisms distracted the church from the ideal to be a united body, the life of the church was not destroyed. Luther can be regarded as the one who tore apart the visible unity of the church in the West. He concludes from these events that although the church still professed unity it was in confusion, division and disparity (Marty, 1989: 203). The ecumenical movement and its efforts to unite the churches receive attention in chapter sixteen. The ecumenical movement's adherents wanted unity of faith and introduced measures to bring this about. The different versions of unity were making Christianity and those who professed it seem liars. Since the twentieth century the World Council of Churches wanted churches to reach out beyond the confessional lines, so churches would return to the biblical demand for unity.

Marty begins his discussion of the mark of catholicity with the view that the first followers of Jesus had a limited concept of mission due to their immediate expectation of his return. In chapter two, he illustrates the way in which the apostle Paul wanted the whole people to know Christ and be inspired to go on missions. He tried ceaselessly to unite members of the universal Body of Christ. Paul showed the way in which the geographical boundaries must be transcended for the message of the Gospel. Marty shows how eventually the quest for wholeness was fulfilled in social life and education so that the breadth and depth of the churches' influence was felt in the Middle Ages and Renaissance period.

In chapter sixteen, Marty describes the Roman Catholic missions and the Protestant expansion that took place since the Reformation period in the 16th century. In his view, both groups expected great things from God and to do great things for God. The reunion of churches became more important after the expansion of Protestant churches. By the 20th century the age of missions was not over but the concept of missions has changed. Marty states that the countries that accommodated religious pluralism were facing new challenges with regards to missions.

Marty regards the marks as useful in the past, present and in the future. He shows how each mark developed uniquely as criteria to the demands and challenges faced by the church in each period of its history. It illustrates to me that these marks can also be used as criteria to discern the signs of the times today and serve as a challenge to all churches that confess and embrace the true church.

This section allows us to understand how the early Christians formulated their vision of the church that has become known to us as the true marks of the church. From the historical developments it is clear that every generation of Christians should take responsibility to reformulate this vision in the light of the challenges that face them.

It is established that no church can claim to have an absolute understanding of the nature of the church, but that even our attempts to confess and believe the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church are partial and limited. It is clear also that our view of the church is the product of others and any exclusive claim to a unique experience of that must be critically scrutinized in the light of the biblical and historical evidence available. Pentecostals can see in this overview that they share a great history and in the next four chapters we will also see how each mark developed within the history of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The first section (1.1) of this chapter examined the origin and development of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. It becomes clear that Pentecostals do not share the same view about the founders of the Movement. In South Africa, the AFMSA started through the work of J G Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch, but the Zionists and some prominent DRC members such as Andrew Murray and his student P L le Roux influenced it. It is shown that the AFMSA was initially in line with the vision shared by the early Pentecostals, namely the equality of believers, but due to other influences produced a church structure that contradicted this vision. The purpose of the process to revision the structures, policies and procedures of the AFMSA are to go back to the roots of the movement that are steeped in the early Christianity.

Section 1.2 develops an understanding of vision and structure and traces the move from a vision of the church derived from biblical metaphors to the institutionalisation of that vision over the centuries. It was established that the Christians in biblical times and in early church history formulated a vision of the church with insight and foresight. The insight was based on what God required from them as a community of faith in their respective contexts. To take their insight and apply it blindly to contemporary

challenges can cause frustration and the rejection of their vision of the church as irrelevant for today. It is also important for contemporary Christians to develop a vision of the church that reflects foresight in order to be able to face the future challenges of the church.

It is on this basis that some of the contributors plead for a critical appreciation for the vision of the early Christians as depicted in the Bible and in history. It requires from us to accept that the institutionalisation of the church was inevitable and humans constructed it as the will of God for their time. The responsibility to envision and restructure, in order to meet the challenges faced by the church in other times is not God's task but ours. This is the reason why we need criteria such as biblical validity, cultural relevancy and temporal flexibility as pointed out by Howard Snyder.

The debate around the kind of structure suitable for the church has brought interesting ideas to the front. Arguments against a hierarchical structure (Küng) were refuted by an argument in favour of hierarchical structure based on principles of service that recognise the headship of Jesus Christ over the church (Burke). Acceptance of church order was challenged by the relationship between the institutional and charismatic elements in the structure of the church (Berkhof). The plea for the recognition of the role of the Spirit in church structures is to express the idea that God is also a God of order and freedom. This freedom is not equally available to all members and the most marginalized of them are the women who are excluded from certain structures in the church (Russell).

The church is in constant need of renewal and must have a structure that enables all members, including the marginalized, to participate as equals. The form of structure used by the Basic Christian communities in Latin America provides an opportunity to rebirth or to start the church anew. In such a structure, the local and universal church are both recognised and developed to their fullest capacity (Boff). This rebirth of the church requires

the revision of all structures, policies and procedures of the church, which is the intention expressed by the AFMSA (Hodgson).

Any ministry philosophy of the church should bear in mind that the church is firstly a creation of the Spirit and that it exists as an anthropological reality, in community and in this world (Coenie Burger). The church is thus an empirical reality and should not be above the questioning of its vision and structure. The church should beware that the vision it has does not become a static formulation, but that it must be rooted in a Trinitarian understanding of God's work in the past, present and future. It must move from unclear to more solid commitments that enable them to revision their confession and structures. People will then move from a self-care that is private to a care that restores the biblical vision of koinonia. This will cause them to move from a self- driven to a more service-oriented church structure. In this section it became clear that all the theologians see the process of moving from vision to structure in the church as a difficult challenge. The role of the Bible has major implications when such a process is undertaken in the church.

In the section on the role of the Bible (1.3) we dealt with some elements needed in a Pentecostal hermeneutic and concluded that Pentecostals have a high regard for Scripture as the authoritative Word of God that can address any situation at any time, even today. The element that emphasises the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture refuses to allow the Bible to be simply a scholarly and academic piece of literature but encourages the interpreter to allow the Word to speak and transform him or herself or any situation. In order to interpret Scripture correctly Pentecostals emphasise the church and thus community as important in interpretation. Their emphasis on the role of experience is another determining factor in the correct interpretation of Scripture. The value of a narrative reading of Scripture as well as the fourfold office of Christ is some of the other important elements.

Pentecostals find considerable value in metaphors when it comes to reading the Bible and that is why the importance of metaphors to understand ecclesiology is a helpful tool for this study. The metaphors of the People of God and the Body of Christ in the Bible are analysed to gain an understanding of the marks of the church. Some other metaphors such as the church as the Bride of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit and the true Witness of God are helpful to an understanding of the Pentecostal view on the marks, according to the typical Pentecostal hermeneutic.

The section on the historical developments of the doctrine of the church and Pentecostal perspectives of the church (1.4) provide some insight on the needs that led to a vision of the church in the Christian creeds and the way that vision was structured in the respective centuries of the Christian church (Marty). It became clear that each generation of Christians has the responsibility to revision their structures to make the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church a reality.



From chapters two till five an assessment will be given of the question, what it means to be an apostolic, holy, one and catholic church for the AFMSA and how some insights from the Bible, church history and theologians from different confessional backgrounds can help us to answer it. Each chapter will be concluded with an assessment of the broader implications that these biblical and historical perspectives have for the vision that the AFMSA have for these marks. Its implications for the process of institutionalisation in the AFMSA will also be assessed and possible ways how to express it structurally will be proposed.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH?

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter introduced the need for a revision of the structures, procedures and policies of the AFMSA. In search of structure that is effective to fulfil this need, the origins of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA were examined for direction. This was followed by an analysis of the terms “vision” and “structure” applied to the church in order to understand the process of institutionalisation in the structures of the church. The section on the role of the Bible helped to give a perspective on the elements involved in Pentecostal hermeneutics and the major biblical metaphors used to shed light on a Pentecostal understanding of the church. In the section on the historical development of the doctrine of the church, the emphasis was placed on the interpretation of the marks in every period of the church’s history.

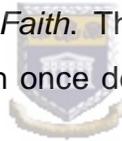


In this chapter, the focus will be on the mark of apostolicity from a Pentecostal perspective and specifically, from the perspective of the AFMSA (2.1). The guiding question that must be answered is what precisely does the AFMSA understand under the term apostolicity? In the next section the question that must be answer is whether the vision of the AFMSA is in line with the biblical understanding of apostolicity (2.2). The following section will answer the question whether the vision of the AFMSA is in line with the insights gained from the historical development of this mark (2.3). The reason why certain periods of the history and theologians will be used is because it is a systematic theological and not a historical study. In the last section the implications of these answers for the structural expression of the apostolicity in the vision of the AFMSA will be assessed.

2.1 THE AFM AND APOSTOLICITY

It is remarkable that the AFMSA is called the APOSTOLIC Faith Mission. Some authors are hesitant or even negative about the apostolicity of the church as an attribute. Many Pentecostal people accept the term "apostolic" with reference to their identity that is mission-orientated. It was decided in 1998/1999 at the strategic planning sessions of the AFMSA that the apostolic and prophetic ministry be re-emphasized as central to the vision of the church (Ephesians 2:20).

There is consensus amongst Pentecostals that in it's founding, the Pentecostal Movement wanted to go back to the church of the original apostles (Burger, 1987: 183 - 188, Brewster 1976:105). They wanted the movement to reflect in life and teaching the apostolic faith. Charles Parham, one of the founders of the Pentecostal Movement called his message of living Christianity, "the apostolic faith". (Blumhofer, 2002: 327). He called his church the Apostolic Faith Movement and his magazine, *The Apostolic Faith*. This Apostolic Faith Movement had a twofold purpose: to restore the faith once delivered to the saints and to promote Christian unity (2002: 328).



The founders believed that the gifts that were present in the church of the New Testament are still available and that is why they wanted to restore them in their movements or missions. They did not intend to become churches because these were seen as too formal, stark, dead, and ritualistic. This is what lies behind their understanding of the restoration of the apostolic faith in the beginning of the twentieth century. It is also said that Charles Parham "demonstrated a pro-activity for intense spiritual experience as well as impatience with structure and authority" (Blumhofer, 2002: 327). He was determined to preach the early Christianity that is expressed in the New Testament and when his students spoke in tongues on January 1901, he urged them to spread the message that another dimension of the apostolic faith had been restored.

One of his students, William Seymour took not only his message, but also the name of the church, the Apostolic Faith Movement as the name of his church in Los Angeles. This name was regarded as a synonym for the term "Pentecostal". One of the members of Seymour's church, J G Lake later became the founder of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa. In 1913, P. L. Le Roux, a South African born leader of the AFMSA stated at an ordination service, "we call ourselves the Apostolic Faith Mission, we expect the same power to rest upon us that rested on the early church and we expect to do the same work" (Burger, 1987: 187). They wanted to be a mission or a movement that was outgoing, in action, a moving community like the early church of the apostles. The term "apostolic" must not be mistaken for the Old and the New Apostles that, because of their German roots, separated from the Mission in 1926, or for the Catholic Apostolic Church of Edward Irving, or the Apostolic Faith that is known for its Jesus-only Pentecostalism or for John Alexander Dowie's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion.



In the AFMSA today, there is a plea for the restoration of the real meaning of the apostolic ministry by the current leadership. In his watershed speech delivered at the Workers' Council of June 1999 in Johannesburg, the President of the AFM said that the AFMSA did not start with a structure, but by a fresh move of the Spirit of God and that Pentecostal people came together because of a common Pentecostal experience. J. G. Lake and T Hezmalhalch formed the heart of the movement with their Pentecostal ministries. This consisted of spreading the gospel, ministering to people and seeing souls saved. He said, "God is reviving the apostolic and prophetic ministry and the principle of apostolic networking" (Burger, Augustus, 2000: 5). He then pleaded for apostolic networks that are based on spontaneous father-son relationships that are not regulated and ruled by laws and policies, but by the apostolic character and intention meant by the J G Lake who planted the church.

In my discussion with Isak Burger in 2001, it has become clear that his urge for a church that is more apostolic in character has not faded. He said that the AFMSA turned the pastoral title into an office, which downplayed and undervalued the other ministries such as the prophetic and apostolic. The greatest challenge for the AFMSA is to restore these ministries, but also to keep a healthy balance between them (Conversation at the AFM Head Office, Lyndhurst, June 2001).

The mark of apostolicity offers many possibilities for the AFMSA in its process of the revision of its structures, policies and procedures. It is stated in the preamble to the new constitution that the AFMSA acknowledges the five equipping ministries according to Ephesians 4: 1-14 and the ministry of apostles is also mentioned. Isak Burger, the president of the AFMSA, stated in 2000 that the church should go back to the roots of the AFMSA for a workable church structure. He further stated, "Today it is an undeniable fact that God is reviving the apostolic and prophetic ministry and the principle of apostolic networking" (Burger I, August, 2000: 5). He asked the question: What happened to the prophetic intention and purpose as reflected in our name: Apostolic Faith Mission? To Burger, the AFMSA was no longer faithful to the apostolic character and intention with which John G. Lake planted this church because it had been cynical and skeptical about the apostolic ministry and neglected the apostolic dimension in its structure. The apostolic networks were one of the pillars on which the AFMSA was built and it was significant that many pastors and churches were becoming apostolic again.

Burger (2000: 6) appreciated the fact that the AFMSA, after the first few years of unification, had to be careful with regards to structures because the church needed to be politically correct. However, he said that the AFMSA had become mature enough to recognize and respect diversities among its churches and allow it to be reflected in the different ministry philosophies. After commenting on the right direction taken by the church through the constitution, Burger proposed an amendment to the constitution to establish a footing for alternative networks in the church that can function like autonomous regions. Aware of the risks involved in

such a development, Burger asked for love, faith and trust to prevail over fear and the desire to control.

The Dogmatic Handbook of the AFMSA Theological College asserts that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. The term “apostolic” is defined as that which comes from the apostles, but the church does not only come from the apostles. It is a continuation of the New Testament Church. The handbook examines the term “apostolic succession” from a Roman Catholic and a Pentecostal perspective. The Roman Catholic view holds that there is a visible, organic continuity of the church over the centuries that is derived from those who were accepted to the ministry at first and authorizes those who enter into the ministry today. The ministry was handed over to the bishops by the first apostles and from them unbroken through the generations to today. For that reason the same ministry and authority are at work in the church today and can be seen as a true mark of the church. The possibility is thus ruled out that the church can be founded again or that others can start their own ministry.



Against this view, the AFMSA handbook declares that the apostolicity of the church only exists in Christ, not in the historical line of a handing over of authority (462). It exists in the community that the believers have in Christ, the one from whom, through whom and to whom the church is created. He alone in his divinity and eternity that is above time ensures that the same unity that the first believers had in Him continues in believers today (Hebrews 13:8). It is the Holy Spirit, the one who represents Christ in the believer and the community of believers today, who is the true mark and guarantee that the church is the same as the early church known to us from the New Testament. The Holy Spirit is not handed down by the laying of hands, but is given by Christ who is the baptiser in the Spirit (Acts 10:44/ 2:38).

It is also stated that the apostolicity of the church means that the church is a charismatic body (463). The historical handing over of the ministry was no guarantee that the church has remained the same. The Holy Scripture is another objective norm to see whether the church is in line with the first church in teaching

and life. It can only be that norm when the Holy Spirit, and not any institution, is the exegete. It is only God that calls the believers into ministry and equips them with the spiritual gifts. The role of the church is to acknowledge the gifts and help these gifts be developed through training, supervision, and opportunities to exercise them by making room in the church for someone to live out the ministry. In that sense, the church only works with God by acknowledging and authorising the gifts and ministries. The handbook states, "Sou die kerk ten spyte van sy sogenaamde apostoliese suksessie en lang geskiedenis, afwyk van die leer en lewe van die Nuwe Testament, en sou die kerk na vele pleidooie en vermanings hom nie bekeer nie dan sien ons hoe die Here self in die lewens van groepe gelowiges werk om in en deur hulle sy ware kerk te hervestig en voort te sit" (464). The church does not exist in itself but is a charismatic body that is established as an institution by the Holy Spirit.

When a church does not allow the revelation of Christ and His truth, way and life to be a part of it, it is no longer a charismatic body or a community that keeps the principles of Scripture. It is then that the church seeks existence and authority in external things such as apostolic succession, holy things, church decisions and spiritual truths, the pope as *vicarius christi*, and the use of violence and force to portray the church as powerful. The church then becomes a worldly power and an oppressor. This contrasts with the image of the church as a pilgrim who goes through the world, but is not from this world. It is concluded from this that the church should not become a worldly power that seeks worldly wealth, but should use all its resources to extend the kingdom (reign) of God. Buildings, institutions and all kinds of structures are supposed to serve the spiritual calling of God until the last day (465).

The final report from the Roman Catholic and classical Pentecostal dialogue of 1977-1982 concludes that both groups accept that order and structure are necessary for the exercise of ministry and that there is no single New Testament pattern for the development and structuring of it. It is accepted that the Spirit many times led churches to adapt their ministries to the needs of place and time (PNEUMA, Vol.12, no. 2 Fall 1990: 111). While Roman Catholics see in the

ministerial office of the New Testament, God's design for the early church, a design that is structured along the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon, the Pentecostals appeal primarily to the priesthood of all believers. This connotes access to God and a participation of all believers in ministry. Pentecostals agree to seek guidelines for ministry and office in the New Testament, but they point to the problem of over-institutionalisation in the church as found in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Amongst Roman Catholics, the need for the institution of ecclesial offices is seen as part of the divine plan of the church although they are aware of the dangers of institutionalism. They also feel that Pentecostals fail to give acknowledgement to the visible aspect of the church, the sacrament of order, and the sacramental ministry (1990: 112).

According to the report, both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals believe that the church lives in continuity with the New Testament apostles and their proclamation, and with the apostolic church. This is seen especially in their fidelity to the apostolic teaching. Catholics see the unbroken line of succession of bishops as a guarantee and manifestation of this fidelity, while the current dynamic of the Spirit is regarded as a more valid endorsement of apostolic faith and ministry by Pentecostals. The apostolic life and the power of preaching, which leads to conversions to Jesus Christ is seen by Pentecostals as an authentication of apostolic ministry.

From the report, it is clear that Pentecostals place a high premium on the role of the Spirit in the ministry and structures of the church. The desire is expressed by Hollenweger when he asks, "Is it unrealistic to think that they could perhaps come forward with a form of organisation that gives way for the charismata in the Pauline sense, and does not for example exclude women from leading positions" (1997:261).

It is clear that the Pentecostal Movement and also the AFMSA have a peculiar understanding of what is meant to be an apostolic church. Apostolicity is based on the biblical meaning that stresses the idea of being sent by God as a called disciple with a message of salvation that is accompanied by signs, wonders

and miracles. The apostolic role of the church means that it is a church on the move, a church that is send. It is clear that a moving, growing church must have apostolic leaders to prevent itself from avoiding opportunities for renewal because of conservatism.

2.2 THE BIBLE AND APOSTOLICITY

The original and most general meaning of the term “apostle” is, having a direct link with the apostles of Christ. The question therefore is to whom do we refer when we talk about the apostles, because this determines one’s understanding of the apostolicity of the church. The desire to be known as a church that is a direct link with the apostles has been part of the vision of the Christian church over the centuries. In this section, our focus will be on the biblical understanding of the term “apostolic” and the different meanings given to it in different contexts.



The Gospel writers Matthew, Mark and John use the word “apostles” once, while Luke uses it six times in his gospel and twenty eight times in his Acts of the apostles. Some authors hold the view that we must first abandon the stereotyped ideas about the missionary role of the twelve (Küng, 1971: 345). There are reasons why the term “apostolic” has not only a missionary meaning. The idea is born from the fact that Jesus commanded the disciples to go out into the entire world and spread the Gospel (Matthew 28:19/ Mark 16:15/ Luke 24:47/, Acts 1:8). The fact is that the disciples stayed in Jerusalem and undertook their mission to the gentiles with great reluctance (Acts 10:1-11,18) except Peter (Acts 12:17). Paul and Barnabas, however, are well known for their missionary journeys.

The twelve disciples must be understood in the light of Jesus’ eschatological message and are connected with the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28/ Revelations 21:24). They were to proclaim and represent the coming and already dawning reign of God. They represented the full tale of both the old and

new people of God. They were the fundamental witnesses of Christ's resurrection and part of the central tradition that Paul would receive later. They are sometimes referred to as primary apostles. They were conscious of the fact that God called them (Colossians 1:15) and had a personal ordination by Christ (Mark 3:14/ I John 20:21/ I Acts 22:14). Another important fact is that from the beginning to the ascension they were with Christ (Acts 1:21, 22). They were personal acquaintances of the work of Christ, as eyewitnesses of even the resurrection (Acts 7:22). They had the power to work miracles, signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; 5:12; 8:18;/ 2 Corinthians 12:12). They are the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:30) and this was accomplished through their preaching and teaching. They used the keys (Matthew 16: 18,19) to open the door for the Gospel to the Jews (Acts 2: 38-41), Samaritans (8: 14-18) and gentiles (Acts 10:44 - 48).

It is also true that their function was confined to the founding of the church. We read about them as the twelve for the last time in Acts 6:2 and then they disappear in the history of the church as a group. It is also clear from scripture what remained was the idea of apostleship that was no longer confined to the twelve.

The apostle Paul in his writings, best developed the idea of apostleship. The word is used twenty nine times by Paul in his letters to the Ephesians and in his pastoral letters. Paul uses it refer to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ as seen in the first verses of first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, first and second Timothy and Titus. He dates his apostleship to his conversion experience at Damascus (Galatians 1:15-17) and claims himself to be the least of all the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:9) and applies it to all to whom he gives the name "apostle" (15:7/ 9:5). Paul contrasted his Judaist opponents from Palestine as false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:5/ 12:11). In Paul's time, the term came to have two meanings: those who are witnesses of the risen Lord, to whom the crucified Lord has revealed himself as living, and second, those commissioned by the Lord for missionary preaching (Galatians 1:1,12,15-17/ 1 Corinthians 9:1/ 15:7-11).

From Paul's understanding of the term we gather that an apostle is the messenger of another, appointed by Christ (Galatians 1:15/Acts 9:27/ Mark 3:4/ Matthew 28:19) and through Christ also by the Father (Matthew 10:34/John 13:20). Because the apostle is sent and authorized by Christ, he is not subjected to the choice of the community (Colossians 1:1) or its judgment (1 Corinthians 4:3). His freedom and authority place him above the community, but he is, at the same time, a member of the community. The apostle is a justified sinner that is called with his full humanity, as an earthen vessel (2Corinthians 4:7/1 Corinthians 15:10/ Romans 1:5) to be used as a tool of God's grace. He is also judged by the Lord and depends greatly on God's grace (1 Corinthians 4:4). From the community, obedience can be demanded, but the apostle must be prepared to abdicate that right. The aim of the apostle is not to subject the community, but to create fellowship and to serve the community because he stands in an office of service (1 Corinthians 5:4: 14:37; 9:19). The community needs the witnessing of the apostle, and the apostle needs the prayers and cooperation of the community.

The apostle's primary task is to preach the Gospel, not as his own message but as the message of Christ (1Corinthians 1:17/ 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2). The apostle should also accept that his word shall be received as the Word of God (1Thessalonians 2:13/2 Corinthians 5:20) and is regarded as a minister of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:9, 15:15/ Philippians 2:17) and as a servant of God (1 Thessalonians 1:3-9; 3:2). The apostle finds and leads as well as exercises discipline in the church (2 Corinthians 10:13-16; 13:10/ 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 11:34/1 Thessalonians 3:4/ 1 Timothy 1:20).

Amongst Pentecostals themselves, there has been much effort to arrive at a biblical perspective of the apostolicity. Everything that was said about the Pentecostal and AFMSA intention to be a movement that restored the apostolic roots of the church was based on a particular reading of Scripture. One of the persons who contribute to a Pentecostal understanding of apostolicity is a South African Pentecostal theologian J.C Langerman who completed a doctoral thesis with the title, *A revitalisation of the theological concepts of church ministry* (1983).

From his definition of the term, “apostle” can mean a messenger, that is one sent on a mission (John 15:16/ 1 Corinthians 8:23/ Philipians 2:25) or an apostle of Jesus Christ with reference to the twelve disciples (Matthew 10:2/ Mark 3:14) and some prominent teachers like Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Paul (Colossians 1: 1 Timothy 2:7), Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 2:6) and Andronicus and Gunias (Romans 16:7). From the above, Langerman comes to the conclusion that the Bible distinguishes between primary or first apostles and secondary apostles. He extrapolates from this that the New Testament does not restrict the title of the apostle to certain personalities and that it is therefore inappropriate for church leaders to do so today (1983: 53). . This function cannot be limited to the primary apostles, who as disciples of Jesus, are seen as eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry. The apostolic ministry cannot be seen, as an exclusive office for certain individuals, but is accessible to the church until today. He concludes, "modern day living underscores this and more than ever, the cry is for apostolic ministry within the church, leading out of the wilderness to discover new horizons of spiritual experiences" (1983: 54).



Another Pentecostal, Donald Gee (1986: 65) argues that we have become afraid of the designation of the term “apostles”. He refers to the word "missionary" that is just the Latin term for the word “apostle”, which means one who is sent forth. He argues that a missionary sent by Christ need not be a Peter or a Paul to qualify humbly for some designation. He states that all missionaries are not apostles for their work has many facets. He brings the God-given task of world-evangelisation in line with the pioneering work that was done by the first apostles and asks for church planters. He says a true apostle with spiritual gifts coupled with an appreciation of the differing members of the body of Christ, will beget spiritual children for whom he or she will live or die.

Floyd McClung (2002: 185) argues that the church needs an apostolic passion that will enable the church to suffer for Christ. He recalls four things that can build the passion and they are an apostolic abandonment that knows what it is

to be crucified with Christ. They are an apostolic focus on the nations that does not just focus on church planting, apostolic prayer that is without ceasing and full of thankfulness in the Spirit and the ability to make apostolic decisions in the Spirit.

2.3 THE HISTORY OF APOSTOLICITY IN THE CHURCH

In section 1.3, the importance of the historical development of the true marks of the church in every period of history was evaluated with the help of Martin Marty. On the mark of apostolicity, certain important comments were made that are valuable to our interest in the movement of the church, from vision to structure.

It was stated that the trend to formalise religious life, stewardship for orthodoxy and authority as well as the centralisation of power under the rubric of apostolicity were established in the early period. The church fathers were regarded as ecumenical theologians who represented a consensus of the tradition of the apostles. They found a nearness to the source and founder of the church in their creedal authority. The attempts to make the Christian faith contextual were not always equally successful and faithful to the apostolic tradition. Clashes and conflicts occurred when some Christians could no longer recognise the same apostolic and catholic deposit of faith in the theological language and the structures that were put up to contextualise them.

The move towards correct doctrine was needed to combat heterodoxy and heresy for the survival of the basic core of the Christian witness. The three heresies were: gnosticism that denies the humanity of Christ, Marcionism that denies one half of the authority of the Word of God namely the law and Montanism that denies one half of the working of the Spirit of God, which is the authority of Scripture. The Montanists and Marcionists were also seen as people who opposed the centralisation of power in the hands of the bishops of the church. These Christians were trying to make Christianity understandable and meaningful within the Greek world and protect their apostolic origin and catholicity (Pillay & Hofmeyr, 1991:10).

It is from the writings of the apostolic fathers that the ideas, practices and beginning of church structure were born that later become normative for the church. At the end of the first three centuries, no universal centralised church structure existed, but only the three stages of ecclesiasticism. These are the acceptance of the monarchical bishop as the custodian of the faith and the unity of the visible church, the ecumenical domination of the universal church by a pattern of episcopacy, and the development of the Roman supremacy that centralised the authority and control.

Marty also emphasised the fact that the sending out of the apostles soon changed into a historical doctrinal issue. The dynamic and cultural relativity soon changed to static absolutist claims that possess and guard the deposit of doctrine in Rome. It is true till today that churches assume apostolicity on the basis of tradition and claim that their institutions are infallible.

The Reformers criticised the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of the *soli Scriptura* principle that had come to mean that the church should stand on what was taught by the apostles as ear-and-eye witnesses of Jesus Christ. Marty asserts that their “sola” was also coloured by their interpretation of Scripture. Although they wanted the faith to be the foundation or rock on which God’s redemptive activity rests, they soon realised the need to institutionalise their vision. Luther was against the idea of describing the church as an external organisation, but rather as a spiritual community composed of all living believers in Christ. For him, the true church was the one that bore the external marks of baptism, eucharist, and the proclamation of the Gospel. Calvin thought likewise and emphasised that the church was where the Word of God was sincerely preached and the sacraments rightly administered. The Anabaptists were primarily interested in the restitution of the true church that is gathered and disciplined upon the apostolic pattern. They wanted to replace the territorial church pattern with the New Testament pattern and went so far as to burn Roman Catholic churches. Their objective was not to start something new but to restore something old (Radmacher, 1978: 69).

The influence of modernity and the consequences of its innovations challenged the apostolic message during the Modern Period that dates from the 17th to the 19th century. People have found new confidence in their ability to order their world and fashion their destiny (Pillay & Hofmeyr, 1991: 184). In this Modern period that is called the period of enlightenment, the intellectual credentials of Christianity were challenged and church leaders had to explain the rational roots of their faith. The Bible as a norm and the apostolic tradition of the church were no longer regarded as the authority in society due to process of secularisation. For some theologians of that time, Christianity was not just a set of doctrinal formulations or moral directives but also rather a core-religious experience of absolute dependence on God. The attempt, by others to re-interpret Christianity and make it more acceptable and meaningful to the critical, scientific spirit of the late nineteenth century was met with strong opposition. Other theologians argued that theology could only be built on God's word and that human experience could only hear the Word of God.



Theologians were also challenged in the twentieth century to respond to the understanding of apostolicity in their respective contexts. The insights on apostolicity given by Karl Barth, Hans Kung, Jurgen Moltmann, John Macquarrie, Peter Hodgson, R Kuiper and Johan Heyns will be assessed in the following paragraphs. These theologians have written on the mark of apostolicity from different confessional backgrounds and contributed some critical perspectives relevant to the assessment of the AFMSA. Their understanding of apostolic succession will be of special interest to the question how the AFMSA expressed apostolicity in their vision and structure.

Karl Barth is one of the theologians of the twentieth century who has contributed significantly to the idea that theology must listen to the Word of God. He calls the ecumenical church to do theology based on the Word of God. He defines apostolicity as “in the discipleship, in the school, under the normative authority, instruction and direction of the apostles, in agreement with them, listening to them and accepting their message” (1971: 714). According to Barth (1971: 723) can no form of church government whether monarchic, autocratic or democratic be

regarded as the best one. He argues that as long as Scripture and Christ are avoided, suppressed or eliminated in church governance, the basis for apostolicity cannot be sought on historical and juridical grounds.

Barth (1971: 720) also emphasises the element of service when he questions any form of church government that is not service oriented. He contends that the only form of succession that exists is the succession of service and if the community wants to follow Christ and the apostles, they must have the attitude of subjection and obedience. In the school of the apostles, the church learns the meaning of obedience where Christ instructs, guides, corrects, and qualifies them. This makes the church the true church, over against the false church. Barth (1971: 721) calls this a spiritual process in which the scriptural principle applies. In such a process the authority of the Bible becomes a source and norm of the existence, doctrine and order of the church.

Jürgen Moltmann (1977: 358), a student of Barth argues that the term denotes both the church's foundation and its commission. Its foundation lies in the fact that its gospel and doctrine are found on the testimony of the first apostles, the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. As a foundation the word "apostolic" means, "deriving from the apostles", "relating to the apostles" and "dating from the periods of the apostles". Later, the church fathers described that time as the "apostolic age", the "fellowship of the apostles" and greeted churches in the "apostolic" manner. The word "apostolic" also acquired the meaning of legitimacy against the heretics and schismatic. It was used in the dispute over the ministry to legitimise the bishops as successors of the apostles. This idea brings us to the debate over the form of the church and the role that the apostolic succession played in the development of it. Moltmann (1977: 359) regards the tradition and succession as not enough proof for a bond with the apostles. The apostolic succession for him is in fact and in truth the evangelical succession, the continuing and unadulterated proclamation of the Gospel of the risen Christ.

Moltmann (1977: 358) argues that the commission of the church lies in the carrying out of the apostolic proclamation. It means that the church must testify by

means of word, deed and fellowship to the liberating lordship of Christ that stretch to the ends of the earth and to the end of time (1977: 360). The church evangelises people and brings them into new fellowships that becomes the form that the kingdom of God takes in the world. He sees no need to idealise the apostolic age or to maintain its apostolic identity through repetition but that the church should continually orientate itself towards the future as an apostolic movement of equivalence.

The church should thus strive for continuity with the historical church but remain open to leap forward to what is new and surprising and forms new churches of the same apostolate. Through its apostolicity the church calls people to repentance and to be an open fellowship. It calls on them to be witnesses to the hope of the kingdom and shares the fellowship of poverty. Because the true church must share in the cross, it participates in the mission of Christ that leads to tribulation, contradiction and suffering. Yes, apostolic succession is the succession of the passion of Christ (1977, 361). The church preserves its unity when it fulfils the apostolic mission of Christ in its own historical situation. Christ becomes the life giving Spirit that makes something new everywhere and unites it in Himself. It is clear from Moltmann that the church should take the apostolic foundation serious for the sake of historical continuity but that it should be mindful of the apostolic commission when it forms new church structures.

Hans Küng a Catholic theologian is known to be very critical to the ways in which the Roman Catholic church has institutionalise apostolicity over the years. In his discussion of the apostolic dimension of the church he overturns the traditional Roman Catholic understanding of apostolic succession as involving the juridical successors of the Roman see (Bodley, 2000: 211). Küng (1971: 355) understands apostolic succession as a matter of obedience and that the whole church is consequently successors of the disciples. The apostolic office as a whole is thus unique and unrepeatable and does not allow successors to the apostles, only an apostolic mission and ministry. For him, apostolic succession is not limited to a few individuals but incorporates the whole church.

The church is apostolic as a true follower of the apostles' mission and ministry, when it preserves in all its members a continuing agreement with the witness of the apostles and a vital continuity with their mission and ministry. He does not call for the abolition of the episcopal structure or the papacy but for the reform of both according to the Pauline charismatic understanding of servant hood. She concludes, "What is decisive are not the claims, the rights, and the chain of succession but the exercise and carrying out of a ministry in service" (2000: 212).

Küng (1993: 135) calls for the democratization of the church, whereby the church corresponds to the New Testament constitution of the church and not to the spirit of the age. According to that constitution, all in the church are called equally into service, although they have different functions. The church in the apostolic sense is thus a democratic community. On the basis of this, apostolic succession is not the special privilege of a few who are called, but the task of the whole church. He states that a church can only be apostolic if it lives in accordance with the apostolic testimony of the New Testament. Apostolic succession is not a special privilege, which may be the basis for hierarchical arrogance and division in the church. For the church to become more apostolic the church must become loyal to the origin of the church.

When Küng (1971: 180) evaluates the issue of the ecclesiological structure of the church, he criticizes the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has founded its Episcopal structure on the basis of the models reflected in the Pastoral epistles and Acts where not much is made of the charismatic structure of the church. He identifies in the Pauline epistles a reflection of what he believes to be the church's earliest dominant ecclesiological structure. It is in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Colossians 1 and Ephesians 4 that one can find evidence of the charismatic structure of the church. In these passages of Paul, one finds that the church is constituted by the Holy Spirit that bestowed charismatic gifts upon every member of the body of Christ. For him the charisma of leadership does not produce a ruling class of those endowed with the Spirit who separated themselves from the community and rose above it to rule over it (Küng, 1971: 187). It is clear from Küng that both the hierarchical and charismatic structures have a legitimate

Scriptural basis, but that the former needs reconstruction from authority, dominion, rule and subjugation to service in humility (Boydley, 2000: 209).

R. B. Kuiper (1966: 67) a Reformed theologian is also critical of the Roman Catholic understanding of apostolic succession. He firstly tries to answer the question whether apostolicity is an attribute of the Christian Church. He captures the duality of this question when he answers “yes and no.” He answers from Scripture by referring to the rock that Jesus spoke of in his conversation with Peter (Matthew 16:18). The Roman Catholics called Peter the apostle, the rock and used it as cornerstone for their doctrine of the papacy.

Kuiper (1966: 67) suggests that there are certain objections to that interpretation. The New Testament states that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20) and that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. He argues that no apostle is thus singled out. Others are certain that the “Rock” of Matthew 16:18 is no one other than Jesus Christ himself. Some believe that this “rock” can as well be the confession of Peter. This “rock” refers to the confessing Peter as representative of the apostles who answer the question, “Who do ye say that I am?” The “ye” is meant in the plural and coincides with the fact that the church is built on the apostles (Eph 2:20).

Arriving at his certainty about the apostolic foundation of the Christian church, Kuiper (1966: 68) then discusses the issue of doctrinal apostolicity. He starts with the question, “In what sense is the foundation of the New Testament church apostolic?” He answers it by saying that the church is founded upon the teaching of the apostles. This is based upon what is said previously, that the apostles are the foundation of the church as confessors of the truth. It is said, when Jesus prayed for the disciples in his high priestly prayer, he prayed also for those who shall believe on their word (John 17:20). Kuiper (1966: 69) suggests that the Lord had the church in succeeding centuries in mind.

The fact that the disciples teach Christ does not contradict what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11, that no other foundation can be laid because Jesus Christ is that

foundation. Another significant feature for Kuiper (1966: 69) is that one of the ecumenical creeds is called, *“the Apostles’ Creed”*. On the question whether the apostles composed this creed, he answers “no”, because he regards it as a product of growth and that its present form was acquired after the death of the apostles. The name of the creed says what it is, “a summary of the beliefs and teachings of the apostles.”

On the issue of organizational succession Kuiper (1966: 70) states that no one can claim apostolic succession as the continuation of the organised church as it existed in the days of the apostles. He believes that organizational succession does not guarantee doctrinal succession. He contends that churches cannot be called churches of Jesus Christ if they do not embody doctrinal succession. From the insights of Kuiper it is clear that the teachings of the apostles about Christ as the foundation of the church, is the foundation of the church apostolicity.

P.C Hodgson (1988: 43) a North American theologian provides some constructive insights on the apostolicity of the church. He argues that the juridical model of church structure with its system of rewards and punishments caused the charismatic forms of ministry to be lost. These hierarchical, absolutistic and juridical forms were regarded as divinely sanctioned and eternally legitimated. This meant that the church was unable to change in new political circumstances.

Hodgson (1988: 43) argues further that there is no apostolic succession but only the apostolic mission of service that is a service of obedience to the Lord. Such a service ought to be liberating rather than authoritarian, collegial rather than hierarchical, inclusive rather than exclusive, suffering rather than triumphant, a ministry of the Spirit, rather than of the letter. He concludes that apostolicity seem to mean that the ministry of Jesus remains a paradigm for subsequent ministries but that it cannot be a matter of simple imitation or repetition (Hodgson, 1966: 44)

It is clear from the insights given by Hodgson that the form of the church can cause the charismatic elements of the church to be lost. He also links the apostolic succession with a service that is obedient to the Lord, allowing the Spirit

to influence the form of the church to change. His connection between the institutional and charismatic elements is of utmost importance for the Pentecostal experience, because the unwillingness and inability to change by some people and structures within the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA accounts for the lack of apostolic service that was characteristic of the early Pentecostals. In the following paragraphs John Macquarrie an English theologian explains that the way in which apostolicity is institutionalised in the episcopal structure can also be valued positively.

John Macquarrie (1967: 367) argues more in favour of the institutional form of the church. He regards apostolicity as the extension of the church through time, its continuity and identity through the ages. The inner meaning of the church's apostolicity is its constancy in the faith of the apostles. The note of apostolicity has its own embodiment or institutional form to protect it, which is the episcopacy. The episcopacy is regarded as an institutional vehicle that was used by the apostles and successive generations to ensure the continuity of faith.



To accept the episcopacy as an institutional form opens one to accept other forms such as the papacy. Thus he accepts the notion of apostolic succession as a valid historical development. He draws a parallel between the episcopate and other embodiments, for example the canon of Scripture, the sacraments and the creeds. The argument is that if one accepts the church as a visible historical community that possesses an identity that develops in response to new demands and opportunities it is possible to accept every other institutional form of the church. It is clear from the insights of Macquarrie that we must understand the historical continuity of apostolicity as understood by the early Christians and how it is expressed in church structures today. The structure or form of the church should rather protect the constancy of the faith delivered to us by the apostles. In history such a view turned out to become a protection of the tradition of the church with an unwillingness or openness to change. In the following paragraph some insights will be assessed from a South African Reformed theologian Johan Heyns.

Johan Heyns (1980: 144) holds also the view that the labour of the apostles is the foundation upon which the church is built. The disciples can be called the foundation because they were ear-and-eye witnesses to the fullness of the age-old saving actions of Jesus Christ and because they were his authorised representatives (Mark 3:14, / Matthew 10:1/ Luke 9:1). They spread abroad the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14) through their preaching. This was regarded as authoritative proclamation. They acted in obedience to God and continued his work in Christ as human labourers for the great harvest (Matthew 9:37). The apostles were thus the first members and missionaries and an unending stream of member-missionaries followed them. According to Heyns (1980: 145), “indissolubly bound up with apostolicity there are then the calling and the mission, as well as the going out in obedience and the bearing of fruit that are proper to that calling”.

He also emphasise the identification of Christ with the duties and actions of the apostles in the world. The authority of Jesus is evident in the commission of the apostles. When Jesus sent out the seventy disciples he says, “whoever listens to you, listens to me, whoever rejects you, rejects me” (Luke 10:16). He tells the twelve disciples, “To receive you, is to receive me” (Matt 10:40). Paul declares, “We come therefore as Christ’s ambassadors. It is as if God were appealing to you through us” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). He concludes, “The apostles’ work is, then God’s mode of operating in the world” (1980:145). When the church is called, “apostolic” it refers to this “mode of operating”.

Heyns (1980: 145) regards the church’s apostolicity as the legitimising of its actions so that the church need not ask for an excuse for what it says and does. The continuity with the apostles does not reside in apostolic succession, but in the succession of doctrine. The church of the Reformation found the guarantee for doctrinal purity not in apostolic succession, but in the church’s obedience to the teaching as it was recorded in scripture. This does not imply a slavish repetition of what the apostles themselves did. On the other hand, the church must remain committed to the world to become an open church that listens to the Word.

Heyns asserts (1980: 146) that the apostolic church that is sent must be aware of the risk of ecclesiological imperialism which is the transplanting of its own form to younger churches without allowing them to be an apostolic church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When the older church give guidance to the younger one they “must leave ample room for the Holy Spirit, who will call forth new forms of community experience, of confessional formulation and of liturgical ordering” (1980: 147). He concludes that it is in this way that the church and its apostolate will remain new.

It is clear from the abovementioned theologians the foundation laid by the first apostles and the commission lived by them and later generations should be continued today. The call for an apostolicity of service and obedience to the Lord of the church and the openness for the work of the Holy spirit that makes all things new should be taken into account when the church wants to form new structures.



The insights given by these theologians are also expressed in the book *Confessing the one faith* that is published by the World Council of Churches (1991). It states “The church is apostolic because everything it confesses about Christ comes from the apostles as witness, whose testimony to the life, death and resurrection of Christ has been transmitted by Holy Scripture” (1991: 89). The church recognises and lives its fundamental identity with Christ and the apostles in this continuity. The apostolicity of the church is thus manifested in its faithfulness to the Word of God, lived out and witnessed in the apostolic tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit through centuries and expressed by the ecumenical creed (1991: 89). It is also manifested in the celebration of the sacraments, the continuity of a ministry of service and the committed life of Christian members and communities.

The World Council of Churches also declares that the church is apostolic by following the example of the apostles in continuing their mission to proclaim the gospel, which is confirmed, by the action and the gift of the Holy Spirit (1991: 89). It is stated that the church witnesses to and serves the reconciliation of

humankind with God in Jesus Christ and proclaims divine salvation to the world. It should announce divine judgement on sin that is revealed and broken in the victory of the cross. The victory achieved by Christ calls the church to be motivated by sacrificial love and to be the servant of Christ's mission in the world until he returns in glory. It is agreed by the World Council of Churches that the church can only fulfil its mission in the world if it is renewed as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church (1991: 241).

It is clear from the insights of the ecumenical movement that the apostolic foundation and commission is important for an understanding of apostolicity today. There is agreement that apostolicity is broader than apostolic succession of ministry, which is a sign and, part of the apostolic tradition, which it serves. At the centre of the ecumenical discussion is the question whether episcopal succession can be seen as the best way to express the apostolic mission. From the arguments given by the many theologians from diverse confessional backgrounds it is clear that the gospel and service is regarded as fundamental criteria to understand apostolic succession today. The issue of renewal and openness to change is seen as fundamental for the churches that desires to build their structures in continuity with the apostolic tradition. In the conclusion the insights gained from the apostolicity of the church will be summarised and assessed in the light of the vision and structure of the Pentecostal movement and the AFMSA.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this section we will deal with the implications that this broader biblical and historical perspectives have for the vision of the AFMSA to be more apostolic. In this section we will also focus on the practical institutional questions and proposals implied that could help the AFMSA to broaden their vision of apostolicity.

From the section on the AFMSA, we can conclude that it wanted to be apostolic from the beginning and even included the term "apostolic" in its name. AFMSA's

usage of the term was born from the greater Pentecostal Movement that wanted to go back to the church of the original apostles, to the apostolic roots of the church. For the early Pentecostals it meant the restoration of the faith once delivered and to promote the unity of the church. Its understanding of the church at that time was that the church was too ritualistic, formal and dead. The members expressed the desire to be a mission or a movement instead. The fact that other groups also call themselves apostolic necessitates distinguishing the AFMSA from them. The AFMSA finds its link with the restoration dreams of Charles Parham, continued in the ministries of William Seymour and John G. Lake.

There is currently a revival of the meaning of apostolicity in the AFMSA. The leadership of the AFMSA strongly encourages relationships and structures that are based on apostolic relationships and networks. It is also clear that a Pentecostal understanding of apostolicity acknowledges that it only exists in Christ and not in the historical link of handing over authority as in apostolic succession. The unity that the church has with the church of the past is only possible through the Holy Spirit that makes us one. The Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit are the norm and guarantee of the apostolicity of the church.

The gifts and ministries that function in the lives of the believers and in the church come from God. The only thing that the church can do is to allow these gifts to function and to make room for them in their structures. The Holy Spirit thus gives the charismatic nature of the church and the church must allow the truth and revelation of Christ to be part of it. If the church loses that, it seeks its apostolicity in apostolic succession, church decisions, holy things, etc. The danger of that is that the church centralises its authority on earthly power and tends to forget that it is just a pilgrim travelling through this world.

We can also see that Pentecostals agree with other traditions on the need for order and structure for the ministry of the church. They agree that the New Testament does not prescribe one structure for all churches, but opt for the priesthood of all believers and acknowledge the potential of each member.

The section on the role of the Bible dealt specifically with the manner in which Christians understood the relationship between the disciples who were the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death and resurrection (first apostles) and the later followers of Christ who regarded them as apostles of Jesus Christ (secondary apostles). The continuity between these first and secondary apostles makes some conclude that the term carries a meaning beyond the missionary idea associated with the twelve. It points to the coming reign of God that is central to the message spread by the original apostles and all others who are obedient to the call of Christ as sent ones. The fact that an apostle is called from the community does not erase that person's humanity nor put such a person beyond the community. The relationship that the apostle has with the community is based on service and fellowship. Although the apostle is open to the censure and criticism of the community, the apostle is only obedient to God and serves God's purpose for the community.

The existence of primary and secondary apostles provides the possibility for other believers to share in the apostolic ministry. It means further, that the term must be understood more in functional terms than as a concept that describes the status of a few people. The term implies that all believers must be Spirit filled and willing to be sent as messengers into the world. It also implies that they must have an apostolic passion that requires them to have apostolic abandonment or the willingness to suffer for Christ, an apostolic focus that includes the whole world and not just the planting of churches, an apostolic form of prayer that is without ceasing, and the making of apostolic decisions that acknowledge the role of the Holy Spirit.

From our section on the historical development of the term it became clear that the mark of apostolicity always called the church back to its only Lord but the way in which members of the church reflected that in their structures, leadership and doctrines differs from period to period.

In the early period, we see how the term apostolicity became institutionalised in the episcopal structure and continued in the apostolic succession. The emphasis

of the Reformers on the Gospel as criterion for the apostolicity of the church restored the role of the priesthood of believers in the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of the Word. We also see how they institutionalised their understanding of the church so that groups like the Anabaptists had to call them back to the apostolic pattern of the New Testament.

In the Modern period, those who required intellectual proof for the apostolic roots of the church challenged the apostolic tradition. In turn, the church developed an understanding that concentrated more on the experience of the apostolic ministries through revival. It is also this revival that formed the roots of the Pentecostal understanding of apostolicity. The challenges of the Modern period also contributed to the rise of the ecumenical movement that led to the origin of the World Council of Churches. From an ecumenical perspective, the churches that belonged to the movement confessed that they stand in continuity with the first apostles and that their apostolicity lies in their faithfulness to the Triune God, the Word and the apostolic tradition. They see the task of the church as the proclamation of the Gospel, witness to the reconciliation that humans have in Christ, the proclamation of divine salvation to the world, the announcement of judgement on sin, and the willingness of the church to have a sacrificial love for the world and each other as servants of Christ.

For all the churches involved in the ecumenical movement the great challenge is to understand the role of apostolic succession as it was formed in the episcopal structure. Theologians from diverse confessional backgrounds agree that apostolic succession should be based on service and obedience to the Lord of the church. The reformed theologians propose strongly that the apostolic succession should rather be based on the teachings of the apostles and not the succession of bishops. This continuity with the teachings of the first apostles is not just preserved for a few individuals but is for the whole church. The continuity is preserved in the members if they continue the ministry and mission of the apostles. The continuity expressed in the episcopacy that was used as an institutional vehicle by the apostles and successive generations to ensure continuity of the faith allows us to accept other forms too.

The vision of the AFMSA to be apostolic should accept the fact that the apostolic foundation cannot be found in a founder of the Pentecostal movement but in the witness of the first disciples to the life, death and resurrection of Christ transmitted in the gospel. From their view that the secondary and later generations of Christians have access to the same gift of apostolicity the rest of the ecumenical church are challenged to value the gifts of every believer who confess to believe the apostolic church. It challenges also the manner in which some Pentecostals view the giftedness and leadership of individuals who claim to be apostles that is superior to the rest of the members. It allows a form of democracy that allows all members to be servants of God's great commission. The lesson that Pentecostals and the rest of the Christian family should learn is that no structure or form given to apostolicity can ever repeat the meaning that it had for the first apostles but that they should strive to be equivalent to their structure, open for renewal in new situations.



CHAPTER THREE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HOLY CHURCH?

Introduction

In chapter one the importance of vision and structure for an understanding of the church was introduced. It was said that the vision of the Early Church which was to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is captured in the metaphors that were used to describe the church. Over and over again in the history of the church, certain metaphors were emphasized to keep the vision of the early church alive.

Chapter two illustrated the role that the mark of apostolicity has played in the historical development of church structure and how it was used by Pentecostals to call the church back to the apostolic roots. Another mark that is highly valued in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA is the holiness of the church. Together with the mark of apostolicity this mark is synonymous with the origins of the Movement and the AFMSA.

The first section of this chapter will assess how holiness was understood in the vision that the early Pentecostals had for the church and how they expressed it institutionally (3.1). In the following section we will look at the role that the Bible played as a basis for the early Christians to understand holiness (3.2). The next section shall assess the historical developments that shaped the understanding of holiness in the major periods of church history and also the insights given by theologians from diverse confessional background about these developments (3.3). The last section will give an assessment of the implications that these insights from the Bible and history have for the vision and structure of the AFMSA.

3.1 THE AFM AND HOLINESS

The vision of the AFMSA is to be a holy church, but what precisely is meant with their understanding of holiness will be discussed in this section. The AFMSA is sometimes referred to as a holiness movement because of its emphasis on holiness to its members. In the mission statement of the AFMSA that was formulated in 1996, one of the principles that were formulated dealt with this mark of the church. The intention was to encourage the *“cultivation of holy life styles and relationships”*. In the preamble of the new Constitution of the AFMSA, it was further urged that a Christian should be disciple of Jesus Christ, living a consecrated and holy life (p3.7).

The AFMSA regards the acceptance of the Confession of Faith in the preamble as a pre-condition and prerequisite for membership. It is thus expected from members of the AFMSA to give proof of a consecrated, holy life. The church also has a section (Appendix II, Administration of Justice) whereby members are disciplined if they do not adhere to the codes of conduct that are biblically based and to the pronouncements from the Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy Commission. At the same time, it is stated, “To maintain and promote the good order of the church... the church prays that its law will always be an interpretation of the will of Christ” (Preamble, Constitution of the AFMSA, 2000: p.3.8.6). In order for the AFMSA to be a church that is relevant to the challenges of the new millennium, the church must realize the roots that the church has in holiness from a biblical and historical perspective. The church should be aware of its own sinfulness as members and leaders are entrusted by God to revision and restructure the church.

As a church that is part of a universal Christian church and a Pentecostal traction, the AFMSA regards the holiness of their members as serious.

According to Isak Burger (1987: 406), the AFMSA has had, since its inception, a high standard of moral and spiritual norms. Sinful habits were not tolerated amongst pastors and members.

Dieter (1975: 60) describes the influence of the American holiness revival as a call to Christians for an immediate response to God's provision of a life of present Christian holiness. This should be just as urgent as their call sinners to an instantaneous new birth at the penitent bench. One must remember that the early leaders of the Pentecostal Movement and of the AFMSA were strongly influenced by their roots in the Holiness Movement. The Pietists emphasized personal repentance, encounter with God, a Bible-centered morale and a practical sanctification. These characteristics were taken over by the Holiness Movement. The teachings of John Wesley on sanctification are worth mentioning here. He regarded sanctification as a second crisis experience, a second work of grace by God after repentance. The confession of faith of the AFMSA explained sanctification as "the act of grace through which the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin and makes us holy" (Burger, 1987, 407). Holiness was thus seen as an act whereby the believer was made holy instantly. This understanding of holiness was not accepted for too long in the AFM.

Later, it was understood that holiness is a process of growth. Charles Finney suggested that there must be another experience, which enables the believer to live holy. He emphasized that the believers must pray earnestly for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which enables the believer to live holily. Against the low spiritual state caused by humanism, materialism, evolution, secularism, and great criticism, people started to hunger for a more spiritual world. According to Burger, the Holiness Movement's growth was thus accelerated by this low state of spirituality. They emphasized sanctification, which enables the believer to live a morally perfect life. The Keswick Conference called also on all Christians to pray for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and a life of sanctification.

Charles Parham and William Seymour were both members of the Holiness Churches. It is thus not strange to find a resemblance between the understanding of holiness in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. John G. Lake was a minister in the Methodist Church and a close friend of William Seymour. The understanding of holiness in the AFM as an infant church was based on the immediate empowerment of members to live holy after repentance.

Another interesting development is the relationship of Zionism and the early AFM. Daniel Bryant, a missionary from America, formed the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion in South Africa. The Zionists emphasized holiness and separation from the world as well as a consecrated lifestyle. The Zionists rejected the use of alcohol, tobacco, the eating of pork and the use of medicine. Although they did not agree with the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, they had a certain external view of holiness. P. L. le Roux who received his first teachings on holiness from Andrew Murray, who also supported the holiness movement and its understanding of holiness became involved with Zionism, but later, he became a member of the AFMSA. Zionist, reformed and holiness influences in his understanding of holiness affected Le Roux who was the president of the AFM for almost thirty years. The split between its Zulu and white members caused the AFM later to become a more white-dominated church with a particular understanding of holiness.

The reason why it is important for us to understand these developments in the Pentecostal Movement and the AFM is because those distinctive persons and churches lay the foundation for an understanding of holiness in the AFM. Holiness was important in the life of the individual, but at the same time, it had social consequences. It had an impact on the way believers or members behaved themselves in society. At first, pastors and later assembly boards applied discipline. In 1912, the General Conference declared that "no man or woman who

is not delivered from smoking or the use of tobacco in any form as well as other evil habits shall be appointed a worker or Committee member in our assemblies" (Burger, 1987, 406). At that time, discipline was practiced against sinners and apostates of the church's doctrines. Disciplinary steps included censure, dismissal from positions, and even the termination of fellowship. An important principle was the honour and trust of the public.

If the AFMSA came to any understanding of sanctification, which implies that the believer is instantly holy and will never be able to sin again, one asks how they accounted for the mistakes made by the members. That is why the implementation of discipline in the forming years of the AFMSA makes sense. Initially, the Pentecostal Movement and also the AFMSA were not prepared, for the making of laws because of their anti-church sentiments. One must remember they always wanted to be called "missions" or "movements". In order to have some control over their members and the way in which they conducted themselves the AFMSA saw the need for a biblical basis of holiness and church structures that facilitate this vision.

With the formation of the AFM, these beliefs have become part of the church's view on the way members must behave themselves. Holiness was thus seen as a hallmark for a true Pentecostal. Lapoorta (1996: 64) shows that the AFMSA did not avoid the unethical and fleshly things that always accompany party politics. They did not do so because they wished to assert the pre-eminence of the Kingdom in all things. He evaluates certain issues critically that were addressed in the early years of the AFMSA.

One of the issues addressed was the position of the AFMSA on the vaccination, inoculation and the use of medicine and drugs. It is stated, "the AFM of SA was opposed to compulsory vaccination because they perceived it to be in conflict with their belief of divine healing" (Lapoorta, 1996: 66). The leadership declared that they would exhort their people to be true to their principles and be faithful to God and His Word. They further

declared it to be their determination “to obey God rather than man, as did the Apostles of old” (Acts 4: 19) and if they had to suffer for conscience’s sake and for the Gospel they were willing to do so (Lapoorta, 1996: 67). He concludes that the authorities later included the conscience clause to exempt those whose religion did not permit vaccination.

The AFMSA also objected that their members be included in the armed forces after the First World War. Members were also not allowed to take part in the conscription programme of the Defense Force but due to the involvement of the AFMSA with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, that changed after World War Two. In the first case, the government after the First World War applied the conscience clause again (Lapoorta, 1996: 67).

Lapoorta (1996: 78) argues that the AFMSA have had double standards with regards to the participation of white and black pastors in the politics of the past. Black members were told not to become involved in politics, as in the case of pastor Chikane, while a white pastor, Gerrie Wessels was allowed to become a member of the senate in the Apartheid regime. He argues that the underlying presupposition in the political involvement of the white AFMSA has been racism. The policy of separate development that was practiced in society had also become part of the church structure in the AFMSA. Lapoorta (1996: 34) argues that it was possible in those years to be a born-again, spirit-filled Pentecostal and also a racist.

Lapoorta is critical about the use of Scripture by white members on certain issues. Their understanding of Scripture did not permit them to take up arms or the compulsory use of vaccine. He questions the fact that the white members could not use the same Scripture to fight racism as it was expressed in the church structure and society. For Lapoorta (1996: 78), this was the use of a deeply flawed hermeneutic because white members theoretically affirmed the dignity and equality of all human beings, while in practice; they religiously adhered to apartheid, which dehumanized black people, regardless of their spiritual experiences. In that sense the AFMSA

held double standards with regards to holiness because when it comes to vaccination they confronted the government but when resistance were required against oppressive structures they kept quiet.

The final report on the dialogue between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals (1977-1982) stated that all the baptized are called to be saints and that the Early Church members called themselves just that (Acts 9:13; 26:19/ Romans 15: 25-26/ 2 Corinthians 8: 4; 9:1). They agreed that the church is always in need of repentance because of sin and is at once holy and in need of purification and renewal in its persons and structures. Both the Roman Catholics and the Pentecostals recognized that their respective theologies of *koinonia* were all too seldom reflected in the empirical reality of the life in their respective communities (PNEUMA, Fall 1990: 138). Due to the sinfulness of the persons and structures in the church it is accepted by both Catholics and Pentecostals that the un-holiness of the ministers does not invalidate the work of the Holy Spirit although it can be a stumbling block which prevents non-believers from coming to faith in a true and living God. It frequently hinders the work of the Spirit in the believing community.

The need for renewal in church structures that is pointed out in the report implies that holiness cannot just be confined to the lives of individuals. It means that sin cannot only be seen as personal but also as structural. Pentecostals who stress the freedom of the Spirit do acknowledge the necessity for church order. They affirm church order as the will of the Lord for the church because they believe that the New Testament Church was without persons holding specific authority and responsibility (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1). It is stated that, "Pentecostals do not reject ecclesiastical institutions, they recognise that the Spirit operates not only through charismatic individuals but also through permanent ministries of the Church" (1990: 139). There is agreement amongst Roman Catholics and Pentecostals that the offices and structures are in continual need of renewal in so far as they are institutions of men and women here on earth.

It is thus the Spirit that breathes new life into the church's offices and structures when it become dry bones (Ezekiel 37). The report recognizes the ecumenical implications of the ongoing efforts at renewal.

The final report of the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal Dialogue states that first; God calls the church as *Communio Sanctorum* into communion with himself, which is communion with the Holy One. Second, the church is called into communion in the Body and Blood of Christ (*communio sanctorum*) and third, into communion between Christians who are called the fellowship of the saints (*communio sanctorum*). It makes clear that the phrase "*communio sanctorum*" has eschatological significance in the Nicene Creed. It means that the same Spirit makes the saints on earth and those in heaven into a single body. From the Roman Catholic perspective, the members of the church are given *koinonia* in the very holiness of God and form a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12: 1) and a great multitude, which no one can number "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Revelations 7:9).



In Roman Catholic faith and practice, God alone is the object of worship (*latría*) but veneration (*douλία*) is given to saints who have run the race, finished the course and have received a crown of life. From the report, it is also clear that no Catholic has an obligation *jure divino* of venerating relics, icons, or saints. These kinds of devotion are not regarded as necessary for salvation but are accepted by the Catholic Church as useful forms of devotion that can be recommended to members and will resist any condemnation or contempt of such practices (PNEUMA, Fall 1990: 137).

Pentecostals, according to the report, find the stress on the worship that belongs to God reassuring about Roman Catholic theology. Pentecostals teach that the unique role of Christ as Mediator positively excludes veneration of relics, icons and saints. Pentecostals affirm that the earthly saints, who worship with saints in heaven and with them, comprise the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

3.2 THE BIBLE AND HOLINESS

Christians worldwide accept the Apostles and the Nicene Creed as normative statements of faith. In these creeds, Christians confess a belief in a holy catholic church and describe the church as a communion of saints or holy persons. From the previous section it is clear that the Pentecostal perspective of holiness is also based on the Bible. The early Pentecostals were serious about their call on the church to go back to the apostolic roots of the early church in the New Testament. In the next section the focus is on the role that the Bible have in an understanding of holiness and more use will be made of contributions from theologians of other traditions. The question that needs to be answered is whether the vision of holiness in the AFMSA is adequate to the biblical material given about the holiness of the church.

OLD TESTAMENT

The holiness of the church does not come from the members and their moral and religious behaviour, but it is rooted in the Old and New Testament understanding of holiness. The Old Testament meaning for holiness implies a separation and a cutting-off, a distinguishing and dividing of what is profane and impure from what is pure. It implies a separation for God's service where pure things become holy by being removed from their profane usage and being dedicated to God (Kung, 1971: 321). Holiness is grounded in God self who is unique and different in kind as the Creator God. God can be described as the "Wholly Other" which means that nothing is likened and comparable to God (Heyns, 1980: 128). It does not mean that God lives in isolation or is removed from creation, but only that God is different from creation and humanity as the transcendent God (Hosea 11:9) and God is also involved in creation and with humanity as the immanent God (Exodus 33:11). The hallowing acts of God make people holy because they bind people to God self and bring them into a new relationship that sets them free from sin (Moltmann, 1977: 353). God is portrayed as an active subject in the process of salvation or liberation (Ezekiel 36:23; 20:40/ Isaiah 5:16/ 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13/ Ephesians 1:4). It is also the Triune God who is

involved in these acts because they take place in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2,30) and the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11/ Romans 1:4; 15:16).

Heyns (1980:129) states that holiness as an act, command the believers to be holy (Leviticus 19:2; 11:44; 20:7), because they are chosen to be different from others as God's possession (Exodus 19: 5). It implies that believers have to obey the duties and obligations required from a people who stand in a covenant with God. In the Old Testament, this concept has a cultic background. Holiness is portrayed in the washing ceremonies of the old covenant community (Kersten, 1983: 474). In the Old Testament, the tabernacle, temple and those who ministered in those places were regarded as holy to God. They served in the Old Testament sanctuaries where they were expected to be saints at heart. Kuiper (1966: 57) argues that some people were exceedingly wicked, for example Hophni and Pinehas, the sons of Eli, whose behaviour so displeased God that he destroyed them (1 Samuel 2: 12 34 / 4: 1,22). Holiness was evident in the kind of life that Israel lived because they were forbidden to do the things that other nations did (Leviticus 18:3). They were not allowed to practice idolatry (Leviticus 19:4), sacrifice children, and commit adultery (Leviticus 17; 20:1-12). The religious and political life was one and required constant cleansing and forgiveness (Isaiah 6: 5-7; Ezekiel 16) (Heyns, 1980: 129).

NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament concept of holiness is almost completely dependent on the Old Testament usage where holiness is the most emphatic description of the divinity of God. The only thing that matters is that it is God who reveals the sanctifying will of God in the Word. It shows how God is called holy in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:35; 4:34/ Mark 1:24/ Revelation 3:7). God's name is eschatological hallowed in humans by God self (Matthew 6:9/Luke 11:2). This takes the form of a request to the Father that he will reveal his holiness. God is the logical subject of sanctification (Ezekiel 36:23; 20:41; 28:22; Isaiah 5:16) and it is justification that this too is a work of God (2 Thessalonians

2:3/5:3; Ephesians 1:4). God achieves the sanctification of humans by saving them in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11).

The holiness of the church solely exists in Christ because holiness speaks of total goodness, truth, light, life or whatever revelations of divinity there are. This is a state that the church will never be able to achieve by themselves as a body of believers who still have a sinful, fleshly, and carnal nature. It is only through the relationship that the church has with Christ and the unity through the Holy Spirit that the church can have a part in his holiness. It is only if the church is in Christ who is the Holy One of God (Luke 1:35, Acts 3:14, Revelations 3:7) that the church can reveal the life and attitude of the Holy One. The imperfection of the church darkens the light and life of the Holy One in it as the Body and Bride. In the letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul describes the ideal relationship between Christ and his church as a marriage between a husband and a wife (5: 25-27). This relationship exists also through what Christ has done for his church through his Word and Spirit that destroys everything that is sinful and unholy and creates everything that is good, holy and pleasing to God. In the church, we can see the breakthroughs of the Kingdom in people's lives that provide us with testimonies of what it is to live a consecrated and holy life for God.

The church must also strive to become more and more holy like Christ (Hebrews 12:14 /1 Peter 1:16). The church should take a stand against things that are not honouring God and beware of conforming to the world (Roman 12:2). The church should also be holy in everything that its members does, whether it is in their living (Titus 2:3/ 2 Peter 3: 11), worship (1 Timothy 2:8/Psalms 29:2), proclaiming the glory of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4), the holiness of God fulfilled through their full commitment (2 Corinthians 7:1) and in their giving everything in service to God. The holiness of the church is not a mere ornament worn like a necklace, but is its very essence (Kuiper, 1966: 58). The church is perfect in Christ who is its head (Colossians 2: 10) and whom he predestined, called justified and

glorified (Rom 8: 30). The church is separated from the world (John 17:16 for Jesus declared his followers clean (John 13: 10). The true members are called saints (Rom 1: 7). They are sanctified by Christ in faith (1 Corinthians 1: 2; Acts 15: 9) and are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Peter 2: 9). Weber (1985: 560) asserts that the community is not holy by virtue of its own state, contributions or activities for what sanctifies the church is what it receives, which is the Word (John 15:3, Eph 5:26), the Baptism (Ephesians 5:26), The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27) and the Gift of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The Spirit is the one that does the work of sanctification in humans (Romans 1:4; 15:16). The holiness of the church is revealed as the fruit of the Spirit that enables us to follow the will and laws of God through the grace of God (Romans 8:2/7:22). It is through the Holy Spirit that the character and attitude of the Lord Jesus works in the lives of people and is expressed in love. The main characteristic of this fruit is love that is poured by God into the heart of the people (Romans 5:5). This is seen in the love for God, which takes place through consecration and obedience to God, and the love expressed for one's brothers and sisters (1 John 4: 11, 12,19-20). It is also seen in the passion to evangelise to the world (2 Corinthians 5:14) and the care shown to others (Matthew 5: 34-35). We can conclude from this that there are no self-made saints, but that they are called and sanctified in Christ by the Holy Spirit (Kung, 1993: 141). It is only on that basis that they can now be called saints in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1:24/ Romans 1:6,7/ Philippians 1:1/ Colossians 3:12). It is clear that humans can only become holy through divine sanctification. It is thus clear that one cannot believe in the holy church but in God who makes the church holy (Kung, 1971: 325).

The holiness of the church is a status that is received from Christ, but is not above the reality of the members (Heyns, 1980: 127). It is already clear from the paragraphs above, that the same demands that were laid on the people of the Old Testament are placed on the people of the New

Testament. In essence, it means that the church is set apart for God, which implies that believers should turn their backs on sin and consecrate their lives to God as saints and beloveds (Acts 9:13/ Philipians' 1:1/ 1 Corinthians 1:2), holy brothers or sisters (Colossians 1: 2). We read also about a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2: 5), holy prophets and apostles (Acts 3:21/ Ephesians 3:15/ Revelations 18:20) and the holy building of God (Acts 6:13/ 1 Corinthians 3:17). God is holy and everything acquainted with God must be holy according to 1 Peter 1:16. It means that the church as the Body of Christ and Bride of Christ, which will one day appear before God, must be holy and without blame (Ephesians 5: 27).

From these metaphors that were formed in the world of the Old and New Testament believers it is clear that holiness must be expressed visibly in structures and in the lives of individuals. It is clear that the holiness of the church should impact the personal and communal aspects of people's lives. As a gift from God, holiness places a task on the church to strive towards the same demands required from believers in the Old and New Testament. It is clear from the biblical assessment that all areas of life should be influenced by the holiness required by God. In the following section we will look at the manner in which the vision of the church to be holy was challenged in the four major periods of church history.

3.3 THE HISTORY OF HOLINESS IN THE CHURCH

In this section we will see whether the vision of the AFMSA is in line with the insights that developed around the holiness of the church in history. We will focus on certain developments that happened in the four major periods of church history, which is the early church period, Middle Ages and Renaissance period, Reformation period and the Modern period. This will be followed by an assessment of contributions from theologians of diverse confessional backgrounds who examined the issues related to holiness from their contexts.

The work of Martin Marty will be used to describe developments in the early church period, Middle Ages and Renaissance, the Enlightenment period and the Reformation period. The work of theologians from various theological contexts internationally, like Karl Barth, Hans Küng, Jurgen Moltmann, John Macquarrie, Louise Berkhof and nationally, Johan Heyns and Jaap Durand will be used. Their reflections on the holiness of the church are quite helpful for the question related to the mark of holiness and the process of revisioning underway in the AFMSA.

A summary was given on the development of this mark in the section on the historical development of the doctrine of the church (1.4). Marty (1987: 37) describes how the mark of holiness developed from a characteristic of martyrdom to one of separation and isolation from the body and the world. The change from a persecuting empire to a confessing state changed the perspective of holiness from martyrdom to other ways that express their separation from the world. Holiness came to mean complete separation from the world and due to the subtle pervasion by the Greek influences Christianity adopted a view that despises the body (Marty, 1987: 48). At this time, holiness meant faithfulness to the apostolic teachings until death. Those who opposed the exponents of the visible, universal church were called heretics, but they considered the holiness of their members the true mark of the church.

There was a great deal of tension amongst certain groups about the church's essential being as the Body of Christ (a spiritual community) and its historical existence (a sinful, fallible people). The Montanists claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. They allowed no forgiveness of post-baptismal sin, practised an ascetic discipline, and welcomed martyrdom. Theologians like Tertullian have accepted certain Montanist practices and defined the church as a society of the Spirit whose true members are spiritual persons or saints.

Hyppolytus describes the church as the holy society of those who live in righteousness, which must exclude sinners. A distinction gradually developed

between the true, spiritual or heavenly church and the empirical, historical church. The main proponents were Clement of Alexandria and Origen. They were universalists who understood the church to be a heavenly church, pre-existent and eschatological. The heavenly church is the ideal towards which the church as an earthly institution was oriented and prepared its members for. They would not accept the distinction between an invisible church (the elect) and a visible church (including sinners). They believed that all would finally be saved.

Some of the groups really worth mentioning here were the Donatists who declared the true church as a fellowship of the real saints only. They wanted to purge the church of all unholy elements and even the bishops who betrayed the church. Augustine held the view that we cannot determine on earth between those who are saved and those who are not. He used the story of the wheat and the tares from Matthew 13 to prove that only God will be the judge at the end of time. Augustine first made the invisible-visible distinction under his predestination doctrine. In his view, the invisible holy church consists of the fixed number of saints known to God in pre-existence. The Early Church believed that the church is holy because its members are holy. Leith (1993: 242) argues that if the holiness of the members was the condition, then it was impossible for the church to exist. If the members could not be holy, it was argued that the priests contribute to the church's holiness. This led to major schisms in the church and to the answer given by Augustine. He argued that the Holy Spirit works through appointed means of grace to transform human lives. The church is a community of forgiven sinners and the Lord is daily smoothing out the church's wrinkles and cleansing the spots. The holiness of the church is not yet complete, but it is daily advancing and progressing.

In the Middle Ages, holiness was characterized by the struggle between emperors and popes for control over society and land. According to Marty (1987: 74), the church was initially a comprehensive unifying and reconciling whole, which included both the sociological circle of religion itself and the

politico-social organizations. The sacred and the secular interacted with each other so that there was a quest for wholeness without the denial of creative tensions. In this medieval period, the idea of a Christian society developed along the lines of theocracy and monasticism. Under a theocracy, the church was challenged to express holiness through its varied careers and involvements in the Holy Roman Empire. Under monasticism, holiness was achieved through withdrawal and aloofness from the quasi-secular order. This was also the time when Augustine distinguished between the City of God and the world.

During the Middle Ages the life of the parish in the Roman Catholic Church was described as inefficient, arbitrary, lax, and unjust under the clergy. The Roman Catholic Church was accused of being too close to the moral standards of the world. The selling of indulgences for the forgiveness of sins was seen as an unacceptable practice that corrupted the church. The free flow of God's grace and righteousness to the people was diverted and damned by this. Some other negative influences were capitalism, nationalism, and the Renaissance humanism. They eroded and undermined the exclusive claims to authority in the church and society. It caused some of the early Reformers like Wycliff, Hus and Savonarola to attack the institutional unholiness of the church and to purify it.

Marty disagrees with the view that this time must be described as 'Dark' because the ordinary life of the church was continuing in the lives of the ordinary men and women. He states that they are too easily blamed for a weak leadership and for accommodating themselves to an overpowering environment. Marty (1987: 148) argues that "there was still holiness in the lives of men and women who rose above the limits of their times and singly or in movements demonstrated their unselfish motivation that persisted in a corrupt church". In their quest for holiness, the early Reformers identified themselves with monasticism that proves that not all the clergy was corrupt.

In the Modern Period, a wall of separation was erected between the church and society. Through secularisation, the institutional forms of Christianity underwent revision at the hands of the world so that they were no longer the centres of life for humans. The church was now officially excluded from the political, social and economic life. Marty (1987: 223) states that the pull of the decades was all in one direction, the church was set apart from the world by its enemies. This took the form of a shift from compulsion to voluntarism in the human response so that new forms of holiness were possible and realized.

The two movements that limited Christianity's chances to gain new dominance in the world were the Enlightenment and Pietism Movements. The former challenged the intellectual authority of the church as an institution based on revelation and the latter one forced Christians to withdraw to an inner experience and personal devotion to holiness. The formation of national states challenged the church's urge for worldly power and dominance and caused the church to lose ground amongst the monarchs. Christianity was now forced to exist on a voluntary basis in society. Although this disentanglement and disestablishment was challenging to the church it did enhance the church's holiness.

Marty (1987: 235) describes also how the acceptance of a more secularised American constitution gave a new charter of religious advance on a voluntary basis to the church. At first the churches did not welcome the loss of influence they had in society but adapted to find new possibilities in voluntarism. Marty concludes that "later experiences affirms that this disentanglement which reversed fifteen centuries and set a pattern for the modern world was a declaration of independence for the church in its assertion of its holiness while it walks as a pilgrim walking this earthly city" (Marty, 1987: 236).

Marty (1987: 236) lastly evaluates the contributions made by the holiness movements that operated throughout history. For him these movements proves that holiness cannot be marked only in the social and societal

relations between church and world but also in the lives of individuals and groups of Christians as the mystical body of Christ. He states that no Pietist movement ranks with the path of holiness prescribed by Wesleyanism or Methodism that left their mark on the Church of England, Protestantism and Pentecostalism.

Marty (1987: 239) concludes that the test that faces Christian theology is how to adapt to the assumptions of the modern world and how can the Christian mission compensate for its exclusion from affairs by a growing secularism by winning the hearts of individuals around the world. He states that the assumption that people had about the church reforming the world by formal involvement in societal life or through the experience of devoted individuals was tried and questioned in history. Marty (1987: 240) finally concludes by saying that through all the relativities and ambiguities of human existence and churchly shortcomings it was still possible for Christians to assert, I believe the holy church.



In his *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth (1971: 685) comments on the fact that the church is set apart from other societies and their standards and function according to its own laws. He defines holiness as to be set apart, marked off and therefore differentiated, singled out, taken (and set) on one side as a being, which has its own origin and nature and meaning and direction.

The church has its own basis and its own goal and makes use of its own methods to do things in its own way. For him the church has the definite condition to encourage faith in its membership and that distinguishes it from other human societies. He does not imply that the church has no relation to the world, but that, as a human society. It also has its own sphere of power and interests and influence. Barth (1971: 686) asserts “as long as the community lives in the world, its holiness like its unity is covered by its actual likeness and relationships to other societies by the twofold citizenship of its membership of Christians in itself”. For Barth, the confession that the church is holy does not describe a matter, which is open to all, but a discovery, which

no one can make without the Holy Spirit and to which no one can hold without a continuance of his revealing work. The holiness of the church is not that of the Holy Spirit, but that which is created by Him and ascribed to the church, which marks it off and separates it.

The holiness of the church comes from Jesus Christ who is the holy Head of the Church and the members can share in it through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the character of the church is indestructible because the He that is the Head of the Church will not forsake it. The fact that the church did not taken it by itself to be holy means that it cannot set aside its calling. The church is thus infallible, without error and cannot lose its distinctiveness and separateness within the world because it is Christ's Body and cannot cease to exist. The community may sometimes be pushed to the wall, persecuted; suppressed, and outwardly destroyed, be guilty of failure and error, and also degenerate like Israel and the church of the New Testament, but it cannot be destroyed (Barth, 1971: 689).



The church is constantly under the possibility of censure from the Lord, the world and from itself (*ecclesia semper reformanda*). It is required from the members of the community to live holy although some will be hypocrites that do not live accordingly. Barth (1971: 690) asserts that the church has always needed and always will need, self-examination and self-correction. Church discipline is needed but cannot be used to distinguish between true and false members. The church can only believe in the holiness of the Christian community and in themselves as members. They must accept that obedience is expected from the Body of Christ on earth.

Hans Küng (1971: 320), the student of Karl Barth from the Roman Catholic Church, asserts that the church is holy and yet sinful. He argues that the history of the church is part of the deep sinful human history. This is the reason the church has always been in a state of reformation and deformation throughout its two thousand year history. The excuses that was given by the

church over the years for the mistakes that was made he regards as understandable but not acceptable. He argues that although the church only sets apart holy members the church consists of human beings that cannot say they have not sinned (James 3:2/ 1 John 1:8/ Luke 18' 11). He regards the distinction between a holy church and sinful members as a fallacious one because of the fact that there would be no church without believers. He also refutes the distinction between the holy and sinful parts of the Christian because of the fact that the church is a church of sinners. From the previous section, it has become clear that sanctification is a work of God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is clear that there are no self-made saints but only those who are called by God. Küng (1971: 328) concludes that the New Testament never refers to a holy church but only to communities.

In the following sections of his chapter on the holiness of the church, Küng sees forgiveness and renewal as continuing aspects of the church. He argues that in the church there is forgiveness of sins and that the church must also pray daily to be delivered from evil. The church receives the authority, as the Jewish rabbis have, to bind (forbid) and loosen (declare permissible) and allow God to act through the church. The church is thus authorized to pass judgment on certain issues (Matthew 18:18). This authority is not restricted to certain individuals like the apostles, but the community also bears the authority to forgive sins. Küng (1971: 337) concludes from this that every Christian must begin the *metanoia* and hence the reform and renewal of the church within him or herself. He asserts that the church should always commit itself to positive renewal and that it is an inner reform of heart and attitudes not a matter of abstract academic discussions, or being hampered by external conditions like church structures.

For Küng (1971: 341), the church is set apart from the world by God as holy and is an effect of His grace. The church must remain set apart because that is His call to *metanoia* and renewal. It will remain set apart because it is His faithful promise. The church cannot remain set apart by itself, but because it

is by God's mercy. Küng agrees with Barth (1971: 691) on the idea that the external threats can humble, put down, condemn, enslave, weaken, scorn, mutilate, suppress, persecute and even wipe out the church, but the church is indestructible because God keeps it alive (Matthew 16:18). Internally, the church can become weak and fainthearted, proud, undisciplined, degenerate, despoiled and violated, even forget its true calling and turn its back on its Lord, "yet will God say I am with you always to the end of time" (Matthew 28:20). Küng agrees with Barth that the church cannot be ruined and that God will keep it alive.

The last remarks on Küng's contribution focus on the role of the Spirit that preserves the church from falling away from the truth (John 14:16). When Küng refers to the church as infallible he does not mean that the church is free from error, but to a fundamental remaining in the truth, which is not disturbed by individual errors. He asserts that the church can only be infallible if it is humbly obedient to God's Word. Küng (1971: 343) argues that the unquestionable verifiability of particular statements is something that is not demonstrable from the New Testament. There are two points that need to be taken into account namely: that it is a binding force with qualitatively high value as its formulations have the whole church behind it, and second it can be accepted as fragmentary, which means that every formulation by the individual or the whole church remains imperfect, incomplete, unclear, partial and fragmentary. Despite all that has been said about the internal and external threats of the church, he concludes that the church will always remain the holy church.

Küng further explores the mark of holiness in his book, *Credo* (1993). For him, the real church is a sinful church because it consists of fallible, sinful people. He says it is superfluous to remind contemporaries of all the wrong historical decisions and developments, the personal failure and guilt of those in the office of the church. Here he refers to the discrimination against women, the burning of witches, and the persecution of theologians and heretics. He refers to anti-Judaism, the treatment of the Renaissance

Popes, and the cases of Hus, Luther, Descartes, Galileo, Kant, Loisy, Teilhard de Chardin and others such as himself.

Küng (1993: 139) argues that no Christians should be shy about speaking of the often-incredible blindness, terrifying sin and many-sided blasphemy in the church. What are involved here are both the failure of the human individual and the inhumanity of church-structure.

Jurgen Moltmann (1977: 354), another student of Barth, relates the mark of holiness to poverty. He argues for the idea that the church is both a communion of saints and sinners and he asserts that the church should respond with a public admission of guilt. He states that the “church is therefore holy precisely at the point where it acknowledges its sins and sins of mankind and trusts to justification through God”. The church is set apart and destined not for itself but for service of the kingdom of God to sanctify the world.



Moltmann asserts that in the context of the coming kingdom of glory lies the sanctification of the church in its call to service, suffering and poverty. Sanctification is not only service but is also an experience in Christ's suffering. The friends of Jesus have left everything and became poor for the sake of the kingdom. Romans 15:26 refers to the poor saints in Jerusalem and 1 Corinthians 8:9 to the money that was collected for the poor in Macedonia and Achaje. Moltmann (1977: 255) concludes from this that the church is sanctified wherever it participates in the lowliness, helplessness, poverty and suffering of Christ. The church can only be sanctified if it becomes the church of the poor and honors almsgiving to the poor. Because Christ became poor in order to make us rich (1 Corinthians 15:43), the church must make itself spiritually and materially poor to invest in the messianic mission to the world. Christian poverty means fellowship of and with the poor. It is solidarity with the poor and the protest against poverty. He concludes that true fellowship of the poor is of more value than all the alms and development aid of the rich.

John Macquarrie (1967: 364), the English theologian warns the church against rigidity that forms the basis for fundamentalism. He describes the holiness of the church, not as an escape from the world, but as obedience in particular situations. The church can only testify about the grace of God at work in the church. He also believes that the church can fall short of holiness when it supports the wrong causes such as an oppressive regime or the status quo. Losing holiness can also happen when the church idolizes its structures. He warns that church members must not even idolize particular sacramental forms, which are rooted in the Bible or church tradition, and command a very special respect and reverence (Macquarrie, 1967: 365).

The holiness of the church does not only have implications for the individual members but also for the structures of the church. The American theologian Louis Berkhof (1941: 572) distinguishes between the Roman Catholic and Protestant conception of the church's holiness. He first discusses the Roman Catholic conception of the church's holiness. The Catholics use a basic external characteristic to understand the church. The outer-holiness (ceremonial) is placed in the foreground, not the inner-holiness of the members. The church is holy in its dogmas, in its moral precepts, in its worship and in its discipline. It is thus pure and unapproachable.

The Protestant conception maintains that the church is absolutely holy, in an objective sense, as it is considered to be in Jesus Christ. They also regard the church as being subjectively holy, in the inner principle of its life and in it being destined for perfect holiness. The church is holy in the sense that it is separated from the world in consecration to God. Louis Berkhof (1941: 575) stresses the Protestant conception of the church too radically when he maintains that local visible churches that consist of believers should exclude all unbelievers and wicked persons.

Kuiper (1966: 57) also comments on the two kinds of holiness, which are ceremonial and ethical. He argues that the ceremonial holiness of the church do not guarantee an ethical holiness by the members. The ethical holiness of the church is a work that is done by the Holy Spirit in the lives of members that are regenerated. Such members are in principle perfect and their lives manifest the beginning of perfect obedience. They are the ones who according to Scripture, delight in the law of God (Romans 7: 22), are no longer servants of sin (Romans 6: 17), cannot commit sin because they are born from God's seed (1 John 3: 9) and are the ones who are addressed as "saints" in Scripture. The church can however, have members enrolled who are unregenerate and do not qualify as true and living, born-again members.

Kuiper (1966: 58) distinguishes between holiness as a fact, which is perfect as a principle and as a duty wherever it is threatened. He states that the church should never be satisfied with the degree of her holiness but strive towards greater heights. He regards the world, the devil and the flesh as the three foes that prevent the church from progressing in holiness and that they are subsumed under the term worldliness that is the opposite of holiness. He disagrees with traditions that externalise the difference between the church and the world in such a way that it falls into an unwholesome extremism (Kuiper, 1966: 59).

At this point, the valuable contribution of some South African theologians to the mark of holiness needs to be mentioned.

According to Heyns (1980: 130), the holiness of the church is not earned through an ethical revolution but is given by God at the moment of its coming into being. Holiness is a concept that speaks of a relationship that was initiated by God and takes place in a context of election, calling and mercy (1 Peter 2:9 - 10). He argues that it is a status that was given to Israel by God. It is also expressed in the status that the church receives from Christ. In the relationship that the Triune God has with Israel and the church, they have the status as God's possession and are set free to be

holy in their acts and obedience in all spheres of life. Their holiness must be evident to the nations amongst whom the members live and they must reflect obedience to their obligations and duties to the covenant.

Holiness is not just a confession. It must be expressed visibly in the lives of the believers, and when it is not visible, it is a sign of sickness in the church. Although holiness is not grounded in ethics or morality, Heyns (1980: 131) argues that these are necessary fruits of holiness. The holiness of the church must be heard in the preaching and confession of the church and in its actions that are faithful to Scripture. When this does not happen, the church is not hallowed and it is judged (Revelation 3:16) as lukewarm. It means that every area of life must be brought into line with its status, which is that Christ possesses it. The church should thus struggle against sin within itself and engage in a universal crusade against every form of sin among people and in institutions. It is then that the church becomes God's hallowing institution in the world, which is the task of every believer. The church should also know that that full reality and glory of its holiness is an eschatological promise and for that its entire people must work and pray (1Thessalonians 3:12, 13).

Jaap Durand (n.d: 4) argues in an article called "*Eienskappe van die kerk*" that the holiness that we confess is not of an ideal church, but of the visible church of Christ that originates and brings its witness as sinful people in history. He describes the tension between the holiness of the church and its sinful existence in the world. He finds that there were many attempts in history to evade this tension. One of them was to purify the church from sinners in a perfectionist way. He regards that as a superficial sense of sin that is not in line with the New Testament understanding of sin (1 John 1:8/ James 3:2) and the image of the New Testament church. The second one is the distinction between the holiness of the members and the church where the institution is holy and the sinfulness is on the side of the members.

The third attempt at evasion is to argue that the church is objectively holy in Christ and it is that which makes the church holy. It means that the church is set apart for a purpose or service and this puts no ethical requirements on the church. Durand (*Eienskappe van die kerk*, p.4) disagrees with such a view because of the fact that holiness is not something invisible nor does it happen in secret. He agrees, on the other hand, that true holiness is found only in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30), is done by God (1 Thessalonians 5:23/ 2 Thessalonians 2:13/ Ephesians 1:4). This holiness is visibly expressed in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22) and deliverance from sin (Romans 8:2/ John 3:6). The fourth evasion is to project the holiness of the church into the future as something that is “not yet”. He argues that it is clear from the Bible that Christians should look for holiness in the here and now (Hebrews 12:4) and struggle towards that (Hebrews 12:1/ Philippians 3:12).

Durand (*Eienskappe van die kerk*, p.5) concludes that we must accept the holiness of the church as a confession of faith, which calls us to struggle and to pray for forgiveness so that we can make an effort to run for the end of the race. It is the struggle between the communion of the saints (*communio sanctorum*) and the communion of the sinners (*communio peccatorum*). The church must declare war on sin and practice discipline. The church is called to be a missionary in holiness and an example of discipline to the world.

In the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed the early Christians confessed their belief in the holy church and the communion of the saints. The book, *Confessing the one faith* (1991: 239), of the World Council of Churches states that the Holy Spirit dwells in the holy church that is set apart by God who is holy and who sanctifies it by the Word and sacrament. It is said that God's holiness signifies the faithfulness of God towards his people. Christ is the one who continues to justify and sanctify those who remain faithful in the darkest times faced by the church. The church is holy because of the holy words it proclaims and the holy acts it performs. Although the church is a community of sinners, the sinners are sustained by the knowledge that they are constantly forgiven (1 Peter 4:

17). The struggle between what it means for the church to be the communion of sinners and the communion of saints at the same time, is a great challenge for their understanding of the mark of holiness.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this section the insights gained from the biblical and historical perspective of holiness will be assessed in the light of its practical implications for the broader vision of the AFMSA.

It is clear that the AFMSA should take the demand of their early leaders to get a biblical understanding of holiness seriously. From the metaphors that translate the experience of the Old and New Testament believers it is clear that holiness is rooted in the Triune God and it would be unbiblical to base any understanding of holiness only on the work of the Holy Spirit. The fact that holiness is a gift and task emphasizes its roots in the nature of the unfailing love of God the Father, the unselfish sacrificial love of Christ the Son whose blood is able to wash sins away and the sanctifying creative work done by the Holy Spirit.

In every period of the church's history when it seemed that believers tend to emphasize one or no Person of the Godhead's work in the holiness of the church reformation took place. When it seemed that holiness was based on everything else but the work of the Triune God certain individuals or groups became alarmed and call on the authority of Scripture, tradition or experience that agrees with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. In the restoration dreams of the first leaders of the Pentecostal Movement there was a call for a personal holiness from members that finds expression in their actions. The call was for the church to go back to the church of the New Testament.

Another element that is helpful for the vision and structure of the AFMSA is the centrality of the ceremonial and ethical implications of holiness that is

clear from the biblical and historical perspectives. The Old Testament with its ceremonial or external emphasis on holiness broadened the term in such a way that all of life set apart for God. There was no distinction between the leaders or individual's responsibility to God and the people or society's accountability to God. Everything and every one had to live in obedience to God. From the Old Testament it is also clear that human beings was unable to live up to the demands set by God in the law and something else was needed to change peoples hearts towards God's demand for holiness. From the New Testament it is clear that Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law with his demand on a love for God that comes from the heart. In a sense was the call for holiness based on an internal change that would enable human beings to be obedient to God. The history of the Church shows in each period how certain groups emphasized a ceremonial holiness that later cause others to call for a more internal experience of holiness that is reflected on the outside.



From the history of the holiness movement that can be regarded as a forerunner of the Pentecostal Movement is clear that their emphasis on personal repentance, an encounter with God, a Bible-centered morality and a practical sanctification was the result of challenges that threatened the holiness of the church. Sanctification would enable the believers to live a morally perfect life. Another group that can be regarded as forerunners for the AFMSA, the Zionists, made these injunctions to holiness more practical by emphasizing some taboos such as the drinking of alcohol, smoking of tobacco, the eating of pork, use of medicine and total separation from the world and the world's churches.

The AFMSA is sometimes perceived to be very critical of the ceremonial approach in some church traditions to the holiness of the church where people are confessing Christians in the church on Sundays but on Mondays they abuse their farm workers or do things that is contrary to their confession about the holiness of the church. At the same time can the AFMSA also be criticised for their extremism when they become so strict with

certain dressing codes like in some churches where a woman is not allowed to pray or preach if she does not wear a hat or wear pants. In other cases you are not allowed to become pastor or church member if you are divorced. On the other hand can holiness not be confined only to the heart or be experienced internally.

Another element that has serious implications for the vision of holiness in the AFMSA is suggested in the last sentence. From the biblical and historical perspectives it is clear that the sacred and the secular cannot be separated but at the same time can they not be seen as supplement for each other. A biblical perspective of holiness makes it clear that God wants obedience in all spheres of life, which mean that God cannot be isolated or left out of anything in the world. The question that can be asked is, what is in the world that does not belong to God? From the history of the world it is clear that there are forces that belongs to God but are not willing to obey or submit to God. It implies that there is a continuous struggle between the sacred, what is set apart for God and the secular, that which rebels against God. The challenge for the church is to declare and work towards a world that is holy to God in all spheres of life.

It is clear that the early Pentecostals wanted to bring every sphere of life under God's rule. In their efforts to be holy they were sometimes misunderstood and has been regarded as sects. It eventually led to a withdrawal from society that consequently birthed a holiness that does not consider the betterment of the world. The main idea was rather to be removed from the world as far possible and be prepared for the coming of the bridegroom, the soon coming King Jesus Christ. If the AFMSA wants to be apostolic in the true sense of the word, their message and ministry should reflect a holiness that is catholic.

This brings us to another element that challenges the vision and structure of the AFMSA, the fact that the church is seen to be holy and sinful at the same time. From the biblical and historical perspectives it became clear

that the holiness of the church is a status given by the Triune God but that the church do not always live up to that standard. It is clear that there were many efforts by individuals and groups to explain the fact that the church is both a communion of saints and a communion of sinners.

Hans Küng (1993: 139) is so critical about the holiness of the church that he calls its history “a criminal history”. For him the term means that there is no holy church but only holy ones or saints. It implies that there is no institutional holiness in the New Testament but “an utterly personal holiness, a basic attitude of holiness for each individual, which means a total orientation on the will of the ‘holy God’ himself” (Küng, 1993: 141).

When the early Pentecostals emphasis on sanctification as a second work of grace their intention was to bring the church back to the responsibility lay on every member to live up to the biblical standards of holiness. It was also a reaction to the emphasis placed on the institutionalisation of holiness in the ministry and structures of the church. The AFMSA have decided from the beginning to have a church order that can disciplines its members. It seems as if they accepted from the beginning that the AFMSA is also a community of saints and sinners at the same time. Although the ideal is for members not to do unholy things the vision and structures of the AFMSA allow members to go through a process of discipline and restoration.

It brings us to the last element that is crucial for any vision of holiness in the structure of the AFMSA, the fact that holiness is something that the church already have but which is not yet achieved. The holiness of the church should be expressed visibly according to our biblical and historical perspectives. It is proposed that the holiness of the church should be seen in the lives of the members and in the structures of the church. The members are able to express it because it is made possible by the God through the power of the Holy Spirit that works in the lives of every member of the body of Christ. The church through certain forms of solidarity for example expresses this with the lowly, most vulnerable, poor persons in

society. When the church acts in solidarity they should keep in mind that holiness will only be complete when God makes all things new.

This places a responsibility on all churches to strive for the hallowing of this world through the power and the grace of the Triune God. The challenge for the AFMSA is to be aware of the fact that its perception of holiness is shared with other Christian traditions and that both their contributions are needed for the moral renewal of society today.



CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ONE CHURCH?

INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, I examined the concepts of vision and structure as well as their practicality for my study of the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA. I also gained an understanding of the nature of the church from the Bible and the various ways in which different communities of faith in history institutionalised it.

In Chapter two, I give a short discussion on the importance of the marks of the church and started with the mark of apostolicity to comment on the different biblical and historical views on it. The meaning of the term, having a direct link with the apostles as the ones sent with a message, does not bring so many questions as the question asked today: Who represents the true meaning of apostolicity? The origin of the term in the lives of the first twelve disciples and the meaning acquired during the course of history provide interesting insight into the vision of what the term signifies to an apostolic church. My study suggested the possibility that the present generation can speak and act with the same authority as the past generations of Christians. At the same time, my study warns against the danger of destroying the charismatic value of the ministry by an overemphasis on hierarchical and manipulative leadership structures that are based on apostolic principles, which are foreign to the biblical nature of this mark.

Chapter three deals with the mark of holiness and concludes that it is both a gift from God to the church, but at the same time, has provided it with a task to perform in every generation. It has become clear that some generations needed to be more diligent about this mark of the church due to the fallen nature of their societies. It is significant that this more diligent

pursuit of holiness always preceded a revival. Holiness has caused much division in the church over the past centuries and what was supposed to be a gift sometimes became the church's worst nightmare due to a "holier than thou" attitude.

This chapter deals with the mark of oneness. It first describes the understanding of unity within the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. Second is the biblical foundation for the unity of the church and the historical development of the mark. Last is the conclusion that summarises the important elements and applies them to my Pentecostal, AFMSA tradition.

4.1 The AFM and unity

For the last thirty years, the AFMSA have struggled with the issue of church unity due to the separation that was caused by the influence of racial segregation in the church from its origin at the beginning of the twentieth century. When it was announced that the AFMSA committed themselves to the revision of the constitution, policies, procedures and all structures so that all will have freedom to fulfil their calling within the mission of the AFMSA, a history of racial discrimination and unequal distribution of resources and leadership had to be revised.

For the last eight years of unity in all structures on a local, regional and national level in the AFMSA, various people tried to narrate and evaluate critically the nature and form of our newly found unity. In the next few paragraphs different Pentecostal theologians that can give us an understanding of the unity of the church from a Pentecostal perspective describe some relevant events and developments. In the following paragraphs the role of the Bible in a Pentecostal understanding of unity in the church will be described from *The Dogmatic handbook of the AFMSA Theological College* and the final report of the dialogue between the Pentecostals and Roman Catholics that was held between 1977-1982.

The Dogmatic handbook of the AFMSA Theological College describes the marks of the church as the spirit and attitude of Christ that become visible in the church. If that does not happen a church cannot be seen as the church of Jesus Christ. The basis of the church's unity is the unity between the Father and Christ (John 17: 20, 22). Apostle Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 1:13 whether Christ is divided and answers that the unity of the believers exists in the fact that those who are part of Christ are united in His body (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13).

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul calls on the believers to strive seriously for the protection of the unity in the Spirit through the bond of peace (4: 4-6). In this passage, the unity of the one body is expressed in the fact that all the members are part of the one body and live in harmony, peace and love (Colossians 3: 14-15; 1 John 4:20). The Spirit that dwells in me is the same Spirit that is in my brothers and sisters because we have received the same new birth from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; John 3:3). As born-again people we all live from the same source and life, which is Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of Christ, which is in every believer and every believer in Him (John 14:20). The church also stands under the one hope to which all the believers are called and on which they hope. The church stands under the one Lord who is the Head from, in, and for whom they exist, who possesses and controls their lives.

Because all believers believe the same Gospel they share the same faith and stand in the same relationship with God. This means that the believers are all in the faith and consequently, fellow-believers or without the faith and separated from each other. We are one because we are all baptized into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The water-baptism is the visible expression and confirmation of that unity in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). As believers, we are brothers and sisters because we have the same God and Father who are in us , over us, and work through all of us. All believers, from all times and places,

are included in this unity and that is why the church can transcend all boundaries and differences whether these are nationality, language, culture, class, sex and distance. The conclusion reached on the unity of the church is, that it stand above everything else (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3: 28; Colossians 3:11).

The reality proves that the church does not always reveal the unity it has in Christ for we see the opposite. The division in the church can be seen in the quarrels and group-formations prevalent in the church according to 1 Corinthians 1:11-12. Sometimes, these can be the result of an over-emphasis of differences between communities for personal, political and socio-economic gains (James 2:1-9; 4: 1-3). It is a fact that sin does not just bring differences and divisions, but that it also make differences bigger so that those who do not have love and patience will use the opportunity to emphasize their lack of love and impatience to create more conflict. People who have such a polemical attitude do not witness to a spiritual maturity in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). They need to become more intimate with Christ so that all can find each other in Him.

In the community of believers, there is also room for diversity, which means in brief, that the unity is not the composition of many forms of diversity, but exists as a diversity that develops from the unity. There is a diversity of ministries because one member cannot fulfill all service, and (1 Corinthians 12: 12-30), a diversity of the sexes does not mean that members cease to exist as male and female but rather that such diversity is affirmed and regarded as holy (1 Corinthians 11:1-16; 14:34; Ephesians 5:22-29). The Bible also respects the diversity of nationalities, language and cultures but the church cannot force people to accept things foreign to their language, cultures and customs (Acts 15). The diversity of work relationships is also not ended in the Bible but that does not eradicate the equality that all members have in the Body of Christ (Matthew 23: 37-41; 25:14-30; Luke 17:7-10; Philemon 3-16). Geographical distance is also one of the

contributors to the diversity in the church and sometimes makes it difficult to have one external organized structure.

All the differences and diversities are transcended by the unity because of the fact that it is a work of grace by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people. This is sometimes difficult to perceive visibly and cannot always be structured so that true unity will only be manifested at the end when Christ is going to be reconciled with His bride the church. The unity of the church is on the other hand, necessary for the integrity of the witness of the church in the world (John 17:20). It is necessary that all believers should show in word and deed that their unity transcends all doctrinal, legalistic, traditional, denominational and personal differences. This unity is demonstrated when we recognize each other as fellow- Christians, honor, accept, and praise the good in each other. The Lord's Supper can also be used as a way to demonstrate this unity. Only those who's teaching and lives do not correspond to the unity will bring a judgment on them before God (1 Corinthians 11:27-31).



The final report of the Roman Catholic- Pentecostal Dialogue, also describes the role of the Bible with regards to the unity of the church. Both groups believe that there is only one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, made of all believers (Ephesians 4:4-6). The difference between them is over the understanding of the one church and of the way in which people can belong to it. The Roman Catholic position is that denominations not established on the basis of love and who have divergence in the matters of faith lack the unity of the one church. The Pentecostal position is that denominations are manifestations of the one universal church and their legitimacy lies in the acceptance of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture

The distinction between an invisible undivided church and a divided visible church based on the teaching of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13: 24-30) can lead to misunderstanding and both groups agree that the teaching cannot be used to justify and reinforce separation between Christians. Both

groups accept that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity in diversity and not division (1 Corinthians 12:13). The essential unity of the church is not uniformity for it allows diversity that is forged by the Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 12:12).” The unity which the Spirit gives must not be identified simply with like-mindedness, sociological compatibility or the felt need for togetherness” (PNEUMA, Fall 1990).

Cecil Robeck (1998: 341), a Pentecostal theologian who was an active participant in the Roman-Catholic Pentecostal dialogue, argues that the Pentecostal Movement started in the power of the Holy Spirit to foster visible Christian unity. The issue whether the Pentecostal Movement and also the AFMSA have quenched the Spirit and its activity in the life of their members and structures with regard to unity is still relevant in the AFMSA today. To limit the issue of unity only to racism can make the understanding of unity too narrow, but because it is the clearest example of the way in which the unity created by the Spirit was undermined it is best to start there.



According to Cecil Robeck (1998: 340) there seems to be no shared vision of unity between Christians but rather the proliferation of division or the careful construction and maintenance of ever higher boundaries between us in the name of purity (2 Corinthians 6:17), with no discernable recognition or acknowledgement of the need for co-operation between us, to say nothing of reconciliation. He sees the contribution of Pentecostals to this vision of unity as a contrast between the later vision of unity and the way earlier leaders behaved. What these earlier leaders wanted to achieve to restore this apostolic faith once delivered to the Christian church was broken off by sectarian positions, attitudes and behaviours. Instead of maintaining relationships with older churches that their message of Pentecost may be heard they compromised it by "external condemnations and internal discord". Pentecostals contributed thus to the divisions in the Christian church and by "ignoring lessons which could have been learned

from the historic churches the Pentecostal Movement has not lived up to its potential, nor has it achieved the hopes and dreams of its pioneers.”

Robeck (1998: 344-346) distinguishes between three groups that work towards ecumenism. The first group is those who either have the church as a single “*oikos*” or household or an extended family idea. To them a visible unity shared by all Christians in an organic or organizational form is very important.

The second group is those more concerned about an action-oriented approach that takes human integrity seriously. They are driven by their Christian conviction to work for social justice against poverty and other things that threaten humanity. They respect the integrity of other religions and cultures; see the world, as a global village and the way Christians must live in a pluralistic setting. This has implications for evangelisation and makes room for alternative views on salvation. The third group is committed to the idea that ecumenism should not stop with the church or humanity, but must take creation into account, which is plagued by human sin and greed. They are concerned with stewardship of the earth.

Robeck (1998: 346-350) addresses the relationship of Pentecostals with the World Council of Churches and the Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue. On the relationship with the WCC, he first highlights the importance of the last ecumenical creed namely the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) and its acceptance by the Eastern and Western churches. He then explains the efforts of the Council to bring Christians to a common faith and states that there are four areas of interest, which are the nature and task of the WCC as a fellowship of churches, the role of the WCC in the one ecumenical movement, and steps towards an integrating ecumenical vision. He concludes that Pentecostals are already contributing to this effort by co-operation with other believers on issues such as justice, peace, ecology and others.

There are many theories about the origin of the Pentecostal movement in South Africa and especially its view on unity. It is clear that Isak Burger (2000: 4) adheres to the providential theory with his view that the AFMSA did not start with a religious leader but with the Holy Spirit. This argument he supports by saying that the AFMSA started as a fresh move of the Spirit and not with a structure. He states that the people who were attracted to the AFM were more interested in spreading the Gospel, ministering to people and seeing souls saved than in a complicated structure. The question that is raised by this view is whether the disunity of the AFMSA should be accepted as a form of disobedience to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew Clark and Henry Lederle used the historical approach in their book, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology*. In this book they strongly argue for the historical link between certain revival movements in history and opt especially for the Holiness roots of the Pentecostal movement. Clark and Lederle (1989: 9) state, that “from the point of view of historical continuity, however, Pentecost can only be clearly linked to the Holiness movement (there can be little doubt that existing holiness congregations supplied many of the members and at times even the infrastructure for early Pentecost e.g. Dowie’s Zion Christian Church in South Africa), and to revivalism, in spirit at least”.

The multicultural and functional approach is used by Lapoorta to analyse the origins of the Azusa Street Mission of William Seymour and the AFMSA. He argues that both movements originated as a non-racial, non-sexist Body of Christ where all believers formed the priesthood and shared in the ministry. The paradigm that was set by God at Azusa was shattered by the racism practiced by the Spirit-filled born again believers.

Lapoorta describes the story of unity, disunity and the struggle for unity in his book, *Unity or Division? The unity struggle of the black churches within the Apostolic Faith Mission* (1996). He also wrote an article, “The united

AFM of SA: a case study” in the book, *Essays and Exercises in Ecumenism* (Lombaard (editor), 1999: 245-255). Another article entitled “Unity or division: a case study of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa” was published in the book, *Globalisation of Pentecostalism* (Dempster, 1998: 151-169).

Lapoorta (1999: 252) argues that the divine intention for the Pentecostal Movement as a whole was expressed in the Azusa Street Revival and repeated in Doornfontein at the formation of the AFMSA. He argues that the misuse of Scripture was responsible for the building up of the previously broken-down walls of separation. It was the retrieval of the Azusa Street Revival paradigm as a hermeneutical key to understand Scripture that led blacks in the struggle for unity. The intention, will, and the purpose of God for Pentecostalism were revealed and manifested at Azusa.



Lapoorta (1999: 253) offers different points of departure in hermeneutics for blacks who believed that unity should start with the changing of structures and the promulgation of laws that would reverse the imbalances of the past and eradicate ethnicity and other forms of discrimination and oppression in the AFMSA. For blacks, liberation means to be free from inferiority, shame and complacency that were instilled by the system of apartheid. The point of departure for whites was that unity should start in the hearts of people and then affect laws and structures. He believes that whites need to be liberated from what he calls a false sense of superiority. For him this is crucial because it will lead to the reorientation of the black and white mind about blackness. Blacks will be enabled to affirm their human dignity and whites to accept the black roots and leadership of the movement. Lapoorta (1996: 254) concludes by saying that “ the achievement of unity between black and white AFM churches should, however, not be the ultimate goal of the struggle described above. This is because the prayer of the Lord is that the whole church in the whole world should be one. The united AFM,

therefore, should actively work towards greater unity of the church both nationally and internationally”.

The unification process of the AFMSA has been very fragile since 1996. Burger, who became the first president of a truly united AFMSA, wrote that much spiritual energy was lost over the years due to the disunity. He pleaded for the church as a “loving community” where people are not forced to be one, but one through the blood of Jesus. He called on whites not to be afraid of the unity because the blacks were the fruit of their evangelism and mission labours. Although this sounded very paternalistic at that time, it was his intention to reassure the white section how needed they are in the unity process. He warned them also that if they would not unite, they would become marginalized with less influence in the new South Africa.

Frank Chikane (1996: 4) wrote also that the AFM, through her unity, regained her credibility as an instrument of God to bring the message of salvation. In the past (before unification), the church had to go into partnership with other organizations to do missionary work, but could now enter the arena as a church with honour and integrity. For him, the unity act of April 1996 has given the AFM a new face in South Africa to show in our broken society, a miracle of God’s healing and restoration. The AFMSA could now spread the Gospel in partnership and share their resources. They could now also share their gifts with other churches, and this sharing has ecumenical implications. He concludes that the AFMSA must also have a holistic view of people in their mission perspective.

Burger (1996: 4) continued this holistic approach by saying that the church should care for both the souls and the physical, material needs of the people because it is in that sense, the church will proclaim the full Gospel. M van der Merwe (2001: 13) concludes that the AFM did not perform well as a national church on social issues before 2001. He documented a project that was part of a local assembly’s social outreach program and

proposed that the AFMSA, which has the numbers, become involved in projects with a national character such as land restitution, housing, education, crime, etc.

At the Workers' Council of June 2000, Dr Burger (2000: 5) strongly appealed to the church for a more accommodating structure. His argument was based on the understanding that the biblical idea of spontaneous networking is better than the self-made structures of the church. He traced this back to the origins of the Pentecostal Movement and especially the AFM. He argued that the traditional structures upholding most of the denominations often undermine the unity and co-operation that the church was striving for. He called strongly for an apostolic networking amongst pastors and churches that is based on father-and-son relationships. At that time, many of the pastors were leaving the church because they did not feel accommodated by the structures anymore. The purpose of the apostolic networking was thus to facilitate relationships and create a space for alternative structures in the AFMSA.



With the acceptance of the apostolic networking now described as the “non-geographic regions”, criteria were formulated to protect the church from unhealthy intentions and forms of networking. Some of these criteria were vision, loyalty, relationships, functions, language and culture and the confession of faith. Without going into detail, I would like to mention that people could not form a network for reasons of race, language, personal relationships and culture. They had to give proof of their loyalty to the AFM, demonstrate that their vision was not accommodated in the AFM regions, and give an undertaking that they would remain liable to the AFM

The former white church that had become frustrated under the leadership of black regional committees, mostly created the networks that were formed after the acceptance of networking by the entire church. The impression developed that the non-geographic regions provided an escape route for the whites for which the unity, for various reasons, did not bring

what they hoped for. In 2002, the national leadership decided to place a moratorium on the formation of any new regions because the non-geographic regions undermined the unity of the AFMSA. Many thought that the idea of dissolving the denominational structures could bring more spontaneous networks of fellowship. Others felt that the denominational structures on all levels were the fruit of long discussions and debates. Perhaps, we need to restore the vision of the New Testament and Pentecostal movements to bring visible Christian unity that actually starts at home. Van der Merwe (2001: 13) argues that the structural unity of the AFM did not guarantee true, biblical unity amongst believers.

In this section, the main emphasis is to outline and analyse the centrality of unity in the roots of the Pentecostal Movement and the struggle towards that vision within the AFMSA for the last thirty years. The intention is also to comment on the newly found unity in the structures of the AFMSA and the fact that the struggle for unity still continues amongst assemblies in the AFMSA and with other Christian churches. The fact that the AFMSA is part of the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council Of Churches shows the commitment that Pentecostals have towards the unity of the church. In the next section the role of the Bible in the unity of the church is described. It is of interest that all contributors use the same texts on which to base their analysis of unity.

4.1 THE BIBLE AND UNITY

In the section that describes the role, which the Bible takes when one, study the doctrine of the church; reference was made to certain metaphors that illustrate the oneness of the church. From the images of the church as the People of God and the Body of Christ it was established that the continuity between the community in the Old Testament and the New Testament is based on the Oneness of God. This section is an analysis of the understanding of unity as it is recorded in the Old and New Testaments

Unity in the Old Testament and Judaism

Most contributors refer to the origin of unity in the Old Testament but jump immediately to a New Testament foundation for the church's unity. This section first deals with the origin of unity, disunity and the hope for the restoration of unity in Judaism as a basis for the New Testament understanding of unity. Characteristic of Judaism was the monotheistic belief that there is only one common origin and one Lord that has made the world into a unity (Psalm 97:5/ Micah 14:13/ Zechariah 4:14; 16:5). Israel viewed God as one (Deuteronomy 6: 4) and with that they did not refer to any formal numerical details, but to the uniqueness of God (Theron, 1978: 14). In the oneness of God there was no division or tension because it is part of Gods nature. In the unqualified oneness of the Creator lies the unity of creation that also includes its diversity. The unity of creation can also be called shalom, a state of wholeness (Genesis 1) that stands over against sickness (Isaiah 38: 17; 53:5; Jeremiah 33:6), division (Exodus 18: 23; Judges 4: 17) and includes the material and spiritual welfare. The term shalom also implies where the relationship of humans to God, neighbours, themselves, nature and the structures in which they live are according to the will of the Creator they experience peace (Theron, 1978: 17).

The Old Testament idea of unity is mostly understood in terms of Gods dealings with Israel as a nation. From a Jewish viewpoint, the unity of the world means that everything must conform to the Will of the Creator (Hanson, S; 1946: 7). The reality that the world is disunited and no longer subject to one God is because of the opposition between God and the worship of idols (Exodus 34:14/ 2 Kings 23:13/ Jeremiah 2:11). The people's cleaving to different gods brings also disruption between peoples (Genesis 11:1-9). The Old Testament Jews had a religious motive for the restoration of the unity of the cosmos based on God's supremacy. It was accepted that the unity would be realized in future, but that it would be

conditioned by Israel. It was the mission of Israel to preserve unity and prepare its final realization.

The unity of the people (Jews) corresponded to the unity of God (Exodus 20:2; 19:5/ Deuteronomy 5:6/ Haggai 3). This unity was strengthened by the temple cult in Israel, which created unity amongst the people in three ways: the Temple with its cult and priesthood was a sign of the internal and external national and religious unity of the people (Deuteronomy 12/ Isaiah 6). The temple cult is also unifying because it makes the people appear as a collective unit and it creates unity by presenting a force to exterminate sin, Satan and other destructive forces and it thus anticipates the eschatological unity. The Law unified the people, but disunity also occurred among them. There was a schism between the Pharisees, the representatives of the exclusive legal piety and the Sadducees, the orthodox clerical aristocracy. Division also occurred between the Pharisees who were pious and the ordinary people, the sinners who did not have the knowledge to live by the Law (Hanson, 1946: 10-17).



The antagonism between the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the Diaspora or dispersion of the Jews threatened the unity amongst the people of God. The unity of the people was broken because they did not live anymore as the only people in a country that worshipped one God. In spite of all this, the eschatological hope was still alive that there would be a restoration of unity at the end of time. The idea was that unity is potentially given to the people of Israel, but the actualisation of unity lies in the future. It will only be at the end of time when the Messiah comes that the Kingdom of God is established and the enemies will be destroyed and the original unity will be restored.

In the Kingdom of God, Yahweh will be the only God and there will be no other gods (Zechariah 14:9/ Wisdom 14:11). The disruption of the people will disappear and all will be united under one king (Isaiah 2:4/ 9:5). The opposition of the people will be eliminated, the people will be gathered

again and Satan will be destroyed (Isaiah 24:21; 27:1). A universal resurrection is expected (Ezra 6:27).

Unity in the New Testament

It is clear from the New Testament that the eschatological people of God from the Old Testament became realized in the *ekklesia* of the New Testament (Theron, 1978: 39). The name Israel was used only once for the church (Galatians 6: 16) while the formula, "I will be their God and they will be my people" is used more often for the church (2 Corinthians 6: 16; Hebrews 8: 10; Revelations 21: 3). Some of the other terminology used for the church from the Old Testament are the *saints* in Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 9: 13, 32 with Exodus 19: 16; Leviticus 11: 44; Psalms 16: 3. The church is also called the *chosen ones* in Romans 8: 33; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1 like in Deuteronomy 7: 6; 1 Kings 3:8; Isaiah 14: 1. The church is also known as *the called* in Romans 1:6; 8: 28 like in Isaiah 41: 9; 42 6. Some of the terms from the Old Testament is combined with the idea of the *people of God* in 1 Peter 2:9 and applied to church (Theron, 1978: 40).

The unity of the church is founded on the unity and uniqueness of God. The uniqueness of Israel as a people of God in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 33: 29) was a result of Gods oneness, which has chosen them as Gods property (Amos 3:2), not as a people amongst the nations but from the nations (Theron, 1978: 47). The unity of the church is thus not the same as any worldly ideal that strive towards unity (like unity is strength), but it should be undivided and unbroken. The diversity in the church should not threaten the diversity (1 Corinthians 12: 12) because when its harmony is replaced by chaos than the true character of the church as the people of God, who is a God of peace and not disorder, is lost (Theron, 1978: 48).

The church exists as a *unity in origin* because it discovers deepest unity in the Trinitarian being of God (Heyns, 1980: 114). The church has one God

and Father who from eternity has decided on its existence and willed, chosen, called and carried out His plan for them. The Father has done this through the Son, who as the Head of the Church redeemed it and reigns over it. The church must take the shape of Christ in the world because it exists in Him (Galatians 4:19/ Romans 8:9; 14:8/ 1 Corinthians 15:18/ 2 Corinthians 5:14-15). The unity of the church is a result of the role of Christ as mediator who asked Saul, “why do you persecute me” (Acts 9:4). Jesus died to unite the scattered children of God (John 11: 52) so that the one shepherd has only one flock (John 10: 16). The unity of the church lies in the fact that Christ is not divided according to 1 Corinthians 1:13 (Theron, 1978: 48).

The Son did not do this apart from the Holy Spirit who dwells in all members who share in the benefits of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 12:12 (Heyns, 1980: 15). It is the Holy Spirit that incorporates the members into one body so that the diversity of gifts given by the same Spirit does not compete with the unity (1 Corinthians 12:14). It is the fact that the Spirit resides in the church that makes it the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16) so that division in the church can rightfully be called from the flesh according to 1 Corinthians 3: 4 (Theron, 1978: 49). A clear warning is given to those who destroy the temple of God through schisms (1 Corinthians 3: 17). Theron (1978: 50) concludes that the one God implies one people, the one Head one body and the one Spirit implies one temple. For him the eschatological fulfillment of the covenant, “*I will be your God and you will be my people*”, can only happen when the church become one.

The *unity of calling* is very important for the church because it has one God who has called the people (Ephesians 4:1/ 1 Corinthians 1:24/ Judah 1). They are called to community in Christ (Romans 8:30/ 2 Timothy 1:9) and share the heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1/ Ephesians 4:4). This is expressed in a *unity of fellowship* where the one God (Deuteronomy 6:4/ Isaiah 45:18/ Jeremiah 10:6) reconciles the world to the one Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14; 18:3/ 1 John 4:9) and are all gathered by the Holy Spirit who is the

one in fullness and abundance of gifts (Ephesians 4:4). The three persons are one and so is the gathering of the members. The members can have fellowship with one another at the Lord's Supper where they share in the one bread and cup (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17) and submit to one discipline. They have fellowship in suffering (Hebrews 10:33), in consolation (1 Corinthians 1:7), in adversity and endurance (Revelation 1:9), in intercession for one another (Ephesians 6:18/ Romans 8:26; 15:30/ 1 Thessalonians 5:25) and mutual care (1 Corinthians 12:26) (Heyns, 1980: 119).

It is also a *unity in essence and confession*. The church needs to confess verbally and publicly what it is in essence. The church confesses that it is Christ the Son of the living God (1 Corinthians 1:2/ Acts 9:14) that builds His church (Matthew 16:18). Although there are doctrinal, liturgical, cultic and historical differences amongst churches they believe themselves to be the one Body of Christ on earth (1 Corinthians 12:12) (Heyns, 1980: 117). This is expressed in the *unity of witness* by the propagation and proclamation of the confession about which the church must not be silent. This results in the *unity of service* that is determined by the service of Christ (Matthew 20:28). The church can be described as a community of those who serve the needy (Acts 11:29/ 2 Corinthians 9:1/ 1 Peter 4:10). The church also serves those outside of it (Romans 12:20/ Galatians 6:10) and is concerned with the individual and social need of people (Heyns, 1980: 119).

It is clear from this section on the role of the Bible that any contemporary view of the unity of the church should understand its roots in the oneness and uniqueness of God in the Old Testament and the result of God's nature on the calling of Israel as the chosen people of God. It is clear that this eschatological people of God was continued in the church who are rooted in the Trinitarian being of God that is one and unique. This implies that the church is one in origin, calling, fellowship, confession and service. It implies that there is room for diversity but not for division because it is against the

nature of God, who is a God of shalom, wholeness. In the next section the historical insights on the unity of the church will be described with the help of theologians from diverse confessional backgrounds.

4.3 THE HISTORY OF UNITY IN THE CHURCH

In this section the question that must be answered is whether the vision of the AFMSA to be one church, is in line with the historical insights that developed around the mark of unity in the church. The first part of this section will concentrate on the development of this mark in the four major periods of the church and great use will be made of Martin Marty's contribution. In the second part theologians from diverse theological and confessional traditions in the twentieth century will be used like Karl Barth, Hans Kung, Jurgen Moltmann, Louise Berkhof, Howard Snyder, Peter Hodgson, Dirkie Smit, Brian Gaybba, Jaap Durand, and Phillip Theron to assess the mark.



With regards to oneness in the Early Church, Martin Marty (1989: 18) asks whether it was Jesus' intention to establish the church. His conclusion is that most critics discern in the records of Jesus' ministry an intention for a new society that will continue His proclamation in succeeding years. Marty regards the wrongful division of the church as the most offensive sin in Christian history and the failure to work for reunion and healing as the greatest neglect. The end of the apostolic generation brought the emergence of an ideal for the church and an outline of its shape and life. It was the Spirit of God that moved individuals and movements in history to recapture this vision of the divine purpose, which Christians have seen in the founding of the church.

During the Middle Ages, an institutionalised and juridical structure became the primary embodiment and guarantee of unity. In the eleventh century, the visible and living unity that characterized these structures was brought to an end by the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches. The

political factors that can be regarded as major reasons for this schism must be sought in the transference of the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople and the identification of the eastern churches with the Byzantine Empire under Basil as the lawgiver of the church. In the West, the foundation of a single organized Latin church system under the bishop of the old imperial capital and their leaning towards converted barbarian kings as well as the crowning of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor made the Eastern churches feel betrayed. Cultural and religious factors like the different languages of the Eastern and Western Churches led to intellectual and cultural isolationism on both sides as well as innumerable misunderstandings even in matters of theological terminology.

Theological factors, which contributed to the schism, were the contrast between the mainly contemplative and monastic theology of the East and the more rational and scholarly approach of the West. The primacy and infallibility of the pope came to be promulgated as dogma to embody all the differences between the East and the West. Küng (1971: 279) concludes from this that both the Latin and Greek churches “have at any rate reason enough, as far as their past history is concerned, to take a critical look at themselves and try to find a way towards a new communion”. Marty (1989: 108) asserts that church life did not die with the schism between East and West and that the East had better warrants for continuity and tradition that are more catholic and apostolic.

Marty sees the contribution of Martin Luther as that which has torn the “vineyard”. Through his apostolic teaching, Luther shook the unity and catholicity of the Roman Catholic Church. Küng (1971: 280) describes his contribution as not “concerned simply with the fight against the indescribable abuses of the church and with gaining independence from the papacy ” but “ the need for the Church to return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its original testimony in Holy Scripture”. The unity of the church that Luther hoped to reform had been destroyed and the schism between the Protestants led to more divisions in the church. Smit (2005: 250)

comments that divisions occurred after the Reformation, which have led to the formation of national and people's churches with their own confessions of faith to enhance unity. Unity from this perspective was achieved on a regional and national level, but also led to further divisions.

In the nineteenth century, churches were seen as free associations where individuals could organize themselves around their communal convictions, needs, language and colour of skin to the exclusion of others. The result of this was the formation of denominations and the ecumenical endeavours to create visible unity on all levels (Smit, 2002: 250). Marty (1989: 278) sees this as the first time since the sixteenth century that Christians became worried about their divisions. He states that "they claimed to have a Gospel that unites as it frees, but at the same time, produced many versions of the unity that make Christianity looked like a lie or its professors as faithless". He regards the origin of the ecumenical movement as a profound theological recovery to make this era the most theologically conscious era since the Reformation.



Küng (1971: 270) also praises the admirable work of the World Council of Churches for unity and calls for the active support by churches, but he points out that the Council itself is not a church. The churches of the World Council form a disunited plurality of churches, which are all seeking the unity of the one church. It is stated in *Confessing the one faith* (1991: 238) published by the World Council of Churches, that there is one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism and one church. Christians are called to manifest their unity in Christ by oneness in the apostolic faith and the sacramental life. The sharing of the one mission implies that the church should have communion in the one ministry and common prayer. It is further stated that unity does not imply uniformity but is an organic bond of unity among all the local churches, comprising a richness of diversities.

Karl Barth (1971: 671) states that it was essential to the church, from the very beginning and it always will be, to represent unity in itself and to exist

in it. He states “that is why it has always read the Old Testament with the New and the Old before the New, as the attestation of the one work and the one revelation of the one God. That is why from the very first, it has thought of itself as the church of Jews and Gentiles and to that extent as the ‘Israel of God’ (Galatians 6:16), as ‘all Israel’ (Romans 11:26). To try to deny this unity would be to deny Jesus Christ himself” (Barth, 1971: 671). He argues that the unity of the church is guaranteed by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and not by another synod or episcopal structure. He strongly believes that the people of Israel in history and the Christian Church as it came into being on the day of Pentecost are two forms and aspects that Jesus Christ brought together. The community that the Christian churches share is a single unity, but one can speak of it as being historically existent in the plurality of the churches. It is thus possible to understand and explain historically the separation and opposition of such churches but there is no justification, theological, spiritual or biblical for such a plurality of churches. He states “a plurality of churches in this sense means a plurality of lords, a plurality of spirits, a plurality of gods” (Barth, 1971: 275). The church then derives practically what it confesses theoretically - the unity and the singularity of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. He calls every division a deep riddle, a scandal for Christendom. One can be called a good Roman Catholic, Reformed Orthodox, Baptist (and one could add Pentecostal) but then one is not necessarily a good Christian. It is thus impossible to exclude some communities there and have a unity here.

He is against an escape from the visible divided church to the unity of an invisible church. No matter how disunited the church is, where two or three are gathered in his Name, the Lord is present (Mt 18:20). The church must abide by the truth of the Gospel, but where the truth is sacrificed to love and peace, we are not on the way to the one church. The church, wherever it exists, cannot accept any bastions of separation but must allow Jesus Christ genuinely to speak and to rule and to subject the church to his guidance, instruction and direction. He must be allowed to be Lord of the church.

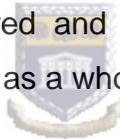
Küng (1971: 272) argues that the disunity and rivalry amongst churches contributes to the failure of the Christian mission in the world and that it causes people to become alienated by the church. He states that it is the will of God, God who is the foundation of the church, that the church must be one. Christ who reconciles the church with God and man and women with each other is the basis of the church's unity, so that the local and universal church are one church, one People of God, one Body of Christ and one Creation of the Spirit. He concludes that the unity of the church is thus a spiritual unity.

He answers the question whether the multiplicity of churches can be a bad thing by saying that the unity of the church presupposes a common life shared by all local churches. The one church is manifested in the multiplicity of churches, present in the multiplicity of regional churches and the coincidences and dispersions in the multiplicity of types of churches. This presupposes that the church flourishes anew in her diversity. This diversity is expressed in worship, in theology, and in church order. His conclusion is that the different historical forms of the one church should recognise one another as legitimate, and then have fellowship together. Küng continues to warn the churches against the justification of any abnormal separation that is a scandal and a disgrace. He evaluates certain evasions that are sometimes used by the church to justify the separation. The first evasion deals with the retreat from a disunited visible church to an undivided invisible church (Küng, 1971: 281). He totally rejects such a position as superficial spiritual dualism that can give no proof of invisible unity to the unbeliever.

The second evasion used by the church is to see the divisions in the church as a normal, divinely intended postponement of unity that will be fulfilled in the eschaton. He rejects this position on the basis that there is no justification for the wrong human decisions. A third evasion is to regard the different churches as three or four great branches of the one tree, but Küng

(1971: 282) argues that we can only speak of one church when we can pray, hear the Word, confess our faith and share our meal together. The last evasion is to explain the schism by saying that there is only one empirical church identical with the church of Jesus Christ. He regards such an argument as an overestimation of the self and a sign of self-conceit, self-righteousness and impenitence on the side of the church.

As a solution to the challenge of plurality of churches and the threat of division in the church, Küng (1971: 285) pleads that the task facing the church should move from a self-critical investigation of the roots of the division to a common confession of our common guilt. He offers certain theological principles that can guide the church in the task ahead. The churches must recognise the existing common ecclesial reality and find the desired common ecclesial reality. The work for unity must start in one's own church but always with the other churches in mind. The truth must not be sacrificed but rediscovered and the standard for unity must be the Gospel of Jesus Christ taken as a whole.



Moltmann (1977: 342) is another twentieth century theologian who contributes to a particular understanding of the oneness of the church. He describes the unity of the church as a unity in freedom that is experienced first of all in the assembled congregation that gathers for baptism (Ephesians 4:5/ 1 Corinthians 12:13), the Lords supper (1 Corinthians 12:13; 10:17). Such a congregation lives in the spirit of mutual acceptance (Romans 15:7) and maintains the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. People from different socio-cultural and religious origins become friends in the church and forbear one another in love (Ephesians 5:3). He states "the unity of the gathered congregation is visible and experienced in the fellowship of people who are in themselves different".

He explains that the unity in freedom must not be confused with unanimity or uniformity in perception, feeling or morals. Everyone must be accepted with his gifts and tasks, his weaknesses and handicaps so that everyone is

free to deal with others and be at the disposal of the needy. The unity is also a freedom and diversity. People are not allowed to force their way or their perceptions as a law on others because this threatens the fellowship of people and God. Moltmann (1977: 343) argues that anyone who uses freedom to destroy freedom is not acting in accordance with that freedom. Freedom can be destroyed by both uniformity and pluralism and in the face of these dangers it is best for the committed congregation “to return to the foundation of its unity in diversity and to experience the open fellowship of Christ in his supper”. It is only through the Spirit that unity and diversity can be so intertwined that they do not destroy one another.

Moltmann (1977: 343) continues that every congregation gathered together in one place is one in Christ with every other congregation gathered together in other places and at other times. This requires the congregations to be in solidarity with one another as fellowships in times of persecution (1 Corinthians 12:26) and to recognise one another through their identity in Christ and the common Spirit. Although different types of organisation are needed in the church, the all-important thing is that the fellowship between local churches be presented and organised from below. They can only be fellowships if the members of the churches can gather around the Word and sacrament in unity and freedom in the Spirit.

Lastly, he argues that the unity in freedom is not just a mark of Christ's church but also a confessional mark of the church so that a divided and estranged world may believe (John 17:21). Unity is not just an attribute of the church, but it is also the task of the church to represent the unity of Christ and the Spirit. The unity of Christ is not just with his disciples, but also his unity and fellowship with the oppressed, the humiliated and the forsaken and the church should likewise minister to them. When the church is free from any claims of domination in the society in which it exists, it experiences and lives a practical unity. The unity within the church would be abstract if the church does not discern and accept the political trend of its unity, which is part of its messianic mission (Molmann, 1977: 346).

He also emphasises the political implications of the church's unity in Christ and the world.

Louis Berkhof (1941: 573) wrestles also with the question of the plurality of churches. He asks the question whether the one visible church ought to find expression in a single organisation. He answers it by saying that the Bible does not require that explicitly, and where it was tried, it is shown to be unfeasible and also of questionable worth. When it was tried to unite the church in one great external organisation it led to extremism, ritualism and legalism. Louis Berkhof (1941: 174) contends that the law of differentiation should also be applied to the church.

According to this law, an organisation in its development evolves from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. This is also characteristic of Protestantism that arose from the providential guidance of God and, in a legitimate way, arose in a natural manner to multiformity.



The ideal of the church must always be to have the most adequate expression of external or visible unity. Unity cannot be fabricated into an external union if no inner unity is presented. Then it is an artificial aggregation that seeks to unify natural disparities that have no guarantee against the strife of parties within the aggregation. Louis Berkhof (1941: 574) calls this kind of unity unscriptural because it seeks unity at the expense of truth. He says “unless it changes colour and strives for greater unity in the truth, it will not be productive of real unity but only of uniformity and while it may make the church more efficient from a business point of view, it will not add to the true spiritual efficiency of the church”.

Howard Snyder (1977: 170) is an evangelical theologian who regards the unity of the church as an expression of the Gospel. He describes oneness as a fundamental and essential characteristic of the Gospel, which is the revealed truth of the one God (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 / Mark 12:29-30). He

believes that God is one who provides the foundation for the New Testament emphasis on the unity of the Gospel and of the church (Ephesians 4:4-6). Because there is one Gospel, there is then only one church and any dualistic perspective of an ideal (invisible) and real church (visible) must be rejected as non-biblical. Although the real church is fragmented it is one by nature. When the apostle Paul faced factions in the Corinthian church, he asked, "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:13).

The unity of the church is therefore required as the expression of the Gospel and the church must be one in the Spirit. Snyder (1977: 173) uses the priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 to highlight the importance of unity in the church. He states firstly that the primary purpose of the unity of the church is that God may be glorified (John 17:1 / Ephesians 1:12 / 3:21). The secondary purpose for the unity of the church is the authentic communication of the Good News (John 17:21 / 23). Unity in truth is unity with Christ and thus with the Trinity (17:11, 21). The unity in truth must be grounded in the message and works of the church, and that is more than a mere doctrinal agreement.

Peter Hodgson (1988: 38) wrestles with the historical fact of schism and division and the existential fact of diversity and plurality and concludes that the exigency for unity resides not in scriptural or doctrinal proofs or historical practices, but in Christ. For him a precondition for unity is the recognition of and tolerance of diversity, plurality and difference. The one who cannot tolerate a difference insists on separation in order to preserve a rigid identity.

There are also some South African theologians from different confessional backgrounds that have made some valuable contributions to a fuller understanding of the mark of unity.

Dirkie Smit (2002: 250) agrees that the marks were seen in history as criteria to measure and renew the visible, real and concrete church that

was not always one. These marks answered the question what the real church was in which people should believe and strive towards. He then discusses the responses to the question on the nature of the church as it developed in different circumstances over the centuries. With regard to the Early Church, he states that the unity of churches was to be sought in the unity of faith that was embodied in their confession of the Lord, one God and Father of all, one Spirit through whom all are baptised into one body, connected through the bond of love in one hope. The contents of their faith were to be seen in the canon of authoritative and trustworthy writings and communal confessional traditions created by the communal apostles, bishops and other authoritative structures and meetings such as the councils.

Smit (2002: 251) asserts that there are many ways in which churches strive for unity. Some groups look for unity and cooperation through witness and mission, while others look for unity through service and public involvement in life and work because they see faith as a divisive factor. Some look for unity in faith and order through communal confessions of faith with the intention of a reunion of churches on a local and national level. The groups differ also on the basis of unity, whether it is organic unity, conciliar unity, reconciling unity and *koinonia* that emphasize the biblical ideal for unity. He concludes that the Bible does not offer a timeless and context-less portrayal of unity, but makes an appeal to strive towards unity in the local assembly and the ecumenical church.

The role of the Spirit that creates the unity in the church is emphasised by Brian Gaybba (1987: 175), a Catholic theologian, and he calls it a unity in love. The unity, that the Spirit gives, brings respect for differences between people and does not allow it to become divisive. He states that in the past, the Catholic Church was based on uniformity throughout the world and the unifying force was regarded as the charismatic element in the church that responded to the signs of the time. A negative effect of this was that people came to see the unity in the uniformity of the structures and practices that

led to the denial of the legitimate differences, freedom and responsibilities of individuals and communities. Some other negative effects are that it can be tyranny masked as unity and the overemphasis on the institutional aspects can lead to excessive uniformity that stifles the charismatic element.

Gaybba (1987: 176) argues that the unity created by the Spirit must be expressed visibly and cannot exclusively be sought in the presence of the Spirit or in the uniformity of structures and practices. Because people are visible creatures, unity must be expressed visibly and the common visible ties will strengthen the very unity it creates. The three main structural expressions of the church's unity are its faith, ministry and sacraments. He states that the Spirit creates a common faith but leads the church to express it in commonly accepted formulae.

The Spirit also creates and establishes certain ministries that have to be uniformly structured, such as the ordained ministries. He concludes that the Spirit does not only unite us in Christ but also through ceremonies like the sacraments (Lord's Supper and Baptism), which visibly express an individual's unity with Christ and His body. The Spirit is not there to serve our institutional structures, but we are to serve the Spirit of love by giving visible expression to love's unity.

Jaap Durand, a Reformed theologian, questions in an unpublished article called "*Eienskappe van die kerk*", whether the unity that can be seen in the structures of the church is always in line with the norm of unity in the Bible. He also questions whether the marks of a particular church are the marks of the true church of Christ. He sees it as the main reason why the Reformers decided that the marks of the church should be the critical norm of the true church.

He argues first, that the unity of the New Testament is a unity given in Christ that cannot be created. As the body of Christ, the church is connected in a

close community of fellowship (1 Corinthians 12:12; Romans 12: 4,5). Christ gathers the church as the one flock because it is part of his messianic work and time (John 10:16; Matthew 12: 30). The walls of separation between Jew and Gentile are broken in Christ so that the people are no longer foreigners but family and stones in God's building (Ephesians 2:16, 19, 21). The unity with each other in Christ is so strong that no separation can be allowed on the basis of sex, race or apostleship (Galatians 3: 28; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Second, the church is called to protect the unity that is given by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4: 3-6). Third, the one faith stands in an unbroken relationship to the one Lord and Spirit because those that confess the one Lord should shun those that preach another gospel and another christ (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:8). Fourth, Christ's people know from the New Testament that there is a visible church and that there is also an invisible side that is only known to God.



Fifth, the invisible unity that the church has with Jesus Christ becomes visible when people are initiated to the Body through baptism (1 Corinthians 12: 13) and expressed through the Lords table (1 Corinthians 10: 17). Sixth, the unity of the church does not exclude diversity except when it excludes the rest of the body (Romans 12:4-8; /1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 14-31). Seventh, is the local assembly as the Body of Christ, the place where the revelation of Jesus takes place and thus requires unity in all the local assemblies as with the Ephesians, Philippians, and Thessalonians? Last, the unity of the church brings the church to its mission in the world (John 17: 23).

Durand agrees with Barth and Küng when he states that the only way forward for the church is to confess the division without justification and to look for unity from within one's own church. He also agrees that this is not done at the expense of the truth, but is rather a critical testing of the status quo according to the Gospel (Ephesians 3: 18, 19). In the following paragraphs the critical testing of the unity of the church by another South African theologian will be described.

Phillip Theron ((1978: 99) another South African theologian, describes the unity of the church under the word *shalom*, which refers to wholeness. Shalom happens when all relations is in order, in accordance to the will of God. For him the unity of the church is about the relationship between neighbours and disunity breaks that relationship which eventually leads to chaos, the opposite of peace and order. When disunity occurs the whole cosmos is threatened and all relations is in chaos. Disunity in the church threatens the meaning that the marks of the church have in other relationships.

Theron (1978: 100) argues that the *holiness* of the church emphasize the relationship with *God*, the *unity* of the church emphasize the relationship with the *neighbour*, the *catholicity* of the church emphasize the relationship with *creation* and the *apostolicity* provides the *norm, which is Gods will* for all these relationships. He describes it as a form of *perichoreses* whereby these marks explain and determine each other. He correlates for example the unity and holiness of the church by saying that the disunity of the church is a result of dishonesty, a move away from the truth and that it can be regarded as a manifestation of un-holiness in the church

He argues that the church should be aware of not isolating unity from the other marks because it can leads to church triumphalism that is not true to the real character of the church. They should keep in mind that the church exists as a sign. As a sign it points to the already and the not yet. In the unity of the church the peace of God is already evident in all relationships but the church still suffers the division which points to fact that unity is not yet achieved. It is on that basis that the church should strive seriously for the peace of God, which brings wholeness in all relationships. Although the not yet can easily been used as an alibi for schism, the church is commanded to strive towards peace (Theron, 1978: 101).

It is clear from this section that the greatest sin of the church is its division and the greatest neglect in the different periods of the church has been in the efforts to bring about unity. It is certain that in every period, the church was forced to formulate statements and structures to express the unity found in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is clear from these theologians of diverse theological backgrounds that disunity cannot be justified because it is against the nature of Gods will for the church and that all efforts directed towards the unity of the church should be evaluated in the light of the marks of the church. In the following section the implications of these biblical and historical insights for the vision of unity in the AFMSA will be assessed.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this section the implications of the biblical and historical perspectives will be assessed and applied to the vision of the AFMSA to be one. The focus will be on the practical institutional questions and certain proposals will be identified that can help the AFMSA to express the vision of unity structurally in a more relevant way.

The following elements will be the focus of discussion in this section. The biblical and historical insights about the fact that unity is given to the church by God but the demand on the church to strive towards it will be assessed and applied to the AFMSA. The next element deals with the tension between difference and division, plurality and uniformity and its implications for the AFMSA. Another elements of interest are the tension between the visibility and the invisibility of the church together with the idea of a unity that is already and not yet fully expressed. The last element will focus on the truthfulness of unity and its implications for the mission of the church in the world.

It is clear biblically and historically that the two images that describe the organic or institutional nature of the church are the People of God, mostly

said of Israel in the Old Testament, and the Body of Christ in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the unity of Israel as a people is reflected in their nationalistic character. In the New Testament, unity is seen as a self-evident concept that is given to the church by Christ and not by the members or their erected structures. The oneness of the church is thus regarded as an indivisible spiritual entity. How these images were used in the different periods of church history depended greatly on the challenges that faced the unity of the church at that time.

It is clear that the basis for the unity of the church lies in the nature of God who is one and unique. The oneness of Gods people lies in the fact that their unity is something given to them by God. The historical evidence of disunity and division demands from the church to strive towards the realisation of that unity. The unity that exists in God and that is expressed in the Bible function as a norm for the struggle of the church to be one.



Historically this unity of the church was expressed institutionally and should always be examined in the light of the norm for unity set by the vision of the early Christians in the Bible. The fact that this given unity was expressed differently in each church period allows the AFMSA to accept their particular expression of unity as different and unique. It also opens the possibility for the AFMSA to explore new ways to express their unity structurally and to constantly examine it in the light of the Biblical norm for unity that is expressed in the confession and structures set up by the early Christians. The AFMSA has the freedom to explore the unity that is already given to them by God and face the challenge of expression it institutionally, strive to make it a reality in the light of their past. There is nothing wrong with the intention of the AFMSA to express their unity in geographic and non- geographic networks, as long as the biblical norm for unity is not replaced by a false sense of unity in diversity. This brings us to the next element for discussion, the tension between difference and division, plurality and uniformity.

It is clear from the Bible that there is room for differences and thus for plurality in the body of Christ. This diversity provides a freedom to the church to accommodate all kinds of people and expressions of their unity as the people of God. It is in their expression of that diversity that something about the fullness of God that gives room for difference is experienced. The diverse gifts and ministries of the members are celebrated and enhance the unity amongst them.

Historically it is true that the church was not always open to allow plurality. Sometimes the differences were used as reasons to justify the disunity and division in the church. The diversity that is intended to enhance and fosters fellowship has become the very reason for the breaking up of fellowship. It is clear that this was normally replaced by a false sense of uniformity, which killed the creativity and the possibility for new forms of expressing unity in the church.



The history of the churches in South Africa and especially the AFMSA proves how easily the biblical demand of unity can be replaced and undermined by ideological factors. It is no wonder that most of the South African theologians argue seriously against any form of unity in the church that is not based on the nature of God. They argue strongly against any structure that does not allow difference and plurality.

The AFMSA struggled from its inception to be a non-racial church in a racially divided country but failed in the past to maintain the equality of believers that characterised their movement. There was a tendency to build a unity that allows plurality as long as members who belonged to different racial groups stays away from each other. For the last ten years the AFMSA strives to break that past and create a true sense of unity in diversity that allows members the freedom to join churches over the racial divide. The AFMSA realised that they could form structures to facilitate their struggle towards true biblical unity but that true unity lies in the nature of God who called them as members into the body of Christ that is constituted

by the Holy Spirit. The AFMSA regard their unity as a work done by the Spirit.

The question that must be dealt with is, what if this unity that is created by the Spirit is not reflected visibly. Coming from a tradition that can so easily spiritualise that one forgets the reality of disunity, I am cautious about such a view. The invisible spiritual unity of the church and her members cannot be separated from a visible structural unity. Here I am reminded of Jesus' prayer that our unity will be a witness to our unity with Him and His with the Father. It is actually a historical fact that the visible church is less glorious than the invisible church and that membership of the visible church does not guarantee eternal life. The members of the church must always be loyal to Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church and in that sense, allow him as Lord to rule the church. No form of church government or structure can guarantee unity, but without visible unity in it, our confession of the one church is blurred.

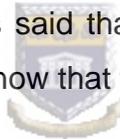


The AFMSA really struggled to make their unity as visible as possible and sometimes it looked like they failed to achieve that. Despite the freedom that people had to celebrate their diversity, some people also see it as an opportunity to excuse them from events that can bring interaction with other racial groups. Some groups never attended the opportunity that was created for fellowship and mutual sharing because they did not see the need for that.

One of these events was the church service that was held in the regions. In the historically black regions it was seen as a major opportunity to create fellowship with their white brothers and sisters. They even agreed that these meetings should be held in the white areas in order to accommodate them. It turned out that white churches did not see the need for huge gatherings like that because they have too many members. Later the black members did not see the need for such gatherings because they lost lots of money on Sundays when regional meetings were held or because there

was poor attendance by some members. It turned out that white members was only interested in meetings that focused on the election of new regional and national structures, that is poorly attended by black members due to financial constraints. The AFMSA have a long way to go towards true unity that is visibly expressed in their structures.

The next element focuses on the truthfulness of unity in the church. It is clear from the biblical and historical perspectives that the unity of the church testifies to the truth of the Gospel. It is in the unity of the church that the world can see to whom the church belong. The unity of the church says something about the relationship between them and God, the relationship they have with one another and with their environment. Some theologians argue that it is than that the church is truly apostolic or Christian. It is than that the church shows that it is not like any other institution of society. It is through the unity in the church that the mission of the church in the world gets its true meaning. Jesus said that it is through the love amongst His followers that the world will know that they are truly His disciples.



The disunity in the church undermines the truth of the Gospel and reveals whether the church can be seen as holy. It has become clear that the AFMSA regained credibility when it became united. Before unity the AFMSA used other missionary organisations as a frontline to do missions abroad. Today the AFMSA can do missionary work in its own name in the country and abroad. For the last ten years many South African churches still struggle to unite after years of separation and the struggle towards unity in the AFMSA is a testimony to them. Although the unity in the AFMSA have its shortcomings and are faced with challenges that sometimes threaten to destroy the unity process, they have come to realise that unity is not an end in itself. The unity of the church is a means to an end, which is to testify to the world that true unity is possible with God. It stands as a testimony in the world, that love conquers all.

The AFMSA have first hand experience that a precondition for the unity of the church is the recognition and tolerance of plurality, diversity and differences in the church. It should be clear that God gives the unity of the church but that the church should strive to express it relevantly in each period of history. It is clear that the differences cannot be allowed to cause division in the church because it compromises our mission in the world. The fact the church is a visible institution allows us the freedom to analyse its vision of unity and how it is expressed in our structures. Simultaneously are we also warned that our vision of unity and its expression cannot be regarded as the ultimate norm for all times and traditions.

In the following section our focus will be on the vision of the early church to be catholic. In the unity of the church it is already implied that there is room for all differences because it is based on the fullness of God that allows diversity.



CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CATHOLIC CHURCH?

INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, we have examined the mark of unity from a Pentecostal/ AFMSA perspective and concluded that the vision of a united church was one of the reasons for its origin at the beginning of the twentieth century. The founders' intention to restore the apostolic roots of the church included the "full Gospel". This was a direct use of an expression that has been part of the Christian confession or vision about the church throughout the centuries, "*we believe in the catholic church*".

In this chapter, we will analyse the meaning of catholicity from the perspective of the Pentecostal Movement in general and the AFMSA in particular (section 5.1). The leading question will be, what precisely did the AFMSA understand under the term catholicity? The answer to this question will be examined with the help of certain statements by the AFMSA, the contribution of Pentecostal theologians and other relevant literature that pertains to it. In the next section some biblical insights will be examined that can be helpful for the understanding of catholicity (5.2), followed by the historical evaluation of contributions by theologians from diverse confessional backgrounds that inform and supports the vision of the church to be catholic (5.3). In the concluding section the implications of these biblical and historical insights will be assessed in the light of the vision of the AFMSA to experience the "full gospel."

5.1 THE AFM AND CATHOLICITY

The constitution of the AFMSA states that it seeks to "extend the influence of the church beyond its boundaries and abroad" (Constitution of the AFMSA, 2000: p.4.5). The church's calling to promote the fellowship of

believers and to network ministries is also emphasized. By implication, it is a move towards catholicity, or fullness. Only a biblical and historical understanding of the church's catholicity can throw light on this silent mark of the AFMSA.

In an unpublished work called, *The Dogmatic handbook of the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological College* catholicity is defined as that which denotes the whole and is used with regards to the church in a threefold manner. First, it advocates the church that keeps to the full Gospel or the whole teaching. The totality of the Gospel implies that the full counsel of God's salvation (Acts 20:27) is taught and lived in by this church unlike many other churches.

Second, it advocates the church that is meant for every human at every place on earth. It means that the faith that is believed always and everywhere by all. This is in contrast to the church that belongs only to a certain people or geographical space at the exclusion of others. It also means that Christ is everything and in all of us (Colossians 3:11) and in Him there is no more male and female (Galatians 3:28). The journeys of the apostle Paul took him to all places that he could reach no matter what the race or the language of those people was. John wrote, "The song sung by the redeemed" that the Lamb bought them by His blood for every tribe, language, people and nations (Revelation 5:9).

Third, catholicity advocates the church must be involved with everything that touches the lives of people. This church should be the visible expression of God's kingdom on earth. This means that the church should bring everything under the rule and law of God because nothing stands outside God's territory. Everything that stands outside God's rule should be addressed and be judged in the light of the Gospel. The purpose of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth is to bring the sinful state of the world under God's dominion and service. This can only be reached at the end of everything, but it must be expressed already in the church where the

universal rule of Christ is acknowledged and practiced. Everything is thus brought under His feet so that he is the Head “and every knee and tongue confess that he is Lord “(1 Corinthians 15:25-28/ Ephesians 1:22-23)/ Philippians 2:10-11).

In the history of the AFMSA, the marks of unity, holiness and apostolicity have been explored more explicitly than the mark of catholicity. It is stated with regard to unity that the church will seek to further the deepening of and the demonstration of true unity in Christ. The AFMSA also strives for the cultivation of a holy way of living in for their members. The mark of apostolicity is so integral to the identity of AFMSA that it is called the "Apostolic Faith Mission".

The Pentecostal Movement is a century old, and has developed into a distinctive expression of Christianity worldwide. One cannot regard this movement as homogeneous because of the character it embodies from the different contexts in which the movement originated and developed. There are some common features amongst Pentecostals worldwide and one of them is the negative acceptance of ecumenism and a particular emphasis on the meaning of the term fullness. The AFMSA shares this Pentecostal view on ecumenism and the fullness of the Gospel although it has given particular expression to what it means in the South African context.

In a very perceptive article, Larry Christenson (1975: 34) argues that Pentecostalism had strong ecumenical tendencies in the formative periods. The spontaneity and vitality of the experience that the Pentecostals had did not respect denominational boundaries and yet there developed distinct exclusive tendencies. The Pentecostal movement was in the beginning interracial, open and ecumenical, but due to the rejection of society it became exclusivist. He states “as historic denominations hardened in their resistance to Pentecostalism,

the movement itself moved progressively toward exclusivism". He sees the essence of ecumenism as acceptance and the essence of exclusivism is rejection. These two contrasting motifs he sees as part of a typical historical rhythm. His answer to the issue is that the church must recover the balance between the charismatic power and the ecclesiastical authority, which was characteristic of the apostolic and sub-apostolic era.

It is clear from Cecil Robeck's (1998: 352-355) contribution in the previous chapter that Pentecostals function already in a limited ecumenical fashion and that a dialogue with other forms of ecumenism has implications for our lives and ministries. Some of these implications are: Pentecostals who ignore other Christians as part of the Body of Christ are arrogant, self-serving and condescending; they violate the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 27). Pentecostals who ignore the wider church are moving to sectarianism and run the risk of being labelled sectarian and being marginalized by their brothers and sisters. Pentecostals who choose not to build relationships with other people who dare to be Christian run the risk of being charged with intolerance, proselytism or holy wars. He concludes that Pentecostals must be sensitive to the existence of other Christian presences in their areas, otherwise they can become like those who oppressed them when they were marginal.

Pentecostals can have much to gain if they have a global perspective and are truly catholic. They have the numbers to shift power and they will be amazed by the similarities that they share with some Christians from whom they were estranged such as the Orthodox Christians. Other Christians can also learn from Pentecostals' views on Christianity and perhaps move closer to their perspective.

Robeck (2001: 3-6) proposes that Pentecostals must break down the walls that were erected because they can sometimes walk out of what is needed,

and walk into what they need to get rid of. He reminds us of the words that Jesus used when he said that those who are not for us are against us.

Martin Marty (1975: 208) answers the question whether Pentecostalism moved more from an uninhibited approach towards an ecumenical involvement by saying that it was more a turn from fundamentalism towards the interactive life of non-charismatic churches. They became churchlier and more respectable. He argues that old-line Pentecostalism (1900) had always been in the process of moving from being sectarian to being churchly which means that they had a general inclusiveness and accommodation towards culture and the taking of responsibilities for spheres of life not simply under the ecclesiastical domain. The opposite is also true that Pentecostals have sometimes not made major contributions to political life and manifested a behavioural distancing from the ordinary, everyday religious and secular experience (Marty, 1975:209). Marty (1975: 224) argues that a move in the direction of the world was seen by many as a threat to Pentecostal integrity because it might so easily lead them to a social gospel that blurred the line between the religious and the secular so that they might lose their identity as Pentecostals.

Marty states that a move towards social action will parallel and symbolise other tendencies, which while rendering Pentecostalism more catholic could also compromise it. Some people in the Movement find its trend towards identification with middle class ways of life more disturbing. He mentions a group called the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship which shows that Pentecostalism has made its way from life among the dispossessed and the people of marginal status to those who are more secure and climbing the social ladder.

Allen Anderson (1999: 210) argues that the stereotype of Pentecostalism in the West of a middle class “prosperity gospel” with “get-rich schemes” for its members is to some extent justified, particularly since the advent of the Charismatic Movement and the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship. He further argues that there are enough Pentecostal voices that disagree with the labelling of Pentecostalism as a white middle-class phenomenon in most of the world and maintain that it is predominantly a grassroots movement amongst the poor. He points to the fact that Pentecostals are not very much involved with political activity, but do have structures of social concern for their members. Some of the examples that he mentions are from Latin America where “they have developed a social conscience not just at a personal and occasional level but in an institutional form” (Anderson, 1999: 211).



This shows that the Pentecostal Movement has a vision of a society that takes account of the structural aspects of human life (oppression, discrimination, social decay) and sees in them an area for the work of the Spirit. The need for a salvation that brings wholeness from brokenness, incompleteness, sickness and degradation is strongly emphasised. Where Christ was not allowed to work in the fourfold way as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Coming King, His fullness was not experienced wholly. Amongst Pentecostals, the view of Christ as Liberator is mostly confined to the saving of the soul.

The idea of fullness can also be found in the origin of the Pentecostal Movement especially with the influence of the Holiness Movement and the Revivalists. Donald Dayton (1975: 35-53) states Wesley taught a doctrine of Christian perfection and not a baptism of the Holy Spirit and from this he derives that there was no developed doctrine of a baptism of the Holy Spirit in early Methodism. Wesley’s contribution on the

second blessing can, on the other hand, be seen as a direct influence on the American holiness revival that called Christians to an immediate response to God's provision of a life of present Christian holiness.

The idea of living under the dispensation of the Spirit came from a certain Miss Palmer. Dieter (1975: 60) describes her contribution as follows: "The definiteness of her urgent revivalism called upon every believer to recognize the biblical promise of the fullness of the Spirit and to receive the experience by consecration and faith now". This dramatic and revolutionary experience became the hallmark of the Christian life and witness and a vital element of Pentecostalism. Pentecost, which was regarded in the past as a proof of God's power, was the present pattern for the renewal of the churches and the fulfilment of all things in the restoration of God's kingdom among people. The lack of spiritual power by some was attributed to the failure of individuals to enter the fullness of the sanctification experience. The alternative answer to remedy this lack was the third experience of grace, which was the baptism of power. This created an increased expectancy of Pentecostal power and the introduction of the language of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Larry Christenson (1975: 28) agrees that there was a mood of expectancy that something was about to happen. He states that people had a feeling of deadness, a lack of conscious spiritual life and power that pervaded also in the churches 19th century. In the Pentecostal Movement, it was believed that the fullness of life in the Spirit is released in the measure of those expectations. The fullness of life in the Spirit meant different things to the different church traditions. For Catholic Christianity, the Holy Spirit was the authenticator of the ecclesiastical order, for Protestant Christianity it was the illuminator of Scripture, while the person in the pew saw it as vague and blurred. Pentecostal

Christianity saw the Holy Spirit as the initiator of the rich and varied Christian experience and its purpose to equip the believer for service in the Body of Christ (Christenson, 1975: 30).

It is clear from the insights gained from the Pentecostal insights that there is a definite move towards catholicity. The intention of the AFMSA to be a church that moves beyond their boundaries is a clear indication of that. The Pentecostal view makes it clear that they understand it to mean the adhering to the full or whole gospel, the intention to be a church for all humans everywhere and to be involved with everything that touches the lives of people.

The Pentecostal view of themselves as part of the universal church of God and its implications for ecumenical relations is also examined as important for catholicity. The early Pentecostal view that the baptism of the Holy Spirit brought a fullness of life in the Spirit needs also to be examined in the light of the fact that catholicity can also be defined as fullness. Another aspect that needs to be examined is the relation between the view that the full gospel includes the fourfold role given to Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and King and catholicity.

In the following section some biblical and historical insights will be examined that can be helpful in the assessment whether the vision of the AFMSA to be catholic is understood widely and richly enough. It is stated by Walter Hollenweger (1997: 230) that no Christian can be a Christian alone with the Bible. He believes that we need the universal church to help us through the desert of interpretation because no system of hermeneutics can be final. It can only be a contribution to the continuing process of knowledge in the whole *oikumene*. Wonsuk Ma (1998: 53) agrees with this view when he says that there is still a wealth

of material in church history that Pentecostal scholars can utilize to illustrate that “the Holy Spirit has been working throughout all of the church’s existence”.

5.2 THE BIBLE AND CATHOLICITY

The term catholicity does not appear in the New Testament although the word is used once as an adverb meaning “thoroughly”, “completely” and “totally” (Acts 4: 18). The church is never described as catholic and the growth of interpretations around it was due to the fact that the New Testament has nothing to say about it (Küng, 1971: 297). Some contributors ascribe the development of this mark to the work done by the apostle Paul who turned the world upside down to fulfil God mission (Marty, 1989: 29), while others see the origin of this attribute for the church solely in Christ (Küng, 1971: 302, 312).



THE OLD TESTAMENT ANTICIPATION

Some contributors find the origin of catholicity as universality in the Old Testament idea of Israel that existed as a people of God nationally (Kuiper, 1966: 62). God established His covenant with Abraham and his seed. (Ps 149: 19, 20). When God called Abraham out of the heathen nations to become father of a peculiar people, God said, “In thee shall all the family of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12: 3). Israel’s nationality was never meant to be a means to an end but would lead to the anticipated Messiah who will have universal reign (Psalms 72: 3). God also said that he would save the ends of the earth (Isaiah 45: 22).

It is also clear from the Old Testament that God looks at humans and their world from a universal perspective as a people of God, which also sets the agenda for the new people of God in the New Testament. God cared so

much for the people of Nineveh that God send Jonah to preach to them. Some individuals turned from paganism to the living God like Rehab of Jericho, Naaman the Syrian and Ruth of the Moabites. From this perspective it is possible to see something of the universality of the church in Gods dealings with people in the Old Testament.

NEW TESTAMENT REALIZATION

The anticipated universality of the Old Testament comes to its full realization in the New Testament. In the life and ministry of Jesus it became clear that he came to seek and save the lost from the children of Abraham (Luke 19: 9) but he ministered also to the needs of the people from other nations (Matthew 15: 21-28). When Jesus sends his disciples to continue his ministry and mission he send them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and in the uttermost of the earth (Acts 1: 8).



At the day of Pentecost, there were present at Jerusalem, men and women from out of every nation. The Ethiopian eunuch was converted through the teaching of Philip and Cornelius, the Roman Centurion through Peter's preaching. (Acts 8: 27 /10: 1 - 48), Paul became God's vessel to the Gentile world. Acts show us how the Gospel marched from Jerusalem, the capital of the Jews to Rome the capital of the world. In the New Testament the nationalistic tendencies associated with the people of God was replaced with the view of a more universal people of God that belongs to the church.

It is clear from the New Testament that the church called to life by the Spirit of God is truly universal (Kersten, 1983: 474). The church is thus the assembly of the first-born (Hebrews 12: 23), there is no difference between Jew and Greek (Romans 10: 12 / Galatians 1: 28) and the Lord gathers his people out of all nations (Revelations 7: 9). The church is revealed

differently in different locations and ages, but it is every time the same church, built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone and Head (Ephesians 1:22, 23). This term was introduced in later centuries to bring together New Testament insights and attach them to a single term (McGrath, 1994: 424 – 425).

In conclusion, we can trace the way in which God demonstrates his love for the world through His relationship with Israel (nationalism) and through the life of the New Testament church (a universal community). God's love is a universal love for the world expressed in various ways and the history of the Christian church testifies to that.

5.3 THE HISTORY OF CATHOLICITY

In this section a comparative and illustrative approach will be followed to understand the historical development of catholicity in the church. It is clear from the previous section that no definite meaning is ascribed to the catholicity of the church. It will become clear that the term was introduced in later centuries to bring together New Testament insights and attach them to a single term: *catholicity* (McGrath, 1994: 424-425). Theologians from various confessional backgrounds are used to analyse the meaning of catholicity in each period of history.

The term “catholic” originates from Ignatius of Antioch in the early church period and is narrowly defined in reference to the Roman Catholic Church. It is he who said, “Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church”. With him the use of catholicity acquired very early a geographical meaning, which is a unity in spatial and cultural universality, associated with the notion of the correct faith (Volf, 1998: 265).

Cyril of Jerusalem defined the church as “denominated catholic because it is spread throughout the world from one end to another”. Other writings of the second century used the term to refer to the existence of the universal

church alongside local congregations. Vincent of Lerins views catholicity as what has been believed everywhere, always and by all. It is the idea of universality coupled with continuity and the identity maintained through the ages and expressed. With the conversion of Emperor Constantine the meaning of the term changed.

The term "*ecclesia catholica*" came to mean, the imperial church (only legal religion in the Roman Empire) at the end of the fourth century. Any other beliefs, even differing Christian beliefs, were regarded as illegal.

During the Middle Ages it came to mean a quest for a wholeness that has an all-embracing intent, so that the Christian life included both the socio-cultural and the religious life. This quest for wholeness was found in the establishment of educational institutions such as the monasteries, cathedrals and universities. The zeal for God and knowledge were combined in the liturgies and hymns of that time.



Since the Reformation, the concept of catholicity has had a fundamental re-examination. The Roman Catholic Church maintained a historical continuity, spatial and numerical strength, which they believed, described the truly catholic church (Küng, 1971: 298). The churches that originated from the Reformation period were not seen as true churches because they were separated from the truly Catholic church. The churches that embraced the Reformed view of the church emphasized the qualitative catholicity (only the true church is catholic) and they interpreted the continued catholicity and the quantitative catholicity (geographical and numerical) from there.

The three questions that was commonly asked was, what is the meaning of being the most extended church but you stopped being church truly, what does it help to numerically the strongest, but you are un-faithful to you nature and lastly, what is the benefit of having the longest history but you are fading in being the church. They confessed catholicity to mean, that

which is always believed by all according to Scripture (Küng, 1971: 299). The continued catholicity of the church was no longer dependent on the visible historical church but on Gods faithfulness, which has always maintained the church throughout the centuries.

Rex Koivsto (1993: 83) argues that the Reformers brought the catholic understanding of the faith to fruition. He sees their contribution as a return to the first and secondary usage of the term. For them, the church existed primarily where the Gospel was preached, church discipline exercised and the sacraments administered so that institutional structures were secondary.

The nineteenth and twentieth century brought a real drive towards the reunion of churches that accepted and realized that they belong to a universal religion. William Carey described it as a time where the church should expect great things from God and attempt to do great things for God. At this time some traditions experienced the expansion of the church as dramatic but there was overall, a new awareness of the mission of the church. The age of mission was not over, but the concept of mission has changed.

The American experience of religious pluralism and liberty also challenged certain efforts towards unity amongst churches. People could now practice the religion that they chose and that created space for undesirable neighbours. The new approach to expansion has made the church more divided and each missionary movement presented a bewildered world a picture of the universal faith, which was one although each claimed its own truth (Marty, 1989: 275). It seemed like the Christian Movement, through its expansion of faith and life in the Body of Christ, seemed to be denying its essential nature and that the Christian church was on the verge of gaining the whole world and losing its own life.

The following theologians of the twentieth century provide some insights that can be helpful to a wider understanding of the mark of catholicity and its meaning for the process of revision in the AFMSA. Karl Barth is regarded as one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century and his insights on the catholicity of the church influenced theologians from diverse confessional backgrounds. He states that the adjective “catholic” means general or comprehensive. It speaks of an identity, continuity, and a universality, which is maintained in all the differences. According to Barth (1971: 704) when this definition is applied to the church it means that it has a character in virtue of which it is always and everywhere the same and recognizable in this sameness to the preservation of which it is committed. He believes that even if the church is a multitude of people (Mk 3:7 / Acts 2:41 / 4:4) or a minority of followers, (Mt 18:20) and no truth is evident so that it cannot be believed, no catholicity is possible. Everywhere the church is the same, the earthly, historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ; and therefore catholicity is grounded in Him as the Head. No matter where the church is in history, it must maintain its identity that relates to its essence.

Karl Barth (1971: 705) highlights two errors of which the church must be fully aware because they show that the church is not fully catholic. These errors are that it is the oldest community and that its modernity or newness stands as proof of its catholicity. The church is catholic because it is a direct witness to Jesus Christ in the New Testament and a typical catholic community in every age. He also states that what counts in the church is reformation not progress. The church is even catholic in relation to its members and cannot prevent its members from leaving the church. He believes that the Christian community is one and the same in essence, in all places, in all ages, within all societies and in relation to all its members (Barth, 1971: 707). The church is in danger of becoming a-catholic if it becomes different from its essence. The church must thus pray and watch over its being in all dimensions. This means its order, ministries, actions and attitudes in the world. The church must stand firm in its faith (1

Corinthians 16:13) and resists any threats until the blood flows (Hebrews 12:4). It is then that the church will see that the Son of God and his Spirit is the source and norm of its identity, that maintains and makes it one, holy and universal (Barth, 1971: 712).

Hans Küng is a Catholic theologian that was influenced by Karl Barth 's insights about the catholicity of the church. Küng (1971: 296) states that the word catholic comes from the Latin word "*catholicus*" or "*universalis*" that means referring to or directed towards the whole, or general. The word catholic applied to the church means the whole, universal, all-embracing church.

Küng (1971: 300) argues that each local community can only be called local church if they are the manifestation, the representation, the realisation of the one, entire, all embracing, universal church but then they are not yet the entire church. All the local churches that are inwardly one in the same God, Lord and Spirit through the same Gospel, baptism, sacred meal and the same faith make up the entire church. It is only when the church remain faithful to its all-embracing identity, its essence that the church is catholic (Küng, 1971: 302).

Küng (1971: 302) also emphasises that the message of Jesus was literally universal and the prerequisites for salvation were not found in the fatherhood of Abraham, the covenant of Moses but rather in faith, *metanoia* and the doing of God's will in love. It means that the church was to be all things to all men and women for (1Corinthians 9: 19-23), all men and women are one in Christ (Galatians 3: 26,28). The church saw its calling as referring to the whole world and to serve the world through the proclamation of the Gospel (Mark 16: 15), to all nations (Matthew 28:19) and to be witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) and the end of the world (Matthew 28: 20).

Küng (1971: 303) states that the church is worldwide, thinking and acting with reference to the whole world, with reference to the whole inhabited earth, the *oikumene*. The universality is a consequence of catholicity and is expressed in the word ecumenical. He believes that the catholicity of the church consists in a notion of entirety, based on identity and resulting in universality. Küng (1971: 303) concludes “it is clear that unity and catholicity go together; if the church is one, it must be universal, if it is universal it must be one. Unity and catholicity are two interwoven dimensions of one and the same church.”

In his book *Credo*, Küng (1993: 137) relates the term “*catholic*” with evangelical. He asks what the terms “*catholic*” and “*evangelical church*” mean. His answer is that the term “catholic church” means in an un-polemical sense, the whole, universal church as distinct from the local church. This does not denote a particular confessional church such as the Roman Catholic Church.



In asking who can call themselves “*Catholics*” he asserts that it is only those that are basically catholic in attitude, those who are particularly concerned with the whole, universal, worldwide church. Catholics are those who are concerned with the continuity of faith and the community of faith in time (the 2000 year old tradition), which has been maintained through all the breaks in this tradition. Catholics are those with the universality of faith and the community of faith in space, which embrace all groups, nations, races and classes.

Küng (1993: 138) also asks the question: *Who is the evangelical church?* He asserts that it means those who are concerned with or primarily oriented on the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*evangelium Christi*) himself. The evangelical church subordinates tradition to the Gospel, which remains the normative authority for all authority (*norma normans*) in the church. In asking: *Who might call themselves “Evangelical,”* he replies that it is only those who think it is important to submit all church traditions, doctrines and

practices to the study and analysis of the Gospel. Evangelicals are those concerned with practical reform in accordance with the norm of the Gospel (*ecclesia semper reformanda*).

He concludes that Christians have a need for a “catholic evangelicity” today. This is a constant concern for catholic breadth, centred on the Gospel, but there is always a need of further correction. “Christians today can be Christians in the full sense, without denying their own confessional past, but also without getting in the way of a better ecumenical future (1993: 139).

Jürgen Moltmann is a theologian whose understanding of catholicity was influenced by Karl Barth. He connects the catholicity of the church with the eschatological mission of the church when he states that the church remains also limited, non-universal, and non-catholic until every rule, authority and power is destroyed under Christ’s headship (1 Corinthians 15:24). It means that the church should be available to all people and when they have conflict, the church should be above the conflict and not intervene in it. In some other cases, the church can serve the universality of God’s Kingdom in a different way. This can be achieved by the breaking down of the barriers set up by people against each other through their mission and fellowship. In such an approach, the path begins from the bottom upwards with the purpose to save the oppressor and the oppressed.

John Macquarrie (1967: 365) relates the term “catholicity” with universality and authenticity. He regards the church as an open society and abolishes divisive demarcations that set one segment of society against another. He applies an inclusive unity-with-diversity principle that means that one should not obliterate the variety but enrich the unity of the church. He focuses on Paul’s perspective on unity, which affirms that in Christ, there is neither slave or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28). At the same time, Paul also stresses diversity when he says that there are varieties of gifts,

service and working (1 Corinthians 12: 4 - 6). This principle of unity with diversity constitutes the catholicity of the church as universality.

The second idea implied by the catholicity is authenticity. This refers to the authenticity of belief and practice in the church. The authentic faith is to be learned by considering the universal faith. Macquarrie (1967: 365) continues that from the time of the New Testament if decisions had to be made, a council was summoned to ascertain the consensus of the church. The catholicity of the church was embodied in the catholic creeds (the Apostles and Nicene Creed) and the universally recognised councils of the church (Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon). He regards the creeds as catholic in sense and word. It expresses the identity of the community of the faithful. The creeds and councils were aimed at excluding errors, but were not intended to exclude further study.

Macquarrie (1967: 366) proposes that Christians must hold the balance between the inner and outer, between the spontaneity and fixity of forms. He refers to some churches that stick to the letter of correct doctrine and deny the universality (catholicity) of the church. Other churches exclude from their membership and even worship, persons of a different race from their member. For him it is strange that these churches pride themselves on their orthodoxy and also conservative theology. He concludes "No matter how orthodox these congregations may be, they have cut themselves off from true catholicity by denying the universal character of the churches" (1967: 366). Churches like those that are against the catholicity of the universal church are moving into the opposite direction, into isolation and disintegration.

In the book published by the World Council of Churches, *Confessing the One Faith* (1991: 240) it is stated that Christ is present in the church that is catholic. In each local church there is the fullness of grace and truth that requires communion of all local churches. It is further stated that the catholic nature is expressed and realized in the great diversity of Christian

spiritual life and witness among all peoples in space and time. The catholicity transcends nationalism, particular traditions and all human barriers. It is described as a fullness of life that enlists all human beings and situations for worship and service to God. The whole mystery of Christ is present in each local church so that where Christ is there will the church be also. It is through the Holy Spirit that that people are made participants of Christ's life and salvation and without respect of race, sex and class.

Miroslav Volf (1998: 265) states that the church was already catholic on the morning of Pentecost when a small room was still big enough for all its members. Miroslav Volf relates the mark of catholicity with the other marks of the church. He believes that an understanding of unity, holiness and apostolicity is problematic in some churches because they are not truly catholic. According to him, their conception of unity is un-catholic because it lacks the concrete forms of communion with all other churches (the whole church). The perception that they have of holiness is un-catholic because it is exclusive of all who do not believe in the same form as they do. It is un-catholic in terms of its view on apostolicity because it does not accept apostolic succession as practiced by the episcopal churches.

They, on the other hand do not subscribe to catholicity as seen by those who are catholic because of their view to be the only Catholic Church. Their un-catholic holiness is seen in their distancing themselves from sinful members and unwillingness to confess their own sin. Their un-catholic apostolicity is seen in their apostolic succession that binds church doctrine to certain formulations of the past to render them uniform. Volf concludes that if Catholics and Orthodox Christians refuse to accept their own particularity and deny full catholicity to other churches, their exclusive claim to catholicity is narrow, intolerant and thus un-catholic.

Volf (1998: 261) also examines the relationship between the unity and multiplicity in the church. He defines totality in the church as a differentiated unity that includes multiplicity. There is ecumenical consensus that both

unity and multiplicity are constituents in the catholicity of the church and to negate multiplicity is to dissolve catholicity into uniformity that is a false totality. To surrender unity, on the other hand, is to dissolve into an integrated false particularity so that one can criticise catholicity as individualistic or totalitarian in a particular way.

Volf (1998: 262) describes unity and multiplicity as an internal problem in every church and sees the external side of the problem in the relationship between exclusivity and inclusivity. For him, catholicity does not only involve the inner life of the church but also its existence in the world. The involvement of the church in the social and cultural life increases the urgency of such a problem in the church.

Volf (1999: 224) takes a strong stance against an external view of Christian presence in the world that leads to the withdrawal of Christians from the world. He argues, "It presupposes that the social environment in which the churches live is a foreign country pure and simple. Yet this is simply not the case. The God who gave Christians the new birth is not only the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3) but also creator and sustainer of the universe" (Volf, 1999: 230).

He argues further that Christians do not live in a foreign land but in their homeland, which is the property of God under a foreign power because every social world is God's territory. He concludes that Christians should neither abandon nor dominate their cultural environments but rather live differently in them, that their differences should be internal not simply in the cultural space but in cultural forms. The paradigmatic option that flows from this is first, that Christians will be able to adopt some of the cultures that they live in and put them to different use guided by the values that stem from their being in God. In that sense, the majority of elements of the culture will be transformed from the inside. Third it means that Christians will have to discard and even replace elements of their lives that are not acceptable in the Lord.

Rex Kiovsto (1993:48), an evangelical theologian, states that the roots of genuine catholicity can only be found in the New Testament. He argues that the three fundamental dimensions of the church are the believers who frequently gather as a house church, who periodically gather as a local city church and the entire community of believers in Christ who never have the opportunity to gather all at one place are one church.

These three dimensions must be kept in balance for accountability, support and catholicity to develop in healthy ways. The unity between believers in one local church with those in other local churches is an example of the inclusiveness prevailing in the New Testament church. It implies that the doctrine of the church should include the unity of all believers in Christ and that the tolerance for diversity should be part of their notion of catholicity.

Kiovsto (1993: 270) provides four basic options that are used to conceptualise catholicity. In the historic model the claim is based on historical continuity with the ancient church. In the separatist model the claim is on doctrinal and moral purity. The restoration model disregard denominational distinctiveness and gather and receive all on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ. The pistis model claim that wherever Christians of genuine, sincere historical faith are found, there is the church catholic. He chooses the pistis model because it “allows for all believers to be genuinely considered a part of the body of Christ based on their faith alone, through the saving core of orthodoxy, the Gospel”. This model acknowledges all legitimate, historic Christian denominations and congregations, which affirm the Gospel to have a part in the body of Christ.

He further explains his model by saying that the church has to deal with the centripetal forces of catholicity, which mean that the unity in Christ draws all together toward certain ends. It results in mutual prayer and support, cooperation in evangelism, mission and discipline as well as respectable and humble dialogue. The church must also deal with the centrifugal force

of sectarianism that separates Christians from each other on inappropriate grounds. The result of this is that some regard themselves as superior to other expressions of the faith and this leads to no cooperation, support and dialogue in the areas mentioned above.

In order for the church to become truly catholic, Kiovsto proposes that the church will have to develop a perception of the local church that is in line with the New Testament idea that it is broader than a single church. He proposes that we will have to read ancient church history in order to understand the reasons for the division and to see whether it is still valid today. It will also help to read the history of other traditions in our country to understand the reasons for our divisions. It will allow us to gain perspective on the “entire church” in our area and make us face our diversity so that we will evangelise with more assurance in our communities. We will have to place denominational loyalties secondary to the task of cooperation and not be in competition with each other. That will lead to a practical focus on ecumenical relationships. The spiritual giftedness of believers will then be at the disposal of the entire church

The South African theologians that gave some valuable insight to this mark of the church are Brian Gaybba, J A Heyns, Willie Jonker and Dirkie Smit.

Brian Gaybba (1987: 179) asserts that the unity the Spirit creates is a catholic unity. He makes use of the meaning that catholicity means universal and all-embracing which implies that the unity that the Spirit creates is open to all according to Matthew 28:19. The Spirit creates a unity that is based on God’s love, which is open to one and all and not any national, cultural or any other human identity. It is also described as a unity that threatens no one’s identity individually. The mission of both Christ and the Spirit is to unite God and the whole of humanity. The people involved in the mission of spreading the Gospel and building the church must make sure that the church is not associated or identified with any particular culture, class or nation. The Gospel must be preached in such a way that

the unity is not a threatening but a fulfilling one so that it only threatens those who make their own identities so divisive that they refuse to unite with those outside their group and their identity.

For Johan Heyns (1980: 134), a typical non-catholic action is when a local church sunders itself physically and doctrinally from other churches and when it is concentrating on itself with the delusion that it is self-sufficient. The local church should express within itself the fullness of the whole church. He agrees that catholicity is not simply a geographical concept because the spatial or world-embracing extensiveness of a church does not make it catholic. The catholicity is not a statistical concept because the largeness of a church, number of members or financial status does not make a church catholic.

Catholicity is also not a historical concept because the oldness of a church, even if it can be traced back to the early fathers, does not make it catholic. The catholicity of the church is not an ethnic concept because the nationality or language of a church does not make it catholic. If a church cannot transcend its ethnicity, it might be an obstacle to real catholicity.

Heyns (1980: 136) relates catholicity with fullness. He approaches it from different angles. He firstly concentrates on the fullness of God and says that catholicity is grounded in the Triune God. The persons of the Trinity are related in a particular way to God because the Father decided on the church's existence and its members. Jesus the Son redeemed the sinful people and gathered the church. The Holy Spirit caused the book, the Bible to be written to lead the people to new birth. In the following Scriptures, we are shown the exclusive use of the concept catholicity. According to these Scriptures, Christ and God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28; Colossians 3:11; 2 Peter 1:11).

In his description of catholicity as the fullness of time Heyns (1980: 138) argues that the church cannot be confined to one particular period in time,

but has place in the council of God in prehistory. The church is the church of all ages, of yesterday, today and tomorrow. This is traced from Old Testament Israel to the New Testament where Christ's kingdom is proclaimed to be eternal (1 Peter 1:11). The fullness of the world implies that Christ as the Head of the Church and is also the Head of the world. It is stated in the Bible that the good news that Jesus is the remedy for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that God loves the world (John 3:16) must be proclaimed to the world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:18). . To win people over, Paul adapted his style "became everything to all people"(1 Corinthians 9: 20 - 22), because all nations, tribes and people will appear before the throne of God (Revelations 7:9).

On the fullness of the truth, Heyns (1980: 141) says that the church must proclaim the truth to its full extent. The task to reflect on Scripture and theology is never finished. Indeed, the Catholic Church demands a particular view of truth.



The fullness of obedience makes it clear that God calls the church from a sinful and prodigal generation. The Gospel asks for unconditional obedience and not for half-hearted acceptance but genuine and complete consecration for the total involvement of the entire personality. The Bible asks Christians to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, body and spirit and their neighbours like themselves. God's love demands the whole person and their service.

Willie Jonker (1992: 17) argues that although the word "catholic" does not appear in the Bible, it became part of the ecclesiological language to give expression to specific areas of truth. It expresses something of the true identity of the church especially of the universality of its being, the fullness of its message and the comprehensiveness of its calling as it is taught in the Bible. He argues that it is possible to use it in different senses depending on what kind of wholeness one has in mind. The senses that he regards as still relevant to us that developed in the history of the church are

catholicity as the geographical, temporal and cultural universality of the church.

Jonker (1992: 19) sees unity and catholicity as correlative and used interchangeably. He states that when the unity of the church is threatened, the catholicity is threatened with it and when the catholicity is impaired; the unity of the church is shattered. The New Testament firmly establishes that the church is understood in a Trinitarian context, making it clear that the unity of the church goes hand in hand with the unity of God's work of salvation (Ephesians 4:4-5). The repetition of the words "one" and "all" in this passage is indicative for him of the close bond between the unity and catholicity.

Jonker (1992: 20) states that the term "catholicity" denotes also the spiritual identity of the church that abides in the fullness of the truth of the Gospel. It refers also to the authenticity or the essence of the church, which he calls the element of "real churchiness," that is found among all authentic Christian believers of all ages. This has led to the apologist use of the term against the heretics and schismatic people who had severed their ties with the church because of doctrinal differences. Against this view, the Reformers argued that the norm of true catholicity is only in adherence to the Word of God.

Jonker also (1992: 22) finds that catholicity, unity and truth have a correlation between them and cannot be divorced. The local church is called the pillar of the truth (1Timothy 3:15) and is the church of God in the fullest sense of the word. The local church can however, not isolate itself from other local churches and the church universal. The unity amongst the local churches must be maintained and go beyond the boundaries of the local church so that what is true of the local is also true of the universal church. It is the will of God that the unity, catholicity and mutual confession of all the children of God on earth should be sought and made visible to the glory of God.

Jonker (1992: 22) concludes from this that it is wrong to say that catholicity had nothing to do with the expansion of the church over the whole world. Every Calvinist justification of the opposite is not what Calvin did not mean, nor did he underestimate the visible unity of the church. The Reformation differed from Rome in its ideas of the way in which the visible unity of the church should be expressed organizationally although the Reformers did not reject the idea of the visible unity of the church.

Jonker (1992: 24) believes that the unity of the church is broken when the truth of the Gospel is denied and we let one another go because of differences. Although the truth is catholic and unifying amongst the saints (Ephesians 4:11-16/ 3: 18), we must remember that we only know in part and are in need of other Christians to assist us in knowing the truth in order to have a clearer vision. He further states that “when our zeal for the truth tends to become divisive in the sense that it continually threatens the unity of the church and fosters a spirit of withdrawal from the fellowship with other churches, we may have reason for some caution...we may well ask whether our concept of the truth is not perhaps lacking in depth, and whether we are sensitive enough as far as the unity and catholicity of the church are concerned”.

Finally, he deals with the unqualified recognition of the one Lord and the totality of his sovereignty over every aspect of life. Christ, who is the head of the Church and the cosmos, should at all times be recognized in every sphere of life whether it is the religious or secular. Jonker (1992: 25) sees the church as catholic when it proclaims and obeys the Lordship of Jesus in every sphere of life. He concludes the article by saying that the church has a calling to manifest the catholicity, which it confesses. The consequence of this is that no church should settle with an exclusive view of the church that caters only for a specific nation, class, race or colour. The church should not foster an inward-looking attitude that jeopardises the confession to part of the one, worldwide and catholic church of Christ. It should also

not develop a sectarian complacency by which it regards itself as the only true church of Christ with a negative attitude towards other denominations and persuasions.

His second conclusion is that the church has a calling to maintain and protect the truth of the Gospel because there can be no catholicity without a common adherence to truth. Third, Jonker (1992: 26-27) concludes that the church and especially the Reformed churches in his context should be willing to proclaim their prophetic witness in the world even in the midst of the temptation to politicise the church as an instrument in the battle of political ideologies. Churches should thus assist one another to discern the signs of the time and to proclaim the Headship of Jesus in every sphere of life.

The idea to describe catholicity with the term fullness is supported by another South African theologian, Dirkie Smit (2002: 251) says that the church wants to believe, confess and live the full Gospel. He also states that the true church extends over the fullness of time and space into the past so that it includes all of those in the Christian family. It implies that the Gospel has implications for the fullness of life and embraces every inch of reality and facet of our existence as created beings.

It is clear from this section that the term catholicity came to have different meanings in each period of church history. The theologians that were used emphasized various aspects of catholicity that can be helpful for the vision of the AFMSA. Some of these aspects are related to its historical continuity with the identity or essence of the church, the meaning it has for the locality and universality of the church, its correlation with the unity of the church and what is meant with catholicity as fullness.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In this section we will have some concluding perspectives from the biblical and historical insight about the catholicity of the church. The practical implications of these insights will be used to assess the vision of the AFMSA to preach and live out the “full gospel”.

It is clear that the term “catholicity” cannot be found in the Bible but that its meanings that refers to the universal, whole, entire, complete church that is everywhere and at all times the same is based on certain passages from the Bible. It is clear from the Old and the New Testament that God as Creator was always involved with creation and thus the world. Although this story develops around a particular people or nation is it clear that Gods intention was more universal. Already in the Old Testament there is a tendency to see the mission of God in the world not in particular terms with Israel but as a move towards universality where the faithful from all nations can be called the people of God. This mission was realized in the New Testament where it became clear from the ministry of Jesus and his mission for the church that God is concerned about all people in the world.

The problem for the church in history was, how to relate this universality of the local church with all the other churches. The struggle to institutionalise the catholicity of the church led to the development of different aspects related to it. It became clear from the historical insights that each local church must reflect the identity of the whole, entire, complete, universal church which is based on obedience to the Gospel, the Triune God, the sacraments of baptism and eucharist and the faith of the apostles.

It is important for the AFMSA to accept that the same identity and essence of the church is expressed in it. They stand in the same historical continuity because they believe and are obedient to the “full gospel”. They should accept the fact that it is the same Triune God at work in their midst and in the rest of the world. The AFMSA should accept the fact that they practice

the same baptism, although they accentuate different aspects from it and that they share in the same sacred meal, with the one bread and the one-cup. They should accept that there is only one apostolic faith, which is the faith in Jesus Christ. Should Pentecostals accept that they are a local expression of the one universal church of God, then it will be easier to accept other churches as expressions of the same essence. They should strive to maintain that same identity and essence, to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The history of the church proves that some churches are of the view that they are more catholic than others because they have historical continuity with the ancient church. The AFMSA cannot make such a claim because it is almost a century old but sometimes they feel themselves superior to other churches due to doctrinal and moral claims. It causes them to withdraw from the rest of the body of Christ and keeps an exclusive view of themselves as the body. Such an exclusive view is foreign to the nature of the church because only God knows what the nature of our relationship is to him as Lord. The AFMSA should accept that they are different and unique from other churches and that there is room for plurality and diversity in the body of Christ. The church has the ability to be one in all places, ages and societies and allow difference and variety that do not ruin its essential nature. This essential nature or essence is none other than the identity, which the church finds in the Trinity and the Gospel as the source and norm.

It is clear from the above that the unity and catholicity are correlative and both are threatened if one of them is threatened. The catholicity of the church denotes the identity that the church abides in the fullness of the truth of the Gospel, which is the essence of the church through the ages. When the truth of the Gospel is denied and we let each other go because of differences, the unity is broken. If every local church is the church of God in its fullness but the churches are isolated from each other they cannot be regarded as a church of God. The unity amongst the local churches must

be made visible for the glory of God. Christians need each other to come to a clearer understanding of the truth and if the truth causes further division and withdrawal, the truth lacks some depth.

At this point it becomes important to assess the aspect of the fullness of catholicity. It is clear from the biblical and historical insights on the fullness of catholicity that the fullness of the church is based on the fullness of God and Christ, who must be all in all. These aspects imply that the Headship of Christ over the cosmos and the church affects every sphere of life and must be recognised and obeyed.

The Pentecostal vision to believe the full gospel included the four square gospel. By this they meant to experience Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and King. Christ is the Saviour who can save, redeem, and liberate people. Pentecostals did not always accept the wider implications of Christ's role as Saviour due to their inward-centred perspective of salvation. This view of salvation caused them to withdraw from society and to see other churches as "wordly" and not having the same experience of salvation. The AFMSA will have to accept that Christ is the Saviour of the world and not a particular group of Christians. They should accept that salvation couldn't be narrowed down to the personal but that it includes the whole creation that is also waiting for redemption. The Lordship of Christ must be proclaimed over every sphere of life, be it socio-political, economical, ecological, etc.

As the Healer, Christ can heal people from all sorts of sickness, evil spirits and misfortunes. Healing is not only the absence of sickness but it is also the brokenness of relationships, which makes the role of Christ as the Healer broader than the healing of the body. The vision of the AFMSA to adhere to the full gospel should include the meaning of healing as wholeness, meaningfulness and the quality of life. This implies that the revision of the AFMSA should give room to the healing process amongst members who were torn by their racist past. This process should also be

extended to the broken relationship that the AFMSA have with other churches. The role of Christ as healer must also include the healing of South Africa as a nation, where lots of hurt from the past is still prevalent amongst racial groups. The hurt experienced by women and children should also be included in the process of healing which is made possible through a relationship with Jesus Christ the healer. In these senses the role of Christ the Healer can be understood more widely and more richly.

The role of Christ as the baptiser in the Spirit can enable the unity amongst members, churches and communities. It is clear from the biblical and historical insights that it is the Spirit who baptises us into one body and enables us for service in the church and in the world. The Spirit is the one that brings regeneration and change peoples attitudes and perspectives to change. The belief that Christ baptises us for service enables the AFMSA to appreciate the diversity of gifts given in the body of Christ and to seek ways how they can serve other churches that believe in the Triune God but are in need to experience the fullness of life in the Spirit.



When Pentecostals ascribes the role of a King to Christ, they refer to his reign in all spheres of life and the life to come. As the King Christ can bring peace that implies the wholeness of relationships in all spheres of life. It establishes his authority as final over all authorities until everything is submitted under his Lordship. The AFMSA can become more involve in spheres of life that they sometimes regard as belonging to the world like politics, economics and ecological issues. Although they belief Christ is the soon coming King, are they not indemnified from recognising and obeying His rule in all spheres of life.

The Pentecostal belief in the full gospel, which includes the four roles of Christ, allows the AFMSA to bring some fresh insights to the catholicity of the universal church. The Pentecostal Movement and particularly the AFMSA were a continuation of this universal church. Their emphasis on the fullness of life by the baptism in the Spirit with the initial evidence of

speaking in tongues did not stop their belief in the Trinity, the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Today, things have changed because the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA have grown from an exclusive group to a more inclusive group. The AFMSA accept the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed as part of their confessions of faith. Over the years, a new openness is expressed towards Pentecostals from other church traditions.

If there ever was a time that our structures and those who live in them and control them must become open it is now. This means not only openness in dialogue, but also in the acceptance of other Christians. The vision of the AFMSA is challenged to leave their doctrinal and ecclesiological baggage behind and to search for true ecumenism. We can only be strengthened if we combine the search for visible unity, social justice and ecological hygiene.



The issue that needs to be stressed is that the vision to be catholic does not imply that the Pentecostals must throw overboard what is unique and different about them. It is in the acceptance that they are unique but not superior that the AFMSA can make a huge difference in the universal church. At the moment, some churches express the desire to find out what it is that causes the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement to grow and attract people of all classes to them. It is possible that there is something about their experience of the fullness of the truth of the Gospel that others can learn from which will be to the glorify God. At the same time, the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements will have the opportunity to learn something about what others do for the glory of God and see too what can happen if they were to lose God's vision and intention for the church.

CHAPTER SIX

The implications of the marks for the vision and structure of the AFMSA

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the vision of the church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic and how it became institutionalised will be assessed in the light of its implications for the vision and structure of the AFMSA. From these implications some possible ways will be proposed for the AFMSA to understand and apply the vision to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic more widely and richly in their vision and structure.

In sections 6.1 till 6.4 the implications of each mark for the vision and structure of the AFMSA will be assessed. In the conclusion (6.6) an overall summary will be given of these implications for the AFMSA and the way forward in the lights of its challenges.

It was established in the earlier chapters that the vision formulated for the church by the Christians in biblical times and in early church history had an immediate and a future effect. The insight they had for their immediate context was based on what God required from them as a community of faith in their respective contexts. To take the insights derived from their context and apply them blindly to contemporary challenges can cause frustration and the rejection of their vision of the church as irrelevant for today. At the same time, the refusal to understand the values and truth reflected in their vision blinds contemporary Christians to the foresight they had about future challenges for the church.

This implies that a critical appreciation of the vision of the early Christians as depicted in the Bible and in history is required. It requires acceptance of the fact that the institutionalisation of the church is inevitable and that

humans construct it as the will of God for their time. It is thus a human task and responsibility to envision and restructure the church so that it can meet the challenges faced by the church in other times. Therefore, the role of the bible in the understanding of the church and the historical insights that developed around each mark is crucial for the revision and restructure of the church. From the sections that follow the biblical and historical insights that developed around each mark will be assessed in the light of its implications for the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

6.1 The implications of apostolicity for the AFMSA

It became clear from the biblical insights that the term “apostles” mean “the ones that are sent with full authority”. The word “ones” is used in the plural to show that there were also first and secondary apostles sent with the same authority and that there was no room for an exclusive apostolate. Even the apostles had to submit to the authority established by the local elders and from that, we can learn that being an apostle was more a function than it was a title or position.

The historical insights that developed around the term “apostle” makes clear that it later became known as the unbroken line of authority established by the first apostle Peter and institutionalised in the episcopal structure of the Roman Catholic Church. The result of this development was that the unbroken line of authority was established as the “apostolic succession” that replaced the role of the apostolic gift that was available to every believer. In later periods of the history of the church, other groups emphasized that the church was built on the foundational teachings of the apostles and the prophets, which placed Christ at the centre. They declared that the only possible succession that there could have been is the succession of service and obedience to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. The historical importance of the episcopal structure is not rejected,

but could no longer be accepted as normative to all Christians, everywhere and all the time.

The desire to be a mission or a movement and not a church with complicated structures and authoritarian leadership characterised the early Pentecostal Movement. The impulse was to go back to the roots of the original apostles, to be built on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets, and to be a movement led by the Holy Spirit. Such an impulse was not unique because earlier in the history of Christianity, other groups like the Montanists and the Anabaptists had the same desire although they differed in some details. All of them shared the concern, which was the fear that the longing for institutional success could kill the charismatic structure of the church. The issue at hand was and still is that the balance that these groups sought did not always bring the expected outcome but rather resulted in other forms of excess.



The vision of the Pentecostal Movement was to replace the institutional elements with the charismatic. They stressed the spiritual experience of the apostolic gift that was available to every believer, who was the actual one sent with the message by Jesus Christ. Apostolic succession for the Pentecostal Movement was no numerical measure, but it was exemplified by the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of every ordinary believer. In that sense, all believers are called into a mission of service, no matter what their functions are. It can thus not be reserved as the privilege of a specific group.

The term implies also an eschatological dimension because it points towards the Kingdom of God. The message of the apostles is that God rules in every sphere of life and that includes the whole of our existence so that the “full Gospel” is preached. The tendency to restrict the mission of the church to certain areas of life brings an unhealthy relationship between the secular and the religious that is not in line with the eschatological vision

that everything will become new. It also means that the church will have to become involved in the struggle to make this world a better place and to fight against certain things that threaten the dignity of people like poverty and Aids. The need for an apostolic passion requires from people to be willing to lay their lives down so that others can stand up.

Every structure set up and form of leadership established should be an opportunity for renewal and new horizons. They should not become a means to manipulate members, who disagree with the structure and leadership, with agendas that do not serve the message and the mission implied by the term “apostolic”. They should strive to be the same church that was established by the apostles and accept only Jesus Christ to be the foundation of the church. Anything that calls itself church, but is not built on that foundation is not a church of Jesus Christ. To go back to the roots of the church means always to go back to the biblical witness and the role of the Holy Spirit in the history of the church.



The Pentecostals also referred to the foundation that was laid by the apostles and the prophets as the roots of the church. When they referred to the vision of the apostolic church they also mentioned the authentic New Testament Christianity and the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Any process of revision in the AFMSA that does not take that seriously is condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past where one form of institutionalisation becomes a burden and harassment to the future generations. Within the AFMSA, the concern is sometimes expressed that they are not apostolic enough because of the fact that they do not take the apostolic dimension seriously enough. The plea for an apostolic networking is welcome, but it should not be a hidden agenda to encourage the continuation of groupings that do not want to accept the new interracial AFMSA.

The Pentecostal understanding of apostolic ministries, as the founders introduced them in the AFMSA was based on the spreading of the Gospel,

ministering to the needs of the people, and the saving of the lost. For the early Pentecostals, salvation meant the liberation from all forms of alienation, domination and oppression. Jesus Christ was preached as the Saviour who can save people from all kinds of misfortunes whether spiritual, physical or material. Sometimes, Pentecostals are accused of not spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but a health-and-wealth gospel. Salvation means that Jesus Christ can save people as whole human beings, in totality. Conversion is not to reach a state of utopia. It is to look at life with a new perspective. Because the Holy Spirit is at work in the church, the AFMSA accepts that God is also working in denominations other than themselves.

From the above-mentioned comments, one can conclude that the call for the church to be true to its apostolic roots is as old as the history of the Christian Church. It is more the challenge to structure the church according to the apostolic principles that posed a threat to the biblical and historical development of the mark of apostolicity in the history of the church.

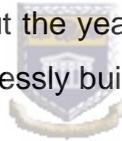


It remains debatable what the best way to structure the church is. Some contributors feel strongly that the church receives its structure from the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ and that no structure is adequate to express Christ's will for the church. Others feel that the Bible does not prescribe a specific pattern of church structure and that the Spirit should structure the church through the gifts of the individual members of the church. Still others feel that there is an implied structure based on apostolic succession to which the church should submit as God's will for the church. Some prefer any structure that is based on service to God and people, while others just prefer the democratic structure where the people decide what structure can serve God's will the best.

Whatever structure one chooses, it is important to know that there are both a divine and human element involved in church structures. The fact that we strive to follow the foundation of the apostles and the prophets implies that

we accept the history of their struggles to follow the example that they have from Christ as the first ear-and-eye witnesses. The reason why I call it a struggle is because these first apostles did not receive a ready-made blueprint vision that became fulfilled into an apostolic structure overnight. It is in this sense that the Pentecostals and especially the AFMSA will have to be critical of just taking the apostolic tradition from Scripture without recognising the historical development of this apostolic tradition. At the same time, must they not be intimidated by those who confess the biblical foundation for an apostolic tradition but cannot live with the same vision, passion and life received from the biblical witnesses to this reality?

The giftedness of every believer implies that all members can participate in the leadership of the different ministry structures. During the unification process of the AFMSA some sections of the church was amazed by the role that illiterate elders and church mothers played to establish and maintain churches throughout the years. In the absence of formally trained pastors these individuals tirelessly built the structures of the AFMSA.



Today, the AFMSA have become a church with highly educated young people that sometimes forget or ignore the role that they played to lay the foundation of the AFMSA for future generations. These first generation Pentecostals understood apostolicity to mean, the willingness to be sent into the world with the message of the Gospel and to be equipped with spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. They derived their view of apostolicity from the bible and had a passion for ministry. Today its is very difficult to get people involved in the ministries accommodated in the structures of the AFMSA like the children, youth, welfare, men and women ministries. People have either become too busy or they have another “ministry philosophy” that cannot be accommodated by these structures. The AFMSA needs to teach new members about the importance of their gifts that can serve the greater body of Christ and be helpful for the mission of the church in the world.

The emphasis on mission in the meaning of the term apostolic implies that the AFMSA should be careful not to betray its roots in being an organisation. The fact that the AFMSA is a movement implies that it do not focus on bringing people into the church building but sending apostles into the world. The over emphasis on church planting in the seminars held recently by the national office bearers of the AFMSA sends a word of alarm. Although this is seen as a strategy to win the lost and create job opportunities for pastors by establishing churches, it can easily become an institution that is proud of its extension but not effective in its ministry to the lost. This can easily become a structure that is built around the needs of an individual at the expense of the needs of the community who is suppose to be the centre of the mission in the first place.

The AFMSA should at all times be reminded that God send Jesus to save the whole world, in that sense is God's mission orientated towards the world and not towards a church. Any church planting endeavours that do not keep that in mind is not committed to the kingdom or rule of God but to the narrow view that God's kingdom can only be served by my church. The result of such a view is that the church become inward and not outward centred, exclusive and not inclusive. For the structure of the AFMSA to remain apostolic it must be careful not to allow ministry philosophies that is alien to the apostolic witness and its expression in church history of which the Pentecostal expression is a part.

Therefore, the structure of the AFMSA should reflect an apostolic or Christian character. The influence of so many ministry philosophies is tempting for the newly formed or planted AFM churches. Some pastors have practices in their so-called apostolic networks that are far removed from the biblical and historical insights that developed around the mark of apostolicity. There are cases where the fatherhood principle that is referred to by Isak Burger, is used to mislead the spiritual sons and daughters that is seen as the fruit of such a spiritual fathers work amongst them. It leads to a situation where these followers cannot do any thing without the blessing

of the spiritual father. Some fathers even believe that they do not have to work because it is the responsibility of the children to look after their fathers. Jesus warned his followers not to call anyone their father, except their Father in heaven. It is a disgrace that the call for spiritual fatherhood, which is based on the biblical demand in 1 Corinthians, is misused to serve the selfish interest of individuals.

It is clear from the study that some contributors do not want to prescribe any form or structure for church leadership as the biblical norm. Whatever structure is chosen in the AFMSA, if it does not serve the vision that God have for the church in a particular generation and meet the needs of people than it must be questioned and rejected. Any structure that do not realise and utilise the gifted of every believer, whether male or female, rich or poor, black or white, young or old cannot be seen as liberating and thus biblically and historically relevant.



6.2 The implications of holiness for the AFMSA

In this section some concluding perspectives will be given about the biblical and historical insights that developed around the holiness of the church. This will be followed by an assessment of its meaning for the vision and structure of the AFMSA.

From the biblical insights it is clear that holiness is a status received from God, but it requires from the church to be holy because God is holy.

The holiness of the church can only be found in *God* who is the Holy One of Israel that is revealed in *Jesus Christ*, the image of the invisible God, who is present in power and grace through the *Holy Spirit*. The church can have holiness only through the relationship that it has with Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The relationship of the church and Jesus Christ is like a marriage where Christ is the groom and the church is the bride. The church is set apart by God and prepared for the Son and while it is waiting for His coming it should be ready to be pure and blameless, forsaking all others.

From this metaphor it is clear that the expectation is still from the church to be faithful unto death to the only Lord and Saviour it always had. The church has its own sphere of power, interest and influence that are given to it as the Body of Christ, without whom the church cannot exist. This places the church in a very difficult situation because there are many others who want the allegiance and loyalty that the church preserves for Christ, the only Head and Groom of the Bride.

The holiness of the church is a fruit of the Spirit and the main characteristic of that fruit is love that requires from the church to be faithful. The church is thus required to be holy in its words and actions because it signifies the relationship of faithfulness. The sacraments and the Word are visible ways in which the church can express that holy relationship. It is no wonder that the reformers could say that the marks of the true church are where the Word is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered.



The holiness of the church cannot be found in the lives of the members or the policies, structures and procedures of the church. The members can enhance the holiness of the church through their exemplary lives and their testimonies, but they do not give the church its holiness. It became clear that it is God that calls the church into holiness through Christ by the Holy Spirit and that the holiness of the church does not depend on the members or their behaviour as saints. The holiness of the church cannot be threatened internally or externally by anything because the church is indestructible and cannot be ruined. The members and leaders can erect structures, but these structures must not be worshipped just as we worship God.

There are certain threats like secularisation (danger from the outside) and sacralisation or self-glorification (danger from the inside) that can be dangerous for the vision of the church. Secularisation is a process whereby the influence of the church is limited to the point where it is removed from society. It can lead the church into the temptation to give up the biblical

values that are the foundation of its morality in order to preserve its relationship in the world in the name of relevancy. Sacralisation implies that the church has become so holy that the members and structures are seen as holy within themselves. The result is that the members and structures become conceited and above censure so that a sense of superiority is developed towards members and structures of other churches. Such a church does not glorify God as the giver of its holiness but glory in its own efforts and successes. These two threats have become very prevalent in the history of the Christian church.

Christians are part of this sinful world and it is clear from history that the church structure that is erected reflects human fallibility. The infallibility of the church can only come to fruition if the church remains obedient to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit provides the church the ability to discern the signs of the time and is responsible for the renewal and restoration of the church. The responsibility to restore the church is not just the prerogative of a few leaders, but it is expected from every member of the body of Christ in whom the Spirit of the living Christ dwells.

From the historical insights about the holiness of the church this infallibility is proved by the fact that the church was not always faithful in holiness. The church did not always express the unconditional love of God for people through its structures. The concept of holiness has changed at various times in history. It has signified "martyrdom" and later it came to mean "the isolation of the body from the world". However, there is one word that has kept its meaning and this is faithfulness. When it signified, the struggle for control between the secular and spiritual rulers also meant: faithfulness. When the Catholic Church was accused of being too close to the world in the Dark Ages, it was also expressed in one word, faithfulness. The outcry of the Reformers that the church should go back to the Scriptures was a call for faithfulness. When its enemies split the church apart in the Modern period and holiness was no longer forced, but voluntary, the issue was faithfulness.

The Holiness Movement that is regarded as the forerunner of the Pentecostal Movement originated as a response to the threats against the holiness of the church. The emphasis on sanctification as a second work of grace was intended to bring the church back to the responsibility laid on every member to live up to the biblical standards of holiness. It was also a reaction to the emphasis placed on the institutionalisation of holiness in the ministry and structures of the church. Many of the terms that became vocabulary of the Pentecostal Movement originated from the leaders of the Holiness Movement.

The Holiness Movement emphasises personal repentance, an encounter with God, a Bible-centred morality, and practical sanctification in the hearts and lives of members. Through sanctification, the believers can be enabled to live morally perfect lives. The reality shows that believers of this doctrine of the Holiness Movement and the Pentecostal Movement could not always live up to these standards. The consequence is that some groups developed certain codes of conduct for their followers like the Zionist influencers of the Pentecostal Movement. They emphasised certain taboos like the abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, the eating of pork, the refraining from medicine and a complete separation from the world.

Many of these practices became part of the early AFMSA and are seen as the hallmark of a true Pentecostal. On some issues, the AFMSA had some dubious views such as those on politics, vaccination and the inscription of members for war. On the one hand, the AFMSA was against the involvement of their black members in politics and on the other hand, they applauded the influence of a white pastor in politics. The way in which the AFMSA could take a stand against the vaccination of their members in the time of an epidemic and a stand against participation in the wars that the country had at that time shows the seriousness with which they regarded their holiness. They were set apart by God to be different and that they justified from Scripture yet, they did not take a stand against the racial

segregation that would soon infiltrate their church structures. One wonders whether their selective use of Scripture misled them into not taking a stand against racism and changing the course of history.

Members of AFMSA and Pentecostals worldwide wrestle with a moral crisis that challenges their belief that they are part of a holy church. At the Workers' Council of the AFMSA that was held at Pretoria in 1999, Isak Burger expressed concern about the performance of the members in the area of holiness. He asked that holiness must be embraced by the church because there were world views creeping into the church that destroy the lives of the people who are supposed to raise the standard for the Kingdom of God. In a conversation with Burger in June 2001, he admitted that the lowering in moral standards has not escaped the AFMSA. Within the AFMSA, the spirit of our time has also caught the members. This is evident in things such as the high divorce rate, especially amongst pastors, corruption, sexual abuses, bribery, etc. The taboos of the past that resulted in a legalistic view of holiness are no longer avoided. True separateness does not exist anymore and materialism has replaced the generosity with which the early Pentecostals served God.

The AFMSA, with its peculiar roots in holiness, can raise the standard, and in this way, make a valuable contribution to the moral renewal of society. The first thing that the AFMSA will have to recognise is that its holiness is a status that is received from God that results in acts of obedience and service. This implies that that the members and church structures should stop fearing the influence of the sinful world on the church or bemoan their lack of influence on the world.

As a grassroots community, churches are in the best position to become involved with the moral formation of individuals and communities. The idea of partnership as a model to create structures that interact as separate entities but contribute to the character of the whole is deeply stimulating if applied to relationship between the church and society. The openness of the AFMSA to accept the expression of holiness by other churches as expressions born

from God, creates opportunities for cooperation and dialogue. The AFMSA have made certain pronouncements about abortion, HIV and AIDS, homosexuality, same sex marriages, gambling, use of tobacco and alcohol, etc. In their understanding of all these ethical issues, the AFMSA emphasises the Scriptural basis for its position and the implications for its members. The belief that sanctification enables the believer to live a morally perfect life is really challenged by the moral demands placed on Christians living in South Africa and the rest of the world today.

The making of responsible choices requires the churches to reformulate their own positions that is based on theology of the past and be honest about their relevance for today. An example is the fact that the young people of South Africa are encouraged to use condoms in order to have sex responsibly. In the past, the church encouraged young people to abstain from sex until they are married. The question is whether it is more responsible for a young Christian to have safe sex in the light of the AIDS pandemic or whether the custom of abstinence still applies. Does it mean that young Christians are no longer holy and serving Christ in obedience when they use condoms or can we say that disobedience to live safely makes a young person un-holy? When we say that the holiness of the church is not based on an ethical revolution but on the person and work of Christ, does this mean that the holiness of the members exists invisibly and where it is visible, it is only done by Christ without any human effort?

In a recent report on the charges brought against pastors of the AFMSA, tabled by the national treasurer of the AFMSA at the General Business Meeting, the question was asked whether these things can be true in Pentecostal church? He also asked, "What should we be doing to curb this flood of moral failure within the church?" It is clear from this report that disciplinary actions against pastors or members do not guarantee holiness in their lives or the structures of the church. These findings prove that the AFMSA is confronted like any other church with the struggle of being holy and sinful at the same time. The time of separating themselves from the rest

of the other Christian churches on the basis of their history in holiness and superior attitude based on the exemplary lives of their followers is past. The AFMSA struggle just like the other churches to stay true to the biblical demand for holiness and can no longer base that struggle on the performance of members and leaders. It might be time to realise that the holiness in the AFMSA cannot be based on their Pentecostal roots but on God, the Wholly Other.

From the history of the Revival movements the AFMSA can learn that periods of moral degeneration have always led to revival. It means that one must not become passively accepting in a moral crisis, but must look for the possibilities that God offers the AFMSA and the entire church to preach and live true biblical holiness. Such a process gives the church the opportunity to accept that it is part of the sinfulness of the world, but that God chose us to be part of the Bride that is waiting for the coming of the Groom, Jesus Christ. The test for the church is to become involved with the redemption of the world and at the same time, keep in mind that their experience of holiness is only fragmentary. There must always be an expectation of the final day when everything will become new. Until then it is expected of us to be faithful.

No particular church denomination can claim to have found the final remedy for our sinfulness in the world but they must call out with Paul: "Who can save us from our sinful bodies?" He answered by saying that we can thank God in Jesus Christ our Lord for the salvation that He brought about (Romans 7:24-26). The Lordship of Christ demands from us to be obedient to him until death in every area of our lives where holiness is required and live a life in service to the command: be holy because I, the Lord, am holy (Leviticus 11:44/ 1 Peter 1:16).

The place where God meets us as a church is in the world and we must remember that God loves this world, despite its sin and alienating forces that undermine that love. God's love for us is described by Hendrik Berkhof as a Holy Love that hates the sin but loves the sinner. It is a love that judges us,

but at the same time offers reconciliation. The church should at all times, proclaim that “agape” love of God .According to Hendrik Berkhof (1986: 125), “ God meets us here as injured love by which he tries to make us aware of our estrangement in order to induce us to surrender to his love.”

6.3 The implications of unity for the AFMSA

The biblical and historical insights that developed around the mark of unity will be used in this section to assess the implications it has for the vision and structure of the AFMSA.

From the biblical and historical insights it became clear that when God looks at the church He sees only one, but it is reality that there exists many churches. The two images that describe the organic or institutional nature of the church namely, the People of God and Body of Christ is used as metaphors that clearly illustrates that unity. The unity of Israel as a people and the unity found in the Body of Christ that is created by the Spirit is one unity that comes from God. The oneness of the church can thus be described as an indivisible spiritual unity and must be reflected visibly in its structures. From the biblical and historical insights it is clear that the term “people” implies a common origin, calling and purpose that result in a common decision making to perform a common task. The term “body” implies that every member is a vital organ and is needed for the body to function effectively. The over emphasis on the differences amongst the people or the members of the body results only in division.

It became also clear that the purpose of unity is to glorify God and serve as an authentic communication of the Good News. The unity of the church does not exist as an end in itself but is given by God in Jesus Christ and is preserved by the Holy Spirit. The walls of separation have been broken in Christ and the church must protect the unity given by Christ. The church has an unbroken relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals Himself to the church. Whether the unity of the church is expressed in faith and order,

witness and mission, service and public involvement, it remains the unity given by Jesus Christ.

The historical insights make it clear that church cannot escape into a dualism of a visible disunity and invisible unity because there is only one single unity that historically exists in plurality. The church can flourish in diversity but any superficial dualism that is an excuse for division must be rejected. Any justification of an eschatological unity, which means that it will be reached only at the end of time, is not acceptable. The idea of one church with many branches that results in an excuse for being disunited is not correct. The idea that there is only one empirical church that is identical with Jesus Christ must also be rejected. This idea can be seen as a form of self-conceit and self-righteousness, which is sinful and needs to be confessed before God and other churches. These insights make it clear that it is important for all churches to have a self-critical investigation of their roots and to be honest and true to what they find about themselves that needs to be confessed.



The biblical and historical insights make it clear that the precondition for unity is the recognition of and tolerance towards diversity plurality and difference. The unity given in Christ transcends all boundaries and differences so that unity stands above all else. The fact that the members are baptised by the Spirit into one body implies that the Spirit dwells in all of them and unity can be expressed in all members. The fact that unity transcends all differences does not mean that it results in uniformity because it can kill the reality of diversity. The over emphasis of differences can be regarded as a sign of immaturity and needs to be resisted.

These insights make it also clear that the visible church is less glorious than the invisible church and that membership of the visible church does not guarantee eternal life. The members of the church must always be loyal to Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church and, in that sense, allows him as Lord to rule the church. No form of church government or structure

can guarantee unity but without visible unity in them our confession of the one church is blurred. The purpose is not to have a church of only like-minded people where we have at the end, ritualism, formalism and extremism. We must be careful not to make our traditions the tradition that subjugates the truth of the Gospel to our “self-made” structures. A bit of caution is needed here because so easily we can make God responsible for the church structures that were erected in our images. Maybe the reason our church structures need to be revised, reformed, and given rebirth is because our sinful nature is always part of what we recreate.

These insights help the church to understand the law of differentiation whereby organisations develop and evolve from homogeneous to heterogeneous. The church must accept its diversity as the will of God and make room for multiformity. The warning is not to fabricate external unity without inner unity that is at the expense of truth. This would make the church only efficient from a business point of view but with no spiritual efficacy.



The biblical and historical insights on the unity of the church are helpful to understand the process of unification that underway in the AFMSA. The recent call for apostolic networking greatly challenged the unity achieved by the AFMSA in 1996 and encouraged the AFMSA to re-vision and restructure itself in the light of these challenges.

The AFMSA was the first racially divided denomination in South Africa to unite after 1994. Their experience of unity is a testimony to other South African churches that goes through the struggle of unification and is also an example of what may take place when divisive conditions are removed. The AFMSA was also forced to question what was in their unity for each other and who will be glorified most in their unity. For them the glory of God and the serious need for unity in its confession and structures was the most important issue. The critical question, whether the structural unity

guaranteed a unity of heart amongst the white and black members of the AFMSA, still needs to be answered.

In my conversation with Burger in 2001, he stated that the unity of the AFMSA was a huge step, but it does not mean that our unity is perfect. For him our structural unity testifies to that, but he does not disregard what happened in the AFMSA when he and Chikane asked each other forgiveness on the day of unification. He describes it as a Day of the Lord that happened in the spiritual dimension or the heart of the AFMSA. On the question whether our unity has been successful, Burger cautiously stated that the positive changes are more than the negative factors. He concluded that our unity is not cosmetic and that the church should keep in touch with the political changes that still take place in South Africa.

The unification of the AFMSA in 1996 was the result of a long struggle between white members and those black members who would not accept that their disunity was the will of God. It is clear that they differed about the best possible way to arrive at their mutual vision of structural unity. The black Composite Division wanted a geographical unity within a stipulated time while the white Single Division stood for a spontaneous and free association of churches at a regional level. After the unification of the AFMSA some felt that the church should no longer be structured along geographical lines because it did not guarantee spontaneous networking that formed the basis of the apostolicity in the AFMSA. With the numbers of the black members in the cities it has become very difficult for some former white Afrikaner churches to be in control. The idea of spontaneous relationships was used to undermine the outcome of a process that was negotiated to work against the harsh reality of racism and the unequal distribution of resources and leadership. The issue was not about whether the vision of unity is acceptable for the uniting partners but what structure can serve that vision of unity the best.

In the regions where geographical unity is accommodated the resources and money of more affluent assemblies are used to help struggling formerly

disadvantaged assemblies and pastors. The fact that most of the non-geographic regions consist and are controlled by white assemblies is suspect for the rest of the assemblies in the AFMSA. The critical question asked is whether the unification of the AFMSA happened for the preservation of white supremacy at the expense of the truth of the Gospel that sets free.

At a recent General Business Meeting the following decisions was taken by the AFMSA about the non-geographic regions. The report stated that in 2002 the National Leadership Forum decided to “audit the current situation and manage the whole future process so as to minimize the undesirable outcome of the present process, namely the groupings of mainly white and affluent assemblies” (GBM- report, 2005: 46). At that meeting the decision was taken that the national office bearers be mandated to co-opt innovative thinkers for the purpose of making proposals on how to structure the church in a way of effectively minimizing the formation of non-geographic regions which has a detrimental effect on the unity, economics and capacity of the church. It was decided at the General Business Meeting of September 2005 that only the existing non-geographic regions will remain as its is and any future applications for new regions to be considered on merit by the national Leadership forum, subject to no existing region being unduly negatively impacted (GBM-report, 2005: 47). This decision concluded an issue that was threatening the unity of the AFMSA for the last five years and shows the commitment that the leaders of the AFMSA have towards their vision of unity.

When it comes to the preservation of that unity amongst the youth and children ministry in the AFMSA, the same commitment is not received. For the last ten years of democracy and equal opportunities in South Africa, where children and youth are allowed to attend schools and tertiary institutions, the AFMSA allowed the former white local assemblies the freedom to choose if their young people and children must participate in the regional and national Youth and Sunday School Department. In the former black section of the AFMSA these departments produced many of the current regional and national leaders. For the assemblies that is living in communities

where young people have become disillusioned and a menace to society these local, regional and national children and youth events provides an alternative. Most of the inmates of the South African prisons are coming from these communities, which make the existence of these departments in the AFMSA detrimental for their future.

The reluctance of the national structures of the AFMSA to address this issue is the greatest enemy of the unification process. It threatens the future of their unity because it preserves white supremacy in a very subtle way. It threatens the future of their testimony that was send out by the AFMSA when they decided to unite, even when it seemed that they have no guarantee it will work. It threatens the future of unity in the South African society because the church loses its flavour as the salt, which prevents the polarisation that has become descriptive of the post-apartheid South Africa. The unity of the children and the youth of the AFMSA need to be addressed and supported from local to national level if the AFMSA wants to be a true expression of the one church of God.



The AFMSA was the first racially divided denomination in South Africa to unite after 1994 and their experience of unity is a testimony to other South African churches that goes through the same struggle of unification. It is also an example of what may take place when divisive conditions are put secondary to the biblical demand for unity and what can go wrong if it is not done consistently. The AFMSA was forced to question what was in their unity for each other and who will be glorified most in their unity. For them the glory of God and the serious need for unity in its confession and structures was the most important issue.

The AFMSA has learned that the only way towards unity is honest and creative confrontational dialogue that accepts the other as different but as a determining element for the wholeness of the Body of Christ. The AFMSA did not allow the unity to remain an invisible sign of an eschatological nature but worked to make unity visible in its relationships as a community of faith. It

accepted that unity is needed if it wanted to fulfil its apostolic task in South Africa today.

Everyday in South Africa, people still experience forms of discrimination and oppression and the most vulnerable are our women and young children. They look to the church as a grassroots community, to bring the good news of life in Jesus Christ. If we remain disunited on all levels of our lives as individual members of our churches and in the structures of our churches our Gospel is turned into bad news. It is then that Karl Barth's statement that the church has become a "riddle and a scandal " applies to us. These forms of oppression that are undermining the Imago Dei in the lives of people need to be addressed by the church as an institution of which the AFMSA is also part.

6.4 The implications of catholicity for the AFMSA.

From the biblical and the historical meaning attached to the term catholicity, one has the sense of a universal, whole, entire and complete church that is at all times everywhere the same. It is clear that what makes the church catholic is the fact that it is one in essence, in all places, ages and societies. It implies that difference and variety do not ruin the essence of the church. The essence is the identity that the church has in Jesus Christ and the Spirit, which are the source and the norm of the church's catholicity. The catholicity is thus more than a geographical, statistical, and temporal concept. No church can thus claim on the basis of its doctrines or structures that it is more catholic than others. No church can boast on the basis of its age or numbers that it is more catholic than others. No church can claim because it is the largest or the smallest that it is the most catholic. The catholicity of the church does not depend on the nature or performance of a specific church, but whether it allows Jesus Christ to be the Head and the Holy Spirit to renew it.

Some authors claim that the primacy of fullness denotes catholicity more than universality. They argue that the only fullness that the church can have is the

fullness of Christ and where Christ is there is the Spirit of God. Every local church that has Christ as the Head has His fullness and is a church in the very sense of the word. It does not actually mean that such a church is without errors or perfect, but that the church remains limited and un-catholic until the eschatological fulfilment of all things in Christ. This does not mean that the church should not strive to be catholic or justify its un-catholic behaviour on the basis that it will be done at the end of time. Because this is an internal problem for every church, every church should become honest and truthful to its commitment for true biblical catholicity. The depth of the truth must also be analysed critically because people sometimes use it as an apology to remain divided.

Some contributors see a close link between the unity and the catholicity of the church because the one cannot exist without the other. In the church, one finds both unity and multiplicity that should express the mark of catholicity. It is the Spirit that creates the openness that does not threaten the identity of the individual members in the church. It remains a challenge for every church to keep the balance between the unity and the multiplicity in the church. The challenge is to see the link between the universal and the uniform over against the plural and the different and the way these can be reconciled to have a more truthful catholic church.

The biblical and historical insights illustrate how the unity and catholicity of the church are correlative and that both are threatened if one of them is threatened. The catholicity of the church denotes the identity by which the church abides in the fullness of the truth of the Gospel, which is the essence of the church through the ages. When the truth of the Gospel is denied and we let each other go because of differences the unity is broken. If every local church is the church of God in its fullness and they are isolated from each other, they cannot be regarded as a church of God. The unity amongst the local churches must be made visible for the glory of God. Christians need each other to come to a clearer understanding of the truth

and if the truth causes further division and withdrawal the truth lacks some depth.

Another important issue highlighted by the term catholicity is the Lordship of Christ who is the Head of the Church and the entire cosmos. It does not matter what sphere or area of life the Christian live in, they should acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in both the religious and the secular. This has implications for the prophetic witness of the church in the world. The church should make sure that it is not the reason for the disunity amongst people. It should constantly be breaking the barriers between people even if it means persecution for the church. The church will also have to discern the spirits at work and to proclaim and obey the Lordship of Jesus when dealing with them.

In the past, Pentecostals had the tendency to treat the local church as the visible Body of Christ, but were reluctant to speak of any visible embodiments of the universal church. It reflected a historic Protestant mistrust of church institutions and also a concern not to make exclusive claims for their own denominations. Pentecostals understand today that they are part of a catholic and universal church.

The Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA believed that they were part of the universal church, but limited their perspectives sometimes only to those who had a personal encounter with Christ as Saviour, had received adult baptism, and could show that they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. The confession that they believed denoted the catholicity of the church was that they had kept to “full Gospel”, lived and taught the full salvation and that it was meant for all people at all places. It contributed to a particular view of mission and ecumenical involvement.

In the past, Pentecostals were treated by the rest of the Christian family as a sect that did not hold to the basic Christian teachings that were confessed

and believed by the older and larger Christian communities. Amongst Pentecostals themselves, a sectarian attitude developed that used inappropriate grounds to justify their withdrawal and exclusion from other Christian churches. The consequence of that was that the AFMSA as a national and local church was not allowed to share the opportunities as other churches in the structures of society.

From the vision of the early Pentecostals it is clear that they wanted to bring everything under God's rule because they saw in everything an opportunity for the Spirit of God to work. In some instances, it caused Pentecostals to become more involved with social actions that can make this world a better place. Over the years, Pentecostals have moved away from being sectarian to being a church that expresses the universality of the church. They have become more open for ecumenical relationships and involvement in societal organizations.



Lapoorta (1996: 167) states that the AFMSA should be mindful that “the *una, sancta, catholica, apostolica* church necessitates a broader unity that is local, national and international. That includes its spatial catholicity- its presence in all parts of the inhabited earth (oikumene) and its temporal catholicity- its presence in all periods of history”. For him such a church have no denominational or national boundaries and through active participation in ecumenism, the AFMSA can make a significant contribution.

At the last General Business Meeting it is reported that the AFMSA was accepted as a full member of the South African Council of Churches since July 2004 (GBM-report, 2005: 31). This proves that the AFMSA is moving to a more concrete sense of catholicity. The AFMSA is also represented by their president Isak Burger in the National Religious Leaders forum that serves as an advisory board to the government on religious matters. Goerge Mahlobo, the general secretary of the AFMSA, is serving as the chairperson of the Spiritual Security Christian Advisory Board that deals with the different chaplain services of the South African National Defence Force, South African

Police Services and the Department of Correctional Services. The AFMSA serves also in the International Roman catholic- Pentecostal Dialogue and is represented by Japie Lapoorta. Besides that is the AFMSA also serving in national para-church organisations such as the national prayer initiative (NUPSA), radio and television networks (multi-media), missionary organisations and Bible societies. The involvement of the AFMSA in all these organizations proves that they have become truly catholic.

Pentecostals developed also a peculiar understanding of fullness that they related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the fourfold role of Christ. It is only through the Spirit that they could receive the fullness of life to spread the full Gospel. The idea was that where people did not receive it there is a lack of spiritual power and thus a lack of fullness. For many years, it was interpreted that Pentecostals are the only ones that have access to the truth of the Gospel. If someone claimed to be born again but belonged to a church outside the Pentecostal or Charismatic family, such a person was seen as one who did not experience the fullness of the Gospel. Adult baptism and Spirit baptism were a determining part of an experience of the fullness of God.

The fourfold role of Christ describes what the Pentecostal understanding of the full gospel means. The fact that Christ is the Saviour implies the ability that the church have to participates in the here and now in that salvation. In their understanding salvation meant the redemption from sin and the liberation from all kinds of evil in the world. Christ heals the believer also from the wounds and hurt of the past so that the church can live in peace with all spheres of life that includes more than the physical body. As the baptiser in the Spirit Christ empowers the individual believer with spiritual gifts to be fruitful in His body and to overcome the challenges of the world. Through his role as the king Christ is recognised and honoured as the one who reigns with authority and power. His rule should thus be established in the lives of the believers, the church and all spheres of life in the world.

6.5 Conclusion

It is clear from this study that the AFMSA shares the biblical foundation and the historical development of the marks with the other Christian churches. The AFMSA must accept that their particular expression of those marks is just a century old and learn from the history of the Christian Church that they are not the first ones to call the church back to the role of the Spirit in the structures of the church.

It has become clear from this study there is a link between the vision of the early church and its institutionalisation with the vision that was formed by the early Pentecostals in the worldwide Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA. There is also a link established with the manner in which both founded their vision on the biblical metaphors and the needs that led to their organisation of the church.



In *chapter one*, we focused on the origin and development of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA to obtain a clearer understanding of its place in the history of the Christian Church. This was followed by a section that examined the biblical basis for the doctrine of the church with special reference to the marks of the church and the biblical metaphors that explain them. The historical development of the marks was also examined to gain some insight into the way that the church institutionalised it in the different periods of its history. From this section, it became clear that the struggle to define the true church was always based on the biblical metaphors and that the struggle appears always to be between the institutional and the charismatic elements in the church structures.

We have discovered that the formulation of a doctrine of the church is a human exercise that is done within the contours of people's experience of God and the challenges that demand from them to reflect on their faith. We discovered that the early Christians were challenged to formulate a confession of the church and that it culminated into the Apostles' Creed and

later the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. We have found that the intention of the early Pentecostals to go back to the roots of the apostolic faith that is related in the New Testament definitely implies the true marks of the church which are the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church although they did not state this explicitly. Some of the marks had more prominence in the history of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA and that is why the decision was made to start with the ones that are more known.

The analysis of the marks from chapters two to five provided interesting insights in to the AFMSA and thus the Pentecostal perspective on the marks. It became clear that the marks of apostolicity, holiness and unity are more explicit in the vision of the Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA, while the mark of catholicity is implied in the other three marks.

In *chapter two*, we have found that the vision of the early Pentecostals to restore the roots of the apostolic faith was definitely part of the vision of the AFMSA. The biblical foundation on which they based their vision was taken from the experience of the first twelve and the secondary apostles, which implied a link with the preaching and the gifts that manifested in their ministry and a sharing of their mission today. We have also established that the vision to be apostolic is shared by other churches and that we must find a way to give structure to that vision in a way that is inclusive and open to dialogue because at the end, it remains the message, ministry and the mission of God for the whole world.

This leads us to conclude what is said in chapter three about the vision of the Pentecostals to restore the unity that is created by the Spirit in the Body of Christ where the equality and giftedness of every member is acknowledged and given the opportunity to develop. The unity that characterised the early Pentecostal Movement and the AFMSA was shattered by the biases and ideologies of members and what was supposed to be an example, a witness of the Spirit's work in the entire church became a scandal that they have had to deal with in all churches today. One can conclude that the AFMSA has

been busy with its struggle for unity in the last thirty years and when the various Pentecostal churches united in 1996, they became an example to the rest of the South African churches. There are critics that question the intentions that the former white section had for unity and whether these can be accepted as the reasons for their reluctance to participate in structures that are led by black leaders in the Sisters, Youth and Sunday School departments. However, others believe that our decision to honour God first by uniting and glorifying God through our processes was the best approach to adopt. One can also conclude that the churches that are struggling to unite should learn from the AFMSA experience that unity could not happen overnight, but the gospel's demand still remains, that the world may know through our unity that we are one with Christ, His disciples.

The moral crisis and the call for the moral regeneration of South Africa place a huge responsibility on churches today. The vision of the early Pentecostals to live up to the demands of God that is expressed in holiness became also part of the AFMSA through the influence of different organisations and movements. We have found in *chapter three* that the essence of the holiness of the church comes from God and that the church receives that as a gift from God, which also puts a task on the church. The essence of holiness that is received from God needs to be expressed visibly in the lives of the members and the structures of the church through the blood of Christ and the sanctification that is done by the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit of God is holy, Pentecostals believe the vessel must be kept holy so that God can find a channel to work through. In that, God finds an opportunity to work through the lives of Christians, true followers of Christ to restore the moral fiber of society. In this chapter, we conclude that the churches must become obedient so that they do not only confess, but also live up to the demand set by God, "be holy because I am holy".

The vision of the early Pentecostals was always focused on the whole world. For them the "full Gospel" needed to be taken to the entire world. They intended to be an apostolic mission or movement that wanted to reach the

world because the coming of the Lord was nigh. Due to the exclusion from other denominations, they became exclusivist towards other churches and the world and soon became un-catholic. In *chapter four*, we argued that the fullness of the Gospel meant that people must live in the fullness of life in the Spirit. This life is not compartmentalised because life in the Spirit pervades all spheres of life. Christians are called upon to live that life to its fullness. We conclude that it sometimes meant that only Pentecostals knew that kind of life, which resulted in a negative view and approach to ecumenical relationships. Over the years, things have changed and Pentecostal churches have relationships with local churches, national and international ecumenical bodies. Through these relationships Pentecostals in general and the AFMSA have become aware that there are so many similarities between them and others that they regret all the years that were lost due to a sense of superiority that resulted in an exclusivist attitude on all sides. It turned out that the fullness that the churches have is shared through the relationship that they all have with Christ which makes them all part of the God's one church, through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Today, we all live in a global village that is connected through networks that transcend the differences created by the past, It is a global village in which we need each other as co-creators and co-partners of the future. The churches are challenged to appreciate their uniqueness and, at the same time, to share that with others without sacrificing the truth about their identities.

The AFMSA is also part of that future and has something to share from its past that can help the church in South Africa to express to a polarised society the strength that lies in unity and in diversity. It can show to a morally corrupt society what can happen when holiness is based on the nature of God and the demands of the Bible. To a society without hope and direction, we, as his apostles, can take the message of the Good News that Jesus Christ is alive and the same today and in the future.

The AFMSA can stop the polarisation of our society by telling and showing them that this Gospel message is meant for the whole inhabited world. The SHALOM of God allows all people to share in the fullness of life that is offered by God in the Holy Spirit. While the AFMSA is still restructuring to address the wrongs of the past and create structures that can help future generations to serve the purpose of God in their time and space, they should keep the following in mind.

The AFMSA should be mindful of the gifts and ministries available in its structures by all the members and not those serving in leadership positions. The newly formulated dream of the AFMSA, “we see a church accessible to all people, celebrating our unity and God-given diversity, empowering our members for caring and transforming communities to the glory of God” express it perfectly. The fact that the national office bearers traveled through the country to explain and discuss the practical implications of this dream with the regions shows the commitment they have towards the unity of the AFMSA.



The AFMSA should bear in mind that in order to transform communities; the lives of its members should first be transformed by their faithfulness and loyalty to God. The glory of God is greatly destroyed by the negative publicity received from the scandals of church members in their personal and social lives. The result of a broken relationship with God can be seen in the brokenness that describes the relationships between people and especially in the disunity and the un-catholic attitudes amongst churches. It is destroying the true meaning of apostolicity, being witnesses to the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, standing in the tradition of the apostles.

A re- appreciation of shalom (wholeness in all relations), will help the AFMSA and the rest of the Christian church to restore the vision of the early Church: to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic in all relationships.

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Minutes

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Workers Council Minutes of the united AFMSA, May 1997. Address by Isak Burger, The state of the nation. Address by Frank Chikane, The role of the Church

in the reconciliation of South Africa. The resolution 15/79 that was taken about the role of the church in healing and reconciliation was accepted at this meeting. Pretoria.

Workers Council Minutes of the AFMSA, April 1998. Opening address of Isak Burger on the proper perspective of structural unity that leads to the church's goal. Frank Chikane addressed the meeting on the Pentecost experience that is meant for the whole church to become witnesses for Jesus. Johannesburg.

Workers Council Minutes of the AFMSA, June 1999. Opening address on the state of things in the AFMSA, with special focus on holiness, followed by Peter De Witt on what it means to be the Apostolic Faith Mission. Pretoria.

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Reports of the General Secretary (28-35), General Treasurer (36-50). Johannesburg.

